

Program Review

Executive Summary

Human Services & Restorative Justice

Majors Reviewed:

- *Human Services & Restorative Justice (HSJ), B.S.*
- *Human Services & Restorative Justice (HJ), A.A.S.*

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Pennsylvania
College of Technology
A Penn State Affiliate

Penn College offers two-year (A.A.S.) and four-year (B.S.) majors in Human Services & Restorative Justice (HSJ) that produce graduates who have gained extensive practical experience, possess strong knowledge in the field, and demonstrate cultural sensitivity. This unique combination of skills and qualities is highly praised by industry partners, resulting in a high rate of job placement. Penn College is the sole higher-education institution in Pennsylvania to provide this specific degree combination.

The HSJ program has exceptional faculty, all of whom have joined within the past five years. Collectively, they bring over 35 years of field experience. With diverse areas of expertise, ranging from substance abuse to child and family welfare, the faculty provides students with access to a wide range of professional networks and community partnerships to support the customization of their degree.

The program has undergone significant improvements based on faculty experience, administrative support, and input from the Advisory Committee. These enhancements include a change in program title and curriculum from Human Services to Human Services & Restorative Justice, the introduction of contemporary courses, relocation of the program to a new facility with added lab space, implementation of updated technologies, increased social media marketing, and intensified recruitment efforts. As a result, student enrollment has expanded, student retention has improved, and new campus-wide and community events have been offered to enhance student experience and outreach.

HSJ occupations have been designated as "high priority" in Pennsylvania due to the high number of retirements in the fields of corrections, policing, and mental health. This has created a wealth of job opportunities for HSJ graduates. In response to industry demand, the program continues to focus on preparing students for academic excellence, while efficiently meeting the workforce requirements. Based on these considerations, the following recommendations have been proposed:

- A thorough review of the current curriculum (e.g., course offerings, overlapping of content across programs, method of content delivery, and development of a minor) should occur.
- The assessment process (course-level, program-level, and core) should be evaluated and better organized.
- Opportunities to increase collaboration with campus partners (e.g., Workforce Development) and the community (e.g., articulation/pathway development) should be pursued.
- General operational procedures should be evaluated with the goal of producing an updated program manual and resource guide for students.
- Opportunities to increase knowledge of, and resources for, students interested in the fields of restorative and criminal justice should be investigated.