

## March Department Meeting

### Criminal Justice and Composition

Hello everyone!

As I said last month, there are quite a few things to go over this month, so please bear with me and read all the way to the end. I wanted to give you the reasoning behind what we're doing as well as just the nuts and bolts. Some of it will be more applicable to the CJ crowd, but all of it is good information to have and understand.

1. **Identi-Kit.** For any CJ instructors, I have received the new list of Identi-Kit passwords. Identi-Kit is directly applicable to the CJ131 and CJ242 courses, and can often be integrated into other classes to give the students a little more "hands-on" work. Let me know if you need ideas on how to work it into your curriculum, and/or how many passwords you will need.
2. **Failing Students:** Please send me a list (either hard copy or via e-mail) of your students who are failing your courses in weeks 3 and 6 (I'll remind you along the way). This should include the course, student name, percentage grade, and any other information you feel I could use. In addition to your (at least) bi-weekly grade reports, I will be following up with all CJ students who are in danger of failing as well, to try to help get them motivated to get back on track.
3. **Re-Enters:** I will be sending you a list of students in each of your classes who are returning to school this quarter. These students are absolutely essential to our retention goals; unfortunately, they are also at higher risk of dropping since they have done so at least once already.
  - A) Please contact these students (bulk e-mail is ok) and touch base with them. Just let them know that you are their instructor, that you are looking forward to working with them over the quarter, and give them a little encouragement as they re-start their education with us.
  - B) Re-enters don't count for us until they actually sit in class, and obviously they count against your attendance, so it's a win-win for everybody when we can get them into class.
  - C) Please include me, along with the students, in the BCC section when you send out the e-mails.
4. **Withdrawals:** Historically, CJ has the highest attrition (drop-out) rate of any school at ITT Tech. We've made great strides lately in bringing this up, but we still have room for improvement. Withdrawing students hurt both the school and the student in the following ways:
  - A) Students who withdraw from a course (especially a core (CJ) course) are at much higher risk for dropping out of school. In fact, early CJ courses in particular have an almost 1:1 withdrawal to drop out ratio!
  - B) Even if they don't voluntarily drop out, we have many more students on Academic Probation for a low completion percentage than for low GPA. Most

students would be much better served to stick out a quarter and hopefully pull out a "D" than to drop the class and, more often than not, eventually drop from school.

- C) In short, please don't recommend to your students that they drop your course. For the reasons shown above, as well as many others, it is almost always in their best interests to continue on and try to pull a passing grade. If someone is talking about dropping your class, please recommend that they come talk with me before doing so.

5. **Attrition:** Our goals for the School of Criminal Justice are shown in the table below, and are based on our percentage of the school's student population.

MONTH	BOM CENSUS TARGET	GOOD STUFF		BAD STUFF		Difference
		Re-enters (Budget)	Re-enters (Actual)	Drops (Budget)	Drops (Actual)	
January	72	0	1	5	5	0
February	67	0	3	4	3	+1
March	63	5	1	4		
Qtr 1 Totals		5				

A) What we've been doing:

- a. Instructor contacts absent students. This is done by most instructors via e-mail and then documented in IRIS under "Attendance Advising." As a team, we have been doing a great job on this step.
- b. The Chair ("Moi" for those of you who speak French) must phone all students who have missed either two consecutive classes or 10 consecutive days of classes.
- c. The Chair (Moi again) tracks the absent students (along with the instructor/Chair contacts) and submits it to the Dean every day.

These efforts have greatly reduced our attrition over the past few quarters, but we still have a ways to go.

B) What we are going to do:

- a. Continue making and documenting our contacts for each student.
- b. Emphasize attendance. I would recommend talking about attendance on the first day of class, and periodically throughout the quarter. I have also added attendance to the syllabus supplement I hand out on the first day of the class.
  - i. An especially crucial attendance week is week 9. Students who attend in week 9 will not be dropped from the course for attendance reasons.
- c. On the second consecutive absence, the instructor will phone the absent student to encourage their return to class and offer their assistance. I will also be phoning them, but you will probably have more impact due to the rapport built up throughout the quarter.

- d. Encourage your students who miss that second consecutive week to submit work for your class. If they do, we can fill out a submitted work form and keep them from being dripped if they should have to miss their third class session.
6. **Summary:** In closing, I wanted to thank you for reading through this and recap the new steps we will be taking this coming quarter:
- A) Please send me a list of failing students in weeks 3 and 6.
  - B) Contact the students on the re-enter list I will provide to you.
  - C) Encourage "borderline" students to complete the course. Often a little extra effort will make the difference between passing and failing.
  - D) Emphasize attendance at the beginning of each course and regularly throughout the quarter. Remember how important attendance is in week 9. Try to come up with an interesting activity and let them know ahead of time what is going on.
  - E) Phone students with two consecutive absences in your course.

These steps shouldn't take up much of your time or energy and should significantly improve our effectiveness working with our students. Please let me know if you have any questions about any of the things we've "discussed" here.

Thanks again for everything you do,

Redacted by HELP Committee

Chair, School of Criminal Justice