

CRIMINAL MINDS
A House for Criminal Justice

Program Directors:

Monica Johnson, 2013
College of Arts & Sciences
Anthropology

Jennifer Dell, 2014
College of Arts & Sciences
Biology

OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM

In the “Criminal Minds” program, we will enhance our knowledge about many aspects of legal procedure, forensics, and criminal profiling. We hope to have a close and interactive environment that will allow members to draw from each other's experiences as well as collaborate with one another on ongoing endeavors. In the program we will increase our knowledge through field trips, films, lectures, individual research, and hands on experience.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE ONE

Each member will demonstrate an advancement of knowledge in numerous areas of legal procedures such as apprehension and incarceration. (Fall 2011)

ACTION STEPS:

- A) All program members will be expected to attend a presentation given by an on campus police officer and/or a presentation by a corrections officer at the Chittenden County Jail. Members will then engage in a discussion about the similarities and differences of the two career expectations.
- B) Members will work individually or in pairs to prepare a brief presentation on self-selected topics relating to legal procedure. These topics may range from discussing Supreme Court Decisions to debating the effectiveness of Miranda rights.
- C) Members will be required to attend a self-defense class and complete a quiz on personal safety.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE TWO

Members will gain hands on experience in a laboratory setting as well as increasing their knowledge of various forensic methods. (Winter 2011-2012)

ACTION STEPS:

- A) Program members will pick a specific forensic method/technique of interest and complete individual research that they will later present to the group. These methods may include learning about blood typing, blood spattering, track marks, etc.
- B) All members will participate in a fingerprinting hand on lab.
- C) Members will learn about preservation techniques which they will apply to a final murder mystery challenge.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE THREE

Program members will learn about the emerging field of criminal profiling and its application in real crime solving versus the exaggerated use seen in many films and television shows. (Spring 2012)

ACTION STEPS:

- A) All members will pick a well-known serial killer and present a brief description of their crimes and history to the group.

B) Members will examine a “crime scene” and make educated guesses about the killer (motivation, gender etc) by using knowledge of pre-existing profiler techniques. Members will then propose a story of how the crime occurred and learn what actually “happened”.

C) Program members will participate in a discussion about the improbability of common techniques seen in Hollywood compared to gained knowledge about real life limitations to the science of profiling.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

We have a lot of volunteer ideas for our program. Since our program will focus a lot on the negative aspects of human nature, it is important for us to also focus on giving back to the community. Some of ideas include working with the Burlington Police Department as part of the Graffiti Removal Team, a team of people who come together to clean up graffiti in Burlington. The Burlington Police Department also offers volunteer positions such as filing and front desk support. We will direct any interested members towards these positions. We may work with the women's shelter or help victims of crime by donate goods or services. We may also participate in the Prison Project, which is an organization that arranges pick up games with teenagers in juvenile detention centers. We would also like to plan a fundraiser to raise money for police dogs who need veterinary care.

PLANNING TIMELINE

See attached Planning Timeline for a detailed schedule of program activities.

PROGRAM ADVISOR

Our program would be advised by Professor Robert Gordon. His email is Robert.Gordon@uvm.edu. Robert Gordon is a professor of anthropology at UVM. He specializes in politics and law and social change. Professor Gordon has an extensive background in law and social justice. He has been an advisor to other programs in the past. We are extremely excited to work closely with him and make this a fantastic program.

In addition to Professor Gordon, we would like to have a second advisor who is a police officer. We feel like they will be able to offer a different, more hands on approach to our program. Also, they will have good connections and be able to work closely with member interested in that field.

HOUSING

We would like a one seven-person and one six-person suite. We anticipate both suites being co-ed. The most important request to us is that our suites are on the same level (instead of one downstairs and one upstairs) as it would be the most conducive to our learning and interacting. Our program would be a great example of General and Professional Interests and could be housed in a building with the other professional interests programs.

PLANS FOR INTERACTIONS WITH OTHER L/L PROGRAMS

We feel our program can really thrive by interacting with other houses. We would definitely like to team up with the Emergency Services program on their tour of a police department. We also would

love to be able to work with Active Minds when we start learning about abnormal psychology and the profiling of serial killers. Our program could easily team up with Neighboring Relations and the Dewey House of Civic Engagement to find volunteer opportunities throughout the city. We will also probably collaborate with the film and the literature programs as we will be working extensively in both mediums. We also were thinking of possibly collaborating with the Theater suite in order to learn about how the film/television industry uses make up to create wounds and bruises.

PROGRAM MEMBER RECRUITMENT

We are really excited about member recruitment because our house has the advantage of being open to a large number of students. We will use a different combination of advertising campaigns that emphasize different aspects of the program. We will hang the posters in heavy-traffic areas such as Living/Learning, the library, and Davis Center. In addition, we will target buildings that hold classes pertaining to our program such as psychology, political science, biology (forensics), anthropology, sociology, and social work. We will also reach out to specific groups on campus- such as Mock Trial and pre-law students- who may be interested in our program. We want to make posters that are bright and appealing and will interest a lot of student. We will also ask professors of many of these subjects to inform their students about our program.

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An additional component of our program will be to examine ideas of social justice through the lenses of the criminal justice system. Increasing social justice is an important issue at the University, and every program in Living/Learning should do their part in increasing awareness. The Criminal Minds house is in a unique position to do this while examining the law and criminal procedures. We would like to incorporate social justice issues under the umbrella of our other topics (legal procedure, forensics, profiling). We will challenge our members into really examining the supposed “blindness” of justice through topical issues. For example, why are defendants more likely to receive the death penalty if their victims are white? Why are 60% of inmates black? In addition to race, we will look at gender, sexual orientation, and the socio-economic politics that may influence a trial. During our focus on legal procedure matters, we will spend an extended amount of time on hate crimes (what constitutes a hate crime, why extended years are added to a sentence, etc). During our profiling section, we would like to look at the difference between criminal profiling and racial profiling. We think it would be neat to meet with the South Burlington Police Department who received accusations of racial profiling last year. Also, we would somehow like to coordinate a panel with faculty members to discuss the issues of social justice within the scope of criminal justice.