



# State of Connecticut

## Police Officer Standards and Training Council

### Connecticut Police Academy



March 8, 2016

**Good Morning Senator Larson and Representative Dargan and all the members of the Public Safety and Security Committee. Thank you for allowing me to speak with you this morning.**

**I would like to discuss Raised Bill No. 5547.**

**Based on my professional experience, I believe that this bill is unnecessary for the following reasons:**

I. The Police Officer Standards and Training Council is a Commission on Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA), fully accredited Public Safety Academy. We were awarded Re-accreditation in March of 2014 for three years. This is our 3<sup>rd</sup> consecutive award and we are next due for an on-site assessment in early 2017. These consistent awards recognize the fact that we are demonstrating national best practices in the law enforcement training venue.

The CALEA standards manual for Public Safety Academies has an entire chapter dedicated to Instructional Systems and in fact the first paragraph of that chapter states "Training course development should be based on an instructional systems model that provides for continuous self-evaluation and improvement based on needs, analysis, training design, course development, instructional implementation and evaluation." The most recent Assessment Report is available for review if you so desire. These awards confirm that we operating under the highest professional standards.

II. The Police Officer Standards and Training Council Academy has undergone an in-depth review of its curriculum by Charter Oak State College resulting in the awarding of 26 college credits to our graduates by Charter Oak recognizing the quality and appropriateness of our curriculum. This recognition is effective until March of 2020.

III. The Police Officer Standards and Training Council is currently in the process of a complete review of our curriculum pursuant to CALEA standard 6.4.2 which is being led by Dr. Amy K. Donahue from the University of Connecticut, Chief Duane Lovello, J.D., 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chair of the POST Council with Mr. Tim Coon, our full time Curriculum Manager as the staff person. Chief Lovello and Dr. Donahue have co-authored a report on this project which is attached to my comments. This review began in 2013 and is continuing.



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IV. The POST Council consists of eight Police Chiefs, including Chief Lovello, Commissioner/ Dr. Dora Schriro, Ed.D, Mr. Kevin Kane, Chief State's Attorney, Dr. Guy Vallaro, Forensic Laboratory Chief, retired Connecticut Supreme Court Justice David Borden, the Special Agent in Charge of the F.B.I. for Connecticut, Patricia Ferrick, Atty. James Tallberg who specializes in Civil Liability Defense for police officers and police agencies and several public members. All are invested in providing the best possible education to police officers, very astute and very experienced.

V. As soon as March 21<sup>st</sup>, I will be attending an all day meeting of the International Association of Directors of Law Enforcement Standards and Training in Washington, D.C. to review and discuss President Obama's Task Force on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing report and its implication on police training nationwide including curriculum revisions.

All of this work seems to be accomplishing exactly what this bill proposes therefore in my opinion; this legislation is redundant and unnecessary and potentially expensive at a time when we have been operating in a significantly reduced fiscal environment.

Thomas E. Flaherty  
Police Academy Administrator  
Police Officer Standards and Training Council

**Police Officer Standards and Training Council**  
**Curriculum Review 2015**  
**Focused Reform of Area 400 – Human Relations**  
**Submitted by:**  
**Dr. Amy K. Donahue**  
**Chief Duane J. Lovello, J.D.**

The POSTC Curriculum Committee is currently tasked with conducting a review of the current POSTC recruit curriculum and making recommendations for changes, if any, to the full Council. To date, POSTC Curriculum Director Tim Coon, as well as POSTC staff, along with instructors and administrators of each of the satellite academies, have worked diligently to review the current curriculum and have made recommendations to the Committee for consideration. The Committee appreciates the thorough and careful work of these contributors and is giving close attention to their recommendations.

In light of this feedback and its own review, however, the Curriculum Committee also sees this as an opportune and appropriate time to consider broader questions about the quality, content, and configuration of the recruit curriculum, as much has changed in the law enforcement field since the curriculum was last formally reviewed in 2009. In particular, educational and instructional technology has evolved considerably in recent years. More generally, current communication platforms and interactive social media mean that today's recruits have new ways of learning, and of interacting with each other and functioning in society. At the same time, emerging technologies (such as sensors, cameras, drones, and many others) and evolving societal norms have created a law enforcement operating environment that is increasingly complex and dynamic. On top of this, recent events have revealed that public perceptions of the police are sometimes negative, and relationships between the public and police can be tense and adversarial. Some segments of society assert that they have been disenfranchised from effective law enforcement. Police struggle to retain or regain credibility and legitimacy in some communities across the nation.

The recruit curriculum is the first and best opportunity for Connecticut to create the learning environment where future police officers can develop the knowledge and skills to be able to operate capably and effectively in this challenging environment. To meet the goal of top-notch training and education of POSTC recruits, the Curriculum Committee believes the Council must capitalize on best practices in law enforcement education to refresh the focus, content, and organization of its recruit curriculum. To initiate progress toward a renewed curriculum, the Committee recommends that the Council undertake a careful analysis of an aspect of the curriculum that is especially germane to the challenges enumerated above: Area 400 (*Human Relations*).

Area 400 is comprised of eleven separate modules (401–412), totaling forty-six hours of instruction. Each module involves two to ten hours of instruction. Each of the eleven instructional areas has specific instructional goals (statements of what is to be accomplished within that particular module) and performance objectives (essentially checklists of topics to be covered framed as skills or knowledge the recruit should be able to demonstrate). For instance,

within the 401 module (*Human Behavior/Interpersonal Communications*), there are twenty-four distinct objectives to be covered during a four-hour block of instruction.

It is the Curriculum Committee's assessment that Area 400 includes some valuable content, but taken as a whole, does not adequately address the challenges of contemporary policing, and thus does not fully serve POSTC's high standards for quality training. This is in part because the content of the modules often involves large volumes of factual information rather than practical knowledge new officers will need in the field. Some of the information provided may be correct, but it is out of date and out of step with current issues, and the modules fail to tackle some of the most nuanced and challenging aspects of how police interact with a wide variety of people to solve problems in a wide variety of circumstances. As just one example, module 412 (*Cultural Awareness*) is silent on the challenges represented by an ever-increasing undocumented immigrant population, and misses a key issue. Moreover, current practices now consider cultural *competence* (not simply awareness, sensitivity, or knowledge) to be the underpinning objective of educational programs in this area, and thus module 412 is also less relevant and useful than it should be.

On top of this, the *Human Relations* Area is not organized according to a framework into which the modules fit cohesively. Instead, the modules operate in isolation, sometimes seeming unrelated to each other (for example, it handles internal supervisor-subordinate relationships in the context of modules otherwise about dealing with the public and special populations), and other times seeming redundant with each other (for example, it has modules on interpersonal interactions and on police and the public, which seem overlapping). This lack of focus makes the curriculum in this Area choppy and incoherent. The Area needs a holistic approach that allows recruits to accomplish what seems to be the true objective of instruction in this Area: developing the interpersonal skills necessary to identify and solve problems in the field, defuse volatile situations, and deliver fair and impartial service.

With the recent release of President Obama's *Task Force on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing* draft report and its recommendations for change, POSTC finds itself well-positioned to "capture the moment" and develop an Area 400 curriculum that not only reflects best practices but simultaneously aligns with the recommendations of the president's Task Force.

Given this initial assessment, the Curriculum Committee recommends that Area 400 be reformed to assure it meets POSTC's expectations for excellence. The Committee proposes that this reform proceed in three phases: First, a comprehensive review of best practices in human relations education should be conducted. The goal of this phase would be to learn how top programs (both in law enforcement and in other public service settings) are structured, what content they offer, and how they teach this material. Second, POSTC's Area 400 curriculum should be evaluated against these insights to determine what changes should be undertaken. Third, a plan to implement these changes, including creating new materials and identifying new instructors, should be developed and executed.

Acknowledging ever decreasing access to resources internally, the existing Curriculum Committee should be expanded and tasked undertake Phases 1 and 2 of this project, supported by some dedicated effort from the POSTC staff and the services of a consultant. After Phase 2 is

complete, POSTC can consider the nature of the changes proposed and determine how to proceed with implementation.