

**Vision Plan for the Center for the Study of Crime, Delinquency, and  
Corrections**

**June 2006**

## **I. Vision and Aspirations**

The problems of crime, violence, and the provision of social justice have been a challenge for American society since its beginning. Founded in 1963, Southern Illinois University's Center for the Study of Crime, Delinquency, and Corrections was one of the early attempts in American higher education to address those problems. Over the past 42 years, the Center has provided criminal justice and criminology education to thousands of students. It has been a national leader in policy relevant research and scholarship, and it has been a major provider of technical assistance to criminal justice agencies and community based organizations. The Center has a rich legacy in criminal justice and criminology education, and this plan reflects the commitment of its faculty and staff to build upon that legacy and to achieve national and international distinction for excellence in criminal justice and criminology education, research and scholarship, and outreach and service to the community and to the profession. This plan also reflects the commitment of Center faculty, staff, and students to the goals of *Southern at 150*.

Our vision statement highlights several themes that we feel are important for teaching students, informing policy makers, and contributing to scholarship:

*The Center will achieve national and international distinction by conducting theoretically grounded scholarship that informs regional and national policy; promoting evidence-based practices; responding to emerging concerns of communities; and most of all, by generating and disseminating knowledge that promotes social justice. Through its education programs the Center will prepare students to be informed citizens and leaders in their career fields. Through its outreach programs the Center will assist agencies and community based organizations to develop, implement, and assess the efficacy of data-driven policies and practices.*

## **II. Goals and Objectives**

### **Achieve National Distinction**

The Center enjoys a national reputation for its solid foundation of faculty scholarship. The history of the Center's existence has provided the benefit of name recognition with fellow academics, criminal justice practitioners and students across the country. We will bolster this existing name recognition with a renewed reputation for conducting superior scientific research and providing high quality undergraduate and graduate education. To capitalize on and further enhance our current reputation to the level of achieving national distinction we must achieve a number of milestones that will increase and promote our work in the larger academic community and also in the local regions. First, the Center must engage in actions that will result in distinguished recognition in the broader academic community. One approach is to become more visible within prestigious rankings of criminology and criminal justice programs commonly recognized by the broader academic community. The most commonly cited ranking systems are based on numbers of publications in top-tier, peer reviewed journals. As such, the faculty will

seek to specifically target their work for publication in these journals. Currently, we are not listed in these rankings. In the next two years, we will seek to be ranked in the top twenty programs in the country. In five years, we seek to be ranked in the top five programs. Enhancing our national reputation in this manner will attract and retain high quality faculty and students in our discipline. Further, a stronger reputation will add credence to our organizational capacity and reputation for our ability to attract and participate in externally funded research.

Thus, a second approach to increasing our visibility in the broader academic discipline will be augmented efforts to obtain external funding to support our research. We will greatly increase the number of responses to requests for proposals at the local, regional, and national level. Additionally, we will seek funding for researcher initiative projects from external governmental agencies and through private sponsorship. Increased levels of external funding not only serve to assist in achieving the University's goals of *Southern at 150* but will also serve to achieve our broader organizational goals, to the benefit of both faculty and students.

To increase our visibility within and contributions to the discipline of criminology and criminal justice, we will encourage our faculty to serve on editorial boards of major journals and increase the number of faculty serving as officers and/or chairs in national and regional academic societies and associations. As our faculty interacts with colleagues from other universities and institutes, we will improve the Center's overall visibility. Finally, we will strive to publish in top tier journals so that our scholarship has the most impact. We will focus our efforts to increase publication in journals having widespread readership among members of our field. We will measure our success in these efforts according to independent evaluations of scholarly productivity (publication in top journals) conducted by members of our field. Within the next two years, we will be ranked in the top twenty in these evaluations. Within the next five years, we will be ranked in the top ten.

In addition to increasing our visibility at the national level, we seek to further enhance our reputation with local, state, and regional agencies and practitioners and within our own university community. Thus, the Center must increase its visibility at the local level. In order to build a bridge for the community to our discipline, we will bring speakers to campus each semester to present criminal justice/criminology topics of interest to the larger academic and area communities as well as to the state and region. Also, we will organize and host an annual Center lecture series or academic conference. Bringing together nationally recognized experts and agency leaders and practitioners will expose our students and colleagues from other disciplines as well as agency professionals to innovative research in criminology and criminal justice. Such activity will also facilitate the development of ongoing research partnerships with these constituents.

### **Engage in Theoretically Grounded Scholarship that Informs Regional and National Policy and Promotes Social Justice**

The Center faculty will emphasize the role that theory plays in guiding use-inspired research that informs sound policy and practice. Because the field of criminology and criminal justice is interdisciplinary, we will also emphasize the diversity of perspectives, theory, and methods in our scholarship and teaching.

To achieve its goals in research and scholarship the Center will need to increase its funding through external and internal grants. Emphasis will be placed on competition for grants with the potential to produce results with important implications for criminal justice system policy. We must campaign for the recognition of the Center as a “priority program” for funding purposes within COLA and within the entire university. Furthermore, we should designate and fill an administrative position within the Center, which has the responsibility of facilitating the acquisition and management of grants and grant funding.

### **Promote Evidence-Based Practices**

We will promote treatment and crime-control policies that we can demonstrate as effective and ethical. To facilitate dissemination and improve our ability to promote evidence-based practices, we will consider the development of an organizational unit dedicated to the promotion of evidence-based practices. Potential functions of this unit include analysis for criminal justice system agencies and supplementing individual and organizational decision making with the latest research. Furthermore, we will educate professionals and future professionals (our students) about the utility of modeling improvements based on ‘what works.’

### **Respond to Emerging Concerns of Communities**

In order to be of service to local, regional, and federal agencies, we will expand our partnerships with these constituents. We will invite agency administrators to use the Center for analysis purposes; include agencies as partners in federal and state grants; and sponsor a conference on policy issues, inviting local and regional agencies, officials, and politicians. And we will create an alumni/practitioner advisory board to advise the Center on the research, educational, and professional development needs of the criminal justice community.

### **Deliver Skill Driven Education That Encourages an Informed Citizenry**

We are dedicated to providing a skill driven education that meets the needs of students competing for jobs in a dynamic market. Increasingly, policy making and practice in the criminal justice system is evidence-based and data-driven. To compete successfully for jobs in such a market, our students must be provided analytical tools necessary to win jobs, while developing an understanding of the broader criminological and criminal justice system issues that define the context in which these analytical tools are applied.

As we revise and deliver our curriculum, we will emphasize the development of critical thinking, ethical behavior, appreciation of a multiplicity of cultures, analytical and problem-solving abilities, and the enhancement of oral and written communication skills. We will place greater emphasis on oral and written communication ability by incorporating more writing and presentation assignments into coursework. We will foster the development of analytical and problem-solving capacities through traditional courses in statistics, research methods, but also through specialized courses in evaluation research, crime analysis and policy analysis.

As we set higher goals for ourselves, we will also expect more from our students. We will attract and retain highly able and diverse students for both the Center's undergraduate and graduate programs. To attract students of high quality, we must increase our attendance at local and

regional high school and college career fairs; develop and distribute attractive and useful promotional material; and offer undergraduate scholarships for new students who declare AJ as a major.

### **Develop A Quality Doctoral Program**

The development of a quality doctoral program in criminal justice and/or criminology, one that is competitive with the best in our field, will be important if the Center is to achieve its goals. The Center will explore a variety of options for developing a program ranging from a stand alone program managed and governed exclusively by the Center to a collaborative doctoral program jointly administered by the collaborators.

Developing a doctoral program of high quality and strengthening the Master's program will be important for achieving our goal of an enhanced national reputation. Graduate programs of national repute will enable successful recruitment and retention of high quality graduate students. Provision of funding through graduate assistantships, the potential to collaborate with faculty on existing research projects, a strong skill-based graduate curriculum, positive working relationships with numerous local agencies, and a collegial environment will serve to attract strong graduate students who will have a positive employment outlook upon completion of their degree requirements. Additionally, this program will make it possible to continue to recruit and retain high quality faculty and to compete more effectively for external funding support for research and scholarship.

### **Organizational Structure and Features**

Over time, we will modify the existing organizational structure and some of the features of the Center in order to facilitate the achievement of our goals. The name, the Center for the Study of Crime, Delinquency and Corrections, has historical value and should be retained. However, the Center will be the organizational umbrella for four organizational subunits or divisions. Two of these will have responsibility for the Center's degree programs (undergraduate unit/division and graduate unit/division). Another unit or division will be established to promote and facilitate carrying out sponsored research and related activity and act as a research institute within the Center. The final unit or division to be established will have responsibility for promoting evidence-based practice and policy through conferences and professional development and related continuing education activities sponsored by the Center.

The Center will also explore the renaming of its degree granting programs to align them more closely with other programs across the country, including those recognized as leaders in the field. Programs in the field are most commonly referred to as criminal justice, or criminology, or criminal justice and criminology, but not as Administration of Justice. Renaming the Centers degree programs will make it easier for the Center and its students to communicate that nature of the field of study and degrees offered.

### **Enhancing Resources**

Achieving the goals outlined in this plan will require additional investments in the Center. Some

of these will need to be ongoing investments made by SIUC, while others will require startup funding but seek to become self-sustaining overtime. Some of the other initiatives can be supported through the reallocation of existing Center resources. Additional faculty and operational support will need to be developed, as will support for students. These requirements will be detailed in a separate implementation plan.

### III. Timeline for Development

Objective	05-06	06-07	07-08	08-09
Review undergraduate and graduate curriculum (05-06)	█			
Implement revisions (06-07)		█		
Improve Center visibility within CoLA and the university at large (05-ongoing)	█	█	█	█
Implement nationally recognized scholars lecture series (06-07)		█		
Hold a conference on policy issues; invite local, regional, and national agencies (06-07)		█		
Create subunits within the Center (06-07)		█		
Rename degree programs (07-08)			█	
Prepare initial concept paper for doctoral plan (06-07)		█		
Prepare full proposal for doctoral program and seek approval (07-08)			█	
Implement doctoral program (08-09)				█
Apply for and be awarded federal grants (05-ongoing)	█	█	█	█
Apply for and be awarded State grants (05-ongoing)	█	█	█	█
Create alumni/faculty advisory board (06-07)		█		
Create and fund scholarships (05-ongoing)	█	█	█	█