



# Sam Houston State University

MEMBER THE TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

## COLLEGE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE

PHILLIP M. LYONS

April 19, 2021

Dear Criminal Justice Community,

Many of you are struggling to make sense of the events that are unfolding in our communities and across the nation. To those of you who have been affected and have voiced concerns, we hear you and acknowledge the pain that you are feeling. We feel it too.

We intend to be part of the solution. Together, we will confront behaviors that do not align with our values and will strengthen and rebuild an educational community committed to finding solutions to social issues that affect the criminal justice system.

Although it is important to *speak* to these issues, we are committed to *action*. We have already acted to implement significant changes for the College. A sample of key activities include:

- **Executive Leadership:** The College is hiring a Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to develop, promote, and assess new initiatives and practices; be an active voice for our minority students and stakeholders, and provide support for those in need. Having already screened and interviewed the top candidates, we plan to extend an offer this week.
- **Social Justice Cluster Faculty Hires:** The Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology has hired 3 new tenure-track faculty members for Fall 2021 with diverse backgrounds as part of our Social Justice and Diversity initiatives. This adds to three such faculty hired for Fall 2020.
- **Curriculum:** We have launched a new Minor in Equity and Inclusion to educate our students on multiculturalism and inequalities in the criminal justice system; and we are launching a certificate program this Fall. We also are in the midst of a years-long review of our curriculum to ensure its timeliness. That review includes a focus on these issues.
- **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Month:** May 2021 is Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Month in the College of Criminal Justice, where we celebrate, highlight, and promote diversity.

We know this will be an ongoing effort. We look forward to educating ourselves and our stakeholders on these issues. We pledge to continue to examine diversity, equity, and inclusion in a serious way while devoting resources to advance solutions. Our strong national presence and state-wide dominance provide us with both a unique opportunity and a responsibility to effect positive change. We accept this challenge and charge our students, faculty, and staff to work collaboratively to these ends.

This is just the beginning, we want to be better, do better, and we want to hear your voice! For feedback and ideas please reach out to us at this address: [cjademics@shsu.edu](mailto:cjademics@shsu.edu).

Sincerely,

Phillip M. Lyons, Jr., J.D., Ph.D.  
Dean and Director

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