

**Graduate Executive Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**March 18, 2021**  
**MEETING LOCATION: Online through Microsoft TEAMS**

Present: Becky da Cruz, Herb Fiester, Linda Most, David Nelson, Kelly Heckaman, Matt Carter, Grazyna Walczak (proxy for Luis Bejarano), Maren Clegg-Hyer (proxy for Dixie Haggard), Keith Lee, Meagan Arrastia-Chisholm, Michelle Ritter, Mitch Lockhart, Zhong Lin, Matt Grant, Nancy Swanson, Anne Price, Ellis Heath, Peggy Moch, Christopher Downing,

Guests: Corine Myers-Jennings, Darrell Ross, Ernest Smith, Heather Kelley, Natalie Kuhlmann, Deborah Robinson, Rudy Prine, Ofelia Nikolova, Jessica Cid, Sonja Jenkins, Justin Sanchez

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Becky da Cruz at 2:00 pm.

Minutes from February 18, 2021 were approved. Ellis Heath motioned to approve. Peggy Moch seconded. 15 voted to approve.

**College of Education and Human Services**

Revised Catalog Copy – EDUC 2999 (satisfactory grade requirement and update content): Clarify the timing of meeting the EDUC 2999 satisfactory grade requirement and update content. Linda Most motioned to approve. David Nelson seconded. 18 voted to approve. Motion to approve passed unanimously.

Revised Catalog Copy – Master of Science in Marriage and Family Therapy (GRE requirement update): 1) Increasingly, universities across the United States are dropping the GRE as a necessary and informative marker for admission into graduate school. This is true of VSU as well, per my conversation with Dr. da Cruz. The primary reason is that seems to be no/little correlation between GRE scores and students' ability to succeed in graduate school (<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0169121>). This can be verified by a quick Google search where dozens of sites and publications discuss the suspension of the GRE test in higher education and the reasons for this change. 2) As a field that deals wholly in human relationship, personality, interactional behavior, decision-making, and the art and science of change, a quantitative test of verbal and mathematics skills is inappropriate for a Family Therapy graduate program. Linda Most motioned to approve. Ellis Heath seconded. 18 voted to approve. Motion to approve passed unanimously.

Request for a New Course – CSD 5300: Diagnosis and Correction of Reading Difficulties: Two syllabus were attached. Removed Structured Literacy Instruction syllabus – will present this new course at a later date. Diagnosis and Correction of Reading Difficulties is the same name as another course so changed name to Assessment and Diagnosis of Dyslexia. Dyslexia is a

common learning disability which is thought to affect approximately 10% of the population. Dyslexia is defined as a specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin and characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and poor spelling and decoding abilities. Mounting evidence supports the important contributions of the accurate assessment of language and literacy abilities toward differentiated instruction for those with dyslexia. Current legislation also is being directed toward improving the educational experiences of those with dyslexia. Due to the passage of Georgia Senate Bill 48, the GaPSC assembled a task force for responding to requirements set for in the legislation, including the development of a Dyslexia Endorsement educator preparation rule. The GaPSC educator preparation rule for this endorsement will establish standards (based on the standards of the International Dyslexia Association) and requirements for programs that will train educators to do the following: understand and recognize dyslexia and signs indicating problems with language-skill development; implement instruction that is systematic, explicit, and evidence-based to meet the educational needs of students with dyslexia; and train and advise other teachers on the signs of dyslexia and language-skill deficits and how to work with affected students.

The new Dyslexia Endorsement preparation rule will be proposed to the Professional Standards Commission for initiation late this summer or early fall and if adopted, will be effective by January 2020. Ellis Heath motioned to approve. Peggy Moch seconded. 18 voted to approve. Motion to approve passed unanimously.

Request for a New Course – SCHC: 8892: School Counseling Special Topics Seminar: To meet SACS requirement for a minimum of 30 credit hours in graduate programs, this 3-credit hour course is created to bring the program from 27 credit hours to 30 credit hours. Ellis Heath motioned to approve. Linda Most seconded. 17 voted to approve. Motion to approve passed unanimously.

Revised Catalog Copy/Curriculum Change – Education Specialist School Counseling: Reflects newly added course along with other program requirements thereby meeting SACS requirement. Ellis Heath motioned to approve. Linda Most seconded. 17 voted to approve. Motion to approve passed unanimously.

### **College of Humanities and Social Sciences**

Revised Catalog Copy – MAT in ESOL: ESOL 6780 and 6790 are essentially the same class – Student Teaching, aka Clinical Practice. Teacher candidates who are already hired to teach in their field take the class student teaching in their own classroom and are considered “interns”. Thus, they take ESOL 6780. Teacher candidates who are not employed as teachers at the time of their student teaching take the class teaching in their mentor teacher classroom and take ESOL 6790. The work they do is the same. Linda Most motioned to approve. Ellis Heath seconded. 18 voted to approve. Motion to approve passed unanimously.

Request for a Revised Course – CRJU 7000: Revising entire curriculum. Through self-study and looking at other agencies, BOR schools, and schools across country we are focusing more on the practical side vs. theoretical side (supervision management, risk assessment, personnel, etc.). There will still be theoretical courses but moving more to practical due to self-study. No thesis but a research policy course vs. just a research paper. Criminal Justice Administration: See the general degree revision justification. This revision fits within the overall revisions to the MSCJ program, which includes recommendations from a CJ advisory board and a survey of CJ professionals. Ellis Heath motioned to approve. Nancy Swanson seconded. 17 voted to approve. Motion to approve passed unanimously.

Request for a New Course – CRJU 7020: Revising entire curriculum. Through self-study and looking at other agencies, BOR schools, and schools across country we are focusing more on the practical side vs. theoretical side (supervision management, risk assessment, personnel, etc.). Leadership and Ethics for the Criminal Justice Executive: See the general degree revision justification. The recommendation to create this course and to restructure the MSCJ degree is in accordance with the CJ advisory committee recommendations for criminal justice professionals and what they need to be successful. Ellis Heath motioned to approve. Nancy Swanson seconded. 17 voted to approve. Motion to approve passed unanimously.

Request for a Revised Course – CRJU 7370: Revising entire curriculum. Through self-study and looking at other agencies, BOR schools, and schools across country we are focusing more on the practical side vs. theoretical side (supervision management, risk assessment, personnel, etc.). Ethics and Legal Issues: See the general degree revision justification. The course remains a required course and specifically addresses civil liability issues in criminal justice. The CJ advisory committee members and survey respondents rank this subject matter as the number one issue/course requiring inclusion within the overall degree. The ethics of the criminal justice administrator will be specifically addressed in the Leadership and Ethics for the CJ Executives course (new course). This is primarily a title change. Ellis Heath motioned to approve. Nancy Swanson seconded. 17 voted to approve. Motion to approve passed unanimously.

Request for a Revised Course – CRJU 7412: Advanced Research Methods for Criminal Justice: Revising entire curriculum. Through self-study and looking at other agencies, BOR schools, and schools across country we are focusing more on the practical side vs. theoretical side (supervision management, risk assessment, personnel, etc.). See general justification for the degree revision. Criminal justice reforms require ongoing research and assessment in order for administrators to make informed decisions about operational practices, personnel issues, and instituting constitutional practices within the organization. The course specifically addresses research strategies commonly used in criminal justice organizations and remains a required course. Ellis Heath motioned to approve. Nancy Swanson seconded. 17 voted to approve. Motion to approve passed unanimously.

Request for a Revised Course – CRJU 7413: Criminal Justice Planning and Evaluation: Revising entire curriculum. Through self-study and looking at other agencies, BOR schools, and schools

across country we are focusing more on the practical side vs. theoretical side (supervision management, risk assessment, personnel, etc.). This course was an elective course and now will be a required course consistent with the revised administrative focus. Organizational policies and programs are implemented with frequent occurrence with little emphasis on field implementation and evaluation. The course underscores field practices as it focuses on policy development and program evaluation techniques for maximizing organizational effectiveness. Ellis Heath motioned to approve. Nancy Swanson seconded. 17 voted to approve. Motion to approve passed unanimously.

Request for a New Course – CRJU 7640: Conflict Management in Criminal Justice: Revising entire curriculum. Through self-study and looking at other agencies, BOR schools, and schools across country we are focusing more on the practical side vs. theoretical side (supervision management, risk assessment, personnel, etc.). See the general degree revision rationale. Creation of this course and restructuring the MSCJ degree is based on the advisory committee's recommendation and our own research to address the needs and demands of CJ personnel to be successful in the Criminal Justice profession. Ellis Heath motioned to approve. Nancy Swanson seconded. 17 voted to approve. Motion to approve passed unanimously.

Request for a New Course – CRJU 7650: Risk Assessment and Risk Management in Criminal Justice Organizations: Revising entire curriculum. Through self-study and looking at other agencies, BOR schools, and schools across country we are focusing more on the practical side vs. theoretical side (supervision management, risk assessment, personnel, etc.). See the general degree revision rationale. The course is being implemented in accordance with best practices in the CJ system. CJ administrators are challenged with numerous operational threats and legal risks on a recurring basis. Many administrative decisions must be made from a risk analysis perspective. The course will assist in identifying and assessing threats, and developing risk control strategies which will effectively protect the human and property assets of the CJ organization. Ellis Heath motioned to approve. Nancy Swanson seconded. 17 voted to approve. Motion to approve passed unanimously.

Request for a New Course – CRJU 7660: Personnel Management in Criminal Justice Organizations: Revising entire curriculum. Through self-study and looking at other agencies, BOR schools, and schools across country we are focusing more on the practical side vs. theoretical side (supervision management, risk assessment, personnel, etc.). See the general degree revision justification. With the focus on administration and related issues, this course will provide information on managing personnel issues specific to CJ agencies. Ellis Heath motioned to approve. Nancy Swanson seconded. 17 voted to approve. Motion to approve passed unanimously.

Request for a New Course – CRJU 7670: Domestic and International Terrorism: Revising entire curriculum. Through self-study and looking at other agencies, BOR schools, and schools across country we are focusing more on the practical side vs. theoretical side (supervision management, risk assessment, personnel, etc.). See the justifications for program revision, this was a topic recommended by the advisory board and practitioner survey. Administrators in

criminal justice organizations face many domestic and international terrorism threats. Approaches to identifying and responding to the nature of terrorism is an ongoing process. The course addresses strategies and approaches to threat mitigation and developing appropriate practices to respond. Ellis Heath motioned to approve. Nancy Swanson seconded. 17 voted to approve. Motion to approve passed unanimously.

Request for a New Course – CRJU 7920: Criminal Justice Policy Research: Revising entire curriculum. Through self-study and looking at other agencies, BOR schools, and schools across country we are focusing more on the practical side vs. theoretical side (supervision management, risk assessment, personnel, etc.). See the general degree revision justification. With the focus on administration and related issues, this capstone course will allow students to evaluate and implement the curriculum material for an agency problem or issue. The completion of the policy research will allow students to show faculty as well as current or future employers the ability to identify issues, apply knowledge, skills and abilities learned in the MSCJA degree program, and to positively and effectively solve administrative issues. Ellis Heath motioned to approve. Nancy Swanson seconded. 17 voted to approve. Motion to approve passed unanimously.

Revised Catalog Copy – Master of Science in Criminal Justice Administration (title change): Revising entire curriculum. Through self-study and looking at other agencies, BOR schools, and schools across country we are focusing more on the practical side vs. theoretical side (supervision management, risk assessment, personnel, etc.). The Master's degree in criminal justice has been offered at VSU since 1998. Only a few revisions have been made to the program, which included eliminating an area paper and adopting a thesis requirement (2014) and offering the degree fully online (2014). As a result of the CJ program's 5-year review conducted in 2019, Provost Smith and Dean LaPlant recommended revising the program. Additionally, our CJ Advisory Committee, which includes nine practitioners from diverse backgrounds and agencies, as well as a separate survey of 23 practitioners from across Georgia, suggested that the program be revised. We have also reviewed other CJ administrative graduate programs across the nation, as well as reviewing the GA Command College curriculum. In response to these suggestions and review, we are revising the program to focus on administrative and management issues specific to criminal justice organizations, resulting in a title change to Masters of Science in Criminal Justice Administration. Recent societal events suggest an ongoing need to prepare criminal justice practitioners to lead their respective agencies. Practitioners in leadership and supervisory roles are in positions to bring about positive changes within their organizations. A national trend amongst a majority of criminal justice agencies reveal a number of reforms in the overall management of the organization. These reforms require experienced and educated leaders to implement the proposed reforms. Higher education has always been responsive to societal issues, and an advanced education can assist in this process. Based on our research and discussions, there exists a viable pool of potential students who hold line-level positions in these agencies in both Georgia and nationwide who are interested in an advanced degree which focuses on criminal justice administration. Each of Georgia's 159 counties has a Sheriff's Office, a jail, and county court personnel, and there over 500 municipalities in the state with law enforcement departments.

Moreover, the GA Department of Corrections operates 36 prisons and 25 community supervision (probation & parole) centers. There are also 1) 30 State Patrol Posts, including the Capital Police and the Motor Carrier Division; 2) 28 university campus police departments, and 3) six Department of Natural Resource Law Enforcement Regions. At the federal level, there are numerous federal law enforcement agencies in Georgia (i.e., US Probation, BATFE, BOP, DEA, BIA, FLETC, US Marshals, etc.) and 13 military bases with security personnel. Finally, it is estimated that about 28,000 CJ practitioners in Georgia alone comprise a viable pool of prospective students.

Our focus is on attracting practitioners who desire an advanced degree to prepare them for a promotion to administrative and command positions. Within the University System of Georgia, GA State University is the only school that offers a graduate CJ Administration Degree: a Master of Interdisciplinary Studies in CJ Administration. Also, the University of West Georgia offers a track in CJ Administration, and the Command College at Columbus State University offers a Master in Public Safety Administration. Our goal is to offer an alternative and provide students with a viable option, particularly those in our region. We remain committed to recruiting our own graduates into the program as well.

To support this revised program, we are splitting some existing courses into separate courses, adding new required and elective courses, and revising other existing courses. The program will continue to require 36 credits: 24 required credits and 12 elective credits. Program revisions are responsive to the survey results identified by the respondents combined with our review of other graduate CJ administrative programs. We are proposing to replace the thesis with a CJ Policy Research paper, to be completed in the student's final semester. A budget and finance course will be added to the curriculum and taught by the PADM department (PADM 7140). Department Head, Dr. Joseph Robbins, supports and has approved the inclusion of this course. We are retaining existing CJ electives and the program delivery will remain online. We believe that these proposed revisions are overdue--responsive to practitioner recommendations--and will provide a highly viable program offering which will meet the needs of potential students. The revisions align with the goals of the Value of Higher Education in Georgia. We believe that offering the proposed graduate program will be successful in increasing student enrollment when supported with marketing and advertising resources. Ellis Heath motioned to approve. Nancy Swanson seconded. 17 voted to approve. Motion to approve passed unanimously.

Request to Deactivate Course(s) – CRJU 7411: Applied Statistics for Criminal Justice Research, CRJU 7998: Thesis I, and CRJU CRJU 7999: Thesis II: Revising entire curriculum. Through self-study and looking at other agencies, BOR schools, and schools across country we are focusing more on the practical side vs. theoretical side (supervision management, risk assessment, personnel, etc.). The request to deactivate the three courses is part of the overall revisions to the MSCJ program. See the justifications to revise the program with a focus on Criminal Justice Administration. Ellis Heath motioned to approve. Nancy Swanson seconded. 17 voted to approve. Motion to approve passed unanimously.

## **Sub Committee Report**

- Graduate Student Success – Dr. Downing updated that there is a survey after discussion with the sub-committee about graduate student orientation. Also met with AGS and got good feedback regarding networking opportunities as well as things that they would like to change in their programs. Asked what we could do to make them more comfortable, etc. Thursday March 25<sup>th</sup> @ 2PM the task force will be held for faculty and students to help coordinate orientation (portion will be online and a portion will be in person). If you are interested in Student Success and joining the team the meeting is April 1<sup>st</sup> @ 2PM. Email Dr. Downing if you have any questions.
- Doctoral Program Sub-Committee – Dr. da Cruz updated. The sub-committee discussed the thesis and dissertation format guidelines (general guidelines). We wanted to have a general guideline (not cornering any program) and transparency for students to know what formats are available for them to use. Dr. Maren Clegg-Hyer raised the concern that English and History had some concerns regarding the structure (in the sense that they aren't a social science), there would be intro and conclusion but formatting will not match the formatting. Dr. da Cruz indicated that we could include the other formatting guidelines from the English department (general format). Dr. Clegg-Hyer will send over and we will update the guideline document. We will continue editing the document and will circulate around and bring back in April for voting and discussion. We have been working with Stanley regarding IP's and trying to see if we can assign another grade (example "Z"). We are keeping these discussions going. Many of our doctoral programs have been cleaning up those students who have had IP's for many semesters and have assigned grades to those students (starting fresh and implementing protocols regarding successfully working toward progress for an "S" in their dissertation hours courses).
- Graduate Appeals – N/A
- Graduate Faculty Scholarship – Spring 2021 applications have been reviewed. Committee voted (5 out of 5) to approve 7 applications for a total of \$3,402.
  - Limited funding, no travel (registration for teleconference, etc.), update on approved funding applications (approx. \$4,360 for Fall 2020 over 9 apps) – Total for FY21=\$7,762 awarded (16 apps)
- Graduate Faculty Membership – Applications due March 12th, sub-committee is meeting March 25th to discuss and vote. Will bring to April GEC for vote.

### **Other Business/Topics from the Floor**

1. Graduation Application – Dr. da Cruz updated. Students are applying through new DocuSign application. There have been some glitches but they have been remediated. If you notice any other issues, please let us know and we can get to Pepper Croft if you are able to get to her directly. Dr. Most mentioned that the curriculum checklist is still an issue.
2. Graduate Symposium – Dr. da Cruz updated. It will be fully virtual with 3 musical performances, the GA of the Year as a part of it, student alumni will be keynote, 42 poster session nominations and 13 3MT submissions. 3MT, music performance, and

keynote will be video files. Poster session will have breakouts for discussion. We will have an awards ceremony at the end for the top 3 posters and top three 3MT. <https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/graduate-school/research/symposium.php>

3. Graduate Assistantships – Dr. da Cruz updated. Summer allocations of GA’s has been made. 74 positions have been funded for summer. Everyone who submitted was able to be funded. Starting hiring process and continuing hiring process for the Fall. Timelines are much better and working from a much earlier point in time so we don’t lose students.
4. Graduate Admissions Updates – Dr. da Cruz updated. Working on applications submitted for March deadlines. Reminder to coordinators to keep checking App Review as applications are completed and forwarded to programs.
5. Marketing/Social Media – Shared where to find Facebook and Instagram and shared the sample for Sociology that we posted this week. Also highlighted our new Graduate School landing page.
6. AGS/SGA Updates – Justin Sanchez/Allison Carr – Next AGS Meeting: April 19th. Elections will be happening at that time and transition of positions will be happening after that meeting. We are also working on getting stoles for all grads affiliated with AGS. Update about Grads: Found that not all graduate students are on the grad alias and not all of them are receiving emails for the graduate school/department when those are being sent out from Ernest. Working on getting some names to email to Ernest so that they can be added. From our meeting this past Monday, there was also discussion of a discontent with communication from programs to grads, specifically with advising, so I find it best to present that information here. If you have any questions, I’d be happy to answer them via email at [jjisanchez@valdosta.edu](mailto:jjisanchez@valdosta.edu). GEC stated that many programs are emailing students but students should be sure to check email and check in with advisor. Maybe add it to the orientation to have students understand the need to be advised semester, etc.
7. Items from the Floor?

Motion was made to adjourn at 3:35PM by Dr. Peggy Moch. Ellis Heath seconded.

Next Meeting: April 15<sup>th</sup> (Next Academic Meeting April 12, 2021)

*Ernest Smith*

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Ernest Smith, Recorder

*Becky K. da Cruz*

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Becky K. da Cruz, Associate Provost for Graduate  
Graduate Studies and Research