Evaluation of the Student Engagement Process in a Criminal Justice Program at a Technical College

by
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Approval Page

This applied dissertation was submitted by Martin W. Totzke under the direction of the persons listed below. It was submitted to the Fischler School of Education and Human Services and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova Southeastern University.

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Abstract

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This applied dissertation was an evaluation of the student engagement practices offered to students in a criminal justice program at a Midwestern technical college. The problem was that an evaluation of the practices had not been conducted to provide data to indicate whether the current practices were effective.

The researcher developed an evaluation tool to assess existing student engagement activities employed within the criminal justice department at the college. The expected criteria of the currently used activities were compared to expected criteria of best practices established for a student engagement process at a community college for vocational education practices and programs. The expected outcomes (criteria) of best practices for a student engagement process at the college criminal justice program were developed from the following resources: (a) a review of literature, (b) a survey administered to students currently enrolled in the criminal justice program at the college, and (c) a survey administered to faculty members of the criminal justice program.

The evaluation of student engagement practices currently employed at the college identified gaps between expected outcomes of the current practices and expected outcomes for student engagement best practices model for a criminal justice applied associate degree program.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

Student engagement is an academic process with a protracted history. During the past 3 decades, research and writing focused on student engagement as an important aspect affecting the quality of student learning. This applied dissertation project was conducted at a Midwestern technical college. Hereafter, the term *college* refers to the subject Midwestern technical college.

The Wisconsin Technical College System

The Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) was originally established in 1907 by legislation permitting cities to offer trade school opportunities for youths age 16 or older. The offerings were to be part of the public school system. This legislation mandated communities with a population greater than 5,000 to establish industrial education boards that were authorized to levy taxes to support this endeavor (WTCS, 2006a).

In 1917, the focus changed from industrial education to vocational education as a result of federal legislation. In 1937, the WTCS expanded to offer college transfer credits due to a change in the compulsory school attendance requirements and an increased demand for adult education. The 1963 Federal Vocational Education Act helped transform the WTCS once again. In 1965, state legislature required the establishment of a statewide vocational, technical, and adult education system (WTCS, 2006a).

The state legislature passed enabling legislation establishing the State Technical College System. The WTCS, of which the college remains a member, is composed of 16 technical colleges throughout the state. Each institution serves a geographically defined area. Each college is directed to serve the needs and requirements of its individual labor

market. The WTCS board of directors establishes the vision, policies, and standards for the entire system. Each district appoints a board responsible for focusing the broader statewide vision within the individual district.

Mission and Vision

In order to address the academic and learning needs of students and the functions that the college system provides to meet those needs, the WTCS was assigned a mission set forth by the state legislature in enabling legislation. The legislature recognized the importance of having a skilled and educated workforce. The technical college system was to provide occupational skills training that stressed job training and retraining in order to meet the needs of dynamic, ever-evolving employment environment. The technical college system was also tasked to provide education and training opportunities to all members of the public.

In addition to the mission, the WCTS (2006b) further addressed the provision of meeting the academic and learning needs of students in the following vision statement:

> The Wisconsin Technical College System is the premier provider of technical education. We develop individuals who apply knowledge and skills to enhance quality of life and boost economic vitality. We are committed to extending learning beyond the classroom and throughout life.
>
> To meet each student's educational needs, we:
>
> Deliver high quality instruction and services that are responsive, flexible and accessible.
>
> Join talent and technology to make learning generously available and imaginatively delivered.
>
> Commit to high standards and accountability.
>
> Create strategic alliances that expand students' learning opportunities.
>
> Respect each other's dignity, embrace diversity and offer opportunities for growth. (¶ 1)

The Midwestern Technical College

In addition to the WTCS vision and mission, each college is mandated by WTCS to maintain a mission and vision statement. The mandate requires that individual colleges

develop mission and vision statements mirroring the mission and vision statement of the WTCS. The mission is documented on the college Web site. The mission statement of the subject college is to "help individuals reach their potential by providing cost-effective education and training which meet their objectives for employment, continuing higher education, and personal enrichment." This statement mirrors the legislative intent and direction to prepare residents for participation in the state's work force.

The vision of the college is published on the college's Web site:

> The Strategic Planning Process has led us to a shared vision to fulfill our mission. Four strategic directions focus on assuring excellence in all college endeavors, maximizing the collective value of those endeavors in the eyes of the college's constituency, reaching more people with programs and services, and strengthening the lifelong connection between the college and its students and graduates.
>
> Protect and enhance the performance reputation of the college by seeking continuous improvement in all areas.
>
> Strengthen the college's value to its constituents.
>
> Reach more people with programs and services.
>
> Strengthen lifelong ties to our students and graduates.

The college serves five counties with an aggregate population of 454,698 residents (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). From this population, the college draws more than 50,000 persons to attend classes. The college offers 75 applied associate degrees and technical certificate programs. The college also offers a variety of continuing education courses and certificate programs. The college employs 333 full- and part-time instructors, as well as 798 adjunct faculty members. In addition, 405 professional and support staff contribute to the programs.

The criminal justice division is the largest academic area of the college. The division offers associate degrees in criminal justice and in security loss prevention and also offers three technical certificates in the areas of cyber-crime investigations, criminal justice leadership, and private investigation. The division also operates three entry-level

academies, leadership and management courses, and a plethora of specialized law enforcement trainings. The division employs six full-time and 42 adjunct faculty.

The class of 2005 included 94 criminal justice and 5 security loss prevention graduates. The 2006 Graduate Employment Research Report documented that 90% of criminal justice and 80% of security loss prevention students responding to the survey were employed within 6 months of graduation. The response rates for the graduate employment research survey were 76% criminal justice and 100% security loss prevention.

Professional continuing education course offerings occur throughout the calendar year. In addition, the division includes an active contract-training component that generates revenues in excess of $12 million annually. Contract training expands upon mandated entry-level training and education by providing specialized programs and projects developed to specific criteria for participants residing beyond the geographically defined district boundaries of the college. The scope of contract training, staffed by an additional cadre of subject matter experts, is national. Contract training partners include The Office of National Missing and Exploited Children, The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the National Crime Prevention Council, and the State Department of Justice.

Nature of the Problem

The criminal justice department enjoys an excellent reputation throughout the state. The college's 2006 Graduate Employment Research Report demonstrates the strength of this reputation. The report shows a 90% employment rate 6 months after graduation. However, this reputation masks the problem to be studied. The problem is

that criminal justice students fell below the 2004 Community College Survey of Student Engagement mean in four of the five engagement benchmarks.

The college participated in the 2004 Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE). The survey is administered through the Community College Leadership Program of the University of Texas. The survey was administered to 532 full-time and 228 part-time students. The criminal justice division was disproportionately represented in the sample of survey respondents with 283 criminal justice students completing the survey.

The number of criminal justice students surveyed was linked to the requirements associated with the League for Innovation and College and Career Transition Initiative (CCTI), in which the college was a partner. The league and CCTI funded the administration of the CCSSE with a grant, allowing the college to participate fully in the study. Neither the college accreditation committee nor the high school transition department utilized the data collected from the CCSSE.

The director of CCTI reported that a follow-up to the 2004 CCSSE was conducted. The CCTI grant did not fund the follow-up effort. Grant funding was essential to the college's participation in the follow-up, and due to the unavailability of funding, no follow-up occurred at the college.

The CCSSE was a relatively new survey tool when the first survey was administered at the college. The director of CCTI chose the survey to get a good handle on community college student engagement and to identify as many characteristics as they could. The survey covered five benchmarks of student engagement: (a) active and collaborative learning, (b) student effort, (c) academic challenge, (d) student-faculty

interaction, and (e) support for learners (Community College Leadership Program, 2004).

Student engagement focuses on the amount of effort students invest in their learning. Active and collaborative learning relates to how actively involved students are in their learning. The academic challenge benchmark inquires into the complexity of the cognitive work and course evaluation standards. Academic challenge examines whether or not students were afforded the opportunity to solve problems with peers and challenge course content. How the faculty engages students was also surveyed using the student-faculty interaction benchmark, which looked at how involved instructors were with students. The final benchmark focused on support for learners. The survey examined college services related to financial aid, advising, and career development, as such services may affect learning and retention. In the report *Engagement by Design: 2004* (Community College Leadership Program, 2004), it was noted that such services "may affect learning and retention" (p. 12).

A 2004 report of the subject college discussed benchmark scores and described the determination of the mean as follows:

> Every college has a score for each benchmark. These benchmark scores were computed by averaging the scores on survey items that comprise that benchmark. Benchmark scores are standardized so that the mean--the average of all participating students--always is 50 and the standard deviation is 24.

In an unpublished institutional report on the 2004 CCSSE, the director of institutional research reported that the college was below the mean in the remaining four benchmarks. The results indicated that the below-mean benchmarks were statistically significant. The mean for the benchmarks was determined always to be 50%. The CCSSE established that the college was above the mean, 51.8%, in the active and collaborative learning benchmark. Specific college results in comparison to other participating institutions are

presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Community College Survey of Student Engagement 2004 Benchmark Mean Scores for All Students at the Subject Midwestern Technical College Compared to Similarly Classified Colleges Participating in the 2004 Survey

Benchmark	Subject college	Similar colleges
Active and collaborative learning	51.8	49.0
Student effort	47.4	50.2
Academic challenge	46.0	49.6
Student faculty interaction	48.8	49.2
Support of learning	45.0	49.7

Note. Benchmark scores are standardized so that the mean is always 50.

The chairperson of the criminal justice department and the dean of the criminal justice division agreed that the survey indicated there was room for improvement. A list of the survey items used in the 2004 CCSSE is included as Appendix A.

Discussions regarding student preparedness among members of the criminal justice division resulted in the formation of a committee. The student-involvement initiative committee was designated to examine the issues of students' lack of class preparation and participation. The committee was challenged to identify methods to increase student involvement. Included in the charge was the identification of existing faculty practices designed to increase student involvement. The committee was also requested by the division dean to submit recommendations of practices to improve the student-involvement process for department and division consideration. Committee membership included the department chair and two adjunct instructors. The committee

took no action.

Background and Significance of the Problem

The issue of student preparation for college is important not only for 4-year institutions but especially so for 2-year colleges. Astin (1985) commented that, in "virtually every longitudinal study of student development is that the chances of dropping out are substantially greater at a two-year college than at a four-year college" (p. 146).

Accreditation

The college is accredited through the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. The college participates in the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) for reaccreditation. The college was admitted to AQIP on October 3, 2001. The next reaccreditation process will be conducted during the 2008-2009 academic year (Higher Learning Commission, 2002). The Higher Learning Commission described the AQIP process:

> The Academic Quality Improvement Program infuses the principles and benefits of continuous improvement into the culture of colleges and universities by providing an alternative process through which an already-accredited institution can maintain its accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission. With AQIP, an institution demonstrates it meets accreditation standards and expectations through sequences of events that align with those ongoing activities that characterize organizations striving to improve their performance. (p. 1)

The college communicated the AQIP accreditation process to the staff and public through an Internet posting (see Appendix B).

The AQIP process examines several areas of the college. One such area is how the college helps students learn. AQIP, within the scope of helping students to learn, inquires how the college aligns cocurricular activities with course-curriculum objectives (see Appendix C).

Student Engagement

The term *student engagement* refers to the amount of effort students put into their studies. Difficulties were noted through personal discussions with criminal justice instructors as well as criminal justice administrators at the other state technical college criminal justice programs, in getting students to engage subject matter. The consensus is that difficulty exists with getting students to read assigned materials or actively participate in some courses. Through these discussions, the question arises: Are the students ill prepared for the rigors associated with a vocational college, or are they simply apathetic? McClenney (2004) commented that only 42% of U.S. high school graduates were ready to attend college. This observation is one explanation for the deficiencies in academic performance of students. The lack of preparation may exacerbate the engagement issue and be a contributor to first-term student retention issues.

Factors That Affect Student Engagement

Several factors affect student engagement. Such factors include student background, faculty involvement, institutional support of learners, and academic challenges.

Student background. Student background encompasses three influences affecting student engagement. These influences are familial and generational, lack of residential facilities, and student socioeconomic conditions.

McClenney (2004), Pike and Kuh (2005), and Warburton, Bugarin, and Nuñez (2001) all observed that many high school students were simply ill prepared for the rigors of college-level study. These observations suggested that many high school students lack the academic engagement skills to prepare them for college.

During staff meetings, the division faculty noted that the college is a commuter

institution with a diverse mix of traditional, nontraditional, and displaced students. The college offers no residential living facilities for students; therefore, students reside off campus, commuting from personal residences to the college. This absence of dormitory facilities, along with being located in a metropolitan area, classifies the college as an urban commuter college. The lack of dormitory facilities reduces opportunities for students to congregate in common areas and debate the essence of their courses.

The 2004 CCSSE survey suggests that students attending the college are generally middle class and maintain employment to finance their education and to provide the essentials for themselves and often for their families. The demands placed on student time related to employment and familial obligations reduce the time available for studying.

The college offers a variety of cocurricular activities to enhance opportunities for student social and intellectual engagement through student life. These opportunities are in the form of student clubs, associations, and sporting activities.

The importance of cocurricular activities is identified in the college's reaccreditation process. One reaccreditation element is helping students to learn (see Appendix C, Process Question 1P10).

An Arizona State University (ASU; n.d.a) Web page identified benefits for both students and faculty who engage in external class discussions. Such benefits were recognized in the works of several researchers (Jaasma & Koper, 2001; Kuh & Hu, 2001; Plecha, 2002). The first benefit that students exhibit is an increased confidence in their scholastic abilities. Through informal interaction, instructors gain the opportunity to praise the demonstrated effort of a student. Second, improvement in academic performance was noted. Students who are struggling with a concept are given the

opportunity to discuss the idea with the professor. The conversation may provide the instructor with an opportunity to communicate on a level the students more readily understand. Third, these students demonstrate greater effort in academic activities that they perceive as purposeful. Students gain important insight from the professor as to why an assignment or activity was given out. Fourth, students who engage in cocurricular discussions with faculty demonstrate increased persistence rates. Educators gain the opportunity to reinforce students' ability to be successful in the course. Fifth, this group of students is more likely to desire and to pursue graduate-level studies. Instructors acquire the opportunity to reinforce that students possess the intellect to successfully study at the graduate level. Sixth, the students integrate into the college environment, both socially and academically, better than students who do not communicate with faculty. Faculty obtain an opportunity to direct students toward activities the students may find rewarding, both collegiate and community based. Such a relationship is more individualized than the classroom would allow.

The ASU (n.d.b) Web page also listed a series of tips for students to assist them to improve faculty-student interaction. For a variety of reasons, instructors frequently intimidate students. The tips provide suggestions to assist students in overcoming this sense of intimidation, allowing enhanced student-faculty engagement and substantive interaction (see Appendix D).

Faculty involvement. At the college, adjunct instructors teach a significant number of course offerings. Adjunct instructors outnumber the full-time faculty college wide by a ratio of 2.3:1. The criminal justice division ratio is nearly three times higher at 7:1. These instructors are hired for their specialized vocational knowledge, skills, and abilities. Although they are excellent instructors, the use of adjuncts diminishes opportunities for

student engagement. Adjunct instructors are not required to maintain office or advising hours. Such times are specifically scheduled for a student to meet with a faculty academic advisor or an instructor to discuss academic, course, and career issues. The scheduling aspect of these hours advertises times when a student may justifiably assume that the instructor will be available for consultation.

Adjunct instructors are frequently assigned evening course offerings, which complicates student-instructor interaction. Students and adjunct instructors often arrive directly from work and just in time for the start of the class period. Both the students and the instructor are fatigued after class, departing with limited, if any, interest in interaction after class.

Communication and outside-of-class interaction produce benefits for instructors as well as students. An ASU (n.d.a) Web page identified three benefits for faculty members who engage in external class discussions with students. Those benefits are related to student-faculty interaction. First, students submit higher ratings on course evaluations for professors who interact with them. The interaction communicates that the faculty member cares about the student and that any statements made are more than hollow rhetoric. Second, teachers who interact with students receive more nominations and recognition for their efforts. Once again, students will recognize instructors who relate with them as outstanding educators. Third, students indicate that classes are inspiring when taught by instructors who relate well with students.

The ASU (n.d.b) Web page also listed a series of tips for faculty to improve student-faculty interaction. For a variety of reasons, instructors frequently intimidate students. The tips provide suggestions to assist faculty in overcoming this sense of intimidation on the part of the student, allowing for enhanced student-faculty engagement

and substantive interaction (see Appendix E).

Support for learners. The college provides three programs designed to assist students with academic and social issues. The college maintains a peer-advising program that utilizes students as advisors. The premise associated with the peer-advising program is that students may be more at ease asking questions of another student.

Student success often requires that the student receive special assistance. The college offers special educational services for students requiring individual accommodations. Tutoring, special testing conditions, or disability accommodations are available to students upon request and are offered through an educational support services office.

The college also offers remedial education for students to improve general education skills. The Goal-Oriented Adult Learning program (GOAL) allows students the opportunity to improve math, English, and reading skills prior to enrolling in specific courses. This program, while improving academic skills, contributes to student confidence in intellectual abilities, thereby enhancing the possibility that students will engage other students and faculty.

Active and collaborative learning. Student success is frequently predicated on the level of student participation in the learning process. Learning is an active process that does not occur without effort. Student participation in classroom-related activities as well as collaboration with faculty and peers are important. Astin (1996) reported that peer groups exert the strongest influence on the cognitive and affective development of peer-group members and, as such, cannot be discounted. Active and collaborative learning may occur with learning communities or peer-group interactions focused on course content.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the engagement process of criminal justice majors at the college. A recommendation will be forwarded to college administration based on the results of the evaluation of current student engagement practices. The purpose of the recommendation will be to facilitate opportunities for faculty to assist students in discovering ways to become more involved in the classroom and engage assignments with vigor.

Research Questions

To conduct the student-engagement evaluation, five research questions were established. The purpose of the questions was to provide direction for the study to evaluate the student engagement process at the college:

1. What current engagement activities are available for criminal justice students at the college? The rationale for this question was to identify existing practices and to establish a foundation for the identification of a model of student engagement activities.

2. What models are identified in the literature of expected outcomes for best practices of successful student engagement processes and programs? The rationale for this question was to determine potential engagement practices to determine appropriate practices to be included in the recommendation to the criminal justice dean and the executive assistant to president/chief academic officer.

3. What are the perceptions of students and instructors regarding student engagement at the college? The rationale for this question was to obtain feedback from students and faculty regarding their opinions of student-engagement practices currently used by the division.

4. What valid components are necessary to formulate an evaluation tool that will

assess the worth of the engagement practices currently offered to criminal justice students? The rationale for this question was to construct a valid evaluation tool.

5. What would be included in a valid recommendation to revise, implement, and evaluate an improved academic engagement process? The rationale for this question was to provide a viable recommendation regarding student engagement to the executive assistant to the president/chief academic officer and the criminal justice dean.

Study Outcomes

Five outcomes were associated with this applied dissertation study:

1. Determine what engagement activities are currently being used in the criminal justice department.

2. Identify the presence of any gaps between what the department is currently using for engagement activities, and what additional activities are available.

3. Develop a valid evaluation tool.

4. Provide a recommendation of engagement activities for future consideration.

5. Submit the final report to the executive assistant to the president/chief academic officer and the dean of criminal justice.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms necessitate additional explanation and are identified and defined.

Advising hours. As part of their workload, instructors are assigned scheduled advising hours outside of instructional time. During this advising time, an instructor is expected to be available to students for academic and career advising. This time facilitates engagement opportunities between faculty advisors and students.

Andragogy. Andragogy is an instructional theory that focuses on the needs of

adult learners. Mezirow's (1981) definition was, "Andragogy is an organized and sustained effort to assist adults to learn in a way that enhances their capacity to function as self directed learners" (p. 21).

Cocurricular activities. Cocurricular activities were previously known as extracurricular activities. Such activities are created for students by educational institutions to promote a variety of activities encouraging student interaction in intellectual and social environments. These activities are normally linked to course curriculum.

Cohort. This term refers to a group of students who form an affiliation while perusing an educational goal. This group enrolls in a common series of courses to form a community of learners.

Commuter college. A commuter college is a college where the students do not reside on campus. The lack of residential facilities requires students to commute in order to attend classes at the college.

Displaced student. A displaced student is one who enrolls or returns to college following a crisis event in his or her personal life. The event could include loss of a job, divorce, or geographic relocation.

Engagement. This term refers to student involvement in the learning process. Engagement includes preparation for class, out-of-class discussions, and any other social or academic practice or activity contributing to the learning of academic material.

Greater college community. A college represents a small component of a community. The greater community embraces elements of a community external to the college but that influence the college through financial and political means.

Learning community. Gabelnick, MacGregor, Mathews, and Smith (1990)

characterized the creation of a learning community as "purposefully restructuring curriculum to link together courses or course work so that students find greater coherence in what they are learning as well as increased intellectual interaction with faculty" (p. 5). Learning communities may also be established through service-learning projects.

Linked courses. Linked courses involve the pairing of two academic courses that complement one another. The courses may be of different disciplines but are thematically linked (Upcraft, Gardner, & Barefoot, 2005).

Nontraditional student. A nontraditional student begins or returns to college later in life. The nontraditional student may be a lifelong learner, a displaced student, or any individual who is not a recent high school graduate.

Office hours. As part of their workload, instructors are assigned scheduled office hours outside of instructional time. Such hours represent time available for students to schedule an appointment with the instructor to discuss general issues associated with their coursework.

Practice. A practice is an activity customarily performed in a systematic manner and designed to lead to proficiency.

Process. A process is a continuous operation or treatment established through a usual and routine set of practices and is also a group of related individual practices.

Primary instructor. This term refers to a member of the criminal justice faculty. A primary instructor may be employed on a full-time basis or may be an adjunct faculty member so long as he or she is identified as being responsible for instruction as well as course curriculum development.

Service learning. Service learning is an instructional strategy linking community service with classroom instruction. Goals of this pedagogy are to develop critical thinking

skills and a sense of social responsibility (Hubbert, 2002).

Stakeholders. Stakeholders include a broad spectrum of individuals in the public. The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation Programs (1994) defined stakeholders as "individuals or groups who may be affected by program evaluation" (p. 209).

Traditional students. Recent high school graduates between 18 and 22 years of age who are enrolled full-time in a college are considered traditional students. Such students are enrolled without having entered the full-time workforce prior to enrollment.

Urban commuter college. An urban commuter college is a postsecondary institution located in an urban setting. The majority of students reside off campus in the community, minimizing the necessity for the college to maintain residential facilities for students.

Utility. The concept of utility focuses on the usefulness of a tangible or intangible item. The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation Programs (1994) defined utility as "the extent to which an evaluation produces and disseminates reports that inform relevant audiences and have beneficial impact on their work" (p. 210).

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Introduction

This chapter focuses on literature related to the academic engagement of college students. The intent of this chapter was to discuss literature related to student engagement and practices that enhance students' motivation to be more engaged with academic course work.

Student Engagement

The topic of student engagement by a 2-year college is difficult to isolate from that of 4-year colleges. Schreiber and Shinn (2003) explained this reasoning in providing the rationale for conducting their study of epistemological beliefs at a community college. The researchers noted that 44% of students who seek a degree attend community colleges, but only 5% of the research focuses on that group.

The concept of engagement relates to students being actively involved with their studies both in and out of the classroom. Two national studies examined the concept of student engagement. The first is the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). The survey is administered to first-semester and graduating students at 4-year colleges. The CCSSE is an equivalent survey administered to students attending 2-year colleges. Both surveys provided insight into the student engagement concept.

In November 2004, the Community College Leadership Program released the results of the CCSSE. The report, titled *Engagement by Design: 2004 Findings*, critically reviewed the performance of 2-year colleges (as cited in Evelyn, 2004; McClenney, 2004; Pekow, 2004). The report cited findings by the National Center for Education Statistics that a significant percentage of community college students failed to achieve their academic goals from 1995 through 2001. The number of students who reported

failure to achieve academic goals during the period of the study was appreciable. The report noted that only 25% of the students reported achieving their goal of transferring to a 4-year institution. The report also stated that, whereas "53% of the students cited transferring to a four-year college as a primary goal, an additional 21% name it as a secondary goal" (p. 3). Perhaps more important, statistics from the American Council on Education (2001) indicated that only one quarter of the students enrolled in public 2-year institutions actually graduated or received the desired certificate. The report is replete with examples of how the cultivation of student engagement would improve the quality of the 2-year students' academic experience.

Although the CCSSE report illustrates the necessity for colleges to improve student engagement, the question remains, how is engagement defined? Dictionaries contain many varied definitions for the concept of engagement. These definitions include military encounters, agreement to meet at a predesignated place, and premarital commitments. The inclusion of the term *engagement* in *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* in 1977 indicates that student engagement is not a new phenomenon, existing for over 30 years. Although the term *engagement* was defined in 1977, the origin of the term dates back to the 16th century. Analogous terms such as *involve* and *connect* date from the 14th and 15th centuries respectively. All three terms use or allude to the words *interlock, come together, pledge,* and *participate* within their definitions. The concept of engagement is centuries old.

Mosenthal (1999) quoted Dewey, noting that the current concept of engagement--or as Dewey referenced it, reflective inquiry--originated as early as the 1920s. Engagement has also been identified by the term *collaborative learning* (Bruffee, 1999). The concept of engagement was an issue for academic scholars even before the NSSE

ignited scholarly discussion and scholarly research on the topic.

The educational definition of engagement employs the term in a manner that relates commitment to the learning process. Various dictionary meanings help define the broad scope of the term. All of the definitions embrace commitment as part of the core learning process. The term *commitment* is a promise to participate in some undertaking (Brown, 1993) or a pledge to be involved in an activity. The term can also be related to pledging or assuming an obligation. Astin (1985) defined student engagement as student involvement, referring to "the quantity and quality of the physical and psychological energy the student invests in the college experience" (p. 156). Astin (1996) also discussed elements associated with student engagement. One of Astin's goals was to define the concept of student engagement. In proffering his thesis, Astin linked the terms *student involvement* and *engagement* and essentially used them interchangeably.

Scholarly writers reviewed the concept along with the dictionary definitions (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004) and provided a refined focus of the concept of engagement and student learning. Young (2003) wrote that, whereas engagement varies with course majors, engagement is essentially "how involved students are in the material they study and in the learning process itself" (p. A37). This definition reveals that engagement is not the exclusive responsibility of the learner. The learning materials presented, along with the instructor's class presentation, play a role in enabling the instructor to be a de facto participant in the student engagement process.

Skinner, Wellborn, and Connell (1990) defined the term *engagement* as "children's initiation of action, effort, and persistence on schoolwork, as well as their ambient emotional states during learning activities" (p. 24). Although this article focused on primary and secondary students, a correlation to technical and first-year college

students was found. Kuh (2003), in discussing the results of the NSSE, defined student engagement as "the time and energy students devote to educationally sound activities inside and outside the classroom and the policies and practices that institutions use to entice students to take part in activities" (p. 25). Kuh's definition showed that engagement is not exclusively a student responsibility. Institutions, not just faculty, possess the ability, as well as the responsibility, to affect student-engagement levels during policy formulation.

Fredricks et al. (2004) cited the work of Newmann, Wehlage, and Lamborn and the work of Wehlage, Rutter, Smith, Lesko, and Fernandez in discussing the psychological component related to student engagement. Both groups of authors wrote that a psychological investment in efforts directed toward the mastery of knowledge was necessary. Fredricks et al. (2004) considered Newmann's and Wehlage's psychological component in their examination of student engagement. Fredricks et al. noted that engagement was comprised of three learning elements: affective, cognitive, and behavioral. Other writers focused on two of these elements: behavior (being involved) and cognitive (being mentally invested in learning). No author has effectively integrated all three elements.

Skinner et al. (1990) and Fredricks et al. (2004) maintained that the concept of engagement is primarily behavioral, but cognitive and affective components are identifiable. The concept of engagement having qualitative, cognitive, and affective components and quantitative, behavioral, and affective components link the writings of Astin (1996), Fredricks et al. (2005), Kuh (2003), Skinner et al. (1990), and Young (2003). The term possesses a meaning relating to behavior, emotion, and cognition.

For the purpose of this dissertation, this researcher defines student engagement as

the amount of time a student devotes toward acquiring mastery of a skill or knowledge. The efforts dedicated towards learning occur any time within any academic, cocurricular, or social environment.

Student Engagement Factors

Several factors affect student engagement: student background, faculty involvement, institutional support of learners, and academic challenge. Student background acknowledges three influences affecting student engagement: familial and generational, lack of residential facilities, and student socioeconomic conditions (Pike & Kuh, 2005). Students who are the first in their families to attend a postsecondary institution face issues that may affect their level of engagement as well as academic success. Pike and Kuh studied student engagement of first- and second-generation college students and reported, "Unfortunately, a disproportionately low number of first-generation students succeed in college. . . . A 15% gap exists between the 3-year persistence rates of first- and second-generation students (73% and 88% respectively)" (p. 276). Similarly, McClenney (2004) observed that many high school students were simply ill prepared for the rigors of college-level study. The observations by Pike and Kuh and McClenney suggest that many high school students lack the academic engagement skills for preparation for college-level intellectual study.

Further complicating the student retention and engagement issues is the fact that many students attending a 2-year college are the first in their families to attempt a college degree. Pike and Kuh (2005) suggested that students who are the first in a family to attend college might require assistance in becoming engaged in their studies. The lack of experience in this area translates into the family's inability to empathetically support the student, requiring additional assistance from faculty. First-generation students, lacking

additional assistance, may struggle through the collegiate acculturation process. Pike and Kuh explained as follows:

> Helping those who are first in their families to go to college is challenging for many reasons, one of the more important of which is that many first-generation students do not engage in the wide range of academic and social activities that the research shows associated with success in college. (p. 292)

The responsibility for fostering student involvement and engagement within the first term is transferred to members of the faculty.

ASU (n.d.a) identified benefits for both students and faculty who engage in external class discussions. The benefits were recognized in the works of several researchers (Jaasma & Koper, 2001; Kuh & Hu, 2001; Plecha, 2002). The first benefit that students exhibited was an increased confidence in their scholastic abilities. Instructors possessed the opportunity through informal interaction to praise the demonstrated effort of a student. Second, improvement in academic performance was noted. Students who were struggling with a concept gained the opportunity to discuss the idea with the professor. The conversation could provide the instructor with an opportunity to communicate on a level the students would more readily understand. Third, students demonstrated greater effort in academic activities that they perceived as purposeful. Students could gain insight from the professor as to why an assignment or activity was considered important. Fourth, students who engaged in cocurricular discussions with faculty enjoyed increased persistence rates. Educators took the opportunity to reinforce the students' ability to be successful in the course. Fifth, this group of students was more likely to desire and to pursue graduate-level studies. Instructors were able to grasp the opportunity to reinforce that students possess the intellect to successfully study at the graduate level. Sixth, the students integrated into the

college environment, both social and academic, better than students who did not communicate with faculty. Faculty possessed an opportunity to direct students toward activities the students might find rewarding, both college and community based. The researchers indicated that, in order to provide the most meaningful academic direction, the instructor-student relationship has to be more individualized than the classroom allows.

ASU (n.d.b) listed a series of tips for students to help improve interaction between faculty and students. For a variety of reasons, instructors frequently intimidate students. The tips supplied provide suggestions to assist students in overcoming this sense of intimidation, allowing for enhanced student-faculty engagement and substantive interaction (see Appendix D).

Faculty Involvement in Student Engagement

Barr and Tagg (1995) observed that a new model was replacing the traditional instructional standard. In discussing the traditional standard, they noted, "Under it, colleges have created complex structures to provide for the activity of teaching conceived primarily as delivering 50-minute lectures--the mission of a college is to deliver instruction" (p. 13). College administrators recognized that their missions had shifted from delivering instruction to promoting learning. The promotion of learning is the learning model. Even though the subject college has attempted to encourage use of the learning model, use of the traditional instructional standard persists.

Undertaking engagement in learning opportunities is no longer considered the exclusive responsibility of students. Several researchers focused on the role of the faculty in student learning engagement (Handelsman, Briggs, Sullivan, & Towler, 2005; Kuh, Laird, & Umbach, 2004; Reed, 1989; Umbach & Wawrzynski, 2005). Reed maintained,

"There are two elements essential to being a good teacher: enthusiasm for the subject and a genuine interest in the personal, as well as the professional, well being of the students" (p. 555). The two factors identified by Reed, when combined with well-crafted learning activities, produce the potential to create an enthusiasm within students that will inspire students to do their best in their pursuit of knowledge.

Handelsman et al. (2005) conducted two independent studies regarding student engagement. Both studies reported findings consistent with other previously published research results. The Handelsman et al. research also produced the finding that faculty members play a significant role in developing student engagement in the classroom:

> This research supports a multidimensional construct of student engagement. Moreover, some of the dimensions are not necessarily obvious to the observers. Thus, instructors receive only part of the picture if they focus on the obvious signs of engagement, such as raising hands and asking questions. (p. 190)

This statement supports the association of student engagement with the andragogical principle that learning occurs in any context and at any time. The statement also reinforces the observation that proactive faculty members search for signs that students are engaged in their studies and are learning. Handelsman et al. (2005) discussed the results of their research: "Participation/interaction was the factor that related to a variety of internal and external indexes. That finding is consistent with previous research . . . that highlights the importance of faculty interaction and learning" (p. 189).

Turner and Patrick (2004) supported the theory that students require assistance in order to become engaged learner: "Work habits, like other behaviors, arise from the interaction of both characteristics of students and of the learning environment" (p. 1759). Given the real and potential impact of faculty members on the learning environment, their contributions to student engagement ought not to be overlooked or overstated.

Umbach and Wawrzynski (2005) examined the role of faculty as related to student engagement. Their research utilized data from two sources. The first was the 2003 NSSE. The second was a survey of faculty members at institutions participating in the 2003 NSSE. These researchers concluded, "We found that faculty behaviors and attitudes profoundly affect students, which suggests that faculty members may play the single most important role in student learning" (p. 176). This work further demonstrates the profound impact by faculty on student learning.

Astin (1996) identified three potent forms of student engagement. Two of the forms are clearly affected by instructors: student-academic involvement and student-faculty involvement. In each, the instructor is a key participant. In the first instance, the instructor designs and implements an academic program in a manner that encourages and assists a student to focus intently on learning the subject matter. In the second instance, the instructor meets individually with students. In a best-case scenario, the meeting results in building a rapport that inspires students to learn and encourages further future interaction.

Astin (1996) identified a third form of student engagement. This form is not readily identified as was improving faculty and student interaction with peer groups. This third type of engagement is assisting students to identify cocurricular activities that relate to a student's individualized interests. Although the third variety of student engagement appears unrelated to faculty influence, this is not necessarily an accurate observation. The influence of a respected faculty member's support of specific cocurricular programs cannot be precisely measured. Through a student-centered teaching orientation, faculty members positively influence students in a direction that enhances their opportunities to collaboratively engage others in their quest for knowledge.

Astin (1985) noted, "Community colleges are places where the involvement of both faculty members and students appear to be minimal: All students are commuters and most are part-timers" (p. 146). This observation continues to be accurate more than 20 years later. Faculty members are reluctant to change from traditional instructional activities to being active participants in facilitating student learning. Instructors who adopt andragogical teaching methods make that transition by becoming active participants in student engagement practices. Astin (1985) described an engaged faculty member:

> A highly involved faculty member would put an appreciable amount of time and energy into teaching activities, regularly seek out student advisees to monitor their progress, actively participate in departmental and institutional functions, and make a conscious effort to integrate research and teaching activities. (p. 134)

McClenney (2004) suggested that a disconnect exists between the faculty's perception of student interaction and reality:

> So when data suggest that faculty-student interaction is less extensive than faculty members believe it is--which often happens--they begin to realize that their impressions of the quality of education at their college are based on the best student experience rather than the typical student experience. (p. 5)

Weimer (2002) made a similar observation regarding faculty and student perceptions noting, "Faculty consistently say students are more than students report they are" (p. 73). Astin (1985), McClenney, and Weimer all noted that a disconnect exists between faculty and students. This disconnect may be attributed to the inefficiencies associated with the evaluation of student engagement.

Samuelowicz and Bain (2001) noted that a change in teaching orientation allows faculty to focus on improving the typical student experience. Various instructional orientations run from the simple transmissive course lecture to a method involving student inputs. The latter facilitates learning. The facilitated orientation is a practice that

most encourages student engagement. Samuelowicz and Bain stated, “Academics expressing such an orientation were in transition from a transmissive to a facilitative perspective, and that interaction between the student and teacher was the active agent in the change process” (p. 301). Once the orientation process has transitioned, increased student engagement may be expected to follow.

Engagement has been tied to student success and retention. Rhodes and Nevill (2004) discussed retention and student success, blending the concepts of academic and social integration. “Academic integration includes academic performance, self-perceptions, academic progress and belief that lecturing staff are personally committed to teaching and supporting students. Social integration includes self-esteem and the quality of relationships established with teaching staff and peers” (p. 181). Rhodes and Nevill suggested that a linkage between student success and student retention exists and extends to student-faculty engagement. This study supports the concept that facilitated learning inspires students to engage their studies, resulting in a positive collegiate experience both academically and socially.

College policies also affect student engagement. An administration that fails to consider the impact of college policies on education risks compromising the quality of student engagement and learning. Haworth and Conrad (1997) held, “Faculty and administrators [who] invest in teaching and learning activities--such as ‘real world’ lectures and hands on learning-- . . . invite connections between theory and practice” (p. 34).

Colleges are obliged to promulgate policies in support of andragogical activities. Policymakers who fail to take into account student engagement activities during policy formulation also risk alienation of both students and faculty. Walters (2003) pointed out

that, with regard to student retention, instructional methods were as important as academic support systems in assisting students in meeting their goals.

Student Engagement in a Criminal Justice Program

A dearth of information exists specifically relating the concept of student engagement and adult learning to technical colleges or criminal justice programs. Three articles were located relating to andragogy and criminal justice instruction. Birzer (2004) discussed the application of Knowles' seven principles of andragogical practice in collegiate criminal justice studies. Finckenauer (2005) discussed the quality aspect of criminal justice programs. Finckenauer expressed that, historically, law enforcement education lacked credibility. As law enforcement evolved into a profession, a proliferation of collegiate criminal justice programs was spawned. This sudden demand for faculty resulted in less-than-adequately prepared instructors. While these instructors were experienced practitioners, they lacked academic credentials. The result was marginal curriculum and poor assessment processes. This compromised the expected rigor of college-level study.

Sims (2006) described the impact and application of active learning techniques in creating an active learning environment in collegiate criminal justice programs. Sims contended that active learning techniques were quite applicable to criminal justice studies. These techniques engage students, stimulating their critical thinking skills. Sims explained that there are four active learning techniques, and she compared the advantages and disadvantages of those techniques (see Appendix F).

Birzer (2004) advocated applying Knowles' seven andragogical practices to criminal justice education. Birzer listed the seven principles: (a) establish a physical and psychological climate conducive to learning, (b) involve learners in mutual planning of

methods and curricular corrections, (c) involve learners in diagnosing their learning needs, (d) encourage learners to formulate their own learning objectives, (e) encourage learners to identify resources and to devise strategies for using such resources to accomplish their objectives, (f) help learners to carry out their learning plans, and (g) involve learners in evaluating their learning.

Birzer (2004) also identified four advantages of the application of the andragogical approach to criminal justice education: "(1) it draws on students' past experiences, (2) it treats students as adults, (3) it adapts to the diverse needs and expectations of students, and (4) it develops critical thinking, judgment, and creativity in the learner" (p. 398). Each advantage contributes to the effectiveness of criminal justice learning. Birzer identified the fourth advantage as the most important. Within the context of vocational or community college instruction, the fourth advantage is critical. Many students graduate from 2-year institutions at the relatively young age of 19 to 22 years. Such students often lack the life experience that hones judgment, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. For this reason, incorporating andragogical principles to attain the identified advantages in the classroom is important, if not vital. Table 2 illustrates the correlation of Knowles' seven andragogical principles to the principle learning advantages as described by Birzer.

Finckenauer (2005) identified several problems that were associated with criminal justice programs. Deficiencies exist in criminal justice education; the deficiencies cited included lack of course rigor, poor evaluation methods, and curriculum issues. These deficiencies Finckenauer noted are historical. Criminal justice as an academic discipline is relatively new. The call for a better educated law enforcement officer dates back to the 1931 *Report on Police* commissioned by the Wickersham Commission on Law

Observance and Enforcement. The commission was charged with examining prohibition enforcement and the repeal of the 18th Amendment. One finding of the commission was related to police education and training. The commission noted the importance of police being educated.

Table 2

A Comparison of Andragogical Principles to Learning Advantages

Andragogical principle	Principle advantage
Establish a physical and psychological climate conducive to learning.	Facilitates student engagement. Identifies the diverse needs of learners.
Involve learners in mutual planning of methods and curricular corrections.	Facilitates student interaction. Treats students as adults. Begins the critical thinking process. Acknowledges student experiences.
Involve learners in diagnosing their learning needs.	Facilitates student engagement. Treats students as adults. Begins the critical thinking process. Acknowledges student experiences.
Encourage learners to formulate their own learning objectives.	Facilitates student engagement. Treats students as adults. Begins the critical thinking process. Acknowledges student experiences.
Encourage learners to identify resources and to devise strategies for using such resources to accomplish their objectives.	Facilitates student engagement. Treats students as adults. Begins the critical thinking process. Acknowledges student experiences.
Help learners to carry out their learning plans.	Facilitates student engagement. Begins the critical thinking process.
Involve learners in evaluating their learning.	Facilitates student engagement. Treats students as adults. Begins the critical thinking process. Acknowledges student experiences.

In 1967, the topic of police education came to the attention of policymakers. The President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice (1967) called for police officers to earn a baccalaureate degree. At the time of the report, the average educational level of a law enforcement officer was 12.4 years (Schmalleger, 2005).

Little attention was directed toward improving law enforcement education until the 1960s. Totzke (1999) acknowledged the educational efforts of Berkeley Police Chief A. Vollmer and Federal Bureau of Investigation Director J. Edgar Hoover during the 1930s. Although such efforts were notable, they were nascent. Vollmer was among the first police chiefs to acknowledge the importance of a well-educated police force. Deakin (1988) explained that Vollmer recruited entry-level officers from the University of California at Berkeley. Deakin quoted Vollmer, who identified the importance of proper personnel selection quoting the *Maxims of Confucius*: "The successful administration of any government depends entirely upon the selection of proper men" (p. 95). Vollmer was also recognized as initiating one of the first police academy training programs in 1908 (Deakin; Totzke).

Deakin (1988) reported that Vollmer was credited with being instrumental in the development of the first law enforcement college curriculum. Criminal justice as a minor course of study was first offered at the University of California at Berkeley in 1923. The first associate degree program was offered at San Jose College in 1930 and identified the importance of the application of various sciences to criminal investigations.

Similarly, the Federal Bureau of Investigation under Hoover identified a need for improved law enforcement training. The National Academy was developed in 1935 to fill this need (Totzke, 1999). The mission of the National Academy was to train command

officers on the latest law enforcement administration and investigation techniques. However, little consideration was given to the need for improved entry-level training for law enforcement officers.

The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals endorsed the concept of minimum police education. The court upheld a Dallas, Texas, requirement that an entry-level police applicant must possess 45 college semester credits with a C average. In the matter of *Davis v. City of Dallas* (1985), the court held as follows:

> .The position of officer on the Dallas police force combines aspects of both professionalism and significant public risk and responsibility. We regard this distinction as crucial, and affirm the District Court's finding that the appellees' education requirement bears a manifest relationship to the position of police officer. (p. 226)

A proliferation of criminal justice programs occurred between 1967 and 1977. The increase was attributable to three government actions. The first was the 1965 Law Enforcement Act. The second was a report, *The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society* (President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, 1967), that contributed to the 1968 Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act. This act enabled the commission of the Law Enforcement Assistance Act and the Law Enforcement Education Program. The establishment of the Law Enforcement Education Program was the third action that triggered the expansion of criminal justice programs. This program funneled funding to colleges, police agencies, and individual officers, enabling officers to return to college. Officers returning as students resulted in an increase of criminal justice programs, exploding from 209 in 1967 to 1,245 in 1977, an increase of 600% (Deakin, 1988; Totzke, 1999).

The use of andragogical principles minimizes, if not neutralizes, the lack of course rigor, poor evaluation methods, and curriculum issues that Finckenauer (2005)

identified. Student participation, where feasible, will assist instructors in developing a challenging curriculum with valid evaluation activities. The impacts of program growth issues, present since September 11, 2001, are minimized by controlling the learning environment.

The inclusion of andragogical practices also neutralizes another issue Finckenauer (2005) identified. This issue was identified as faculty qualifications. Faculty and instructors who possess appropriate vocational experience and academic credentials and employ andragogical principles will perform at an above-average level.

Sims (2006) wrote that a learning environment is enhanced by using student-engagement activities. Sims expressed that "a student-centered learning environment would fit in criminal justice classrooms given the 'hot topic' issues that provide fodder for robust learning activities" (p. 336). The article identified four active learning andragogies that are useable in the classroom" collaborative learning, problem-based learning, service learning, and the involvement of students in research. Sims acknowledged that each andragogy possessed advantages and disadvantages (see Appendix F).

Andragogy and Student Engagement

Two definitions of andragogy are proffered for this study. The first definition is provided by Knowles (1970), who defined andragogy as the "art and science of helping adults learn" (p. 38). The Knowles definition recognizes andragogy as a legitimate approach to educating adult learners. The definition also suggests that instructors personalize their instructional presentation for each group of students.

The second definition of andragogy is provided by Mezirow (1981), who stated, "Andragogy is an organized and sustained effort to assist adults to learn in a way that

enhances their capacity to function as self directed learners" (p. 21). Mezirow supports Knowles' concept of andragogy as a science. This defines, or redefines, the role of the instructor in terms of a facilitator for learning rather than an omniscient person holding the keys that permit access to information and learning.

Learning Communities in Student Engagement

Learning communities play a role in fostering student engagement in their academic and social lives. The concept of learning communities found basis in the work of Meiklejohn and Dewey from the 1920s and 1930s (Kellogg, 1999; Minkler, 2000; Price, 2005; Smith, 2003; Webber, 2000). Dewey focused on experiential learning. Minkler noted that Dewey agreed with a philosophy of Thomas Jefferson that one goal of education was to promote a sense of democracy in students. Minkler stated that Dewey believed the best way to accomplish this goal was through a "community of learners working collectively to solve problems" (p. 2). Minkler also noted that Dewey agreed with Aristotle that students develop an "important relationship between the use of the learner's reason with that of the learner's actual experience" (p. 15). Minkler pointed out that Aristotle in *Nicomachean Ethics* discussed how "knowledge could neither be said to be all logos (reason) nor could it be said to be all praxis (experience)" (p. 12).

Kellogg (1999) related that Meiklejohn developed the Experimental College at the University of Wisconsin in 1927, and although the college existed for only 6 years, researchers acknowledge that this was the initial establishment of learning communities as we know them today. The concept of the Experimental College was premised upon the integration of a learning theme across all courses instructed in a curriculum. Price (2005) noted that "Meiklejohn focused the college on the principles of integrated learning with a common reference that dissected all aspects of a diverse curriculum taught by many

faculty members" (p. 5). Smith (2003) affirmed that Meiklejohn articulated that teaching students how to think was more important than teaching students what to think. Smith further noted that the educational system Meiklejohn sought to develop fostered civic engagement both in the classroom as well as outside the classroom.

Webber (2000) discussed research conducted in 1969 by Tussman. Tussman, a student of Meiklejohn, was dissatisfied with liberal arts education, believing such an education had an adverse effect on students' ability to understand human nature. Webber quoted Tussman, who advocated learning communities consistent with the Experimental College concept:

> The course forces teaching into small, relatively self-contained units. Horizontally, courses are generally unrelated and competitive. . . . No teacher is in a position to be responsible for . . . the student's total educational situation. The student presents himself to the teacher in fragments, and not even the advising system can put him together again. . . . Horizontal competitiveness and fragmentation of student attention are limiting conditions of which every sensitive teacher is bitterly aware. But there is nothing he can do about it. He can develop a coherent course, but a collection of coherent courses may be simply an incoherent collection. For the student, to pursue one thread is to drop another. He seldom experiences the delight of sustained conversations. He lives the life of a distracted intellectual juggler. (p. 21)

Opportunities for student engagement increase when courses are integrated with other diverse course offerings. Learning communities encourage the integration of thematically linked courses that allow students to observe how courses interact with each other and potentially contribute to deeper understanding and real-world application of the material (Gabelnick, MacGregor, Mathews, & Smith, 1990).

Upcraft et al. (2005) identified that learning communities continue to be represented in the collegiate setting. The use of learning communities is applicable in any collegiate learning environment. Associate degree programs use learning communities approximately 20% of the time, whereas the percentage of use escalates to 75% by

research-intensive institutions.

Several researchers examined the importance of learning communities. Cross (1998) discussed learning communities and defined the term as "groups of people engaged in intellectual interaction for the purpose of learning" (p. 4). Smith and Hunter (1988) defined a learning community as curriculum structured in a manner in which students are actively engaged in a sustained academic relationship with peers and faculty for a longer duration than a traditional course of study would allow. A common definition cited in the literature is by Gabelnick et al. (1990), who defined a learning community as "purposefully restructuring curriculum to link together courses or course work so that students find greater coherence in what they are learning as well as increased intellectual interaction with faculty" (p. 5).

Upcraft et al. (2005) used the 2001 MacGregor, Smith, Matthews, and Gabelnick definition of a learning community:

> A variety of approaches that link or cluster classes during a given term, often around an interdisciplinary theme, that enroll a common cohort of students. This represents an intentional restructuring of students' time, credit, and learning experiences to build community among students, among students and their teachers, and among disciplines. (p. 372)

The thread of commonality running through these notable definitions is that each definition groups students together in a structured course curriculum. The structured curriculum facilitates learning with increased interaction between students, their peers, and faculty members.

The objective of learning communities is to mesh students into communities where their academic and social lives will facilitate learning. Zhao and Kuh (2004) reported the following:

Findings from this study tend to corroborate previous research on the value added

> effects of participating in learning communities. Learning communities are associated with enhanced academic performance, integration of academic and social experiences, gains in multiple areas of skill, competence and knowledge, and overall satisfaction with the college experience. (p. 131)

The positive effects of learning communities reported by Zhao and Kuh (2004) are reinforced in the literature. Bowden, Hart, King, Trigwell, and Swamm (2003) made observations similar to those of Zhao and Kuh, as did Smith and Bath (2006). Bowden et al. commented that students were better prepared when presented with opportunities to learn in a situational environment. Upcraft et al. (2005) wrote that students learn "most effectively in the context of a compelling problem" (p. 374). Upcraft et al. reinforced other authors' observations (Bowden et al.; Smith & Bath; Zhao & Kuh; Zhu & Baylen, 2005). Students learning in a situational environment are afforded the ability to develop sensitivity to a myriad of situations. Smith and Bath (2006) cited Bowen, observing that college education "increases the capacity of people to tolerate, to understand, and to communicate with others. Indeed education is the most significant predictor of tolerance. . . . College reduces authoritarianism, dogmatism, ethnocentrism, and prejudice in the intellectual sphere" (p. 265). The latter traits are hardly conducive to a civic-minded citizen, let alone a successful law enforcement officer.

Learning occurs neither through osmosis nor in a vacuum, and learning communities assist students in navigating complex issues. Learning communities empower students, allowing them to discover new ways to approach difficult and complex situations (Smith, 2003). Zhao and Kuh (2004) identified that learning communities also assist students in making connections:

> Learning communities are intentionally structured to help students make two types of connections consistent with this theoretical orientation. The first is encouraging students to connect ideas from different disciplines, which is aided

> by being co-enrolled in two or more courses. . . . The second connection is the linking of students through ongoing social interaction afforded by being with the same students for an extended period of time. (p. 117)

The connections noted by Zhao and Kuh are important contributions toward the development of collaboration between experiential and theoretical learning.

Observations by Bowden et al. (2003) reinforce the importance of situational learning for law enforcement students. Traits that are increased are essential for any law enforcement officer to be successful. Those traits identified as being reduced are corrosive to a law enforcement career and interpersonal qualities society demands a professional law enforcement officer not demonstrate. The discussed traits are difficult to impact in a traditional transmissive learning environment. A transformed student-centered learning, community-oriented method would influence each behavior (Birzer, 2004; Bowden et al.; Finckenauer, 2005; Smith & Bath, 2006).

Various implementation models describe or characterize learning communities. The literature identified four prominent models (Chaves, 2003; Kellogg, 1999; Price, 2005; Upcraft et al. 2005). The four models are (a) linked or clustered courses, (b) cohorts in large classes, (c) team-taught programs, and (d) residence-based programs. Each model exhibits a specific orientation; however, they share the common goal of improved student learning.

The first model is linking or clustering courses. Linked courses are simply the pairing of two courses that share common components and mutually reinforce one another. Clustering involves three or more classes centered on a common theme (Upcraft et al., 2005). Linked or clustered course model students are automatically enrolled in all course sessions, thereby building a cohort of students that becomes a learning community.

The second model is a cohort in a large class. Both Upcraft et al. (2005) and Kellogg (1999) referenced this model as freshman interest groups. This style of learning community features a "master learner" who serves as a course guide. Upcraft et al. identified a master learner as an instructor who takes the course and is responsible for assisting ". . . students [to] synthesize what they are learning" through a seminar session (p. 379).

Dabney, Green, and Topalli (2006), in discussing freshman interest groups, wrote that students were more involved in student activities when the activities were associated with a learning community. Correspondingly, Hu and Kuh (2003) reported that students who are more engaged "in educationally purposeful activities" perform at a higher academic level than students who are uninvolved (p. 197).

The third model is team teaching. Upcraft et al. (2005) noted that learning communities that are team-taught "are the most extensive in terms of curricular integration and faculty role" (p. 379). The comprehensiveness of this method is attributable to faculty collaboration in designing the curricula (Price, 2005). This learning community model requires that instructors focus on a cluster of courses with an interdisciplinary theme rather than a typical unilateral course focus.

The fourth model is residence based. The rationale is for students to live in residential facilities in order to integrate experience with their academic studies. Schroeder (1994) wrote, "Learning communities are fostered by a commonality and consistency of purpose, shared values, and transcendent themes" (p. 380). The residence model reinforces values as well as the academic theme due to informal student interactions outside of formal academic meetings.

Smith and Bath (2006) provided the following list of characteristics of a learning

community:

> A review of the literature shows that a learning community can be broadly characterized as a collective of learners in a learning context that emphasizes social interaction and identity over individual action (Wenger 1989) collaboration among students, active engagement in problem solving, the generation of solutions and research questions related to solutions related to the material being learned, . . . interactions between faculty and students as well as among students, . . . peer teaching and peer assessment, . . . and continuity of the learning cohort over time. (p. 267)

Two other author dyads (Lenning & Ebbers, 1999; Oates & Leavitt, 2003) identified characteristics of learning communities. The authors respectively identified four and eight characteristics of learning community activities. The four activities identified by Oates and Leavitt were interdisciplinary, collaborative, thematic based, and team-taught activities. These activities intertwined with the activities identified by Lenning and Ebbers on multiple levels. The first activity noted by Lenning and Ebbers was organizing students and faculty into smaller groups. This activity corresponds to three of the four activities identified by Oates and Leavitt: interdisciplinary, collaborative, and thematic-based activities. Encouraging integration of the curriculum corresponds to collaborative, interdisciplinary, and team-taught activities. Helping students establish academic and social support networks is collaborative in nature. The provision of a setting for students to be socialized to the expectations of the college is both thematic based and collaborative.

Finding more meaningful ways to bring faculty together correlates with team-taught activities. Focusing faculty and students on learning outcomes incorporates both collaborative and thematic-based learning activities. The provision of a setting that permits community-based delivery of academic support programs is an interdisciplinary approach to learning. Examining the first-year learning experience through a critical lens

is both collaborative and thematic based.

Minkler (2000) observed that Dewey, Meiklejohn, and Aristotle all embraced the concept of learning as an experiential process. Learning communities are but one method to experience and address complex issues in an academic, or learning, environment. Evaluation of complex issues frequently requires a multidisciplinary approach by a group and is best embraced by a group of learners working within a structured and integrated curriculum.

Engagement Practices

Researchers who examined engagement discussed the concept of student learning and effective instructional practices being linked together (Bain, 2004; Kuh et al., 2004; Handelsman et al., 2005). Bain researched the practices of the best college instructors. Bain maintained that the instructors were focused on the art and science of teaching. One of the conclusions of Bain's work was that "scholarship centered around four fundamental inquiries" (p. 49). Student engagement is encouraged and instruction improved by examining the manner in which course presentations are prepared. Bain identified four questions that scholars used to guide lesson development that focused on student-centered delivery:

> (1) What should my students be able to do intellectually, physically, or emotionally as a result of their learning? (2) How can I best help and encourage them to develop those abilities and the habits of the heart and mind to use them? (3) How can my students and I best understand the nature, quality and progress of their learning? and (4) How can I value my efforts to foster that learning? (p. 49)

Each question focused on how the material or instructional approach would best aid the student in comprehending the course material. The developmental practices position student learners ahead of the professorial ego, further encouraging student engagement.

One form of experiential learning for criminal justice students is the mock trial.

The mock trial requires students to be involved with the exercise and is a simulation of a real-world process (Kravetz, 2001). In simulating the trial, students are able to internalize learning, as they are directly involved in the process. Kravetz advocated the mock trial as an effective method of engaging students in their learning. Keeping the trial consistent with the academic abilities of the students is important. An uncomplicated and straightforward trial provides the most benefit to the students.

Service learning is another student-engagement activity. The concept dates back to 1862. As one component of the Land Grant Act that established universities nationwide, service to the community was included as a primary collegiate mission (Penn, 2003). Boyer (1994) acknowledged that, in 1896, future President Woodrow Wilson stated, "It is not learning, but the spirit of service that will give a college a place in the annals of the nation" (p. 8). The statement is prophetic in that the concept of service learning matured over the next century into a respected pedagogical model. Wilson would, in 1902, become president of Princeton University before being inaugurated as the 28th President of the United States in 1913.

The use of service learning increased during the 1980s. The increase was attributable to reports released by the Carnegie Foundation. The foundation reported that students were receiving inadequate citizenship training. Responsibility for the failure fell upon the educational system (Hirschinger-Bank & Markowitz, 2006).

Service learning is the integration of out-of-class activities designed to complement course outcome achievement (Oates & Leavitt, 2003). Service learning is an extension of or is complimentary to learning communities. Hubbert (2002) endorsed service learning as an effective method to connect students with a prospective faculty member. This linkage helps to integrate a student's "interpersonal development with their

academic and cognitive development" (p. 5). Another benefit of service learning is that students may critically review their role in the project assignment. Through this critical review, students reflect upon how the project activities influenced their interpersonal values (Hirschinger-Bank & Markowitz, 2006).

Service-learning courses assist colleges in identifying community and vocational needs. This identification is often accomplished vicariously through the activities of service learning students. The identification allows real community and vocational needs to be met rather than having academia presume that students know those needs (Penn, 2003).

Service learning provides a beneficial component to a criminal justice curriculum. This pedagogical model provides students with opportunities to observe the criminal justice system in operation. With this insight, an opportunity exists for students to observe how various policy makers react to the issues and the impact of policy decisions on institutions and the public (Hartmus, Cauthen, & Levine, 2006).

Penn (2003) discussed various benefits that are associated with service learning. First is the ability of students to "apply abstract principles to 'real-world' situations" (p. 376). Bringle and Hatcher (1996) wrote that service learning infused a new vitality into the classroom. Students developed interest in the course, and their performance, as well as their ability to solve problems, improved. Service learning was also found to contribute to higher midterm and final exam grades (Markus, Howard, & King, 1993). Frederickson (2000) described how students self-reported improved understanding of subject matter from attending courses taught under the model of service learning.

Criminal justice curricula traditionally utilized internship programs to provide students with a dose of real-world experience. Penn (2003) questioned the value of

internship programs and noted that students traditionally take the internship course during the final semester of classes. At that point in their education, students are focusing on life after college, which effectively overshadows the potential benefits of the course. Instead, students focus on the task of finding employment in a full-time position.

Service learning is a method that adds an experiential component to students' academic experience. This experiential component allows students to apply the cognitive component of their studies to real-world experience. Hubbert (2002) observed that this experiential component embraces the concept of developmental theorist Piaget, whom Hubbert said "argued that intelligence is shaped by experience" (p. 6).

The term *service learning* has a plethora of definitions. As Hubbert (2002) remarked, common to all the definitions are elements of "learning and reflection that distinguish service learning from volunteerism or charity work" (p. 5). Hirschinger-Bank and Markowitz (2006) defined service learning within a criminal justice context. The definition was that service learning is an instructional model integrating scholastic learning with learning through community service.

Several examples of effective learning programs initiated within criminal justice programs. Hirschinger-Bank and Markowitz (2006) evaluated one such program associated with juvenile justice. The program identified five outcomes: (a) achievement of diversity, (b) interpersonal development, (c) intellectual development, (d) personal development, and (e) citizenship behavior. The program was successful; students were able to grasp larger issues considered systemic to the juvenile justice system.

A program at John Jay College is another example showing that service learning is beneficial to criminal justice students. The college offers seminars on judicial process courses in two different disciplines, the department of public management and the

government department (Hartmus et al., 2006). The component of this class that involves service learning involves students serving as court monitors. The arrangement between the college and the Fund for Modern Courts included a requirement that the monitors must be enrolled in an arduous academic course. This structure allowed students to discuss their experiences. The discussion component provided the opportunity for reflection, which is a characteristic of a course developed under the model of service learning (Penn, 2003). The intent of the course was accomplishment of two goals. The first goal was to orient students to the most complicated court system in the United States. The second goal was to facilitate the success of the Modern Courts monitoring program goals of educating the public about the court system and providing constructive feedback focused on making the courts more efficient (Hartmus et al.).

Service learning is related to learning communities and is another practice that may increase student engagement. Service learning is also amenable to being linked with other engagement activities, such as journal writing. Journal writing would be beneficial when attached to service learning as the two practices are thematically linked. The learner is allowed to document experiences and reflect on the value of such experiences (de Acosta, 1995).

De Acosta (1995) studied the impact of journal writing as a method of engaging students in experiential learning activities and reported, “Journals provide students with a space for active, regular, systematic thinking about what they are learning. In service learning courses, where keeping journals is a fairly common practice, journal writing contributes to integrating experiential learning with classroom learning” (p. 141). In addition to engaging in the experience of service learning, the journal exercises also allow the students “to step back from the learning experience to record it, speculate about

it, reflect about it, connect it to theories and concepts learned in the course, and make sense of it in preparation for speaking to others in class and writing papers" (p. 142).

Standards of Evaluation

Standards of evaluation are rooted in the 1975 formation of the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation. The committee was established with the goal to improve the quality of educational evaluation research. The 1981 publication *Standards for Evaluations of Educational Programs, Projects, and Materials* was the committee's compilation of its study. The publication was revised in 1981 and 1994 and retitled as *Program Evaluation Standards* (Davidson, 2005; Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2004; Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003).

Stakeholders are individuals affected by the results of an evaluative study. The potential effect on stakeholders mandates that a study be of a quality that contributes to the institution's sensitivity to the changing needs of those stakeholders (McGillin, 2003).

Charles and Mertler (2002) wrote, "Evaluation research is done to determine the relative merits of various products and approaches used in education" (p. 311). Airasian and Gay (2003) explained, "Evaluation research is concerned with making decisions about the quality, effectiveness, merit, or value of educational programs, products, or practice" (p. 7). In a discussion of criteria for a good evaluation study, Gall et al. (2003) described the purpose of an evaluation:

> An evaluation has utility if it is informative, timely, and useful to the affected persons. Feasibility means, first, that the evaluation design is appropriate to the setting in which the study is to be conducted and second, that the design is cost-effective. Finally, accuracy refers to the extent to which an evaluation study has produced valid, reliable, and comprehensive information for making judgments of a program's worth. (p. 552)

The assurance that a study is feasible, proper and accurate will provide guidance

in developing appropriate evaluation practices. Gall et al. (2003) discussed how the criteria of utility, feasibility, propriety, and accuracy are linked to the standards of evaluation. Multiple criteria are associated with each of the four standards. The complete linkage between the criteria and the standards of evaluation was summarized by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation Programs (1994). The detailed linkage between the standards and the criteria are included Appendix G.

The use of multiple sources of data collection will improve the accuracy of the study (Fitzpatrick et al., 2004; Thomas, 2000). Multiple sources may include the use of literature reviews, interviews, and surveys.

Varcoe (2003) wrote that components of an evaluation process are agreement on criteria, determination of gaps between the gathered data and the identified outcomes of the studied process, and the utilization of gap analysis to identify weaknesses in the process or provide feedback to identify potential changes. According to Varcoe, an effective evaluation study utilizes the action research methodology. Varcoe identified steps involved in the methodology:

1. Define the problem and describe the purpose.
2. Establish the research questions.
3. Complete information gathering.
4. Establish criteria.
5. Develop assessment design.
6. Implement assessment processes.
7. Analyze and report data.
8. Conduct gap analysis to determine findings.
9. Use the findings as the basis for recommendations and decisions. (p. 8)

The literature review identified two evaluation methodologies (Gall et al., 2003; McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). The methodologies were the context, input, process, and product (CIPP) model and the objectives model. The CIPP methodology developed

by Stufflebeam (as cited in Gall et al., 2003) evaluates existing programs or programs under development. The CIPP method consists of four procedures. The first stage, context, identifies problems in the program being evaluated. The second stage, input, judges what resources and strategies are required to fulfill program goals and objectives. The third stage, process, is the collection of data. A requirement of this stage is that the program is in operation or the design is completed. The fourth stage, product, evaluates the product or program. This evaluation examines whether or not program goals were achieved. The CIPP model is complex and difficult to use in its entirety in a thesis or dissertation.

The second methodology identified was the objectives model. The focus of this methodology is to identify specific goals and objectives and evaluate whether or not they were achieved. The objectives method measures outcomes of a program (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). The objectives model is similar to that of Varcoe (2003) in that the researcher identifies discrepancies, or gaps, in a program (Gall et al., 2003; McMillan & Schumacher). Gall et al. also wrote that the objectives model is used to evaluate the costs and benefits of a program. A cost-benefit analysis is dependent upon whether the costs and benefits are calculable in monetary terms.

Survey Instruments

Program evaluations frequently include surveys as a source of information collection. The survey instrument is an important tool that allows researchers to combine and summarize data in evaluation studies (Fitzpatrick et al., 2004; Stufflebeam, 2001). A review of the literature associated with surveys indicated that surveys examine limited issues through the dissemination of questions to a large group of participants (Gall et al., 2003; Fitzpatrick et al.). Many surveys use a rating scale or Likert-like items (Passmore,

Dobbie, Parchman, & Tysinger, 2002). Likert-like questions evaluate participant replies in an ordered continuum of responses from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*. Researchers found that the number of responses used in a Likert survey varies from 3 to 10, but 5 is considered acceptable (Amoo & Friedman, 2001; Passmore et al.). The resulting participant perceptions allow for the interpretation of a ranking order or suggestion of a pattern. A survey, however, may not be an accurate reflection of the true importance of the interpreted data.

Researchers have suggested that surveys possess limitations as research tools. The limitations appear to be rooted in three assumptions. First, surveys rely on the honesty of the respondents. Second, the accuracy of the data collected is dependent on how well the survey participants understand the survey questions. Participant education and cultural background can influence the validity of the responses. Third, the number of surveys returned may limit the value of a survey (Passmore et al., 2002; Pike & Kuh, 2005).

The survey limitations relate to the reliability of participant responses. Survey reliability is dependent upon the basic assumption that the participants will candidly complete the survey. Pike and Kuh (2005) addressed the issue of inaccurate self-reports:

> Research has shown that self-reports are likely to be valid under five conditions: (1) the information requested is known to the respondent; (2) the questions are phrased clearly and unambiguously; (3) the questions refer to recent activities; (4) the respondents think the questions merit a serious and thoughtful response; (5) answering the questions does not threaten, embarrass, or violate the privacy of the respondent or encourage the respondent to respond in socially desirable ways. (p. 282)

Charles and Mertler (2002) also commented on survey reliability and first assumed that reliability may be related to survey construction. The second reliability assumption was based upon the premise that the survey would prompt a process that would "elicit and probe responses from participants and informants" (p. 162).

A third limitation of a survey focused on the number of returned surveys. Passmore et al. (2002) noted that, to achieve an acceptable rate of return, a follow-up protocol for nonresponding subjects is necessary. The researchers considered a survey response rate of around 60% to be adequate.

Reliability may be increased if the survey is constructed through a methodical process. Passmore et al. (2002) put forward a process that would contribute to a reliable survey:

1. Stating the problem and planning the project.
2. Stating the research question.
3. Reviewing the literature.
4. Developing survey items.
5. Constructing the survey.
6. Piloting the survey.
7. Administering the survey.

Evaluation Reports

Evaluation studies identify gaps between observed results and original criteria in an existing process. The gap analysis results facilitate the creation of recommendations for practices development and process improvement within a program. To provide accurate information, the evaluation report is an essential component in communicating the results of an evaluation study. Wurzbach (2002) identified that a properly authored evaluation report provides the following resources:

1. A critical analysis of the evaluation results.
2. A substantive product for the institution.
3. Evidence of the effectiveness the carefully developed process.

4. A record of activities for the guidance of future process planning.

5. Assistance to others in the development of similar processes.

6. A dependable foundation for future program evaluations.

There are five additional key concepts of an evaluation report: (a) incorporation of appropriate visual representations of results, (b) a clear and concise manner of writing, (c) use of headings and subheadings to generate a valuable table of contents, (d) preparation of an accurate and succinct executive summary, and (e) solicitation of feedback on report drafts before submission of the final report (McDavid & Hawthorn, 2006; Wurzbach, 2002).

Presentation of final evaluation reports may vary in format due to the variety of content and the differing interests of stakeholders. Individual institutional preferences range from written reports to oral presentations. An evaluation report is ultimately considered effective so long as the report provides appropriate feedback and contributes value to the existing service, product, or process (Fitzpatrick et al., 2004). The report design and content is determined by both the audience and the intended use of the evaluation. The value of an evaluation report lies in the ability of the writer to effectively communicate the contents, regardless of the of delivery mode. Although the evaluation study sponsor will direct the report format, an evaluation report outline will include (a) the purpose of the process or program, (b) identification of what was evaluated, (c) the purpose for conducting the evaluation, (d) the evaluation methodology, (e) impediments the researcher encountered conducting the evaluation, and (f) a discussion of the results (Wurzbach, 2002).

Conclusion

The review of the literature indicated that student engagement impacts the ability

of students to learn. Researchers discussed the historical perspective of student engagement. A variety of engagement activities has been identified through this review. Learning engagement activities are linked to criminal justice programs by several authors. These various researchers suggested that the involvement of student in experiential learning or service learning adds a beneficial component to the criminal justice curriculum.

Student engagement is not a singular issue. It is influenced by instructors, instructional practice, and learning communities. To maximize student engagement all factors, students, faculty, instructional practice, institutional norms and learning communities are obliged to coordinate efforts to effectuate best practices.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Procedures

Methodology

This study utilized the evaluation research methodology in an action research study to evaluate student engagement at a Midwestern technical college's criminal justice program. Charles and Mertler (2002) asserted, "Evaluation research is done to determine the relative merits of various products and approaches used in education" (p. 311). This study attempted to identify current engagement practices and any gap between current practices and the expected outcomes of best scenarios and to identify concepts that would support a recommended engagement process. Airasian and Gay (2003) supplied reinforcement for using the evaluative method as they described the purpose of evaluation research: "Evaluation research is concerned with making decisions about the quality, effectiveness, merit, or value of educational programs, products, or practice" (p. 7).

The study utilized an action evaluation methodology. This method was identified after reviewing the CIPP evaluation method (Gall et al., 2003) and the objectives-oriented evaluation approaches (Fitzpatrick et al., 2004). The CIPP model was eliminated because it focused on an evaluation that would contribute to management decision making regarding existing programs to provide an insight into future program improvements.

The Tyler objectives-oriented approach is a research method designed to evaluate whether program objectives are being met (Fitzpatrick et al., 2004). The focus of this study was what engagement practices were used to enable students to meet course and program objectives. The process focus of this project made the objectives-oriented method incompatible with the study. One assumption of this study was that course and program objectives were currently being satisfied. For the aforementioned reasons, the

Tyler objectives-oriented approach was eliminated from consideration.

The data-collection process used a survey tool administered to participants for self-reporting of information. Charles and Mertler (2002) said that one assumption associated with self-reporting is that the participants will honestly report. The assumption is based upon the premise that the survey will prompt a process that will "elicit and probe responses from participants and informants" (p. 162).

Pike and Kuh (2005) addressed the issue of inaccurate self-reporting and wrote that a well-written survey will negate inaccurate responses. They identified five conditions that will enhance survey accuracy:

1. Ask questions to which participants know, or are reasonably expected to know, the answer.

2. Phrase the questions in a manner that is clear and explicit.

3. Refer to recent occurrences.

4. Elicit an insightful response from the participants.

5. Respect the participants in order to elicit honest answers.

Procedures

Twelve procedures were proposed to address the five research questions in this applied dissertation study. The study included an extensive literature review that incorporated current and seminal publications and the development of an evaluation instrument that satisfied the college's institutional review process. The literature review and development of the evaluation instrument addressed Research Question 1, What current engagement activities are available for criminal justice students at the college?

Second, the study examined engagement activities currently in use to determine the expected outcomes of engagement activities for criminal justice students. This

examination addressed what current course engagement activities were available to criminal justice students (see Appendix H). An introductory letter explaining the survey and inviting students to participate accompanied the survey (see Appendix I).

Third, a formative committee was established. The committee consisted of three members. The members were stakeholders internal to the college and associated with the criminal justice department. The stakeholders possessed an interest in the success of students and the program. The purpose of this committee was to provide input during the establishment of criteria, the development of an interview tool, the development of an evaluation instrument, the evaluation criteria, and the review of findings for the report.

Based on their experience, the members of the formative committee were expected to provide suggestions related to the study. Committee members included an adjunct instructor, the criminal justice academic counselor, and a full-time criminal justice instructor. Formal documentation of the committee members and their qualifications is included as see Appendix J. Four issues were shared with the formative committee: (a) the expected outcomes of the current student engagement practices that were designated on the overview document, (b) the expected outcomes for best practices of related topics identified through the literature review, (c) the survey tool used to collect data from students regarding engagement practices, and (d) the survey tool used to collect data from criminal justice instructors regarding engagement practices.

Formal invitations to serve on the formative committee were sent through letters of invitation to all committee members. Accompanying the invitation was a participation agreement form. All committee participants signed the participation agreement. The formative committee members met in face-to-face sessions or via electronic or telephonic modalities. An iterative process was utilized when working with the formative

committee. The iterative process was a process used by the committee members to review and examine criteria from the overview document, related topics and models from the literature review, and survey tools to collect data. The formative committee members were provided a feedback form on which to record comments, and the researcher requested feedback within 5 days. The researcher addressed responses from the formative committee members until consensus was attained that the most complete list of criteria of current practices and best practices were developed. The study outcomes, survey instrument, and evaluation criteria were deemed appropriate after no more comments were received. The formative committee addressed Research Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5:

1. What current engagement activities are available for criminal justice students at the college?

2. What models are identified in the literature of expected outcomes for best practices of successful student engagement processes and programs?

3. What are the perceptions of students and instructors regarding student engagement at the college?

4. What valid components are necessary to formulate an evaluation tool that will assess the worth of the engagement process currently offered to criminal justice students?

5. What would be included in a valid plan to revise, implement and evaluate an improved academic engagement process?

Fourth, a summative committee was formed. The committee consisted of three members. The members of this committee were external to the college. Members were experienced in the technical college system and possessed expertise in the education field. Members of the summative committee included (a) a dean of a technical college criminal justice program, (b) a retired vice president of instruction of a technical college

who serves in the same capacity at a private 4-year college, and (c) a retired social science instructor and criminal justice manager (see Appendix J). Formal invitations to serve on the summative committee were sent through letters of invitation to all committee members. Accompanying the invitation was a participation agreement form. All committee participants signed the participation agreement form. The summative committee met in face-to-face sessions or via electronic or telephonic modalities. An iterative process was utilized when working with the summative committee. The iterative process was a process that the committee members used to review and examine criteria from the overview document and continued to address comments. The researcher presented all current practices and expected outcomes (criteria) to the members of the summative committee. The summative committee members were provided a feedback form on which to record comments, and the researcher requested feedback be returned within 5 days. The researcher addressed responses from summative committee members until consensus was attained that the most complete list of criteria of current practices and best practices were developed. Current practices and best practices criteria were deemed valid after no more comments were received.

The summative committee addressed Research Question 3, What are the perceptions of students and instructors regarding student engagement at the college? and Research Question 5, What would be included in a valid plan to revise, implement, and evaluate an improved academic engagement process?

Valid and reliable survey tools were necessary to obtain data from students who were currently taking criminal justice courses at the college. The literature review identified two previously administered survey tools. The first was the CCSSE. This survey focused specifically on student engagement data associated with 2-year colleges.

The college participated in this survey in 2004. Permission was obtained to use the results of the 2004 survey for this study.

The second survey instrument was the NSSE. The focus of the survey was first semester freshmen and graduating seniors at 4-year colleges. Both the CCSSE and NSSE surveys possessed similarities. The researcher consulted both the CCSSE and NSSE as models in developing two surveys. Both surveys were considered models, as both possessed similarities. The first was a survey intended to identify the engagement practices in which students participated (see Appendix H). The second survey identified faculty knowledge and understanding of existing student engagement practices (see Appendix K).

The survey tools were built upon on the research questions, outcomes pertinent to student engagement practices used by the criminal justice department at the college, and synthesis of the literature review. The director of research at the college reviewed the survey. Construct validity and reliability of the survey tools were established using two processes. The survey tools were submitted to the director of research at the college as part of the college institutional review procedure. These tools were approved for use in this study. The formative committee also reviewed the survey tools for reliability and readability. The surveys were also submitted to the summative committee for validation. Survey validity was determined by showing that survey questions addressed specific research questions (Gall et al., 2003).

The survey tools and the cover letter were reviewed for reliability by checking for ambiguous questions or poor readability. An additional review process used the Flesch reading ease and the Flesch-Kincaid grade-level scales included in the spelling and grammar check integrated into Microsoft Word.

The student survey was administered during a class period to students who agreed to participate. Participants received a printed copy of the survey participation invitation (see Appendix I). To ensure confidentiality, the names of participants were not requested. The completed surveys were filed and then were destroyed upon completion of the research.

A second survey titled *Faculty Survey* targeted criminal justice faculty knowledge and understanding of student engagement (see Appendix K). Distribution of the survey was made to all full-time faculty members and selected adjunct instructors who were active primary course instructors. Five full-time instructors and ten primary adjunct instructors were asked to participate in the survey. An introductory cover letter explained the purpose of the survey (see Appendix I). The survey and the letter were reviewed for reliability by checking for ambiguous questions or poor readability. The review process included a review by the formative committee. The surveys also were analyzed using the Flesch reading ease and the Flesch-Kincaid grade-level scales included in spelling and grammar check integrated with Microsoft Word. The researcher contacted all criminal justice faculty via e-mail to request participation.

Survey participants received an electronic copy of the survey participation invitation (see Appendix I). Once participants agreed to complete the survey, the survey was personally delivered to full-time faculty and sent electronically to adjunct faculty participants. Names of participants were not used in order to ensure confidentiality. The completed surveys were filed and then destroyed upon completion of the research.

The survey instruments contained questions and statements based on criteria developed by the researcher. Additional input received from the formative committee and summative committee through the iterative review processes were considered. Survey

tools were refined based on formative and summative committee comments as appropriate. The researcher addressed formative and summative committee comments until all comments were addressed and the survey tools were determined to be valid. However, based on the literature review, a possibility existed that the student and faculty survey tools would closely resemble the national survey tools. This validation process utilizing the formative and summative committees addressed Research Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5:

1. What current engagement activities are available for criminal justice students at the college?

2. What models are identified in the literature of expected outcomes for best practices of successful student engagement processes and programs?

3. What are the perceptions of students and instructors regarding student engagement at the college?

4. What valid components are necessary to formulate an evaluation tool that will assess the worth of the engagement process currently offered to criminal justice students?

5. What would be included in a valid plan to revise, implement, and evaluate an improved academic engagement process?

Fifth, the entire composite of expected outcomes for recommendations for improving student engagement, including criteria from the related issues found in the literature review, models of student engagement practices discovered in the literature review, and results of the preliminary survey tools, were presented to the formative and summative committees. The formative committee worked with the researcher to deem the criteria of best practices most appropriate for the study. The summative committee validated the entire composite of expected outcomes for best practices. The iterative

process was employed by the formative and summative committee members until all comments were addressed. Committee members reviewed and examined the criteria and presented comments to the researcher, and comments continued to be addressed until no additional comments were made. At that time, criteria were deemed valid. The researcher requested feedback forms to be completed and returned within 5 days.

Sixth, the researcher designed the evaluation instrument. This evaluation instrument was composed of the following three sections: (a) expected outcomes of current of student engagement practices used by the criminal justice department, (b) expected outcomes of best possible practices for student engagement practices, and (c) a gap analysis section to indicate possible gaps between the current practices and best possible practices for the student engagement process. Recommendations were offered for resolving each of the gaps that were found in the evaluation. The sixth procedure addressed Research Question 4, What valid components are necessary to formulate an evaluation tool that will assess the worth of the engagement process currently offered to criminal justice students? and Research Question 5, What would be included in a valid plan to revise, implement and evaluate an improved academic engagement process?

Seventh, the evaluation tool was presented to the formative committee for review and examination. The formative committee members reviewed and examined the evaluation tool and presented comments to the researcher. The researcher requested feedback forms to be completed and returned within 5 days. Comments continued until all were addressed. The seventh procedure addressed Research Question 3, What are the perceptions of students and instructors regarding student engagement at the college?

Eighth, the evaluation tool was presented to the summative committee for validation. The members reviewed and examined the evaluation tool and presented

comments to the researcher. The researcher requested feedback forms to be completed and returned within 5 days. Comments continued until all comments were addressed. The evaluation tool was deemed valid when the summative committee no longer provided comments.

Ninth, an expert evaluation panel was formed. This panel consisted of two experts in the field of evaluation who were external to the college. The members of the evaluation panel were identified in the final report. The members of this expert evaluation panel conducted the evaluation by comparing each expected outcome (criterion) of recommendation to each expected outcome (criterion) of current practices of student engagement practices employed by the criminal justice department. The researcher was available during the evaluation process to answer any questions from the expert evaluation panel regarding any of the criteria on the evaluation tool, and the expert evaluation panel compiled an evaluation report that listed any gaps between current practices and best practices along with a recommendation for each gap that was found.

Tenth, the evaluation report was submitted to the formative committee and the summative committee for review, comments, and validation. Once again, an iterative process was employed. Committee members reviewed and examined the evaluation report and presented comments to the researcher. The researcher requested feedback forms to be completed and returned within 5 days. Comments continued until all were addressed. At that time, the evaluation report was considered valid. This procedure addressed Research Question 5, What would be included in a valid plan to revise, implement and evaluate an improved academic engagement process?

Eleventh, the evaluation report was submitted to the summative committee for validation. Once again, an iterative process was employed. Committee members

reviewed and examined the evaluation report and presented comments to the researcher. The researcher requested feedback forms to be completed and returned within 5 days. Comments continued until all comments were addressed. The evaluation report was considered valid at that time. This procedure addressed Research Question 5, What would be included in a valid plan to revise, implement and evaluate an improved academic engagement process?

Twelfth, the evaluation report was submitted to the executive assistant to the president/chief academic officer and the criminal justice dean. The researcher was available to meet with the executive assistant to the president/chief academic officer and the criminal justice dean to discuss results and address feedback. Results of the final report were used to determine whether changes to improve student engagement practices in the criminal justice department were indicated. The executive assistant to the president/chief academic officer and the criminal justice dean determined how the feedback was to be utilized. The dissemination protocol was described in the final report (see Appendix L).

Proposed Timeline

The time to conduct this study was approximately 8 months. During this time, the researcher gathered, analyzed, and recorded the data and results of the evaluation of the student engagement practices used in the criminal justice department at the college. This timeline allowed sufficient time for formative and summative committee feedback, distribution of surveys, and the report preparation.

Assumptions

Several assumptions were pertinent to this study. First, it was assumed that the reviewed literature exhausted the available information on the engagement topic, and that

the information contained in the literature was accurate. Second, it was assumed that the members of the formative, summative and expert committees utilized their knowledge to the best of their abilities to provide input and validation to the study. Third, the writer assumed that the students participating in the survey study were representative of the general criminal justice department student population. Fourth, the writer assumed the college personnel being surveyed were knowledgeable and forthright regarding their answers to the survey questions. Fifth, the writer assumed the surveys were reliable and valid as stated by feedback from the formative and summative committees. Sixth, the writer assumed that the collection and interpretation of the data from the surveys was accurate.

Limitations

In discussing limitations, Charles and Mertler (2000) explained, "Limitations refer to conditions outside the investigator's control that affect data collection" (p. 71). Several limitations for this study were identified. First, varying degrees of knowledge and expertise among the formative and summative committee members existed. Second, the motivations, commitments, and expectations of the formative and summative committee members impacted the direction of the research study. Third, because the study focused on one department at a 2-year technical college, the results may not be generalized to other educational institutions or other divisions or departments within the college. Fourth, not all participants responded to the survey.

Implications for the Improvement of Educational Practice

Three outcomes of this study contribute to improving educational practice. First, the study provides the college with additional resources to facilitate criminal justice student learning. Second, this research project contributes to the body of research

focusing on student engagement in 2-year colleges. Third, the results of this study identify any gap in the use of current student engagement practices presently used by criminal justice faculty and the practices identified through the literature review.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this applied dissertation study was to evaluate student engagement practices at a Midwestern technical college criminal justice department to determine if the current practices were effective. The evaluation methodology was employed in developing an evaluation tool to conduct the study. Although several possible evaluation models were considered, the Varcoe (2003) design was identified as the most appropriate to determine if any gaps existed between current engagement practices and student engagement practices identified in the literature review.

Research Question 1

The first research question asked, What current engagement activities are available for criminal justice students at the college? The following procedures were conducted in order to answer this question. First, a review of literature in relation to criteria development was conducted. Criteria are described as the ideal state of a program, activity, product, or process. Criteria identify those portions of the activities that are good or of value (Fitzpatrick et al., 2004; Varcoe, 2003). An evaluation study depends on the criteria of the current program or process to provide a comparison of ideal criteria to the existing practice or process. Evaluative studies such as this one direct attention to gaps between current practices or processes and the ideal criteria. The identified gaps allow the researcher to make judgments and recommendations regarding the practices or processes evaluated. The recommendations form the foundation for improvement of the quality of the practice or process. No formal engagement practices or processes are currently identified within the criminal justice department.

Existing practices were identified through the use of two surveys (see Appendixes H and K). These surveys were validated during the Midwestern technical college

institutional review process. Validation of the surveys through the institutional review process was required prior to administration of the surveys.

Second, a formative committee was established to provide input to the study. Four issues were shared with the formative committee: (a) the expected criteria of the current student engagement practices that were designated in the evaluation tool document, (b) the expected criteria of recommended practices of related topics identified through the literature review, (c) the survey tool utilized to collect data from students regarding engagement practices, and (d) the survey tool utilized to collect data from criminal justice instructors regarding engagement practices.

The formative committee was also utilized to review and provide input regarding the development of the evaluation tool and the final evaluation report. Formative committee members were internal to the college and associated with the criminal justice department. Each member possessed appreciable experience and knowledge, as well as a stake in the success of the criminal justice program at the college. The formative committee provided valuable input and quality information for this study. Committee members included the following persons: (a) an adjunct instructor, (b) the criminal justice academic counselor, and (c) a full-time criminal justice instructor. The qualifications of the formative committee members are included in Appendix J. Each formative committee member was invited by the researcher to participate in this study. All committee members were provided a letter of invitation, and a signed committee participation agreement form was returned.

An iterative process was utilized. This process allowed the committee members to review submitted materials and provide feedback to the researcher. For example, the committee members reviewed and examined criteria provided and considered related

topics and models from the literature review. The data collection tools approved by the college were shared with the committee, along with the evaluation tool and evaluation report.

Third, the researcher presented the initial criteria document that set forth the criteria to the formative committee for review and recommendations. The researcher e-mailed the document to each committee member. The e-mail contained a draft of the criteria document, an informational memorandum, and a feedback form. Committee members were asked to review the materials and return the completed feedback form within 5 days.

The researcher personally met with, and received recommendations from, formative committee members. These recommendations prompted revisions related to developing criteria for the evaluation tool. Committee feedback included several suggestions for consideration. The first suggestion identified a cross-reference between the words *criteria* and *outcomes*. One member suggested that these two terms should not be utilized as analogous terms, as such terms represent conceptual differences.

A second suggestion was not to identify standards. This committee member postulated that defining standards at that juncture in the study was premature and could lead to confusion. The third suggestion was to change the criteria from a question format to a statement format and that the criteria statements should begin with action verbs. A fourth suggestion was that criteria were linked to specific research questions in a table format. One committee member opined that this linkage suggested the study outcomes were predetermined and elimination of that linkage removed any appearance of bias in the study. This suggestion resulted in the elimination of the appendix containing the table. A fifth observation suggested that the criteria should be included in the design of

the evaluation tool. Another committee member suggested that inclusion of the criteria in evaluation tool this format would be more understandable and would provide the opportunity to facilitate comments regarding the evaluation tool and potentially expedite the work of the committee.

A committee member expressed a preference to meet individually and discuss the study criteria. A meeting was scheduled, and two of the three formative committee members attended. Prior to the meeting, the suggested changes from the committee were drafted and shared with each committee member via e-mail. The attending members accepted all changes following a discussion of the changes and the evaluation tool. The absent member replied by e-mail and stated that the revised criteria and evaluation tool were acceptable.

Fourth, a summative committee was formed. The committee consisted of three members. All members of the summative committee were external to the college. Members possessed experience with the technical college system and possessed expertise in the education field. Summative committee members included the dean of a technical college criminal justice program, a retired vice president of instruction of a technical college currently serving in the same capacity at a private 4-year college, and a retired criminal justice manager and social science instructor (see Appendix J).

Formal invitations to serve on the summative committee were sent through letters of invitation to all committee members. A participation agreement form accompanied the invitation. All committee participants signed and returned the participation agreement form. The summative committee met in face-to-face sessions and via electronic or telephonic modalities. An iterative process was utilized when working with the summative committee, and this process was also utilized to review the study criteria and

the evaluation tool. The researcher presented all current practices and expected criteria to the members of the summative committee. The summative committee members were provided a feedback form on which to record their comments. The researcher requested feedback within 5 days.

Committee members responded to the evaluation tool and the proposed criteria. Aside from several grammatical suggestions, members accepted the criteria and evaluation tool. The validated criteria and evaluation instrument are presented in Appendix M.

Research Question 2

The second research question asked, What models are identified in the literature of expected outcomes for best practices of successful student engagement processes and programs? Literature relevant to student engagement was reviewed to answer this research question. The literature review was assembled to obtain a comprehensive sample of applicable scholarly information as well as models to compare with the existing student engagement practices in the criminal justice department at the college. More than 90 sources were consulted. The research consisted of the works of a variety of authors and institutional documents from colleges as well as other academic works. Research included journal articles, textbooks, monographs, and dissertations. Most sources were derived from research within the past 10 years, with the exception of landmark and historical research.

The literature review presented a compilation of preferred criteria for development of effective student engagement practices and provided a review of a number of student engagement practices that incorporate such elements as faculty involvement, andragogy, learning communities, and experiential learning. The criteria

represented best practices of student engagement at various colleges and universities. The practices were utilized to develop the criteria for Section 2 of the evaluation tool.

Research Question 3

The third research question asked, What are the perceptions of students and instructors regarding student engagement at the college? Several procedures were utilized to address this question. The first procedure included the literature review that identified appropriate information related to student engagement practices and existing survey tools.

The second procedure involved the development of the survey instruments. The survey tools were developed utilizing the study research questions and a synthesis of the literature review and were submitted to the director of research at the college as required by the college institutional review procedure. Construct validity and reliability of the survey tools were established using two processes. The college requires that any research be approved through the local institutional review process, and this study was submitted for the local review. The college's institutional review resulted in approval to conduct the study. The review board directed that the reviewed surveys be utilized, and the college directive was honored. The surveys were also provided to both the formative and summative committees.

Program evaluations frequently utilize surveys as one source of information collection. The survey instrument is an important tool that allows researchers to combine and summarize data in evaluation studies (Fitzpatrick et al., 2004; Stufflebeam, 2001). A review of the literature associated with surveys indicates that surveys examine limited issues through the dissemination of questions to a large group of participants (Gall et al., 2003; Fitzpatrick et al.). Many surveys utilize a rating scale or Likert items (Passmore et

al., 2002). Likert questions evaluate participant replies in an ordered continuum of responses from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*. Research indicated that the number of responses utilized in a Likert survey varies from 3 to 10, but 5 is considered acceptable (Amoo & Friedman, 2001; Passmore et al.). The resulting participant perceptions allow for the interpretation of a ranking order or the suggestion of a pattern. A survey, however, may not be an accurate reflection of the true importance of the data.

Surveys possess limitations as research tools. The limitations are rooted in three assumptions: first, the honesty of the respondents; second, how well the survey participants understand the survey questions; and third, the survey response rate (Passmore et al., 2002; Pike & Kuh, 2005). Effective surveys utilize a systematic development process. The process includes stating the problem, planning the project, stating the research question, reviewing the literature, developing survey items, constructing the survey, piloting the survey, and administering the survey (Passmore et al.; Pike & Kuh).

Research supported the premise that surveys are created to meet similar reliability and validity standards as other methods of research. These standards are sometimes found to be lacking when the surveys are reviewed (Gall et al., 2003). Validity and reliability standards applicable to other data research collection tools also apply to surveys.

Evidence that survey questions are responsive to stated research questions establishes content validity. A survey is valid on its face when the respondents and those who interpret the results advise that the survey appears valid, or reliable. An exception to this rule exists, however, and according to Gall et al. (2003), "A lower level of item reliability is acceptable when the data are to be analyzed and reported at the group level than at the level of individual respondents" (p. 223).

Survey questions developed for this evaluation study consisted of Likert-type scales and response format questions. The Likert-type scales allowed participants the ability to express a sense of like or dislike. This type of question provided a statement that was followed by responses ranging from the extremes of positive to negative. Many survey participants were familiar with these types of response choices. This format permitted the survey to be quick and effective (Passmore et al., 2000).

Response format items were developed as either opened or closed statements or questions. The open response format allows subjects to express their opinions. The closed response questions provide the participant with a list of choices. Closed response statements were utilized to maximize the ease of response for participants.

In the literature, a limited number of surveys focus on student engagement, and only two such surveys were identified. The first was the NSSE and the second was the CCSSE. The surveys were conducted to collect latent information regarding the opinions and perceptions of the participants (Gall et al., 2003). Survey questions were developed by the researcher in conjunction with the institutional review process of the Midwestern technical college, and the review process assisted in the validation of the survey. The researcher submitted two draft surveys as a partial requirement for the college institutional review process, and the college accepted the preliminary surveys prior to receiving feedback from the formative or summative committees. The process of survey tool development and review in conjunction with the college institutional review process and the expertise of the director of institutional research established the construct validity of the survey instruments. In addition, the formative and summative committees reviewed the surveys and were afforded the opportunity to provided feedback.

Third, the researcher presented the two surveys, the student survey (see Appendix

H) and the faculty survey (see Appendix K), to the formative and summative committees for review. The documents were e-mailed to the committee members. The e-mail included a cover memorandum and a feedback form. Committee members were asked to review the materials and return the completed feedback form within 5 days.

Fourth, the student and faculty surveys were distributed to the appropriate respondents. Sample size for the student survey consisted of 40 criminal justice students. These students were older than 18 years of age, included both men and women, came from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, and spoke English as a primary language. The students were randomly selected. Permission was obtained from an instructor to survey a class in which all students anticipated graduating at the end of the current term.

The sample size for the faculty survey consisted of 5 full-time and 10 adjunct instructors in the criminal justice department. All faculty participants were older than 18 years of age and included men and women who spoke English as a primary language. The entire full-time faculty was asked to participate. The adjunct faculty members were selected based upon those instructors actively employed during the term in which the survey was distributed, which was the spring term of 2007.

The researcher explained his role, the purpose of the study, and the details of the participation invitation when requesting student participation in the student survey. Students were advised that they were not obligated to participate in the study and that the survey would take approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete. Students willing to participate were given the participation invitation to read and review. A written participation letter was utilized in lieu of a consent form because the participants remained anonymous. The survey was distributed after the students reviewed the participation letter. Completed surveys were collected and filed in a locked filing cabinet

for the duration of the study and were destroyed upon completion of the research.

The faculty survey was distributed personally to full-time faculty members. Faculty were asked to return the completed survey in an anonymous manner. The surveys were e-mailed to the adjunct faculty. Adjunct faculty were asked to return completed surveys in an anonymous manner, and completed surveys were collected and filed in a locked filing cabinet for the duration of the study. Surveys were destroyed upon the completion of the research.

Results from the student and faculty surveys were analyzed and contributed to the construction of the evaluation tool. The results were compiled, with student survey results presented in Appendix N and faculty survey results presented in Appendix O. No quantitative reviews of the survey results were undertaken, as the majority of questions were not assigned numeric values.

Research Question 4

The fourth research question asked, What valid components are necessary to formulate an evaluation tool that will assess the worth of engagement practices currently offered to criminal justice students? The Varcoe (2003) research design and six procedures were utilized to answer Research Question 4. First, a review of the literature related to standards of evaluation was conducted. Current standards of evaluation were compiled by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (1994) and updated in *The Program Evaluation Standards: How to Assess Evaluations of Educational Programs* (as cited in Davidson, 2005; Fitzpatrick et al., 2004; Gall et al., 2003).

Charles and Mertler (2002) wrote that evaluation research is concerned with making decisions and determining the relative merits of various programs used in

education. (Airasian & Gay, 2003; Charles & Mertler). Gall et al. (2003) discussed the criteria for a good evaluation study:

> An evaluation has utility if it is informative, timely, and useful to the affected persons. Feasibility means, first, that the evaluation design is appropriate to the setting in which the study is to be conducted and second, that the design is cost-effective. Finally, accuracy refers to the extent to which an evaluation study has produced valid, reliable, and comprehensive information for making judgments of a program's worth. (p. 552)

The assurance that a study is feasible, proper, and accurate provides guidance in developing appropriate evaluation instruments. Varcoe (2003) wrote that components of an evaluation process are agreement on criteria, determination of gaps between the gathered data and the identified outcomes of the studied process, and the utilization of gap analysis to identify weaknesses in the process or provide feedback to identify potential changes. Gall et al. (2003) discussed how the criteria of utility, feasibility, propriety, and accuracy are linked to the standards of evaluation. Multiple criteria are associated with each of the four standards. The complete linkage between these criteria and the standards of evaluation was summarized in *Evaluation Standards: How to Assess Evaluations of Educational Programs* (Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation Programs, 1994). The detailed linkage between the standards and the criteria is included as an appendix (see Appendix G).

Second, the researcher developed a preliminary evaluation tool. A composite of validated evaluation tools was considered during the design of the evaluation instrument. The evaluation instrument was composed of three sections: (a) expected criteria of current student engagement practices utilized by instructors at the college, (b) expected criteria of engagement practices for enhancing student engagement, and (c) a gap analysis section to identify possible gaps between current engagement practices and practices

identified through the literature for student engagement, including recommendations focused on resolving each of the gaps identified by the evaluation.

Third, the entire array of expected criteria related to recommended practices, including criteria formed as a result of the literature review and results of the survey tools, was shared with the formative committee. The formative committee worked with the researcher to determine the criteria of best practices most appropriate for the study. The criteria endorsed by the formative committee were forwarded to the summative committee who validated those criteria for recommended practices.

Fourth, the researcher presented the evaluation tool to the formative committee for their review and recommendations. The evaluation tool reflected the results of the literature review and the faculty and student surveys. The researcher e-mailed the evaluation document to each committee member. The e-mail contained a draft of the evaluation tool, a cover memorandum, and a feedback form. Committee members were asked to review the materials and return the completed feedback form within 5 days.

The formative committee members critically assessed the first draft of the evaluation tool and requested several grammatical changes. Committee members suggested all criteria identified in the evaluation tool begin with action verbs. The committee additionally recommended that the tool list components and activities should be paired with the criteria instead of merely listing several criteria. As a result, the researcher revised the evaluation tool to reflect the recommendations of the formative committee.

An updated evaluation instrument was supplied to the committee members. Included with the revision was a memorandum describing how the revised evaluation document addressed member concerns. The formative committee accepted the tool

following the final review of the evaluation tool changes.

The revised evaluation tool was forwarded to the summative committee for validation. The researcher conveyed the survey documents via e-mail. The e-mail contained the evaluation tool as revised by the formative committee, a cover memorandum, and a feedback form. Committee members were asked to review the materials and return the completed feedback form within 5 days. The researcher received the summative committee responses. Summative committee members accepted the evaluation instrument and made no additional recommendations. The evaluation tool was therefore considered valid.

Fifth, an expert evaluation panel was formed consisting of two people external to the college who were experts in the field of evaluation (see Appendix P). The evaluation panel and the researcher communicated by phone, in person, and via e-mail.

Sixth, the expert evaluation panel conducted its evaluation of the student engagement practices identified as being in place at the college. The panel compared each expected criterion of recommended practices to each expected criterion of current practices. The researcher communicated with the panel by telephone or e-mail during the evaluation process to answer any questions related to the evaluation tool. The evaluation panel provided its results to the researcher via e-mail (see Appendix Q).

Research Question 5

The fifth research question asked, What would be included in a valid recommendation to revise, implement and evaluate an improved academic engagement process? For this research question, the following six procedures were completed.

First, a review of literature provided information on evaluation reports. According to Thomas (2000), inherent unreliability is associated with a single data source.

Evaluators neutralize this unreliability by employing multiple sources of data utilizing a variety of measurement tools. This evaluation study dealt with the reliability issue by using two surveys and a comprehensive literature review as data sources.

Second, the evaluation report that identified gaps between current practices and recommended practices, including recommendations for addressing the gaps, was prepared. The researcher, in cooperation with the expert evaluation panel, drafted the report. A properly prepared evaluation report contains information focused on six areas: (a) a critical analysis of the evaluation results, (b) a substantive product for the institution, (c) evidence of the effectiveness the carefully developed process, (d) a record of activities for the guidance of future process planning, (e) assistance to others in the development of similar processes, and (f) a dependable foundation for future program evaluations (Wurzbach, 2002).

Additional important concepts included in an evaluation report are: (a) the incorporation of appropriate visual representations of results, (b) the use of a clear and concise manner of writing, (c) the use of headings and subheadings to generate a valuable table of contents, (d) the preparation of an accurate and succinct executive summary, and (e) the solicitation of feedback on report drafts before submission of the final report (McDavid & Hawthorn, 2006; Wurzbach, 2002).

Evaluation report format varies among researchers. No standard report format exists. The inability to standardize report formats is a result of the differences associated with the required content of each report and the diverse needs of involved stakeholders. The information contained in the evaluation report is fundamental to the usefulness of that report. Effective communication of the information enhances the value of the report (Fitzpatrick et al., 2004). A valuable report provides essential feedback while adding

value by recommending changes to an existing service, product, or process. Authors suggested that the design and content of a report include consideration of the audience as well as the intended use of the evaluation. Wurzbach (2002) suggested an evaluation report outline reflect the background and purpose of the evaluated process, a description of what was evaluated, the intended purpose of the evaluation, the methodology that was utilized to conduct the evaluation, obstacles encountered by the researcher while conducting the evaluation, and a clear discussion of the evaluation results. Incorporated into the evaluation report (see Appendix R) are several of these concepts. The formative and summative committees reviewed the report prior to finalizing the report.

Third, the researcher wrote the evaluation report. The final version of the validated evaluation report is included in Appendix R.

Fourth, the evaluation report was submitted to the formative committee for review and recommendations**.** The researcher e-mailed a draft of the evaluation report, a cover memorandum, and a feedback form to each committee member. Committee members were asked to review the materials and return the completed feedback form personally or via interoffice mail within 5 days. The iterative process was employed, and committee members reviewed and examined the evaluation report and presented comments to the researcher. Committee feedback was addressed until all issues were resolved.

Committee members were provided the updated evaluation report. Included with the revision was a memorandum identifying how the revised document addressed member concerns. The formative committee accepted the evaluation report.

Fifth, a revised draft of the evaluation report was submitted to the summative committee for review, comment, and final validation. The researcher provided the report via an e-mail that included the draft evaluation report, a cover memorandum, and a

feedback form. Committee members were asked to review the materials and return the completed feedback form via e-mail within 5 days.

Recommendations from the summative committee were received, prompting the researcher to revise the evaluation report. Committee feedback suggested changing verbiage to clarify statements made in the report. A second comment suggested adding breadth to a recommendation. A third suggested that a recommendation was unnecessary and could be deleted. A fourth comment identified that an opinion was present, and rewording the sentence was suggested.

The researcher addressed the concerns and sent a memorandum to the summative committee detailing how comments were addressed and included a revised draft of the evaluation report. The committee accepted the revised report.

Sixth, the evaluation report was submitted to the dean of criminal justice and the executive vice president/chief academic officer of the college. The researcher met with the dean of criminal justice and the executive vice president/chief academic officer of the college individually to discuss the report results and obtain feedback. The researcher requested that a liaison be identified to facilitate the development and implementation of report recommendations found acceptable by the college. The researcher also suggested that the administrators report the progress of improving criminal justice student engagement activities to the executive cabinet. A final suggestion included establishing a series of periodic follow-up evaluations of student engagement to track the success of any implemented recommendations. The use of the CCSSE was suggested as an appropriate tool to reassess any changes made to the process.

The final report results were intended to assist in the identification of changes necessary to improve criminal justice student engagement at the college. The criminal

justice dean and executive vice president/chief academic officer hold management level positions at the college, and in their professional capacities will determine the impact of the evaluation feedback upon decisions influencing policy and procedures related to student engagement. A dissemination protocol is included in Appendix L.

A plan for revision, implementation, and future evaluation was prepared by the researcher. This implementation plan will be executed under the direction of the criminal justice dean and executive vice president/chief academic officer of the college as they deem appropriate. The administrators will assign a contact person to assist in the development and implementation of given assignments. As a final step, administrators will meet with the criminal justice faculty to review report recommendations, address issues raised by faculty members, and complete the implementation plan assigning specific duties to individual faculty.

The implementation plan will be executed over a 6-month timeframe. Faculty members will meet on a monthly basis to discuss assignment progress and express concerns related to their assignments. Faculty assignments will be completed within the 6-month timeframe by reporting progress in a final meeting with the criminal justice dean. As changes are implemented and new information is identified, the criminal justice dean will report the progress to the executive vice president/chief academic officer of the college.

As a final step, a follow-up evaluation was suggested for the 2008-2009 academic year. This will provide an opportunity to implement recommended changes. The CCSSE was recommended as an appropriate evaluation tool. The entire plan for revision, implementation, and future evaluation of the revised process in 2008 is included in Appendix S.

The sequence of events culminating in the completion of the study followed a specific progression:

1. In December 2006, an exhaustive review of literature was completed to identify recommended student engagement practices.

2. In December 2006, formative and summative committees were organized. Committee members were sent e-mail invitations that included letters of participation and feedback forms. Members were asked to commit to assisting the researcher by signing the letters of participation.

3. In January 2007, study criteria for student engagement activities were developed.

4. In February 2007, the student and faculty survey tools were distributed to their appropriate populations. Data were gathered and reviewed in developing the evaluation tool.

5. From February to March 2007, the formative and summative committees reviewed the composite of expected criteria for recommended practices, including criteria from the related issues found in the literature review, student engagement models identified through the literature review, and the results of the survey tools.

6. In March 2007, the evaluation tool was designed by the researcher and forwarded to the evaluation panel, whose members completed the evaluation within a two-week period and provided results to the researcher.

7. During May 2007, the evaluation report was written and submitted to the formative and summative committees for review, comments, and validation. Upon validation, the evaluation report was submitted to the criminal justice dean and executive vice president/chief academic officer.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

The purpose of the applied dissertation study was to evaluate student engagement practices of a Midwestern technical college criminal justice program. The evaluation provided guidance in identification of gaps between the engagement activities identified in the literature and the practices currently in use by the criminal justice faculty. Recommendations to improve student engagement were prepared to assist criminal justice faculty in closing the identified gaps.

The results of this study of student engagement correlate with the information found in a broad-based literature review. Little scholarly writing focused on 2-year colleges. Schreiber and Shinn (2003) wrote that, whereas 44% of students seeking a college degree attend 2-year institutions, only a scant 5% of research focuses on 2-year institutions. No research specifically related to 2-year vocational institutions was located.

The literature review identified student engagement practices utilized by various collegiate institutions. Astin (1985) defined student engagement as student involvement. Astin (1985) went on to define student involvement as referring "to the quantity and quality of the physical and psychological energy the student invests in the college experience" (p. 156). Young (2003) wrote that while engagement varies with course majors, the concept of engagement relates to students being involved with course material as well as the process of learning.

Authors identified that engagement practices are varied and need to be designed carefully. Practices identified include class presentations, team-oriented assignments, and practical assignments focusing on solving "real world problems" (Bowden et al., 2003; Smith & Bath, 2006; Upcraft et al., 2005; Zhao & Kuh, 2004; Zhu & Baylen, 2005). The

survey instruments utilized in this study indicate that the criminal justice department currently utilizes the student engagement practices recognized in the literature.

Students and faculty were asked, During this school year, how regularly have you done the following in your criminal justice classes? Both groups reported that, over 50% of the time, students participated in class activities that were engagement oriented *very often* or *often.* These activities included class discussions, in-class project preparation interacting with peers, and engaging others in discussions centered on their academic assignments (see Appendixes N and O).

Students and faculty responded positively to the inquiry, During this school year, what emphasis has your criminal justice coursework placed on the following? The response categories were "use of memorization," "concept analysis," "finding new ways to integrate ideas and experiences," "evaluating the soundness of information," and becoming proficient with new skills." Both groups again showed that emphasis was placed on these areas over 50% of the time as *very much* or *quite a bit* (see Appendixes N and O).

The data from surveys also demonstrated inconsistencies. When asked how much time during a 7-day week students spent preparing for class, both students and faculty were again consistent. Students' responses indicated that 75% spent fewer than 6 hours a week preparing for class. Faculty estimated that, 92% of the time, students spent fewer than 6 hours a week in activities related to preparation for class. Responding to an inquiry related to participation in college-sponsored activities, 95% of the students reported spending fewer than 6 hours a week participating in college-sponsored activities, and, of that number, 60% reported that they never participated in college-sponsored activities.

Students were also asked to respond to the question, Have your skills and personal

development in the following areas been improved by the criminal justice department? Fifteen skills were listed as responses: (a) a broad general education, (b) job or work-related knowledge and skills, (c) clear and effective writing skills, (d) clear and effective speaking skills, (e) critical and analytical thinking, (f) numerical problem-solving skills, (g) information technology and computer skills, (h) ability to work effectively with others, (i) skills to learn effectively on your own, (j) understanding yourself, (k) understanding people of diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds, (l) personal code of values and ethics development, (m) contributing to community welfare, (n) refining career goals, (o) career opportunity information. Both students and faculty reported that, in most areas, the skills were *very much* or *quite a bit* improved over 60% of the time (see Appendixes N and O).

Students reported that, less than 50% the time, skill development was improved *very much* or *quite a bit*. Faculty reported that skill development was improved *very much* or *quite a bit* in the areas of writing skills (46%) and diversity skills (33%; see Appendixes N and O).

The literature review indicated that a disconnect generally existed between how students and faculty viewed student engagement (Astin, 1985; McClenney 2004; Weimer 2002). Responses to the surveys correlated with those observations (see Appendixes N and O). In the areas of inquiry focused on student engagement activities, students and faculty responded similarly. Over 50% of all responses indicated that behaviors were performed or skills developed *very often* or *often*. However, closer examination revealed that, in nearly all student engagement activities analyzed, a disconnect existed between students and faculty responses.

The disconnect is indicated in 17 of the 21 questions related to activities regularly

performed. Students rated themselves higher in 10 of the 21 areas, and faculty rated students higher in 7 of the 21. Only 4 of the 21 questions earned similar responses from both groups of participants.

The surveys inquired into six categories related to the emphasis placed on course work. Faculty reported a higher emphasis on course work in four of the six inquiry areas. Interestingly, faculty reported a higher emphasis in areas of analysis, perspective, evaluation, and adaptation. All inquiry areas related to the more complex learning goals.

An additional disconnect is present in the survey area related to how challenging criminal justice examinations were during the 2006-2007 school year. Using a Likert scale, faculty reported that examinations were more challenging than students perceived them. Just over half (58%) of the students reported the examinations as *extremely difficult*, whereas 77% of the faculty perceived their examinations as *difficult*.

Another area the survey examined was skill development. The question was, Have your skills and personal development in the following areas been improved by the criminal justice department? Fifteen individual responses focused on cognitive and behavioral characteristics. Students reported improvement as *very much* or *quite a bit* at a higher rate than faculty in 8 of the 15 response areas. Faculty reported greater student improvement in one area: numeric problem-solving skills. All other response areas were essentially equivalent.

Most students participating in the survey met the definition of traditional students. The survey indicates student characteristics as (a) 81% between the ages of 19 and 24, (b) 75% are males, (c) 80% are single, and (d) 18% are the first generation to attend college.

The literature review identified two additional areas contributing to increased student involvement. The areas are learning communities (Kellogg, 1999; Minkler, 2000;

Price, 2005; Smith, 2003; Webber, 2000), and service oriented learning (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996; Frederickson, 2000; Markus et al., 1993; Penn, 2003; Upcraft et al., 2005).

Learning communities group students in areas of academic commonality. These learning associations are calculated to integrate student's academic and social activities. The integration of these activities is intended to facilitate learning centered on course majors or thematically linked courses (Cross, 1998; Smith & Hunter, 1988; Zhao & Kuh, 2004).

Service learning is another method to increase student engagement and encourage integration of class activities that take place outside of the traditional classroom with the curriculum. An extension of, or complement to, learning communities, service learning is designed to complement course outcome achievement (Oates & Leavitt, 2003). Real-world situations and service learning effectively connect students and faculty. Linking community service to academics allows the integration of a student's interpersonal development with academic and cognitive development (Hubbert, 2002).

Benefits attributed to service learning activities include providing students with the opportunity to apply newly acquired knowledge and skills (Penn, 2003) and the opportunity to experience academic learning in a manner that increases student interest and enthusiasm for their studies (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996). The benefits noted above lead to improved student performance. Improved performance is manifested in higher test scores (Markus et al., 1993). Frederickson (2000) also identified enhanced performance using the service learning model. He noted that students' self-report improved understanding of subject matter when attending courses taught using the service-learning model.

The student survey provided an area of concern. Students reported that they spent little time studying. Survey Question 5 asked, How much emphasis does the criminal justice department place on each of the following? The student survey responses indicated that 45% of the respondents reported that the department places quite a bit of emphasis on substantial amounts of time for preparation and study. The faculty survey respondents concurred, reporting that faculty emphasized that substantial time studying was necessary. Faculty reported emphasizing preparation and study, with 54% reporting that they stressed studying *quite a bit* and 15% reporting that they stressed studying *very much*.

Although faculty respondents placed emphasis on studying, student and faculty surveys indicated that students actually spent little time studying. Question 6a asked, During a full 7-day week, how much time, in hours, do you normally spend on each of the following activities? The first area of inquiry was time spent preparing for class in hours. Ninety-two percent of the faculty and 75% of students indicated students spent 5 or fewer hours a week preparing for class. Question 16 asked, What is your overall grade average? Student survey responses indicated that 93% had a grade point average of B or better.

Two factors were identified in the surveys as potential influences in the lack of time students devote to their studies. The first was the amount of time students spent working. Question 6b asked, During a full 7-day week, how much time, in hours, do you normally spend on each of the following activities . . . employment for pay? Fifty-five percent of students reported that they were employed more than 30 hours per week. A corresponding question to faculty was, During a full 7-day week how much time, in hours, do you believe your students normally spend on each of the following activities?

The specific area analyzed was employment for pay. Sixty-nine percent of faculty reported that they believed students were employed 20 hours or less per week. None of the faculty indicated that students worked more than 30 hours per week.

A second factor suggested that a lack of rigor may be associated with criminal justice courses. The lack of rigor may be a result of a lack of substantive student engagement activities applied by criminal justice instructors.

Five research questions were identified for this study. To answer these questions, the Varcoe (2003) research design was utilized, and an evaluation tool was developed utilizing the results of the literature review, engagement survey information, and constructive criticism from formative and summative committee members. The formative and summative committee members offered comments and suggestions regarding the criteria documents, surveys, evaluation tool, and information to be included in an evaluation report. Comments from committee members directed changes to study documents. In addition, the summative committee validated the evaluation report. An evaluation report was prepared in response to input of the evaluation panel. This evaluation process utilized the validated tool developed as part of this study. Additionally, a plan for dissemination of the report was developed (see Appendix L). The researcher provided the validated evaluation study results and recommendations to the dean of criminal justice and the executive vice president/chief academic officer of the college. The results will be shared at a scheduled meeting. The dean of criminal justice and the executive vice president/chief academic officer of the college will be asked to appraise the results and the study recommendations considering the mission of the college and the criminal justice division. The college's budget will clearly be a factor that influences the evaluative process. The criminal justice dean will be asked to assign a

contact person for each of the recommendations, and contact persons will meet as a team with the dean to review study recommendations and prepare an implementation plan. The criminal justice dean will report to the executive vice president/chief academic officer of the college who, in turn, will inform the executive cabinet of the progress of student engagement changes that are made and the results of the changes as indicated.

Conclusions

The researcher assembled conclusions from the data obtained to address the five research questions. The first question asked, What current engagement activities are available for criminal justice students at the college? Seven criteria were identified using information obtained through faculty and student surveys. Formative and summative committee members validated these criteria: (a) involve students in cocurricular activities, (b) facilitate student interaction, (c) participate in activities that promote engagement, (d) create an environment where students and faculty interact, (e) increase critical thinking skills, (f) create an atmosphere for ethnically diverse information exchanges, and (g) increase student interaction in class activities.

Results of the study revealed that current criminal justice department student engagement practices were consistent with practices identified through the literature review. However, the application of these practices did not achieve the goal of the promotion of student involvement in order to reconcile the grade point averages with the lack of study time reported.

The second question asked, What models are identified in the literature of expected outcomes for best practices of successful student engagement processes and programs? The literature review focused primarily on 4-year educational institutions. A lack of information restricted research directly focused on 2-year colleges. The literature

review identified a lack of research in this area, with authors documenting that 44% of students attend 2-year institutions, yet only 5% of research focuses on such institutions (Schreiber & Shinn, 2003).

The literature revealed a variety of engagement practices from which recommended engagement practice criteria were developed. These criteria were included in the evaluation instrument (see Appendix M).

The literature review also identified that the concept of criminal justice student engagement was addressed in scholarly journals on a limited basis (Birzer, 2004; Dabney et al., 2006; Finckenauer, 2005; Hartmus et al., 2006; Hirschinger-Bank & Markowitz, 2006; Kravetz, 2001; Penn, 2003; Sims, 2006). The discussions identified several engagement activities that enhance student learning. In addition to enhancing student learning, several engagement activities contributed to increasing student understanding of human behavior. Students were also able to identify challenges confronting the criminal justice system through these activities. The prevalence of these activities, throughout collegiate-level criminal justice education programs, cannot be determined. This inability may be related to a lack of scholarly writing in this area.

The third question asked, What are the perceptions of students and instructors regarding student engagement at the college? The student and faculty engagement surveys and the literature review addressed this question. A review of the literature associated with surveys indicated that surveys examine limited issues through the dissemination of questions to a large group of participants (Fitzpatrick et al., 2004; Gall et al., 2003). The literature review also revealed that surveys are commonly utilized in evaluating practices and processes. Survey instruments are utilized to collect and summarize data that aids in evaluation studies (Fitzpatrick et al., 2004; Stufflebeam,

2001). The surveys developed by the researcher were validated through the college institutional review process. The formative and summative committees were consulted prior to distribution of the surveys.

Two surveys were distributed to different populations. The surveys provided the process by which data were collected, assisting the researcher in summarizing data and developing an evaluation tool for the current study. The first survey, the student survey, collected data regarding the perceptions of criminal justice students at the college. The student survey participants were students in their final term. Students participating in the survey answered a variety of question related to learning activities, expenditure of their time, demographic information, and their satisfaction with the criminal justice program. The validated survey consisted of 23 questions. Several of the 23 questions included attached subquestions.

The fourth question asked, What valid components are necessary to formulate an evaluation tool that will assess the worth of the engagement practices currently offered to criminal justice students? No evaluation instrument existed that was pertinent to this study, so the researcher developed an evaluation tool. The tool was developed from data and information collected through the administered surveys and the literature review. The formative and summative committees reviewed the evaluation tool. An iterative process was utilized to validate the tool.

The validated evaluation tool contained 16 criteria. This tool was sent to an evaluation panel to perform a gap analysis. The evaluation tool provided the panel utilized a Likert scale for responses. The scale ranged from 1 to 5, with 5 representing strong agreement and 1 representing strong disagreement. The completed gap analysis is shown in Appendix Q.

The fifth question asked, What would be included in a valid recommendation to revise, implement and evaluate an improved academic engagement process? Recommendations were to be forwarded to the criminal justice dean and the executive vice president/chief academic officer of the college. The literature review identified potential criteria for inclusion in a final evaluation report (Fitzpatrick et al., 2004; McDavid & Hawthorn, 2006; Wurzbach, 2002). The recommendations were utilized as a guide for developing the report for this study. The items utilized for this report included a list of tables, an executive summary, a purpose for the process, a description of the evaluation and the purpose of the evaluation, methodology, results, appendixes, and references.

Study results were categorized into two areas: (a) gaps identified through the evaluation tool and the gap analysis of the evaluation panel and (b) areas where the criminal justice program met the criteria of the validated evaluation tool.

The criminal justice department met the criteria identified in the evaluation tool in nine of the identified criteria. Criteria were considered to be met if the evaluation panel either agreed or strongly agreed. The panel strongly agreed that the criteria evaluated relating to current student engagement practices were being met, and in addition, the panel agreed that two criteria were being satisfied. Current practices being met included, (a) involve students in cocurricular activities, (b) student interaction is facilitated, (c) course activities promote engagement, (d) an environment exists that allows for student-faculty interaction, (e) student thinking skills are increased, and (f) engagement activities are well crafted.

The evaluation panel also disagreed with seven of the criteria. The criteria upon which the panel disagreed were, (a) engagement is affected by socioeconomic factors, (b)

importance of engagement practices is noted by faculty, (c) individual meetings occur between faculty and students, (d) engagement practices include past experience of students, (e) situational learning activities are included in courses, (f) program curriculum is structured to form learning communities, and (g) courses contain experiential learning components.

Implications of Findings

Three outcomes of this study contribute to improving educational practice. First, the study provided the college with additional resources to facilitate criminal justice student learning. Second, this research project contributes to the body of research focusing on student engagement in 2-year colleges. Third, the results of this study identified any gap in the use of current student engagement practices presently utilized by criminal justice faculty.

Gap Analysis Results

The evaluation indicated that opportunities for student engagement currently exist in the criminal justice curriculum. Students and faculty report engagement activities are regularly utilized. Students and faculty agree that the criminal justice division is supportive of students on both academic and personal levels. The evaluation panel indicated that the performance of the criminal justice division was deficient in seven areas. The deficient areas were identified through a gap analysis. Gaps identify areas for improvement. Recommendations for resolving the seven gaps are a result of this evaluation. Three of the analyzed criteria were found to be interrelated. Discussion of these criteria was combined. In total, five gaps were identified, and recommendations to address these gaps were prepared.

The first identified gap related to student-faculty individual meetings. The college

identifies the importance of student-faculty interaction, as evidenced through the scheduling of instructor office and advising hours. Although office and advising hours are identified as necessary and time is allotted for this purpose, a gap continues to exist. Office and advising hours are scheduled by faculty based upon faculty preference. The scheduling of class hours is not a consideration in determining office and advising hours, and this may contribute to the existence of the gap.

The second identified gap relates to capitalizing on student experiences. Most students in the program meet the definition of a traditional student. The definition identifies this student as being between the ages of 18 and 22 and being enrolled in full-time coursework. The presence of this gap may exist due to limited student experiences relative to criminal justice activities. Evaluating the scope of student experiences in a class is difficult. Students may be unwilling to discuss past personal involvement with law enforcement authorities within a classroom environment.

The curriculum as presently constructed provides a limited number of opportunities to engage students in situational learning activities. Courses include scenario-based activities and assessments, narrowly focused on state law enforcement officer certification requirements and not on providing the students with engagement opportunities. The narrow focus limits the breadth of possibilities for situational learning.

A third gap revealed in the evaluation is that the curriculum is not structured to form learning communities. The program allows students to self-select their course schedules. Students attend various courses together, but this is due to happenstance or student preference rather than by curriculum design. No coordination exists between criminal justice courses and applicable required general education courses.

A fourth gap is the importance faculty place on student engagement. The degree

of importance a particular faculty member places on engagement related activities is difficult to measure. The panel indicated that faculty do not place importance on student engagement activities.

The fifth gap identified is whether the diversity of students' socioeconomic conditions is addressed by division student engagement practices. The student survey and the literature review both support the existence of this gap. Students who attend 2-year institutions maintain employment during the course of their studies. The student survey indicates that 55% of the participants work more than 30 hours per week. The survey also identified that students receive little, if any, monetary assistance from either their parents or their employers.

Limitations

The study is limited due to the specific focus of the study: the criminal justice division of one college. The narrow focus of the study limits generalization of the results. The results of the survey research were also limited. Approximately 20% of the criminal justice division student body participated in the survey.

Changes based upon certification requirements for law enforcement officers are ongoing, and being instituted by an agency that is not focused upon academics. Certification requirement changes will materially affect course structure. As these changes occur, the criminal justice program will adjust to incorporate such changes. The relevance of this evaluation study may diminish as a result of the adjustments.

Recommendations

Six recommendations are presented based upon results of this study. The commitment of the criminal justice division and the college to provide quality education indicates that these recommendations will be thoughtfully reviewed and implemented.

First, the exploration and implementation of practices designed to build learning communities is a beneficial undertaking for the criminal justice division. Learning communities will enhance student engagement and learning with the implementation of linked or bundled courses.

The law enforcement profession requires practitioners to be proficient in many skills. In addition, professional law enforcement practitioners are expected to possess diversified knowledge spanning several interrelated disciplines. Linking social science courses with criminal justice courses will increase engagement opportunities and facilitate learning in both disciplines. Courses that readily lend themselves to such a pairing are the introduction to criminal justice course and the contemporary American society course. The juvenile procedures course may be linked with either introductory psychology or abnormal psychology, with discussions between criminal justice and social science faculty taking place on a regular basis to coordinate curriculum and complement the instructional goals of each course.

Bundled courses are designed to create a student cohort. Through the creation of the cohort, students enroll in specific courses. The opportunities for engagement increase and learning is facilitated as the students interact frequently in different disciplines.

Second, the necessity exists for criminal justice faculty to examine to what extent situational and experiential instruction methods are currently utilized, with a focus on what variety of situations and experiences are beneficial to the instructional process. The faculty will determine the design and placement of student engagement activities that will most benefit student learning. The implementation of this recommendation will prevent a duplication of activities.

Third, improved student-faculty communication is essential. Improving the new

student orientation presentation may be helpful. Stressing the importance of student-faculty communication during the orientation is a first step toward improvement. The orientation provides the opportunity to advise students of what they may reasonably expect from faculty outside of scheduled instructional hours.

Fourth, reexamination of the computation and scheduling of office and advising hours should be conducted. Office hours are computed based upon the current number of a faculty member's assigned instructional hours. The number of office hours does not include factoring in the number of students enrolled in a course. No criteria currently exist to determine the number of hours a faculty advisor may schedule.

Fifth, improvements will be made to advising services for criminal justice students. The current process allows students to self-advise. The current process does not encourage student interaction with faculty. Assigning faculty advisors to specific students is one action that will encourage the development of a relationship between faculty and students. Another action that will encourage relationships is instituting a requirement that a faculty advisor meet with a student a minimum of once per term. A required minimum number of contacts with students may also increase faculty-student communication and engagement. A registration hold is one option to consider in facilitating the advising session.

The researcher recommends a follow-up study. This study will be conducted a sufficient amount of time after the recommended changes are implemented in order to determine the impact of the changes upon student engagement.

The study also utilized the results of the evaluation report to create an implementation plan (see Appendix S). The plan will adhere to college protocols for the revision of curricula. The plan for revision will consist of the following procedures: (a)

The criminal justice dean, in consultation with the executive vice president/chief academic officer, will determine the recommendations appropriate for implementation; (b) the dean will appoint a criminal justice faculty member to assist in the development and implementation of tasks related to implementation; and (c) criminal justice faculty will meet to review the recommendations, address concerns, and develop an implementation plan that assigns specific duties to faculty members.

The implementation plan will adhere to the following guidelines: (a) complete implementation of the revision plan within 6 months, (b) use monthly criminal justice faculty staff meetings to discuss progress and concerns of the implementation plan, (c) faculty will work cooperatively to implement the recommendations assigned by the dean, (d) faculty will prepare 6-month progress reports for the dean, and (e) the executive cabinet will receive a status report regarding the implementation plan at the discretion of the executive vice president/chief academic officer of the college.

The plan for future evaluation will adhere to the following steps: (a) A follow-up evaluation will be conducted by the college research and development department 18 months after the recommended changes are implemented, (b) Internet technology will be the method of choice for the follow-up survey, (c) students admitted to the criminal justice program for one academic year following plan implementation are eligible for participation, (d) results of the survey will be compared with this study, (e) if indicated, the implemented recommendations will be revised, and (f) the survey will be readministered 2 years following plan implementation.

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Appendix A

Community College Survey of Student Engagement Document

The Community College Student Report

1. Did you begin college at this college or elsewhere?	☐	Started here	☐	Started elsewhere
2. Thinking about this current academic term, how would you characterize your enrollment at this college?	☐	Full-time	☐	Less than full-time
3. Have you taken this survey in another class this term?	☐	Yes	☐	No

4. In your experience <u>at this college</u> during the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following?

	Very Often	Often	Some-times	Never
a. Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Made a class presentations	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Came to class without completing readings or assignments	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Worked with other students on projects during class	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. Tutored or taught other students (paid or voluntary)	☐	☐	☐	☐
i. Participated in a community-based project as a part of a regular course	☐	☐	☐	☐
j. Used the internet or instant messaging to work on an assignment	☐	☐	☐	☐
k. Used e-mail to communicate with an instructor	☐	☐	☐	☐
l. Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor	☐	☐	☐	☐
m. Talked about career plans with an instructor or advisor	☐	☐	☐	☐
n. Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with instructors outside of class	☐	☐	☐	☐
o. Received prompt feedback (written or oral) from instructors on your performance	☐	☐	☐	☐
p. Worked harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations	☐	☐	☐	☐
q. Worked with instructors on activities other than coursework	☐	☐	☐	☐
r. Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, co-workers, etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Very Often	Often	Some-times	Never
s. Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity other than your own	☐	☐	☐	☐
t. Had serious conversations with students who differ from you in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values	☐	☐	☐	☐
u. Skipped class	☐	☐	☐	☐

5. During the current school year, to what extent has your coursework <u>at this college</u> emphasized the following mental activities?

	Very much	Quite a bit	Some	Very little
a. Memorizing facts, ideas, or methods from your courses and readings so you can repeat them in pretty much the same form	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Synthesizing and organizing ideas, information, or experiences in new ways	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Making judgments about the value or soundness of information, arguments, or methods	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Using information you have read or heard to perform a new skill	☐	☐	☐	☐

6. During the current school year, about how much reading and writing have you done <u>at this college</u>?

	None	1 to 4	5 to 10	11 to 20	More than 20
a. Number of assigned textbooks, manuals, books, or book-length packs of course readings	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Number of books read on your own (not assigned) for personal enjoyment or academic enrichment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Number of written papers or reports of any length	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

7. Mark the box that best represents the extent to which your examinations during the current school year have challenged you to do your best work at this college.

	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
Extremely challenging	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Extremely easy

8. Which of the following have you done, are you doing, or do you plan to do while attending <u>this college</u>?

	I have done	I plan to do	I have not done nor plan to do
a. Internship, field experiences, co-op experience, or clinical assignment	☐	☐	☐
b. English as a second language course	☐	☐	☐
c. Developmental/remedial reading course	☐	☐	☐

d. Developmental/remedial writing course	☐	☐	☐
e. Developmental/remedial math course	☐	☐	☐
f. Study skills course	☐	☐	☐
g. Honors course	☐	☐	☐
h. College orientation program or course	☐	☐	☐
i. Organized learning communities (linked courses/study groups led by faculty or counselors)	☐	☐	☐

9. To what extent does this college emphasize each of the following?

	Very much	Quite a bit	Some	Very little
a. Encouraging you to spend significant amounts of time studying	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Providing the support you need to help you succeed at this college	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Helping you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Providing the support you need to thrive socially	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Providing the financial support you need to afford your education	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. Using computers in academic work	☐	☐	☐	☐

10. About how many hours do you spend in a typical 7-day week doing each of the following?

	None	1-5	6-10	11-20	21-30	More than 30
a. Preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, rehearsing, or other activities related to your program)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Working for pay	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Participating in college-sponsored activities (organizations, campus publications, student government, intercollegiate or intramural sports, etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Providing care for dependents living with your (parents, children, spouse, etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Commuting to and from classes	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

11. Mark the box that best represents the quality of your relationships with people at this college.

a. Other Students

	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
Friendly, supportive, sense of belonging	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Unfriendly, unsupportive, sense of alienation

b. Instructors

	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
Available, helpful, sympathetic	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Unavailable, unhelpful, unsympathetic

c. Administrative Personnel & Offices

	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
Helpful, considerate flexible	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Unhelpful, inconsiderate, rigid

12. To what extent has YOUR EXPERIENCE AT THIS COLLEGE contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?

	Very much	Quite a bit	Some	Very little
a. Acquiring a broad general education	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Writing clearly and effectively	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Speaking clearly and effectively	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Thinking critically and analytically	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Solving numerical problems	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. Using computing and information technology	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. Working effectively with others	☐	☐	☐	☐
i. Learning effectively on your own	☐	☐	☐	☐
j. Understanding yourself	☐	☐	☐	☐
k. Understanding people of other racial or ethnic backgrounds	☐	☐	☐	☐
l. Developing a personal code of values and ethics	☐	☐	☐	☐
m. Contributing to the welfare of your community	☐	☐	☐	☐
n. Developing clearer career goals	☐	☐	☐	☐
o. Gaining information about career opportunities	☐	☐	☐	☐

13**.** This section has three parts. Please answer all three sections, indicating (1) HOW OFTEN you use the following services, (2) HOW IMPORTANT the services are to you, and (3) HOW SATISFIED you are with the services AT THIS COLLEGE.

a. Academic advising/planning

(1) Frequency of Use				(2) Satisfaction			(3) Importance		
Often	Some-times	Rarely/ Never	Don't know/ N.A.	Very	Some-what	Not at all	N.A.	Very	Some-what	Not at all
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

b. Career counseling

(1) Frequency of Use				(2) Satisfaction			(3) Importance		
Often	Some-times	Rarely/ Never	Don't know/ N.A.	Very	Some-what	Not at all	N.A.	Very	Some-what	Not at all
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

c. Job placement assistance

(1) Frequency of Use				(2) Satisfaction			(3) Importance		
Often	Some-times	Rarely/ Never	Don't know/ N.A.	Very	Some-what	Not at all	N.A.	Very	Some-what	Not at all
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

d. Peer or other tutoring

(1) Frequency of Use				(2) Satisfaction			(3) Importance			
Often	Some-times	Rarely/ Never	Don't know/ N.A.	Very	Some-what	Not at all	N.A.	Very	Some-what	Not at all
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

e. Skill labs (writing, math, etc.)

(1) Frequency of Use				(2) Satisfaction			(3) Importance		
Often	Some-times	Rarely/ Never	Don't know/ N.A.	Very	Some-what	Not at all	N.A.	Very	Some-what	Not at all
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

f. Child care

(1) Frequency of Use				(2) Satisfaction			(3) Importance		
Often	Some-times	Rarely/ Never	Don't know/ N.A.	Very	Some-what	Not at all	N.A.	Very	Some-what	Not at all
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

g. Financial aid advising

(1) Frequency of Use				(2) Satisfaction			(3) Importance		
Often	Some-times	Rarely/ Never	Don't know/ N.A.	Very	Some-what	Not at all	N.A.	Very	Some-what	Not at all
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

h. Computer lab

(1) Frequency of Use				(2) Satisfaction			(3) Importance		
Often	Some-times	Rarely/ Never	Don't know/ N.A.	Very	Some-what	Not at all	N.A.	Very	Some-what	Not at all
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

i. Student organizations

(1) Frequency of Use				(2) Satisfaction			(3) Importance		
Often	Some-times	Rarely/ Never	Don't know/ N.A.	Very	Some-what	Not at all	N.A.	Very	Some-what	Not at all
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

j. Transfer credit assistance

(1) Frequency of Use				(2) Satisfaction			(3) Importance		
Often	Some-times	Rarely/ Never	Don't know/ N.A.	Very	Some-what	Not at all	N.A.	Very	Some-what	Not at all
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

k. Services for people with disabilities

(1) Frequency of Use				(2) Satisfaction			(3) Importance		
Often	Some-times	Rarely/ Never	Don't know/ N.A.	Very	Some-what	Not at all	N.A.	Very	Some-what	Not at all
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

14. How likely is it that the following issues would cause you to withdraw from class or from <u>this college</u>?
(Please respond to each item)

	Very likely	Likely	Some-what likely	Not likely
a. Working full-time	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Caring for dependents	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Academically unprepared	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Lack of finances	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Transfer to a four-year college or university	☐	☐	☐	☐

15. How supportive are your friends of your attending this college?

☐ Extremely ☐ Somewhat
☐ Quite a bit ☐ Not very

16. How supportive is your immediate family of your attending this college?

☐ Extremely ☐ Somewhat
☐ Quite a bit ☐ Not very

17. Indicate which of the following are your reasons/goals for attending this college *(Please respond to each item)*	Primary goal	Secondary goal	Not a goal
a. Complete a certificate program	☐	☐	☐
b. Obtain an associate degree	☐	☐	☐
c. Transfer to a four-year college or university	☐	☐	☐
d. Obtain or update job-related skills	☐	☐	☐
e. Self-improvement/Personal Enjoyment	☐	☐	☐
f. Change careers	☐	☐	☐

18. Indicate which of the following are *sources* you use to pay your tuition <u>at this college</u>**?** *(Please respond to each item)*

	Major source	Minor source	Not a \ source
a. My own income/savings	☐	☐	☐
b. Parent or spouse/significant other's income/savings	☐	☐	☐
c. Employer contributions	☐	☐	☐
d. Grants & scholarships	☐	☐	☐
e. Student loans (bank, etc.)	☐	☐	☐
f. Public assistance	☐	☐	☐

19. Since high school, which of the following types of schools have you attended other than the one you are now attending**.** *(Please mark all that apply)*

☐ Proprietary (private) school or training program
☐ Public vocational-technical school
☐ Another community or technical college
☐ Four-year college or university
☐ None

20. When do you plan to take classes at this college again?

☐ I will accomplish my goal(s) during this term and will not be returning
☐ I have no current plan to return
☐ Within the next 12 months
☐ Uncertain

21. At this college, in what range is your overall college grade average?

☐ A
☐ A- to B+
☐ B
☐ B- to C+
☐ C
☐ C- or lower
☐ Do not have a GPA at this school
☐ Pass/fail classes only

22. When do you most frequently take classes at this college? *(Mark one only)*

☐ Day classes (morning or afternoon)
☐ Evening classes
☐ Weekend classes

23. How many TOTAL credit hours have you earned at this college, not counting the courses you are currently taking this term?

- ☐ none
- ☐ 1-14 credits
- ☐ 15-29 credits
- ☐ 30-44 credits
- ☐ 45-60 credits
- ☐ over 60 credits

24. At what other types of institutions are you taking classes this term?
(Please mark all that apply)

- ☐ None
- ☐ High school
- ☐ Vocational/technical school
- ☐ Another community or technical college
- ☐ Four-year college/university
- ☐ Other

25. How many classes are you presently taking at OTHER institutions?

- ☐ None
- ☐ 1 class
- ☐ 2 classes
- ☐ 3 classes
- ☐ 4 classes or more

26. Would you recommend this college to a friend or family member?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

27. How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this college?

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Fair
- ☐ Poor

28. Do you have children who live with you?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

29. Mark your age group

- ☐ Under 18
- ☐ 18 to 19
- ☐ 20 to 21
- ☐ 22 to 24
- ☐ 25 to 29
- ☐ 30 to 39
- ☐ 40 to 49
- ☐ 50 to 64
- ☐ 65+

30.Your sex:

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

31. Are you married?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

32. Is English your native (first) language?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

33. Are you an international student or foreign national?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

34. What is your racial identification? *(Mark all that apply)*
- ☐ American Indian or other Native American
- ☐ Asian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander
- ☐ Native Hawaiian
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ White, Non-Hispanic
- ☐ Hispanic, Latino, Spanish
- ☐ Other

35. What is the highest academic credential you have earned?

- ☐ None
- ☐ High school diploma or GED
- ☐ Vocational/technical certificate
- ☐ Associate's degree
- ☐ Bachelor's degree
- ☐ Master's/doctoral/professional degree

36. What is the highest level of education obtained by your:

	Father	Mother
a. Not a high school graduate	☐	☐
b. High school diploma or GED	☐	☐
c. Some college, did not complete degree	☐	☐
d. Associate's degree	☐	☐
e. Bachelor's degree	☐	☐
f. Master's degree/1st professional	☐	☐
g. Doctorate degree	☐	☐
h. Unknown	☐	☐

Note. From *Community College Survey of Student Engagement*, by Community College Leadership Program (2004), Austin: University of Texas at Austin. Copyright 2004 by Community College Survey of Student Engagement. Reprinted with permission.

Appendix B

College Academic Quality Improvement Project Explanation

What is AQIP?

Academic Quality Improvement Project (AQIP) is a new accreditation option that intends to revolutionize how the North Central Association (NCA) accredits and reaccredits its member colleges.

It used to be that every 10 years, a team of six or more NCA consultant evaluators would read our self-study, make an on-site visit, interview staff, and write a report recommending that the college be reaccredited for another 10 years-in the case of a good result. AQIP changes all of that.

In 2000, a group of 14 college staff formed an AQIP study group to take a look at whether the new accreditation model would be better or worse for college than the traditional process that the college went through in 1995-96 (with 2 ½ years of preparation). The group concluded that pursuing AQIP would be a better option for college, in part due to its rich history with quality principles and tools.

AQIP bills itself as a "quality-based" accreditation process, meaning that you can use a different set of evaluative criteria than the traditional five criteria used in the past for all colleges. With AQIP, a college conducts its own self-assessment, sets its own goals and measures itself on how well it is making progress toward achieving the goals. There is still a site visit by an outside team, but it occurs once in a seven-year period, supposedly without the fanfare that typically accompanies the traditional 10-year visit.

Per NCA, "AQIP will be nonprescriptive and will not encroach on an institution's right to make its own decisions about its future…[it asks] an institution to examine whether it is doing those things which will help it achieve its goals, and whether it is doing them as effectively as possible." (NCA AQIP Brochure, page 4)

NCA developed the AQIP model to offer an alternative for accreditation. Some colleges had complained about the traditional NCA model, finding it intrusive and not helpful in improvement efforts. Meanwhile, the business world had gravitated toward Malcolm Baldrige, state award programs like State Forward, and quality-based evaluation. The college's cross-functional NCA/AQIP team includes staff from many different areas of the college.

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Appendix C

Academic Quality Improvement Project Questions

Category One: Helping Students Learn

Context for Analysis

1C1 Common Student Learning Objectives: What are the common student learning objectives you hold for all of your students (regardless of their status or particular program of study) and the pattern of knowledge and skills you expect your students to possess upon completion of their general and specialized studies?

As appropriate, address co-curricular objectives/goals. Category Six, Supporting Institutional Operations, asks how you determine, address, and improve your learning support systems to contribute to achieving student learning and development objectives.

1C2 Aligning Student Learning with Mission, Vision, and Philosophy: By what means do you ensure that student learning expectations, practices, and development objectives align with your mission, vision, and philosophy?

1C3 Key Instructional Programs: Delivery and Use of Technology: What are your key instructional programs? What delivery methods are used within these key programs? To what degree is technology used within the formal instructional context?

1C4 Preparing Students for a Diverse World and Accommodating Various Learning Styles: What practices do you use to ensure that the design and delivery of student learning options prepare students to live in a diverse world and accommodate a variety of student learning styles?

1C5 Creating a Climate That Celebrates Intellectual Freedom, Reflection, and Respect: By what means do you create and maintain a climate that celebrates intellectual freedom, inquiry, reflection, respect for intellectual property, and respect for differing and diverse opinions?

Processes

1P1 Determining Student Learning Objectives and Program Learning Objectives: How do you determine your common student learning objectives as well as specific program learning objectives? Who is involved in setting these objectives?

1P2 Designing Responsive Academic Programs: Balancing Education Issues with Student Needs: How do you design new programs and courses to facilitate student learning? How do you balance educational market issues with student needs in designing responsive academic programming?

1P3 Determining Student Preparation Required for Specific Curricula, Programs, Courses, and Learning: How do you determine the preparation required of students for the specific curricula, programs, courses, and learning they will pursue?

1P4 Communicating Expectations of Student Preparation and Learning Objectives: How

do you communicate expectations regarding student preparation and student learning objectives (for programs, courses, and the awarding of specific degrees or credentials) to prospective and current students?

1P5 Helping Students Select Programs of Study: How do you help students select programs of study that match their needs, interests, and abilities? In providing this help, how are discrepancies between the necessary and actual preparation of students and their learning styles detected and addressed?

1P6 Determining and Documenting Effective Teaching and Learning: How do you determine and document effective teaching and learning? How are these expectations communicated across the institution?

1P7 Effective and Efficient Course Delivery System: How do you build an effective and efficient course delivery system? How do delivery decisions balance student and institutional needs?

1P8 Currency and Effectiveness of Curriculum: How do you monitor the currency and effectiveness of your curriculum? What process is in place for changing or discontinuing programs and courses?

1P9 Learning Support for Students and Faculty: How do you determine student and faculty needs relative to learning support? How are learning support areas involved in the student learning and development process?

1P10 Alignment of Co-curricular Development Goals with Curricular Learning Objectives: How are co-curricular development goals aligned with curricular learning objectives?

1P11 Determining Process for Assessment of Student Learning: How do you determine the processes for student assessment?

1P12 Determining Students' Preparation for Further Education or Employment: How do you discover how well prepared the students who are completing programs, degrees, and certificates are for further education or employment?

1P13 Measures of Student Performance: What measures of student performance do you collect and analyze regularly?

Results

1R1 Results for Common Student Learning Objectives and Specific Program Learning Objectives: What are your results for common student learning objectives as well as specific program learning objectives?

1R2 Evidence of Adequate Student Skills: What is your evidence that students have acquired the knowledge and skills base required by the institution and its stakeholders

(that is, other educational institutions and employers) for the awarding of specific degrees or credentials? *Note: Results might address perspectives of other higher education institutions, employers, and so on.*

1R3 Results Associated with Helping Students Learn: What are your results for processes associated with helping students learn? *Note: Results might include processes in designing and introducing new courses and programs, using technology and its impact, evidence of effective teaching, processes associated with scheduling, and so on.*

Regarding 1R1 through 1R3, how do your results compare with the results of other higher education institutions and, if appropriate, organizations outside the education community?

Improvement

1I1 Improving Process and Systems: How do you improve your current processes and systems for helping students learn and develop?

1I2 Targets for Improvement: Determination, Priorities, and Communication: With regard to your current results for student learning and development, how do you set targets for improvement? What specific improvement priorities are you targeting, and how will they be addressed? How do you communicate your current results and improvement priorities to students, faculty, staff, administrators, and appropriate stakeholders?

Note. From *Principles and Criteria for Improving Academic Quality*, by Higher Learning Commission, Academic Quality Improvement Program, 2002, Chicago: North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. Copyright 2002 by North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. Reprinted with permission.

Appendix D

Engagement Tips for Students

Tips for Students

Approaching faculty can be intimidating. But they are people, too! Here are some suggested ways to interact with faculty:

Email
Contact a professor via email to ask a question or to schedule an appointment. Email allows you to "talk" with a professor without worrying about interrupting them, because they can answer in their free time. You can give a professor a sense of what you want to talk about during your appointment so they have time to prepare information making your visit more worthwhile. Email also enables you to take your time with what you want to say

Small talk
Talk with a professor before class or walk with them back to their office after class

Invitations
Invite a professor to attend an event that your club is sponsoring. Hand the professor a flyer or an invitation that does the talking for you if you get tongue-tied.

Office hours
Stop by during office hours to:

- Ask how you are doing in class. Ask what you can do better.
- Ask for more information on a subject in which you are interested.
- Discuss different paper topic ideas and possible research sources.
- Let a professor know what you enjoyed about his/her lecture.
- Find out their recommendations for what classes to take next semester.
- Ask for their suggestions for an internship/volunteer position/job in their field.
- Learn their opinions about different graduate programs
- Volunteer to assist with their research projects

Note. From *Tips*, by Arizona State University, (n.d.), retrieved September 24, 2006, from http://www.asu .edu/studentaffairs/mu/mpa/tips.htm.

Appendix E

Engagement Tips for Faculty

Tips for Faculty

Student-faculty interaction can mean inviting students over to one's house for dinner, participating a service project with students, asking students to work on faculty research projects, and advising a student organization.

But interaction can also be defined as informal conversations, including course-related topics, self-disclosure, small talk, advice, intellectual ideas, and favor requests.

Research has demonstrated that students are eager for faculty interaction but that many, particularly first-year students, are highly dependent upon faculty encouragement to do so. Faculty can encourage students to take the initiative by:

Availability
Arrive to class early/stay a few minutes at the end.
Small talk
Although the initial function of small talk is to break the ice, it has been demonstrated that students feel more confident in the classroom and more valued by the faculty member after engaging in small talk .
Office Hours
Select student-friendly hours, keep the door open, and suggest reasons why a student could stop by, such as to discuss paper topics, how they are doing in the class, and their future plans. Faculty can also solicit feedback from their students on the class.
Email
Encourage students to email questions, concerns, and thoughts. In one study, students who reported being too intimidated to interact in person were able to have frequent contact with faculty through email.
Role as Teacher
Research shows that when students perceive faculty as making teaching a priority, communicating concern that students understand the material, challenging students, involving students in the teaching process, and extending the students' understanding beyond the class material to include general subject matter, these faculty seemed more approachable to students.
Self disclosure
When faculty relate to students as 'real' people by communicating interest in students as individuals, by talking about themselves, by using humor, or by relating to the student perspective, students are more willing to interact with them. Self disclosure can include sharing experiences about graduate school, children, and future plans (Daniel-DiGregorio 1996; Plecha 2002).

Note. From *Tips*, by Arizona State University, (n.d.), retrieved September 24, 2006, from http://www.asu .edu/studentaffairs/mu/mpa/tips.htm.

Appendix F

Advantages and Disadvantages of Active Learning Techniques

Table 1 Advantages and Disadvantages of Active Learning Techniques

Technique	Advantages	Disadvantages
Collaborative learning	Engages students in joint intellectual efforts Students learn to work together Students are able to maintain some sense of individual accountability Provides an opportunity for peer evaluations	Decision about how to form groups Getting "buy-in" from students Giving up classroom lecture time for group work Individual members who fail to be responsible members of the group
Problem-based learning (PBL)	Sense of commaradie (sic) that is generated among student peers Challenges students to activate prior knowledge Stimulates intrinsic motivation to learn A curricular organizer	Requires careful planning and implementation More difficult in larger classes May need to cut back on content coverage tin order to allow PBL activities to take place Suitable for lower-achieving and higher-achieving students
Service Learning	Provides opportunities for students to apply course content to real-world problems Allows students to take responsibility for their own learning Allows for simultaneous service and learning Creates a sense of civic responsibility in students Allows students to apply major course concepts to the community setting Can enhance overall scores (examinations, major papers, etc.) Creates a mentoring relationship between the student and the instructor	Additional effort on the part of the student and the instructor Identification of sites Liability issues related to student safety and well being
Involving undergraduate students in research	Allows a "hands-on" effort related to the learning of research methods and statistics Travel to professional conferences and enhancement of students' speaking and networking skills Encourages students to think about continuing their education experience at the graduate level	Requires a high level of motivation on the part of both the instructor and the student Additional time commitment on the part of both the student and the instructor

Note. From "Creating a Teaching and Learning Environment in criminal Justice Courses That Promotes Higher Order Thinking, by B. Sims, (2006), *Journal of Criminal Justice Education, 17*(2), p. 350.

Appendix G

Criteria and Research Standards Linkage

Utility The utility standards are intended to ensure that an evaluation will serve the information needs of the intended users.

U1 *Stakeholder Identification.* Persons involved in or affected by the evaluation should be identified so that their needs can be addressed.

U2 *Evaluator Credibility.* The persons conducting the evaluation should be both trustworthy and competent to perform the evaluation so that the evaluation findings achieve maximum credibility and acceptance.

U3 *Information Scope and Selection.* Information collected should be broadly selected to address pertinent questions about the program and be responsive to the needs and interests of clients and other specified stakeholders.

U4 *Values Identification.* The perspectives, procedures, and rationale used to interpret the findings should be carefully described so that the bases for value judgments are clear.

U5 *Report Clarity.* Evaluation reports should clearly describe the program being evaluated, including its context, and the purposes, procedures, and findings of the evaluation so that essential information is provided and easily understood.

U6 *Report Timeliness and Dissemination.* Significant interim findings and evaluation reports should be disseminated to intended users so that they can be used in a timely fashion.

U7 *Evaluation Impact.* Evaluations should be planned, conducted, and reported in ways that encourage follow-through by stakeholders so that the likelihood that the evaluation will be used is increased.

Feasibility The feasibility standards are intended to ensure that an evaluation will be realistic, prudent, diplomatic, and frugal.

F1 *Practical Procedures.* The evaluation procedures should be practical, to keep disruption to a minimum when needed information is obtained.

F2 *Political Viability.* The evaluation should be planned and conducted with anticipation of the different positions of various interest groups so that their cooperation may be obtained, and so that possible attempts by any of these groups to curtail evaluation operations or to bias or misapply the results can be averted or counteracted.

F3 *Cost Effectiveness.* The evaluation should be efficient and produce information of sufficient value so that the resources expended can be justified.

Propriety The propriety standards are intended to ensure that an evaluation will be conducted legally, ethically, and with due regard for the welfare of those involved in the evaluation, as well as those affected by its results.

P1 *Service Orientation.* Evaluations should be designed to assist organizations to address and effectively serve the needs of the full range of targeted participants.

P2 *Formal Agreements.* Obligations of the formal parties to an evaluation (what is to be done, how, by whom, when) should be agreed to in writing so that these parties are obligated to adhere to all conditions of the agreement or formally to renegotiate it.

P3 *Rights of Human Subjects.* Evaluations should be designed and conducted to respect and protect the rights and welfare of human subjects.

P4 *Human Interactions.* Evaluators should respect human dignity and worth in their interactions with other persons associated with an evaluation so that participants are not threatened or harmed.

P5 *Complete and Fair Assessment.* The evaluation should be complete and fair in its examination and recording of strengths and weaknesses of the program being evaluated so that strengths can be built upon and problem areas addressed.

P6 *Disclosure of Findings.* The formal parties to an evaluation should ensure that the full set of evaluation findings along with pertinent limitations are made accessible to the persons affected by the evaluation, and any others with expressed legal rights to receive the results.

P7 *Conflict of Interest.* Any conflict of interest should be dealt with openly and honestly so that it does not compromise the evaluation processes and results.

P8 *Fiscal Responsibility.* The evaluator's allocation and expenditure of resources should reflect sound accountability procedures and otherwise be prudent and ethically responsible so that expenditures are accounted for and appropriate.

Accuracy The accuracy standards are intended to ensure that an evaluation will reveal and convey technically adequate information about the features that determine worth of merit of the program being evaluated.

A1 *Program Documentation.* The program being evaluated should be described and documented clearly and accurately so that the program is clearly identified.

A2 *Context Analysis.* The context in which the program exists should be examined in enough detail so that its likely influences on the program can be identified.

A3 *Described Purposes and Procedures.* The purposes and procedures of the evaluation should be monitored and described in enough detail so that they can be identified and assessed.

A4 *Defensible Information Sources.* The sources of information used in a program evaluation should be described in enough detail so that the adequacy of the information can be assessed.

A5 *Valid Information.* The information gathering procedures should be

chosen or developed and then implemented so that they will assure that the interpretation arrived at is valid for the intended use.

A6 *Reliable Information.* The information gathering procedures should be chosen or developed and then implemented so that they will assure that the information obtained is sufficiently reliable for the intended use.

A7 *Systematic Information.* The information collected, processed, and reported in an evaluation should be systematically reviewed and any errors found should be corrected.

A8 *Analysis of Quantitative Information.* Quantitative information in an evaluation should be appropriately and systematically analyzed so that the evaluation questions are effectively answered.

A9 *Analysis of Qualitative Information.* Qualitative information in an evaluation should be appropriately and systematically analyzed so that the evaluation questions are effectively answered.

A10 *Justified Conclusions.* The conclusions reached in an evaluation should be explicitly justified, so that stakeholders can assess them.

A11 *Impartial Reporting.* Reporting procedures should guard against distortion caused by personal feelings and biases of any party to the evaluation so that evaluation reports fairly reflect the evaluation findings.

A12 *Metaevaluation.* The evaluation itself should be formatively and summatively evaluated against these and other pertinent standards so that its conduct is appropriately guided and, on completion, stakeholders can closely examine its strengths and weaknesses.

Note. From *The Program Evaluation Standards: How to Assess Evaluations of Educational Programs* (2nd ed.), by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation Programs, 1994, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Appendix H

Student Survey

Student Survey

1. During this school year, how regularly have you done the following in your criminal justice classes?

	Very Often	Often	Some-times	Never
a. Contributed to class discussions and/or asked questions in class	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Made a presentation to your class	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Drafted a paper or assignment at least twice before turning it in	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Integrated concepts or facts from various sources in a paper or project for class	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Failed to complete readings or assignments prior to class	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Prepared projects with other students during class	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. Prepared assignments with other students outside of class	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. Explained concepts or ideas to other students in preparation for class	☐	☐	☐	☐
i. As an assignment/project for a class, participated in a community-based project	☐	☐	☐	☐
j. Used the internet or instant messaging to prepare an assignment	☐	☐	☐	☐
k. Communicated with an instructor via e-mail	☐	☐	☐	☐
l. Talked to an instructor about your grades or assignments	☐	☐	☐	☐
m. Held a discussion with an instructor or advisor regarding your career plans	☐	☐	☐	☐
n. Continued classroom discussions or discussed ideas from your readings with instructors after the class period ended	☐	☐	☐	☐
o. Instructors provide written or oral feedback regarding your performance promptly	☐	☐	☐	☐
p. Exceeded your own expectations, or worked beyond what you believed were your capabilities to meet an instructor's standards or expectations	☐	☐	☐	☐
q. Interacted with instructors on activities other than coursework	☐	☐	☐	☐
r. Found yourself engaging other students, family or co-workers in discussions centered on your readings or classes	☐	☐	☐	☐
s. Seriously discussed ideas with students of a different race or ethnicity	☐	☐	☐	☐
t. Seriously discussed ideas with students holding different religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values than those held by you	☐	☐	☐	☐
u. Failed to attend class without an excuse	☐	☐	☐	☐

2. During this school year, what emphasis has your criminal justice coursework placed on the following?

	Very much	Quite a bit	Some	Very little
a. Memorization: Repeating facts, ideas, or methods from your courses and readings in practically the same form in which they were presented	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Analysis: breaking down an idea, experience or theory to its basic elements	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Perspective: finding new ways to organize and integrate ideas, information, or experiences	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Evaluation: assessing the value or soundness of information, arguments, or methods	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Adaptation: finding new applications of theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Proficiency: performing a new skill using information you have read or heard	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. What amount of reading and writing have you done during this school year?

	None	1 to 4	5 to 10	11 to 20	More than 20
a. Assigned texts, books, manuals, or book-length course readings	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Books read on your own for personal enjoyment or academic enrichment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Assigned written papers or reports	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

4. How challenging have your criminal justice examinations been during the current school year?

	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
Extremely difficult	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Extremely undemanding

5. How much emphasis does the criminal justice department place on each of the following?

	Very much	Quite a bit	Some	Very little
a. Spending substantial amounts of time studying	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Supporting your success in the program	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Encouraging students to interact with those of diverse economic, social, racial, or ethnic backgrounds	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Assistance with your non-academic responsibilities to your family, employer, etc.	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Support for social interaction and growth	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Making you aware of financial support opportunities to help finance your education	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. Computer uses in your schoolwork	☐	☐	☐	☐

6. During a full seven-day week, how much time, in hours, do you normally spend on each of the following activities?

	None	1-5	6-10	11-20	21-30	More than

						30
a. Preparing for class	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Employment for pay	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Participating in college-sponsored activities outside the classroom	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Providing care for family members in your home	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Travel to and from classes	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

7. How would you rate your relationships with others in the criminal justice department?

a. Other Students

	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
Friendly, supportive, sense of camaraderie	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Unfriendly, unsupportive, sense of hostility

b. Instructors

	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
Available, supportive, sensitive	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Unavailable, unsupportive, insensitive

c. Office and Administrative Personnel

	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
Helpful, understanding, flexible	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Unhelpful, uncaring, rigid

8. Have your skills and personal development in the following areas been improved by the criminal justice department?

	Very much	Quite a bit	Some	Very little
a. A broad general education	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Job or work-related knowledge and skills	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Clear and effective writing skills	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Clear and effective speaking skills	☐	☐	☐	☐
e Critical and analytical thinking	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Numerical problem-solving skills	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. Information technology and computer skills	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. Ability to work effectively with others	☐	☐	☐	☐
i. Skills to learn effectively on your own	☐	☐	☐	☐
j. Understanding yourself	☐	☐	☐	☐
k. Understanding people of diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds	☐	☐	☐	☐
l. Personal code of values and ethics development	☐	☐	☐	☐
m. Contributing to community welfare	☐	☐	☐	☐
n. Refining career goals	☐	☐	☐	☐
o. Career opportunity information	☐	☐	☐	☐

9. How often are you involved with student organizations?	Often	Some-times	Rarely/Never	Don't know/ N.A.
	☐	☐	☐	☐

10. How satisfied are you with the student organizations?	Very	Some-what	Not at all	N.A.
	☐	☐	☐	☐

11. How important are student organizations to you?

Very	Somewhat	Not at all
☐	☐	☐

12. How would you characterize your friends' support of your involvement in criminal justice classes?

☐ Extremely supportive
☐ Quite supportive
☐ Somewhat supportive
☐ Not very supportive

13. How would you characterize your immediate family's support of your involvement in criminal justice classes?

☐ Extremely supportive
☐ Quite supportive
☐ Somewhat supportive
☐ Not very supportive

14. Why are you taking criminal justice classes? *(Please respond to each item)*

	Primary goal	Secondary goal	Not a goal
a. Complete a certificate program	☐	☐	☐
b. Obtain an associate degree	☐	☐	☐
c. Transfer to a four-year college or university	☐	☐	☐
d. Obtain or update job-related skills	☐	☐	☐
e. Self-improvement/personal enjoyment	☐	☐	☐
f. Change careers	☐	☐	☐

15. How are you financing your education? *(Please respond to each item)*

	Major source	Minor source	Not a source
a. My own income/savings	☐	☐	☐
b. Parent or spouse/significant other's income/savings	☐	☐	☐
c. Employer contributions	☐	☐	☐
d. Grants & scholarships	☐	☐	☐
e. Student loans	☐	☐	☐
f. Public assistance	☐	☐	☐

16. What is your overall grade average?

☐ A
☐ A- to B+
☐ B
☐ B- to C+
☐ C
☐ C- or lower
☐ Do not have a GPA at this school
☐ Pass/fail classes only

17. My educational experience in the criminal justice department has been:

☐ Excellent
☐ Good
☐ Fair
☐ Poor

18. Age

☐ Under 18
☐ 18 to 19

- ☐ 20 to 21
- ☐ 22 to 24
- ☐ 25 to 29
- ☐ 30 to 39
- ☐ 40 to 49
- ☐ 50 to 64
- ☐ 65+

19. Sex

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

20. Marital status

- ☐ Married
- ☐ Single (never married)
- ☐ Divorced
- ☐ Widowed

21. Racial grouping *(Mark all that apply)*

- ☐ American Indian or other Native American
- ☐ Asian, Asian American or Pacific Islander
- ☐ Native Hawaiian
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ White, Non-Hispanic
- ☐ Hispanic, Latino, Spanish
- ☐ Other

22. Parents' education

	Father	Mother
a. Not a high school graduate	☐	☐
b. High school diploma or GED	☐	☐
c. Some college, did not complete degree	☐	☐
d. Associate's degree	☐	☐
e. Bachelor's degree	☐	☐
f. Master's degree/first professional	☐	☐
g. Doctorate degree	☐	☐
h. Unknown	☐	☐

23. Are you the first member of your family to attend college?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Appendix I

Survey Participation Invitation

Month, Day, 2007

Dear Survey Participant,

My name is Marty Totzke, and I am a doctoral student attending Nova Southeastern University. As a requirement of my doctoral program, I am conducting an applied dissertation study and am writing to invite you to participate by completing a survey pertaining to the topic of my study.

My applied dissertation study focuses on student engagement at a technical college criminal justice program. Student engagement is the involvement of students in the learning process. Engagement includes preparation for class, out-of-class discussions, and any other social or academic activity that contributes to learning of academic material. Once obtained, the feedback will be interpreted and shared with individuals within the organization for the purpose of preparing a model of best practices to be used by instructors.

You have been selected for this study because you are an active student in the criminal justice program. By participating in the study, consent is given that the data may be used for research purposes. Confidentiality will be protected.

Thank you for your consideration of my invitation. I will contact you within the next week to answer any questions that you may have and to learn of your decision.

Marty Totzke, Doctoral Student

Appendix J

Formative and Summative Committee Members

Formative Committee Members

Student Counselor

Qualifications: B.A. Psychology, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point; M.S. Educational Counseling, University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, Ed. D., Higher Education Leadership, Nova Southeastern University.

Reason for selection: This member is the counselor for the criminal justice program and receives critical feedback from students regarding the quality of program instruction.

Formative committee selection process: Discussion explaining the purpose of the dissertation and the role of the formative committee.

Criminal Justice Adjunct Faculty Member

Qualifications: A.A.S. Police Science, Fox Valley Technical College; B.A., Leadership in Public Service, Silver Lake College; M.S., Organizational Behavior, Silver Lake College.

Reason for selection: This member's elective credit focused on adult learning theory. The member proactively incorporated student engagement activities in the classroom.

Formative committee selection process: Discussion explaining the purpose of the dissertation and the role of the formative committee.

Criminal Justice Instructor

Qualifications: B.S., Criminal Justice, University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh; M.Ed., Northern Arizona University.

Reason for selection process: This member was chosen due to his Master of Education degree. The member holds an Arizona Community College instructor certification in the field of Administration of Justice. The member served as adjunct faculty at three institutions.

Formative committee selection process: Discussion explaining the purpose of the dissertation and the role of the formative committee.

Members of the Summative Committee

Vice President of Instruction and Academic Dean of a 4-year Midwestern college

Qualifications: B.S., Business Education, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater; M.S. Distributive Education, University of Wisconsin; Ed. D., Vocational Education, Nova Southeastern University.

Reason for selection to the Summative Committee: This member is also a retired Dean of Business and Marketing from a State Technical College. Having received a Doctorate from NOVA, this member is familiar with the committee process.

Summative Committee Selection Process: Discussion explaining the dissertation purpose and the role of a summative committee member.

Associate Dean of Criminal Justice of a State Technical College.

Qualifications: B.S., Criminal Justice, University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh; M.S., Educational Leadership, Marian College.

Reason for selection to the Summative Committee: As a Dean of a Criminal Justice program in a similarly situated technical college, this member contributes administrative implementation insight from the perspective of a technical college dean.

Summative Committee Selection Process: Discussion explaining the dissertation purpose and the role of a summative committee member.

Social Science Instructor and Retired Criminal Justice Manager of a State Technical College.

Qualifications: B.S., Business Education, University of Nebraska; M.S.W., University of Nebraska.

Reason for selection to the Summative Committee: This member possesses an enormous capacity for detail and critical evaluation.

Summative Committee Selection Process: Discussion explaining the dissertation purpose and the role of a summative committee member

Appendix K

Faculty Survey

Faculty Survey

1. During this school year, how regularly have you had students do the following in your criminal justice classes?

	Very Often	Often	Some-times	Never
a. Contribute to class discussions and/or ask questions in class	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Make a presentation in your class	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Prepare more than one draft of a paper or assignment before turning in the final work	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Integrate concepts or facts from various sources in a paper or project for class	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Fail to complete readings or assignments prior to class	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Prepare projects with other students during class	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. Prepare assignments with other students outside of class	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. Explain concepts or ideas to other students in preparation for class	☐	☐	☐	☐
i. As an assignment/project for a class, participate in a community-based project	☐	☐	☐	☐
j. Use the internet or instant messaging to prepare an assignment	☐	☐	☐	☐
k. Communicate with you via e-mail	☐	☐	☐	☐
l. Talk to you about their grades or assignments	☐	☐	☐	☐
m. Hold a discussion with you regarding their career plans	☐	☐	☐	☐
n. Continue classroom discussions or discuss ideas from the readings with you after the class period ended	☐	☐	☐	☐
o. Request prompt written or oral feedback regarding their performance	☐	☐	☐	☐
p. Exceed your own expectations, or work beyond what you believed were their capabilities to meet your standards or expectations	☐	☐	☐	☐
q. Interact with you on activities other than coursework	☐	☐	☐	☐
r. Find them engaging other students, family or co-workers in discussions centered on their readings or classes	☐	☐	☐	☐
s. Seriously discuss ideas with students of a different race or ethnicity	☐	☐	☐	☐
t. Seriously discuss ideas with students holding different religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values than those held by themselves	☐	☐	☐	☐
u. Fail to attend class without an excuse	☐	☐	☐	☐

2. During this school year, what emphasis have you placed on the following?

	Very much	Quite a bit	Some	Very little
a. Memorization: Repeating facts, ideas, or	☐	☐	☐	☐

methods from courses and readings in practically the same form in which they were presented				
b. Analysis: breaking down an idea, experience or theory to its basic elements	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Perspective: finding new ways to organize and integrate ideas, information, or experiences	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Evaluation: assessing the value or soundness of information, arguments, or methods	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Adaptation: finding new applications of theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Proficiency: performing a new skill using information students have read or heard	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. **What amount of reading and writing do you believe students have done during this school year?**

	None	1 to 4	5 to 10	11 to 20	More than 20
a. Assigned texts, books, manuals, or book-length course readings	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Books read on their own for personal enjoyment or academic enrichment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Assigned written papers or reports	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

4. How challenging have you made your examinations during the current school year?

	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
Extremely difficult	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Extremely undemanding

5. How much emphasis do you place on each of the following?

	Very much	Quite a bit	Some	Very little
a. Spending substantial amounts of time studying	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Supporting students' success in the program	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Encouraging students to interact with those of diverse economic, social, racial, or ethnic backgrounds	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Assistance with students' non-academic responsibilities to your family, employer, etc.	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Support for social interaction and growth	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Making students aware of financial support opportunities to help finance their education	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. Computer uses in students' school work	☐	☐	☐	☐

6. During a full seven-day week, how much time, in hours, do you believe your students normally spend on each of the following activities?

	None	1-5	6-10	11--20	21-30	More than 30
a. Preparing for class	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Employment for pay	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Participating in college-sponsored activities outside the classroom	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Providing care for family members in their home	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Travel to and from classes	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

7. How would you rate your students' relationships with others in the criminal justice department?

a. Other Students

	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
Friendly, supportive, sense of camaraderie	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Unfriendly, unsupportive, sense of hostility

b. Instructors

	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
Available, supportive, sensitive	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Unavailable, unsupportive, insensitive

c. Office and Administrative Personnel

	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
Helpful, understanding, flexible	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Unhelpful, uncaring, rigid

8. Have your students' skills, and personal development in the following areas been improved by the criminal justice department?

	Very much	Quite a bit	Some	Very little
a. A broad general education	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Job or work-related knowledge and skills	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Clear and effective writing skills	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Clear and effective speaking skills	☐	☐	☐	☐
e Critical and analytical thinking	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Numerical problem-solving skills	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. Information technology and computer skills	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. Ability to work effectively with others	☐	☐	☐	☐
i. Skills to learn effectively on their own	☐	☐	☐	☐
j. Understanding themselves	☐	☐	☐	☐
k. Understanding people of diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds	☐	☐	☐	☐
l. Personal code of values and ethics development	☐	☐	☐	☐
m. Contributing to community welfare	☐	☐	☐	☐
n. Refining career goals	☐	☐	☐	☐
o. Career opportunity information	☐	☐	☐	☐

9. How often are you involved with student organizations?	Often	Sometimes	Rarely/Never	Don't know/ N.A.
	☐	☐	☐	☐

10. How satisfied are you with the support student organizations provide your students?	Very	Somewhat	Not at all	N.A.
	☐	☐	☐	☐

11. How important are student organizations to your students?	Very	Somewhat	Not at all
	☐	☐	☐

12. How would you characterize the support your students receive from their friends for their involvement in criminal justice classes?

☐ Extremely supportive ☐ Somewhat supportive

☐ Quite supportive ☐ Not very supportive

13. How would you characterize the support your students receive from their families for their involvement in criminal justice classes?

☐ Extremely supportive ☐ Somewhat supportive
☐ Quite supportive ☐ Not very supportive

14. Regarding each of the following, how would you characterize your students' goals for taking criminal justice classes? *(Please respond to each item)*	Primary goal	Secondary goal	Not a goal
a. Complete a certificate program	☐	☐	☐
b. Obtain an associate degree	☐	☐	☐
c. Transfer to a four-year college or university	☐	☐	☐
d. Obtain or update job-related skills	☐	☐	☐
e. Self-improvement/personal enjoyment	☐	☐	☐
f. Change careers	☐	☐	☐

15. How do you believe your students are financing their education? *(Please respond to each item)*	Major source	Minor source	Not a source
a. Personal income/savings	☐	☐	☐
b. Parent or spouse/significant other's income/savings	☐	☐	☐
c. Employer contributions	☐	☐	☐
d. Grants & scholarships	☐	☐	☐
e. Student loans	☐	☐	☐
f. Public assistance	☐	☐	☐

16. How do you believe your students would rate their educational experience in the criminal justice department?

☐ Excellent
☐ Good
☐ Fair
☐ Poor

Appendix L

Dissemination Protocol

Dissemination Protocol

1. The researcher will present the validated evaluation study results and recommendations to the dean of the criminal justice division and the executive vice president/chief academic officer at an individually scheduled meeting.

2. The dean of criminal justice and the executive vice president/chief academic officer will review the results and recommendations from the study. Recommendations will be reviewed, analyzed, and considered based on the mission of the college, mission of the criminal justice division, and budget and personnel constraints.

3. The recommendations accepted by the dean of criminal justice and the executive vice president/chief academic officer will be prioritized and a contact person assigned to be responsible for assisting in the development and implementation of the assigned recommendations. The dean of the criminal justice will provide leadership in the implementation of the student engagement recommendations.

4. The dean of criminal justice will meet with the faculty to discuss the recommendations. The discussion will be ongoing until recommendations have been assigned to specific faculty members.

5. The criminal justice dean will work with these assigned personnel to complete an implementation plan for their specific duties as assigned. This plan will include a list of roles, responsibilities, resources, budget, and timeline.

Appendix M

Evaluation Instrument

Evaluation Instrument

Section 1

Expected Outcomes (Criteria) for the Student Engagement Process in the Criminal Justice Program Currently Utilized by the Criminal Justice Division. (What the student engagement process at the college is expected to be doing right now)

1. Involves students in cocurricular activities.

Do the current engagement practices encourage student participation in activities outside of the classroom? These activities may relate to criminal justice studies or any other activity that will encourage student involvement and discussion of academic or social issues.

2. Facilitates student interaction.

Do current practices encourage students to interact with their instructors? Are instructors available during non-classroom hours to meet with students? Do the practices facilitate peer interaction?

3. Participate in activities that promote engagement.

Do courses include activities that include problem solving, or require critical thinking by students individually or in a team environment? Courses encourage student participation in college co-curricular activities as well as community based involvement.

4. Creates an environment where students and faculty interact.

Do the current engagement practices create an environment where students feel faculty members are approachable?

5. Increases critical thinking skills.

Do the engagement practices include reality-based scenarios that require students to evaluate an issue and arrive at a reasonable conclusion?

6. Creates an atmosphere for ethnically diverse information exchanges.

Do current practices create opportunities for students to interact with students and citizens of diverse backgrounds?

7. Increases student interaction in class activities.

Course projects and activities are designed to facilitate in-class student and faculty interaction.

Section II

Expected Criteria for the Student Engagement Process in the Criminal Justice Program Currently Utilized by the College.

This section may include all criteria of the criminal justice division student engagement practices and may have additional criteria not identified in the division student engagement practices.

Criteria	Components/Activities Tied to Criteria
1. Engagement is effected by socioeconomic factors.	Student employment and family obligations were surveyed. • The effect of generational factors on student engagement.
2. Importance of engagement practices is noted by faculty.	• Faculty identify course assignments that encourage student engagement. • Faculty facilitate opportunities to interact with students in a variety of settings.
3. Student engagement activities are well crafted.	• Identified engagement activities and practices area designed to fulfill an .identified objective. • Engagement activities are constructed to use adult learning principles. • Engagement activities stimulate the affective, cognitive and behavioral elements of learning.
4. Individual meetings occur between faculty and students.	• Students and faculty report meeting individually.

Criteria	Components/Activities Tied to Criteria
5. Engagement practices include past experiences of students.	• Students are encouraged to include life experiences in learning activities.
6. Included in courses are situational learning activities	• Problem solving and decision making is a component of assigned activities.
7. Program curriculum is structured to form learning communities.	• Students are required to attended courses as cohorts.
8. Courses contain experiential learning components.	• Assigned projects contain a practical application component.

Section III
Evaluation and Gap Analysis

This section will evaluate the validated criteria of the current student engagement practices use by the criminal justice department. The criteria will be evaluated processes and practices identified in the literature review. The researcher has identified criteria of student engagement practices at the criminal justice division of the college. These practices will be compared in order to create a gap analysis. The gap analysis will be completed and viewed by an expert evaluation panel.
Evaluators, please mark the appropriate number demonstrating the ability of the college peer advising services meeting the criteria in comparison to best practices as listed in Section II of this document.

Criteria to be compared The current student engagement process in the criminal justice department:	**5=Strongly Agree**	**4=Agree**	**3=Undecided or Neutral**	**2=Disagree**	**1-Strongly Disagree**
1. Facilitates student interaction.	5	4	3	2	1
Comments for 1.					
2. Participate in activities that promote engagement.	5	4	3	2	1
Comments for 2.					

Criteria to be compared The current student engagement process in the criminal justice department:	**5=Strongly Agree**	**4=Agree**	**3=Undecided or Neutral**	**2=Disagree**	**1-Strongly Disagree**
Creates an environment where students and faculty interact.	5	4	3	2	1
Comments for 3.					
4. Increases critical thinking skills.	5	4	3	2	1
Comments for 4.					
5. Creates an atmosphere for ethnically diverse information.	5	4	3	2	1
Comments for 5.					

Criteria to be compared The current student engagement process in the criminal justice department:	**5=Strongly Agree**	**4=Agree**	**3=Undecided or Neutral**	**2=Disagree**	**1-Strongly Disagree**
6. Increases student interaction in class activities.	5	4	3	2	1
Comments for 6.					
7. Engagement is effected by socioeconomic factors.	5	4	3	2	1
Comments for 7 .					
8. Importance of engagement practices is noted by faculty.	5	4	3	2	1
Comments for 8.					
9. Student engagement activities are well crafted.	5	4	3	2	1
Comments for 9.					

Criteria to be compared The current student engagement process in the criminal justice department:	**5=Strongly Agree**	**4=Agree**	**3=Undecided or Neutral**	**2=Disagree**	**1-Strongly Disagree**
10. Individual meetings occur between faculty and students.	5	4	3	2	1
Comments for 10.					
11. Engagement practices include past experiences of students.	5	4	3	2	1
Comments for 11.					
12. Collaboration is included in projects that involve problem solving.	5	4	3	2	1
Comments for 12.					
13. Included in courses are situational learning activities.	5	4	3	2	1
Comments for 13.					

Criteria to be compared The current student engagement process in the criminal justice department:	**5=Strongly Agree**	**4=Agree**	**3=Undecided or Neutral**	**2=Disagree**	**1-Strongly Disagree**
14. Program curriculum is structured to form learning communities.	5	4	3	2	1
Comments for 14.					
15. Courses contain experiential learning components.	5	4	3	2	1
Comments for 15.					

Appendix N

Student Survey Results

Student Survey Results

1. During this school year, how regularly have you done the following in your criminal justice classes?

	Very Often	Often	Some-times	Never
a. Contributed to class discussions and/or asked questions in class	30%	40%	28%	3%
b. Made a presentation to your class	18%	43%	38%	3%
c. Drafted a paper or assignment at least twice before turning it in	23%	40%	28%	8%
d. Integrated concepts or facts from various sources in a paper or project for class	18%	43%	35%	5%
e. Failed to complete readings or assignments prior to class	3%	15%	35%	48%
f. Prepared projects with other students during class	8%	46%	46%	0%
g. Prepared assignments with other students outside of class	5%	40%	48%	8%
h. Explained concepts or ideas to other students in preparation for class	13%	25%	58%	5%
i. As an assignment/project for a class, participated in a community-based project	5%	23%	60%	13%
j. Used the internet or instant messaging to prepare an assignment	23%	40%	25%	13%
k. Communicated with an instructor via e-mail	28%	28%	38%	8%
l. Talked to an instructor about your grades or assignments	18%	33%	45%	5%
m. Held a discussion with an instructor or advisor regarding your career plans	13%	15%	40%	33%
n. Continued classroom discussions or discussed ideas from your readings with instructors after the class period ended	3%	23%	58%	18%
o. Instructors provide written or oral feedback regarding your performance promptly	18%	43%	40%	0%
p. Exceeded your own expectations, or worked beyond what you believed were your capabilities to meet an instructor's standards or expectations	8%	53%	38%	3%
q. Interacted with instructors on activities other than coursework	8%	30%	53%	10%
r. Found yourself engaging other students, family or co-workers in discussions centered on your readings or classes	18%	40%	35%	8%
s. Seriously discussed ideas with students of a different race or ethnicity	8%	20%	55%	18%
t. Seriously discussed ideas with students holding different religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values than those held by you	8%	25%	48%	20%
u. Failed to attend class without an excuse	0%	3%	18%	80%

2. During this school year, what emphasis has your criminal justice coursework placed on the following?

	Very much	Quite a bit	Some	Very little
a. Memorization: Repeating facts, ideas, or methods from your courses and readings in practically the same form in which they were presented	21%	51%	28%	0%
b. Analysis: breaking down an idea, experience or theory to its basic elements	18%	45%	34%	3%
c. Perspective: finding new ways to organize and integrate ideas, information, or experiences	33%	21%	36%	10%
d. Evaluation: assessing the value or soundness of information, arguments, or methods	21%	33%	46%	0%
e. Adaptation: finding new applications of theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations	23%	28%	44%	5%
f. Proficiency: performing a new skill using information you have read or heard	46%	38%	15%	0%

3. What amount of reading and writing have you done during this school year?

	None	1 to 4	5 to 10	11 to 20	More than 20
a. Assigned texts, books, manuals, or book-length course readings	3%	51%	28%	15%	3%
b. Books read on your own for personal enjoyment or academic enrichment	28%	55%	10%	3%	5%
c. Assigned written papers or reports	0%	30%	38%	23%	10%

4. How challenging have your criminal justice examinations been during the current school year?

Extremely Difficult						Extremely Undemanding
7	**6**	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
3%	5%	50%	30%	8%	3%	3%

5. How much emphasis does the criminal justice department place on each of the following?

	Very much	Quite a bit	Some	Very little
a. Spending substantial amounts of time studying	0%	45%	53%	3%
b. Supporting your success in the program	40%	48%	13%	0%
c. Encouraging students to interact with those of diverse economic, social, racial, or ethnic backgrounds	30%	23%	38%	10%
d. Assistance with your non-academic responsibilities to your family, employer, etc.	3%	40%	33%	25%
e. Support for social interaction and growth	20%	30%	43%	8%
f. Making you aware of financial support opportunities to help finance your education	30%	28%	25%	18%
g. Computer uses in your school work	48%	35%	13%	5%

6. During a full seven-day week, how much time, in hours, do you normally spend on each of the following activities?

	None	1 to 5	6 to 10	11 to 20	21 to 30	More than 30
a. Preparing for class	5%	70%	18%	8%	0%	0%
b. Employment for pay	8%	5%	5%	20%	8%	55%
c. Participating in college-sponsored activities outside the classroom	60%	35%	3%	0%	3%	0%
d. Providing care for family members in your home	25%	40%	10%	5%	3%	18%
e. Travel to and from classes	3%	65%	20%	8%	5%	0%

7. How would you rate your relationships with others in the criminal justice department?

	Friendly, supportive, sense of camaraderie 7	6	5	4	3	2	Unfriendly, unsupportive, sense of hostility 1
a. Other Students	25%	43%	20%	10%	3%	0%	0%

	Available, supportive, sensitive 7	6	5	4	3	2	Unavailable, unsupportive, insensitive 1
b. Instructors	30%	43%	25%	3%	0%	0%	0%

	Helpful, understanding, flexible 7	6	5	4	3	2	Unhelpful, uncaring, rigid 1
c. Office and Administrative Personnel	25%	38%	20%	18%	0%	0%	0%

8. Have your, skills, and personal development in the following areas been improved by the criminal justice department?

	Very much	Quite a bit	Some	Very Little
a. A broad general education	49%	36%	13%	3%
b. Job or work-related knowledge and skills	69%	26%	5%	0%
c. Clear and effective writing skills	33%	44%	23%	0%
d. Clear and effective speaking skills	33%	49%	18%	0%
e Critical and analytical thinking	49%	36%	15%	0%
f. Numerical problem-solving skills	28%	21%	33%	18%
g. Information technology and computer skills	18%	36%	26%	21%
h. Ability to work effectively with others	41%	38%	21%	0%
i. Skills to learn effectively on your own	31%	41%	26%	3%
j. Understanding yourself	21%	46%	26%	8%
k. Understanding people of diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds	10%	51%	33%	5%
l. Personal code of values and ethics development	36%	41%	23%	0%
m. Contributing to community welfare	21%	46%	31%	3%
n. Refining career goals	33%	49%	15%	3%
o. Career opportunity information	36%	46%	18%	0%

9. How often are you involved with student organizations?

Often	Sometimes	Rarely/Never	Don't know/NA
5%	13%	75%	8%

10. How satisfied are you with the student organizations?

Very	Somewhat	Not at all	NA
5%	43%	10%	43%

Very	Somewhat	Not at all
11%	58%	32%

12. How would you characterize your friends' support of your involvement in criminal justice classes?

Extremely supportive	Quite supportive	Somewhat supportive	Not very supportive
33%	50%	15%	3%

13. How would you characterize your immediate family's support of your involvement in criminal justice classes?

Extremely supportive	Quite supportive	Somewhat supportive	Not very supportive
70%	23%	3%	0%

14. Why are you taking criminal justice classes? *(Please respond to each item)*

	Primary goal	Secondary goal	Not a goal	N/A

a. Complete a certificate program	80%	13%	0%	8%
b. Obtain an associate degree	75%	23%	3%	0%
c. Transfer to a four-year college or university	28%	53%	20%	0%
d. Obtain or update job-related skills	68%	20%	10%	3%
e. Self-improvement/personal enjoyment	68%	28%	5%	0%
f. Change careers	30%	13%	58%	0%

15. How are you financing your education? *(Please respond to each item)*

	Major Source	**Minor Source**	**Not a Source**	**Not Answered**
a. My own income/savings	45%	38%	18%	0%
b. Parent or spouse/significant other's income/savings	33%	18%	48%	3%
c. Employer contributions	13%	8%	75%	5%
d. Grants & scholarships	28%	15%	50%	8%
e. Student loans	35%	15%	45%	5%
f. Public assistance	10%	8%	75%	8%

16. What is your overall grade average?

A	**A- to B+**	**B**	**B- to C+**	**C**	**C- or lower**	**Do not have a GPA at this school**	**Pass/fail classes only**
35%	33%	25%	8%	0%	0%	0%	0%

17. My educational experience in the criminal justice department has been:

Excellent	**Good**	**Fair**	**Poor**
65%	33%	3%	0%

18. Age

Under 18	**18 to 19**	**20 to 21**	**22 to 24**	**25 to 29**	**30 to 39**	**40 to 49**	**50 to 64**	**65+**
0%	10%	48%	23%	8%	13%	0%	0%	0%

19. Sex

Male	**Female**
75%	25%

20. Marital status

Married	**Single (never married)**	**Divorced**	**Widowed**
13%	80%	5%	3%

21. Racial grouping (Mark all that apply)

American Indian or other Native American	**Asian, Asian American or Pacific Islander**	**Native Hawaiian**	**Black or African American**	**White, Non-Hispanic**	**Hispanic, Latino, Spanish**	**Other**
8%	0%	0%	10%	83%	0%	0%

22. Parents' education

	Father	**Mother**	**Both**
a. Not a high school graduate	4%	1%	5%
b. High school diploma or GED	13%	8%	28%
c. Some college, did not complete degree	3%	10%	3%

d. Associate's degree	3%	3%	3%
e. Bachelor's degree	4%	4%	3%
f. Master's degree/first professional	1%	4%	0%
g. Doctorate degree	0%	0%	3%
h. Unknown	0%	0%	0%

23. Are you the first member of your family to attend college?

Yes	**No**
18%	83%

Appendix O

Faculty Survey Results

Faculty Survey Results

1. During this school year, how regularly have you had students do the following in your criminal justice classes?

	Very Often	Often	Sometimes	Never
a. Contribute to class discussions and/or ask questions in class	62%	23%	15%	0%
b. Make a presentation in your class	0%	46%	38%	15%
c. Prepare more than one draft of a paper or assignment before turning in the final work	0%	15%	54%	31%
d. Integrate concepts or facts from various sources in a paper or project for class	0%	62%	38%	0%
e. Fail to complete readings or assignments prior to class	8%	33%	58%	0%
f. Prepare projects with other students during class	15%	23%	46%	15%
g. Prepare assignments with other students outside of class	8%	23%	54%	15%
h. Explain concepts or ideas to other students in preparation for class	8%	31%	38%	23%
i. As an assignment/project for a class, participate in a community-based project	0%	23%	38%	38%
j. Use the internet or instant messaging to prepare an assignment	25%	17%	33%	25%
k. Communicate with you via e-mail	23%	38%	38%	0%
l. Talk to you about their grades or assignments	23%	46%	31%	0%
m. Hold a discussion with you regarding their career plans	23%	31%	46%	0%
n. Continue classroom discussions or discuss ideas from the readings with you after the class period ended	8%	38%	38%	15%
o. Request prompt written or oral feedback regarding their performance	23%	23%	46%	8%
p. Exceed your own expectations, or work beyond what you believed were their capabilities to meet your standards or expectations	8%	31%	62%	0%
q. Interact with you on activities other than coursework	15%	15%	54%	15%
r. Find them engaging other students, family or co-workers in discussions centered on their readings or classes	0%	23%	62%	15%
s. Seriously discuss ideas with students of a different race or ethnicity	8%	23%	46%	23%
t. Seriously discuss ideas with students holding different religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values than those held by themselves	8%	31%	38%	23%
u. Fail to attend class without an excuse	8%	0%	92%	0%

2. During this school year, what emphasis have you placed on the following?

	Very much	Quite a bit	Some	Very little
a. Memorization: Repeating facts, ideas, or methods from courses and readings in practically the same form in which they were presented	31%	23%	46%	0%
b. Analysis: breaking down an idea, experience or theory to its basic elements	46%	46%	8%	0%
c. Perspective: finding new ways to organize and integrate ideas, information, or experiences	23%	38%	38%	0%
d. Evaluation: assessing the value or soundness of information, arguments, or methods	23%	69%	8%	0%
e. Adaptation: finding new applications of theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations	38%	46%	15%	0%
f. Proficiency: performing a new skill using information students have read or heard	46%	31%	23%	0%

3. What amount of reading and writing do you believe students have done during this school year?

	None	1 to 4	5 to 10	11 to 20	More than 20
a. Assigned texts, books, manuals, or book-length course readings	0%	62%	23%	15%	0%
b. Books read on their own for personal enjoyment or academic enrichment	0%	62%	8%	0%	0%
c. Assigned written papers or reports	0%	54%	23%	23%	0%

4. How challenging have you made your examinations during the current school year?

Extremely difficult 7	6	5	4	3	2	Extremely undemanding 1
0%	23%	54%	8%	8%	8%	0%

5. How much emphasis do you place on each of the following?

	Very much	Quite a bit	Some	Very little
a. Spending substantial amounts of time studying	15%	54%	31%	0%
b. Supporting students' success in the program	54%	46%	0%	0%
c. Encouraging students to interact with those of diverse economic, social, racial, or ethnic backgrounds	46%	23%	23%	8%
d. Assistance with students' non-academic responsibilities to your family, employer, etc.	23%	38%	31%	8%
e. Support for social interaction and growth	15%	46%	38%	0%
f. Making students aware of financial support opportunities to help finance their education	23%	8%	62%	8%
g. Computer uses in students' school work	31%	31%	31%	8%

6. During a full seven-day week, how much time, in hours, do you believe your students normally spend on each of the following activities?

	None	**1 to 5**	**6 to 10**	**11 to 20**	**21 to 30**	**More than 30**
a. Preparing for class	0%	92%	8%	0%	0%	0%
b. Employment for pay	0%	0%	15%	54%	31%	0%
c. Participating in college-sponsored activities outside the classroom	0%	89%	11%	0%	0%	0%
d. Providing care for family members in their home	0%	40%	30%	30%	0%	0%
e. Travel to and from classes	0%	92%	8%	0%	0%	0%

7. How would you rate your students' relationships with others in the criminal justice department?

a. <u>Other Students</u>

Friendly, supportive, sense of camaraderie						**Unfriendly, unsupportive, sense of hostility**
7	6	5	4	3	2	1
15%	46%	31%	0%	8%	0%	0%

b. <u>Instructors</u>

Available, supportive, sensitive						**Unavailable, unsupportive, insensitive**
7	6	5	4	3	2	1
0%	46%	54%	0%	0%	0%	0%

c. <u>Office and Administrative Personnel</u>

Helpful, understanding, flexible						**Unhelpful, uncaring, rigid**
7	6	5	4	3	2	1
8%	15%	38%	15%	8%	0%	8%

8. Have your students' skills, and personal development in the following areas been improved by the criminal justice department?

	Very much	Quite a bit	Some	Very little
a. A broad general education	31%	38%	23%	8%
b. Job or work-related knowledge and skills	67%	33%	0%	0%
c. Clear and effective writing skills	8%	38%	54%	0%
d. Clear and effective speaking skills	23%	46%	31%	0%
e Critical and analytical thinking	17%	67%	17%	0%
f. Numerical problem-solving skills	42%	33%	17%	8%
g. Information technology and computer skills	8%	50%	33%	8%
h. Ability to work effectively with others	25%	50%	25%	0%
i. Skills to learn effectively on their own	15%	46%	38%	0%
j. Understanding themselves	25%	42%	33%	0%
k. Understanding people of diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds	25%	8%	58%	8%
l. Personal code of values and ethics development	31%	38%	31%	0%
m. Contributing to community welfare	27%	36%	36%	0%
n. Refining career goals	23%	62%	15%	0%
o. Career opportunity information	15%	54%	31%	0%

9. How often are you involved with student organizations?

Often	Sometimes	Rarely/Never	Don't know/ N.A.
8%	23%	62%	8%

10. How satisfied are you with the support student organizations provide your students?

Very	Somewhat	Not at all	N.A.
8%	83%	0%	8%

11. How important are student organizations to your students?

Very	Somewhat	Not at all	N/A
0%	85%	0%	16%

12. How would you characterize the support your students receive from their friends of their involvement in criminal justice classes?

Extremely supportive	Quite supportive	Somewhat supportive	Not very supportive
0%	54%	46%	0%

13. How would you characterize the support your students receive from their families of their involvement in criminal justice classes?

Extremely supportive	Quite supportive	Somewhat supportive	Not very supportive
8%	58%	33%	0%

14. Regarding each of the following, how would you characterize your student's goals for taking criminal justice classes? *(Please respond to each item)*

	Primary goal	Secondary goal	Not a goal
a. Complete a certificate program	54%	23%	23%
b. Obtain an associate degree	69%	31%	0%
c. Transfer to a 4-year college or university	25%	58%	17%
d. Obtain or update job-related skills	54%	38%	8%
e. Self-improvement/personal enjoyment	23%	31%	46%
f. Change careers	15%	54%	31%

15. How do you believe your students are financing their education? *(Please respond to each item)*

	Major source	Minor source	Not a source
a. Personal income/savings	77%	8%	8%
b. Parent or spouse/significant other's income/savings	23%	46%	15%
c. Employer contributions	8%	8%	69%
d. Grants & scholarships	0%	69%	15%
e. Student loans	62%	15%	8%
f. Public assistance	15%	46%	23%

16. How do you believe your students would rate their educational experience in the criminal justice department?

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
46%	54%	0%	0%

Appendix P

Evaluation Panel Members

Members of the Evaluation Panel

Retired Vice President for Institutional Advancement at a Two-Year Technical College in the Midwest

Qualifications: B.A., English, Cornell College, Mt. Vernon, IA; MEAS, Education, UW-Green Bay, WI; Ed.D., Higher Education, Nova Southeastern University.

Reasons for selection for Evaluation Panel: This member possesses experience as an evaluator focusing on assessment and evaluation. This member has been an evaluation consultant for a variety of public and private institutions as well as in business and educational settings. This member has received accolades for the quality of the member's work products and has also held positions as Executive Director for Institutional Advancement, Director of Planning, Research and Development, and Projects and Research Services Manager.

Director of Institutional Effectiveness at a Community College in the Southwest

Qualifications: B.S., Economics, University Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, WI; Master of Arts, Economics, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, WI.; and Ed.D., Higher Education, Nova Southeastern University.

Reasons for selection for Summative Committee: This member possesses 25 years of experience in the area of research and evaluation. Past positions held include assessment coordinator, research and evaluation specialist, community economic development specialist, and economic development planner. This member has published an article in the *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*. This member is currently a member of American Evaluation Association and Association for Institutional Researchers.

Appendix Q

Evaluation Panel Report

Section III
Evaluation and Gap Analysis

This section will evaluate the validated criteria of the current student engagement practices use by the criminal justice division. The criteria will be evaluated by processes and practices identified in the literature review. The researcher has identified criteria of student engagement practices at the criminal justice division of the college. These practices will be compared in order to create a gap analysis. The gap analysis will be completed and viewed by an expert evaluation panel. Evaluators, please mark the appropriate number demonstrating the ability of the criminal justice division student engagement practices meeting the criteria in comparison to best practices as listed in Section II of this document.

Criteria to be compared The current student engagement process at the criminal justice division:	**5=Strongly Agree**	**4=Agree**	**3=Undecided or Neutral**	**2=Disagree**	**1-Strongly Disagree**
1. Facilitates student interaction.	5	4	3	2	1
Comments for 1. Identical to Outcome 2, Sec 1					
2. Participate in activities that promote engagement.	5	4	3	2	1
Comments for 2. Identical to Outcome 3, Sec 1					

Criteria to be compared The current student engagement process at the criminal justice division:	**5=Strongly Agree**	**4=Agree**	**3=Undecided or Neutral**	**2=Disagree**	**1-Strongly Disagree**
3. Creates an environment where students and faculty interact.	5	4	3	2	1
Comments for 3. Identical to Outcome 4, Sec 1					
4. Increases critical thinking skills.	5	4	3	2	1
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5. Creates an atmosphere for ethnically diverse information.	5	4	3	2	1
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6. Increases student interaction in class activities.	5	4	3	2	1
Comments for 6. Identical to Outcome 7, Sec 1					
7. Engagement is affected by socio-economic factors.	5	4	3	2	1
Comments for 7. This item does not seem appropriately worded as a "criterion." It seems like a factual statement. The concept is weakly related to Outcome 6 but needs restatement, e.g., "Engagement practices address the socio-economic diversity of students."					
8. Importance of engagement practices is noted by faculty.	5	4	3	2	1
Comments for 8. Somewhat related to Outcomes 4 and 7, may be implied by them, but no statement in Section 1 specifically states that faculty note engagement practices					
9. Student engagement activities are well crafted.	5	4	3	2	1
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Criteria to be compared The current student engagement process at the criminal justice division:	**5=Strongly Agree**	**4=Agree**	**3=Undecided or Neutral**	**2=Disagree**	**1-Strongly Disagree**
10. Individual meetings occur between faculty and students.	5	4	3	2	1

Comments for 10.
Although somewhat related to Outcomes 4 and 7, none of those criteria mention individual meetings with students. The FVTC criteria are broader in scope than simply calling for individual meetings.

11. Engagement practices include past experiences of students.	5	4	3	2	1

Comments for 11.
Outcomes in Sec 1 contain nothing specific about students' past experiences.

12. Collaboration is included in projects that involve problem solving.	5	4	3	2	1

Comments for 12.
3 in Sec 1 encompasses teamwork and #5 in Sec 1 addresses problem solving.

13. Included in courses are situational learning activities.	5	4	3	2	1

Comments for 13.
Outcomes contain nothing specific about situational learning (although we am fairly sure it exists in the program)

Criteria to be compared The current student engagement process at the criminal justice division:	**5=Strongly Agree**	**4=Agree**	**3=Undecided or Neutral**	**2=Disagree**	**1-Strongly Disagree**
14. Program curriculum is structured to form learning communities.	5	4	3	2	1
Comments for 14. The outcomes in Section 1 contain nothing specific about learning communities.					
15. Courses contain experiential learning components .	5	4	3	2	1
Comments for 15. The outcomes contain nothing specific about experiential learning.					

Overall comments

1. The existing criminal justice program outcomes could be amended to encompass experiential learning, situational leaning, and learning communities, particularly as we believe these actually exist in the criminal justice program. They just aren't specified in the outcomes statements. For instance, the tactical decision making lab in the criminal justice program, an application of virtual reality, involves students in situational learning. The outcomes may understate what the program is actually doing.

2. In Section 2, item 8 does not seem well-stated as a criterion. Socioeconomic diversity would fit in very well as an enhancement to Outcome 7 in Section 1, which already addresses ethnic diversity.

Appendix R

Evaluation Report

Evaluation of the Student Engagement Process in a Criminal Justice Program at a Technical College

Martin W. Totzke

A summary of the applied dissertation presented to the
Fischler School of Education and Human Services
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

2007

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

The topic of criminal justice student engagement arose following the release of the 2004 Community College Survey of Student Engagement results for the college. This discussion occurred between the current criminal justice dean and the department chair. The discussion included input from faculty about the lackluster performance and limited academic involvement of criminal justice students. The study was undertaken as an effort to evaluate current engagement activities and how those activities compared with those identified in the scholarly literature.

While there were no preconceptions regarding the state of student engagement practices within the criminal justice division, the researcher anticipated the practices could be improved and expanded. The Varcoe action research model was employed for this study. This model assisted in the identification of current, effectively utilized engagement practices. The Varcoe model also served as a guide in gathering information from stakeholders, data, and the literature review.

Formative and summative committees were utilized to validate the criteria, the evaluation tool, and the evaluation report. The committees were composed of criminal justice educators, practioners, and college administrators.

The validated evaluation tool was comprised of criteria based upon current criminal justice student engagement practices, and validated criteria derived from a review of the scholarly literature. The criteria were listed in the evaluation tool to facilitate a gap analysis. An expert evaluation panel reviewed the validated evaluation tool and completed the gap analysis. The membership of this panel was external to the college.

The research design incorporated the evaluation tool. The tool aided in identifying gaps between current criteria and criteria identified in the literature. The criteria for the proposed recommendations were identified through a review of relevant literature and surveys of students and faculty members.

Key Results

a. The evaluation panel identified discrepancies with 7 of 16 criteria. The discrepancies were between the current division practices and the practices identified through the literature review.

b. Five main gaps were identified as a result of this evaluation.

c. The evaluation results revealed nine criteria relevant to student engagement within the criminal justice division are congruent with practices identified through the literature review and criteria identified through the surveys.

d. Five recommendations were submitted based upon the gap analysis results.

Purpose of the Process

Introduction

Student engagement is an academic process that has a protracted history. During the past three decades, research and writing discussed student engagement as an important aspect of quality student learning. This applied dissertation project was conducted at a midwestern technical college, hereafter referenced as the college.

The Wisconsin Technical College System

The Wisconsin Technical College System, referenced as WTCS, was originally established in 1907. In 1917, the focus changed from industrial education to vocational education. In 1937, the WTCS expanded, offering college transfer credits to attendees. The 1963 Federal Vocational Education Act helped transform the WTCS once again. In 1965, the State Legislature required the establishment of a statewide vocational, technical, and adult education system (Wisconsin Technical College System History, 2006).

The WTCS, of which the college remains a member, is comprised of 16 technical colleges sited throughout the state. Each institution serves a geographically defined area referred to as a district. Each technical college is directed to serve the needs and requirements of its individual labor markets.

Mission and Vision

In order to address the academic and learning needs of students and the functions the college system provides to meet those needs, the legislature assigned the WTCS the following mission statement in the enabling legislation (Wisconsin Statutes, 2005-06):

> The legislature finds it in the public interest to provide a system of technical colleges which enables eligible persons to acquire the occupational skills training necessary for full participation in the work force; which stresses job training and

> retraining; which recognizes the rapidly changing educational needs of residents to keep current with the demands of the work place and through its course offerings and programs facilitates educational options for residents; which fosters economic development; which provides education through associate degree programs and other programs below the baccalaureate level; which functions cooperatively with other educational institutions and other governmental bodies; and which provides services to all members of the public. (§38.001)

In addition to the mission, the Wisconsin Technical College System Vision (2006), further addresses the provision of meeting the academic and learning needs of students in the following vision statement:

> The Wisconsin Technical College System is the premier provider of technical education. We develop individuals who apply knowledge and skills to enhance quality of life and boost economic vitality. We are committed to extending learning beyond the classroom and throughout life.
>
> > To meet each student's educational needs, we:
> > Deliver high quality instruction and services that are responsive, flexible and accessible.
> > Join talent and technology to make learning generously available and imaginatively delivered.
> > Commit to high standards and accountability.
> > Create strategic alliances that expand students' learning opportunities.
> > Respect each other's dignity, embrace diversity and offer opportunities for growth. (¶ 1)

The Midwestern Technical College

In addition to the WTCS vision and mission, each individual college is mandated by WTCS to maintain a mission and vision statement and that mirrors the mission and vision statement of the WTCS. The mission statement of the college stresses the importance of aiding individuals as they strive to reach their potential. The college provides cost-effective education and training and prepares students for successfully meeting their objectives for employment, continuing higher education, and personal enrichment. This statement mirrors the legislative intent and direction to prepare district residents for participation in the state's workforce.

The vision of the college, as published on the college web site states:

> The Strategic Planning Process has led us to a shared vision to fulfill our mission. Four strategic directions focus on assuring excellence in all College endeavors, maximizing the collective value of those endeavors in the eyes of the College's constituency, reaching more people with programs and services, and strengthening the lifelong connection between the College and its students and graduates.
>
> Protect and enhance the performance reputation of the College by seeking continuous improvement in all areas.
>
> Strengthen the College's value to its constituents.
> Reach more people with programs and services.
> Strengthen lifelong ties to our students and graduates. (¶ 1)

The criminal justice division is the largest academic area of the college. The division offers associate degrees in criminal justice and in security and loss prevention. The division offers three technical certificates in the areas of cyber crime investigations, criminal justice leadership, and private investigation. The division also operates three entry-level academies, leadership and management courses, and a plethora of specialized law enforcement trainings. The division has a complement of six full-time and 42 adjunct faculty. The division has assimilated the mission and vision statements of the college.

Nature of the Problem

The criminal justice division enjoys an excellent reputation throughout the state. The college 2006 Graduate Employment Research Report demonstrates the strength of this reputation. The report shows a 90% employment rate six months after graduation. The criminal justice division has a reputation that masks the problem studied. The problem is that criminal justice students fell below the 2004 Community College Survey of Student Engagement mean in four of the five engagement benchmarks.

The college participated in the 2004 Community College Survey of Student Engagement, referenced as CCSSE. The survey is administered through the Community

College Leadership Program of the University of Texas. The survey was administered to 532 full-and 228 part-time students. The criminal justice division was disproportionately represented in the sample. Of the 760 student participating in the survey 283, or 37%, were criminal justice students

The study reported on five benchmarks of student engagement. These benchmarks were (a) active and collaborative learning, (b) student effort, (c) academic challenge, (d) student-faculty interaction, and (e) support for learners (Community College Leadership Program, 2004). Student engagement refers to the amount of effort students invest in their learning. Active and collaborative learning relates to how actively involved students are in their learning. The academic challenge benchmark inquires into the complexity of the cognitive work and course evaluation standards. Academic challenge examines whether students are afforded the opportunity to solve problems with peers and to challenge course content. How the faculty engages students was also surveyed using the student-faculty interaction benchmark, which examined the involvement of instructors with students.

The final benchmark focused on support for learners. In the report *Engagement by Design: 2004 Findings* (Community College Leadership Program, 2004), it was noted such services "may affect learning and retention" (p. 12).

The CCSSE established that the college was above the mean, 51.8%, for the active and collaborative learning benchmark. The director of institutional research reported the college was below the mean in the remaining four benchmarks, as indicated in an unpublished institutional report of the 2004 CCSSE. The result indicated that the below mean benchmarks were statistically significant. The mean for the benchmarks was determined always to be 50% (Community College Leadership Program, 2004).

Background and Significance of the Problem

The issue of student preparation for college is important not only for four-year institutions, but especially so for two-year colleges. Astin (1985) commented that in "virtually every longitudinal study of student development - is that the chances of dropping out are substantially greater at a two-year college than at a four-year college" (p. 146).

The college is accredited through the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. The college participates in the Academic Quality Improvement Program, referenced as AQIP, for reaccreditation. The college was admitted to AQIP on October 3, 2001. The next reaccreditation process will be conducted during the 2008-2009 academic year (Higher Learning Commission, 2002). The North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, Higher Learning Commission, in describing the AQIP process wrote:

> . . . the Academic Quality Improvement Program infuses the principles and benefits of continuous improvement into the culture of colleges and universities by providing an alternative process through which an already-accredited institution can maintain its accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission. With AQIP, an institution demonstrates it meets accreditation standards and expectations through sequences of events that align with those ongoing activities that characterize organizations striving to improve their performance. (p. 1)

The AQIP process examines several areas of the college. One of these areas is how the college helps students learn. Within the scope of helping students to learn, AQIP inquires how the college aligns co-curricular activities with course curriculum objectives.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the engagement process of criminal justice majors at the college. Based on the results of the evaluation of current student engagement practices, this recommendation is being forwarded to the dean of the criminal justice division and the executive vice president/chief academic officer of the

college. The purpose of this recommendation is to facilitate opportunities for faculty to assist students discover ways to become more involved in the classroom and engage their academic assignments with vigor.

Research Questions

To conduct the student engagement evaluation, five research questions were proposed. The purpose of the questions was to provide direction for the study to evaluate the student engagement process at the college.

1. What current engagement activities are available for criminal justice students at the college? The rationale for this question was to identify existing practices and to establish a foundation for the identification of a model of student engagement activities.

2. What models are identified in the literature of expected outcomes for best practices of successful student engagement processes and programs? The rationale for this question was to determine potential engagement practices to determine their appropriateness to be included in the recommendation to the dean of the criminal justice division and the executive vice president/chief academic officer

3. What are the perceptions of students and instructors regarding student engagement at the college? The rationale for this question was to obtain feedback from students and faculty regarding their opinions of student engagement practices currently utilized by the division.

4. What valid components are necessary to formulate an evaluation tool that will assess the worth of the engagement practices currently offered to criminal justice students? The rationale for this question was to construct a valid evaluation tool.

5. What would be included in a valid recommendation to revise, implement and evaluate an improved academic engagement process? The rationale for this question was

to provide a viable recommendation regarding student engagement to the dean of the criminal justice division and the executive vice president/chief academic officer.

Methodology

Methodology

The evaluation research methodology was utilized as an action research study to evaluate student engagement at a midwestern technical college criminal justice program. Charles and Mertler (2002) wrote, "Evaluation research is done to determine the relative merits of various products and approaches used in education" (p. 311). The study attempted to identify current engagement practices and any gap between existing practices and the expected criteria of best scenarios and to identify concepts that may support an improved engagement process. Airasian and Gay (2003) supplied reinforcement for using the evaluative method as they described the purpose of evaluation research. The description provided stated "Evaluation research is concerned with making decisions about the quality, effectiveness, merit, or value of educational programs, products, or practice" (p. 7).

The Tyler objectives-oriented approach is a research method designed to evaluate whether program objectives are being met (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2004). The focus of this study was the engagement practices that were utilized to enable students to meet course and program objectives. Varcoe (2005) described an evaluation study as follows:

> An evaluation study is a carefully implemented set of procedures used to assess the value, merit or worth of a program, practice, activity, product, process, etc. when compared with pre-established criteria. The comparison of the observed (assessment information) to the criteria-called 'gap analysis'-produces the findings. These findings are the basis for recommendations and/or decisions. (p. 8)

The data collection process utilized two survey tools administered to participants for self-reporting of information. One assumption associated with self-reporting is that the participants will honestly report. Charles and Mertler (2002) made that assumption based upon the premise that the survey will prompt a process that will "elicit and probe responses from participants and informants" (p.162).

Pike and Kuh (2005) addressed the issue of inaccurate self-reporting. They wrote that a well-written survey will negate inaccurate responses and identified five conditions that will enhance survey accuracy. First, ask questions to which participants know, or are reasonably expected to know, the answer. Second, phrase the questions in a manner that is clear and explicit. Third, refer to recent occurrences. Fourth, elicit an insightful response from the participants. Fifth, respect the participants in order to elicit honest answers.

Procedures

Formative and summative committees were formed to assist the researcher with developing criteria and the evaluation tool. Fifteen criteria were developed for the evaluation tool. Criteria were developed using the results of two surveys and a comprehensive literature review. One survey, the student survey, was administered to 40 criminal justice students. The second survey, the faculty survey, was administered to five full-time and ten adjunct faculty members. All participants were provided a participation letter/informed consent form to read and review. Survey results were collected and secured in a locked file cabinet to assure participant confidentiality. The collected data aided in identifying criteria and contributed to the development of the evaluation tool. The tool was considered valid after its review by the formative and summative committees.

The researcher forwarded the validated evaluation tool via e-mail to the expert evaluation panel, which consisted of two members external to the college. The evaluation was completed, and the members provided their results to the researcher. The researcher examined the data and prepared an evaluation report. The evaluation report was provided to the formative and summative committee members for review and validation.

The researcher anticipates that the results of this evaluation study will facilitate implementation of recommendations for improving student engagement practices at the criminal justice division. Literature suggests that students who participate in college activities, both academic and co-curricular, are successful. The recommendations of this study will provide opportunities to improve student engagement at the criminal justice division.

Assumptions

Several assumptions were made in the course of this study. First, the researcher assumed the reviewed literature exhausted the available information on the topic of engagement, and the information contained in the literature was accurate. Second, the researcher assumed the members of the formative, summative, and expert committees utilized their knowledge to the best of their abilities to provide input and validation to the study. Third, the researcher assumed that the students participating in the survey study were representative of the general criminal justice division student population. Fourth, the researcher assumed the college personnel being surveyed were forthright regarding their responses to the survey questions. Fifth, the researcher assumed the surveys were reliable and valid as stated by feedback from the formative and summative committees and the local institutional review process.

Limitations

In discussing limitations, Charles & Mertler, (2000) wrote that "Limitations refer to conditions outside the investigator's control that affect data collection" (p. 71). Several limitations for this study were identified. First, varying degrees of knowledge and expertise among the formative and summative committee members existed. Second, the motivations, commitments, and expectations of the formative and summative committee members impacted the direction of the research study. Third, since the study focused on one department at a two-year technical college, the results may not be generalized to other educational institutions or other divisions or departments within the college. Fourth, not all participants would respond to the survey. Fifth, changes based upon certification requirements for law enforcement officers are also being undertaken. These changes are ongoing and being instituted by a non-educationally focused agency. Such changes will materially affect course structure. As these changes occur, the criminal justice program will adjust to incorporate them, and the relevance of this evaluation study may diminish as a result of the adjustments.

Implications for the Improvement of Educational Practice

Three outcomes of this study contribute to improving educational practice. First, the study provides the college with additional resources to facilitate the learning of students enrolled in the criminal justice program. Second, this research project contributes to the body of research focusing on student engagement in two-year colleges. Third, the results of this study identify any gap in the use of current student engagement practices presently utilized by criminal justice faculty.

Results

Gap Analysis Results

The evaluation indicates that opportunities for student engagement currently exist

in the criminal justice curriculum. Students and faculty report engagement activities are regularly utilized. Students and faculty agree that the criminal justice division is supportive of students, both on academic and personal levels. The evaluation panel indicates that the incorporation of student engagement activities by the criminal justice division was deficient in seven areas. These areas were identified through a gap analysis. Gaps identify areas for improvement. Recommendations for resolving the seven gaps are a result of this evaluation. Three of the analyzed criteria are interrelated. Discussion of these criteria was combined. In total, five gaps were identified, and recommendations to address these gaps prepared.

The first identified gap related to student-faculty individual meetings. The college identifies the importance of student-faculty interaction, as evidenced through the scheduling of instructor office hours. While office hours are identified as necessary, and time is allotted for this purpose, a gap continues to exist. Office and advising hours are scheduled by faculty based upon faculty preference. The scheduling of class hours is not a consideration in determining office hours, and this may result in the existence of the gap. A second cause for this gap may be related to the manner in which the faculty advising process is explained to students during the new student orientation.

The second identified gap relates to capitalizing upon students' life experiences. Most students in the program meet the definition of a traditional student. The definition identifies this student as being between the ages of 18 and 22 and being enrolled in course work full-time. The presence of this gap may exist due to limited student life experiences relative to criminal justice activities. Evaluating the scope of student life experiences in a class is difficult. Students may be unwilling to discuss past personal involvement with law enforcement authorities within a classroom environment.

The curriculum as presently constructed provides a limited number of opportunities to engage students in situational learning activities. Courses currently include scenario-based activities and assessments, narrowly focused on state law enforcement officer certification requirements, not on providing the students with engagement opportunities. The narrow focus limits the breadth of possibilities for situational learning.

A third gap revealed in the evaluation is that the curriculum is not structured to form learning communities. The program currently allows students to "self-select" their course schedules. Students attend various courses together, but this is due to happenstance or student preference rather than by curriculum design. No coordination exists between criminal justice courses and applicable required general education courses.

A fourth gap is the importance faculty place on student engagement. The degree of importance a particular faculty member places on engagement-related activities is difficult to measure. The panel indicated that faculty do not place importance on student engagement activities.

The fifth gap identified is whether the diversity of students' socioeconomic conditions is addressed by the division's student engagement practices. The student survey and the literature review both support the existence of this gap. Many students who attend two-year institutions maintain employment during the course of their studies. The student survey indicates that 55% of the participants work more than 30 hours per week. The survey also identified that students receive little, if any, monetary assistance from their parents or tuition reimbursement from their employers.

Recommendations

Five recommendations are presented based upon the results of this study. The commitment of the criminal justice division and the college to provide quality education indicates that these recommendations will be thoughtfully reviewed and implemented.

First, the criminal justice division needs to explore and implement practices designed to build learning communities. Learning communities will enhance student engagement and learning with linked or bundled courses. The law enforcement profession requires practitioners to be proficient at many skills. In addition, professional law enforcement practioners are expected to possess diversified knowledge covering several interrelated disciplines. Linking social science courses with criminal justice courses will increase engagement opportunities and facilitate learning in both disciplines. Consideration should be directed at linking the introduction to criminal justice course with the contemporary American society course. The juvenile procedures course may be linked with either introductory psychology or abnormal psychology, with discussions between criminal justice and social science faculty to coordinate curriculum and complement the instructional goals of each course taking place on a regular basis.

Bundled courses may be designed to create a student cohort. Through the creation of the cohort, advisors direct students to enroll in specific complementary courses. As the students interact across different disciplines, the opportunities for engagement increase, and learning is facilitated.

Second, criminal justice faculty need to examine the extent that situational and experiential instruction methods are utilized, with a focus on the variety of situations and experiences beneficial to the instructional process. The faculty will determine the design and placement of student engagement activities that will most benefit student learning. The implementation of this recommendation will prevent duplication of activities.

Recognition of the impact socioeconomic diversity has on law enforcement expands the pool of potential experiential and situational learning opportunities. The recognition of this diversity allows faculty to incorporate instructional techniques that embrace a wide range student experiences. The college recognizes that many of the division students are not experienced in diversity-related issues or situations. By encouraging faculty participation in the development of experiential learning opportunities, faculty are empowered to accept ownership of the revised curriculum.

Third, student-faculty communication needs to improve. Improving the new student orientation presentation may be helpful. Stressing the importance of student-faculty communication during the orientation is a first step toward improvement. The orientation provides the opportunity to advise students what they may reasonably expect from faculty outside of scheduled instructional hours.

Fourth, reexamination of the methodology used to compute and schedule office and advising hours warrants improvement. Currently, the number of assigned office hours is based upon the current number of a faculty member's assigned instructional hours. The number of office hours does not factor in the number of students enrolled in a course. No criteria currently exists to determine the number of hours a faculty advisor may schedule.

Fifth, the researcher recommends improving advising services for criminal justice students. The current process allows students to "self-advise," a process that does not encourage student interaction with faculty. Assigning faculty advisors to specific students is one action that will encourage the development of a relationship between faculty and students. The researcher recommends instituting a requirement that a faculty advisor meet with a student a minimum of once per term, a requirement that may also increase faculty-

student communication and engagement. A registration hold is one option to consider in facilitating the advising session.

Conclusion

An examination of student engagement practices within the criminal justice division was the focus of this evaluation study. The study examined data derived from student and faculty surveys as well as a comprehensive literature review.

The study revealed that the criminal justice division currently uses some student engagement practices. However, the evaluation identified several gaps between the ideal student engagement practices identified in the literature and those practices currently in use. The identified gaps may to be resolvable by administrative action. The recommendations made in this report may be a guideline for implementation of these changes.

Evaluation Report

Section III
Evaluation and Gap Analysis

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20. Creates an atmosphere for ethnically diverse information.	5	4	3	2	1
Comments for 5. Identical to Outcome 6, Sec 1					

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22. Engagement is affected by socio-economic factors.	5	4	3	2	1
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Although somewhat related to Outcomes 4 and 7, none of those criteria mention individual meetings with students. The FVTC criteria are broader in scope than simply calling for individual meetings.

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3. The existing criminal justice program outcomes could be amended to encompass experiential learning, situational leaning, and learning communities, particularly as we believe these actually exist in the criminal justice program. They just aren't specified in the outcomes statements. For instance, the tactical decision making lab in the criminal justice program, an application of virtual reality, involves students in situational learning. The outcomes may understate what the program is actually doing.

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Appendix S

Implementation Plan

Implementation Plan

The plan will adhere to college protocols for the revision of curricula. The plan will follow the protocol of the college, utilizing the following procedures:

(a) Plan for Revision:

a. The criminal justice dean, in consultation with the executive vice president/chief academic officer, will determine the recommendations appropriate for implementation.

b. The dean will appoint a criminal justice faculty member to assist in the development and implementation of tasks related to implementation.

c. Criminal justice faculty will meet to review the recommendations, address concerns, and develop an implementation plan that assigns specific duties to faculty members.

(b) Plan for Implementation:

a. Complete implementation of the revision plan will occur within six months.

b. Use monthly staff meetings of criminal justice faculty to discuss progress and concerns of the implementation plan.

c. Faculty will work cooperatively to implement the recommendations assigned by the dean.

d. Faculty will prepare six-month progress reports for the dean.

e. The executive cabinet will receive a status report regarding the implementation plan at the discretion of the executive vice president/chief academic officer of the college.

(c) Plan for Future Evaluation:

a. A follow-up evaluation will be conducted by the college research and development department 18 months after the recommended changes are effected.

b. Internet technology will be the method of choice for the follow-up survey.

c. Students admitted to the criminal justice program for one academic year following plan implementation are eligible for participation.

d. Results of the survey will be compared with this study.

e. If indicated, the implemented recommendations will be revised.

f. The survey will be re-administered two years following plan implementation.