

Northeast Area Command
COMMUNITY POLICING COUNCIL
RECOMMENDATION SUBMISSION FORM

DATE SUBMITTED: _____ Seven (7) business days after submission

RECEIPT DUE: _____ Twenty (20) business days after submission

APD RESPONSE DUE: _____ Sixty (60) business days after submission

CITIZEN POLICE ACADEMY: Concerns, Observations and Recommendations.

Structured Time, Attendance, and Content

CONCERNS and OBSERVATIONS:

Significant Time and Attendance Required and Demanded of CPA Students:

- Three (3) months, two (2) nights per week, three (3) hours per night totaling seventy-two (72) hours. Classroom time in most college level courses, including post-graduate, total sixty-four (64) hours or less. We recognize the department is attempting to replicate the content that actual cadets receive in the academy, but the level of detail is beyond what is generally needed to appreciate the breadth and significance of training the department supplies cadets.

CPA Certification and Early Dismissal:

- Many sessions are "required" for graduation/certification. Students are not informed which sessions are required, only that attendance is mandatory. Few college classes make such demands. Required sessions are not advertised as such;
- Early dismissal is not granted even after instructors/speakers complete presentations. Instead, students are told to remain and engage in other discussions or view 'calls holding' on screen.

Repetitive and Crammed Content:

- Content amount per session is highly variable. Some speakers repeat information. Others cram presentations making it difficult for students to absorb content. Thus, time is decreased for meaningful questions and answers.

Course and Instructors' Evaluations:

- After spending seventy-two (72) hours in class, testing for content knowledge is not administered;
- While individual speakers are evaluated for performance at end of sessions, the course, as a whole, is not. The coordinator is not evaluated either.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Partner with local curriculum development professionals at APS or CNM/UNM to develop a clear curriculum for the program with clear goals, learning objectives, and lessons tied to those standards. This should also include creating "units" to arrange topics of similar matter in sequence ie., Law of Policing, Training and recruitment, Units of APD, etc. Adjust instructional time for students to offer related questions, answers and discussion on a consistent basis.
2. Reduce each session to two (2) hours.
3. Reduce the length of the course to two (2) months (8 weeks).

4. In tandem with 1: Develop a syllabus to lay out clear expectations and requirements at the outset of the course.
5. Post agenda online. List sessions where attendance is required for CPC, CPOB etc.
6. Close sessions at completion of presentation or instruction.
7. Consolidate related speakers/presenters into one session. Example: Specialized tactical units like SWAT, bomb squad, and K-9 should be one session. Develop and utilize a form of assessment to determine program effectiveness, strengths and weaknesses. Evaluation alone cannot determine if the program is actually effective in conveying information. This assessment should not determine pass/fail for students, but rather will provide additional content-based, feedback to presenters and the coordinator.
8. Allow reflective time for students to evaluate performance of individual instructors and the overall program and its effectiveness at the conclusion of each session and the course.
9. Timely complete production of online sessions as promised in July, 2016. Offer these sessions along with a written assessment in lieu of attendance for all sessions. This will again require the department to partner with local software developers and curriculum experts to develop an adequate program.
10. Require attendance at 80% of sessions, with absences "made-up" through online content and related assessment. Online assessments would need to be 75% correct or higher to receive credit. In-class assessments would be scored for informational purposes only.

Community Policing: CPC, CPOA and the CASA

CONCERNS and OBSERVATIONS:

- Importance of CPC, CPOA/CPOB and the CASA is diminished. Presentations and discussions downplay or omit the relevance of the 2014 Settlement Agreement mandating police reform; Example: A student asked if CPOA might be invited to discuss the agency's work. The coordinator responded, "No. They are not a part of this."
- The Settlement Agreement is frequently maligned by some speakers. It is described as "just more paperwork" ... "we already did things that way" ... and "just a media frenzy." Other statements dismiss the validity of the settlement's conclusions and merits. **It is important to note that not all speakers maligned the agreement, and many were supportive of the efforts it outlines.**
- Attitudes by some speakers, smack of "this will blow over," rather than a healthy and progressing attitude of "we are changing and committed to implementing and practicing those changes going forward." If civilians are subjected to such in CPA, then one questions what is presented to cadets during their training by some presenters.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Provide an overview of Settlement Agreement and the roles of CPCs, CPOA and CPOB.
2. Presenters should be trained to teach according to the curriculum. Spouting casual remarks and personal opinions undermine the work of the department and the CPA.
3. Create a larger more expansive "Community Policing Unit" that includes information and speakers on the CASA, CPC's, the CPOA and CPOB, the PACT unit, the mounted unit, bicycle patrols, and youth outreach programs.

Professionalism and Ethics

CONCERNS and OBSERVATIONS:

- Results of presidential election were openly celebrated by the coordinator in front of the entire CPA class. This behavior politicized the department and associated it with a highly polarizing and contentious election;
- Several speakers discussed controversial cases with a bend toward officers and the department;
- Several speakers encouraged students to always conceal carry---even in places deemed as "firearms prohibited." One officer stated, "It's only a misdemeanor."
- During an informal discussion with some CPA students, a detective encouraged students to carry a weapon at all times. He emphasized the legality of carrying a firearm matters less than your ability to defend yourself. When asked about legal ramifications of killing or seriously injuring another, he dismissed the question and stated, "Your life matters more."
- An APD recruiter stressed that being religious is an unofficial requirement of the job.
- Casual use of expletives and profanities;
- An unbecoming exchange took place between a CPA student and a narcotics detective about marijuana. The student pressed the detective to defend efforts to arrest marijuana users and distributors. The detective held that states which do not enforce marijuana laws have higher crime. The exchange continued for some time. Visibly agitated, the detective raised his voice over the student who then was told privately by the Coordinator to leave class. The coordinator then proceeded to lecture students to be respectful to speakers and ask only "respectful questions."
- In reviewing the above controversial speech concerns, an interesting dichotomy surfaces: Police are free to demean the Settlement Agreement, praise a particular political stance, celebrate a mistrial, defend officers under investigation and encourage vigilante behavior; yet, a citizen is not permitted to question department practices or its representative regarding a particular drug enforcement issue;
- Power Point displays errors in subject-verb agreement and spelling. Example:
Department are responsible for ... Judgment made;

- Excessive use of acronyms. Example: IRA. What is IRA? Individual Retirement Account? Or Irish Republican Army? Irish Republican Army, of course. Most CPA students are not acquainted with IRA's history.

RECOMMENATIONS:

1. Presenters and the coordinator should never advocate for particular political or religious beliefs. If the police are to be trusted as impartial arbiters of the law, then public events such as CPA should refrain from showing any bias. Such bias is also not consistent with a learning objective-based curriculum.
2. Refrain from speech or opinions that demonstrate favoritism of officers in ongoing investigations of which those officers' actions are questioned.
3. Offer constructive crime prevention and personal safety suggestions to students and always encourage compliance with firearms regulations.
4. Do not allow profane/foul language in the CPA.
5. Teach to a curriculum rather than espousing personal opinions on department policy. Check ego, anger and disappointment at door. Many CPA students and police cadets consider speakers and presenters as experts in their field and appreciate their work. As trying and difficult an officer's duties, his or her words and tone matter. Shouting at, arguing with, and dismissing students clearly demonstrate lack of self-control and lack of respect for others.
6. Make use of spell-check and dictionaries.
7. Enlist vetted volunteers, hire proofreaders and/or curriculum development professionals for Power Point and other written documents.
8. Develop continuing education classes for officers that will emphasize appropriate and strong vocabulary, writing and speaking skills.