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### Career Path of a Police Officer

Alex Gildea

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Alex Gildea

Capstone Paper: Career Path of a Police Officer

Professor St. Louis

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**Abstract**

According to recent studies, the effectiveness of higher education on police officer performance and salary benefits has been evident. Researchers have concluded that police departments that encourage police officers to receive their college education, or pursue a higher degree than an associates degree, have a higher chance at performing their duties to a higher standard in addition to receiving a higher salary. The purpose of this research is to identify the importance of college education on police officers, and how the additional education is significant to their presence in the community they protect. Police officers can benefit from the research that has been conducted, as police departments have offered incentives in the past for officers to receive their college degree while employed with a department.

As a police officer, your duty is to protect the lives of citizens within your district, as well as others outside of your district when help is needed. Police officers are a safe resource that people can reach out when they need help with crime and other personal situations that require law enforcement attention. While law enforcement officers like state troopers have authority over an entire state, police officers typically work for different zones, which are mostly individual towns, or a group of smaller towns that make up one larger city and is considered one zone. For example, the Boston Police Department consists of many different zones, or districts, that split up the larger city into more manageable and separated areas so they can have enough officers to patrol that given area based on size and demand.

The primary role of a police officer is to protect neighborhoods and people living in them. Their responsibility is to respond to 9-1-1 calls and consistently patrol the streets to ensure that criminal activity is being monitored and the safety of civilians in the town is maintained. Police officers are also responsible for writing citations for parking violations, issuing restraining orders, handling criminal reports, as well as working details to ensure the safety of people driving through construction zones, or unsafe areas at the given time. Police officers are not only responsible for catching criminals, but they are also responsible for performing very simple duties that are harmless to themselves and the public. Police officers respond to calls for service that require them to participate in educational programs that teach kids about safety and what is considered dangerous. A police department's mission statement varies by location and department, but the Boston Police Department's mission statement states that: "We dedicate ourselves to work in partnership with the community to fight crime,

reduce fear and improve the quality of life in our neighborhoods. Our Mission is Community Policing” (Boston Police Department, 2007).

This paper will discuss the benefits of college education for police officers, as well as specific qualifications that are required for them to become officers. The minimum requirement of a police officer is a high school diploma, but a college degree gives officers a higher chance of increased pay, lesser risk of assault and a safer work environment. This paper also discusses studies observing what benefits come from officers receiving a college education.

### **Hiring Process**

The hiring process of being a police officer, again, varies by location. Most departments in Massachusetts require their future officers to have completed the civil service exam, which determines whether a candidate meets the qualifications and displays the ability to hold a position within a government-based job (Sandoval, 2021). The civil service exam has a series of questions about the law. This exam has to be studied for, as it has a series of complex questions that not everyone may know the answers to if they do not read the information prior to the exam. There are textbooks and practice exams that people can take to prepare them for the actual test, and there are also classes that are held to have lecture-style learning so they are taught the information. Police officers must also have a valid drivers license from their state and have to be a legal United States citizen.

After they complete the civil service exam and pass, they are able to apply to a police academy and take a physical test to determine their physical fitness qualifications, and to take

a written exam to see where they are at with basic knowledge of the law. The police academy teaches basic training and prepares future officers physically for the job which will allow them to obtain a job once they apply for the position. There is a lot of physical training that is required to become a police officer, because people must be in good physical shape in the case that they need to use physical force to detain or defend themselves against a criminal. In order to be considered for the position of a police officer, you are required to pass a standardized physical fitness test. Some departments use the physical ability test (PAT), which includes testing fitness in events such as running, push-ups, sit-ups, and sit and reach (Crowson, 2015). Also, police officers undergo a psychiatric evaluation and a series of background checks to check things like their criminal records or drug history before entering the department, in order to determine their mental stability and health before they begin to work with criminals and dangerous situations. Any wrong move that is impulse related can cost them their life and their future.

### **Education Requirements**

The education requirements to be a police officer vary by department. While some of the ranks of police officers like lieutenant, sergeant, deputy chief, and chief. Each position requires bachelor's degrees and others only require a high school diploma or GED, it all depends on what position you would like to further pursue within the department (IACP, 2018). Bachelor's degrees can allow you to be promoted from police officer to positions like lieutenant or sergeant, while only holding a high school diploma or GED may only allow you to hold a basic police officer position. The chance that a police officer gets promoted to a

leadership position without a bachelor's degree is possible, but that officer may be working in one position for the department for a very long time to build seniority and experience at his current position to the point where the chief feels that he is comfortable enough to move up in ranks. An officer that shows his devotion to his job can put forth his best efforts and prove to his higher ups that he is ready to be promoted and may not necessarily need to provide a college degree to do so.

### **Work Environment**

While the role of a police officer is relatively safe, considering there is no real harm being done when the officer is in a safe environment, there is still a duty that needs to be filled which is to prevent crime and ensure safety of civilians. The danger of fighting against crime and putting yourself first on the line of duty means that you are risking your own life to save others. The history of police is very complex, as there have been many incidents where the police have been viewed as the "bad guys" when they are trying to enforce the law and protect the safety and security of their community. Sometimes the protests that came about after the George Floyd situation made us reflect on how people believed that cops were all bad people. This is not the case whatsoever, but there are some police officers that may be corrupt and their intentions as officers are not as honest as they portray them to be.

In the police force, there are many policies in place for police officers specifically, based on historical events and common issues we see everyday in their line of duty. Police departments always have room for improvement with their officers and their tactics that they use to maintain a safe environment for their community. By addressing use of force, poor

officer performance, lack of education on multicultural populations, reducing prejudice opinions of officers, and introducing the benefits of a college degree can help with targeting these areas that need work.

An issue police officers face is domestic violence within their own personal relationships, as they move further in their career with a police agency. In a research study that was conducted on domestic violence complaints by police officers and their wives, both officers and wives stated that 37% to 41% of their relationships involved some level of physical violence (Lonsway, 2006). Forms of violence included pushing, grabbing, shoving, slapping, kicking, biting, hitting, throwing things, choking, strangling, or beating up your spouse; threatening your spouse with a knife or gun; and using a knife or gun on your spouse. Domestic violence ties in with the work environment, because officers are technically taking their work life home with them, creating a hostile home environment.

### **Applying College Education to Line of Duty**

Another study that observed the relationship between education, experience, and police performance, stated that better-educated officers who perform better in the academy, receive higher supervisor evaluations of job performance, have fewer disciplinary problems and accidents, are assaulted less often, use force less often, and miss fewer days of work than their less educated counterparts (Aamodt & Smith, 1997). Not only do police officers have that additional education and experience to help them significantly make an impact on their community and less of a strain on their department, but education is a great opportunity for police officers to consider in the United States. In a study conducted in two large cities within



the Turkish National Police force, college-educated officers were generally satisfied with their jobs in an overall sense and with the opportunity for fulfillment and accomplishment in particular. In addition, a positive correlation was found between level of education and overall job satisfaction (Balci, 2011). It may also be hard for a police officer to be satisfied with their job, if they do not have the proper knowledge of what the career is really like. Many people think that being a police officer is good for the label of it, while it is a real job that should be taken seriously.

With the idea of reducing use of force, or unnecessary use of force, it is mentioned by Rydberg & Terrill (2010) that officers with some college exposure or a 4-year degree are significantly less likely to use force relative to non-college-educated officers. The ability to reduce use of force is a very important goal of law enforcement as it would mean there is less severe crime and more cooperative citizens that are abiding by the law. This statement alone says a lot about college education and how it impacts the decision making of a police officer. Considering the challenges our police forces have encountered over the last few years with use of force, having this potential solution to limiting unnecessary use of force can be really beneficial for a department and its reputation.

A study examining the effects of college education on patrol officers views, regarding attitudinal attributes identified in the literature on police professionalism, was conducted by Stanley Shernock in 1992, and participants included Lawrence Police Department, Lowell Police Department, and Methuen Police Department. The discussion part of this study states that among all participants, which included towns located in the state of Massachusetts, “exposure to higher education is positively related to the importance placed on the value of

ethics. Consequently, higher education potentially may influence police officers' ethics, but it must do so by providing more formalized instruction which confronts the opposing values of the police subculture and which examines ethical issues in terms of specific situations” (Shernock, 1992). Ethics apply to all areas of life, most importantly to the duties of police officers. Acting and thinking ethically is what helps officers avoid misconduct and abusing their authority in cases that may be unavoidable, if they are not educated on alternative ways to approach a situation. Some officers may have opposing opinions on criminals and why they committed a crime, or the fact that they committed a crime initially, which could have an impact on the detaining process of the criminal. If an officer is arresting someone who is guilty of causing harm to a child, naturally this would make anyone feel unsettled and they might act on their own personal opinion rather than thinking ethically and appropriately. Everything that a police officer does, it needs to be done with ethical considerations. If the officer wants to give justice to the community he serves, he must also act in accordance with the ethical implications of his job.

The impact that college educated police officers have on a department as a whole can also impact their reputation and costs. There is always a cost associated with officers and how they can handle a call. For example, if there are plenty of officers within a department, but their mission goals are not met and there are still consistent issues that they face with little improvement, the only underlying factor is the effectiveness of officer performance. This may result in a department needing to increase their employees, or ask current employees to resign or force them to resign as a way to help the department grow in efficiency. The reform and professionalizing agendas in policing seem to take as a given that the uplift in education to

graduate level will result in the hoped-for changes to improve legitimacy, performance, integrity and reduce costs (Brown, 2020). Rather than spending money to hire new officers and provide additional training and education within the department, offering other incentives to current officers that pursue a college degree could have a better impact overall. The state of Massachusetts, along with other states in the U.S., offer incentives/bonuses and tuition reimbursements to police officers who receive a four-year degree. This is not a way to bribe them, but to better strengthen the department which in turn will have a very strong impact on the community that it serves. Today, “nearly half (49.0%) of officers in Massachusetts hold a bachelor’s degree or higher, a percentage that is considerably greater than the national average” (Gardiner, 2017). The salary that police officers receive is based on their rank in the department. In the state of Massachusetts, as of January 2022 the average annual salary for a basic patrol police officer is about \$65,000 per year, while the 10th percentile is about \$57,000 per year, and the 90th percentile is closer to \$76,000 per year (Salary.com, 2022). The benefits offered as a police officer can expand as you move further in your career and they vary based on promotion and current status in the department. For example, the city of Cambridge, Massachusetts, offers its police officers paid sick leave, 401k, paid holiday/vacation time, pension plans, and many other benefits (City of Cambridge, n.d.). Officers are typically paid more for holidays as many other employees, and the typical pay for holidays is time and a half.

**Education and Job Performance**

Another issue in police departments is that there are a lot of police officers that have very poor performance and judgments on necessary use of force. Poor judgment is assuming someone is a criminal, when they may just be in the wrong place at the wrong time and are wrongfully convicted or arrested. They suffer from a significant amount of consequences by their department for improper actions and handling of situations. Based on data reported for 1996–97, 87 percent of 62,411 use-of-force incidents involved officers using physical force (U.S. Department of Justice, 1999). Unwarranted use of force tends to be more common in higher crime areas, and younger males are more likely to be on the receiving end of police force (Prenzler et al., 2013). While police officers are at highest risk of burnout in their career, which can cause severe mental strain, through education and training, police officers can learn the means to handle potentially dangerous situations without the use of force (Kop & Euwema, 2001). Police officers face consistent stress in their everyday lives while on duty. Use of force is something that can easily be taken to a different level depending on the mental state of the officer and if they have a good sense of self control and knowledge of what is too much. With the idea of reducing use of force, or unnecessary use of force, it is mentioned by Rydberg & Terrill (2010) that officers with some college exposure or a 4-year degree are significantly less likely to use force relative to non-college-educated officers. The ability to reduce use of force is a very important goal of law enforcement as it would mean there is less severe crime and more cooperative citizens that are abiding by the law. This statement alone says a lot about college education and how it impacts the decision making of a police officer.

Considering the challenges our police forces have encountered over the last few years with use of force, having this potential solution to limiting unnecessary use of force can be really beneficial for a department and its reputation.

We observe how police officers are trained to respond to calls, we also know that there are very strong expectations between officers and their knowledge of their use of force limitations. Defensive tactics training and other education programs teach them when use of force is necessary, but to this day, some officers are still disobeying new policies and developments that lead them facing legal punishment. In Washington, D.C., almost two years after signing a settlement agreement with the Department of Justice agreeing to develop a use-of-force reporting system in 2001, the Metropolitan Police Department's rate of completion of required incident reports varied month to month from 25% to 86% due to "confusion" about the requirements and lack of a "culture of accountability" (Cohen, 2017). While efforts were made to make changes to use of force by having a reporting system, police officers did not comply and they noted that there was a lack of a culture of accountability, meaning that officers were not technically willing to hold themselves accountable for any use of force that could have been deemed unnecessary so they did not get in trouble.

### **Education and Multicultural Populations**

Finally, many police officers do not have a college degree, either associates or bachelors, and they lack the educational background on multicultural populations. College level courses teach about social determinants of health, socioeconomic factors, and the underlying issues of why crime happens to begin with. Theories like the Broken Windows Theory is a big part of

why areas with crime have such high crime rates. The Broken Windows Theory was proposed by James Q. Wilson and George Kelling in 1982, and stated that broken windows was a metaphor for disorder within neighborhoods. Their theory links disorder and incivility within a community to subsequent occurrences of serious crime (McKee, 2018). With this type of education, officers are able to strengthen their ability to recognize the needs of various populations of people under any socioeconomic status, race, and nationality.

Officers that do not receive this education may lack proper knowledge in these areas while enrolled in a police academy. Sanborn (2015) makes the argument that providing officers with college education is a way to prevent lawsuits before they occur, since the more educated a police officer is, the less likely they will be violent to suspects. The cost of higher education is like a preventative, positive training to avoid the cost of negative disciplinary retraining or worse still, legal costs (Sanborn, 2015). Police departments can help with preventative measures to avoid their officers from facing situations where they may become violent and give them the chance to learn how to maintain aggression and stress levels. While law enforcement officer expectations have changed over the years, given the many situations of terrorist acts like 9-11, or the Boston Marathon Bombing, and many others where people lost their lives, it is important to ensure that newly hired officers are capable of handling the level of stress to do their job correctly.

While it still may be costly for police departments to give them the education as an incentive, in the state of Minnesota, police departments offer financial support of education for officers; 52% of officers reported that they received tuition reimbursement for taking college level courses in 2008 (Hilal & Erickson, 2010). Education has been something that is

consistently reevaluated for police officers and the effects it has on their performance, pay, mentality, and emotional stability. It has been 80 years since police visionary August Vollmer introduced college-educated officers into the Berkeley, California, Police Department, and agencies have moved slowly toward increasing educational levels in the policing profession. They were hoping to encourage police departments to show that they had very strong background knowledge of handling various groups of people, and it was initiated because there had been improved performance and policing outcomes from officers that had received a college degree prior to entering the field. It is still not implemented all around the world but it is more common to know a police officer that has a college degree, since going to college is something that a lot of students are choosing to do.

### **Education Requirements**

Police departments have slowly changed their education requirements for applications into their police force from a high school diploma to a 2-4 year degree, with a major in criminal justice or something closely related to the field (Varricchio, 1998). With the baby boomer generation retiring and the increased demand for public safety officers and policemen is constantly on the rise, police departments are having a harder time finding individuals that meet the specific requirements and qualifications for the position (Terra, 2009). The rising costs of college education as well may be a major reason why the younger generations are not meeting educational requirements when they apply for police officer positions, and the hiring process for them would be much longer than someone who does have the education experience. Officers that only have high school diplomas will only have the standard level of

knowledge that the majority of the population has, which would not be ideal for them when it comes to controlling a situation (Aamodt & Smith, 1997).

There is also a substantial amount of data in regards to hiring preferences for individuals who are seeking a career as a police officer, if they have a college degree. An example from a literature review published in the *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*, discussed that the hypothesis that chiefs whose departments give more hiring preferences to persons with higher levels of education was found to be true. Police departments that give hiring preference to officers with higher education background, will have higher levels of agreement with statements favorable to having officers attain a college education was supported by data collected during this specific study (Marciniak & Elattrache, 2020). There are never-ending conflicts with people's inability to understand and respect diversity, and this issue should not be present among our law enforcement officers. While they are required to protect all citizens and serve their community with equality, the lack of knowledge and college leveled education on what diversity really means and how to appropriately approach different situations is something that needs to be addressed and improved in the law enforcement field. A study conducted in Texas Police Departments examining the perceptions of effects of college education on police practices, stated that knowledge advances moral development and could lead to the positive result of improved performance, or at least, higher emotional intelligence (Fitzgerald, 2013). Emotional stability and intelligence are important factors that plays a role in police response and how they interpret situations that they are handling. If officers have this higher emotional intelligence because of their educational background, this will most likely increase their hiring preference within a department.



### **Reducing Prejudiced Officers**

In 1967, the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice recommended that policing must adapt to the needs of a more complex society and raise educational standards. The 1968 Law Enforcement Education Programme (LEEP) was initiated after this recommendation was made. This program provided federal funding for universities to create a curriculum for the police with the aim of enabling all police personnel to have access to a college degree, in the belief that college educated officers are more flexible and less hostile or prejudiced (Brown, 2018). Officers need to have a proper mindset on multicultural areas and know how to be more effective in populations that require different levels of tolerance. This is an important part of college education in itself, because learning about diversity and how it plays a major role in how police officers need to react to certain situations is urgent. Police officers are also not looking to become cops in their own neighborhood or town, so the people they will deal with every day are going to be far different from what they are used to, and crime rates may be even higher in their district. Given the world we are in now, diversity is being emphasized constantly and it results in police officers needing to perform their duties efficiently.

In 1988, the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) stated that police departments should require a four-year degree as a minimum requirement. PERF based their findings on research that found that only 22.6% of all law enforcement personnel had a four-year college degree and over one-third (34.8%) had not attended college (Aamodt & Smith, 1997). Not only is a college degree something that is recommended by police chiefs and departments, but

commissions are also emphasizing the importance of a college degree for police officers. Supporters of the curriculum claim that increased police education produces personnel who are more capable of responding to the complex and changing needs of modern society, are less prone to liability, and, among other improvements, are more flexible and more innovative when dealing with complex policing programs and strategies (Johnston & Cheurprakobkit, 2002). The education that is provided to aspiring, or current, police officers has a substantial impact on their knowledge of the needs in different communities that face their own conflicts that may increase the crime rate.

Today, there are some cities and states that do require college education to a certain level, and they also require officers to periodically obtain education credits to remain in compliance with the requirements. For example, the state of Minnesota has a different application process for their law enforcement officers. It requires law enforcement officers to have a licensing that states that they completed a two year degree program in order to obtain the license, which is part of the application that they fill out to become a police officer in the state of Minnesota. It is known as being "POST certified." In order to renew the license every three years, you have to show proof of 48 hours of continuing education credit (Breci, 1994). This type of certification is a good way to ensure that officers receive the education they need to better serve their community. It may be necessary to implement this in other states as well, so the benefits that come with having college educated officers can significantly improve crime rates, lower the likelihood of officers using excessive force, and help officers think more critically and ethically.

### **What Police Academies Offer**

Johnston & Cheurprakobkit (2002) had mentioned the need for more police officers with strong technological education, which is not something that may be offered by a police academy. The academies focus more on physical ability and obtaining knowledge about being an officer that does not necessarily always entail technology and more written exams and homework. Technological education for police officers is important because a lot of their work is done on a laptop in their cruisers, and the department also uses technology for logs and records of criminals. Cyber crime is also a very common offense that would require officers to need to know how to navigate.

Some police academies tend to be longer than others, which may leave those individuals at a greater risk of not learning necessary skills and knowledge that they need for when they are officially put in the community. The overall length of academy training varies by academy affiliation, allocation of time both within and across the core areas was strikingly similar with a few predictable nuanced differences such as state police/highway patrol-affiliated academies devoting a larger portion of the total hours to training in commercial vehicle safety and enforcement and traffic law (Sloan III & Paoline III, 2021). It has been suggested that academies would benefit more from providing training hours in communication, cultural diversity, ethics, and professionalism, rather than only patrol tactics, criminal investigations, and use of force (Sloan III & Paoline III, 2021). While the physical training should not be entirely eliminated from the academy process, it should not be prioritized over the other aspects of training that are crucial to proper policing. A college degree should be required to become a police officer, and take priority over the physical training from an academy. A

police officer could be in the best of shape, but if he does not have a strong educational background about the people he is working with then his physical qualifications cannot help him be a better police officer.

### **How to Improve Policing**

Education has been something that is consistently reevaluated for police officers and the effects it has on their performance, pay, mentality, and emotional stability. Potential solutions to the issue of a lack of education among police officers, on the diversity in a general population, can be to continue giving incentives (monetary and non-monetary) to police officers who pursue their college degree while they are employed at a police department. While it still may be costly for police departments to provide officers a college education, some departments are willing to make this investment. In the state of Minnesota, police departments offer financial support of education for officers; 52% of officers reported that they received tuition reimbursement for taking college level courses in 2008 (Hilal & Erickson, 2010). The department does take hiring preference for officers with a college degree, but does not disregard those that do not have one. If an officer chooses to get his degree after being hired, the department can offer to pay for it depending on if that is one of the benefits they provide. As stated previously, the city of Cambridge, Massachusetts, is more likely to offer its police officers paid sick leave, 401k, paid holiday/vacation time, pension plans, and other benefits earlier on in their careers if they have a college degree; they are far more advanced than officers who only hold a high school diploma and earn these benefits quicker or at greater amounts (City of Cambridge, n.d.). Offering pay incentives and other

benefits has been proven to be effective in the past. It was noted in a study that education pay incentives and tuition assistance/reimbursement programs were included frequently as provisions in collective bargaining agreements. Of 486 respondents in the study, 61.3% of them had a form of collective bargaining agreement in place (Carter & Sapp, 1990).

It may be difficult to implement education requirements for officers especially if they are already employed at a department for a long period of time, and suddenly have to go back to school to meet the new standards that have been set. A study sought to determine what police officers thought of the education requirements, and it was found that the majority of officers believed that no education requirement minimum should exist, with respect to possibly needing a two year degree to become a sergeant. They were also asked whether or not they believed that at some point the department would require higher education either through policy or practice, and 53.1% said they did not believe this was true, while 33.6% believed it was, and the rest were unsure (Hilal & Erickson, 2010). Although it will be hard to implement new requirements in a department where there are officers that have been employed for years, or even decades, it is still something that may be in the best interest of the department in the long run so they can continue to protect their communities.

### **Personal Qualifying Skills**

The skills that qualify me for a career in this field is having a bachelor's degree in Criminology and Criminal Justice, as well as currently pursuing my master's degree in the same field of study. I consistently exercise and maintain my internal and physical health, which is also a skill that I hold that can allow me to meet the physical ability requirements of

being a police officer. I am also a strong team leader which would allow me to have a strong connection with fellow officers and can help out the department in a leadership manner.

Throughout my education, I have developed a strong interest in serving the community and putting the lives and safety of others into my own hands, and it has been something that I have always wanted to do. As I live in a very safe community, I also see it as a way to give back to the officers that have protected me and the others living in my town.

Additional training and certifications that may enhance my resume in this area is my internship experience at Tewksbury Police Department. During my internship, I worked directly with officers while they patrolled Tewksbury. I observed as they responded to smaller calls, and assisted with writing police reports. I attended the officers' taser training, and gun training. For work experience, over the last couple of years I have worked as a security guard for Merrimack College's student security program. As a security guard for this location I enforced the campus COVID-19 rules, and consistently checked vaccination cards and campus ID cards to prevent those ineligible of being on campus from coming in. Also, I currently work as a security officer at Beverly Hospital as well as Addison Gilbert Hospital, working hands-on with patients and physicians to enforce safety rules and regulations. The patients vary from ER patients to psychiatric patients. A day-to-day preview of the job entails restraints, transporting, and oversight of patients that are admitted to the hospital. These job experiences tie back to being a police officer, because working with psychiatric patients can mean that they are also combative. Most patients are in a state of confusion and their first instinct is to lash out on those trying to help them and have an authoritative position.

The knowledge I have of the current state of the police officer field can help inform my future career, because it will help me apply what I have learned throughout college to the everyday job. This can also increase my chances of being promoted or receive a better salary in the future. While knowing that it may be harder to progress in the law enforcement field if I did not have a college degree, it can also help me better educate my peers and coworkers when I begin working at a department. Using my knowledge and my ability to understand that the information I learned throughout college is going to help me tremendously in the future, I can also help try to persuade others in receiving the same level of education as well. Even though having a higher chance at having increased pay as a police officer with a bachelor's, soon to be master's degree is something that will be very rewarding, the knowledge and skills I have developed over the years is going to help me tremendously when I am serving the community.

I have a very strong sense of communication, empathy, and compassion for people throughout the four and a half years that I have been taking college-level courses. Some courses that have helped me grasp a strong understanding of policing and underlying issues behind crime were Ethics of Criminal (In)Justice, which I learned about the ethical problems in the criminal justice system, and how it affects people who face injustices by the law. Another course that made a significant impact on my knowledge is Society and Law, where I learned about different factors that determine crime rate and the likelihood for people living in certain areas of high crime to have a greater chance of committing crime or reoffending. With these skills, it will make policing a lot easier when it comes to understanding diverse populations, as well as populations that have other societal determinants of their lives that

may trigger them to commit crime. Higher crime areas need police officers that can show empathy towards them in order to truly understand and build a connection with them so they can give them as much protection as they need. While criminals can be dangerous people, they are still regular humans that are suffering from anger and frustrations that come out in forms of crime. I have a passion for helping people and as an officer in the line of duty, I want to have a strong educational background about what it is really like to serve as the primary protective service of a community.



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