

Contact: Rachel Boon

REQUEST FOR NEW PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA: BACHELOR OF ARTS IN CRIMINOLOGY AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE (ONLINE)

Action Requested: Consider approval of the request by the University of Northern Iowa to add a Bachelor of Arts in Criminology and Criminal Justice (online) in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences.

The Council of Provosts and Board office support approval of this program.

Description of proposed program. Increasing students need more flexibility in delivery mode to accommodate working professionals. The Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Criminology and Criminal Justice offered as a fully online degree will be targeted to students who have earned an associate of arts (AA) degree from an accredited community college. To be eligible to complete the criminology and criminal justice degree fully online, students will have to have completed an AA degree. The program requirements will be the same for the online program as they are for the existing BA in Criminology and Criminal Justice. UNI currently offers a fully online Criminology Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) degree, but students with an AA degree are not eligible for the online BAS. Offering the BA through distance delivery opens opportunities for more professionals to quickly and effectively advance their careers in this area.

Additionally, there are currently some students who are completing their criminology and criminal justice degree online through individual online offerings that are not designed as a fully online program. In some cases, these students have obtained full time jobs in the criminal justice system or have moved away from campus before completing their degree. Setting up this formal option will enable these students to complete their degrees. Implementing the online BA will simply formalize a process that students need and are already seeking.

Academic objectives. The academic objectives specific to the online delivery of the existing Criminology and Criminal Justice BA program are as follows: 1) To provide a pathway for AA degree-holding students to complete a four-year degree at UNI; and 2) To offer a high-quality, rigorous online environment for place-bound students who wish to complete a BA degree in Criminology and Criminal Justice at UNI.

Additionally, the UNI Criminology and Criminal Justice BA degree currently has three student learning goals/objectives that are measured through comprehensive assessment procedures. Because this is a simple change in the mode of delivery and not the content of the major, the department will continue to assess these same goals.

Relationship to existing programs at the institution. As previously noted, this request is for an online modality of an existing academic program. Students who transfer to UNI with an AA degree have at most 55 to 60 credit hours to take in order to reach the 120 credits required to obtain a bachelor's degree at UNI. (The maximum number of credit hours allowed to transfer from a community college is 65 credits). The criminology major at UNI is 39 credit hours; however, many students from community colleges typically transfer in between 3 and 18 credit hours toward the major. This means that online students will be able to take courses in other disciplines. For example, students may be able to earn a minor in family studies or psychology (depending on the number of online offerings) other programs on campus that offer classes online.

Relationship to existing programs at other colleges and universities. The University of Iowa has a major in criminology, law, and justice, however, that degree is not available online. Similarly, Iowa State has a major in criminal justice, but that degree is also not available as a fully online degree.

Two private, Iowa-based institutions currently offer entirely online criminal justice programs: Upper Iowa University (UIU) and Simpson College. UIU offers both a face-to-face and an online program in criminal justice. The cost for one three credit class at UIU is \$1,323.00 (<https://uiu.edu/future/annual-costs.html#centers>). Simpson College offers a Criminal Justice degree through Continuing and Graduate Programs. This program is offered online and evenings. Tuition is \$415 per credit hour, or \$1,245 for one three credit class (<http://simpson.edu/ewg/criminal-justice/>). At UNI, tuition for one 3 credit class is \$933.00, which is a significant cost savings compared to UIU or Simpson. In addition, students who enroll in the UNI program from Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC) and other Iowa community colleges may benefit from state scholarships that assure students pay tuition at community college rates throughout their enrollment.

Resources to establish a high-quality program. UNI currently offers approximately five content-specific courses as well as one or two required courses for this program with an online section each semester. Faculty largely offer these classes as part of their regular rotation of classes. However, as the department needs online sections for the BAS degree, the Office of Continuing and Distance Education pays for one or two classes as overloads to help accommodate the online students. The department will be able to fold in online BA students into existing BAS classes. However, if the major grows substantially, the department may need additional faculty in order to continue to offer enough classes to accommodate both online students and face-to-face students.

Student demand. The criminology faculty currently teach several online required, elective and major courses each semester. These classes are often the first to fill. Additionally, the Criminal Justice BAS advisor has noted that close to half of the students who inquire about or submit applications for the Criminal Justice BAS program have earned an AA degree. These students are not eligible for the BAS.

Workforce need/demand. In criminal justice it is increasingly common for police departments and other agencies to require a bachelor's degree for advancement. For example, Cedar Rapids police officers who are also UNI alums speak to a UNI criminology senior seminar every semester. These alums mention that without a bachelor's degree, the highest rank one can earn is sergeant. It is also very difficult to be a probation or parole officer without a bachelor's degree.

Funding and Cost. The majority of these classes are already being taught in an online format, and the department has the faculty necessary to continue doing so. The existing resources of the division of Continuing and Distance Education and UNI-supported technology will also support implementation of this degree option.

Projected student enrollment.

	Y1	Y 2	Y3	Y4	Y5
Undergraduate	15-20	30-40	30-40	40-50	40-60

Students from across Iowa who are place bound and/or work full time who wish to complete a bachelor's degree are likely to enroll. Some of these students may wish to transfer immediately after obtaining their AA degree. Program leaders anticipate that some students will have been in

the work force some period of time and are seeking to earn a bachelor's degree in order to advance in their current career. Some criminal justice agencies do not require a 4 year degree to be hired, but do require a bachelor's degree to hold some higher-level positions in the agency.

Additionally, this program will draw a number of students from DMACC. With the establishment of the UNI@DMACC program, wherein DMACC students can take an online program at UNI for the DMACC tuition rate, there has been an increase in the number of DMACC students applying to the BAS program and expressing interest in the Individual Studies BA. However, the Individual Studies BA does not allow for the DMACC tuition rate. Establishing a fully online BA in Criminology and Criminal Justice will attract DMACC AA students, who can complete a bachelor's degree fully online at a lower price.

Accreditation. This program is covered by the existing HLC accreditation and does not require a specialized accreditation.

Date of implementation. Fall 2022.

Letter of Support



IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY



June 9, 2022

To the Board of Regents:

The Council of Provosts discussed the University of Northern Iowa proposal for a Bachelor of Arts in Criminology and Criminal Justice (online) and reviewed associated documentation. There is sufficient evidence for the need and value for this program. The plan indicates due diligence and the Council of Provosts appreciates the collaboration between the deans and departments involved. Based on the evidence and documentation, this program is likely to benefit the state of Iowa.

The Council of Provosts is supportive of the program and wishes the University of Northern Iowa the best in its implementation.

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6/10/2022

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