



# Palomar College Police Academy Advisory Board Committee Meeting March 12, 2020 Meeting Minutes

## **I. Introductions:**

Police Academy Director Michael Andrews called the Advisory Board Committee Meeting to order at 1038 hours. Andrews and the academy staff introduced themselves along with the meeting attendees.

## **II. Program Updates:**

Academy Coordinator Juliette Barnes discussed the status of the current class in the police academy. The academy is a modular, extended format training program that is completed in descending order: Module III, Module II, and then Module I. The academy is one year in duration and runs from January through December for a total of 1159 hours. Class is conducted on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday nights from 1730 – 2230 hours and Saturdays from 0600 – 1700 hours. The current class is in Module II, which began on March 5th. There are currently 17 recruits and all recruits have completed Module III which includes PC 832 certification.

The academy is currently accepting applications for Module I, which begins at the end of June 2020. The academy is starting marketing and recruitment efforts for next year's class in the hopes to have a greater number of applicants. There will be a focus on military recruitment, which may reduce some of the background-related challenges seen in applicants in recent years. This will provide a more viable applicant pool for agencies.

Barnes then discussed recruitment opportunities at the academy. Recruiters are invited to come to the academy 30 minutes prior to the start of class to share agency information with recruits and answer questions. Information can also be sent out to recruits and past graduates electronically. Barnes mentioned that the academy staff work with recruits to "guide" them to agencies that fit their attributes and backgrounds. Additionally, recruits assess what they need to work on in order to be more hireable during the academy. Barnes discussed the academy application process and how it mimics agency hiring practices. She also explained how the recruit evaluations in the academy were created to incorporate the POST Job Dimensions and character attributes to help agencies evaluate suitability for hiring.

The academy is currently seeking to hire additional Recruit Training Officers (RTOs) and instructors. The current RTOs are from both Riverside and San Diego County and most are Field Training Officers (FTOs). Feedback from FTOs is important because academy curriculum can incorporate additional training to address deficiencies seen in field training. Additional instructors are also needed at the academy, especially for Arrest and Control training. The job posting for Academy Instructor positions is now open. Interested individuals are encouraged to apply and/or contact Coordinator Barnes.

The academy is currently in need of expired/used ballistic vests of all sizes and conditions. Patrol vehicles are always needed as well. The academy requests procurement of a vehicle or a donation of surplus items, particularly vests, from agencies.

Barnes briefed the group on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) updates, starting with changes to Learning Domain Workbooks and Training and Testing Specifications (TTS), from which all academy curriculum is formed. The changes take effect on 04/01/2020. Learning Domain (LD) 20, *Use of Force*, added 5 hours of new content on de-escalation. In anticipation of the change, the academy already

implemented the new content. LD 3 is being renamed to *Principled Policing in the Community*. This LD added 8 hours of training on Principled Policing, Implicit Bias and Procedural Justice; LD 35, *Firearms/Chemical Agents*, eliminated the four Basic Handgun and Shotgun qualifications as required Exercise Tests, but the academy is keeping them as a part of our firearms training program. LD 34, *First Aid/CPR/AED*, added an additional Required Learning Activity. LD 42, *Cultural Diversity/Discrimination*, added a new chapter on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, although the TTS did not change. Lastly, a new workbook is being developed to replace a long absent LD 14. The Workbook will be titled *Officer Wellness* and curriculum is currently being developed to add into academy training. The academy currently has wellness training incorporated into Academy-specific content, but it will be beneficial for there to be POST content on the topic.

POST moved to Comprehensive Tests a few years ago to replace individual LD tests. The Test Committee is currently assessing questions where the majority of recruits across the state fail to answer correctly (70% or more). The Committee is soliciting feedback from academies on the Learning Objectives being tested and have shared information of commonly failed objectives seen in statewide test results.

Coordinator Barnes is on the POST Scenario Committee and advised all scenario test scripts are being reviewed and revised, and new scripts are being written. There will be changes to the Use of Force tests that will eliminate one of the scenario tests completed, so there will be 13 total tests. Some point values on competencies tests will also be adjusted. Most changes are expected to take effect in October but script revisions are ongoing.

The Basic Course Waiver process has changed and the 136-hour requalification course is now required as a part of the waiver process. Lastly, POST updated regulations to define required qualifications for Academy personnel/staff.

### **III. Program Development:**

The San Diego County Sheriff's Department is contracting with Palomar College to present a Sponsored Module III Reserve Academy. The Sponsored Reserve Academy is set to begin on March 31, 2020, and will be for a total of 13 weeks on a slightly different schedule from the regular program. Training will be on Tuesdays and Thursdays for 4 hours and Saturdays for 8 hours. The academy will be less physically intensive and not as demanding as the traditional academy program. Differences in the program will include agency-specific training during the "Admin Time" portion of the academy hours, to include 800 MHz radio training, prisoner transport training, and Body Worn Camera training. The police academy hopes that other agencies may have interest in sending Level III Reserve candidates to the Sponsored Reserve Academy in the future. It is difficult to find people who will pay the cost to attend the academy to work for free at an agency. The cost of the program to the agency is a fraction of what it costs an individual to attend since the agency will provide the uniforms, equipment and other required materials.

Coordinator Barnes shared information provided by the POST Consultant who manages the Field Training Program. The top three problems currently seen in field training across the state are Report Writing, Multitasking (scenarios), and a Generational Lack of Social Development. The academy is trying to address these common issues during academy training and welcomes feedback from agencies. The Academy will be introducing a Pre-Academy for next year's academy class that will address some of these deficiencies, to include communication/engagement, leadership, report writing, and physical fitness.

Barnes then discussed new course development. The academy hopes to offer Advanced Officer Training (AOT) courses, however enrollment in the past has not been high enough to hold the classes. The academy can currently offer Report Writing on three levels: Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced. The Basic course would work well for personnel that may have never attended an academy but write reports. The Intermediate level is best as a refresher course for those who struggle with report writing or have worked in a custody setting since the academy and are moving to patrol. The Advanced level is intended for personnel moving into investigative duties. Barnes stressed the need for enrollment numbers in order to run any AOT course.

The academy is striving to increase enrollment in the program through marketing and networking with agencies. The academy is working with the Camp Pendleton Education Center for increased marketing towards transitioning military personnel and veterans. Palomar College offers military personnel the Wells Fargo First Responders Grant of \$2555 that can reimburse recruits for ancillary academy costs, such as uniforms and equipment. Palomar College Police Academy also offers 43.5 units towards an Associate's Degree upon completion of the program (Modules III, II and I), which assists recruits will achieving academic goals as well.

Barnes encouraged agencies to refer their "non-select" applicants to the police academy program. These include applicants that are not selected for entry level positions due to lack of life experience or some other factor that would not bar employment in the future. Many "non-selects" are encouraged to reapply in the future, but by encouraging applicants to self-sponsor through the academy, the agency can further evaluate the candidate through their performance in law enforcement training and hire them as an academy graduate, which is a cost savings for the department. The police academy would also like permission to attend an agency's entry level testing to briefly share information with applicants about the academy in case the entry level hiring does not result in employment.

Coordinator Barnes asked agencies what courses are needed in the region and noted that they could be held at Palomar. Sergeant John Russo of the Escondido Police Department asked about driving simulator options. Director Andrews shared with the group that the academy procured a MILO Range Pro Force Option Simulator last year through Perkins Grant funding. It is being utilized in academy training and intended for use for AOT courses also. He is in the process of trying to obtain a driving simulator. Andrews shared his background as a Commander for the Riverside County Sheriff's Department and his role in developing the Ben Clark Training Center. He shared that the academy wants to offer what agencies are looking for and their feedback is vital to developing relevant courses. Andrews and Barnes discussed how they are looking for feedback and communication to best serve the needs of the region.

Chief Chris Moore of the Palomar College Police Department shared that he is an academy instructor and praised the recruits' dedication and investment to their training. He mentioned that the recruits balance many things while attending the academy, such as work, family, and academics. He encouraged local agencies to being open to hiring academy graduates.

There was a comment made by a San Diego Police Department representative about academy graduates from another program being hired and then failing their firearms qualification because it had been many months since they had completed firearms training. Barnes explained that the final firearms training is in the first half of Module I (Module I is between late June and December) and is usually completed in September, but that training can be restructured so that firearms happens later in the year or a refresher

could be added close to the end of the academy to assist with proficiency. Recruits are always encouraged to practice on their own as well, which is necessary for any perishable skill.

A question was asked about academy graduate applicants having backgrounds issues and if that was related to a need for enrollment numbers at the college. Coordinator Barnes briefly went over the application process for the police academy, which includes a Pre-Investigative Questionnaire (PIQ) that is reviewed with the applicant during the interview. Applicants are advised of hirability issues based off the information they provide. Barnes shared that strong enrollment numbers is always a concern for any college-based program, however the admissions process to the academy is maintained solely by Academy personnel. The challenges the academy is seeing with applicant background issues is consistent with what agencies are seeing as well. Director Andrews explained how college funding has changed recently and that revenue is now based on completion rates, not just enrollment numbers. He noted that the academy seeks to accept quality applicants and additional marketing and recruitment is expected to increase the applicant pool.

#### **VI. Future Advisory Board Meetings:**

The police academy plans to hold an Advisory Board Committee Meeting annually each Spring.

#### **VII. Open Forum/ Q&A:**

The meeting opened up to Q&A for all attendees.

Captain Jeff Maxin of the San Diego County Sheriff's Department talked about his agency's acquisition of a mobile range trailer, which can be moved to various sites for training. They are also underway with the development of their Emergency Vehicle Operations Center near the border.

Daniel Schmitt introduced himself as the POST Region 10 Training Consultant, covering Imperial, Orange and San Diego counties. Prior to working for POST, he worked at the San Diego Police Department and San Diego County District Attorney's Office. Schmitt offered to answer any questions anyone had regarding training or POST requirements.

Chief Moore asked Schmitt about POST's stance on marijuana use with backgrounds/ hirability. Schmitt stated that policies regarding marijuana use (and other drug use) were to be determined individually by agencies and departments. POST does not dictate time periods related to drug use or criminal activity in the background investigation process.

Various agency personnel asked questions regarding what the academy does for pre-employment training and brought up seeing writing issues in the field with new hires from any academy. Coordinator Barnes shared information about the Employment Preparation course in the academy. The academy aims to guide recruits to apply to agencies that match their backgrounds, providing a realistic assessment to recruits as to the challenges they may face in the hiring process. Barnes discussed the writing issues seen with many incoming recruits and that applicants are recommended to have a strong foundation in English and writing comprehension skills before entering the program. The college has many resources available for those who are struggling, but it is up to the student to utilize them.

The Sponsored Reserve Academy was briefly discussed and a few different agency personnel added that they have seen very positive changes in the academy in the last few years.

## **VIII. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 1139 hours by Director Andrews.

### **Attendees:**

Michael G. Andrews, Police Academy Director, Palomar College  
Juliette Barnes, Police Academy Coordinator, Palomar College  
Yolande Reilly, Academic Department Assistant – Public Safety Programs, Palomar College  
Ashley Sherrell, Career Technical Program Specialist, Palomar College – Police Academy  
Chris Moore, Chief, Palomar College Police Department  
Aaron Grant, RTO/ Instructor, Palomar College Police Academy  
Bob Sterling, RTO/ Instructor, Palomar College Police Academy  
Randy Soulard, Lieutenant, El Cajon Police Department - Training  
Joe Crawford, Sergeant, El Cajon Police Department – Training  
Ed Varso, Chief, Escondido Police Department  
Eric Skaja, Captain, Escondido Police Department – Services Bureau  
John Russo, Sergeant, Escondido Police Department – Training Division  
Christopher Sullivan, Lieutenant, National City Police Dept. – Internal Affairs/ Backgrounds & Recruiting  
Daniel Schmitt, Senior Consultant, Peace Officer Standards and Training  
John Morris, Captain, San Diego Police Department – Training Division  
Steve Waldheim, Lieutenant, San Diego Police Department – Personnel Division  
Kevin Wong, Lieutenant, San Diego Police Department – Regional Academy  
Jeff Maxin, Captain, San Diego County Sheriff's Department – Training Division  
Brian Nevins, Captain, San Diego County Sheriff's Department – Emergency Services Division  
Matthew Blumenthal, Lieutenant, San Diego County Sheriff's Dept. – Personnel Division  
David Landman, Officer, San Diego Unified School District Police Department – Safe Schools  
John Smart, Sergeant, University of California San Diego Police Department – Patrol Division