



## The College of New Jersey

To: Provost Taylor and TCNJ Deans Council

From: Benjamin Rifkin, Dean,  
School of Humanities and Social Sciences 

Re: Change in Designation for Criminology Degree

Date: September 11, 2013

C: Bruce Stout, Chair of Criminology

On behalf of the faculty of the Department of Criminology, I request TCNJ Deans' Council approve the attached request from the Criminology Department for a change in designation from the "Bachelor of Science" degree to a "Bachelor of Arts" degree. This request will ultimately need to be approved by the New Jersey Presidents' Council as a "change in degree designation"; there is no proposed change to the curriculum of the Criminology major.

I support this request because the change in designation aligns with the nature of the curriculum of the Criminology major and, in fact, all the majors in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. The degrees awarded currently by the School of Humanities and Social Sciences are bachelor of arts degrees in English, History, International Studies, Philosophy, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology, Spanish, and Women's and Gender Studies, as well as a bachelor of science degree in Criminology.

In fact, there is no substantive difference between the nature of the curriculum in Criminology or any of the other social science disciplines for which we award the bachelor of arts degree. Our criminology students have the same school-wide graduation requirements, including foreign language, as all the other bachelor of arts degree students.

This request came from the faculty of the Department of Criminology upon reflection upon the report of the external reviewer last year.

If the Deans Council approves this request, I will forward it to Steering for review by the Committee on Academic Programs.

**Benjamin Rifkin, Dean** • School of Humanities and Social Sciences

P) 609.771.3434 • F) 609.637.5173 • rifkin@tcnj.edu • PO Box 7718 • Ewing, NJ 08628-0718

[www.tcnj.edu](http://www.tcnj.edu)

**School of Humanities and Social Sciences  
The College of New Jersey**

## **Change of Degree Designation Request**

Request: The School of Humanities and Social Sciences at The College of New Jersey (TCNJ) is seeking a change in degree designation from “Bachelor of Science” to “Bachelor of Arts” in Criminology.

According to the Academic Issues Committee Manual of the NJ Presidents’ Council, “An institution seeking a change in degree designation (e.g., BA to BS) must submit the following material to the Academic Issues Committee: a letter indicating why the modification of degree designation is desired and why it does not fundamentally change the purpose of the program; a record of any significant changes in the old degree designation during the previous five years; and the proposed changes in the courses required for the degree.

With this change of designation there is no change whatsoever to the purpose of the program; nor are there any changes to the curriculum.

Rationale: This request is in keeping with the focus of the Department of Criminology and is in line with the degree designation in comparable departments of criminology in peer institutions. The Department of Criminology offers a course of study that focuses on understanding the operations of the criminal justice system and the issues involved in ensuring fairness, equity, compassion and justice in the operations of that system. A main focus of the Department’s curriculum is on public policy – helping students to understand the social, fiscal and political forces that shape criminal justice policy, and teaching them the skills needed to analyze and evaluate alternate policies and their potential impacts. The Department also offers a grounding in analytic and research methods, but at a level commensurate with other social sciences that award the Bachelor of Arts degree.

In February 2013 the Department of Criminology underwent an external review. The Department’s reviewer, Dr. Jerry Ratcliffe from Temple University wrote the following about the Department’s degree designation:

First, I see no clear reason why the major degree offered is a Bachelor of Science. The required classes have a blend of theory, statistics and policy-focus; however, these are all core courses that are generally required in the majority of good criminology/criminal justice programs of which I am aware. And they are all BA courses. I see no clear distinction that would provide a robust justification for the awarding of a BS. For applicants to graduate school, this may raise expectations that are not necessarily met when graduate program admissions officers review the transcripts of TCNJ students. This may result in some confusion or a more skeptical focus from the admissions officer, to the detriment of the TCNJ graduating student. It may be more appropriate to consider the award of a BA degree.

The current faculty of the Department of Criminology is unaware of how the Bachelor of Science degree designation was originally determined, but is unanimous in supporting this change in order to align the degree in Criminology with the degree designation of peer programs. Given that this request involves a matching of the Department's curriculum with the degree awarded, the faculty has not consulted with students about this request. We would, however, request that the change, if it is supported, be implemented prospectively, so that students who were admitted to the Department when the degree designation was Bachelor of Science receive that degree and newly admitted students receive the Bachelor of Arts degree.