In the Issue

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What's next?

Mason's new online criminal justice degree.

On Wednesday, March 31, Mason will complete a second crucial step in its undergraduate criminal justice program's transformation:

The university was recognized by the state Board of Criminal Justice Education and Training as having fulfilled the requirements to establish a degree in criminal justice, starting with the fall 2021 semester.

The new program is in addition to Mason's new online bachelor of science in criminal justice degree, which launched in fall 2020.

In the criminal justice world, it's common for new degree programs to face backlash from those who do not support innovation.

But Mason's program is unique in that it is a fully online, non-credit degree specifically for working professionals who may have to juggle other responsibilities in their personal and professional lives.

Lance Liotta, a professor in Mason's School of Government and Public Affairs, said Mason's online program was designed in response to a strong demand for criminal justice education.

"We have seen a lot of interest in the online master's program and have been able to offer it to people who do not have the time or means to attend a traditional program," Liotta said.

While some traditional college programs, particularly at nonprofit institutions, have been offering online criminal justice degrees for years, others still lag behind in offering such programs.

"The online program is really a response to the needs of working professionals," Liotta said. "We have heard from many people who have told us they need a degree in criminal justice but don't have the time to attend a traditional program.

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