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COLLEGE-UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL¹

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There is increasing need for professional education of law enforcement personnel in the United States. As in other areas of public service, society looks to four-year colleges and universities to assist the field of law enforcement in obtaining the status of a recognized profession. In the past decade, several institutions of higher education have recognized law enforcement as a professional field, with the result that many new law enforcement programs are being developed.

Yet, as in any emerging profession, law enforcement is having difficulty in formulating its appropriate role and functions in the criminal justice process and equal difficulty in obtaining consensus among educators and professionals in the field as to curriculum necessary to provide professional standards. Allen Z. Gammage, Sacramento State College, sets forth the problem as follows:

If college and university programs [in law enforcement education] are to have an appreciable impact in raising the occupational to the professional level, college programs must be professional by nature, standards must be high, and courses, degrees, and curriculums must have a high degree of uniformity. Of the existing programs, one finds definite contrasts in terms of both philosophy and objectives. Programs vary from those primarily vocational in nature to others with distinctly theoretical emphasis. . . . Some lack of uniformity may be justifiable on grounds that complete uniformity would be impossible as well as

¹ This article is based on a research report entitled *A Core Program Proposal of Undergraduate Studies for the Professional Preparation of Law Enforcement Personnel in Four-Year Colleges and Universities* by Richard F. Marsh. This report served as the thesis for an advanced Master's degree for Mr. Marsh at the Florida State University. Dr. Stickler served as major professor while Mr. Marsh was carrying out the research.

impractical. Further, all of the respected professions—Law, Medicine, Engineering, Teaching, and most recently Pharmacy—have experienced these same problems during their formative years. On the other hand, both police educators and men from the field continue to emphasize the fact that maximum contribution cannot be made toward the development of the police professional until greater uniformity is achieved. A high degree of uniformity, they explain, is essential to standards; standards are necessary if college and university graduates are to enjoy general recognition as professionals.

In general, the authors agree with the statement by Gammage. Therefore, they have resolved to find whether among concerned educators and professional practitioners a reasonable degree of agreement exists regarding the basic curriculum for law enforcement education. The purpose of the research here reported has been to examine curriculum practices in law enforcement programs in four-year colleges and universities and to develop a core program of undergraduate studies for the professional preparation of law enforcement personnel in such institutions of higher education.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The curriculum principle that provides the underlying framework for this study has been developed through the work of Tyler, O'Banion, and other major writers in the area of curriculum. The principle, simply stated, is this: the competencies required for the job as judged by successful workers or members of the professions can determine a curriculum.

Working within the framework of this curriculum principle, the methodology employed in this research has been quite simple. At the time of the

study 47 four-year colleges and universities offered undergraduate programs of education in law enforcement leading to the baccalaureate degree. The administrators of these programs were contacted and each was requested to do two things: to supply information concerning the content of the curriculum currently in operation in his institution, and to submit the names of two or three persons he considered to be outstanding educators or professional practitioners in the field of law enforcement who might serve on a panel of experts to appraise and make judgments concerning a desirable basic core curriculum. Of the 47 administrators contacted, 45 replied and furnished the requested curriculum information and names—a 96 percent response.

The 45 responding administrators reported 29 different core course areas that constituted the basic programs for the baccalaureate-level professional preparation of law enforcement personnel in four-year colleges and universities. Of the 29 courses, however, seven (Data Processing, Vice Control, Public Administration, Polygraph Interrogation, Typing, Narcotics and Drugs, and Foreign Language) were mentioned only one or two times. They were eliminated from further consideration. The remaining 22 course were revised, edited, and combined into 17 core program areas.

From the lists of names of outstanding educators and professional practitioners in the field of law enforcement submitted by the 45 administrators a panel of experts was named. The final selection of persons to serve on the panel was made by the researcher and several of his colleagues in the FSU Department of Criminology with the approval of the researcher's major professor. Thirty-seven experienced persons were chosen and all agreed to participate as members of the panel. Only thirty, however, submitted their final responses and judgments in time to be included in the study.² Thus the response rate among individuals who constituted the panel of experts was 81 percent.

The 17 revised core program areas (*i.e.*, courses) were submitted to the panel of experts and each panelist was asked to do three things regarding each item: 1) to rate the program area or course in one of three categories: *Essential*, *Desirable But Not Essential*, or *Unimportant*; 2) to provide a rationale for each core program area judged *Es-*

sential; and 3) to indicate the appropriate amount of credit in semester hours that should be allocated to the course.

FINDINGS

This judgmental procedure revealed that a rather high degree of agreement exists among the members of the panel of experts as to what courses should be included in the core program of law enforcement education. At least two-thirds of the experts marked each of six courses *Essential*—and for five of the six areas at least four-fifths of the panel members rated the course *Essential*. These six courses and the rationale for the inclusion of each are here listed in the order of frequency of their being rated *Essential* by the experts.

1. *Legal aspects of law enforcement*: basic concepts of criminal law, constitutional limitations on police power, trial procedure, philosophy and development of rules of evidence (6 semester hours). This course was rated *Essential* by all 30 members (100 percent) of the panel of experts.

Rationale. Law enforcement functions within a framework of constitutional and criminal law. Therefore, an understanding of the legal aspects in law enforcement is essential for all law enforcement personnel. By knowledge of the law, particularly the constitutional limitations of the police, an officer can better perform his duties in accordance with the expectations of the democratic process. Law enforcement officers are representatives of society and have the responsibility of proving innocence as well as guilt.

2. *Human relations skills*: the role of police in community relations regarding tension and conflict within and among racial, religious, and ethnic minorities and the lower socio-economic classes (5 semester hours). This course was rated *Essential* by 97 percent of the members of the panel of experts.

Rationale. The development of human relations skills is necessary for effective functioning of law enforcement personnel. This is the area of greatest need and importance in terms of successfully dealing with the general public. The development of an understanding and appreciation of the attitudes of sub-cultural groups, including the reasons behind these attitudes, must be considered an essential element in any educational experience of policemen.

²A list of the thirty responding members of the panel of experts will be furnished upon request.

3. *Philosophy and history of law enforcement*: an overview of the law enforcement, judicial process, and corrections (3 semester hours). This course also was rated Essential by 97 percent of the members of the panel of experts.

Rationale. Professional education must provide knowledge and understanding of the theories and developments underlying the existence of law enforcement. Therefore, the study of philosophy and history of law enforcement is necessary for early development of the student's understanding of the role of law enforcement in the criminal justice process.

4. *Principles of administration*: theory and practice of administration, the decision-making process, organizational principles, fiscal management, selection and training of personnel (5 semester hours). This course was rated Essential by 87 percent of the members of the panel of experts.

Rationale. The study of principles of administration should provide the essential background for effective performance of policemen in positions of administrative and supervisory responsibility. This core program area should lay the foundation for later education of professional law enforcement administrators.

5. *Psychology*: developmental theories of personality; socio-psychological factors in criminal and delinquent behavior; social, psychological, and moral problems associated with aberrant behavior (6 semester hours). This course was rated Essential by 80 percent of the members of the panel of experts.

Rationale. The bulk of a policeman's activities are associated with people in trouble. The study of psychology is essential in preparing the law enforcement student to understand, relate to, and deal with other persons.

6. *Juvenile delinquency*: theories of causation, community resources for prevention, law and court procedures pertaining to juveniles (3 semester hours). This course was rated Essential by 67 percent of the members of the panel of experts.

Rationale. An understanding of the theories of causation and methods of preventing juvenile delinquency offers the greatest hope of long-run success on the part of law enforcement. This knowledge will provide the potential police officer with his most effective tool in crime prevention.

The courses here indicated were judged by the panel of experts to be the Essential educational experiences all law enforcement students should have in common. Together these six courses, which involve a total of 28 semester hours of academic credit, should constitute the core program in the undergraduate education of all professional law enforcement personnel.

At least one-third but fewer than two-thirds of the members of the panel of experts rated six additional courses Essential while the remaining members rated them Desirable But Not Essential. These courses might well be considered by law enforcement educators to serve as elective courses to round out the undergraduate law enforcement curriculum. These courses, listed in order of preference by the panel of experts and each carrying three semester hours of academic credit, are: Statistics and Research Methods, Correctional Philosophy, Senior Seminar in Law Enforcement, Police Problems and Practices, Criminal Investigation, and Communications and Records.³

RECOMMENDATIONS

From this study emerge the following recommendations:

1. That the core program here developed be incorporated in new undergraduate programs in law enforcement education and in current programs undergoing revision.

2. That further research be conducted to evaluate the core program developed in this study. The core program needs testing to determine whether it meets the needs of students and provides adequate basic preparation for all law enforcement personnel assigned general enforcement powers and duties, regardless of later specialization.

3. That additional studies be made to establish a core program of education for law enforcement personnel in junior colleges that will articulate smoothly with comparable baccalaureate-level programs in senior colleges and universities, thus facilitating the transfer of junior college students

³It will be recalled that seventeen courses were submitted to the panel of experts for professional judgment and rating. As has been noted, six of these courses have been recommended to constitute the common core program for the undergraduate education of all law enforcement personnel. Six additional areas have been suggested for consideration as possible elective courses. The remaining five courses, which did not meet the criteria for inclusion in the two above categories, were: Criminalistics, Internship, Traffic Control, Defense Tactics and Planning and Management of Physical Facilities.

to senior institutions in the law enforcement curriculum.

4. That early consideration be given to the establishment of a permanent commission on law enforcement education. A primary function of this commission should be planning for eventual accreditation of law enforcement education programs in institutions of higher learning.

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