



Since launching the Honors Program in Criminal Justice in 2011, the desire to participate in it from our students has soared. In order to accommodate the needs of our students, we have made some adjustments to its structure. The Program was originally designed with specialized coursework beginning in the first year. This required students to apply before entering law school, without the possibility of later transitioning into the Program. During the first three years of the Program we have learned that many of our students become excited about criminal law once they arrive at John Marshall. This is not surprising given the depth and experience of our criminal law faculty. But the majority of our students who will practice criminal law and who would like to participate in the Honors Program have been ineligible because they did not come to that decision until after beginning their law school careers.

Because of this we have restructured the Program to touch a broader population of students. We believe this is an important development both to address the professional interests of our students and to have a greater positive impact on the justice system and the people impacted by it.

Under this revised structure, students will continue to take the same comprehensive, criminal law focused curriculum. However, the specialized coursework will begin in the fall semester of the second year of law school. All Honors Program students will be expected to have completed criminal law before the start of their second year. While we are considering moving criminal law into the first year for all students, if that change is not made before the Fall 2014 semester, participating students entering at that time would be expected to take criminal law during the summer after their first year. Honors Program students would take all other required coursework during their second and third years. This modification will allow students who are inspired in their first year to pursue careers in criminal justice to benefit from this unique Program.

In order to both allow those students who are accepted in to Honors Program at the time they apply to John Marshall to begin their criminal law education immediately, and to inspire potentially interested students to consider careers in criminal justice, we will continue to have a criminal justice video and speaker series that will be required for Honors Program students, yet available to all students. Students are further encouraged to become involved in the Criminal Law Society and/or the Public Defender Club during their first year. And while all students at John Marshall are encouraged to seek out our experienced collection of faculty as they embark on their journey to identify, and prepare for, a fulfilling legal career, we will begin facilitating those relationships for Honors Program students in their first year.

We are excited about this step in the evolution of this cutting edge Program as it allows us to continue to offer a three-year experience for students committed to a criminal justice focused education at the outset of the law school careers, while also enabling us to meet the educational needs of a far broader population of students who discover a passion for criminal law after joining the John Marshall community. By making the Honor Program accessible to more of our students, while maintaining the quality of the educational experience, these changes allow us to better prepare a larger cadre of John Marshall graduates to positively impact the quality of justice in our nation's criminal courts.

I look forward to working with many of you as you prepare for an exciting and fulfilling career in criminal justice.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jonathan Rapping". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

Jonathan Rapping
Director, Honors Program in Criminal Justice