Austin Police Department
Headquarters Bureau/Training Division

To: **Chief Brian Manley**
From: **Dr. Sara Villanueva**
Date: **May 22, 2020**
Subject: **APD Training Academy Review and Strategic Plan**

This memo provides the background and context necessary for a full understanding of the review analysis and strategic plan that follow. In September 2019, I began my second career as the inaugural Organizational Development and Training Manager at the Austin Police Department, specifically focusing on the Training Academy. With over fifteen years of leadership experience in academia, I came to APD with significant proficiency in curriculum development, teaching and learning methods, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion work.

While getting acclimated in the first months, my initial priority at the Training Academy was to conduct a needs assessment. Soon thereafter, I decided instead to conduct a more comprehensive SWOT analysis to create a developmental pathway to organizational and academic success for academy instructors, cadets, and leadership. After the initial report was drafted, I was informed by APD leadership that the full and final report would be included in APD's official response to Resolution No. 20191205-066. To that end, what follows is the final report which includes the SWOT analysis, followed by a strategic training plan draft that will require review and approval from the Chief of Police and the APD Executive Team.

The creation of this document has been an iterative process. The initial draft was based on observations made early on in my tenure at APD. The final report incorporates those early observations as well as recent, more comprehensive professional experiences. It is important to note that although I am employed by APD, and although I did, on occasion, seek out consultation from colleagues in academia with expertise in specific fields, the work outlined in this report is independent, objective, and supported by research wherever possible. As such, a reference page is included as an addendum for further review.

Respectfully,

Sara Villanueva, Ph.D.

2020

Review Analysis and Strategic Plan

AUSTIN POLICE DEPARTMENT TRAINING ACADEMY

SARA VILLANUEVA, PH.D.

REVIEW ANALYSIS

This analysis was completed with the understanding that the reviewer's perspective can and will change with more time, experience, and insight at the Austin Police Department Training Academy. It should be noted that despite some overlaps in instruction, the following assessment primarily focuses on the academic programming, also known as the cadet side of the training academy, and not necessarily on the Learning Skills or Continuing Education areas.

The method of review is based on conducting a SWOT analysis, which is an organizational/planning tool used to understand the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats involved in running an organization. SWOT analysis aims to identify key internal and external factors seen as important to achieving an objective. SWOT analysis groups key pieces of information into two main categories:

Internal factors —   the strengths and weaknesses internal to the organization

- What do you do well?
- What unique resources can you draw on?
- What could be improved?
- Where do you have fewer resources?

External factors —   the opportunities and threats presented by the environment external to the organization

- What opportunities are open to you?
- What trends could you take advantage of?
- How can strengths be turned into opportunities?
- What threats do your weaknesses expose you to?

SWOT analysis is typically used as part of a strategic planning process, and in this case is being utilized to understand what works, what doesn't, and guide the organization in creating a strategic plan for the Austin Police Department Training Academy.

Strengths	must be maintained, built upon or leveraged.
Weaknesses	must be remedied, changed or stopped.
Opportunities	must be prioritized, captured, built on and optimized.
Threats	must be countered or minimized and managed.

Strengths

Information gathering stage of analysis. Reviewer has had numerous formal and informal meetings and discussions with the training commander, training leadership, staff, several instructors, and a few patrol officers. Further, reviewer has conducted class observations and participated in numerous departmental and academy leadership meetings. This collection of qualitative data yielded the following observed strengths that have been organized into potential areas of strategic focus. Note that this is an assessment as of the present time (i.e., snapshot), and does not reflect any historical context or institutional memory on the part of the reviewer.

Organizational Structure

- Excellent leadership. The training academy Commander is very organized, responsive, and consistently communicates very well with leadership at the training academy. Commander holds weekly briefing meetings with leadership, systematically reviewing progress of cadets in academics, learned skills, personal issues, etc. Very thorough, very informative. Through the chain of command, academy leadership and instructors all work collaboratively to keep one another informed of any changes in status for each and every cadet.
- Hierarchical structure in place lends stability and consistency in the ability to effectively communicate and direct information up and down the chain of command.
- All members of academy leadership are well informed and keenly aware of TCOLE and BPOC standards and remain vigilant about compliance. After numerous meetings with leadership who directly oversee academy courses and instructors (Sergeant and Corporal over cadet training), it is clear that training academy curriculum carefully adheres to three regulatory areas: TCOLE, BPOC, and Austin Police Department, and has, over time, incorporated/added courses in response to legislative mandates.
- Structure of Instructor Departments, POCs of those departments, and which classes are taught by which department/instructor is documented and stored on network drives.

Culture

- While still supporting the paramilitary structure, academy staff all contribute to a relaxed and family-like atmosphere. The work environment is such that people are respectful, encouraging, and supportive of one another. These daily behaviors create a cultural milieu that is extremely important because it appears to lead to mutual trust, collective efficacy, and confidence in the academy.
- Instructors informally gather during lunch to communicate any relevant information regarding cadets or classes, but more importantly, to check in with one another, decompress, and build a shared community. This comradery is vital to morale, job satisfaction, and productivity.
- Ethnic and racial diversity in academy leadership is excellent. Despite being securely set in a chain of command, diversity of thought, perspective, gender, etc. is actively sought out and thoughtfully considered when making decisions at the weekly academy leadership team meeting. If the objective is to have a police force that reflects the community they protect, APD Recruiting has made great strides in efforts to increase the number of female recruits. It is similarly important to be inclusive of *all* diverse groups and perspectives: transgender and non-binary, diverse religious beliefs, etc. An excellent example of APD Training inclusion, which also incorporates community input, is a series of Informa training modules on Transgender issues and the use of a gender-neutral affidavit. Sgt.

Michael Crumrine and training academy instructor Ofc. Greg Abbink have included subject matter experts in the community as part of this important project. Clearly, being deliberate in the awareness of individuals' experiences is an ongoing goal for everyone. That said, increased diversity in the faculty would be beneficial, as they are the ones with whom cadets interact and are influenced by most. More on this later in the Weaknesses section under Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

Curriculum

Note that a complete and comprehensive review of the entire curriculum will take significant time, and in my opinion, should be an ongoing, iterative process. This said, the curriculum review process is currently underway. The following observations are based on the initial review:

- When considering the length of the curriculum (8-month academy), it is understood that the most recent revision of the BPOC resulted in many (8) of the classes currently taught at the Academy as Intermediate level now be considered part of the BPOC. Continuing work in this review will examine potential opportunities for efficiencies and possible consolidations.
- Training leadership, specifically the Sergeant and Corporal over cadet training work diligently, and go to almost extreme lengths to ensure complicated and ongoing schedule of courses for academies (regular and modified) meet expected regulatory standards. They also go to great lengths to manually overlap concurrent class schedule to ensure that all required courses are included and look for potential conflicts in schedules. This too is an iterative and tedious effort. This point will be further discussed in Weaknesses section.
- Sequencing of courses in academy curriculum is normally considered when new cadet classes are scheduled, particularly when classes begin to overlap. While preparing this document, effects of the national pandemic COVID-19 took hold and required training to be moved online. In doing so, the priority with respect to sequencing was to move all 'cognitive' courses online, while pushing all experiential/hands-on courses (i.e., firearms, defensive tactics) toward the end of the schedule, when cadets are expected to return to campus.
- In preparation for Cadet Class #143, instructors were tasked with conducting a new review of individual lesson plans for their respective courses to ensure compliance with new BPOC standards; and further, to assess time required to teach each course to meet each BPOC module time requirement. In addition to this general time assessment, particular attention was paid to those subjects/courses in which APD actual hours taught far exceed the minimum hours required by BPOC again to look for possible efficiencies.
- Overall curriculum is in compliance of TCOLE standards, and is continually monitored for compliance when updates are made to any regulations. Further, leadership work with instructors to review curricula to ensure TCOLE/BPOC requirements are met.

Teaching Effectiveness

- With few exceptions, the majority of instructors that I have observed are well prepared in the course content outlined using TCOLE lesson plans. It is clear that most faculty have excellent command of experiential knowledge as it relates to the topic they teach.
- In general, instructors are well-organized, run classes efficiently, and begin and end on schedule.
- Of the instructors observed, teaching methods and styles vary significantly. Some due to personality, some to teaching experience, and some due to the teaching methods to which they are accustomed or trained. It is clear that some instructors are more comfortable and at ease in the classroom than others. *The possible influence of a class observer on teaching should be considered.*

The vast majority of academic classes observed thus far present content material on Power Point slide presentation format, but have varying degrees of interactive learning.

- Overall, instructors do a fine job of checking for understanding, and generally being open to questions after each section/class.
- All instructors who have been observed have expressed being open to feedback and suggestions to improve teaching.
- Most recently, the abrupt necessity to move courses online due to COVID-19 has challenged instructors to transition to online teaching, which is no easy task. Based on my observations of the online courses thus far, I have been impressed by the work that has been done by instructors to make this unexpected transition. Again, I have witnessed significant variability in the ease in which the transition has been made as well as with the teaching methods and learning strategies employed by instructors; but overall, instructors have risen to the challenge done an outstanding job during these unprecedented and difficult times.

Weaknesses

Based on initial observations, individual interviews/meetings, baseline information-gathering for context purposes (reading TCOLE, BPOC, President's Report, Community Policing, ICAT, and Matrix), and more recently attendance at the inaugural National Symposium on Police Academies and Training and the 2019 TCOLE Conference, items below are identified not simply as *weaknesses* in the Academy, but as *challenges* for potential future strengths in the overall objective to maximize organizational development and teaching effectiveness.

Organizational Structure: Process Improvement

One of the most pressing challenges pertains to systematic and reliable processes that must be put into place in order to ensure consistency, reliability, and efficiency. Although significant daily efforts are made by staff to keep the training academy running effectively, having consistent and reliable processes in place would contribute to running it effectively *and* efficiently. It would also lead to programmatic sustainability and security, given staff changes across time. Current challenges identified thus far in this category include:

- Process around communication and relevant/important dates and notices within the Academy involving leadership/ instructor/cadets. Presenting relying primarily on email and verbal messaging.
- Processes around and organization of course material for instructors - in addition to the ability to post announcements or communicate with entire class or individual student cadets (versus email). Presently all material saved to the network. Organization of the network folders is unclear, with several files being outdated or empty, and little consistency in classification or naming structure.
- Process of scheduling academy classes (overall – excel sheet with dates of academy cadet classes across years), and specific course schedules for each cadet class (i.e., #141, 142m, 143). At present, there is a clear overreliance on Excel to create academy schedules – primarily because it is the only tool available; secondarily because it is the way it has always been done, thus default.
- Consistent and ongoing/sustainable process of tracking BPOC/Academy course alignment and hours. Currently, all scheduling is done manually using Excel spreadsheets to create weeks 1- 32 populated by module/topic, printing out, manually manipulating the printed weeks on a table, then

going back to Excel to make modifications. The current system of scheduling, course alignment, and tracking is inefficient, time consuming and leaves significant room for human error. Because it is all done without the use of any scheduling software, the chances for error are high, thus creating the need for a reliable process. Because it is well understood that staff turnover is a reality, a clear process must be put in place to ensure consistency, reliability, and sustainability regardless of staff turnover.

- Process of systematic and consistent organization of all training academy related documents, including but not limited to documentation required and tracked by TCOLE: currently all held on the network Drive. Note that documents referred to in this section are separate from instructor teaching material. A process that involves a clear and systematic file naming structure, classification, or taxonomy is needed.

Culture

- Paramilitary culture
  - APD Training Academy operates under a paramilitary training format with strict adherence to chain of command and employs 'behaviorist instructional methodologies' which rely on the assumption that learning occurs primarily through the use of reinforcement schedules, behavior modifications, and other behavioral approaches (Birzer, 2003; Birzer and Tanneill, 2001, 2004).
  - Although the paramilitary-based training format may build camaraderie, research has shown that it tends to be associated with high dropout rates (Blumberg, Schlosser, Papazoglou, Creighton, & Kay, 2019), as it fails to acknowledge individual differences in learning styles, personalities, and interpersonal skills in cadets as well as instructors.
  - There is an apparent mismatch between a typical paramilitary format and effectively preparing cadets to work in a manner consistent with the community-oriented police services model. A growing body of research has shown that paramilitary-structured academies do not align well with the principles of community policing and problem solving which are based on collaborations and partnerships (Chan, Devery, & Doran, 2003; Chappell & Lanza-Kaduce, 2010; Conti, 2011).
  - This model also overrides and perhaps even neglects basic principles of adult-learning theory (andragogy).
- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion
  - Diversity amongst the faculty is paramount for any learning institution. For decades, researchers, social scientists, and teaching & learning scholars have argued the various merits of not only having a diversified student body, but just as importantly, a diverse faculty. With respect to teaching, mentoring, and training, there is also significant evidence showing links between institutions having diversity in the faculty and various indicators of achievement in students from diverse backgrounds.
  - The good news is that there has been an increase in diversity (gender and ethnicity) when it comes to cadets recruited and accepted into the APD Training Academy. And despite recent increases in diversity amongst leadership at the training academy, the not-so-good news is that the faculty teaching those cadets are still primarily White males. Moreover, the cultural ethos at the academy is still securely grounded in patriarchal belief systems and practices, with some concerning indicators being subtle or subliminal and others more obvious.
- Wellness

- o Instructors' physical wellness is attended to and evidenced by routine individual and group workouts. However, mental and psychological wellness should be similarly encouraged and supported, particularly as it relates to the stressors associated with back to back teaching.
- o Building psychological and emotional wellness in cadets should also be a priority that is embedded into the curriculum. The current curriculum includes some coverage of stress management and mindfulness at the beginning of the academy, but this is an issue that should be reinforced throughout the entire 32-week academy.

Curriculum

- o As part of the internal audit mandated by Resolution 66, specific courses in the existing curriculum are currently being reviewed. Recommendations regarding assessment of those courses as well as evidence-based recommendations will be included in a review summary report.
- o The 32-week academy contains courses that include the Basic Police Officer Courses, and in addition, intermediate certification courses as well as APD specific courses. In accordance with the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement regulations, BPOC courses cannot be eliminated or modified; however, the value add of other courses should be assessed to eliminate any courses that are not as relevant or impactful as in the past, and perhaps include new courses that fall in line with updated, innovative curriculums being used in other training academies across the country.

Teaching Effectiveness

Current challenges include:

- o A major area with opportunities for development relates to Instructor Preparedness, Training, and Evaluation. The following observations and subsequent suggestions are based on the fact that effective instruction is at the core of what we do at the APD Training Academy.
  - Instructor Job Description, Expectations, and Evaluation: Under *Duties and Responsibilities*, the current job description for Cadet Training Instructor does not explicitly include any descriptions or expectations of teaching or pedagogical training if hired. The job description is essentially a lengthy list of items. The inclusion of listed items such as "Ability to write legibly and to read" communicates a very low academic standard, particularly given the position as an educator.
  - Regarding performance evaluations, the instructor evaluation form (SSPR) must also incorporate corresponding teaching/pedagogical expectations reflecting those detailed in Cadet Instructor job description. In sum, instructors must be appropriately trained and developed as professional educators, with subsequent evaluation of their teaching effectiveness.
  - Instructor Training: Cadet Training Instructors do not receive any formal preparation or training on how to teach effectively. The Basic Instructor Course (BIC) offers TCOLE mandated basic information regarding logistical issues around teaching, but does not go into more nuanced, yet highly impactful teaching strategies and considerations, particularly as they relate to adult learning theory. After the BIC, new instructors receive guidance on following the processes already in place, and are expected to shadow current instructors in preparing lesson plans and teaching. However, there is no formalized onboarding process in place to determine when they have sufficiently

        prepared to begin teaching independently, other than existing instructor discretion. A more formalized professional development plan should be created and utilized.

- Instructor Teaching Resources: Both incoming and existing instructors have very little resources regarding effective teaching methods that focus on adult learning theory or teaching in the context of continually changing cohorts.
- Instructor responsibilities on Course Content. In conducting numerous informal class observations, and in reviewing lesson plans and Power Point presentations, it is clear that there is considerable variability in quality and understanding of content material being presented. It is clear that TCOLE provides the essential material to be covered via pre-prepared lesson plans. That said, it is the responsibility of each instructor to learn the material, conduct further research for understanding and context, and obtain a firm understanding of the course material before teaching the class.

- Another area with opportunities for development relates to exams being created for and given to APD Cadets. Despite other areas of assessment required for successfully completion of the APD Training Academy (PT, Firearms, etc.), exam performance carries substantial weight in the success or failure of academy completion. Due to the policies around number of test failures, and the 80% passing standard, cadets are dismissed, at times, for academic reasons. Thus, a thorough review of testing policies and procedures is warranted, as well as investigations into more current testing platforms. At present, the process of creating exams is adequate, but not optimal, as it is tedious, over-reliant on multiple choice questions (not ideal), and perhaps a bit antiquated.

Opportunities

In the context of SWOT analysis, the section on Opportunities focuses on elements in the larger environment/community that could be used to an advantage for the Austin Police Department. Opportunities must be prioritized, captured, built upon and optimized. Below are considerations for this category.

Organizational Structure: Process Improvement

The vast majority of problematic issues in the previous section would be addressed by simply adopting a secure and reliable Learning Management System with the appropriate capabilities, and establishing a reliable process. After several months spent investigating various platforms that could align with the needs of the academy as well as meet necessary City of Austin security criteria, academy leadership is now considering the adoption of Informa LMS, Scheduler, and Evaluation/Testing bundle. This bundle of services will increase efficiency, organization, security, and in the long term, increase productivity.

A securely managed LMS could not only provide a platform for all Academy/Teaching-related material to be housed in an organized manner, but would also provide more efficiency to leadership in curriculum planning (including any updates or modifications) for current and subsequent cadet classes, save instructor time in course prep and planning, and in general make instructor's lives a bit easier by having a course set up and ready to go, even in the event that any given instructor were required to step in on short notice. Once a course is set up on the LMS, the contents: lesson plans, lecture slides, current/relevant video clips, assignment, class activities, online quizzes or exams, any collaborative work, and gradebooks are all securely housed and easily accessible to anyone with authorized secure

log-in credentials. Courses stored on the LMS would only require updates each term thereafter. Thus, an appropriate LMS can provide efficiency, ease, and save time in course preparation as well as a means by which secure communication, upcoming events, etc. can occur between all constituents at the training academy. Most importantly, it can provide security and ensure accurate BPOC and TCOLE tracking. Based on shared best practices between police training academies across the United States, the use of this type of technology has proven to be a prospective solution for the APD Training Academy.

Culture

Paramilitary culture

Despite many successes in the long-held paramilitary tradition, numerous scholars and community members alike have proposed a shift in the culture that currently exists in the majority of police training academies across the country. The existing culture promotes an adversarial approach to training, whereby police are prepared to be on the front lines fighting against crime. There is no doubt that this warrior mentality can be very useful in addressing certain acute situations, and of course, officer safety must continue to be a priority in training. However, most interactions with community are not acute. Instead, the focus of training should be on nurturing the relationship between police and the community they serve. The warrior mindset, and the fear that drives it, must change (Sanburn, 2016, Stoughton, 2015). It is time to reclaim the wisdom and power of servant leadership where officers are viewed as guardians that serve and protect their community.

Police departments across the nation are responding to this call to action by moving away from a paramilitary model that emphasizes fear-based learning and strict adherence to commands (i.e., the warrior model), toward an adult learning model that instead values high quality instruction and the development of critical thinking skills, effective communication, and better emotional intelligence in cadets' preparation to work collaboratively with the community they serve and protect (i.e., guardian model). Researchers stress the importance of adopting an adult learning model in training recruits to work within a community-oriented policing model (Schlosser, 2013). Using shared innovative practices from other police training academies, the Austin Police Department Training Academy should seriously consider this cultural/paradigm shift by moving beyond behavioral training techniques and integrating the following psychosocial skills into the curriculum to truly 'build and educate the best police officers in the nation':

- o Understanding basic human behaviors in the context of policing (basic Applied Psychology course)
- o Cognitive skill training (Decision-making/Judgment, Impulse control/Safety, Adaptability/Flexibility)
- o Emotional skills training (Emotion regulation/Stress tolerance, Emotional Intelligence)
- o Social skills training (Social competence, Teamwork/Collaboration, Assertiveness/Persuasiveness)
- o Moral skills training (update and expand current teachings on Integrity & Ethics)

Further, future officers in training should be given the opportunity, while still in the academy, to actively engage with and work in the community, alongside the people that they will serve. Whether this is in the form of ride outs, and/or better yet, participation in community sponsored and community-building events. This shift in emphasis would clearly signal that APD and the training

academy are committed to rebuilding a strong, positive relationship with the Austin community. In sum, modern policing faces increased complexity, which requires officers to respond to difficult and quickly changing challenges of a diverse society in more flexible ways (McGinley, Agnew-Pauley, Thompson, & Belur, 2019). Thus necessitating a greater emphasis on the afore mentioned skills.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion

The issue of race as it relates to policing is clearly an area of concern for many. Numerous efforts throughout the city and department are currently underway to address citizen concerns. At the training academy, several courses addressing multiple topics around race, culture, and community (i.e., Fair & Impartial Policing, Multiculturalism, Racial Profiling, History of Policing, and others) are currently taught in the existing curriculum. As part of the Resolution 66 internal audit, these courses are currently under substantial review and the subsequent report will offer more insight on making improvements to content and teaching effectiveness. When completed, course reviews, which are based on formative assessments, will result in several recommendations given to not only update the content of the materials to reflect current scholarly research on diversity, equity, and inclusion issues, but will also include pedagogical strategies to promote effective delivery of the material. Further, colleagues at The University of Texas School of Law, in collaboration with the Office of Police Oversight, have created a new course that gives insight into the History of Policing and Race in Austin. By including this course in the curriculum, the training academy ensures diverse perspectives are being presented when learning about police history in context.

To become more diverse and more inclusive, the training academy must examine their own organizational capacity to prepare all cadets for a world that is changing, complex, and already very diverse. APD cannot expect future officers to meet the intricate needs of our community if we cannot meet those needs within our own organization. Any disparities within the academy must be rectified by closely examining cadet recruiting policies and practices, interview and hiring board processes for cadets and instructors, yearly evaluation processes for instructors, and shifting the strategic goals of the organization toward a more inclusive excellence model. The inclusion of unconscious bias assessments into the cadet recruitment process, and cultural competency training for all academy instructors and staff would both be good examples of the training academy's commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Specifically, with respect to the fact that faculty of color and female faculty are underrepresented at the academy, it is worth recognizing that such underrepresentation is detrimental to the success of student cadets of color and female cadets.

As part of a culture shift whereby true inclusion of all diverse perspectives is embraced, another opportunity for APD is to include programming based on the work done by Dr. Glenn Singleton and his colleagues in *Beyond Diversity: Creating Courageous Conversations About Race*. At present, leadership at the APD Training Academy has attended the workshop. However, a formal proposal is being created to include a more comprehensive and sustainable program tailored for APD which includes Leadership Development as well as cadet and current officer education on cultural sensitivity and competencies.

Times have changed and the academy, as well as the department as a whole, must change with it. A genuine cultural shift could increase organizational agility, and would go a long way toward improving

police and community relations in Austin (Kringen, 2019; Kringen & Novich, 2017; Perez McCluskey & McCluskey, 2008; Schuck, 2016; Schuck, 2017; Silvestri, 2019; Todak, 2018).

Wellness

Instructors. To avoid instructor burnout that could lead to low morale, low effort, and low job performance, and to avoid higher turnover rates for instructors at the academy, APD leadership must be mindful of recovery time between cadet classes. At present, when accounting for both regular and modified cadet classes, instructors have very little, if any, time off from teaching between the end of one cadet class and the beginning of the next. Based on first-hand experience as well as a significant body of literature, this is a vital issue that directly impacts job performance and, in this case, teaching effectiveness.

Cadets. It would behoove both current and future officers for the academy to place more emphasis on preparing cadets to successfully cope with the emotional challenges of this profession. APD training has the opportunity to infuse into the existing curriculum comprehensive programming where mental health experts can address officers' emotional regulation and stress tolerance in an effort to build long-term skills that cadets can take into their future work- and life-experiences.

Curriculum

Based on supported arguments made in *New Directions in Police Academy Training* (Blumberg, Schlosser, Papazoglou, Creighton, & Kay, 2019), the curriculum should also include previously mentioned courses taught by content experts that focus on the following evidence-based topics: understanding basic human behaviors (i.e., a tailored applied psychology course), social skills (i.e., coping skills to help officers navigate difficult encounters when interacting with community members, as well as coping with the strain that police work places on them, their families, and friends), moral development, and effective communication strategies. These courses, along with those that focus specifically on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion issues should be solidly grounded in current, empirical research and taught by outside scholars who have expertise in the fields.

Further, because the 32-week academy is already longer than most police training curricula, and because adding more classes without judiciously reviewing the value-add of existing courses, the academy should reconsider including all intermediate level courses as part of the curriculum before graduating new officers. From the reviewer's perspective, it makes sense that only after having some time and experience in the role of police officer should she/he/they then be expected to begin to think about intermediate level courses. The experiences themselves would help new officers make sense of and provide context for the intermediate level courses, thereby leading to more meaningful learning and retention of information.

Teaching Excellence

Make no mistake. Police training academies are institutions of higher learning. There is a nuanced but important difference between training and teaching. Training denotes a hands-on, practical, step 1, step 2 method of conveying information. Teaching seeks to impart knowledge and provide opportunities for deep comprehension and long-term retention of knowledge by relying on learning theories and engaging students using various strategies and methods. In the context of police academies, both training and teaching can go hand in hand. But, when considering the importance of the material being taught by academy instructors in the classroom, the fact that they really are creating

future officers for our community, and the fact that we need new officers to remember what they learned when out on the street, the stakes are high and we should get serious about investing in our instructors.

The reviewer recognizes that the academy is not a college or university, but it is a place of learning nonetheless. And as such, making sure that academy instructors have the training, experience, and resources necessary to reach teaching excellence should be a top priority. Instructors, cadets, officers, and the community as a whole all deserve this.

Regarding comments made in the previous weaknesses section around Instructor preparedness and development, below are reviewer recommendations:

- o Revise Cadet Training Instructor job descriptions to include appropriate expectations, duties, and responsibilities around Teaching Effectiveness. Similarly, revisions to the Cadet Training Instructor evaluation (SSPR) are being suggested to ensure that the updated SSPR appropriately reflects the corresponding revisions to the job description.
- o Similarly make modifications to Cadet Selection Board materials to incorporate appropriate pedagogical language throughout document. I.e., include terms such as Teaching, Active/Adult Learning, etc., to signify that the position goes beyond the ability to complete a lesson plan template and create power point slides, rather based in serious pedagogical methodology. "Grading" of presentation should also include ratings on teaching methods.
- o Review our Basic Instructor Course offered at the training academy to make sure it includes information on
  - Cohort/Generational differences
  - Pedagogy/Teaching Adult Learners
  - Active and Interactive Learning in the Classroom
  - Effective Teaching Methods
- o Create a series of Train the Trainer (T3) teacher education online courses that new instructors would be required to take BEFORE teaching independently. Course topics could include the following (see bullets below), and would be offered online so that new (and existing) instructors can complete them while working around their schedules. Note: this could be accomplished via the now accessible LinkedIn Learning tool where specific learning pathways can be developed specifically for academy instructors.
  - Teaching adult learners
  - Innovative teaching techniques: focus on active, interactive, and inclusive models
  - Presentation 2.0: Moving beyond Power Point slides
  - Other topics at suggestion of instructors, training academy leadership, commander
- o Provide new instructors a mentor/coach (experienced instructor) for onboarding. Provide mentor instructor a checklist of items to cover with new instructor. After initial probationary period, and once new instructor is teaching independently, mentor should conduct course observations and periodically scan through instructor course material to ensure that that course content and corresponding exam content are regularly updated to reflect current/relevant course content information (including video clips, examples, activities, etc.)

Instructor resources and Professional development:

- o Transform the existing training academy website to include a page/tab for instructor access only, specifically dedicated to housing various instructor resources such as empirical articles on

teaching and learning, video clips, sample class activities, instructor cheat sheets on how to keep content updated, etc.

- o Create a peer-review program that would utilize class observations to provide individual instructors the opportunity to receive valuable feedback from a senior peer instructor on teaching effectiveness:
    - ▪ Class observation: Observer selects, or is assigned a course and instructor to observe.
    - ▪ Observer thoroughly reviews lesson plan and informs instructor of pending observation date.
    - ▪ Observer sits in on class, and completes a Class Observation rating/feedback form. Form would include sections such as presentation style, rapport and communication with students, content knowledge - and whether content and examples are current, etc.
    - ▪ Observer meets with instructor to give feedback on lesson plan and class.
    - ▪ Each instructor would have a minimum of one course observation per cadet class. This class observation form could/would be used by supervisor to inform the Instructor's evaluation (SSPR) ratings, as this is an indicator of Teaching Effectiveness.
- o As part of the Teaching Excellence program, create incentives for instructors whereby results of various assessments including class observations designate high performers to be publicly recognized. Examples: Instructor of the Year recognition, specific lapel pins for academy instructors, certificates of recognition signed by the Chief, recognition on website.
- o Develop yearly Continuing Education credit courses specifically for professional development in Teaching.
- o Partner with local colleges/university's Teaching Excellence programs to access Teaching resources, symposia, workshops, etc.

Instructor responsibilities on course content:

- o Before teaching any course, instructors should review the course material, investigate any possible updates to course content (including any new legislative changes and/or research findings), and have a firm understanding of content being covered. This is particularly important for any instructor teaching a new course and/or teaching new content. (It is presumed that all instructors will have taken the most current Basic Instructor course, as required by TCOLE).
- o After reviewing content, instructors should make any changes and updates necessary to material to be presented (minimum: lesson plans, slides, handouts) based on legislative or research updates. It becomes obvious when instructors use the same Power Point slides, same handouts, same exam questions that have been used and re-used for years. At minimum, even when no legislative or research updates are warranted, instructors should update handouts, slides, video clips to stay current and relevant.
- o All instructors should be informed that they will be observed by a peer, and should be shown the evaluation form to be aware of expectations in their teaching in their overall performance review.

Threats

Threats in the context of SWOT analysis refer to elements in the environment that could cause issues for the organization. The elements briefly described below can impede the APD Training Academy's strategic goals. These and others should be considered more thoroughly, but are briefly mentioned here.

- Sociopolitical climate/Political unrest
- Negative police-community relations
- Shortage of recruits
- Economic/Financial/Budgetary constraints
- Internal morale
- Internal discord
- Negative perceptions by public/media
- Lack of real or perceived support

Strategic Plan

Taking all information into consideration, while looking to the future to make the Austin Police Department Training Academy worthy of exemplary status, below is a proposed strategic plan outlined for consideration. Note that this is an initial draft of the plan that with assistance from APD leadership and approval from City Manager, would be fully developed to include a detailed timeline, short- and long-term goals, yearly objectives, action, and assessment plans.

2020 strategic plan

Austin Police Department Training Academy
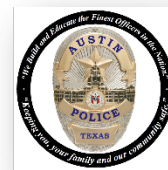
🎯 MISSION

The Austin Police Department Training Academy promotes effective, innovative, and inclusive instruction that advances sustained learning for current and future officers by utilizing the most current evidence-based strategies and incorporates diverse perspectives through community partnerships.

👁 VISION

To build and educate the finest police officers in the nation.

Purpose

Our purpose is to meet the needs of our community by providing the highest quality education to future officers. Contemporary policing requires contemporary training which incorporates Adult Learning (andragogy[1]) teaching principles while maintaining and reinforcing the community-oriented police services model.

[1] *the method and practice of teaching adult learners;*

Need #1: transformation of academy to move away from paramilitary training model to education model
Need #2: address community issues around Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) concerns in training
Need #3: ensure all resources are available for instructors to reach teaching excellence

A New Environment

Training academies across the country are facing challenges in adapting to changing sociocultural and educational environments. While APD continues to lead the way for other departments, the training academy must make the necessary cultural shifts towards an education model to reinforce solid learning theories, adapt innovative teaching and learning strategies, and meet the demands of the new generation of student cadet.

Goal #1: introduce a cultural/paradigm shift for academy moving forward to reflect new directions in police academy training
Goal #2: provide instructors with effective professional development opportunities, feedback, and accountability plan to reach teaching excellence and include outside academics/civilians as academy instructors for some courses
Goal #3: continually innovate and evaluate to ensure cadets receive best education possible, focusing on critical thinking and problem solving, and preparing them for the challenges of modern, community-based policing
Goal #4: using the community-policing model, prepare cadets to communicate effectively, collaborate with community members, and embrace diverse perspectives when serving the Austin community

Investing in Our Future

While APD is not exempt from negative economic trends in the environment, one thing is certain: the long-term return on investing in the education of our future police officers is huge. By providing the necessary resources, instructors receive top notch professional development, cadets receive the best education resulting in long-term retention of important information, and the community benefits as a result.

Goal #1: increase budget to include upgrades in technology and training
Goal #2: increase investment in professional development programming to include pedagogical[2]/teaching resources
Goal #3: invest in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion programming throughout curriculum

[2] *the method and practice of teaching, especially as an academic subject or theoretical*

Key Strategic Priorities

The four key themes identified in this Strategic Plan will guide our work for the next several years. These themes were generated inductively, based on operational observations, review of various bodies of literature, and the agility required by modern times to reach our objectives around educating the hearts and minds of future officers.

Cultural shift | Commitment to Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion | Academic Excellence | Resource Development

Strategic Initiatives

Drilling down, these initiatives will allow us to stay focused on the priorities that will guide our work.

° Transform para-military structure to Education/Adult Learning Model	° Cultural competence assessments & development	° Review and revise Instructor position description evaluation	° Higher pay for prior education and incentive pay for instructors
° Emphasize Servant leadership & Guardian Model	° Incorporate implicit bias evaluations into recruitment process	° Establish consistent onboarding process	° Establish instructor wellness program
° Clear & consistent communication/expectations	° Infuse DEI programming throughout academy to include training for leadership	° Regular class observations	° Prioritize tech upgrades to include LMS, Scheduling software, internal academy site
° Community-based curriculum	° Increase diversity in teaching faculty	° Set expectations and provide teaching resources, then hold accountable	° Manage teaching load and establish equitable process of work distribution
° Emphasize skills in Cognitive, Emotional, & Social areas	° Implement recommended changes in teaching methods	° Reward excellence: either monetary and/or awards and recognitions	° Select and train stellar Field Training Officers (FTO) to set good examples
° Prioritize wellness throughout the curriculum	° Implement recommended changes to course content	° Provide instructors time to develop courses	° Improve cohesiveness between academy and FTO to ensure consistency in training
° Modern-day Policing	° Include simulations and role plays that pertain to difficult cultural or racial situations	° Professional Development opportunities	° Establish a Community placement opportunity for cadets to begin building relationships with community
		° Partnership with local colleges/universities Teaching & Learning Excellence programs (attendance at yearly teaching symposium and access to resources)	
		° Civilianize some instructor positons for specific courses that require expertise in field	

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Austin Police Department
Headquarters Bureau/Training Division

To: **Chief Brian Manley**
From: **Dr. Sara Villanueva**
Date: **June 1, 2020**
Subject: **Community Engagement programming at APD Training Academy**

This memo serves as a report in response to Resolution No. 20191205-066 regarding a review of the Community Engagement programming at the Austin Police Department Training Academy. It is not intended to usurp or in any way contradict the report by the City Auditor's Office on APD's Community Policing Efforts. However, like the City Auditor's report which was a review conducted to make sure that APD was following the initial recommendations of the Matrix report, this summary also uses the Matrix report as a backdrop to understanding and assessing the Community Engagement programming at the training academy.

In an attempt to understand the evolution of Community Engagement (CE) and various iterations of CE programming at the academy over time, I gathered information from several reliable sources and relied on current and former instructors and leadership at the academy for their institutional memory. I further examined the dearth of information found on the network folders around CE program description, community organization group lists, CE assignments and rubrics. What I found was a set of documents using terms that did not match up with what was referenced in the Matrix report. This prompted me to do two things: first, to guide the Community and Culture instructors at the academy in transforming the current Community Engagement programming into a more comprehensive, organized, and formalized experiential learning assignment with the appropriate levels of structure and assessment. This, in my mind, was the immediate need, as the current cadet class was underway. Second, to dig a bit deeper into the history of Community Engagement at the APD Training Academy to understand what has been done before, why it changed, and what is the most effective CE programming moving forward given that we are at a critical historical moment that calls for police departments to look for ways to mend and nurture relationships with the communities they serve.

Regarding terminology and historical context, the City Auditor's report refers to the evaluation of "the Cadet Community Immersion Experience". I was uncertain if this was a different program than the one being included in the current academy curriculum, called Community Engagement Program. When I asked for clarification, I was informed that the two were one in the same. It seems that the title change is appropriately reflective of the evolutionary changes in programming offered to cadets. According to

my sources, over the years the academy has included three community immersion experiences for cadets (thus the name) that were intended to focus on two objectives: to give cadets a taste of what the job is like and begin to apply what they are learning in the classroom in real life (experiential learning), therefore giving them valuable experience prior to graduation; and to begin to become familiar and build relationships with the various neighborhoods and communities that make up Austin. The first community immersion experience consisted of two weeks of 'ride-outs' where cadets would go out on actual shifts (2 weeks) and work alongside a patrol officer. The second was a partnership with several community businesses and organizations whereby Capitol Metro would take cadets to various locations in Austin such as the George Washington Carver museum, the Mexican consulate, etc. to learn about what organizations in the Austin community do, and again to begin to build relationships. The third was a group assignment given to cadets where they were assigned a specific cultural group in Austin. For this assignment, cadets would go out into the community and interview persons that identify with their assigned group as well as community leaders within that group. Cadets would then give a group presentation near the end of the academy class explaining their experiences. This, too, promoted community immersion and relationship building. Although specific reasons for these programs no longer being included in the academy curriculum are not clear, some have alluded to issues involving possible legal liability and return on investment of time and resources.

The Community Engagement program being used currently consists of two exercises: One during the academy and one after graduation, during the Field Training Officer (FTO) period. As part of their academy training, cadets meet representatives from select community organizations who come in to present in a class that is relevant to the organizations goals. For example, a representative from the community group Texas Association for the Deaf presents in the Services for the Deaf and Hearing Impaired class, and author and transgender community advocate, Dr. Wayne Maines presents to the LGBTQ and Transgender classes. Recent revisions to the existing program have included having CE instructors at the academy collaborate with the APD Community Engagement Coordinator (Lt. Gizette Gaslin) to make the list of community organizations more diverse, comprehensive, and robust. Further, the overall CE program description and specific assignment description and rubric were modified to add more clarity and structure (see attached documents) thus ensuring a more meaningful learning experience for cadet students.

After graduation and as part of their Field Training, newly sworn officers are assigned a Field Training Officer. During this FTO period, new officers are given 12 months to complete a Neighborhood Portfolio Exercise (NPE). Trainees (new officers) spend a minimum of 12 weeks developing information about their assigned or chosen neighborhood prior to completing a report and giving a presentation. This includes but not limited to information on demographics, culture, crime trends, residents, businesses.

For this FTO project, trainees contact at least two residents, two business owners, and one community leader. They subsequently prepare a report that includes their "Research and Emotional Intelligence/Self-Awareness". The report is submitted electronically and includes the following:
- A description of the neighborhood, trainee's observations, and contacts
- Provide suggestions and recommendations for problem-solving relevant to the area that include a short and long term solution
- Include information the trainee learned about themselves (Emotional Intelligence/Self-Awareness)

During these extremely difficult times, efforts to move away from teaching cadets to be warriors ready for battle during their shift toward becoming guardians of the people they interact with daily is not only warranted, but badly needed. Community engagement/immersion programming allows for a multitude of opportunities to reinforce the notion that we are all part of one united community, and to let go of the unspoken *us versus them* narrative. Moving forward with current programming, it is essential that in the case of community organizations coming to speak to cadets, that they be organizations that are representative of diverse community groups in Austin; that they align with the information being covered in the class in which they are presenting; and that cadets have the opportunity to interact with the representatives to engage in a less formal discussion. In the case of the Neighborhood Portfolio Exercise, it is suggested that new officers move beyond report writing. More importantly, they should circle back to the community that they researched to inform community members of their results, and work with them on any resolution, implementation, or further discussions. This signals a true collaboration.

Furthermore, I would highly recommend revisiting and perhaps revising prior academy CE programs that provide increased opportunities for true community immersion that give cadets opportunities to actively engage with and in the communities they will serve. Moreover, fostering community partnerships with local colleges and universities, whose faculty also promote and encourage community engagement and experiential learning, would be of great benefit to the training academy curriculum. Finally, with all that has occurred in recent times around the issue of institutional racism and the strained relationship between police and the community they serve, it behooves both current and future officers to learn about the specific experiences of the African-American and Latinx communities in Austin. This should be made the cornerstone of the community immersion/engagement experience for cadets as they not only learn about laws and how best to enforce them while recognizing the impacts they may have, but also learn to truly understand, appreciate, and relate to the vibrant and diverse ethnic and cultural groups that make Austin the great city it is.

Although the current Community Engagement offerings at the academy are good, there is significant room for growth toward increasing Community Policing objectives (Rosenbaum, 1994) and cultivating police-community relations. In addition to the current programming, allowing cadets the chance to actively engage and interact with people in various areas of the Austin community not only capitalizes on the many benefits of experiential learning by applying what cadets have learned in the academy classrooms (Wurdinger & Allison, 2017), but even more importantly, sets the stage for finding common ground with community members, building public trust (Tyler, 2017), and ultimately begin the much needed work of mending and nurturing the relationship between police and the community they serve.

Respectfully,

Sara Villanueva, Ph.D.

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Austin Police Cadet Community Engagement Project

Project Purpose
The purpose of the Community Engagement Project is to give Austin Police cadets the opportunity to learn about and engage with different community organizations and advocates to further strengthen the relationship between the Austin Police department and the larger Austin community. Like the citizens of Austin, cadets come from different cultures, backgrounds, and regions, and may not have had previous exposure to other various cultures and communities that make Austin unique. Because they will be working in different parts of the city once commissioned, it is important for cadets to interact with individuals and organizations that work with and represent diverse cultural groups in Austin. The Community Engagement program also gives cadets the opportunity learn about community resources that they can use in their work as patrol officer or in their personal lives.

Presenter Purpose
It is important that Austin Police cadets learn not just from their instructors at the academy, but from members of the community whom they will serve. The presenter should be a member of a community organization, program, outreach effort or an advocate for underrepresented citizens within Austin's diverse community. The goal of each presenter should be to further educate cadets on what makes the citizens they represent unique and on the challenges they may encounter as a police officer in Austin. The presenter's objective should be to improve the relationship between the Austin Police Department and the community.

Presenter Responsibility
Each community organization selected is responsible for preparing a presentation to be given to the cadets. It will be up to the individual presenter how the information is conveyed i.e., lecture, PowerPoint presentation, group exercises, etc. The scope of the information covered should not be constrained to directly align with what the cadets are taught by their instructors; however, it should be related to the course in which they are presenting. Information conveyed should clearly enhance the understanding of the organization being represented and/or the sect of the community that is being advocated. The presentation should provide an opportunity for each cadet to think critically about their current perspectives and any implicit bias that they may carry. After the presentation is given, the cadet should have increased knowledge and broader perspectives.

Instructor Responsibility
Near the beginning of each cadet academy, cadets will be introduced to the project and given a brief summary of the project, its purpose and its importance (project purpose shown above). Before the beginning of a new academy, the current lead of the Community and Culture team will make an effort to ensure that community speakers are matched with relevant courses being taught in the training academy curriculum. The Community and Culture team lead will be responsible for ensuring proper scheduling of appropriate presenters. During each presentation, a member of the Community and Culture team shall be present introduce the community speaker, explain the significance of the presentations (as it relates to the course), and to observe the presentation. Presentation surveys will be completed by the cadets who were present during the presentation.

Cadet Responsibility
Cadets will be required to take notes and ask clarifying questions so that they may prepare an essay later in the academy. Cadets will complete anonymous surveys after each presentation to provide feedback to the presenter.

Cadet Essay/Paper Assignment

Once all presentations have been completed, cadets will be required to write an essay based on their observations. Specific content to be included in the paper is outlined in the rubric. The essay shall be worth one major exam score and will constitute their last major exam before the APD final. To ensure grading reliability the essays will be evaluated and graded by current members of the Community and Culture team using the grading rubric outlined below. Cadets will be given the opportunity to submit a rough draft to an instructor before submitting their final paper. The rough draft will be given a tentative score. The cadet can choose to accept that score as their final or make the corrections and resubmit for a higher score.

Villanueva

Austin Police Cadet Community Engagement
PAPER ASSIGNMENT

Once all Community Engagement presentations have been completed, you will be required to write a college-level paper based on your observations and notes. Specific content to be included in the paper is outlined in the rubric below. The paper shall be worth one major exam score and will constitute your last major exam before the APD final. To ensure grading reliability, papers will be evaluated and graded by instructors in the Community and Culture team using the grading rubric outlined below. All cadets will be given the opportunity to submit a rough draft to an instructor before submitting their final paper. The rough draft will be given a tentative score. Each cadet can choose to accept that score as their final or make the corrections and resubmit for a higher score. Specific due dates will be communicated to all cadets in the first weeks of the term. The paper grading rubric is shown below:

Overall	-Minimum of 3 pages, double spaced MLS format, 12 point font in Times New Roman, 1-inch margins.
	-Must include:
	   • An **introduction**
	   • A **body** which consists of bulleted items in Content section, covering each group or organization being observed
	   • A **conclusion** – focusing on lessons learned, and how gained information will be utilized or applied
	   • A **bibliography** if outside sources are cited (10 points will be deducted if this is required and absent)
	   • Minimum of 3-5 presentations covered (dependent on total number of presentations)
	
	Points_____/20

Content (to include but not be limited to)	-Overview <u>for each</u> of the community or cultural groups that the presenter represented (minimum 3) -What the presenter or the organization they represent is doing to improve the community -Ways they work with the Austin Police Department or law enforcement in general -What, in your opinion, can APD do to improve the relationship with this culture or community organization? -Thoughtful analysis to include something you learned or a way in which your perspective has changed -In the conclusion, discuss ways you will implement what you learned from this program as a whole in your professional or personal life **Points_____/50**
Spelling & Grammar	-Proper spelling, grammar, and punctuation were used. **Points:_____/30**
Total	**Points:_____/100**