

The Professional Future of Policing: Recommendations to the Law Enforcement Standards

Board of Wisconsin.

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Abstract

The professional future of policing: Recommendations to the law enforcement standards board of

Wisconsin

Craig J. Thimm

Under the Supervision of Dr. Susan Hilal

Statement of Problem

The evolutionary path of today's law enforcement personnel has been reactionary to the social changes within society. Many times legal, political, or social pressures from outside law enforcement have forced local or state law enforcement standards to be modified. Several large commissions, to include the most recent report issued from the Obama administration's task force on policing, have called for higher educational standards for local law enforcement. As police agencies and individual police officers are called upon to deal with an ever increasing amount of complex and challenging issues, the need to increase the educational requirements for law enforcement has never been so great.

Methods of Research

This paper outlines the historical evolution of professional policing and the modern challenges to policing through detailed analysis of several academic journals, textbooks, government resources, and other secondary resources. The paper then examines the logically proposed and empirically tested benefits of higher education to the policing profession. This paper then uses these examples of how education benefits those specific examples of modern policing challenges through education learning theories and formal criminal justice education.

Finally the paper discusses the application of these benefits in other occupations closely aligned with policing to help illustrate the benefits.

Summary of Results

Modern policing faces several challenges in today's society. This paper addressed several of these challenges and highlighted the need to meet these challenges through a broader educational knowledge. Using the understanding of constructivism learning theory and symbolic interaction theory, a demand for higher education in criminal justice and a deeper understanding of social and criminological pressures has become necessary for our police officers. To address these challenges this paper proposed a logical two stage education first and police training second certification module. Recommended within the first stage, those who wish to become police officers must hold an Associate degree in criminal justice prior to enrollment in the police academy. This allows the required police academy training to focus on practical applications and further operational procedures. Building a foundation of jurisprudence, policing strategies, policing structures and liability, criminal justice, and social sciences through proper instruction prior to application of police practices are necessary to ensure professional and proper actions taken while policing Wisconsin communities.

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Section 1: Introduction

Modern police agencies, police administrators, and police officers are held to increasingly higher standards in court rooms, during police related operations, and in public opinion. Law enforcement are expected to enforce the law, solve criminal incidents, and prevent future incidents from occurring all while upholding individual rights, protecting the security of both the community and of the individual, settle non-criminal disputes and do so while exercising the correct amount of judgment and discretion (Gaines & Kappeler, 2008).

It is true that communities in the United States experience a more professional and unbiased policing product today than they did during the turn of the last century. Modern policing has been made possible by several large and small developments in education, legal and social understanding, as well as tactical training. Some of these changes occurred during reform periods while others came from reactions to new social needs. Many of these reforms changed the way police conduct business and were necessary to further the policing occupation. They however, did not come easy and they did not happen overnight. Some of these advancements were done by forward thinking police administrators while others were done in response to society norms and technology. Several of these changes were done only after a judicial decisions or legislative action forced police activities to change. In recent history use of force incidents in New York, Maryland, Missouri, and Wisconsin have again brought into question police actions, uses of force and procedures.

There is a need to further the education of local police officers. This social and criminological understanding will highlight several benefits for the community as well as for the individual members of the policing force. These benefits are not just for police professionals, but

for the communities they service as well as the advancement of social understanding. While there have been many calls for higher levels of education among police professionals in the past, little has been written about how this requirement should be implemented.

Purpose

This paper will provide logical, concise, and persuasive alternatives to the current educational and training standards of Wisconsin law enforcement to the Wisconsin Law Enforcement Standards Board (WLESB). Academia and politicians have argued for raising educational standards for decades and yet minimum entrance education standards across the country continue to remain less than an Associates degree. Using adult learning theories, this paper will show how higher level of educational standards will benefit the policing occupation, the criminal justice system, and the communities of Wisconsin.

This reform will center around new educational and training requirements for all local police officers in the state's jurisdiction. The restructuring of educational and training requirements will be beneficial to the community and to the law enforcement officers which gain this additional training (Paynich, 2009). Requiring law enforcement to have a college level understanding and education of sociological and criminological factors, as well as, requiring a functional knowledge of criminal jurisprudence prior to entering a standardized law enforcement training academy will provide better use of resources and time. At the conclusion of this paper, the reader will see the professional, political, and social benefits to this new minimum standard of law enforcement practitioners.

Implications

The paper will help persuade state legislators and policy administrators to raise the initial requirement of police officer education of an Associates Degree in Criminal Justice or Police Science *prior* to admission to a law enforcement academy, either through department sponsored or otherwise private enrollment. With this new requirement, training and preparation for employment in law enforcement would be separated into a two phase professional development process. This process would more closely resemble other professional careers and allow law enforcement a level of educational clout they have not previously enjoyed.

Methods of Research

This paper outlines the historical evolution of professional policing and the modern challenges to policing through detailed analysis of several academic journals, textbooks, government resources, and other secondary resources. The paper then examines the logically proposed and empirically tested benefits of higher education to the policing profession. This paper then uses these examples of how education benefits those specific examples of modern policing challenges through education learning theories and formal criminal justice education. Finally the paper discusses the application of these benefits in other occupations closely aligned with policing to help illustrate the benefits of requiring all candidates to obtain an associate degree in criminal justice prior police recruit training.

Limitations

Even with a total application of all of this paper's recommended changes to the educational and training, current challenges faced by the law enforcement community cannot be completely addressed. Law enforcement operates in some of the most difficult circumstances in

society, that is increasingly becoming complex and challenging. It is necessary for law enforcement to provide the community with professional and just protection against others and to show professional restraint in everyday actions of law enforcement. Doing this all while exercising responsible and reasonable application of their legal authority to enforce the law.

This paper is further limited by the lack of tested application of these recommendations. Individually each State in the United States is responsible prescribing the educational standard for their law enforcement. The only state which requires an Associates degree in Criminal Justice prior to employment is the State of Minnesota (Hilal & Erickson, 2010). While there are many studies directed in the benefits of law enforcement education, the impact of the recommendations when applied to the entire profession of all law enforcement within a state has not fully been explored.

Section II: Literature review

The following literature review is divided into four sections. The first section gives the reader a short history of policing and how it has evolved along several eras or reforms in an effort to improve policing. In the second section the literature review will examine the benefits of formalized higher education as it relates to the history, perceptions, and challenges of policing. This section will use both a review of the logical analysis as well as empirical research. Understanding the history helps the reader gain perspective on the third section which will provide a generalized perception of law enforcement today. Generalized perceptions will look at both positive and negative relations the police have with communities. Understanding the perception of law enforcement today will give the reader a better perspective on what challenges the policing occupation faces as they attempt to transition into a profession. The final section highlights several challenges that modern law enforcement face within their daily operations.

History of Policing

As society became more complex, governmental structures became centralized. The formation of police agencies coincided with centralized government organizations. Urban cities in England experienced high crime rates which called for a full time effort to control crime (Schmallegger, 2013). In 1829, Sir Robert Peel began formalized policing practices as society recognizes it by the organization of the London Metropolitan Police Department. As with many other portions of the American legal structure, our policing organizations were first modeled after this British example. The formation of full time police did not occur in the United States until the 1840s. The first full time police organization in the United States was created in Boston,

shortly followed by other large cities such as New York and Philadelphia (Dunham & Alpert, 2010; Kappeler, 2006b).

By the turn of the century, local politicians and local police leaders used police departments as their political service servants to push their political agendas. These political actions through police agencies retarded the societal need to provide communities with professional and unbiased justice (Gaines & Kappeler, 2008). These early police officers or agents had little, if any, formal training. Legal knowledge, social understanding, and tactical training were not required. Police officers of this era were often times, hired for their personal connections to political machines or influential families. Police officer positions within the department were given based upon bribes or other means (Ortmeier & Meese, 2010; Uchida, 2010; Woodiwiss, 2001).

Due to this politicalized labor practice, many citizens complained of the corruption and abuses of the local police official. Uchida (2010) explained police of this time were viewed as “instruments of the political machine” and progressive reformers struggled to induce change. This prompted a call for reform within policing. Beginning around the turn of the 20th century police organizations and policing functions were shifted from a localized neighborhood role (which were seen to be easily corruptible) to a highly centralized and standardized (less susceptible to corruption), rule based form of policing (Kelling & Moore, 1988; Uchida, 2010).

Police chiefs around the country formed the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) and sought to focus policing strategy as a law enforcement role instead of community caretaker or “social worker’s” role. In order to establish a professional model, police officers received structured training on tactics and legal aspects of their occupation (Kelling & Moore,

1988). Police chief August Vollmer and later his protégé O.W. Wilson, were instrumental in advocating for professionalism within police departments in the United States. Vollmer and Wilson advocated for police departments and their officers to use of science to aid them in investigations. Both of these police scholars advocated for police officers to have bachelor degrees. They also helped in the development of Uniformed Crime Reports (UCR) and in 1916 introduced American Policing to the “crime laboratory” (Gaines & Kappeler, 2008; Kappeler, 2006b). Also during this time, the transformation of the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) under J. Edgar Hoover furthered the perception of professionalized law enforcement units. Hoover was successful in promoting the FBI as the premier crime detection and prevention agency within the federal government.

This new professional model gained momentum as more police chiefs created centralized procedures and practices. Entire states began certifying standards of training, tactics, and procedures for local law enforcement. Police officers and front line leaders were expected to be “professionally remote” in their relationships to the community and expected to prevent crime by presence and rapid deployments to calls for service (Kelling & Moore, 1988). New technologies aided in this strategy. Radios, patrol cars, and formalized tactics aided police in law enforcement functions. Localized district autonomy within the department was minimized and large centralized police organization controlled policies and procedures (Schmallegger, 2013). Police began to rely on forensics and evidence instead of human source information to solve crimes (Kelling & Moore, 1988; Uchida, 2010).

As these efforts to professionalize policing continued, two inter-related forms of policing strategy emerged. One of these strategies is known as Community Orientated Policing (COP). In

the COP strategy, police agencies, its leadership, the community at large, and other vested members of society (schools, local business, and hospitals) share in the responsibilities to form a civilized and functioning community. Many departments in the past 20 years have adapted some of the COP strategies into their policy and procedures. It has however, remained difficult to fully assimilate these philosophies into the agency practices. This community policing philosophy has been criticized from within the policing ranks in some communities. Many police officers do not "buy in" to the community policing strategy (Rosenbery, Sigler & Lewis, 2008). In some departments the COP effort only extends to small units within police departments does not extend to all policing activity. Community policing is meant to be a collaborative process between the police and the community. If COP strategy is not extended to the entire police department, it will fail (Gaines & Kappeler, 2008).

COP efforts have been difficult to fully implement. In some cases communities are unable to organize and collaborate their efforts with the police and in other cases police agencies are unable to have officers buy into the strategy. In response to these complex failures, police administrators have adapted their policing efforts to a new form of proactive policing strategy. This police strategy is known as problem orientated policing or POP (Office of Justice Programs, Department of Justice, 2010). In POP, police identify specific issues within the community from either calls for service, community concerns addressed to the police, reported incidents of crime, and other data driven statistics (Center for Problem-Oriented Policing, 2015). By identifying these specific problems within the community police can then devise ways to address the root causes of issue which will hopefully solve the problem within the community (Dunham & Alpert, 2010).

Law Enforcement Education

Higher education requirements for police officers especially on the national level, has not increased since the 1970s (Telep, 2011). There are many reasons why this has not occurred. In some cases, administrators fear that if educational requirements were to be raised, the pool of qualified applicants would shrink (Gaines & Kappeler, 2008). Others believe in a discriminatory effect on minority applicants (Gaines & Kappeler, 2008). Still others believed that by raising the educational requirements, several otherwise qualified applicants would be eliminated (Gaines & Kappeler, 2008; White & Escobar, 2008). Many scholars argue that these concerns would be mitigated by strong recruitment strategies, it has served as a powerful deterrent for several states to raise their standard. In fact, only the State of Minnesota mandate that all police officers have a minimum of a two-year degree prior to licensure (Hilal & Erickson, 2010).

The strenuous urging of academia and presidential commissions for the raising of educational requirements in order to professionalize of law enforcement is not a new concept. Study after study has shown how police officers with college level education have less citizen complaints (Manis et al, 2007), when citizen complaints were filed fewer complaints were substantiated (Telep, 2011), reduces corruption (Manis et al, 2008), better legal knowledge and can better maneuver through the criminal justice system (Paynich, 2009).

The importance of the need for formal education of police officers should not be understated. The police and their actions are in many ways the only government influence many people experience in their lives. It is the police officer who is called when an individual needs assistance. It is the police officer which citizens look to in times of need and security. Police officers must be ready to answer these calls. To do so with little or no formal training seems to

place citizens at a disservice. It is imperative that when police respond to calls for service they have the necessary tools to perform the complicated task of policing. Higher education provides a fundamental tool to address everyday operations and challenges.

Police officers have often been called the gateway to the criminal justice system. Often times interaction with police officers are the only experiences a majority of citizens have with the criminal justice system. Police officer must not only be taught the fundamentals of their tactics and vocational responsibility, they must also be taught the criminological and sociological foundation which prescribes their need in society. This understanding allows individual police officers to see “big picture” views not only of police roles in society but also police functions within the criminal justice system.

Police Scholars and contributions. The director of the Center for Problem-Oriented Policing, Michael Scott, advocates for a symbiotic relationship between researchers and police agencies and their officers (Scott, 2010). In traditional police research the police officers, the agency, and its policies have been the subject of research and discussions (Bradley & Nixon, 2009). In these traditional approaches, the researchers pride themselves on the ability to remain distant and independent to the police (Bradley & Nixon, 2009; Scott, 2009). These approaches fundamentally are situated to find fault within police practices. Rather than finding areas to work with police, many researchers in the traditional role contribute their “expert voice” to publish their findings instead of working in partnership with police (Bradley & Nixon, 2009).

New evidence based and problem oriented approaches to policing communities have been gaining popularity in recent years. This strategy however is dependent on external political and budgetary constraints of real world (Bradley & Nixon, 2009). In this new way of developing

policing strategies, police agencies use theoretical research; criminological and sociological perspectives on crime, in constructing their policing strategies and apply the real world experience and knowledge unique to the law enforcement practitioners who operate in the community. This new approach holds value to practical law enforcement experience (Scott, 2009). It recognizes the complex and difficult task of policing within the community and requires constant evidence based assessments of the policing strategy (Bradley & Nixon, 2009; Scott, 2009). In many cases social researchers focus on one specific cause of one type of criminal activity. Michael Scott (2009) points out that police do not deal with a monolithic crime problem and therefore addressing these strategies with a few broad based, universal practice is a flawed approach.

It is critical for police using this new form of evidence based or problem orientated policing to have an educational foundation to maneuver and drive policing policy. Without this educational foundation police will not have the proper tools to necessary to develop new and innovative strategies which are needed within neighborhoods. The police will need researchers to work with them. The communication for this policing is extremely important. Police and researchers together must speak in like terms and ideas. Building the foundation of criminal justice and criminological education would be those like terms which help develop new policing strategies.

Perceptions of Law Enforcement

Even though law enforcement agencies and the police administrators have continued to adjust and evolve with society, not all perceptions of law enforcement have been positive. Social scientists, James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling, criticized new modernization of police

strategies for being too removed from local and social need in individual communities. Wilson and Kelling contend that police are often times pulled away from community and not able to influence public order and control because they do not focus on quality of life issues important to a community (Dunham & Alpert, 2010). Some in the media as well as criminal justice scholars such as Kraska (1999) and Meeks (2006) have questioned the tendency for local police departments to be too militaristic and use these military style weapons and tactics too often.

Criminal justice scholars Ortmeier and Meese III (2010) have questioned if policing should even be considered a profession. Ortmeier and Meese (2010) claim policing does not meet their prescribed definition of what a profession is and should only be considered “a complex trade or vocation” (p 12). According to their definition to be considered a *profession*, the occupation must fulfill specific criteria established an educational foundation as well as adherence to ethical standards of behavior which are universal throughout the profession (Ortmeier & Meese, 2010). Several police agencies and individual police officers have pushed for this professionalism and have proactively pursued the advancement of their occupation, however this individual attempt to professionalize themselves does not push the occupation as a whole. These scholars appear to take the “as strong as the weakest link” philosophy. This call for police to gain a standard body of knowledge is not a new concept. Historically, several policing commissions, first of which was the Wickersham Commission, have called upon police departments and police officers to enhance their body of knowledge through some form of college education (Gaines & Kappeler, 2008; Paynich, 2009).

Strong criticism of police actions and culture have helped create a negative perception of policing (Duham & Alpert, 2010; Gains & Kappeler, 2008; Kappeler, 2006b; Ortmeir & Meese,

2010). This however does not explain public perception as a whole in society. As Gaines and Kappeler (2008) explain most people, around 80 percent of the population, have positive views of the policing within their community. This relative high approval rating is found in lower crime areas. Areas of the community with higher levels of criminal activity do not share the overwhelming support for police (Gaines & Kappeler, 2008). Additionally, a July 2010 public confidence poll reported that 59 percent reported having a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in the police while 27 percent still reported having some confidence in police. Only 13 percent reported having little or no confidence in the police officers (Saad, 2010). The effect of each police organization is unique to not only the size of the department but also the community in which it operates. This approval rating is normally much lower in predominately poor and socially disorganized locations found within inner city urban landscapes, where a higher concentration of minority and immigrant populations reside (Duham & Alpert, 2010; Gains & Kappeler, 2008; Kappeler, 2006b; Ortmeir & Meese, 2010).

Media attention of high profile, isolated and questionable cases of police use of force however further promulgate these perceptions of police misconduct and racial tensions. Thus providing a greater concern for police corruption and abuse of authority. This attention of isolated incidents from national media outlets have perpetuated the perception that police officers in general are abusive and corrupt. Even while according to numerous reports filed at the Bureau for Justice Statistics (BJS), these assumptions or perceptions are often times dispelled by statistics and facts. In a press release by the BJS, minorities perceived police related contacts to be illegitimate more often than whites who were stopped. However out of the estimated 62.9 million individuals who reported contact with the police in 2011, less than 5 percent filed

complaints and a large majority of individuals believed the police acted properly (McCarthy, 2011). Also according to the BJS statistics on arrests and in custody deaths, "white" individuals are twice as likely to die during police related arrests than blacks or other minorities.

The question then remains, what can law enforcement and police officers do to bolster or improve the perceptions of police within the public? This question has several answers which include increase and improve the communication and openness between the police, embrace proactive community policing, and increase professionalism within policing. In 1950, August Vollmer and O.W. Wilson recognized that formalized university education was one way to enhance police practices, criminal justice understanding, and police professionalism (Ganies & Kappeler, 2008; Schmallegger, 2013). This education could lead to a better improvement of police tactics and procedures as well as a better criminological and sociological understanding of society. Higher education allows an individual to gain another perspective of their environment. This perspective broadens the foundation of knowledge and helps reassign meaning to circumstances and symbolic means in our lives (Burbank & Martins, 2010; Miliken & Schriebler, 2012).

Challenges and Expectations to Law Enforcement in the 21st Century

Civil Liabilities. The civil liability of local law enforcement actions began in the aftermath of the United States Civil War (1860-1863), then President of the United States Ulysses S. Grant requested congress to use its federal legislative power to provide the federal government a means to protect southern blacks against confederate supporters and a newly formed social threat known as the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) (Civil rights act of 1871, West's Encyclopedia of American Law, 2013). The United States Congress enacted the Civil Rights Act

of 1871, also known as the Ku Klux Klan Act, the Force Act of 1871 or the Enforcement Act of 1871 (Civil Rights Act of 1871, West's Encyclopedia of American Law, 2013). Then President Grant had issues with southern politicians and their government entities enacting laws and policy which systematically kept minority members of the country from being protected by the law. Part of this congressional act (42USC§1983) made it possible for victims of civil rights violations to bring civil action against their perpetrators. Then over the next 100 years the courts and the several layers of government battled between applications of this law and the use of this law to bind state legislatures to upholding Constitutional guarantees. It was not until two landmark cases *Monroe v Pope* 365 US 167 [1961] and *Monell v Department of Social Services of the City of New York* 436 US 658 [1978]) that the full litigation potential of 42 USC §1983 was realized. After the Supreme Court had ruled on these cases, the precedent was set for individuals to bring suit against government officials, government entities, and police officers when they believed their rights were violated. With decision in *Monroe v Pope*, citizens could hold agents of the government civilly liable for violations of their Constitutional rights to petition the government for redress and grievance against those agents. This allowed the individual citizen an avenue to hold government agents civilly accountable in circumstances where their rights were violated. Of course with this landmark case, individual law enforcement officers were now liable for improper actions during the course of their government duties. This however still insulated municipal governments or the individuals holding high office which set forth public policy to be immune. It was not until the decision of *Monell v Department of Social Services of the City of New York*, where the municipal agencies were subjected to the same civil liability which *Monroe v Pope* allowed (Kappeler, 2006a).

Just as §1983 acted as an individual's means to protect their constitutionally protected rights against injustice, an inserted clause into the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 allowed the federal government to intercede and investigate local law enforcement agencies to prevent "patterns and practices" which violate specific minority's and general citizen's constitutional rights. This inserted clause of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 was later referred to as Section 14141 of Chapter 42 of the United States Code (42USC§14141). In these cases, the United States Department of Justice (USDOJ) conduct reviews of agency policies, police actions, and organizational climate to pass judgement on local law enforcement actions where there is evidence of a patterns and practice which violate whole community's constitutional rights (USDOJ Special Litigation Unit, 2014).

Federal government oversight as well as civil litigation has forced several local agencies to dictate specific law enforcement actions and tactics in order to reduce their exposure to monetary and legal punishments. In current reality of local law enforcement and policing activities, administrators and local municipalities must not only be aware of federal executive oversight but also civil litigation. This exposure to legal action can understandably cause local administrators to restrict tactics, techniques, and procedures of police action. Further centralizing the police function within communities.

According to the Special Litigation Unit of the Department of Justice (2014) between 1994 and 2009 the unit has conducted 33 full scale investigations against local law enforcement agencies at a cost of millions of dollars to local tax payers. From 2008 to 2014, the Special Litigation Unit has conducted 25 formal investigations which have led to either full consent decrees or a "technical letter of assistance" which in many cases is a precursor to other legal

actions such as consent decrees (Special Litigation Unit, 2014). Gaines and Kappeler (2008) found civil liability litigation and the other costs associated with these torts could cost the approximately 39,000 local governments as much as \$780 billion dollars in pending litigation. In fact in one such circumstance, Los Angeles the city officials had set aside \$300 million to pay for potential lawsuits from just one of the many city lawsuits from police actions (Gaines & Kappeler, 2008).

These statistics show the critical need for public agents and officials to comprehend how important their actions can be when operating within the community. The avoidance of activities which could hold entire police departments and city governments accountable could help insulate entire communities from millions of dollars worth of liability. A full understanding of litigious exposure is necessary to protect communities, police agencies, as well as individual officers within law enforcement. As Manis et al (2007) reported police officers with this higher education and understanding help reduce complaints and corruption. Police should be required to have college level instruction focused on case law in civil liabilities. The current required police training within Wisconsin's law enforcement standards does not have this necessary education or training regarding civil litigation. Requiring potential police recruits to have this proper education prior to performance of their police duties could prevent costly litigations in the future.

Specialized Units. Many police related civil liability law suits have come from police action within communities, some of which have occurred during deployments of various specialized units (Kappeler, 2006a). Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) or Tactical Enforcement Units (TEU) first introduced in Los Angeles, CA and Milwaukee, WI in 1967, then

in several large municipalities afterwards, were established in response to several high risk incidents involving armed snipers, hostage incidents, and other violent civil disorders occurring in large municipalities around the country. The Mobile Incident Response Team otherwise known as MIRT is another such unit which is used in crowd control or public protests. In some cases these units have used armored vehicles and ballistic protection. Police agencies contend that these special weapons and tactics units allow for safe apprehension of suspects, search warrant service, and several other high risk incidents (Kappeler, 2006b).

While development of these new units and tactics provide necessary protection for the officers and safeguards for the community, it is also important to understand how these units may be perceived by the public. Constant communication with the community when these units are used is vital to continued public support. When such units are not used appropriately or in cases where their use has been questioned, critics claim the police are becoming too militarized and overly forceful with citizens (Cole & Gertz, 2013; Kleiman, 2009; Kraska, 1999). Police can use learning through higher education to help limit the civil litigation exposure to themselves, the city government, and the tax payers when using these necessary units within the community.

Criminal investigators and detectives are members of the police force which have specific duties to conduct in depth criminal investigations. In early policing history, very little training was given in forensic science and criminal procedures (Gaines & Kappeler, 2008). Many earlier detectives focused only on the confession of a crime to prove guilt. Other physical evidence was not as important, even when this evidence did not support the confession. These confessions were gained by several means which included physical abuse otherwise known as the "third degree," withholding basic medical and nutritional needs, as well as violations of constitutional

rights (Gaines & Kappeler, 2008; Kappeler, 2006a; Schmallegger, 2013). This third degree created a poor perception of law enforcement which still exists today in such television shows as *Law and Order* and *NYPD*. This police misconduct was changed through several legal cases and lawsuits. These cases force administrators to redress policy procedures and training of their detectives. New technologies were used and tested as scientific means to finding guilt and innocent. No longer would a confession alone always be the best way to a conviction. Juries and courts expect to see thorough and complete professional investigations, with or without a confession.

Complex as well as simple investigations, which at one time only required police to obtain a confession, now requires special knowledge of evidence collections as well as procedural and legal hurdles necessary to legally collect this evidence. Surveillance, patrolling tactics, and investigations are not only the challenge of large municipal city police departments. In today's society, these professional expectations are held to all police departments and their law enforcement agents. Regardless of geographical location, all police agents are required to have this higher standard of legal knowledge and practice. This high standard requires an in depth knowledge of basic general policing practices, legal knowledge, and criminological insight which is provided by college level education. This knowledge can provide a foundation upon which all tactics, techniques, and procedures are constructed.

Technologies and Emerging Tools. Technology and the use thereof has become an integral part of our society and in turn, policing strategies in the past 20 years. From advancements in police radios, oleoresin capsicum, computer technologies, less than lethal devices, vehicle mounted and personal audio/visual recorders, technology has transformed the

way police officers conduct their daily operations. Some of these technologies have been used to aid police in investigations. Other technologies are meant for evidence storage, collection, and dissemination. Technology has aided society in producing a more professional, safer, and efficient law enforcement officer.

All of these advancements in technology at the disposal of police agencies, some argue, gives the police an enhanced ability to violate a person's freedom and their individual Constitutional rights. This extra ability to conduct high level computing and investigations through large data processing power, electronic scanning equipment, and digital collection have caused many to question its use (Kappeler, 2006a). Many claim these new uses of technology may violate a persons reasonable expectation of privacy. In some cases these challenges are answered by the courts. Supreme Court cases such as *Katz v United States* 389 US 347 (1967) - electronic monitoring of personal conversations, *Dow Jones Chemical Company v United States* 476 US 227 (1986) - Fly over photographic evidence of a manufacturing plant, *Kyllo v United States* 533 US 27 (2001) - the use of thermo imagines of a person's home, all have answered some question as to where this threshold lies but with new commercially available technology, what constitutes an invasion of privacy as guaranteed to each citizen by the United States Constitution.

These past challenges to police use of technology should be cause for concern to police. As police conduct investigations, it is imperative that police conduct these investigations with past legal decisions and current criminal procedure legislation in mind. Many of these legal cases are not taught to police recruits in the academy. Just as it is important for police to detect and apprehend criminal actors, it is just as important that the police investigative tools used will past

the legal muster so these criminals do not evade prosecution because the evidence police obtained will not be excluded because of a violation of the individual's civil rights. In Wisconsin police recruits who enter into police academy are taught basic criminal law and procedures through a guide called the "Criminal Law Handbook" (Law Enforcement Standards Board [LESB], 2013). In addition to this teaching, recruits are taught selected excerpts from the Wisconsin State Statutes as well as the United States Constitution. This instruction however would not be considered in-depth by university standards. As prescribed by the Law Enforcement Standards Board (LESB) curriculum, constitutional law is dictated to be 30 "contact hours" for the recruits. This is not enough instruction or case law knowledge to build a proper foundation. Understanding this information as a professional level rather than a vocational level requires building that foundation through multiple classes of criminal justice, criminal procedures, and constitutional law.

Police Use of Force. Inherent in police responsibility, is the need to enforce, or persuade societal members to follow or adhere to these laws (Vago, 2012). Police officers can do this in many ways, but is prescribed in a detailed set of intervention and enforcement options dictated by the state and federal government. Police must also understand how this dynamic is played in the public eye. Police must understand how great the responsibility is that they hold. If police fail to adhere to the legal and occupational standards of their department, legislation, and of the Constitutions of both the state and federal governments, then it is reasonable to receive criticism and back lash. When the public loses trust in the policing action, it is imperative that police find new ways to establish new faith in their ability to enforce the law in a just and honorable way.

Several highly publicized and rightfully prosecuted cases causes citizens to be weary of the police action. This however while an extreme small minority of the police officers in society, causes large scale backlash against all officers of the law. In 2002, over 45 million individuals 16 years or older had some contact with police officers. While 1.3 million individuals involved in this contacts were arrested by police, only 664,000 resulted any use of force by the police (Gaines & Kappeler, 2008). In 2008, the Bureau of Justice Statistics revealed that contact between police and public has decreased since 2002. This however was in contrast to the disproportionally rate at which minority drivers were searched during traffic stops (Eith & Durose, 2011).

Telep (2011) furthered the understanding of university education's on police officers. The research found that this education alters the attitudes of police officers towards police powers. The research shown both pre-service and post-service education of police officers positively effected the behaviors and attitudes of abusive police powers. While Manis, Archbold, and Hassell (2008) had found that police officers without a formal education are significantly more likely to receive formal citizen complaints for misconduct. This ability to reduce police use of force or reduce police misconduct should not be taken lightly. Public mistrust of police can often cause violent demonstrations as we have seen in Ferguson, MO and Baltimore, MD. As explained in the previous section, tactical uses of police force can be cause for great public mistrust. Misconduct can also lead to civil and criminal liability for the individual officer and the municipality which employs that officer. If exposure of higher education is helpful in reducing these types of issues within the community, would not a prudent of the local and state governments require such training?

Not all police uses of force should be considered unlawful or unjust. The Wisconsin Law Enforcement Standards Board has set out prescribed defense and arrest tactics for justified use of force (Wisconsin Law Enforcement Standards Board, Defense and Arrest Tactics, 2008). The disturbance resolution and incident response applied in dynamic situations can appear to be overtly aggressive. This however is completely justifiable with proper articulation of a police officer action. The ability to properly articulate not only your actions in investigations, but also during physical actions taken on patrol, is extremely important to police officer. The ability to convey accurate and detailed information both verbally and in written form can aid police in their justification for proper use of force. As the reader will see in the next section, well educated officers will be able better articulate their actions and many times, justify their actions.

Report Writing and Testifying. If Hollywood and movies versions of the police officer's occupation were true, the educational benefit to police report writing and testifying would not be an important point to consider. Police would have the action and drama without the hours of needed report writing and inventorying or processing of evidence. This however is not reality. In reality, police officers spend many hours writing reports and logging evidence after an incident which may have only taken a few moments to complete.

A well educated officer who communicates well in public and on the witness stand, and in report writing is vital to the success of an investigation. In law enforcement clearly conveying information both written and oral through testimony and report writing cannot be understated. Gaines and Kappeler (2008) point out that mistakes made in a preliminary investigation are almost never rectified during the course of an investigation. Follow-up investigations rely heavily on preliminary investigations done by responding police officers. Critical evidence

collection or preservation can be lost if patrol officers (many times younger or less experienced) do not document or fail to recognize the potential for evidence or criminal procedures. Detectives often times conduct follow up; days, weeks or even months and years later, attempting to close cases. These detectives rely on the reports written by officers to provide clues or leads to follow (Gaines & Kappeler, 2008; Schmalleger, 2013). Attention to detail and then reporting of that detail are extremely important skills for responding officers and detectives. Without this detail and concise report writing skills investigators have less information to develop leads and solve criminal cases.

Several studies have recognized the benefit to higher education in relation to report writing (Paynich, 2009). According to the National Commission on Writing (2005) two thirds of all salaried professionals are required to have some responsibility for writing reports. In the policing profession, nearly all police officers are required to compose reports. In police reporting the main purpose of report writing is to record important information for later detection or prosecution of criminals. Police officers and investigators need to take information from all sources, organize this information, and then communicate this information so a wide variety of readers (lawyers, judges, citizens, and jurors) will be able to understand the information. Writing skills are very important to investigations. A required university education provides that report writing skill. University education requires students to compose research reports as well as discussion essays. This forces a student to organize ideas into clear and concise written communication that others can understand.

Police interaction with Persons with Mental Illness. The criminal justice system's interaction with persons that have mental illness is well known. Since 1960s, the

deinstitutionalization of mental illness care in large publicly funded hospitals has caused many of those with mental illness to live within the community and intern exposed to the criminal justice system (Markowitz, 2001). Therefore there are a disproportional number of persons with mental illness who have interactions with the police on a regular basis. This has forced many agencies to provide additional training to their police officers regarding mental health. Interestingly, a study involving police interactions with persons with a mental health also suggest positive benefits to police with higher education. In this study, Cleveland police officers who had higher levels of education were more likely to refer persons with suspected mental illnesses to mental health professionals instead of arresting these individuals for behavior which is deemed criminal (LaGrange, 2003).

Law enforcement were not meant to be the gatekeepers to mental health assistance in our society (Jennings & Hudak, 2010). Police officers play a unique balancing task between public safety and public caretaker when dealing with person with mental illness. There are often few options which are available in short term solutions. Often law enforcement come in contact with mentally ill persons when normal safeguards have failed. The person either stopped taking medication or the medication is no longer working correctly. The person is experiencing a crisis to which they cannot control. In each case, law enforcement has little training and ability to stop the crisis. Law enforcement either have to recognize a crisis or hopefully are informed of the crisis so they can properly act. As more police departments engage in public caretaker responsibilities with these mentally ill persons, larger departments have begun deploying crisis intervention teams to handle these police calls for service (Jennings & Hudak, 2010). Providing

law enforcement the training and education is critical as they attempt to handle dynamic and often times unpredictable incidents with persons with mental illness.

Section III: Theory

This section will focus on the two learning theories which help explain why requiring police education through college instruction prior to police academy training is essential. Each section begins with background information which contains principal theorists and their basic tenets to the theory. The second part of each section will address how these theories pertain to police education and training.

Constructivism/Learning Theory

The credit for the formalization of the learning theory known as cognitive constructivism is normally given to Jean Piaget (Berkeley Graduate Student Instructor [GSI], 2015; Hein, 1991). Piaget's basic understanding of human cognitive learning begins with the premise that all learning is active and not passive in nature (Berkeley GSI, 2015). This active learning begins as basic understanding of the world. The learner assigns meaning and understanding to the information presented to them. Then as new information is added to this basic knowledge, the mind constructs a new understanding or a new meaning to the learner's world (Berkeley GSI, 2015; Hein, 1991).

Constructivism and other active learning theories are student or learner centered (Hein, 1991). This is opposite to many traditional learning theories. In traditional learning theories learning is center around the instructor. The information is given to the students and the students are thought to absorb or accept this information (Berkeley GSI, 2015). The traditional means of learning can be seen in classrooms throughout the world. Lectures or teachers teach from the front of the class, give tests on the information given, and students are expected to test based upon the information given during class room discussion. Cognitive constructivism is based

upon the individual's own experience and active discovery (Hein, 1991). This discovery is powered or influenced by internal rewards of the student rather than external rewards of the grade (Berkeley GSI, 2015). The teacher or instructor's role in a purely constructivism classroom is to act as a facilitator of information and guide to individual intellectual growth.

William G. Perry generalized Jean Piaget's cognitive constructivism theory into a learning theory which included not only adolescent learning but also learning at the college level (Berkeley GSI, 2015). Through a 15 year study with students at the Harvard University William Perry generalized and gave more insight into how post-adolescent adults learn in a college level setting. Perry furthered Piaget's theory but recognizing that adults learn through what was called positionally (Berkeley GSI, 2015). In this study Perry realized that the learn's position has influence on how the individual perceives the information and how this information is then assimilated into the new understanding of the information. This understanding of a positional instead of fixed stage learning allows for a more fluid developmental process of learning than Piaget's theory (Berkeley GSI, 2015).

In an attempt to further epistemology understanding of the learning process, Lev Vygotsky developed social constructivism (Berkeley GSI, 2015). Piaget, Perry, and Vygotsky among others all believed that information and the formation of knowledge does not happen "out there" indifferent to ones own understanding (Hein, 1991). This information enters the individual's cognitive awareness and the brain forms understanding of the world around them based upon this new and old information. While Piaget believed this learning is conducted in a fixed stage and Perry believed in positional learning, Soviet psychologist Vygotsky believed that learning is positional but his positional learning is done in context of an individual's social

position. Vygotsky rejected the belief that learning is done independently of an individual's social context (Berkeley GSI, 2015). Vygotsky argued that people will learn information differently not only based upon what developmental stage they are in, but also in what social context the person learning the information is exposed to during the learning process.

Application of Constructivism Learning theory to police education

Understanding the constructivism learning theory will help the reader understand why advanced post-secondary education is critical for police officers and their ability to function with their occupational setting. This understanding is also fundamental in realizing why studies have shown police officers with post secondary educations receive less citizen complaints (Chapman, 2012), reduces police attitudes towards abuse of power (Telep, 2010), impacts the number of allegations against police officer misconduct (Manis et al, 2008), and have a broader picture of the criminal justice system, better placed for the technological changes in society, and more professional in their policing product (Paynich, 2009). Constructivism can help explain why police officers who obtain higher educational training in are more tolerant to other cultures. The acquisition of knowledge about social sciences, criminology causes, and the criminal justice system would allow an officer to utilize a learned perspective on the community and a various amount of circumstances. Building a broader view of how the role of police officer fits into a criminal justice system, will also allow that police officer a clearer understanding of due process and criminal procedures. This is shown in action through research performed by C.W Telep (2010). In his research Telep shows how a four-year degree produces a positive impact on a police officer's view points. It is interesting for this discussion to highlight that the timing of the education (before or after) the beginning of the police occupation is not as important as the

training itself. When police officers are given new information and experiences related to higher education, this allows the officer to build upon their knowledge and modify their attitude towards this abuse of authority (Telep, 2010).

Scholars recognize the role of the departmental or police culture within the occupation (Gaines & Kappeler, 2008; Ortmeier & Meese, 2010; Kappeler, 2006b; Schmallegger, 2013). This policing culture has both positive and negative effects on the criminal justice system and non-bias policing within communities. In some cases, positive experience and skills are learned during patrol or field training programs. Officers learn practical application of skills and procedures during their academy training. Officers gain special knowledge in real time while working and become "street smart" through new experiences gained during their careers. Each of these experiences can lead to positive aspects of police culture. However, negative experiences can also have an effect on an officer. Police officers come in contact with many in the community when the citizen is at their worst. Police officers are often called to some of our society's most morally deviant circumstances. Most of the time police officers do not experience the community when citizens are not committing violent or property crimes, domestic violence crimes, and other deviant acts. Police therefore develop a predetermined attitude which is seen as cynical or dismissive towards many within the community. Constructivism learning theory explains how police training and education can help strengthen the positive experiences police officers receive while counter balancing the negative experiences.

Thomas, Menon, Boruff, Rodriguez, and Ahmed (2014) apply constructivism learning theory to medical professionals. While this application is not directed specifically towards police officers, the analysis can be used to further our understanding of how higher education and the

utilization of knowledge gained from research and study can effect the perspective for law enforcement practitioners. Thomas et al (2014) argue that applying constructivism learning theory to a daily process of using evidence based research to further medical practices strengthen the practitioners ability to provide better services and care for their patients while increasing the chances of treating their health ailments. They further explain that many times there are informational gaps between researchers and practitioners lead to treatment deficiencies. In utilizing constructivism learning, practitioners and researchers would transfer information and ideas, through an ethically sound application of knowledge and practice referred to knowledge transitions (KT). This KT would maximize practitioner's knowledge using a best practices and evidence based approach (Thomas et al, 2014). The same ideas should be used by criminal justice practitioners.

Symbolic Interaction Theory

George H. Mead is generally credited with providing the foundation of the social theory known as symbolic interaction theory (Burbank & Martins, 2010). Symbolic interactionism is based upon the premise that humans are social beings and associate meaning in their lives through social interactions. Human behavior is found within these social interactions and not merely found within the human mind. This socialization creates meaning in people's lives (Burbank & Martins, 2010; Miliken & Schrebier, 2012). From these premises the human mind creates these meanings and then associates these meanings with some symbolic construct (Burbank & Martins, 2010). These symbolic construct are then assign meaning. From these various symbols, icons, behaviors, events, people and organizations the meanings begins to change their behavior. This subjective label or meaning to various symbols does not have to be

accurate, however, an individual's perception is their reality, and therefore, their bias meaning, accurate or not, becomes truth (Theobald & Haider-Markel, 2008).

Building upon Head's premise and theory, Herbert Blumer, William Thomas, William James, Peirce, Dewey and Cooley at the University of Chicago furthered this understanding by looking at different mechanisms which affect how the individual also assigns meaning to each symbol. Even when these symbols are assigned to themselves in a social construct. They recognized that each individual is capable self actualization and identifying. This ability to internalize their own symbolic meaning to life constitutes thinking and being (Burbank & Martins, 2010).

The dynamic and constant social interaction results in an individual's ability to self reflect or view oneself as an object or symbol. Cooley noted that this ability to conduct self reflection or "looking glass self" is evident in how individuals perceive their station or role within life. (Burbank & Martins, 2010). This meaning however can change from one interaction to another. For example, if an individual begins to view their aging as a negative aspect to life, then that individual, viewing themselves as relatively older than others, will begin to adjust their lives to this belief that they are aging and older. Symbolizing their station in life as "old" or sedentary. However, if the individual happens to be grouped into a social setting where they are the youngest member within the dynamic, their behavior and individual identity can be modified or changed depending on their self assigned or group assigned identity.

Application of Symbolic Interaction theory to police education

Symbolic interaction theory has an important meaning when studying the social dynamic between law enforcement and society. In many cases, the social interaction between

communities and the police are often times based up on preconceived notions of self identification and stereotypes. Sometimes hidden and sometimes blatantly obvious, interactional bias occur for both the citizens and the law enforcement officer. In this understanding of social theory, law enforcement agencies, local and federal governments, and even the individual police officer can have very specific meaning for subgroups and cultures within the community. In some communities or geographical areas within society, police are very positively symbolized as good, honest, and protecting. While in other parts of the community, the police are view as oppressive, corrupted, and many times unjust.

These symbolic meanings can be even more complex when several co-existing meanings are introduced into a single interaction. Police often fight an uphill battle in regards to their public perception. Police officers are often the first and only contact many people have with local government officials. Police are called with issues occur within the public. Police make contact with citizens when traffic related incidents occur. Police predominately wear uniforms with badges affixed to their clothing and wear several tools and patches which readily identify them as police. Police often times drive in a police vehicle with markings and 360 degree red and blue lights. Police is often seen as the most recognizable public official and this is sometimes done by design. All of these aforementioned items, tools, badges, uniforms and status can be thought of as symbols. While each of these symbols may be a center of pride for the person wearing them, they also may be a sense of discomfort or distrust for those who view these symbols as negative reminders of outside authority. Conversely, segments of the population also have preconceived symbolic meanings within society. Some of these meanings are purposeful while others are done unintended. An individual which wears a suit and tie, cleanly kept by

social standards and behaves professionally will convey one symbolic presence while the same individual disheveled and unkempt, wearing torn jeans which do not fit and a soiled t-shirt, untied shoes conveys a completely different meaning to the outside world.

Many of these symbolic meanings or interactions are deeply rooted within a culture or segments of society. Law enforcement must be aware of these predetermined symbolic bias relationships and proactively recognize and counter these tendencies for bias. For instance in a study done by Theobald & Haider-Markel (2009), a large majority of minority drivers in the study had reported believing that white officers had acted improperly during traffic stops. However, when the minority drivers were stopped by officers of the same ethnical minority, the actions of those officers were looked as legitimate and positive. The researchers postulated that the minorities have predetermined bias against race of the officer and the legitimate nature of the action performed (Theobald & Haider, 2009).

This understanding of symbolic interaction theory is meant to show how the failure to recognize these predetermined bias could adversely effect the policing community relations. Using higher education to help educate officers about societal interaction with police can, in many ways, counter individual tendencies to assign symbolic meaning to situations where fair and impartial policing is necessary to remain professional. Positive results from the Denver study performed by Correll, Park, Judd, Wittenbrink, & Sadler, (2007) actually shown that police officers react significantly better then none police personnel in high street and reactionary scenarios. In comparison to other research participants, Correll (2009), show that police officers actually react quicker and with more accuracy in shoot/don't shoot scenarios. It was determined that because of the police officers training and ability to react in stressful scenarios, police

officers showed were less susceptible to racial bias even with compared to minority participants.

This type of training coupled with the understanding police officers will gain from higher education will place the policing professional standards well above that of an ordinary citizen.

Section IV: Recommendations and Conclusions

This section is divided into three sections. The first section explains current law enforcement standards as they are dictated by the Wisconsin State Statutes and the Law Enforcement Standards board. The second section explains new proposed changes to the Wisconsin law enforcement standards. These new proposed ideas are further explained by 3 sub-sections which prescribe various methods of achieving the new proposed standard. Finally, the last section is the conclusion to this paper.

Current Law Enforcement Standards in Wisconsin

The authority to prescribe minimum standards for law enforcement officers is delegated to the Law Enforcement Standards Board (LESB) (Wisconsin Statute §15.255). This Wisconsin LESB is the policy making body attached to the Wisconsin Department of Justice responsible for setting all standards for which each law enforcement and correctional officers must adhere. This board consists of 7 representatives (a chief of police, a sheriff, a district attorney, two local representatives, a public representative, and someone from the state's executive branch) who decide the standards to which law enforcement must abide by.

Current minimum guidelines prescribed law enforcement require a person to have 60 college credits within the first 5 years of employment. There are no restrictions within the LESB requirements which prescribe which classes or topics must be covered. The standard makes no distinction between an education in criminal justice from an education in classical art. Also, an individual could take these classes after their employment begins. De-certification of a police officer's status is only initiated after 5 years without completion the education guidelines. This standard also requires the individual to complete 520 hours of preparatory training normally

referred to as a "police academy." This academy must be accredited by the law enforcement standards board and provide the prescribed training on the topics outlined by the Wisconsin LESB. This 520 hours are broken down into 6 subcategories of instruction; policing in America, the legal context, tactical skills, relational skills, patrol procedures, and investigations. According to the Wisconsin Law Enforcement Standards Board's legal training covers both Constitutional Law and in State Statutes as well as juvenile justice training as they pertain to the vocational responsibilities of the police. Other topics covered through out the training include relatively short tutorials regarding the history of policing, ethics, professional communication, problem orientated policing and report writing (LESB, 2015).

Other current minimum guidelines prescribed by the LESB and Wisconsin state statutes are based upon age and criminal backgrounds. According to the state statutes and the LESB, the police applicant must be 18 years old. The police applicant must have completed high school or equivalent training program. From this program the candidate must have gained a certificate of this training in either the form of a diploma or high school equivalent degree (GED or HSED). The candidate must have a valid driver's license and must not have any criminal convictions in the State of Wisconsin or the state's equivalent which would constitute the as a felony. Finally the Wisconsin LESB requires the candidate to have the required physical and mental competence to perform the duties of a police officer, have conducted an oral interview prior to hiring, and have a clean drug test 60 days prior to the employment (LESB, 2015).

New Proposed Changes to Law Enforcement Standards

Section II of this paper had highlighted several complex and fundamental responsibilities of individual law enforcement personnel. Every officer which polices within the state of

Wisconsin is individually responsible to carry out their duties with competency and professionalism. Theoretically, an eighteen year old (minimum age required) could graduate from high school, complete the preparatory training and begin policing within a community. Many police officers operate by themselves on patrol. While operating independent of other supervision, these police officers are entrusted to make complex and often times life changing decisions with very minimal requirements. While these minimum standards may have been prudent to ensure a standard in years past, this same standard, unchanged in today's society is not responsible decision of a state government. This is why this paper proposes eliminating the 5 year grace period for the educational requirement and imposing a new minimum standard of an Associate degree in a criminal justice related field for all police officers certified by the Wisconsin State LESB.

Associate Degree. While many have argued for police officers to have a 4 year degree other have recognized the difficulty with this transition from such a low standard (Dominey & Hill, Gaines & Kappeler, 2008; Paynich, 2009; White & Escobar, 2008). There is however at least some research which suggests that obtaining an Associate degree is beneficial to policing as well (Manis et al, 2008). Studies have shown police officers who have a 4 year degree in several disciplines can be beneficial to policing (Manis et al, 2008) however, this benefit is limited. In the same study, there were measurable differences between study in social sciences compared to natural sciences (Manis et al, 2008). This could be explained by learning theories discussed earlier known as constructivism. When gaining further education based up on the understanding of social sciences, those police officers were able to build their knowledge foundation and have a "larger picture" outlook on the social and situational context. The same benefit could not be

reached if the higher education was gained in unrelated works in math or computing skills. For this reason, the associate degree should be completed in a social science or criminal justice related field.

Ultimately the goal of requiring a minimum level of education for police officers to have a 4 year degree is not realistic at this time and should only be considered as a long term goal. For police officers to be considered a profession, they must not only obtain a minimum standard of education through a recognized body of knowledge, all police officers must adhere to organizational standards which adhere to a professional code of ethics, standards of conduct, and the promotion of high standards within its profession (Ortmeier & Meese 2010). This is why first requiring the minimum standard of education to be an associate degree in policing or criminal justice is necessary to achieve a higher professional standing within the community.

College Level Equivalency Programs. Just as it is unrealistic to immediately require all police officers to obtain a 4 year degree prior to becoming police officers, it is equally unrealistic to believe that all current police officers are able to immediately obtain associate degrees. As Wisconsin LESB requires all police officers must have only 60 college credits. These 60 college credits are not prescribed so that any and all credits obtained at an accredited university is sufficient to meet these standards. With the new proposed requirement however, the Associate degree needs to be relating to field of criminal justice in order to meet the minimum qualification. This new requirement should not allow credits for random classes to be counted towards this new associate degree. It should however be realistic to afford experienced law enforcement officers credits for knowledge obtained through work experience and other job related education.

Dissent to this new educational standard is nothing new (Gaines & Kappeler, 2008). Many who argue against higher educational standards for police officers claim that this educational standard is not the only litmus test for good policing (Gaines & Kappeler, 2008; White & Heslop, 2012). There is however available compromises when addressing this concern. It is then necessary to create an environment where both foundational education through higher learning and vocational education which is learned through years of experience can be used equally. This environment already exists. Programs known as college level examination programs (CLEP) have been around for 40 years (CLEP, 2015). This CLEP program already offers 33 different examinations which provide educational credits for mastery of many general education at the college level (CLEP, 2015). Though these exams those who contend many police officers already have the education required could show their educational skill by “testing out” of these classes which may be unnecessary. Those who cannot show proficiency will be then still be required to take the necessary class.

In some cases, area technical schools and universities could offer their own examination program which allows students on the “fast track” to test out of some required classes. A technical college in Colorado, Colorado Technical University (CTU), already has a program which offers credits for knowledge gained through work experience. According to the CTU website, credits can be gained through detailed testing and mini module learning experiences which can prove mastery of knowledge (CTU, 2015). Wisconsin schools therefore could create or use programs such as the CTU program or CLEP process to credit officers who have already mastered certain skills trained in higher education.

Police Academy Training. The current design of the “police academy” structure within the allowable guidelines in the state of Wisconsin mixes some basic classroom instruction with tactical instruction. In the new proposed standard to minimum requirements, the police academy instructional time normally allowed for foundational education (i.e. constitutional and criminal law, history of policing, policing in a democracy/free society, and problem solving, criminal procedure, civil liability, etc. [LESB, 2015]) could all be given during the required Associates degree instruction. This instruction would theoretically be far more in-depth and examined with a higher level of understanding. This would also allow time for the student to practice report writing, critical thinking, and research methods. This would then allow police academy training to focus on practical applications of learned instruction, freeing up more time to address situational training and proper application of learned material. Using the idea of Constructivism Learning Theory, police officer recruits would have obtained this foundational learning and education prior to enlistment in the police academy program. Then the police recruit could then apply what the student had learned and get more situational knowledge of how to properly apply the knowledge learned in practical exercises.

This would also allow police academy instruction time to address other new or emerging concerns in policing. These concerns could help address practical applications of evidence processing, technology training, tactical decision making processes, equipment training and problem solving techniques.

Conclusions

Education is key to understanding. This statement is especially true in modern policing and strategy. Using the constructivism learning theory we see that building that foundation through proper instruction prior to application is necessary to ensure professional and proper actions taken while policing Wisconsin communities. In the ever changing society which policing must operate, the challenge is to keep pace with new developments in social, economical, and political conditions. Some of these changes have come from forward thinking policing scholars. Other changes have been through political pressures and social change. For almost a century presidential commissions, criminal justice scholars, and law enforcement leaders have been proponents of improving the social understanding of crime and society. They have also been proponents of furthering policing training and educational standards. It is time that law enforcement proactivity encourage and require these higher standards of their professions. Building the foundation of policing through education and understanding of social sciences is an important component of modern policing today.

Society is ever changing and presents new challenges to the criminal justice system. As gatekeepers to this criminal justice system, police must be ready to face these new challenges by being able to think critically, apply correctly and enforce justly the laws and rules prescribed by all forms of legal authority. Without proper education and understanding of the social need within the community the police will fail in policy. Having the ability to apply these complex social ideas and policy policing strategies within a community is not the job of someone who just has a high school diploma. More education is necessary to qualify to have the authority to perform the policing occupation in Wisconsin. If we are ever able to universally consider the

role of police within society as a profession, we must understand that while many if not most police officers exceed this minimum education requirement and are professional in their conduct, it is this minimum requirement for which we are judged. In an effort to show proactive measures to quell or stop the perceived or actual injustices done by police, the policing community show their commitment to professionalism and demand this standard.

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