Sacred Heart University

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February, 2008

SHU Awarded Accreditation for Year-Old Master of Arts in Criminal Justice Program

Pearl Jacobs, Sacred Heart University

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News Story:

FAIRFIELD, Conn. – Sacred Heart University’s Master of Arts in Criminal Justice program, launched in the fall of 2006, has received accreditation from the Connecticut Department of Higher Education.

“I’m still on a high from the news of the accreditation—it’s been wonderful,” said Dr. Pearl Jacobs, associate professor and chair for the Department of Criminal Justice. “The idea for the program came about four or five years ago, and the fact that we actually have done this is magnificent.”

The endorsement comes amid unprecedented growth for the university’s entire Criminal Justice program, which became its own department on July 1. The program was previously part of the Department of Sociology and Social Work. SHU currently has close to 200 undergraduate students majoring and minoring in Criminal Justice. The department is staffed by five full-time faculty who all have field experience in criminal justice.

Dr. Jacobs said that the master’s program was designed to differ from competing programs at other universities. “I noticed that most master’s programs are geared for individuals who have already been working in the field, but very few were designed for students with undergraduate degrees in Criminal Justice but who have little or no work experience,” she said. “Our idea was to develop a program that would assist both those types of students.”

In March, five of the students in the master’s program will present papers at the annual meeting of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences, to be held in Cincinnati. “Last year we had one student present, and this year it’s five,” Dr. Jacobs said. “It’s both a mark of the growth of the department, and also of the level of students we’re attracting and what they’re learning from the program.”