Palomar College Police Academy
Advisory Board Committee Meeting
August 10, 2021
Meeting Minutes

I. Introductions:

Police Academy Director Michael Andrews called the Advisory Board Committee Meeting to order at 1005 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 I, which began on July 1st and graduates on December 18th.

The academy is currently accepting applications for the 2022 Academy, which begins at the beginning of January 2022. The academy has been advertising on social media for the 2022 Academy in hopes of getting a larger pool of applicants. Advertising towards military applicants has been a focus in the recruitment process, and mentioning the financial help they are able to qualify for.

The amount of time spent on orientation prior to the academy has now expanded to 25 hours of preparation compared to only 8-10 hours. In this orientation program, recruits are being prepared for report writing, strategic communication skills, policies and procedures, cross cultural social engagement, and academy success skills. The Academy Class of 2021 was the first group of recruits to go through the new mandatory orientation program. Coordinator Barnes noted the improvement on having to spend less time on discipline, and more time on actual training. The goal is to make the orientation program into a 4 week course with units to better prepare incoming recruits.

Shortening the hours of the entire academy was discussed. Palomar College Police Academy wants to revise the program by lessening the units and hours. Some of the non-POST content may be turned into new fast track semester courses (4 or 8 weeks). The revisions include equivalency for academy units to satisfy all non-general ed AJ degree requirements. Revising the academy would cut down on the costs for recruits. These changes are expected to be seen in 2023.

Staffing opportunities were mentioned to the attendees. Due to Covid-19, the hiring process was delayed, but the academy will now be taking action on applications for Instructors and Recruit Training Officers (RTOs). More RTOs are needed, especially for Saturdays. Field Training Officers (FTOs) are preferred, but the position is also a great opportunity for officers hoping to attain an FTO position at their agency. Instructors are also needed, with most being hired into a pool so they are available if a vacancy arises. Individuals who are interested are encouraged to apply on the Palomar website for instructors or contact Coordinator Barnes for RTO positions.

Coordinator Barnes invited recruiters to come to the academy to share information about their openings and answer questions. Recruiters are scheduled at 1645 hours prior to the start of training on Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday. Information can also be sent out to recruits and graduates electronically if an agency is unable to send recruiters to the class.

The academy is always in need of expired/used ballistic vests of all sizes. The academy is also seeking procurement of an SUV patrol vehicle, such as a decommissioned unit that would otherwise go to auction. The goal is to train consistent with what is currently being used out in the field.

III. Program Development:

At the end of 2019, the San Diego County Sheriff's Department contracted with Palomar College to present a Sponsored Reserve Academy that had a slightly different format and schedule than the regular course. It was set to begin at the end of March 2020, but was canceled due to pandemic shutdowns. Some of those recruits opted to attend the current academy instead of waiting for when another Sponsored Reserve Academy could be planned. The four recruits who attended did very well and the Sheriff's Department paid their expenses. Agencies interested in finding out more about how this was done or who may be interested in a separate program are encouraged to contact Coordinator Barnes.

Coordinator Barnes shared the development in progress of a PC 832 Arrest course due to a regional need. This course would be held 2-3 times per year depending on the need, after first fulfilling the immediate need. Once the course has been certified, the announcement and dates will be shared with agencies.

Palomar College Police Academy has partnered to with San Diego PD to be a North County training site for entry level testing. Las Vegas Metro PD has also reached out to the academy to establish a testing site in the northern part of the county.

Feedback from agencies and FTOs are highly valued and needed in order to be able to address those issues within academy training. Coordinator Barnes emphasized the importance of feedback in order to develop appropriate training. Feedback from prior advisory board meetings led to development of social communication training within the academy's administrative time to help address some of the generational lack of social skills. The academy welcomes input from the area agencies and aims to assist in best preparing recruits for the field.

The academy encourages agencies to refer their "non-select" applicants to the police academy program as a means of becoming a more marketable candidate for hire, particularly those who either need more time or experience to better meet hiring standards. This includes applicants that are not selected for entry level positions due to background issues or for being unable to pass the written exam. The academy staff would also like to attend agency testing in the future to share information about the academy in case the applicants are not able to get hired through the entry level process.

VI. Future Advisory Board Meetings:

The police academy plans to hold its next annual Advisory Board Committee Meeting in July 2022.

VII. Open Forum/ Q&A:

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

Clarification about the POST Basic Course Waiver process was asked, and whether employees could obtain the waiver or if they also needed to attend a requalification course. Coordinator Barnes explained the BCW process and the requirement for the 144-hour requalification course for all BCW applicants after the evaluation of training hours. Palomar College Police Academy is currently not developing its own requalification course since it is being offered through Southwestern College.

Chief Chris Moore of the Palomar College Police Department praised the recruits' dedication and investment to their training. He encouraged agencies to recruit from the academy. He stated that he fully supports the police academy program, the staff, and the recruits.

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 1045 hours by Director Andrews.

Attendees:

Michael G. Andrews, Police Academy Director, Palomar College Police Academy
Juliette Barnes, Police Academy Coordinator, Palomar College Police Academy
Zofya Downey, Police Academy Assistant, Palomar College Police Academy
Chris Moore, Chief, Palomar College Police Department
Andrew Ahlberg, California State Parks
Matt Smith, Lieutenant, Chula Vista Police Department – Training
Chuck Kaye, Chief, Coronado Police Department
Joe Crawford, Sergeant, El Cajon Police Department – Training
Eric Skaja, Captain, Escondido Police Department – Services Bureau
Mario Sainz, Sergeant, Escondido Police Department – Training Division
Matt Gay, Sergeant, La Mesa Police Department – Training Division
Benny Perez, Sergeant, Mira Costa Police Department
Anthony Abutin, Sergeant, San Diego Sheriff's Department - Reserve Coordinator
Elissa Dorame, Staff Development Coordinator, San Diego Sheriff's Department – Wireless Services Division