June 3, 2009

Dr. Belle S. Wheelan, President
Commission on Colleges
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
1866 Southern Lane
Decatur, GA 30033-4097

Dear Dr. Wheelan:

The University of West Florida (UWF) proposes to offer the Master of Science in Criminal Justice (CIP 43.0104) effective with the Fall Semester 2009.

Currently, the Division of Social Work and Justice Studies offers a Criminal Justice specialization in the online Master of Science in Administration (MSA) degree. (This degree was in place at the time of the University’s Reaffirmation of Accreditation review in 2004-2005.) The Faculty Senate, UWF administration, and UWF Board of Trustees have approved replacing this MSA specialization with a Stand-alone Master of Science in Criminal Justice (MSCJ) degree using a combination of face-to-face, online, blended, evening and weekend course delivery formats.

Program Description. The MSCJ will have two tracks: a coursework option and an area research paper option. Each track requires a minimum of 33 credit hours, including 24 credit hours of criminal justice coursework. The coursework-only option requires 15 credit hours of required coursework plus an additional 9 credit hours minimum of criminal justice electives; the area research paper option requires 15 credit hours of required coursework plus an additional 6 credit hours of criminal justice electives and a 3-credit hour paper completed in consultation with a faculty advisor. Finally, each option requires 9 additional hours of criminal justice or non-criminal justice electives.

The program also offers three optional specializations from which students can choose: Social Work; Public Administration; and Education. Specializations are completed using the 9 credit hours of non-criminal justice electives. The specializations allow the students in the program to more specifically tailor their degree to their academic and career interests.

The purpose of the program is to prepare students for 1) careers in federal, state, county, and local criminal justice agencies, including management and administration, 2) careers in public or private criminal justice research and analysis, 3) teaching positions at community and state colleges, and/or 4) continued education at the doctoral level.
Faculty and Staff: The present complement of faculty and staff who sustain the Criminal Justice specialization in the MSA is sufficient to initiate and sustain the proposed MS in Criminal Justice based on projected enrollments.

Budget: No new budget is needed to support the MS in Criminal Justice. The budget that currently supports the MSA specialization will be redirected to the MS.

Space: The program has access to sufficient space in Pensacola and at the Emerald Coast Campus for face-to-face, blended, evening, and weekend course delivery formats.

Library and Other Learning Resources: Library and other learning resources that support the Criminal Justice specialization in the MSA are sufficient and will be redirected to the MS.

Should you need further information about the proposed new degree program, we would be more than happy to provide it.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Judith A. Bense, Ph.D.
President

cc:  Dr. Michael Johnson, SACS, Vice President
     Dr. Chula King, UWF, Provost
     Dr. Richard Podemski, UWF, Dean, Graduate Studies
     Dr. Don Chu, UWF, Dean, College of Professional Studies
     Dr. Glenn Rohrer, UWF, Chair, Division of Social Work and Justice Studies