

California Assembly Bill 89

Task Force Meeting Four Summary

February 10, 2023
8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. PST

Meeting Highlights

The primary focus of Assembly Bill (AB) 89 Task Force Meeting Four was to take a deeper dive into evidence-based policing (EBP) strategies and how to apply those skills to the future candidates in the California Modern Policing Degree Program. With those skills in mind, Task Force members were presented with the current California Community Colleges Administration of Justice course practices and reviewed their current contributions to critical thinking skill development. Task Force members were asked to reflect on the courses, desired critical thinking skills, and general competencies that were presented to inform recommendations for a Modern Policing Degree student graduate profile.

Acronyms

- ADJ: Associate Degrees for Justice
- ADT: Associate Degrees for Transfer
- DEIA: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility
- EBP: evidence-based policing
- POST: Peace Officer Standards and Training

Task Force Meeting Four Objectives

- Identify methods to train academy recruits in EBP and understand the limitations of its implementation.
- Identify community college courses that contribute to students' critical thinking skills.
- Identify minimum age and education requirements for students in the Modern Policing Degree Program.
- Identify desired competencies for students in the Modern Policing Degree Program.

Task Force Meeting Three Reflections

- Provide an overview and create understanding of EBP.
- Identify current academy training used to address contemporary challenges in U.S. policing.
- Identify gaps in current academy training used to address contemporary challenges in U.S. policing.

Opening Discussion

- Task Force members reviewed key takeaways and recommendations from the previous Task Force meeting and were provided an opportunity to respond to those recommendations.

- The Google Jamboard application, a new participation resource, provided another platform for Task Force members to share comments, questions, and recommendations related to Task Force topics.
- Follow-up comments and questions from Task Force Meeting Three were presented and discussed with Task Force members.
 - There are concerns around adding more “up-front” items that new cadets must complete before they can enter the academy. This could be a good time to review who is attracted to the degree program and additional requirements.
 - The required age to join an academy is now 21. This new gap, from high school graduation/General Educational Development (GED) completion to age 21, allows for the time needed for an apprenticeship.
 - The modular-style academy delivery creates an opportunity for an apprenticeship-type model. It does require the individual to be paid and extends the time cadets spend at the academy. There needs to be a level of awareness for students who may not be able to find a sponsor. Experiential learning is key for adults. Identifying implicit bias often requires exposure in a controlled/safe environment.
 - Evaluating instructors in an Instructional Service Agreement (ISA) context is challenging. Most instructors, if not all, are adjunct, and with multiple instructors for one class, conducting an accurate evaluation is difficult.

AB 89 Landscape Analysis

Focus Group Review

- RTI is conducting focus groups to engage with students, faculty, early career officers, and community organizations to identify current strengths and areas of improvement in the current police training within academies and community colleges. The focus groups address issues surrounding equity in the student experience, financial barriers, opportunities, and community concerns with police training. The results from the focus groups will be used to create a tailored survey to be administered to police academies and academic programs in California. The survey will then directly provide information and insight to initiatives regarding the financial needs of students, competencies and values currently used in programs as well as where the participants see room for change or improvement, and the difference in the sponsored and non-sponsored student experience.
- From the focus groups that have been conducted to date, just under three-quarters (71%) of the attendees, inclusive of community college programs and police academies, have been directors or coordinators of training. Student involvement has been limited; however, this can be attributed to the timing of the groups meeting just before the end of the semester and into the start of the winter break.
- Initial findings indicate that community college programs are “too soft,” and academies are “too militaristic.” Non-sponsored students are at a severe economic and social support disadvantage compared with their sponsored peers. This may be because non-sponsored students come from more difficult backgrounds. It was noted that verbal, written, and interpersonal communication skills need to be built among students, so they can communicate clearly and effectively. Those in the field training officer program are having a difficult time applying the law to real-world experiences.

- New disqualifiers, such as the minimum age requirement, have also pushed some students out of the program temporarily.

Methods to Train Recruits in Evidence-Based Policing and Implementation Limitations

Evidence-Based Policing

- Task Force members were reintroduced to the definitions and foundations of EBP. After this review, they were provided further explanations of EBP practices and how those practices could be applied in the training process for Peace Officers.
- The best available evidence will use appropriate research methods and sources for the questions being asked. Research should be carefully conducted, peer reviewed, and transparent about its methods and limitations and how its conclusions were reached. Where there is little or no formal research, other evidence such as professional consensus and peer review may be regarded as the best available if it is gathered and documented carefully and transparently.

Understanding Data

- Officers are not being taught to read or understand data—this skill is not intuitive. Officers should be able to understand credible sources and where to find them. The Task Force recommends having a class where students learn how to understand statistics and teaching students how to find credible sources of information.
- Descriptive data summarize characteristics of a data set and answer who, what, and where but not why. Inferential data allow for hypothesis testing and for generalizing to a general population.
- Adding crime analysis and statistics courses improves officers' willingness to collect and share police data, understanding of how to use data, the ability to apply statistical knowledge to the data, and the ability to understand and apply research findings.
- EBP involves thinking of how research applies to an agency and how to use data to improve policing practices.

Questions and Answers: Evidence-Based Policing

- **What limitations can be identified in implementing EBP among training academy recruits?**
 - From the perspectives of the Commission of Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) and community colleges, adding EBP practices to the curriculum would be a resource-heavy requirement to execute annually.
 - It is unclear if presenting all EBP practices is necessary for new officers to learn so early in their careers. However, EBP is also a frame of mind and a culture shift. Infusing these ideas as early as possible could be useful to officers and the communities they serve.
- **Based on the information shared, what additional methods would Task Force members recommend to train academy recruits in EBP?**
 - The recommendations from this Task Force should include a few possible degree pathways for the Modern Policing Degree Program. Not everyone comes to the academies or community colleges with the same background.
- **Based on the information shared, how do Task Force members see this influencing the Modern Policing Degree?**

- EBP helps to inform the types of courses to include in the Modern Policing Degree Program. Embedding EBP in the Modern Policing Degree Program coursework would provide continuous reinforcement of EBP as an approach rather than as a strategy.
- Focusing on the timing of implementing EBP into the Modern Policing Degree Program, the degree should be designed such that a recruit can apply the practices directly into the field on day 1. How does one find the right courses for these new officers to learn and make that information relevant? The content the officers are learning should be actionable research; research should be used to inform practice.
 - Associate Degrees for Transfer (ADT) create theoretical generalists; the Task Force should look at a more prescriptive degree (through mapping).
- Those in the Modern Policing Degree Program could have various degree paths. If the degree program is part of a larger liberal arts education, students should be exposed to multiple situations, skills, tools, and thought processes in dealing with others with different life experiences.
- Over 30 units are dedicated to the general education credits in the current ADT model. This Task Force would be looking at changing only the 18 units in the degree that are directly related to policing. The Task Force needs to be sensitive to any changes.
- The Task Force recommends adding applied statistics as a requirement for the degree, as opposed to the traditional mathematics requirement for degrees.

California Community College Approach to Critical Thinking

Educational Requirements in the United States

- Most programs require a degree but not always from higher education. Examples include these:
 - Washington, DC: 60 or more units or Associate of Arts/Science in any major
 - Florida: Bachelor of Arts/Science in any major for correctional probation
 - Illinois: Bachelor of Arts/Science in any major or Associate of Arts/Science in Law Enforcement/Criminal Justice AND 3 years military
 - Harper College required course examples: Sociology, Psychology, Ethics and Leadership, and Crisis Intervention Communication
 - Illinois Central College required course examples: U.S. Diversity Studies, Ethics and Leadership, and Community Relations and Procedural Justice
 - Maine: 60 or more units, Associate of Arts/Science, or 40 or more units and current enrollment in a program—any major
 - California: Would be the fifth state to require more than a high school diploma or equivalent

Educational Requirements in California

- A standardized curriculum was developed to make the law enforcement career process more consistent. There are 281 Associate Degrees for Justice (ADJ) in California.
- Most colleges have a “pick two” system for course selection. Courses are chosen from a general list. Only two degree-specific courses are consistently required throughout the community college system: Introduction to ADJ and Criminal Law.
- General education courses range from area A to area F. Area A focuses on oral or written communication courses. Areas D and F are focused on history, psychology, and ethnic studies.
- Courses for consideration for the Modern Policing Degree Program are as follows:

- Academic Senate for California Community Colleges Course Identification Numbering System: Community and the Justice System, Ethical Reasoning/Ethics in Practice, Introduction to Logic, Introduction to Social Psychology, Introduction to Statistics in Sociology, Introduction to Marriage and Family, and Introduction to Crime
- College specific: Introduction to Transformational Policing, Introduction to Critical Thinking, and Emotional Intelligence. Critical thinking courses are required for the ADJ programs at Bakersfield College and Pierce College. Emotional Intelligence is not a common course and is often a piece of the sociology or psychology courses.

Class Delivery Styles

- Traditional: Lecture style, visual aids, activities, or exercises
- Distance education can improve accessibility but involves little to no face-to-face interaction.
- Outside class assignments: In academies, lecture/laboratory integrated delivery and experiential learning are emphasized.

Student Experiences in Education

- Allow students to articulate how they are interacting with these overarching themes of what is happening in the communities (e.g., law enforcement incidents). Students should be taught who they are going to serve in the community.
- Programs cannot ignore what is happening in the community while teaching law enforcement practices.

California Community Colleges Call to Action

- Students should be able to connect the dots of how to reach various goals and base this on their lived experiences.
- Students look at the history of policing and other historical events differently based on their own experiences and want to tie those in with the historical events. They should be challenging their way of thinking, which will allow them to enter the workforce and critically analyze situations based on the history of policing.
- Regarding transformative justice, the goal is for students to challenge practices that do not practically serve all community members. Students should discuss police discretionary powers when deciding when and how much force to use.

Questions and Answers: California Community College Approach to Critical Thinking

- **How would Task Force members define critical thinking, and how could it be applied in the Modern Policing Degree Program?**
 - Critical thinking would be defined as a more applied focus in this space (e.g., history of policing and understanding students' different backgrounds).
 - Critical thinking offers a path to de-escalation, improved relationships with communities, and offers alternatives to stressful situations.
 - When discussing the culture of change, a distinction should be made between what goes on in intensely stressful situations and classroom-taught skills. Officers often must make decisions with limited and imperfect information. Decision-making skills should be learned through socialization, not in the classroom. When recalling the Stanford prison experiment, one does not know how people are really going to function in the field or what roles they will take until they are directly applying themselves. Advice must be interpreted through socialization and culturalization before being taken verbatim.

- The seven principles of adult learning (andragogy) are self-direction, transformation, experience, mentorship, mental orientation, motivation, and readiness to learn.

Minimum Age and Education Requirements

Minimum Requirements in California

- The current minimum age to be a Peace Officer in California is 21. When this requirement was implemented, only 60 individuals were not 21. Education requirements include a high school diploma or GED. POST does not track beyond the minimum requirements. Currently, POST required hours are 664, but the average is over 800. The minimum is so low because it was developed based on reimbursement from the state for students.

Questions and Answers: Minimum Age and Education Requirements

- **What information shared today is most important to be thinking about as the Modern Policing Degree Program is developed?**
 - In thinking about training, this process could be similar to that for healthcare professionals—when programs begin with 18-year-olds. Is there a time when people in these jobs have enough foundation to feel successful and have a better understanding of society before they jump into these roles? Having that approach to this field feels like an extension of education. Future law enforcement officer members should better understand what society expects and the general requests of these roles (before joining the program).
 - Adding a minimum of a 2-year degree for law enforcement does not seem to be excessive. The added value of general education coursework can include components that complement coursework at the academy. Consider creating law enforcement-specific courses in sociology, psychology, or ethnic studies.
 - Degree requirements should still allow for credit for prior learning and an “easy” bridge for those who already have a degree.
 - Training is the culture of law enforcement, and there always needs to be more. One concern is the recruitment issue, concerned about “up-front” items that new cadets must complete before they can enter the academy.

Student Competencies for the Modern Policing Degree Program

- Task Force members reviewed North Carolina’s Portrait of a Graduate to further understand ideal competencies students should have upon graduation. After this review, Task Force members were asked to include their own list of competencies regarding graduates of the Modern Policing Degree Program. These competencies will be used in the student graduate profile recommended for the Modern Policing Degree Program.

Questions and Answers: Student Graduate Profile

- **What competencies can Task Force members identify that are essential for students in the Modern Policing Degree Program?**
 - Competencies include mindfulness, general self-awareness, self-awareness in recognizing personal biases, good communication skills, the ability to self-reflect, interpretation of body language, strong emotional intelligence, being culturally

competent, being information competent (relating to reliable data), and being victim centered.

Task Force Five Overview

- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) and Instruction in a Modern Policing Degree Program
 - Create a common understanding of how current training practices affect those from historically underserved and disadvantaged communities.
 - Explore recommendations for increasing financial support for an increased diversity of students enrolled in the Modern Policing Degree Program.
 - Explore minimum qualifications for faculty teaching in the Modern Policing Degree Program and police academies.
 - Explore recommendations for how faculty teaching in these programs will meet the new DEIA evaluation and tenure review regulation requirements.

Appendix

Presenters

- Renée Mitchell, PhD, senior researcher and co-founder of the American Society of Evidence-Based Policing, ***Methods to Train Recruits in Evidence-Based Policing and Implementation Limitations***
- Linda Vaughn, regional director of public safety in the San Francisco Bay Area Community College Consortium, ***California Community College Approach to Critical Thinking***
- Sharon Sampson, Administration of Justice faculty, professional development co-coordinator and equal employment opportunity site lead at Grossmont College, ***California Community College Approach to Critical Thinking***

Resources

- Institute for Criminal Justice Training Reform: <https://www.trainingreform.org/state-police-training-requirements>
- Educational links
 - Harper College: <https://www.harpercollege.edu/academics/public-service/law-enforcement/law-justice-degree.php>
 - Illinois Central College: <https://catalog.icc.edu/curriculum/career-clusters/humanpublicservices/law-public-safety-corrections-security/law-enforcement>
 - Academic Senate for California Community Colleges Course Identification Numbering System courses
 - [Course Identification Numbering System Final Descriptors](#)
 - [Community and the Justice System](#)
 - [Ethical Reasoning/Ethics in Practice](#)
 - [Introduction to Logic](#)
 - [Introduction to Social Psychology](#)
 - [Introduction to Statistics in Sociology](#)
 - [Introduction to Marriage and Family](#)
 - [Introduction to Crime](#)
 - College-specific courses

- [Introduction to Transformational Policing](#)
- [Introduction to Critical Thinking](#)
- [Emotional Intelligence](#)
- The President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing:
https://cops.usdoj.gov/pdf/taskforce/taskforce_finalreport.pdf
- North Carolina Portrait of a Graduate: <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/media/15672/open>