

Pact allows BC3 criminology students to pursue bachelors with CAL U

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(Butler, PA) Criminology students at Butler County Community College can now transfer credits earned in their associate in arts degree program toward a bachelor of arts degree in jurisprudence at California University of Pennsylvania.

The schools' Jan. 9 articulation agreement provides for the seamless transfer of credits from one of BC3's most popular programs to the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education institution in Washington County.



Steven Shaffer, a BC3 instructor in humanities and social sciences, teaches a course in criminal law on Tuesday, Jan. 31, 2017, on BC3's main campus.

BC3's 62-credit criminology degree program – which has 113 majors this spring, according to Sharla Anke, BC3's coordinator of institutional research – is offered at main campus and at BC3 @ Cranberry in Cranberry Township, BC3 @ Lawrence Crossing in New Castle and at BC3 @ LindenPointe in Hermitage.

“It is one of our more popular programs,” says Bill Miller, BC3's interim associate vice president for academic affairs and dean of humanities and social sciences. “I think students are drawn to it partly because of some of the TV shows in the past five, 10 years, like ‘CSI’ and other law-enforcement programs, and partly with what is going on with Homeland Security. Some of our students are looking at careers such as juvenile probation, or getting involved with investigations or in the computer cyber-security area.”

BC3's associate degree program offers courses in crime and justice systems, juvenile justice and juvenile delinquency, criminal law and criminal procedure, among others.

Graduates of BC3's program will be able to identify the principles of criminal procedures with a particular emphasis on federal constitutional limitations, classify crime terminology aligned to the Pennsylvania Crimes Code and apply crime and justice system methodology by using appropriate field-related terminology.

Students can pursue California University of Pennsylvania's 120-credit bachelor's degree program in jurisprudence “100 percent” online, says Dr. Christina A. Toras, associate professor and chair of the school's Department of Professional Studies.

“There’s no requirement to come to campus,” she says.

The program, which features a concentration in legal studies, “is designed for the working professional with family obligations. It is a convenient format for completion for those who cannot attend face-to-face programs.”

Faculty members of California University of Pennsylvania’s jurisprudence program are licensed to practice law and are practicing attorneys, Toras says.

“They have not only the academic credentials,” she says, “but real work experience.”

Classical jurisprudence, medieval jurisprudence, Anglo-American jurisprudence, and litigation and trial evidence, are among the courses offered in California University of Pennsylvania’s program.

Most of its graduates find work as paralegals, Toras says.

“I do have people who are very interested in being a paralegal in my classes,” says Steven Shaffer, a BC3 instructor in humanities and social sciences.

The agreement, Shaffer says, will help multiple students and “give them another pathway to the success that we at BC3 want for them to have. We want to get them ready for their futures.”

Shaffer also lauds a December articulation agreement that enables BC3 students to transfer credits earned in their associate in applied science homeland security program to a bachelor’s degree program in the same field at Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania; and a partnership that allows BC3 students to attain a bachelor’s degree in administration of justice from the University of Pittsburgh while remaining on BC3’s main campus.

“This is just such a wonderful starting off point that will help me to guide students,” Shaffer says. “These are just exciting times to be here. It’s just so wonderful that we have all these avenues available so we can send our students out to be successful in their careers.”

Dr. Bruce Russell, BC3’s interim vice president for academic affairs, and Dr. Bruce Barnhart, California University of Pennsylvania’s provost and vice president for academic affairs, signed the articulation agreement.