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**Criminology & Criminal Justice Professional Development Program for
Undergraduates**

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Master of Science in Criminology & Criminal Justice

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Criminology & Criminal Justice Professional Development Program for Undergraduates

Law enforcement officers risk their lives everyday they head into work. Their job is unpredictable and challenging yet also rewarding. Police officers play a pivotal role in keeping communities everywhere safe. However, in recent years, police officers across the United States have come under a lot of scrutiny. There have been multiple cases of police brutality where officers abused their powers, specifically towards people of color, and were not held accountable for their actions. Police brutality is defined as a “civil rights violation that occurs when a police officer acts with excessive force by using an amount of force with regards to a civilian that is more than necessary” (U.S Legal, n.d). There have been countless cases of police brutality throughout history and continue even now in the 21 century. In 2020 alone, there were multiple cases that caught the attention of the entire nation with that of George Floyd being the most prolific. This egregious abuse of power resulted in widespread protests, riots, and the passages of sweeping police reform legislation.

Floyd, a forty six year old African American male that resided in Minneapolis, Minnesota was the ultimate victim of police brutality. He was six feet tall and weighed over two hundred pounds (Vera & Wolfe, 2021). On May 25, 2020, Minneapolis police officers were called when a store employee of a store named “Cups of Food” reported that George Flyod tried to use a fake twenty dollar bill in their store. George Floyd was in his car, when former police officers Derek Chauvin, J. Alexander Kueng, Thomas Lane and Tou Thao arrived on the scene (Vera & Wolfe, 2021). George Floyd was accused of resisting arrest when officers tried to handcuff him and get him into the police cruiser. While George Floyd was handcuffed, he expressed to the officers multiple times that he couldn't breathe, and he did not want to go into the police cruiser. While Floyd was lying face down on his stomach, former police officer Derek Chauvin put his knee on

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Floyd's neck. While Chauvin was on his neck, Floyd screamed and pleaded for the officer to get off of him. He continued to scream "I can't breathe," along with yelling that the officers were going to kill him. Former police officer Derek Chauvin and the other officers ignored George Floyd's request and Derek Chauvin continued to kneel on his neck for roughly nine minutes, even after Floyd was unresponsive (Vera & Wolfe, 2021).

Almost a year after the deadly killing of George Floyd, on April 20, 2021, former police officer Derek Chauvin was charged and found guilty of second degree unintentional murder, third degree murder, and second degree manslaughter (Campbell, Sidner, & Levenson, 2020). On June 25, 2021, Chauvin was sentenced to twenty two and a half years in prison (Lenthang, 2021), a much longer than mandated sentence because of the gravity of the incident. The three officers that were also on scene, Alexander Kueng, Thomas Lane, and Tou Thao were terminated and also charged with "aiding and abetting second degree murder and aiding and abetting second degree manslaughter" (Campbell et al., 2020). George Floyd was one of the alarming cases that sparked protests and riots here in Boston and across the country, due to excessive and unnecessary force by police officers toward African Americans.

A month prior to Floyd, a 26 year old African American woman, named Breonna Shaquille Taylor, was also a victim of police brutality (Carrega & Ghebremedhin, 2020). Ms. Taylor was a licensed emergency medical technician in Louisville, Kentucky. She attended the University of Kentucky and aspired to become a nurse one day. However, her dream was cut short when she was violently killed in her own home by the Louisville Metro Police officers who were conducting a "No Knock" search warrant after midnight on March 13, 2020 (Carrega & Ghebremedhin, 2020). Officers were there looking for Ms. Taylor's ex-boyfriend, Jamarcus

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Glover, who was using Ms. Taylor's address to mail drugs through the U.S postal system, despite not living with her.

Police officers at the Louisville Metro Police Department were able to obtain a warrant for Ms. Taylor's home without knowing for certain if Jamarcus Glover, Ms. Taylor's ex-boyfriend resided at that address that he was using to mail drugs (Carrega & Ghebremedhin, 2020). At the time of Ms. Taylor's death, there was a law in place in Louisville, Kentucky, where police officers were able to conduct "No Knock" search warrants when there is probable cause that there is a drug trafficking operation occurring in the home that could be potentially dangerous (Carrega & Ghebremedhin, 2020). Therefore, on March 13, 2020, Sergeant Jonathan Mattingly, Detective Myles Cosgrove, and Detective Brett Hankison forcibly entered Ms. Taylor's residence at Springfield Drive in Louisville, Kentucky without ever announcing themselves as law enforcement. The officers shot 25 rounds of bullets within the apartment that killed Breonna Taylor. Some of the bullets even reached as far as Taylor's neighbor's apartment (Carrega & Ghebremedhin, 2020). The officers found no drugs in the apartment. However, officers took Ms. Taylor's current boyfriend at the time, Kenneth Walker, into custody for allegedly discharging his firearm and wounding a police officer. Mr. Walker was licensed to own and carry a firearm and he had no past criminal record (Carrega & Ghebremedhin, 2020).

Ms. Taylor's boyfriend, Kenneth Walker, was initially charged with attempted murder of a law enforcement officer. However, through an intense investigation the charges against him were dismissed (Carrega & Ghebremedhin, 2020). All the officers involved in the "No Knock" search warrant and murder of Breonna Taylor were terminated from the Louisville Metro Police Department. However, former detective Brett Hankison was charged with "three counts of wanton endangerment in the first degree in connection with the shooting, for allegedly firing

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blindly through a door and window, with bullets entering an adjacent apartment where a pregnant woman, a man and a child were home” (Carrega & Ghebremedhin, 2020). Former detective Hankison pleaded not guilty to the charges and is currently awaiting trial (Moshtagian, 2021). Ms. Taylor's family members also filed and won a wrongful death lawsuit and received a twelve million dollar settlement.

The George Floyd and Breonna Taylor cases demonstrate injustice, racial profiling, abuse of power and many other violations by law enforcement personnel. Law enforcement are responsible for protecting and serving their community. However, it took the murders of these two African American victims to shed light on the fact that there needs to be major police reform in order to keep police officers across the country from abusing their powers and to hold them accountable. Despite the tragic murders of these two victims, some good has come out of them, in order to prevent cases as such from happening again. In the Breonna Taylor case, the governor of Louisville, Kentucky passed a bill, called the Breonna Law that bans officers from conducting “No Knock” search warrants, and if they do conduct a search warrant their body cameras must be turned on (Treisman, 2021).

Furthermore, after much debate the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act of 2021 was reintroduced on February 24, 2021 and passed by the House of Representative on March 3rd, 2021 (Bass, 2021). This police reform law has been very controversial and as a result it has not been passed by the Senate as of this writing. This law highlights many important issues that communities across the country have been facing with law enforcement. Issues surrounding police misconduct, excessive force, racial profiling, “No-Knock” warrants, etc. This law will transform and strengthen police practices in every single police department across the nation, while holding police officers accountable for their actions. This law will “increase accountability

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for law enforcement misconduct, restrict the use of certain policing practices, enhance transparency and data collection, and establish best practices and training requirements” (Bass, 2021). This law will enforce mandatory training across the nation for police departments. Some of these training include, the use of excessive force along with when another officer should get involved when they see another officer using excessive force, as demonstrated in the George Floyd case. The mandatory training will also include implicit bias and racial profiling training, in order to prevent racial injustice from occurring.

The George Floyd Justice in Policing Act of 2021 will also create a database system which will be referred to as “The National Police Misconduct Registry” and will contain information in regards to misconduct and complaints against police officers across the country (Bass, 2021). This system will be beneficial because it will detect officers who may need additional training and attention, to prevent another incident of police brutality from occurring. This law will also restrict police officers from using certain practices such as “no-knock warrant searches, chokeholds and carotid holds” (Bass, 2021). The goal of this law is to decrease police brutality and injustice from occurring, especially within the African American community. This law will improve community and police relations by increasing transparency, accountability, and reliability.

In Massachusetts, Governor Charlie Baker signed “An Act relative to Justice, Equity and Accountability in Law Enforcement in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts” into law on December 31, 2020 (Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 2020). This law calls for systematic changes, not only in policing, but in the criminal justice system overall. This law made changes to police practices by “establishing certification of law enforcement officers, and providing for continuing assessment of the role of race in our state institutions” (Commonwealth of

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Massachusetts, 2020). This law also included a civilian commission board, The Massachusetts Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission (Massachusetts, 2020). There are nine members on this commission board who are appointed by the Governor and Attorney General of Massachusetts - police standard. Their main duties will be to “certify officers and develop standards and processes for decertification, suspension, or reprimand when an officer is known to have committed wrongdoing. It will also investigate cases of alleged misconduct” (Gavin, 2020). Cases of police misconduct will now be available and be public record. This law enhances many different areas, surrounding the issues of use of force, qualified immunity, state police reform, civil service system, and usage of facial recognition. As a result, this law is to investigate and hopefully dismantle structural racism within the criminal justice system in the Commonwealth, and will also create three commission boards to investigate and study institutional racism within correctional facilities, the parole process, and probation services. They will investigate and identify if any disparities exist, especially towards people of color, and make recommendations to better enhance the criminal justice system. These are only some of the many steps that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has taken to improve community police relations, while also preventing any cases of police brutality, and misconduct from occurring.

Recent cases of police brutality have forced legislators to push for police reform and bring about the changes that society has been longing for. However, despite police reform legislations being put into place, there continues to be a growing mistrust between community members and police officers, especially within communities of color. As a result, police departments across the United States are having a hard time filling positions. Many people, especially persons from underrepresented groups, do not want to become police officers (Associated Press, 2021). It is imperative that the relationship between police officers and

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community members be mended and strengthened. To do so, we must encourage people who live in these communities, especially those of color, to join their respective departments so they can help strengthen and bridge the gap between community-police relations.

In this paper, I will be focusing on the process of obtaining a career as a police officer, along with developing a Criminology and Criminal Justice Professional Development Certification & Training Program for all undergraduate students at Merrimack College. This program will allow students to acquire the skills, certifications, and knowledge necessary for navigating through a career in law enforcement in the 21st century.

A Career in Law Enforcement in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

A career in law enforcement is challenging but yet a rewarding field to work in. There are several levels within law enforcement, such as municipal/local, county, state, and federal. However, for the purpose of this paper, I will be focusing on careers within municipal police departments in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Police officers take an oath to serve and protect their community and they risk their lives everyday they put on their uniform and head into work. Their job is unpredictable making it dangerous and stressful (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021). Some of their daily duties include patrolling their community and responding to emergency and non-emergency situations. They also conduct traffic stops where they may issue citations for those who violate any of the rules of the road in order to keep the community safe from dangerous drivers (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021). They obtain and serve warrants, where they conduct searches and arrest those who have committed a crime. Police officers also write detailed reports of incidents and they are incidents where they may have to testify in court. These are only some of the major duties that police officers are responsible for (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021).

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A majority of the police departments in Massachusetts require individuals to take and pass the civil service examination which is offered every two years in order to obtain a career in law enforcement. However, there is a growing number of police departments in Massachusetts that do not require the civil service examination including, “Acton, Adams, Burlington, Easthampton, Framingham, Franklin, Grafton, Hudson, Lee, Lexington, Manchester-by-the-Sea, Marlborough, Maynard, Milford, Millis, North Adams, North Attleboro, North Reading, Norwood, Orange, Plainville, Provincetown, Reading, Rockport, Sharon, Sudbury, Uxbridge, Walpole, Wayland, Webster, Wellesley, Westwood, and Williamstown” (Civil Service, 2021). In order to take the civil service exam, a candidate must be nineteen years old. However, you have to be twenty one years old to be sworn in as a police officer in any municipality in Massachusetts and you must also have to have a high school diploma or a GED. There are some police departments in Massachusetts that have an age limit of 32 years old, while others do not have an age limit. However, in the city of Boston, once an individual turns 40 years old, the department will not accept them (Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 2021).

There are three parts to the civil service exam. There is an ability test, work styles questionnaire, and a life experience survey (Commonwealth of Massachusetts, n.d). The ability tests your “comprehension, problem sensitivity, and reasoning” (Commonwealth of Massachusetts, n.d). The work styles questionnaire tests “motivational, value-related and attitudinal characteristics that are of potential relevance to successful performance of entry-level law enforcement officers” (Commonwealth of Massachusetts, n.d). The last portion of the test is the life experience survey and this “consists of a series of multiple-choice questions related to candidates' past history and experience of potential relevance to successful performance of entry-

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level law enforcement officers” (Commonwealth of Massachusetts, n.d). After a candidate takes the exam, they will receive their results and their name will be placed on the eligible list.

Police departments across Massachusetts that are covered by the civil service exam use a system known as the “eligible list” to determine who to appoint as a police officer. Under Massachusetts General Law, chapter 534 of the act of 1976, the civil service commission board oversees the ranking system of the list. However, there are certain preferences given to specific individuals that allow them to be placed at a higher ranking compared to other candidates (Commonwealth of Massachusetts, n.d). It's important to note that each city and town covered by the civil service has its own eligible list. A candidate that took and passed the civil service exam can choose up to three cities to work in (Miranda, 2021). However, preference will be given to those candidates that reside in that specific city. In order to establish residency in a specific city a candidate must, “have resided in the municipality for the entire twelve-month period immediately preceding the date of the examination” (Commonwealth of Massachusetts, n.d).

The civil service commission board is able to place a candidate at the top of the eligibility list under very specific circumstances. The commission board, “generally allows an applicant to be placed at the top of a community’s or a specific department's eligible list for consideration to the next vacancy” (Commonwealth of Massachusetts, n.d). One of the many ways a candidate is granted preference is if they are a child of a police officer or firefighter that was killed while working, and they are residents of that specific town they are seeking employment. In chapter 402A, under Massachusetts General Law (MGL), the next preference is given to those who are the child of a police officer or firefighter that was killed while working, but they do not have residency in that specific city (Commonwealth of Massachusetts, n.d). The candidates that are disabled military veterans and have residency in that specific city are then given preference. The

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next preference is given to the child of a police officer or fighter who was severely injured while working that caused them to be permanently disabled for the rest of their life, and also have residency in the specific city along with those who do not have residency, “nonresident.” This can be found under MGL chapter 402B. Following chapter 402B of MGL, resident veteran candidates, and resident civilian candidates are then placed on the eligible list. The last four groups of candidates placed on the eligible list are those who are nonresident, disabled veterans, nonresident veterans, and then nonresident civilians (Commonwealth of Massachusetts, n.d). As previously mentioned, candidates that pass the civil service exam are able to be placed at a higher ranking if they fit any of the preference criteria listed above.

When a police department decides they want to hire a candidate, they are asked to fill out and complete a large, detailed employment packet. The candidate will also have to conduct an extensive background check, then go through an interview (Commonwealth of Massachusetts, n.d). After successful completion of the initial process, the candidate will then move on to a secondary process if the department decides to hire them. This secondary process will require the candidate to “take and pass a medical exam along with taking and passing the initial Physical Ability Test (PAT)” (Commonwealth of Massachusetts, n.d). The police officer physical ability test includes a physical test, where candidates will have to complete an obstacle course, a separation event, and will need to drag a weighted dummy doll that resembles a human being. If the candidates pass these steps, the department will send them off to a six month long academy, and upon successful completion of the academy the candidate will then be an official law enforcement officer in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

I received an opportunity to interview a current police officer about his experience as a police officer in Brockton, Massachusetts. Officer X is a current patrolman who answers all

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types of 911 emergency calls as well as non-emergency calls. He also investigates accident reports along with arresting people on search warrants. He indicated that there are several specialized units within the Brockton police department. Some of these specialized units include, the detectives unit, major crimes, sexual assault unit, gang unit, motorcycle, and bike unit. The rank system within the Brockton police department starts at the bottom with the patrolman, then continues upward to the sergeant, lieutenant, captain, and finally the police chief.

The average salary for a police officer in Massachusetts is \$57,490 (Indeed, n.d.). Officer X explained that the Brockton police department, like most cities, provides an education incentive program, where officers who have an Associate's degree receive 15%, Bachelor's degree receive 20% and Master's degree receive 30%. Besides education incentives, the only other pay raise an officer is able to receive is if he or she moves up the ranks. If an officer moves to a different unit, their pay will still be the same as when they were a patrol officer. Officer X stressed the importance of doing a good job as a patrol officer because it goes hand in hand with the oath you take but in turn it can also get you recognized for your work and can eventually receive a job promotion. The benefits that a police officer in Massachusetts can receive include but are not limited to, a flexible schedule, life insurance, tuition reimbursement, dental insurance, paid time off, and many other benefits (Indeed, n.d.). Furthermore, according to the United States Bureau of Labor of Statistics (2021), over the course of ten years there are roughly 59,100 open positions for police officers each year. Some of these open positions are a result of police officers retiring and or moving into a different field of work (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021).

There are many different training and certifications that will not only enhance a candidate's resume before entering the field, but will also be beneficial in the field of law

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enforcement. As previously mentioned, the job of a police officer is unpredictable. Therefore, they will encounter many different scenarios that require different skill sets. For example, an EMT & CPR certification may be useful if dealing with a civilian that needs medical attention and requires CPR before medical personnel arrive on scene in order to save their life. A mental health first aid certification may also be useful if a civilian is in crisis and needs assistance.

These are only a few of the many different training and certifications that are beneficial. In the next portion of my paper, I develop a Criminology and Criminal Justice Professional Development Certification and Training Program that will allow CCJ undergraduate students to obtain multiple certifications during their college years before entering their professional career.

Professional Development Certification and Training Program Structure

The Criminology and Criminal Justice Professional Development Certification and Training Program will provide Merrimack college students with the knowledge, skills, and certifications necessary for policing in the 21st century. The training workshops will be offered to all students, but will be a mandatory requirement for all students majoring in Criminology & Criminal Justice. The workshops will be offered both in the fall and spring semesters. Each class year will have a designated month to complete their workshop, and each week within the month will be dedicated to a specific training. The same training will be offered twice in the same week, on Mondays and Tuesdays from 6pm-10pm. This will give students the flexibility to plan accordingly and attend the training sessions either on Mondays or Tuesdays, and decide whether they would want to complete the training in the fall or spring semester. These training sessions will be held by certified, professional instructors.

The Criminology and Criminal Justice department will offer nine essential trainings to students at Merrimack College. Beginning sophomore year, all CCJ students will be required to

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complete their training in either September or February. As previously stated, the same training will be offered twice a week, on Mondays and Tuesdays from 6p-10p. The first week of the month will be devoted to CPR & First Aid Training. The second week of the month will be devoted to leadership development and ethics training. Juniors will be required to complete their training either November or March. In the first week, students will attend a mental health first aid training. The second week will be devoted to mandated reporter training. The third week within the month will be devoted to implicit bias training. Seniors will be required to complete their training in the month of December or April. The first week will be devoted to domestic violence training, and the second week will be dedicated to wellness awareness training. If students miss a training session for any reason they will have the opportunity to complete the training the following semester.

CPR & First Aid Training

Beginning sophomore year, all CCJ students will be required to complete CPR & First Aid training. As previously mentioned, a career as a police officer is unpredictable, and they are usually the first ones on any scene, even scenes that require individuals that need medical attention. Therefore, officers need to be prepared to act fast and effectively. For this reason, Merrimack College students will be trained and certified in CPR & first aid management. Students will have the skills and tools necessary to save an individual's life that's in critical care before an emergency medical technician arrives on scene. Combining these two types of training has been shown to be very beneficial to an officer's overall career experience.

For example, Sasikala, Lizy, Venkatesan, & Sasikala (2021) sought to find how effective it would be if traffic police officers received "multimodal" training in regards to first aid and head injury. The study consisted of 60 police officers, who were randomly assigned into two

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different groups, an experimental and control group. Those in the experimental group received the multimodal training which consisted of “introduction, definition, causes, mechanism, types and signs and symptoms of minor and major head injury, first aid, objectives of first aid, first aid for a head injury, bleeding management and CPR” (Sasikala et al., 2021, p.227). They measured the effectiveness of the training by using pretest and posttest methods. They concluded that those in the experimental group that received the multimodal training were more effective when dealing with first aid management, than those officers in the control group. As stated, “Most people who meet road traffic accidents will die because they don’t receive immediate first aid from someone on the scene” (Sasikala et al., 2021, p.229). Therefore, this is important because it shows that officers that are trained, and able to administer various types of first aid management before an emergency medical technician is on the scene, play a crucial role in saving an individual's life.

Furthermore, it is important for all law enforcement personnel to receive first aid management because they will be working in various communities, which could have a large bystander effect. Meaning, there may be a large number of individuals, especially in disadvantaged communities, that do not know how to administer first aid or CPR. Dobbie, Uny, Eadie, Duncan, Stead, Bauld, Angus, Hassled, MacInnes, and Clegg (2020) sought to determine why bystanders are unlikely to conduct CPR in disadvantaged communities. They conducted this study by interviewing 61 participants from disadvantaged communities from the United Kingdom, Europe, and the United States (Dobbie et al., 2020, p.3). They found that cardiac arrest survival rates are lower in disadvantaged communities due to multiple reasons such as environmental and personal confidence reasons (Dobbie et al., 2020, pp.4). Personal confidence had to do with, “self-efficacy; knowledge, and awareness of how, and when, to administer CPR;

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accessing CPR training; having previous experience of administering BCPR; who required CPR; and whether the bystander was physically fit to give CPR” (Dobbie et al., 2020, pp.1). They also found that environmental factors also play a role in whether an individual provides CPR because they have to take into context their safety in the environment where an individual may need first aid, along with fearing retaliation from gang members for helping an individual that needs first aid (Dobbie et al., 2020, pp.6). This is important because training law enforcement, especially those who will be working within disadvantaged cities will have a large bystander effect. Those who are adequately trained have the possibility to increase the survival rate of those who suffer from cardiac arrest and other injuries in these cities.

Leadership Development & Ethics Training

Students enrolled in the Criminology and Criminal Justice Professional Development Certification and Training Program will also be required to complete leadership development and ethics training their sophomore year. Law enforcement personnel are required to follow their mission of being a police officer. They take an oath to serve and protect their community. Therefore, they have to adhere to the policies and procedures of their organization, in order to preserve the trust of not only their police department, but also the members of their community. It is important for those in their community to view law enforcement as people with integrity and strong leadership skills. If officers do not have strong leadership and ethics training, they present the risk of creating a culture where people do not trust law enforcement, while also presenting the risk of corruption within the police department. As presented at the beginning of this paper, there have been many incidents of police misuse of power. Therefore, making sure that students receive this training, well in advance, will have the potential of creating future law enforcement personnel with strong leadership along with strong ethical reasoning skills.

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Kancharla and Dadhich (2021) sought to determine how ethical training affects individuals' behavior and workplace culture. They collected data from 175 participants that were managers in construction firms. The findings suggested that ethical training positively affects workplace behavior. It's been shown that "stronger perceptions of Ethical Training were associated with stronger perceptions of Ethical Culture. Ethical Culture is related to positive workplace behavior" (Kancharla & Dadhich, 2021, pp. 53-73). This is important because it demonstrates that those who receive ethical training are more likely to have a stronger ability to make ethical decisions, which in turn leads to an ethical workplace. As previously stated, there have been multiple cases of police misuse of power. This study shows that by providing ethical training it can have a positive effect on behaviors and attitudes in the workplace. By providing students with ethical training before entering the field of policing, they will be better equipped when making ethical decisions, and that in turn, will hopefully decrease police misuse of power.

Police departments across the United States are under a lot of scrutiny due to multiple cases of police misconduct and misuse of power. Many of these police departments have created a culture where police officers are able to get away with misconduct without being appropriately disciplined. This is not appropriate and police officers have to be held accountable. When they see something, they should need to say something. As previously touched upon, there have been many laws that have recently been put into place to deter police misconduct. Yet, there are still incidents of police misuse of power. Wu, Makin, Li, Boateng and Abess (2018) conducted a study to examine police integrity. They did this by surveying 353 police officers and providing them with different scenarios about police misconduct and misbehavior in a questionnaire (Wu et al., 2018, pp.563). The results indicated that officers had a lenient attitude toward police misconduct, and there was a culture of "silence" to report misconduct (Wu et al., 2018, pp.567).

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It is important to note that this study was conducted in China, with Chinese police officers.

However, I believe that this study also has validity and can directly apply to police misconduct here in the United States. By providing students with ethical training before entering the field of law enforcement, they will be encouraged to do the right thing, and hopefully combat this culture of police corruption, prevent misuse of power and cases of injustice from occurring.

Mental Health First Aid Training

Merrimack College students enrolled in the CCJ Professional Development Training and Certification Program will be required to take and complete mental health first aid training (MHFA) within their junior year. Police officers encounter many different situations, especially with people who are in crisis. Law enforcement officers deal a lot with individuals who are mentally unstable. Mental health has been and continues to be a growing epidemic. It is crucial for law enforcement officers to have the proper skills to deal with someone who is in crisis in order to de-escalate the situation. A police officer that is certified and has the knowledge and skills to deal with someone that is in crisis has the potential to save lives and make a great impact on an individual's life while also giving them the help they need. Mental health first aid training has been shown to be effective in multiple studies. For example, “one trial of 301 randomized participants found that those certified in Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) had greater confidence in providing help to others, greater likelihood of advising people to seek professional help, improved concordance with health professionals about treatments, and decreased stigmatizing attitudes” (Specialized first aid training helps police officers de-escalate mental health crises, 2010). Therefore, MHFA training will allow Merrimack College students to recognize when someone is in crisis, what to do when dealing with someone in crisis, and the proper techniques needed to help someone who is in crisis.

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In a study conducted by Hacker and Horan (2019,) they sought to find how mental health first aid training would improve law enforcement personnel experience when encountering people who suffer from mental illness. They did this by conducting online mental health training, with 24 participants from different states within the United States. They separated the group in half into two different groups, one group received the de-escalation training and the other group received a “delayed treatment control condition”(Hacker & Horan, 2019, pp 551). The de-escalation training measured, “empathy, stigma, self-efficacy, and behavioral self-report with strong effect sizes; control participants obtained comparable benefits after DEFUSE training” (Hacker & Horan, 2019 pp.551). The results indicated that the group that received the de-escalation training specifically for mental health crises were better equipped when responding to individuals that were in crisis (Hacker & Horan, 2019). This study shows that individuals that receive mental health first aid training will have the tools to successfully deal with and deescalate a mental health crisis situation.

Moreover, Robertson, DeShong, Steen, Buys, and Nadorff (2021) sought to determine how effective Mental Health First Aid is in rural communities with community gatekeepers. They gathered participants and had them take mental health first aid training and utilized a survey method to collect data six months after receiving the training (Robertson et al., 2021, pp. 304). The results indicated those who took the MHFA training used the skills they learned from the training and were more confident when dealing with someone who was experiencing a mental health crisis (Robertson et al., 2021, pp. 306). They concluded that “MHFA training appears to increase the confidence and competence of extension agents as community gatekeepers and may greatly enhance the reach of the mental health network of rural areas by increasing identification and referral of those requiring mental health services” (Robertson et al.,

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2021, pp.306). This study is important because it shows that those who receive mental health first aid training are able to recognize when someone is in crisis, and feel more confident because they have the knowledge and skills necessary to help them.

It is important for students to help identify those who are in crisis while also providing the initial help they may need. There is a lot of social stigma surrounding mental health, especially within different cultures everywhere. Various cultures deal with mental health differently; therefore, it is important for students to have a sense of culture sensitivity when dealing with a diverse population, especially in their future career as law enforcement or other public social services. In a study conducted by Wang, Liu, Marsico, and Zhu (2021,) they found that Asian Americans have higher rate of suicide then alot of other races. This may be a result of “Low mental health literacy, attitudinal barriers, structural/practical barriers (e.g., lack of culturally competent mental health providers, confidentiality concerns), and lack of parental support and communication about help seeking” (Wang, Liu, Marsico, & Zhu, 2021, pp.1).

Wang and colleagues (2021) examined how effective it would be to provide Asian Americans with culturally sensitive mental health first aid training. They conducted this study by providing youth mental health first aid training to 55 participants that consisted of both youth workers and Asian American parents (Wang, Liu, Marsico, & Zhu, 2021, pp.4). They provided the participants with a survey questionnaire before the start of the training and after receiving the training. The results indicated that the participants were more confident and knowledgeable about mental health first aid, and what to do in a situation of crisis after taking the training. This study is important especially for students who will be working within inner city communities that have a diverse population, where there is alot of social stigma surrounding issues of mental

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health. This mental health first aid training workshop will raise awareness, not only on mental health first aid, but also about cultural sensitivity surrounding mental health.

Mandated Reporter Training

All students enrolled in the CCJ Professional Development Training and Certification program will be required to complete a mandated reporter training their junior year. Those seeking a career in law enforcement and or other social services will be working with a vulnerable population (i.e. children, those with disabilities, elderlies, etc). Per Massachusetts law, mandated reporters are required to report any signs or abuse or neglect working with this population (Commonwealth of Massachusetts, n.d). Examples of mandated reporters are, public or private school teacher, educational administrator, guidance or family counselor, day care worker, probation officer, social worker, police officer, etc (Commonwealth of Massachusetts, n.d). Failure to report any suspicions of abuse and neglect will result in consequences. In Massachusetts, “mandated reporters can be fined up to \$1,000 for failure to report incidents of suspected abuse and neglect of children, elders, and individuals with disabilities” (Commonwealth of Massachusetts, n.d). Therefore, it is crucial for those seeking a career in law enforcement or other social services to recognize these signs of abuse and neglect. Merrimack College students will receive specialized training that will enable them to recognize these signs and what to do if they encounter a victim of abuse and neglect before starting their career.

Gardner, Derouin, Brown and Johnson (2020) sought to determine how effective it would be to train community members to recognize cases of child abuse and neglect. Gardner and colleagues (2020) recruited 135 participants within a community in Oklahoma. The participants were 18 years and older and they worked with children and youth. The participants worked with these children through teaching, volunteer work, mentoring, and other forms of contact (Gardner

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et al., 2020, pp.182). The participants in this study all received child abuse and neglect training. After receiving the training they were given two posttests, one immediately after, then another one a couple months after receiving the training (Gardner et al., 2020, pp.182). The post test that was given immediately after receiving the training indicated that the participants had an increase in knowledge about child abuse and neglect. The second posttest indicated that there was both an increase of knowledge and confidence when recognizing and dealing with child abuse and neglect (Gardner et al., 2020, pp.183). This study is important because it provides evidence that training in regards to child abuse and neglect can overall increase knowledge and confidence when working with a vulnerable population and recognizing incidents of abuse and neglect. By providing this training to Merrimack College students, they will be prepared and able to recognize when a child, elderly, and/or someone with disability is in harm's way and potentially save and help someone who needs help.

Similarly, Kenny (2007) sought to determine the effectiveness of child maltreatment training for those seeking a future career that will require them to be mandated reporters. The participants in this study were one hundred and five undergraduate and graduate students. They were given the same pretest before taking the web based training and a posttest after receiving the training (Kenny, 2007, pp.672). The test given to the students consisted of true and false questions in regards to child abuse and neglect. The results indicated that the scores on the posttest were higher than the pretest. Therefore indicating that the students were much more knowledgeable on the “child maltreatment signs, symptoms, and reporting procedures” after receiving the training (Kenny, 2007, pp.671). This study shows that even a brief training on child abuse and neglect can have a significant effect, and increase knowledge which will enable others to recognize signs of those who are suffering from child abuse and neglect. As stated, “In

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approximately 1 hour of online training, participants gained an increase in knowledge of reporting procedures. Utilization of Web-based training is proposed as an effective and convenient method of instruction particularly for child abuse issues” (Kenny, 2007, pp.671).

Implicit Bias Training

It is important for all law enforcement personnel to be trained and evaluated in regards to implicit bias in order to deter unjustified bias incidents from occurring. Implicit Bias is defined as “a bias or prejudice that is present but not consciously held or recognized” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Merrimack College students will receive implicit bias training their junior year. This training will hopefully allow students to acknowledge and recognize their own bias, and as a result, it will allow them to base their future encounters with the public based on behaviors and not one's skin color, race, or ethnicity. There have been multiple cases involving implicit bias that has resulted in many African Americans being stereotyped solely due to their skin color. Having implicit bias towards a specific race can negatively affect one's experience, in many different situations especially situations that involve law enforcement officers. For example, in 2012 a seventeen-year-old, African American boy named Trayvon Martin was murdered while walking home to his father's house in Florida. It was reported that Trayvon Martin was murdered because he looked like a threat. Martin was unarmed, wearing a hoodie with a can of the non-alcoholic drink called Arizona and some skittles candy (CNN, 2021). How this African American youth presented himself resulted in him being stereotyped and losing his life early to a neighborhood watchman at seventeen years old.

It is critical for students to know the basic knowledge and skills associated with carrying a concealed weapon, however, it is also important to discuss implicit bias to prevent them from using their firearm inappropriately especially in situations based on prejudice and unconscious

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bias. Dukes, Kahn, and Davies (2017) sought out to determine what influences officers to shoot unarmed African Americans. They recruited eighty undergraduate students to participate in the study from the University of California in Los Angeles. Dukes and colleagues (2017) conducted this study by using a first-person shooter task assimilation. The assimilation consisted of black and white human targets, some were armed and others were unarmed, and they consisted of different environmental factors that would be considered “safe” or “dangerous” (Dukes et al., 2017, pp.729). The participants in the study had to shoot the targets that were armed and dangerous. The results indicated that the participants were more likely to shoot black people, especially in certain neighborhoods. The “results confirmed that racial bias in shooting decisions against Blacks was present in perceived threatening neighborhoods and in perceived threatening clothing, and it was reduced in perceived safe neighborhoods and when wearing perceived safe clothing” (Dukes et al., 2017, pp.723). This study is key, especially for future law enforcement officers that will be working in inner-city neighborhoods that have a large minority population. The findings in this study showed that these participants had a bias towards African Americans and perceived them as threatening, even if they were unarmed. Unfortunately, unconscious bias towards certain groups of people do exist; however, it is important for people to recognize and acknowledge these biases, to prevent unjust cases, like the Trayvon Martin case from ever occurring again.

Miller, Quinton, Alexandrou, and Packham (2020) examined the ways in which ethnic and racial bias training reduces officers' bias when conducting stops and searches while patrolling. Miller and colleagues (2020) conducted a one-day training on ethics and racial bias in England. The ethics and racial bias training, “focused on topics including unconscious bias, reasonable grounds for suspicion, and strategies for conducting stop and search encounters”

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(Miller et al., 2020, pp.1259). After conducting the training, the participants were asked to complete a survey two times, one immediately after along with 3 months after completing the training. The results indicated that those officers that received the training were better at decision making, especially when to stop and search a vehicle, and less likely to stereotype individuals. Survey results “showed the training improved officers' knowledge of stop and search regulations, made them more selective in declaring” search intentions in hypothetical scenarios, and reduced their support for ethnic/racial stereotyping in policing” (Miller et al., 2020, pp. 1259). This study is important because it shows that those who receive racial bias training, are more likely to base police procedures, such as stops and searches, based on actions and specific indicators instead of basing it on their bias against an individual's skin color.

Domestic Violence Training

Domestic violence is “the willful intimidation, physical assault, battery, sexual assault, and/or other abusive behavior as part of a systematic pattern of power and control perpetrated by one intimate partner against another. It includes physical violence, sexual violence, psychological violence, and emotional abuse” (National Coalition against Domestic Violence, n.d). Domestic violence has been and continues to be a growing problem with intimate partners across the county. All Merrimack College students enrolled in the CCJ Professional Development Training and Certification Program will be required to complete domestic violence training. It is important that students receive this training, especially those heading into the law enforcement field, in order to improve their response to domestic violence incidents overall.

Hirschel, McCormack, and Buzawa (2021) sought to analyze the treatment that LGBTQ+ couples and heterosexual couples receive by law enforcement in regards to domestic violence incidents. They conducted a longitudinal study by analyzing 2,625,753 cases in the

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National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) from the years 2000 through 2009 in 37 different states across the United States (Hirschel, McCormack, & Buzawa, 2021, pp.1356). The results indicated that those who were same-sex couples involved in domestic violence incidents were more likely to both get arrested or no one getting arrested at all, in comparison to those in heterosexual relationships (Hirschel, McCormack & Buzawa, 2021, pp.1381). This study is important because it shows that not all domestic violence incidents are the same, and not all DV incidents are going to be heterosexual relationships. Members in the LGBTQ+ community should be treated equally to those in a heterosexual relationship, especially in cases of domestic violence. Therefore, students will be trained to recognize specific indicators of abuse instead of basing the incident on the type of relationship the individuals are involved in.

Furthermore, in a study conducted by McMullan, Carlan, and Nored (2010,) they sought to understand how undergraduate students seeking a career in law enforcement, social work, etc. viewed domestic violence incidents. They recruited 491 undergraduate students from different southern universities. The survey consisted of different scenarios where the students had to determine whether or not the incident is “related to domestic violence, and worthy of being reported to law enforcement” (McMullan et al., 2010, pp.1371). The results indicated that a majority of the students, despite the field of career they are deciding to pursue, are able to identify and recognize cases of domestic violence, take it seriously, and recognize that it needed to be reported, no matter “sexual orientation, violence severity, and offender's or victim's gender” (McMullan et al., 2010, pp.1367). This study shows that education, along with training, can overall improve response and specific indicators related to domestic violence.

This particular study is crucial because it shows that college students are able to better recognize DV situations and are able to make a difference in their community. As stated, “The

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data in this study indicate that criminal justice programs produce graduates who are reasonably sensitive toward the importance of appropriate domestic violence response” (McMullan et al., 2010, pp.1380). Students at Merrimack College are not only going to receive their Bachelor of Arts in Criminology and Criminal Justice, but they are also going to receive additional training in regards to domestic violence situations that will make them better equipped to deal with domestic violence situations as they pursue a career in law enforcement. This training coupled with the aforementioned ones above will help mold a well-rounded police officer.

Wellness Awareness Training

Students enrolled in the CCJ Professional Development Training and Certification Program will also be required to complete a wellness awareness course. As previously explained in order to become a police officer in the state of Massachusetts you have to complete a physical fitness assessment. However, it is crucial for police officers to stay healthy and in good shape throughout their career. Police officers will encounter many situations that will require them to be physically fit. There are also many benefits to maintaining a healthy lifestyle, such as staying strong, increasing in a positive mood, decreasing chances of experiencing illness, elevating stress, etc. Furthermore, this physical awareness course will contain a mental health portion. Almost all police officers witness many different traumatic situations that the general public will never experience. As a result, many officers may suffer from mental health issues. Therefore, it is important for police officers to not only take care of themselves physically, but also mentally. This training will provide Merrimack College students with the knowledge and skills necessary to be a healthy police officer in the 21st century.

Physical fitness is important for police officers in order to protect and defend themselves in the line of duty. Dawes, Kornhauser, Crespo, Elder, Lindsay, and Holmes (2018) conducted a

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study in order to determine whether body mass influenced the physical demands that are associated with defensive tactics that law enforcement officers perform. They did this by recruiting 24 state police officers as participants. Each of these participants had a different body mass index. They were then divided into two separate groups, healthy and overweight (Dawes et al., 2018, pp.322). Then they were asked to complete defensive tactics training drills with their full uniform on. The results indicated that there was a notable difference between the healthy and overweight officers. The healthy officers had a better score on the defensive tactic training than those who were overweight (Dawes et al., 2018, pp.327). This is important because police officers encounter many different types of scenarios that may require them to use defensive tactics to protect themselves and others. If officers are not in shape, it could put them in harm's way, and get them severely injured. It is important for police officers to be in the best shape possible, not only to pass the academy but to also be successful police officers performing daily duties.

Furthermore, Santos do Nascimento, Souza de Oliveira, Lopes Teles, Monte Oliveira, Moura Soares, and dos Santos Silva (2020) examined the relationship between mental health and physical activity. They conducted this study by recruiting 254 military police officers as participants. They sent out a google form to all officers. The google form contained questions regarding, “socio-demographic, anthropometric and occupational characteristics, quality of sleep (Pittsburgh scale), stress (EPS-10), anxiety and depression (HAD scale), Exhaustion syndrome (MBI - GS), suicidal ideation (YRBSS - adapted), and Physical Activity level” (Santos do Nascimento et al., 2020, pp.136). The results indicated that officers who were not physically active had a greater risk of experiencing depression and burnout-like symptoms compared to those officers who were physically active (Santos do Nascimento et al., 2020, pp.139). This is

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paramount because it shows that physical activity not only plays a significant role in one's physical health but also mental health. As previously mentioned, officers experience many traumatic situations, one of the many ways that an officer can deal with their mental health in a healthy manner would be to maintain physical activity.

In fact, law enforcement officers encounter many stressful situations that increase their risk of experiencing injuries, sudden illness, or even cardiac-related deaths. In a study conducted by Varvarigou, Farioli, Korre, Sato, Dahabreh, and Kales (2014), they examined how law enforcement obligations in the United States increase officers' chances of experiencing cardiac arrest. They conducted this study by examining and analyzing 4,500 United States police officers' summaries of death from 1984-2010, which was provided by the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund and the Officer Down Memorial Page (Varvarigou et al, 2014, pp.2). The results indicated that cardiac-related deaths within law enforcement officers were correlated with stressful law enforcement duties, such as restraints/altercations, pursuits of suspects, medical/rescue operations (Varvarigou et al, 2014, pp.3). They concluded that "stressful law enforcement duties are associated with a risk of sudden cardiac death" (Varvarigou et al, 2014, pp.5). This is important because it shows that law enforcement duties can be stressful, and result in sudden illnesses such as cardiac-related deaths. Therefore, maintaining a healthy lifestyle and staying physically active may reduce one's chance of experiencing health-related issues.

Discussion

As presented throughout this paper, there have been many cases of police misuse of power in the past couple of years that have led to countless cases of injustice. We must continue to ensure that those who are pursuing a career in law enforcement or other public services are

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adequately trained before entering the field of work. Through the Criminology & Criminal Justice Professional Development Training and Certification Program, Merrimack College students will be provided with the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate through policing along with other public service careers in the 21st century. As explained in detail and supported by empirical research above, it is important for all of those pursuing a career in public service to have the following essential training: CPR & First Aid, Leadership Development & Ethics, Mental Health First Aid, Mandated Reporter, Implicit Bias, Domestic Violence, and Wellness Awareness.

It is crucial for us as a country to continue to make structural and systematic changes to our criminal justice system, especially within policing. In 2015 former president Barack Obama established a task force in regards to policing in the 21st century. The task force established six different recommendations that would better improve community and police relations along with reducing crime rates (President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015). This task force reached out to different community members to hear their point of view on what they would expect to work best. They reached out to "law enforcement officials, technical advisors, youth and community leaders, and nongovernmental organizations" (President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015). By reaching out to these community members they were able to make recommendations that were diversified, realistic and efficient to community policing. Two out of the six recommendations that former president Obama's Task Force identified are incorporated into the Criminology and Criminal Justice Professional Development Training and Certification program that will be offered at Merrimack College.

One of the recommendations that the task force identified was combining training and education. The task force emphasized that, "As our nation becomes more pluralistic and the

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scope of law enforcement's responsibilities expands, the need for expanded and more effective training has become critical" (President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015). Pillar five of the 21st century policing emphasizes the importance of education and training, in regards to mental health, implicit bias, and cultural responsiveness. These same trainings are identified in the program discussed above. By receiving mental health first aid training, students will have more knowledge, confidence and will also have cultural awareness surrounding the issues of mental health. As a result of receiving these training, their response to these incidents will be more effective and appropriate. Furthermore, by providing students with implicit bias training students will acknowledge their own bias, prevent stereotyping, and improve their decision making. This will prevent cases of injustice from occurring, and will allow them to base future incidents on behaviors and not one's race or ethnicity.

In addition to the training highlighted in pillar five of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing (2015), the CCJ Professional Development Training and Certification Program will incorporate other essential training that is important for policing and public service. The CCJ program will offer leadership and ethical training. By receiving leadership and ethical training, students will have the ability to make morally correct and rational decisions. This is important because police officers must maintain the public's trust, by living up to the mission of their organization, which is to protect and serve. Moreover, mandated reporting training will also be offered, since a majority of police officers will be working with a vulnerable population. It is imperative for them to recognize the signs of abuse and neglect in order to gain more confidence and knowledge in order to effectively deal with these cases. Students will also receive domestic violence training, in order to improve their response to domestic violence incidents.

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Furthermore, the task force identified wellness and safety as another recommendation to improve policing in the twenty-first century. Pillar six, wellness & safety highlights that, “the wellness and safety of law enforcement officers is critical not only for the officers, their colleagues, and their agencies but also to public safety. Pillar six emphasizes the support and proper implementation of officer wellness and safety as a multipartner effort” (President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015). This CCJ program will provide students with wellness awareness training. Law enforcement is a challenging field to work in, but with proper techniques they will have the knowledge and skills to care for themselves physically and mentally in order to be a healthy and successful police officer. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle as a police officer is important for many reasons, including but not limited to, defending themselves, the public along with preventing illnesses that range from depression to cardiac arrest. Merrimack College undergraduate students enrolled in the CCJ program will not only receive these training but they will also earn their Bachelors of Arts in Criminology & Criminal Justice, which makes them high quality candidates that will make a difference in whichever community and public service profession they choose to pursue.

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