

**Summit Meeting**  
**Association of Criminology and Criminal Justice Program Directors**  
**Program Summary**  
**May 18-20, 2006**

**History of the Organization**

Peter Lejins, in the late 1970s, spearheaded an informal gathering of doctoral program directors to meet and discuss common interests. A charter was later developed and the organization was entitled the American Association of Doctoral Programs in Criminology and Criminal Justice. Membership was open to any organization offering a doctoral program in criminology, criminal justice or a related discipline. In 1998, Todd Clear was elected as president and has served as the president since.

In 2005, data was compiled from surveys and shared with the National Research Council (NRC) in efforts to be formally recognized as a separate academic discipline. While this effort fell short of its goal, the NRC did establish criminology and criminal justice as one of the “fields to watch.”

**Purpose of Conference**

The primary purpose of the conference was to bring together all of the directors of criminology and criminal justice doctoral programs to establish a new charter for the organization, discuss the future of the organization, the development of the academic field, and the need for better program performance measurement. The association is composed of 34 member organizations. 33 programs were represented at the Summit Meeting.

Discussions at the Summit were facilitated by Todd Clear, current president of the Association. The meeting began with the presentation by Dr. Clear of eleven propositions to set the tone for the meeting and to guide discussions. Those propositions were:

1. We should continue the annual survey of doctoral programs.
2. We should have our annual business meeting every year at the American Society of Criminology meetings.
3. At the annual meeting, the agenda should include:
  - a. distribution of the survey
  - b. holding elections (President, Secretary, Treasurer)
  - c. any other business from the members
4. We should have annual dues for active programs of \$400 and for observers of \$250.
5. The President’s office should also serve as the secretariat, with responsibilities for: conducting the survey and maintaining the website.

6. Of the dues, \$12,500 should be used to hire a person to staff the office of the secretariat reporting to the President.
7. The website should provide:
  - a. common data about all programs (enrollment, stipends, degrees awarded, etc)
  - b. link to each program's official website
8. We try to get some column space in *The Criminologist* to disseminate information about the Association.
9. We should lobby the National Research Council (NRC) for inclusion as a program.
10. We should conduct the NRC survey on ourselves as a self-assessment, adding items we wish to add and deleting those not of interest to us.

### **Trends in Doctoral Education: Are we a discipline?**

After a brief discussion of the propositions, Dr. Clear and Dr. Natasha Frost presented results from their paper entitled *Doctoral Education in Criminology and Criminal Justice*, submitted for publication in the *Journal of Criminal Justice Education* in 2006. The data from this paper was based on the annual survey of institutions that offer the doctorate in criminology and criminal justice. Their paper provided a comprehensive summary of doctoral education in criminology and criminal justice and support Dr. Clear's contention that criminology and criminal justice have come of age as an established area of study.

In the early development of the association much discussion was given to differences in criminology and criminal justice research and education. There was very little, if any, formal discussions of these differences at the summit meeting. Discussions regarding the evolution of the discipline at the summit emphasized the need to find some balance between establishing clearly defined parameters of exclusion with being open to all emerging programs that have some substantive connection with the fields of criminology and criminal justice. Further discussion on how, for example, forensic science and victimology programs might be aligned with the association was considered. Participation in the discussion by a number of the participants illustrated the difficulty in documenting and defining who we are as a distinct substantive discipline to the National Research Council.

### **Re-setting the course: A new charter**

Since no one could produce a copy of the original charter it was collectively decided to produce a new charter. There was a relatively high degree of consensus among the participants regarding various issues related to the creation of a new charter including the purpose of the organization, criteria for membership, objectives of the organization, protocols for receiving active and associate members, the establishment, collection and use of dues, voting procedures, and the duties of the Executive Board. Duties for the Secretariat were also outlined.

The process of creating a charter served a variety of purposes beyond that of formalizing the association. It served as a forum for program directors to share operational and programs concerns in a relatively open environment and helped create some level of consensus and buy-in for organizational goals. One participant indicated the production of a charter was “painful but necessary.” There was unanimous agreement to approve the draft copy of the charter in principle, to distribute a draft copy of the charter to members prior to the annual meeting, and to consider the ratification of the charter at the annual meeting. A draft copy of the charter is provided in the appendix.

The association directed Dr. Clear to appoint a committee to call for nominations and propose a slate of officers for the annual meeting at ASC in November. Dr. Vince Webb from Sam Houston State University offered the services of the College of Criminal Justice to serve as the Secretariat to the association for one year. The Secretariat will facilitate as necessary in the election process.

Discussion regarding the establishment, collection, and use of annual dues followed. After much discussion, it was agreed that dues of \$600 a year for active members and \$400 a year for associate members was deemed acceptable. The President agreed to confirm that amount as appropriate in further communication with program representatives. Following the summit, the President confirmed the dues structure and directed the Secretariat to invoice the members.

### **Getting recognized: How important is it really?**

Criminology and Criminal Justice are relatively new disciplines. Getting recognized as a credible field of study is important to all programs. The field, as currently specified, did not meet the National Research Council’s criteria for number of graduates per five years to be recognized as an academic discipline in 2005. The National Research Council:

is part of the National Academies, which also comprise the [National Academy of Sciences](#), [National Academy of Engineering](#) and [Institute of Medicine](#). They are private, nonprofit institutions that provide science, technology and health policy advice under a congressional charter. The Research Council was organized by the National Academy of Sciences in 1916 to associate the broad community of science and technology with the Academy's purposes of further knowledge and advising the federal government. Functioning in accordance with general policies determined by the Academy, the National Research Council has become the principal operating agency of both the National Academy of Sciences and the National Academy of Engineering in providing services to the government, the public and the scientific and engineering communities. The Research Council is administered jointly by both Academies and the Institute of Medicine through the

The NRC conducts a survey every five years to rank the productivity of programs and to assess the development of new disciplines. The NRC will reconsider disciplines in 2010.

The reputation of programs on individual campuses impacts the distribution of resources and money. Many university administrators tout the rankings of various programs as a way to market their programs. In 2005, the U.S. News and World Report released the first-ever rankings of doctoral programs in criminology and criminal justice. The results were based on a survey of the Association of Criminology and Criminal Justice Doctoral Program members. The survey had the highest return rate of any such survey done by U.S. News and World Report. The rankings created a great deal of discussion within various programs. There was agreement among the summit participants that while it was good to be finally included in the U.S. News and World Report survey, the methodology used was an inadequate measurement of program productivity. Some programs used the rankings to launch a marketing campaign.

The issue of measuring excellence and program performance received a great deal of attention in discussion among the summit participants. It was agreed that there are unique differences among doctoral programs (some emphasize research, some emphasize theory, some emphasize policy applications, etc.) and that program evaluation and ranking methodologies should be able to differentiate between the operational models. Various methods of faculty and program evaluation were presented. Discussion regarding the accounting of scholarship was followed by expressions of concerns that over quantification of the evaluation process may be counter productive.

The questions “what makes a good student?” and “what makes a good faculty member?” led to dialogue concerning the role of mentoring both untenured faculty and graduate students. It was acknowledged that most doctoral graduates in criminology and criminal justice are hired at universities that emphasize teaching and that doctoral programs doing a good job in preparing graduates to teach should not be penalized in the evaluation process. The notion of doctoral program accreditation and certification was briefly discussed. The participants who did speak to the issue were not in favor of such a process.

### **Measuring productivity**

Previous studies by Cohn and Farrington (1998), Sorenson and Pilgrim (2002), and Fabianic (2002) were discussed. Two studies, one by Steiner and Schwartz and one by Kleck, Wang, and Tark, assessing the productivity of doctoral program

faculty were presented and discussed. Both studies focused on one facet of doctoral program performance, article productivity, and utilized new methodological approaches. Both papers are in the process of being considered for publication and are not available for distribution at this time. Though the methods used to rank programs in the two studies were received with a certain level of skepticism (not unexpected) overall, they were received favorably by the group.

### **The Future: where are we going?**

1. Criminology and criminal justice undergraduate programs are growing at a rapid rate. There is a demonstrated need for entry level professors in the field. Evidence of this phenomena occurred at the Employment Exchanges at the American Society of Criminology annual meeting where there were approximately 190 jobs for 30 applicants. A similar ratio of jobs per applicants occurred at the Employment Exchange at ACJS.
2. Doctoral education in criminology and criminal justice is expanding and will continue to do so for at least another 5 years. It is expected that organization membership in the Association of Criminology and Criminal Justice Doctoral Program Directors will increase and there will be interest from organizations that have a substantive connection to criminology and criminal justice. The organization recognizes the need to balance issues of exclusiveness (i.e. should doctoral programs in public administration or sociology with a concentration in criminology or criminal justice be allowed membership) with need to be inclusive.
3. Criminology and Criminal Justice have been designated by the National Research Council (NRC) as “fields to watch.” The Association is interested in obtaining NRC recognition. The collection of data from NRC annual survey has not captured the growth in graduates from criminology and criminal justice doctoral program or the productivity of doctoral criminology and criminal justice faculty.
4. The Association is interested in expanding the annual survey to incorporate many of the NRC survey questions and providing ongoing data to program members and the NRC.
5. The Association is interested in meeting at least every five years in summit fashion to discuss various issues. It was suggested that federal funding might be available to support such an endeavor.
6. The Association has established an annual dues structure with consideration for developing programs and programs with special needs.
7. The Association is interested in the inclusion of international programs.