

1 **John Jay College of Criminal Justice**

2 City University of New York

3 Committee on Graduate Studies

4
5 **Minutes of September 6, 2024**

6
7 The Committee on Graduate Studies held a remote meeting September 6, 2024, via Zoom.
8 Interim Dean Andrew Sidman called the meeting to order.

9
10 **Present:** Jana Arsovska, Kendra Doychak, Shweta Jain, Simone Martin-Howard, Daniel Matos,
11 Danielle Officer, Susan Pickman, Chitra Raghavan, Ian Seda Irizarry, Avijit Roy, Ellen Sexton,
12 David Shapiro, Robert Till, Lucia Velotti, Rebecca Weiss, Valerie West, Ruby Aguirre

13
14 **Absent:** Marta Concheiro-Guisan, Susan Kang

15
16 **Non-Voting Members and Guests:** Maggie Arismendi, Wynne Ferdinand, Kathy Killoran, Elena
17 Lenihan, Shavonne McKiever, Patrizia Pelgrift, Dyanna Pooley, Charlotte Walker-Said, Rosemary
18 Barberet

19
20 **I. Dean's Announcements – Interim Dean Andrew Sidman**

21
22 Interim Dean Sidman introduced himself and the Academic Programs team. The committee
23 members then introduced themselves. Interim Dean Sidman introduced the aims of the
24 Academic Program team's work to build up quantitative reasoning for its undergraduate
25 curriculum. This effort is headed by Director Ferdinand for the undergraduate curriculum, and it
26 will be expanded towards the graduate curriculum. Part of this work focuses on developing
27 broadly applicable standards for academic skills, for example, Academic Programs hopes to
28 update the writing across the curriculum guidelines, which have remained unchanged since
29 1997. The Council of Undergraduate Program Coordinators is discussing assessment and
30 program review processes to improve student outcomes. The Committee on Graduate Studies
31 plays a vital role in shaping the curriculum and academic standards of graduate programs, and
32 Interim Dean Andrew Sidman encouraged interested individuals to get involved in these efforts.

33
34 **II. Approval of the minutes of May 17, 2024**

35
36 There was no discussion.

1 **A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of May 17, 2024. The minutes**
2 **were approved unanimously with 18 votes in favor.**

3
4 **III. Old Business**

5
6 Interim Dean Andrew Sidman introduced item three on the agenda: the Curriculum Sub-
7 Committee. This sub-committee reviews proposals (revisions, courses, programs) before the
8 Committee on Graduate Studies. The purpose of this Sub-Committee is to ensure that what
9 lands on the desks of the members of the Committee on Graduate Studies is the best version of
10 changes to the curriculum. Four members volunteered for this Sub-Committee: Valerie West,
11 David Shapiro, Ruby Aguirre, Ellen Sexton.

12
13 **IV. New Business**

14
15 **A. Programs**

16
17 **i. Program Revisions**

18
19 Interim Dean Andrew Sidman introduced the proposed revision to the International Crime and
20 Justice Master's Program. Associate Dean Killoran explained that there is a need to refresh the
21 list of electives to make students' graduation audit process more seamless. Courses such as the
22 Independent Study or the faculty mentored research are being added to the list so that they
23 can be counted towards the students' Master's degree. Director Arsovska highlighted the need
24 to discuss a minor change to the comprehensive review exam, since it was removed from the
25 list. All other courses have already been approved. Dean Killoran commented there is a second
26 reason to revise the program – ensuring that all sources of information (the Bulletin, CUNYFirst
27 and DegreeWorks) are correct and consistent. No further discussion.

28
29 **A motion was made and seconded to adopt the proposed revision to the International Crime**
30 **and Justice Master's Program. The motion was approved unanimously with 18 votes in favor.**

31
32 **B. Courses**

33
34 **i. Course Revisions**
35
36

1 Interim Dean Andrew Sidman introduced the final curricular item of the day: ICJ 750 “Special
2 Topics in International Crime and Justice.” This is a proposal that Dean Killoran suggested last
3 year to allow students to take the course twice. ICJ is incorporating this suggestion by making
4 their 750-course repeatable one time for a total of six credits in the program. There was no
5 further discussion.

6
7 **A motion was made and seconded to approve the revision to course ICJ 750. The motion was**
8 **approved unanimously with 18 votes in favor.**

9
10 **V. Other Business**

11
12 Director Pooley conducted a presentation featuring statistics for the past academic year that
13 included the Undergraduate Programs. This is because there are correlations with the Graduate
14 programs (undergraduate students who start in the Undergraduate, and move to the Graduate
15 Programs, for example). Out of the 31 undergraduate majors, she received 18 reports, and two
16 programs that used the self-study review process. She encouraged members who wish to use
17 their academic program review process in lieu of an annual assessment to contact her, Interim
18 Dean Sidman or Dean Killoran. Director Pooley mentioned that she was still waiting for 11
19 graduate program submissions.

20
21 Out of the 13 unattached minors that are included in the process (like Interdisciplinary Studies
22 and Africana Studies), Director Pooley has four reports, but nine are still outstanding / not
23 received. From other academic areas, such as Library, she has one of the two reports.

24
25 Her good news was that 41 unique courses were assessed across all reports received: six of the
26 700-level (most of the assessments occurring at the 400-level). Most of the assessments are
27 done at the capstone level, but Director Pooley would like to find a way to capture the
28 assessment before that final level to ensure that changes and adjustments can promptly be
29 made to close the loop earlier in the curriculum. Some of the courses have small sample sizes
30 (or these details are not included), and this makes the sample statistically insignificant. The
31 Assessment Committee will keep an eye on that detail this year.

32
33 There were 13 courses with 25% or more of students that did not meet expectations.
34 Director Pooley stated that they are in the process of improving assessment measurements.
35 Here are some examples of programs that are working on addressing their assessment results.
36 Based on their fall assessment results, the Human Services and Community Justice major made
37 changes to course modality scheduling while in the midst of the year (after they found that 53%

1 of students met or exceeded expectations, and 46% did not in online courses). The department
2 made amendments to the modality of some sections of courses:

3

4 A. Section 1: change to once a week to twice a week online synchronous;

5 B. Section 2: once a week to twice a week in-person (more contact with instructors and
6 more engagement with peers).

7

8 These sections also had two different rubrics that were merged into one robust and detailed
9 rubric for both sections. In the spring semester, they yielded the following results: 75% of
10 students met or exceeded expectations. Students were also given several opportunities to
11 revise their papers. This additional feature contributed to positive changes, while students that
12 did not take advantage of this feature performed lower.

13

14 Director Pooley also explained that the Anthropology and Deviance, Crime and Culture majors
15 were in the process of revising their program level outcomes in reaction to their last program
16 review from a few years ago. The learning outcome language was long and complex, which led
17 to difficulties assessing the outcome, and during the outcome application, the faculty conflated
18 them on their syllabi. Therefore, they re-organized the outcomes, simplified the language, and
19 have since streamlined them over this academic year.

20

21 Director Pooley also stressed the importance of holding a syllabus review for every department.
22 The Department of Political Science has been conducting the process by using five different
23 criteria. Within their four-program levels, they noticed that 29 courses included writing, but
24 only eight of them had “scaffolding”; 11 of them involved independent research, and only three
25 focused on effective writing. It was decided that they would revisit the learning outcomes
26 (should writing be a learning outcome, if it is not taught in their courses?). With reference to
27 research skills, they are only taught at two specific places in their curriculum (if research skills
28 ought to be an outcome, then it should be embedded more thoroughly in their curriculum at all
29 levels). Director Pooley further mentioned that the deadline for collection of the assessment
30 reports will be at the end of February, however, the Master’s Program can choose a different
31 deadline.

32

33 The Philosophy Department made changes to their overall assessment process. The Chair,
34 Michael Brownstein met with several people to learn best practices. The committee decided to
35 maintain their current plan until the external evaluation in spring 2024. In the meantime, three
36 immediate changes were implemented: 1) the curriculum committee would also serve as the
37 assessment committee; 2) the committee would review student work, instead of course faculty;

1 3) the sample size of student work for assessment will be increased. Their initial findings
2 indicated that 1) most students met or exceeded writing expectations; 2) there was no
3 significant performance difference between 200 and 300-level courses, 3) there was uneven
4 construction of writing assignments, and 4) students used AI in their writing assignments.
5 Director Pooley will follow up on the role of writing in their courses, and she will share the
6 overall results of her entire findings with everyone here.

7
8 Director Pooley concluded that there are three open seats on the Academic Assessment
9 Committee, and those interested ought to contact her, Interim Dean Sidman or Karen
10 Kaplowitz. Students are also welcome to apply. There were two volunteers: Lucia Velotti,
11 Shweta Jain.

12
13 Interim Dean Andrew Sidman thanked the volunteers, and reminded everyone of the
14 importance of the work done by the Academic Assessment Committee.

15
16 The meeting concluded at 13:25.

17
18 Submitted by,
19 Patrizia Pelgrift, scribe