



Judicial Studies & Justice Management Program Review 2021-2022

Closing MOU

Date: August 23, 2022

Overview

Degree/Certificate Programs Reviewed:	Master of Justice Management Master of Judicial Studies Ph.D. in Judicial Studies
Department Chair & Dean:	Shawn Marsh, Chair/Director; Casilde Isabelli, Dean
External Reviewers & Affiliation:	Prof. Keith Swisher, James E. Rodgers College of Law, University of Arizona Dr. Amy Cook, Department of Criminal Justice, Virginia Commonwealth University
Date of External Visit:	April 13 - 14, 2022

Review Process Summary

The Judicial Studies program and the Justice Management program were scheduled for regular program review as mandated by the Board of Regents and University policy. A self-study document for both programs was developed by the department faculty and completed in the Fall of 2021. This report was provided to the reviewers before they conducted virtual visit on April 13 & 14, 2022. The external reviewers reviewed the programs and met with relevant faculty, staff, alumni and administrators. Due to the virtual nature of the review visit, only a limited number of students were available to interact with the review team. They determine the department's accomplishments, examine strengths and weaknesses, and identify opportunities as it plans for the future. A final report was issued by the review team shortly after the review visit. In accordance with institution practice, responses to the review were solicited from the department and the dean. A final meeting took place on August 23, 2022. This document represents the final MOU of recommendations and findings from the review.

Signatures

Executive Vice President &
Provost:

Jeffrey S. Thompson

Date: _____

Vice Provost, Graduate Education
& Dean, Graduate School

Markus Kimmelmeier

Date: _____

Dean, College of Liberal Arts

Casilde Isabelli

Date: _____

Director, Judicial Studies

Shawn Marsh

Date: _____

Major Findings and Conclusions

The external reviewer commented on the unique nature of both the Judicial Studies, and the Justice Management programs. They highlighted the flexibility, quality of faculty and instruction, and variety of relevant course offerings as strengths of both programs.

- A prominent theme was the ongoing resource shortage, which affects all aspects of the two programs. The Judicial Studies and Justice Management programs are each operated with minimal dedicated staffing (half of a full-time position in case of Judicial Studies; a single full-time position in the case of Justice Management). The instructional and administrative effort is considerable, and current levels of staffing are inadequate.
- A lack of resources limits the ability of the program to accommodate new students and to hire needed instructors. Growing enrollment, while possible if not likely, presents a serious challenge to the two programs.
- The Masters of Criminal Justice and the Masters of Justice Management seem to be seen as in competition with each other, even though they are distinct.
- Alumni of the program express high levels of satisfaction with the programs. Alumni of the Judicial Studies program (all judges) highlighted the benefits of the program in managing the complexities of judicial decision making.
- Time to degree is very long, even when the occasionally excessive time in the Judicial Studies program must be attributed to heavy dockets and high judicial workload, i.e. factors beyond the control of students. Recent curriculum changes are aimed at increasing retention and reducing time to degree.
- Both programs are adaptive and highly flexible, which is very much appreciated by their students who are all working professionals.
- Faculty in the Judicial Studies program and the Justice Management program are actively engaged in research, including those on non-tenure track faculty appointments (LOA). This provides evidence of their scholarly productivity.
- Faculty morale is very low because of high workloads and low pay, especially among non-fulltime faculty members. Faculty are struggling financially and are feeling overwhelmed.
- In spite of the evident potential to grow, the programs do not seem to have a deliberate recruitment strategy in place.

- Especially the website of the Judicial Studies program requires an update with information being sometimes inconsistent and outdated. It was noted that more detail is needed to attract additional students, especially considering that this program is geared toward sitting judges. The benefits of the Judicial Studies and the Justice Management program are not yet sufficiently illustrated on the website.
- The current format of the Judicial Studies program, which requires judges from across the U.S. to travel to Reno, is limiting the potential of the program to grow.

Based on their observations, the external reviewers made the following main recommendations:

- Both programs should lobby the University for additional resources, as there is great potential for growth. Specifically, advocate for faculty positions to be allocated to support the Judicial Studies and Justice Management programs.
- The Judicial Studies program should offer an online option, which would facilitate growth in a time when travel cost may be prohibitive.
- Both programs were advised to implement a deliberate recruitment strategy. Online this should include documenting the programs' successes as well as testimonials from alumni highlighting the benefits of a liberal arts education. Other efforts should include outreach to local, state and federal courts and agencies.
- Faculty in both programs were encouraged to seek funding internal and external to the University to support their research
- To reduce the burden on program faculty, it would be advisable to implement a peer advising model in which more advanced students advise less advanced students.

Next Steps for this Program/Department (topics will vary)

Administrative resources. With the Judicial Studies and the Justice Management programs being dependent on the administrative support by the same Administrative Assistant IV, the programs and the College of Liberal Arts will find a solution to ensure that the workload of this position is realistic. This may imply to restructure the current position such that the position is focused exclusively on supporting these two programs.

Faculty resources. Due to impending retirements and ongoing turnover, the programs will work toward making sure that both programs are adequately staffed.

Recruitment strategy. The programs will consider new recruitment strategies that are suitable for their target audiences, judges in the case of Judicial Studies, and mainly working professionals in the justice system in the case of Judicial Management.

Time to degree. The JUDICIAL STUDIES program will work on creative solutions to ensure that the time to degree is reduced, especially for its Ph.D. students. This may include online delivery of content or a restructuring of courses that makes it easier for judges and other working professionals to complete courses.

Fundraising. Both programs will explore fund-raising options in cooperation with the College of Liberal Arts. This may include the creation of endowments that benefit the programs and its students.

Succession plan. The Judicial Studies program will work on a succession plan that considers the possibility that the current director will step down at some point.

Relationship with National Judicial College. The Judicial Studies program will clarify its relationship with a long-time partner, the National Judicial College. Though this relationship has been mutually beneficial, the level of collaboration can be expanded and enhanced. Messaging about this relationship to the public and to students can be confusing with potential implications for student retention.

Vital Statistics on NSHE Reports

1. Number of students with declared major in the program area:

Judicial Studies (MJS) 2021-22	<u>30</u>
Judicial Studies (Ph.D.) 2021-22	<u>10</u>
Justice Management (MJM) 2021-22	<u>33</u>

2. Number of graduates from the program for the following years:

Judicial Studies (MJS)	
2019-20	<u>3</u>
2020-21	<u>0</u>
2021-22	<u>4</u>
Judicial Studies (Ph.D.)	
2019-20	<u>0</u>
2020-21	<u>3</u>
2021-22	<u>0</u>
Justice Management (MJM)	
2019-20	<u>14</u>
2020-21	<u>10</u>
2021-22	<u>13</u>

3. Program-level graduation rate using first-time, full-time, degree-seeking cohort at 150 percent completion time:

Judicial Studies (MJS)	
2019-20	0.0%, n= <u>3</u>
2020-21	<u>100%</u> , n= <u>1</u>
2021-22	<u>20%</u> , n= <u>5</u>
Judicial Studies (Ph.D.)	
2019-20	<u>0%</u> , n= <u>1</u>
2020-21	<u>0%</u> , n= <u>0</u>
2021-22	<u>0%</u> , n= <u>2</u>
Justice Management (MJM)	
2019-20	35.7%, n= <u>14</u>
2020-21	46.2%, n= <u>13</u>
2021-22	37.5%, n= <u>8</u>

4. Headcount of students enrolled in any course related to the program (duplicated):

Judicial Studies (MJS, Ph.D.) 2021-22	<u>111</u>
Justice Management (MJM) 2021-22	<u>100</u>