Proposal for an MIU Hire in Criminal Justice

Department of Sociology
Center for Law, Society, and Justice

October 26, 2010

Abstract

There is strong and unsatisfied undergraduate demand for expanded course offerings in criminology and criminal justice. The lack of a Sociology faculty member specializing in this area has created a course bottleneck. Undergraduates enrolled in the Criminal Justice Certificate Program are especially affected, as well as those majoring in Sociology and Legal Studies. We ask for permission to hire a tenure-track faculty member whose research and teaching is focused on criminology and/or criminal justice.

The need for expanded course offerings in criminology and criminal justice

In the US today, crime is a social problem of enormous practical and academic concern. This is reflected in the high undergraduate enrollment in criminal justice programs across the country. These programs provide a direct gateway into a wide variety of careers in local, state, and federal law enforcement and corrections. More generally, courses in both criminology (the causes of crime) and criminal justice (the processing, punishment, and rehabilitation of accused criminals) are valuable to undergraduates from various majors with a range of professional aspirations (including law, psychology, political science, sociology, and social work).

Within the Big Ten, two of our competitors have stand-alone Criminal Justice departments (Michigan State and Indiana) while several others offer undergraduate majors in Criminal Justice through their Sociology departments (Penn State, Minnesota, and Ohio State). Potential undergraduate interest in this area is perhaps best illustrated by Michigan State, where the Criminal Justice Department (with 28 faculty members) averages about 700 majors per year.¹

In contrast, UW-Madison has had relatively little presence in this area. Within the Law School, the Remington Center provides professional education for future lawyers who will work in the criminal justice system. But there is no department or research center devoted to the study of crime or criminal justice, and there are few faculty members on campus with these research interests. The Sociology Department in particular has only one (Pam Oliver) who identifies criminal justice as a major research interest, and she does not teach courses in this area.

Nevertheless, given strong undergraduate demand, the Criminal Justice Certificate Program (CJCP) is currently the second largest certificate program on campus. For the current semester (Fall 2010), the Office of the Registrar reports 1665 undergraduates enrolled in 38 certificate programs. Criminal Justice has 242 enrollees, second only to Environmental Studies (with 280 enrollees) and ahead of Business (with 172 enrollees).

Looking back over the last decade, enrollment in the Criminal Justice Certificate Program initially grew dramatically, starting from a base of only 60 students in 2000-01.

The more modest growth of CJCP in recent years does not reflect a saturation of student interest but rather a capacity constraint. Key Sociology courses required for the certificate, such as
Criminal Justice in America (Soc 131) and Criminology (Soc 441), are also highly demanded by undergraduates majoring in Sociology and Legal Studies. Given the dearth of Sociology faculty teaching criminal justice, these courses are often taught by non-tenure-track academic staff or graduate-student lecturers (for whom the department limits enrollment to 100 students). Related Sociology courses listed in the Course Catalogue go unoffered year after year.

This bottleneck is felt acutely by both Sociology and Legal Studies majors and students in the Criminal Justice Certificate Program. A recent exit survey of graduating CJCP students showed very strong support for the program, with the most common criticism being the lack of availability of courses. In Sociology, the Undergraduate Advisor reports that students ask on a daily basis about the upper-level criminology courses no longer offered.

The severity of the problem is made apparent by the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>course number</th>
<th>course title</th>
<th>last taught by tenure-track sociologist</th>
<th>last taught</th>
<th>enrollment when last taught</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Soc 131</td>
<td>Criminal Justice in America</td>
<td>fall 1999 (Jack Ladinsky)</td>
<td>spring 2010</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soc 441</td>
<td>Criminology</td>
<td>fall 2002 (Marino Bruce)</td>
<td>spring 2010</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soc 446</td>
<td>Juvenile Delinquency</td>
<td>spring 1993 (Ross Matsueda)</td>
<td>fall 1997</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The problem of lack of faculty was previously noted in the review of the Legal Studies and Criminal Justice Certificate Programs in 2006. The committee stated:

The lack of a faculty member who can teach criminology courses creates serious difficulties for both undergraduate programs, especially for the Criminal Justice certificate program. Sociology 131: Criminal Justice in America is a required course for the CJCP. Currently, one of the instructors for this course is a highly valued member of the [Legal Studies] cluster whose talents might be better utilized in upper division courses. Another integral course, Sociology 441: Criminology, is typically staffed by non-tenure track instructors, who are not likely to serve in an on-going leadership role for the CJCP.....We believe that more faculty expertise in the area would strengthen both Legal Studies and the CJCP (as well, perhaps, as the departmental majors in Sociology and Political Science), so we strongly recommend that the College and the Center prioritize this search" (pp. 21-22)
Our proposal

We have demonstrated a pressing undergraduate need for expanded course offerings in criminology and criminal justice. To address this need, we propose hiring a tenure-track faculty member whose research and teaching is focused on criminology and/or criminal justice. The new faculty member would hold a tenure-track position in the Sociology Department along with an affiliation with the Center for Law, Society, and Justice (which houses the Legal Studies Program as well as the Criminal Justice Certificate Program). Because sociologists specializing in criminology are themselves in much demand, we ask for permission to conduct an open-rank search in order to increase the size and diversity of the applicant pool.

If this proposal is accepted, the payoff for our undergraduates would be immediate and dramatic. In courses currently taught by graduate students and academic staff, our undergraduates would gain from the continuity and knowledge provided by a tenure-track faculty member. Moreover, the number of students enrolled could be greatly expanded. Removing the enrollment cap of 100 students, the Sociology Undergraduate Advisor estimates that the number of students taught each semester in Criminology (Soc 441) would easily double to 200. A new faculty member would also increase Sociology course offerings, reviving the dormant courses and perhaps developing new ones. Within the Criminal Justice Certificate Program, the new faculty member could develop and teach a capstone course, support Criminal Justice summer internships, and expand undergraduate research opportunities. These are precisely the sorts of high-impact educational practices that UW-Madison has promised to provide through the MIU.

Hiring a tenure-track faculty member specializing in criminology and/or criminal justice would also yield longer term benefits. The presence of a faculty member in this area would encourage more Sociology graduate students to adopt this specialization. These graduate students, in turn, could serve as lecturers capable of further expanding our undergraduate course offerings. Further, the presence of one criminologist on our faculty will make it easier to recruit a second and third, so that UW-Madison might ultimately possess a critical mass in this important area.

By enhancing course offerings in the Criminal Justice Certificate Program, our proposal will also contribute to larger University efforts to attract a more diverse undergraduate population. CJCP has a substantial number of enrollees who are racial or ethnic minorities (58 out of 242). In particular, there are far more African-American students in Criminal Justice (21 enrollees) than any other certificate program (the next highest is Women's Studies with 8 enrollees). It is also worth noting that CJCP enrollees are largely female, with about 2.5 females per male (173 females to 69 males).

Potentially, this hire could also increase the diversity of our faculty. We know that the applicant pool in this area includes a large number of women, and we believe that scholars working on criminal justice issues represent the broad diversity of American society. The Sociology Department is deeply committed to both gender and racial diversity, and will follow standard departmental procedures to insure a diverse group of applicants. As already indicated, we have requested an open-rank search to cast the recruitment net as widely as possible.
We understand the need for accountability in the MIU program. To assess the impact of this hire, some quantitative measures of success seem straightforward. Given the current baseline, we could determine the increase in the number of students taught on existing courses, the number of new and dormant courses taught (and their enrollment levels), and the number of summer internships and undergraduate research opportunities supervised. Of course, our expected success on these quantitative measures would fail to capture some important intangibles, such as increased undergraduate contact with a faculty member.

Budget

Given current salaries in sociology, we expect that the cost (salary net of fringes) for the new faculty member could range from $75,000 (for a new assistant professor) to $150,000 (for a senior professor). As already indicated, criminologists are themselves in high demand. We are asking for permission to conduct an open-rank search to maximize our chance of hiring one.
MEMORANDUM

December 1, 2010

To: Provost Paul DeLuca
From: Gary Sandefur, Dean
Re: MIU Round 3 proposals

We are pleased to submit proposals from the College of Letters and Science for MIU Round 3. We solicited two page pre-proposals and received over 40. We reviewed these pre-proposals in the Academic Planning Council and in Senior Staff. Based on these reviews, we invited 15 submissions of full proposals. These proposals were reviewed by Senior Staff and we decided to forward these 15 to you for consideration. All are worthy of funding and would help meet critical needs in the University.

The proposals are grouped into three tiers in order of their importance in meeting the goals of the MIU, with tier 1 being the most important. Importance is based somewhat on the quality of the proposals but primarily on undergraduate educational needs. We also took into account losses in faculty numbers prior to the MIU and the success or lack thereof of departments in previous rounds of the competition.

Tier 1: Communication Arts, English, French and Italian, School of Journalism and Mass Communications, Philosophy, Political Science

Tier 2: Anthropology, Chemistry, Math, Sociology, Statistics

Tier 3: Communicative Disorders, Religious Studies, Service Learning, Undergraduate Research Scholars

We did not carefully assess the budgets of the proposals since we assumed that this would be done by the office of the Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance.

xc: Associate Vice Chancellor Aaron Brower
    Associate Dean Nancy Westphal-Johnson
    Academic Associate Deans
    Associate Dean Anne Gunther
    Sheila Voss, Office of the Provost