Criminal Justice

VIRGINIA WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY

BIRDSONG SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

Criminal Justice is a wide-ranging field that is primarily concerned with understanding the origins, nature, and consequences of criminal behavior and societal reactions to crime. As a profession, it focuses on careers directly related to social institutions of law, law enforcement, and the legal system.

THE PROGRAM

One of only two true liberal arts criminal justice programs in the nation and one of the most popular majors on campus, the Department of Criminal Justice at Virginia Wesleyan offers a line-up of core and allied courses which provide a practical liberal arts perspective of a rapidly growing field. Unique due to its incorporation of other disciplines within the liberal arts framework, it meets and exceeds the minimal standards set by the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences. Students in the criminal justice program receive classroom instruction as well as real-world experiences through simulations, internships, and other teaching tools that contribute to the applied nature of the program.

THE MAJOR

The major in criminal justice focuses on three interest areas: 1) criminology, 2) justice administration and organization, and 3) victim studies and support. As a part of the liberal arts curriculum, the major involves hands-on learning as well as related coursework in chemistry, political science, psychology, sociology, and health and human services. A student majoring in criminal justice at Virginia Wesleyan is required to complete a minimum of 44 credit hours in specified coursework if choosing to pursue an internship in the field, or a student may complete 54 credit hours in course-work if the student wishes to further enhance studies or prepare for law or other graduate school programs.

THE COURSES

Classes at VWU are small and interactive. Some of the courses within the criminal justice program include: Criminology; Criminal Law; Corrections; Law Enforcement; Juvenile Delinquency; Terrorism and Homeland Security; Criminal Investigation/Forensics; and Applied Criminology/Profiling.

INTERNSHIPS/UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

The classroom experience is complemented by an internship experience, which is an elective for our criminal justice majors and can be completed in one of a variety of areas. Students may complete an 8-credit, 300-hour internship during the course of a semester. Internships are personally supervised by the Director of Internships. Examples of internship sites include: Federal Law Enforcement (FBI, DEA, U.S. Marshals, and NCIS), State/Local Police, Social Services, Probation/Parole, Court Support and Corrections.

BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

With close to a 100% retention rate for the department, criminal justice graduates have had great success getting into graduate and law schools across the country, and obtaining positions with a number of federal, state, and local agencies. Between 80 and 85 percent of seniors in internships receive job offers upon graduation from Virginia Wesleyan. Graduates from the criminal justice program at VWU are employed in a number of fields, organizations, and agencies, including: Federal Law Enforcement, State/Local Police, Court Support, Forensics, Probation/Parole, and Victim Advocacy.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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