Developing A Gainful Employment Crime Analyst Graduate Certificate Program
A Framework for the University of Colorado Colorado Springs

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Project Description
This framework supplements the program design process for a gainful employment crime analyst graduate certificate program by recommending key classes, overarching design theories, optional third-party benefits, and potential draws for new or returning students. The design and accreditation process is addressed, though is not the focus of the project.

Organizational Context
UCSS
A four-year public doctoral university with high research activity and small and innovative classes.¹

• The university utilizes a student focused and collaborative approach for responsible growth while maintaining the integrity of the faculty & students.²

• The School of Public Affairs has 3 online graduate certificate programs in criminal justice.

Crime Analysts
Specialists who collect relevant information and produce an analytical product.

• Analyst responsibilities are governed by jurisdiction and availability of data and funding.

• Training standards were established by the International Association of Crime Analysts (IACA) in 1990. Educational recommendations were established in 2010.³

Professional/Scholarly Background

Program Feasibility
• There are 58 criminal justice graduate certificate programs in the US, 8 programs were directly reviewed and 2 were analyzed for this framework.⁴

Accreditation
• The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) oversees the accreditation process in 19 states throughout the US, including UCCS.⁵

• Subsets: If 50% or more of courses within the program are from an existing accredited program the HLC only requires notification to receive accreditation. This bypasses a 3-month review process. ⁵

Methods of Study
Comparative program analysis
• Public-facing data

Former student interviews
• Loosely structured and adaptive interview questions.
• Primarily digital forensic analysts

Findings

Kringen et al. (2017)
• How to educate a crime analyst & IACA recommendations

Evans & Kebbell (2010)
• Interpersonal skills develop in professional work.

Richardson-Hatcher et al. (2018)
• Certificate programs should be clear and concise.

Interview Results
“Do you know now that you wish you could have been taught in class?”
• Scripting, time management, communication, teamwork, and first-hand insight into what the job “looks like” on a day-to-day basis.

“What would you have changed, on a whole, in your program?”
• Flexibility in class selection.
• Students must feel that they are in control of their program.

“What secondary benefits did your program offer?”
• Few and far between, interest in pursuing benefits was low.
• Secondary benefits cannot prolong the program!

Supported courses, components, and theories
• Internships lead to professional experience while still in school.⁸
• Analysts should prepare for a potentially cybercrime laden future.
• IACA support should be sought out to cement program feasibility and appeal.

Classes supported by literature and the IACA³:
• CJ 5010 – Mapping and Analysis...
• CJ 5003 – Research Methods
• CJ 5985 – U.S. Intelligence Analysis...

Recommendations
• Compose the program to be of at least 51% pre-existing criminal justice courses to bypass HLC review.⁵
• Work with the IACA to establish a supported program.³
• Make computer literacy and scripting courses available to students.
• Prioritize Microsoft Excel over SPSS.³
• An Internship or practicum must be part of the certificate program.⁸
• Follow the example set by academic literature but prioritize listening to students.⁹