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## **EIU Now Offers Criminology Minor**

*Sep-05-2006*

Two Eastern Illinois University departments have joined forces to offer students a minor in criminology, a move designed to benefit EIU, the students and society as a whole.

The courses that comprise the criminology minor were already in existence at EIU, but students who took them had no way to have it officially noted as part of their degree.

Now, through a partnership between the sociology and anthropology department and the political science department, students who take the slate of criminology courses can have the effort officially noted in their records.

“What the minor does, at least in terms of catalog availability, is that it makes the existence of those classes readily apparent,” said Gary Foster, chair of the sociology and anthropology department.

“Just over the summer, I received probably 10-12 phone calls from prospective students who were interested in Eastern because somehow they heard about the minor,” Foster said.

Richard Wandling, chair of the political science department, worked with Foster in creating the minor.

“It makes us more competitive, relative to other universities in the state, in recruiting students,” Wandling said. “I think it’s a very important step.”

Foster added that EIU’s offering will benefit students who want or need to stay in the area.

Future police officers who take the criminology coursework will be more well-rounded, Foster said. Requirements include courses in civil liberties in America and philosophy of law.

“Law enforcement is different now in 2006, relative to 20 or 30 years or so ago,” Wandling said. “Even people working in local police departments are expected to have a bachelor’s degree.

“It’s important that we have educated public law officers. We’re expecting them to take on very difficult jobs under very trying circumstances. I think that society benefits by having informed, well-educated law officers who are educated not just in the techniques of law enforcement, but also a recognition of the important role they play in society and the expectations society has of them.”

The criminology minor allows students to select one of two options, criminal justice or criminal administration. A total of 21 semester hours must be taken from the criminology slate of courses.

The criminal justice option focuses on issues such as law-enforcement strategies and fairness. The criminal administration option is geared more toward students who are interested in pursuing careers in law-enforcement administration.

Other departments are involved in the minor as well, particularly the philosophy department, which is offering the required philosophy of law course.

The minor can be earned with degrees from several departments. For example, a biology major who is interested in a career as a conservation officer would find it quite useful, Foster said.

Transfer students benefit from the “two plus two” agreements EIU has with a dozen community colleges – including Lake Land College in Mattoon and Parkland College in Champaign – that insure that students who transfer to EIU from participating programs will get credit for the classes they’ve taken.

“Both Rich and I are genuinely excited about the creation of the minor for the benefit and interest of the students,” Foster said. “I think it contributes not only to the students’ education, but it contributes to Eastern’s ability to be responsive to students’ interests.”

Wandling agreed.

“To me, it’s a perfect example of departments working together, a perfect example of cooperation and partnership, with the sole goal being to do something good for the university and the students,” Wandling said.