

Title: The Training Curriculum at Pennsylvania Municipal Police Academies: Perceptions of Effective Training

Author: Jonathan W. Wolf

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Cathy C. Kaufman

Dissertation Committee Members: Dr. Jennifer V. Rotigel
Dr. George R. Bieger

This study examined the perception of effective police academy training curriculum topics as reported by Pennsylvania municipal police officers. A second purpose explored the relationship between the police academy pedagogy and the perception of training adequacy that exists by individual officers.

Using survey data from 152 municipal police officers this research found respondents have received the most adequate training in terms of knowledge, skills, and dispositions in the area of criminal law. The curricular topic of informants was perceived to be the least effective training area. Literature identified training gaps uncovered in chapter two of this study showed officer training deficiencies in the areas of homeland security, cybercrime, and same-sex domestic violence. Homeland security ranked fourth in least adequacy. Cybercrime was the third least adequate training curriculum topic according to respondents. Same-sex domestic violence training was perceived to be the second least adequate.

This study also sought to determine if there was a significant difference in the perceived adequacy of training between police officers who completed academy training at a higher educational academy and those who attended a governmental academy. An independent sample *t*-test showed no statistical significant difference. The results of this study also explored if a statistically significant difference exists in the level of militarism experienced between higher educational academies and governmental academies. This study found a significant degree of

militarism does exist at academies conducted in a governmental setting compared to a higher educational facility.

The results of this research add to the sparse literature that exists on varying police academy pedagogical techniques. The findings of this study provide valuable information for police academy instructors and curriculum authors. The information obtained as a result of this study can be used to better prepare police officers for their employment responsibilities.

