STOCKTON UNIVERSITY ANNUAL REPORT FOR FY23 COMPASS FUND PROJECT

PROJECT LEADER(S):	Kimberley Schanz, Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice Jess Bonnan-White, Professor of Criminal Justice	
PROJECT TITLE:	Addressing Student Retention in the Master's in Criminal Justice Program	
DATE:	June 6, 2023	

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• This form <u>must</u> be completed and submitted to be considered for a second year of funding, if applicable, or for any future Compass Fund support.

Please provide a summary of the project and your experience.

The Master's program in Criminal Justice (MACJ) has acknowledged that the largest barrier to success for our incoming students is their under preparedness for academic success at the graduate level. The two main areas that the program has highlighted as problematic to their students' success are 1) their (inaccurate) expectations for graduate work and 2) their writing skills, which are a key skill to their future careers. Many of our first semester students have been struggling in the transition from undergraduate work to graduate work, with 6 out of the 12 (50%) first-semester-graduate-students achieving at least one grade lower than a B (the required minimum grade of MACJ program classes) or withdrawing from a class due to low grades in the Fall 2021 semester. Anecdotally, MACJ precepting faculty report students specifically citing inaccurate expectations for work quality and time commitments as main sources of their difficulties in the transition.

In response to these student difficulties, the MACJ program developed and implemented a one-day workshop designed to address the gaps in student preparedness within the first four weeks of their first semester in the program. This workshop was required for all students in their first semester of MACJ classes. It is essentia

The MACJ program had two overarching goals for this workshop. The primary goal of this workshop was to provide the baseline level of accurate expectations and skills that incoming students need to be successful and can then build upon in their MACJ classes. By providing incoming students with appropriate expectations, they had the opportunity to adjust their approaches to the program and its classes accordingly, increasing the likelihood that they will successfully meet those expectations. As these expectations are reinforced and discussed in every MACJ class, this workshop provided incoming students a head-start towards working towards meeting them. Additionally, by spending time reviewing writing skills, the workshop served as the universal equalizer for our incoming students as we understand that students from a variety of backgrounds and paths to our graduate program may have a variety of undergraduate writing skills. The workshop was designed to both reinforce the skills that some students may already have been exposed to create high quality undergraduate writing and to teach those same skills to other students who may not have been exposed to them.

The secondary goal of this workshop was to provide a cohort-based experience, the only of its kind in the program currently. Other graduate programs at Stockton use a cohort-model and have acknowledged its benefits. This workshop, done in cohorts, is the first opportunity that our program has had to encourage the cohort-format and its benefits in our program.

On September 24, 2022, the first Master's of Arts in Criminal Justice (MACJ) first-semester student workshop was held. It was a full day workshop that started at 8:30am and went until 4:30pm. The goal of the workshop was two-fold:

- 1. to provide and explain the expectations for students in the MACJ program, and
- 2. to provide the baseline level of writing skills that incoming students need to be successful and can then build upon in their MACJ classes.

All students who were first-semester MACJ students in Fall 2022 (with the exception of one who was on military training the weekend it was scheduled) attended and actively participated in the workshop. Students reported a high level of satisfaction with the experience (see the <u>full Assessment report</u>) and both faculty were highly satisfied with the day. All of our expectations were met. The agenda for the workshop can be found <u>here</u> and additional materials used can be found <u>here</u>.

Please describe the results of your project and compare them to your original expectations. Elaborate on how well your objectives were met and how they might have changed. Note any particular obstacles that may have prevented your achieving full satisfaction on desired outcomes. The full Assessment report can be found here.

In summary, both the GPA-based comparison and assignment-grade-based comparison showed advantages for those first-					

		increases) in late September and
		second disbursement of \$525 in
		early February
	\$850	Purchase of 25 APA Manuals to
APA Manuals		cover both workshops attendees
AFA Ividi ludis		to be disbursed in late August (if
		possible).
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Total	\$4780	