

# Department of Criminal Justice Strategic Plan

*Approved 10/11/2019*



College of Community  
Innovation and Education

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# Background and Overview

## Where we have been and where we are going

Twenty years ago, faculty in the Department of Criminal Justice at UCF parked in a dirt lot near the Health and Public Affairs I Building. Today, that dirt lot is Parking Lot D, and along with this lot came the attached parking structure and even more recently the UCF Global building. As UCF expands in the number of students served, the number of programs offered, and the nature of services offered to the campus community, the Department of Criminal Justice strives to remain on the cutting edge of the continued advance into the future.

This strategic plan reflects the core values held by the faculty, staff, and administrators in the Department. These values center upon a dedication to providing top-quality education to students, continuously enhancing faculty research, supporting the staff who keep the Department running, and facilitating a positive work environment for all employees.

The Department of Criminal Justice at the University of Central Florida is proud to be a national leader in student and faculty achievement. This strategic plan sets out a roadmap for maintaining and enhancing that reputation. Our advance into the future will be a strong one.

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# The University of Central Florida

Founded in 1963 with the mission to provide talent for Central Florida and the growing U.S. space program, UCF has become one of the best colleges for quality, access, impact and value. It's one of the reasons *U.S. News & World Report* ranks UCF among the nation's top 10 most innovative colleges, while both *Kiplinger* and *Forbes* rank us a best-value university.

As an emerging preeminent research university in Florida, we are driven to do more and be more. We believe success can only happen when we expand opportunity and demand excellence. We believe if there's a better way, we should do it. We believe innovation comes from the meeting of diverse viewpoints. And when more people unleash their full potential, anything is possible.

## Our Impact

We use the power of scale and the pursuit of excellence to solve tomorrow's greatest challenges and to make a better future for our students and society. Through learning, discovery, and partnerships, we transform lives and livelihoods.

## Our Promise

- Harness the power of scale to transform lives and livelihoods.
- Attract and cultivate exceptional and diverse faculty, students, and staff whose collective contributions strengthen us.
- Deploy our distinctive assets to solve society's greatest challenges.
- Create partnerships at every level that amplify our academic, economic, social, and cultural impact and reputation.
- Innovate academic, operational, and financial models to transform higher education.

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# College of Community Innovation and Education

At the College of Community Innovation and Education, you will gain the knowledge, experience and confidence needed to transform lives and strengthen communities. Through our diverse programs and established partnerships, we are uniquely positioned to develop innovative solutions to complex social issues. You will have opportunities to collaborate with faculty experts across academic areas and engage in community-based experiences throughout Central Florida and beyond. Whether you aspire to work in criminal justice, education, health management and informatics, legal studies or public administration, our faculty and staff will help you reach your goals.

## College Mission

The College of Community Innovation and Education educates and empowers leaders to serve a diverse society through innovative instruction, strong partnerships and transformative scholarship.

## College Vision

The College of Community Innovation and Education transcends traditional university boundaries to engage faculty and students with the social and economic fabric of thriving, modern communities.

## College Strategic Goals

1. Cultivate a culture of diversity and inclusion to attract and support exceptional faculty, students, and staff of all backgrounds whose collective contributions strengthen us.
2. Support, recognize, and reward professional excellence of faculty, staff, and students.
3. Become the most transformative college in the region and state through the creation of untraditional interdisciplinary research teams and the advancement of groundbreaking ideas with social impact.
4. Sustain and grow strong partnerships between the faculty, staff, and students of CCIE and local, regional, national, and global communities.
5. Use positive impact as an evaluative marker of community service, research, and academic excellence.

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## Message from the Department

The Department of Criminal Justice at the University of Central Florida provides excellence in teaching, research, service, and community engagement leading to academic excellence and engaged student learning, while addressing our most pressing social problems and supporting our community.

As a top enrolled program on campus, the Department of Criminal Justice collaborates on college and university-wide initiatives and programs that have worked to strengthen and support faculty, staff, and students, facilitate teaching and research collaborations, and inspire faculty excellence to advance the campus mission of research, teaching, community partnerships, and entrepreneurship. Our academic program teams and faculty are committed to engaging and inclusive teaching, experiential learning, student internships, research intensive experiences, and other high impact initiatives that support the educational environment of students that will contribute to the strategic mission of the University of Central Florida.

The Department will continue to work to foster and maintain a collegial environment that promotes creative and problem-based scholarship, innovative transdisciplinary curriculum, and high impact learning experiences leading to excellence in teaching, research, and community engaged partnerships.

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# Goal 1. Provide Top-Quality Criminal-Justice Education

The Department of Criminal Justice continuously strives to deliver excellent classroom (on campus or virtual) experiences for all students. Our graduates become police officers, corrections officers, crime analysts, victim advocates, researchers, and more in Central Florida and beyond. The Department believes that career success begins with an educational experience that treats each student as an individual worth investing in. Our rigorous curricula at the undergraduate, Master's, and Ph.D. levels challenge students not merely to learn new material but to also become critical thinkers and lifelong learners.

To achieve this goal, the following objectives are set out:

- *Objective:* Maintain well-rounded undergraduate, Master's, and doctoral program curricula that comprehensively address multiple aspects of the criminal-justice system, including policing, security, courts, corrections, the juvenile-justice system, and the offenders, victims, and families who come into contact with these institutions.
- *Objective:* Promote faculty excellence in teaching and recognize exceptional faculty teaching through awards and other forms of acknowledgement.
- *Objective:* Continuously review program curricula for opportunities to strengthen or enhance student learning experiences.
- *Objective:* Offer ongoing teaching workshops and trainings within the Department, and encourage faculty and doctoral students to attend outside trainings.
- *Objective:* Promote student retention, degree completion, and timely program completion by monitoring all required courses' completion rates, incentivizing faculty to engage students in creative ways, and encouraging student participation in department and campus organizations.

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## Goal 2. Continue Building the Department's Research Profile

The Department of Criminal Justice is currently home to some of the field's most-recognized scholars. Faculty research spans multiple aspects of the criminal-justice and juvenile-justice systems, including institutions themselves, employees within them, and the ways in which victims and offenders interface with the system. Faculty members consistently produce peer-reviewed journal publications (many of which appear in the field's top-tier journals), authored and edited scholarly books and monographs, grant proposals, textbooks, conference presentations, and other forms of scholarship that contributes to or helps disseminate knowledge.

To achieve this goal, the following objectives are set out:

- *Objective:* Invest in faculty development to ensure they are able to pursue scholarly ambitions and produce important academic deliverables such as peer-reviewed journal articles, grant proposals, and scholarly books.
- *Objective:* Recognize outstanding faculty achievement in research through internal awards, support for college and university level awards, and nominations for national awards, among other methods.
- *Objective:* Encourage peer-to-peer collaboration within the department and across disciplines, and encourage the mentorship of junior faculty by senior colleagues.
- *Objective:* Support faculty travel to academic conferences both within the U.S. and abroad to showcase faculty research on a large scale and give faculty the opportunity to expand their professional networks.
- *Objective:* Fill new and vacated tenure-track faculty positions with candidates possessing strong records of scholarly achievement and potential for continued success.

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## Goal 3. Expand Investment in Graduate Programming

In the fall of 2014, the Department welcomed its inaugural cohort of doctoral students. Since then, the faculty and staff in the Department have dedicated themselves to building this fledgling program into a nationally recognized destination for outstanding criminal-justice doctoral education. The Department maintains a commitment to producing graduates ready for research-intensive positions in universities, research institutions, and other settings. Our unique doctoral program is set apart by our three-tract system. Each student selects a specialty in corrections, juvenile justice, or policing. Additionally, students must complete a series of statistics and research-methods courses and pass a qualifying exam testing their understanding of the collection and analysis of data. Combined, these program elements ensure that graduates are steeped in the scholarship of their chosen area of specialization and ready to begin producing their own independent contributions to academia.

To achieve this goal, the following objectives are set out:

- *Objective:* Actively recruit nationally and internationally to attract talented students poised to excel in the program and beyond.
- *Objective:* Expand student funding with a combination of waivers and stipends from the department, college, and external sources such as grants.
- *Objective:* Ensure rigor and quality in instructional content.
- *Objective:* Support Ph.D. students' entrance into academia by funding conference travel and assisting students in locating external funding sources.
- *Objective:* Organize workshops, trainings, and invited speakers to expose doctoral students to a multitude of research topics, spark creativity, and ensure a well-rounded educational experience.

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## Goal 4. Invest in Support, Administrative, and Professional Staff

Staff are the backbone of any department, college, or university. Their hard work keeps the administration of education and research functioning. The Department of Criminal Justice seeks to continuously recognize the important contributions made by its staff, to maintain high morale among staff, and be an attractive employment option for those seeking new jobs either from within other units at UCF or from the outside community.

To achieve this goal, the following objectives are set out:

- *Objective:* Formally and informally recognize outstanding performance through awards, negotiated salary increases, and so forth.
- *Objective:* Encourage retention of excellent staff members through incentives, rewards, and a comfortable work atmosphere.
- *Objective:* Ensure staff have a voice in departmental matters that impact them, and foster an inclusive environment that empowers them to take charge of tasks, make decisions, and have their concerns given serious consideration by supervisors.
- *Objective:* Continuously monitor position descriptions and pay grades to ensure they accurately reflect the duties required of the people who occupy those positions.
- *Objective:* Fill new and vacant positions with applicants possessing demonstrated histories of productivity, teamwork ability, and commitment.
- *Objective:* Submit proposals for new positions as the need arises to meet the demands of an ever-expanding department and university.

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## Goal 5. Foster Community Partnerships and Service

The University of Central Florida prides itself on being a premier provider of services to the community. In line with this, the Department likewise commits itself to giving back in various ways. Faculty lend their expertise to community groups, local agencies, schools, and other public and non-profit entities. This work is accomplished through a variety of methods, including contracts, collaborative grants, consulting, training, and informal arrangements for data collection and report writing, along with student placements and internships. Community partners benefit from the expertise provided by faculty who are recognized experts, and faculty and students benefit through exposure to practitioners and opportunities for ongoing research and internships. Many agencies, community groups, and schools in Central Florida and even internationally have collaborated with faculty from the Department. Thus, the Department intends to further this spirit of service in upcoming years.

To achieve this goal, the following objectives are set out:

- *Objective:* Enhance the Department's reputation locally, nationally, and internationally as a provider of high-quality services in research, training, funded collaborations, and other endeavors.
- *Objective:* Vigorously seek partnership opportunities through activities such as attending local practitioner gatherings, hosting events open to the public, taking out advertisements in local media outlets, and so forth.
- *Objective:* Incentivize faculty engagement with community partners by supporting their efforts.
- *Objective:* Invest in student internship programs and service-learning opportunities.
- *Objective:* For new and vacant staff positions, prioritize applicants with skills in budgeting and the execution of contracts and grants.

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## Goal 6. Be a Forerunner in Diversity and Inclusivity

Florida is one of the most racially and culturally diverse states in the nation, and Central Florida's residential population reflects this larger vibrancy. Orlando boasts a population composed primarily of Hispanic/Latino and African American residents, as well as a strong LGBTQ+ community. As the main institution serving the post-secondary education needs of Orlando and surrounding cities, UCF endeavors on a large scale to attract a diverse student population. The Department of Criminal Justice has likewise committed to enhancing student, faculty, and staff diversity. Our strong belief is that learning, collaboration, and problem solving are optimized when people of all backgrounds come together. Diversity only works when the social environment is welcoming and inclusive, so the Department has also dedicated itself to fostering an atmosphere in which differences among students, faculty, and staff are viewed as assets to the Department as a whole.

To achieve this goal, the following objectives are set out:

- *Objective:* Expand departmental participation in diversity and inclusion events and organizations on campus and in the community.
- *Objective:* Actively recruit students from multiple sources using various communication methods, including but not limited to local community colleges; print, TV, and/or radio media; community-based groups and agencies; and social media.
- *Objective:* Promote retention and degree completion among nontraditional, minority, and first-generation students by offering additional support services as needed to promote opportunities for success.
- *Objective:* Maintain a classroom and work environment that is inclusive where all people are treated with dignity and respect.
- *Objective:* Use existing departmental faculty lines and take advantage of university resources (i.e., the Targeted Opportunity Program) to recruit diverse faculty.

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## Goal 7. Expand International Focus to our Curricula and Research

The University of Central Florida is committed to expanding its global footprint. The UCF student population represents over 120 countries and over 2,100 international students seek degree programs at UCF while 500 UCF students participate in study abroad. UCF Global is on a quest to transform lives by providing access to high impact, international experiences across the UCF and global community with a commitment to excellence in partnership, innovation, and services. The College of Community Innovation and Education is committed to sustaining and growing strong partnerships between the faculty, staff, and students of CCIE and local, regional, national, and global communities.

To achieve this goal, the following objectives are set out:

- *Objective:* Provide new opportunities for faculty to collaborate with scholars from other countries
- *Objective:* Identify grant opportunities and capitalize on departmental and college funding to identify ways to bring faculty together to expand international and comparative work.
- *Objective:* Identify opportunities to access datasets that allow for comparisons across nations.
- *Objective:* Explore ways to fund faculty and student exchanges.