

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

REQUEST FOR COMMITTEE AND BOARD ACTION

COMMITTEE: Academic Affairs

NO: AAC 18-39

COMMITTEE DATE: June 12, 2018

BOARD DATE: June 19, 2018

ACCEPTANCE OF THE REPORTS ISSUED BY THE *AD HOC COMMITTEE ON POLICE EDUCATION AND TRAINING* AND THE *WORKING GROUP FOR THE REVIEW OF THE BHE GUIDELINES FOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE/LAW ENFORCEMENT ACADEMIC PROGRAMS*.

MOVED: The Board of Higher Education hereby accepts the following two reports:

- 1) *Commissioner's Ad Hoc Committee on Police Education and Training: Final Report and Recommendations (June 2017) (Attachment A); and*
- 2) *Report From the Working Group for Review the BHE Guidelines for Criminal Justice and Law Enforcement Academic Programs (May 2018) (Attachment B).*

The Board expresses appreciation to both groups for their work.

The Board directs the Commissioner to work with stakeholders, including representatives from the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS) and institutions of public higher education, to further develop the recommendations of the reports. The Board further directs the Commissioner to periodically report back to the Board on the Department's progress in this regard.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Section 9 and 6.

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BACKGROUND

In response to multiple constituencies from the criminal justice field identifying a significant and persistent need to address contradictory policies in the field of police education and training Commissioner Santiago formed an *Ad Hoc Committee on Police Education and Training* in the Fall of 2016. The group was charged to study specific questions on the issues that were presented and make recommendations to the Commissioner. The charge included study on requirements for minimal educational qualifications for police officers in Massachusetts; mechanisms to develop a statewide agreement on assessment of what police officers must know and be able to do as it relates to the assignment of college credit for prior learning experiences obtained through police academy training; modifications and adjustments to the existing requirements for BHE approval of PCIPP programs. (See attached: 2017 *Commissioner's Ad Hoc Committee on Police Education and Training: Report and Recommendations.*)

The June 2017 Ad Hoc Committee report to the Commissioner was circulated to campuses in July 2017 for comments that were due in September 2017. Two comments were received from criminal justice faculty members in disagreement with recommendations related to the second and third charge. The Ad Hoc Committee strongly and unanimously supported the recommendation on the first charge, that all police officers should have a minimum of an associate's degree in Criminal Justice, a related field, or a field of study authorized by the hiring department or agency. The Ad Hoc Committee recommended that individuals who have matriculated into an established program at a four-year institution and have completed 60+ credits toward a Bachelor Degree should also be considered to have the equivalent of an associate degree. The Ad Hoc Committee provided the rationale for the recommendations. Faculty, Law Enforcement, and Criminal Justice leaders from the field across institutions and public agencies in MA further agree that this minimum standard is an important indication of learning that reflects an individual's ability to think critically, solve problems, handle conflict, and have an adequate capacity for written and verbal communication, all of which they consider to be, very important to being an effective police officer. The Ad Hoc Committee further underscored that research shows among other benefits that the minimum degree standards is an indicator for an officer's better comprehension of civil rights issues from multiple perspectives, police department's experiencing fewer complaints and disciplinary actions, and it is a significant influence that an officer is less likely to use deadly force. The Ad Hoc Committee emphasized that there is currently strong support from the *Massachusetts Association of Major*

City Chiefs Police (2010) and the *Massachusetts Major City Chiefs of Police Education Study (2014)* for this minimum qualification standard.

The Ad Hoc Committee experts advised the Commissioner that the remaining charges, to develop a statewide agreement on assessment of what police officers must know and be able to do and adjustments to the existing PCIPP standards needed further and specific study. The Committee suggested that the work continue for the remaining two charges in order that more specific and carefully researched recommendations could be made by a working group.

In January 2018, Commissioner Santiago reconvened a smaller group, called the *Working Group to Review the BHE Guidelines for Criminal Justice and Law Enforcement Academic Programs*, to develop recommendations for the second and third charges. Comprised of criminal justice faculty from the community college and state university sectors, as well as criminal justice/law enforcement officials, the Working Group reviewed the most recent version of the BHE Guideline from 2003 and proposed revisions that would accommodate the awarding of credit for prior learning. In early May 2018, the working group submitted its recommended revisions to the *BHE Guidelines for Criminal Justice and Law Enforcement Academic Programs* and other recommendations to Commissioner Santiago. For a full listing of recommendations, see pages 3-8 of the report.

Of note, the group agreed that, with recent changes in the Police Academy curriculum, there is a critical need for higher education faculty to collaborate with the Municipal Police Training Committee (MPTC) staff to discuss pedagogy and assessment for training with the goal of preparing students for PLA assessment. It was the consensus of the group that a pathway or similar “on ramp to college” between the academy and higher education would not only assist recruits who wish to continue their education but would also benefit communities by creating opportunities to ensure that Massachusetts cities and towns enjoy a better educated police force. To meet these needs, the Working Group encouraged the DHE to create a state-wide PCIPP Advisory Group to engage in best practice research and support ongoing collaboration between the various stakeholders. This group would include sustained efforts to ensure alignment between police training and higher education in the state.

In mid-May 2018, the Working Group’s report was circulated to campuses for comments that were due by May 29, 2018. Three comments were received: University of

Massachusetts Lowell (UML), Massachusetts Maritime Academy (MMA), and Bristol Community College (BCC). UML questioned the Working Group's lack of representation from the UMass campuses. MMA requested that other professions, such as emergency management, be considered for Quinn Bill eligibility, and BCC recommended that, for the sake of consistency, the DHE should take the lead to "orchestrate [the] development of a statewide [credit for prior learning] tool to be used by all state colleges and universities."

RECOMMENDATION

Department of Higher Education staff thoroughly reviewed all documentation received from the *Commissioner's Ad Hoc Committee on Police Education and Training Report and Recommendations* and the *Working Group for the Review of the BHE Guidelines on Criminal Justice and Law Enforcement Academic Programs (2003)*. Commissioner Santiago recommends that the Board approve the request to accept the reports and direct him to work with appropriate representatives from the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security and the Commonwealth's public higher education institutions to advance the recommendations of both reports.