LEJA is known for academic excellence and ranks among the top law enforcement programs in the country. The program offers students a rich blend of theoretical, administrative, legal, and practical knowledge as well as teaching valuable research skills. The Master of Arts degree is designed to provide a course of study for those currently employed in criminal justice and related fields of academe. Courses provide students with current information in the areas of criminological theory, administration, civil and criminal liability, research and quantitative skills, and specialized areas such as policing, corrections, security, and multiculturalism in criminal justice. Graduates possess the skills needed to manage and lead in the increasingly complex field of criminal justice. Additionally, students are academically prepared to pursue advanced degrees in respected doctoral and law degree programs.

Admission Requirements
Admission into the Master of Arts program requires a bachelor’s degree from a regionally accredited institution with at least 18 semester hours (sh) in criminal justice, law enforcement, or closely related areas. Undergraduate courses in statistics or research methods are required or waived. All students must apply to and meet the general admission requirements of the School of Graduate Studies in addition to the following departmental requirements:

• Cumulative undergraduate GPA of 3.0 or higher OR last two years’ undergraduate GPA of 3.0 or higher
• Official GRE or MAT scores (five years old or less)
• Three letters of reference (may also be used for graduate assistantship, if applicable)
• Current résumé/vita
• Writing sample 1,000 to 1,500 words in length emphasizing academic, nonacademic, and employment experiences relevant to the degree

Only those files completed with all required documents listed above and official transcripts from all institutions attended will be forwarded to the departmental graduate committee for admission consideration. Please see Graduate Catalog for additional details on file completion.

A waiver of the GPA requirement may be requested if demonstrated subsequent training and work experience justify a waiver. Students may not enroll in LEJA graduate courses unless they have been admitted to the LEJA degree program or have obtained permission from the LEJA graduate coordinator or department chairperson.

Degree Requirements
The Master’s degree in LEJA may be earned through satisfying two options: thesis or non-thesis. The thesis option requires 33 successfully completed credits: 27 credits of coursework and 6 credits of thesis work. Students are allowed to take 9 elective credits as part of the 27 credits in the following departments: Educational Leadership, Law Enforcement and Justice Administration, Political Science, Psychology, or Sociology, or in other departments with the approval of the LEJA Graduate Committee. Courses should be geared toward career objectives. The thesis proposal is to be approved before research is undertaken, and an oral presentation and defense of the thesis is required.

The non-thesis option requires the same five core courses, 21 semester hours of electives, and the comprehensive seminar to be taken in the student’s last semester. The non-thesis option requires a total of 39 semester hours.

In either option, no more than 9 semester hours of 400G-level courses will be counted toward fulfillment of the degree requirements without permission of the LEJA Graduate Committee.

Career Opportunities
Graduates have advanced their careers through employment in the public and private sector in policing, community and institutional corrections, the court system, criminal justice research and planning, and crime prevention. Some of the positions in which LEJA graduates are employed are as follows:

• Supervising agent in the Secret Service
• State’s Attorney Office
• Chiefs of police/other administrative law enforcement positions
• Supervisory investigator
• Supervising agent in the FBI
• Chief Probation Officer
• Warden and correctional institution management
“Our agency participates in WIU’s internship program and consistently sees the quality students produced in the LEJA program. The WIU LEJA program is one of the finest in the country, and Quad City Law Enforcement has been a direct beneficiary.”

—Victor Moreno, 2004
Chief of Police, East Moline, Illinois

WIU.EDU/LEJA

- Court Services Administrator
- Administration in Immigration Customs Enforcement
- Administration in the ATF and DEA
- Director of Security and Agency Operations

Students are encouraged to travel nationally and internationally. Travel opportunities include attending criminal justice and criminology conferences regionally and nationally. Attending the annual Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences and American Society of Criminology allow students to present research, network with professionals in the field, and receive some of the latest information and research about criminal justice.

Faculty Expertise
All of the graduate faculty possess terminal degrees. Each of the faculty have extensive practitioner experience in some aspect of the criminal justice system, ranging from chief, deputy chief, investigator, probation/parole officer, attorney, prison manager, administrative specialist, and patrol officer to mention a few. Faculty members are nationally and internationally recognized for their research and publications. The faculty have actively published research on the use of force in policing and corrections, racial profiling, terrorism, crime prevention, juvenile justice issues, risk management strategies in criminal justice, administration and management strategies, substance abuse issues, criminal behavior assessment, forensics, and legal and liability issues.

Graduate Assistantship
All LEJA graduate students are eligible to apply for a graduate assistantship. Graduate Assistantships are awarded through a competitive process. All full-time Graduate Assistants receive a stipend in exchange for 20 hours of work per week and a tuition waiver. Probationary students are not eligible for graduate assistantships.

Graduate courses are offered at the Illinois Department of Corrections and the Illinois State Police Training Facility.

Distinctive Features
The graduate program in LEJA is among one of the largest criminal justice programs in Illinois and in the region. It is the largest criminal justice graduate program in Illinois to offer off-site coursework at five locations and to use a weekend strategy for working practitioners. All off-campus courses, as well as most on-campus courses, are offered through a weekend format. Students attend class over three different weekends in exchange for 3 semester hours of credit.

Post-Baccalaureate Certificate Requirements
The School of LEJA offers the Police Executive Administration Certificate Program. The certificate program is a post-graduate experience designed to help prepare future law enforcement executives and provide further training for current executives. The certificate program requires admission into the Graduate School and the completion of 18 SH of graduate courses. Applicants must occupy a supervisory position at the time of initial enrollment. For Gainful Employment Disclosure, visit wiu.edu/grad/gainfulemployment.

Featured Alumni
Chief Victor Moreno is the Chief of Police for the City of East Moline, Illinois. Chief Moreno was appointed Chief of Police on May 17, 2004. Prior to that he served in a number of positions within the department, including patrol officer, detective, and patrol sergeant. He also served as an undercover narcotics investigator with the Quad Cities Metropolitan Enforcement Group. Chief Moreno holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Law Enforcement (1986) from Western Illinois University and a Master of Arts degree in Law Enforcement Administration (2004) also from Western.

Contact Information
For admissions process and general program information, contact the School of Graduate Studies, Western Illinois University, 1 University Circle, Macomb, IL 61455, (309) 298-1806, (877) WIU GRAD toll-free, Grad-Office@wiu.edu, wiu.edu/grad.

For specific program questions, contact the School of Law Enforcement and Justice Administration, Western Illinois University, 1 University Circle, Macomb, IL 61455, (309) 298-1038, LEJA@wiu.edu, wiu.edu/leja.