

## SCHOOL OF CRIMINOLOGY

### WHY YOU SHOULD APPLY FOR ADMISSION TO THE HONOURS PROGRAMME

So far, more than 120 students have graduated from the programme, some with first class honours degrees. In nearly every case, the graduates are where they have chosen to be. The majority are in either graduate schools or law schools, some with the support of prestigious scholarships.

#### *Graduate School*

The Honours Programme provides excellent preparation for graduate school. This is because it replicates key aspects of a graduate programme, particularly the preparation and defence of a thesis. An honours degree is often a prerequisite for admission to a graduate school, especially outside North America. Although there are no guarantees, the chances of admission are generally better because an honours student has demonstrated, in a very concrete way, that he or she can complete the most difficult part of most graduate programmes - the thesis. In addition, it is much easier to obtain strong letters of reference from faculty members (notably, the thesis supervisor and the honours programme coordinator) because these faculty will know the student and the student's work. Last, but by no means least, the chances of obtaining an admission scholarship may be better, again because faculty members are better able to comment on an honours student's worth.

So, if graduate school is the long-term goal, plan for admission to the honours programme **first**. This holds true even for those with high GPAs who appear to be already eligible for admission to graduate school and who feel that their chances of admission are high. The Honours Programme will improve your chances even more and the experience will be invaluable preparation; remember, the programme involves only one extra semester of study, not a whole year (as rumour has it!).

### *Law School*

The remarks made above about graduate school apply equally well to those interested in going to law school. The preparation of a thesis on a legal topic helps students to develop solid legal research skills and provides an opportunity for students to demonstrate their abilities. It is much easier to obtain strong letters of admission from faculty members (where letters of admission are required) because students and their work are known to the referees. The chances of obtaining an admission scholarship may be greater because some scholarships are reserved for students with graduate or honours degrees. For example, a member of the 1995/96 cohort won a prestigious scholarship to Osgoode Hall Law School, in part because of her honours degree.

### *Just Hanging Out For A While*

If you have no immediate interest in either graduate school or law school, an honours degree may still be useful later if you decide to go to graduate or law school. It may also give you a competitive edge in the job market. Experience indicates that, all other things being equal, honours degree holders may be looked upon more favourably than pass degree holders, by prospective employers.

## **WANT MORE INFORMATION?**

Technical details are set out in the University Calendar, and can be found on the criminology web site ([www.sfu.ca/criminology](http://www.sfu.ca/criminology)). For example, to be eligible you must be a criminology major, with a **MINIMUM** GPA of 3.0, and with CRIM 300, CRIM 320, CRIM 321 and CRIM 330. There are other technical requirements. The academic advisor, Mr. Philip Jong, can help with technical details, especially checking a student's eligibility for the programme.

Entrance to the program is competitive, so simply having the minimum qualifications does not guarantee entrance. Admission is every September, in a cohort, and when a student has at least 110 credit hours. The programme is worth a total of 22 credit hours.

Eligible students must apply before 15 February. Students present their honours theses the following April and usually graduate together in the June convocation. To apply, students must submit the application form with a supervisors signature, a 1 page research proposal, and a advising record signed off on by Mr. Philip Jong, the student advisor. The above deadline is firm. If accepted, students must attend a mandatory meeting later in the Spring semester.

The Undergraduate Director, Dr. Gail Anderson, is the honours programme coordinator and she will assist with further details of the programme. Dr. Anderson will also help you select a topic and find a faculty supervisor.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to ask.