
**STOCKTON UNIVERSITY
ANNUAL REPORT FOR
FY23 COMPASS FUND PROJECT**

PROJECT LEADER(S):	Kimberley Schanz, Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice Jess Bonnan-White, Professor of Criminal Justice
PROJECT TITLE:	Addressing Student Retention in the Master's in Criminal Justice Program
DATE:	June 6, 2023

- *The boxes below expand as needed to accommodate your notes. You may also include/submit appendices or attachments, if needed.*
- *Email a copy of this completed form to the Compass Fund Review Board:
CompassFund@stockton.edu.*
- ***This form must be completed and submitted to be considered for a second year of funding, if applicable, or for any future Compass Fund support.***

Please provide a summary of the project and your experience.

The Master's program in Criminal Justice (MACJ) has acknowledged that the largest barrier to success for our incoming students is their under preparedness for academic success at the graduate level. The two main areas that the program has highlighted as problematic to their students' success are 1) their (inaccurate) expectations for graduate work and 2) their writing skills, which are a key skill to their future careers. Many of our first semester students have been struggling in the transition from undergraduate work to graduate work, with 6 out of the 12 (50%) first-semester-graduate-students achieving at least one grade lower than a B (the required minimum grade of MACJ program classes) or withdrawing from a class due to low grades in the Fall 2021 semester. Anecdotally, MACJ precepting faculty report students specifically citing inaccurate expectations for work quality and time commitments as main sources of their difficulties in the transition.

In response to these student difficulties, the MACJ program developed and implemented a one-day workshop designed to address the gaps in student preparedness within the first four weeks of their first semester in the program. This workshop was required for all students in their first semester of MACJ classes. It is essential to the MACJ program faculty that we provided this opportunity for students in a way that required from them no more than their time and attention.

This workshop addressed the following topics (see [Agenda](#)):

- The difference in expectations between undergraduate and graduate programs,
- The different types of writing and relevant skills needed for each,
- The skills needed to choose an appropriate paper topic (e.g., creating an argument structure, connecting claims to empirical evidence) and begin gathering sources for it,
- APA style and format necessary for writing in the discipline,
- How to write an integrative "power" paragraph, and,
- How to use rubrics and apply them to writing and peer review.

The MACJ program had two overarching goals for this workshop. The primary goal of this workshop was to provide the baseline level of accurate expectations and skills that incoming students need to be successful and can then build upon in their MACJ classes. By providing incoming students with appropriate expectations, they had the opportunity to adjust their approaches to the program and its classes accordingly, increasing the likelihood that they will successfully meet those expectations. As these expectations are reinforced and discussed in every MACJ class, this workshop provided incoming students a head-start towards working towards meeting them. Additionally, by spending time reviewing writing skills, the workshop served as the universal equalizer for our incoming students as we understand that students from a variety of backgrounds and paths to our graduate program may have a variety of undergraduate writing skills. The workshop was designed to both reinforce the skills that some students may already have been exposed to create high quality undergraduate writing and to teach those same skills to other students who may not have been exposed to them.

The secondary goal of this workshop was to provide a cohort-based experience, the only of its kind in the program currently. Other graduate programs at Stockton use a cohort-model and have acknowledged its benefits. This workshop, done in cohorts, is the first opportunity that our program has had to encourage the cohort-format and its benefits in our program.

On September 24, 2022, the first Master's of Arts in Criminal Justice (MACJ) first-semester student workshop was held. It was a full day workshop that started at 8:30am and went until 4:30pm. The goal of the workshop was two-fold:

1. to provide and explain the expectations for students in the MACJ program, and
2. to provide the baseline level of writing skills that incoming students need to be successful and can then build upon in their MACJ classes.

All students who were first-semester MACJ students in Fall 2022 (with the exception of one who was on military training the weekend it was scheduled) attended and actively participated in the workshop. Students reported a high level of satisfaction with the experience (see the [full Assessment report](#)) and both faculty were highly satisfied with the day. All of our expectations were met. The agenda for the workshop can be found [here](#) and additional materials used can be found [here](#).

Please describe the results of your project and compare them to your original expectations. Elaborate on how well your objectives were met and how they might have changed. Note any particular obstacles that may have prevented your achieving full satisfaction on desired outcomes.

The full Assessment report can be found [here](#).

Overall, MACJ faculty expressed the significant need for this workshop and its maintenance as part of the MACJ program. Additionally, students who participated expressed similarly the need for and satisfaction with this workshop, its timing, its content, and its continuation for first semester students. When looking at class-based improvement as a result of the workshop, we made two comparisons:

1. A GPA-based comparison between first-semester GPAs of students who attended the workshop (F22) and first-semester GPAs of student who did not attend the workshop (F21) who were taking similar classes, and
2. An assignment-grade-based comparison on a writing assignment requiring skills targeted in the workshop between students who did attend the workshop (admitted to MACJ in Fall 2022) and students who did not (admitted to MACJ In Spring 2023).

In summary, both the GPA-based comparison and assignment-grade-based comparison showed advantages for those first-semester students who attended the workshop. The students that attended the workshop had higher GPAs, achieved more As and A-s, achieved fewer non-passing grades, and earned higher grades on an assignment overall as well as the broken-down components of that assignment. Retention rates for students who attended the workshop and who did not were similar.

Overall, based on the assessment measures that were completed (again, see [full Assessment report](#) for details), it is clear that the success and continuation of this workshop is supported by both the quantitative and qualitative evidence. Faculty reported its immense need based on their experiences. Additionally, students expressed their satisfaction with the workshop, which was then supported by their improved performance in the classroom, as exemplified by both their overall grades and their assignment grades. We conclude that this workshop is beneficial to the MACJ students and is making significant improvements in their skills while having no negative impact on retention. We are hopeful that with more time and therefore, more data, we'll continue to see these improvements in skills and hope to see an increase in retention.

Please explain and provide any University Relations & Marketing (URM) coverage of your project (social media posts, press releases, photos, videos, etc.) You may include these items as attachments or paste them at the bottom of this document.

There was none.

Please list any follow-up actions (publications, presentation venues, etc.)

We are in active discussions with the Dean and Director of Graduate Studies as well as their staff to work towards implementing this on the University-scale for FY 24-23. As a result of discussions at the MACJ Advisory Board meeting regarding the success of this workshop, both the Dean of Graduate Studies and the Director of Graduate Studies expressed an interest in having this be integrated into a University-wide initiative to provide these types of workshops for all first-semester graduate students at Stockton. We, as the MACJ program, anticipate being an integral part of this planning and hope that this will be a mechanism for which we can maintain this workshop long-term. As a result, we are dedicated to working with the Dean and Director of Graduate Studies and their staff to ensuring that this initiative is not only expanded but feasible for the future.

Are you recommending the continuation of this project? If so:

- **What are the next action steps you foresee or recommend?**
- **What are the expected budget requirements going forward?**
- **Please identify the program, department, or division you should be working with to secure continuation of funding for your project.**

[Note: continuation proposals must be approved and incorporated into the appropriate budget process. This report will not constitute a request for permanent funding.]

While we are working towards integrating this workshop into a University-wide event through the Dean of Graduate Studies and his staff, their intended implement date for this event is in AY 24-25. In the meantime, since we had such positive results from this pilot, we want to be able to continue to do this in AY 23-24. Additionally, we have a cohort of MACJ students who started in Spring 2023 who missed out on the opportunity for this workshop because we didn't have funding to support it (and did more poorly

on writing-based assignments than their counterparts, as demonstrated above). As a result, for AY 23-24, we are requesting funding to conduct this workshop *twice* – once for the students admitted in Fall 2023 and another for those students admitted in Spring 2024. Based on current numbers (which are estimates based on anticipated enrollment from our Dual Degree program), we expect a cohort of at least 15 for Fall 2023 and a cohort of at least 4 for Spring of 2024.

FINANCES: Based on your proposal, please outline below how the award has been spent.		
	Amount	Notes/Comments
Beginning Budget Balance as of:	\$ 5517	Approved upon Proposal Acceptance
Salary Expenditures		
• TES salaries (613340)	\$ 4320	Two faculty to prep and run the workshop.
• Student worker (613345)	\$ 0	
• Grad student worker (613350)	\$ 0	
Total Salary Expenditures	\$ 4320	
Non-Salary Expenditures (<i>supplies, travel, etc.</i>)		
• Food	\$ 509.90	Breakfast, a morning snack, lunch, and an afternoon snack
• APA Manuals	\$ 682.22	20 APA Manuals
•	\$	
•	\$	
•	\$	
•	\$	
•	\$	
•	\$	
Total Non-Salary Expenditures	\$ 1192.12	
Total Salary + Non-Salary Expenditures	\$ 5512.12	Total costs actually used
Ending Budget Balance as of:	\$ 4.88	Remaining budget

If your project was approved for multiple fiscal years, please itemize future expenditures.

IMPORTANT: Unused funds revert to the general Compass Fund at the end of the fiscal year (June 30th). Compass funds DO NOT rollover to the next FY.

Item Description	Expected Amount	Expected Timing for Payment
Faculty Compensation for 2, 8-hour workshops @ current MOA compensation of \$90/hour for two faculty	\$2880	First disbursement of \$720/faculty member in early October and second disbursement of \$720/faculty member in late February.
Food for both workshops	\$1050	First disbursement of \$525 (costs from AY 22-23 with inevitable cost

		increases) in late September and second disbursement of \$525 in early February
APA Manuals	\$850	Purchase of 25 APA Manuals to cover both workshops attendees to be disbursed in late August (if possible).
Total	\$4780	