A History of the Department of Criminal Justice

The Criminal Justice Program was established in 1972 as a unit within the Department of Political Science, Edmonds Classroom Building. Due to the disparate allocation of resources within the University of North Carolina System, a Consent Decree was enacted in 1978 to help foster the development of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). As a result of the high student enrollment in criminal justice and the Consent Decree, the University of North Carolina allocated funds to build what is now known as the Albert N. Whiting Criminal Justice Building in 1981. The Graduate Program was established in 1984 to offer the Master of Science Degree in Criminal Justice. The Department of Criminal Justice evolved from a program in Political science in 1972 to a free standing department during Spring 1992. The department has increased its undergraduate enrollment from 291 in Fall 2001 to 562 in Fall 2007, and its graduate enrollment increased from 44 to 49 during the same period. The Department is one of nine academic units that make up the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences.

The undergraduate curriculum is designed to educate traditional students as well as promote workforce development by targeting persons currently working in the criminal justice field. In addition to the core courses, students select a concentration from one of the following:

- Law Enforcement
- Corrections
- Juvenile Justice
- Homeland Security
- Computer Forensics

The latter three concentrations were established in Fall 1995. The Master of Science degree is a dual track program through which students can be admitted into the traditional track where they will be required to complete all course work including a thesis, or they can be admitted into the professional track where the student will be required to complete all coursework to include field placements as well as a portfolio. The professional track was established in Fall 2007. Concentrations are offered in Law Enforcement, Corrections, and Juvenile Justice.

Centers of excellence housed within the Department are the Juvenile Justice Institute, the Institute for Homeland Security and Workforce Development, and the Center for the Advancement of Justice Studies and Policy. External funding for the Department exceeds $1.25 million. In addition, the Department is involved with a number of community outreach projects and is home to The North Carolina Re-Entry Action Project (NCREAP).

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