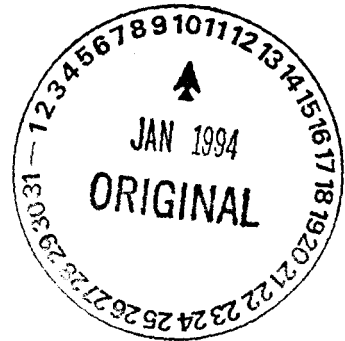


LAW ENFORCEMENT MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE
MINIMUM EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR POLICE OFFICERS

A RESEARCH PAPER
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE BILL BLACKWOOD
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PREFACE

A review of the literature reveals that there have been very few studies conducted to determine the educational requirements of police officers. It has only been in the last two decades that education has begun to play a major role in law enforcement. Education in law enforcement became a topic of concern as a result of the various Presidential Commissions in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Recently it has resurfaced as a result of various studies conducted, primarily by the Police Executive Research Forum.

There are many questions that must be answered. For example, why does the City of Arlington, Texas require a college degree while the City of Irving, just a few miles away, requires only a high school diploma? What changes are occurring in law enforcement that would require additional education requirements? What are the legal and liability issues that needed to be addressed?

Tables are provided throughout the manuscript as ready references to points discussed in the literature. As much care as possible was taken in collecting and interpreting the data to assure accuracy.

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CHAPTER I

TRENDS IN POLICE WORK

Comparative Analysis of Police Work

Policing has been called the unprofessional profession. One of the primary reasons for this statement is the lack of clearly defined educational requirements to become a police officer. Our society places great emphasis on what the minimum educational requirements are for a particular profession. Society, then, judges the importance, prestige and professionalism of that profession by its educational requirement. A comparison can be made with other professions such as educators, bankers, nursing, accountants and counselors, all which have clearly defined educational requirements that are visible, understandable and accepted by society.

Upgrading police personnel by raising the educational levels of police officers has been, and remains, both an integral element of police professionalization and part of the conventional wisdom of police administration. Presidential Commissions, academicians, and police executives have maintained that higher education is essential for anyone charged with such a complex and important task.¹

The arguments for and against measures intended to raise the educational levels of police officers have been advanced on several fronts. Advocates of higher education for police maintain that it will improve the quality of policing partly by shaping the attitudes and values of police officers, with concomitant effects on officer behavior.² Whereas critics maintain that police tasks which require common sense and/or street sense are not performed better by college-educated officers. Critics also suggest that college-educated officers are more likely to become frustrated with their

work, with the restrictions imposed by supervisors and with limited opportunities for advancement.³

This author entered the police profession in 1969 and without doubt the rookie patrolmen then would have a difficult time performing the job today. The job today demands a different kind of person with a much broader background. Yet, very few departments have increased or even evaluated their minimum educational requirements. The officer of the past was stereotyped as strong, uneducated, and quick to use force and physical control. The job of a police officer was usually somewhat temporary with very few officers actually making it a career. Today's officer needs to be educated and have a greater understanding of human nature and societal trends. He or she should have the ability to reason and to coordinate resources.⁴ More is required of today's officers because of the computer and other advanced technology used in law enforcement. Many veteran officers have a difficult time adapting to the new technology.

It has only been in the past two decades that education has begun to play a major role in law enforcement. What changes are occurring in law enforcement that would require additional education requirements? What are the legal and liability issues that need to be examined by police managers? These are important questions that need to be addressed by police executives. This paper explores the impetus for enhancing educational requirements for police recruits, the legal issues involved in establishing educational requirements as well as the advantages and disadvantages of education requirements for police officers.

New Directions and Styles of Policing

Most police departments have utilized and many are still utilizing the style of policing known as the professional model. The professional model of policing includes a commitment to respond to every call for service. Clearly, the reactive posture encourages superficial responses, placing a higher value on "getting there" and on "getting out" than what the officer actually does to handle the situation.⁵ An officer's performance is measured by how much and how fast he works rather than by the quality of his or her work.

Many police departments are moving to a more proactive style of policing. There are three basic styles of proactive policing which are customer oriented, community policing, and problem oriented policing. These types of policing all require more of the individual officer than the more controlled traditional types of policing.

Customer oriented policing as used in Brighton, Colorado and other cities requires a totally different selection criteria and process. Priority is given to highly developed interpersonal skills, high self esteem, model personality profiling, and psychological screening for loss of control.⁶

Community policing is known by a wide range of labels, such as Neighborhood Policing, Foot Patrol and many other labels. It is a proactive decentralized approach to policing, designed to reduce crime, disorder, and fear of crime while also responding to explicit needs and demands of the community. Community policing views police responsibilities in the aggregate, examining consistent problems, determining underlying causes of the problems, and developing solutions to those problems.⁷

Problem-oriented policing is a comprehensive plan for improving policing in which the high priority attached to addressing substantive problems shapes the police agency, influencing all changes in personnel, organizations, and procedures. In problem-oriented policing an officer who can group incidents as problems while focusing on substantive problems as the heart of policing is desired. The officer must also be able to accurately label problems, analyze the problem, critique current response, and evaluate results of newly implemented responses.⁸

All of these types of policing require a more educated officer than what has been required in the traditional or professional model of policing. One academician has advised several cities not to move toward community policing until personnel are upgraded.⁹ The knowledge and skills officers exercise in community policing appear to be tailored to college preparation.

Quality Management for Police

Total Quality Management has been widely used in the private sector for several years. It has been only recently that service organizations and government agencies have joined in the quality movement. Many city, county, and state governments have begun quality service programs. "TQM is a total organizational approach to continually improve products, services, processes and relationships in order to constantly satisfy customer requirements."¹⁰

Part of the TQM process is empowering employees to make decisions--delegating to the lowest competent level to make improvements. In the quality movement, officers will be held more accountable with additional expectations of them. Police managers will begin to manage by commitment rather than by control.

While the quality movement is fairly new to policing, it is only a matter of time until most police departments will join the quality movement. Once again departments will need to re-evaluate their personnel to determine if they have the type of officer that they desire to empower the decision making process to.

CHAPTER II

HISTORY OF POLICE AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Warren Court Era

The 1960s were a very turbulent time for police. It was a time for violence, drugs and riots in almost every major city. Police were also being closely scrutinized by the Supreme Court under the leadership of Chief Justice Earl Warren. Numerous cases were overturned that became landmark decisions. Cases such as Gault, Mapp, Miranda and many others became well-known across the country. Numerous otherwise guilty individuals were set free because of legalities involving the police. These cases sent a clear message to the police profession that the quality of officers in the profession would have to be improved. No longer would shady police work be acceptable to the court. Many in the police profession were upset with the courts for their decisions, but in the end it enhanced the profession by requiring more of police.¹¹ These court decisions demanded improved decision-making on the part of police officers.

The National Commissions

The need for highly educated personnel was recognized as early as 1931 in the Report of the Wickersham Commission. The 1931 National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement was an important, although somewhat amorphous, national recognition of the need for increased standards for police officers. The Commission spoke of a need for a more "professional" law enforcement officer. However, despite the admonition of that commission to improve low entrance standards, educational requirements remained the same in most departments.¹²

In 1967 the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice issued the Task Force Report. In the report, the Commission cited the need for advanced education.

The quality of police service will not significantly improve until higher educational requirements are established for its personnel. As was indicated earlier in this chapter, the complexity of the police task is as great as that of any other profession. The performance of this task requires more than physical prowess and common sense.¹³

The Commission went further in the recommendation of a minimum educational requirement.

Due to the nature of the police task and its effect on our society, there is a need to elevate educational requirements to the level of a college degree from an accredited institution for all future personnel selected to perform the functions of a police agent.¹⁴

The Commission went on to say that two years of college should be required immediately. To assist departments that were unable to reach those demands, the Commission stated that educational requirements should be increased progressively as conditions permit.¹⁵

The basis for these recommendations was the increasing complexity of police work, coupled with police officers' need for a strong foundation on which to base many critical decisions while policing the community.¹⁶

The publication of these reports resulted in the passage of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act in 1968. One provision of that act was the creation of the Law Enforcement Education Program which became better known as LEEP. Its

purpose was to stimulate police officers to attend college. Financial incentives through LEEP in the form of grants, along with the President's Commission recommendations, formed the nucleus of support for law enforcement education.

This researcher and many other officers of the Abilene Police Department were recipients of LEEP. LEEP was responsible for providing the opportunity of a college education to many officers who have moved into leadership roles in the Abilene Police Department. The success of LEEP, both locally and nationally, is underestimated in this researcher's opinion. It has provided many departments with educated officers who have become leaders in their departments.

Further incentive was provided when the National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals (1973) set target dates by which police departments were to establish formal educational requirements.¹⁷ The Commission stated that "every police agency should, no later than 1982, require as a condition of initial employment the completion of at least four years of education at an accredited college or university." Similar recommendations were made by other commissions during this period of time: The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders in 1968, the Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence in 1969 and the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations in 1971.

It has been twelve years since the target date of 1982 was stated by the 1973 Commission. To this date, only a handful of departments require a college degree.

CHAPTER III

HIRING AND RECRUITING MINORITIES AND WOMEN

Minority Officers

The Executive Director of the National Organization for Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE), Dr. Elysee Scott, remembers that as she was growing up in a small Louisiana town, the black police officers rode in cars marked "Colored Police" and were allowed to arrest only "colored" people.¹⁸

A great deal has changed in law enforcement since Dr. Scott grew up in the 1950s. There is no longer the overt segregation of minorities in the law enforcement agencies of the United States as existed thirty years ago. However, there still exists a certain amount of prejudice and discrimination in some departments.

Very little has been published about minority police officers in the early history of our country. The available literature has been limited to anecdotal accounts and mostly concerning blacks. There has been virtually nothing written about any other minority group.¹⁹

Though the major metropolitan areas have become increasingly populated by black and Hispanic citizens, law enforcement positions are still held predominantly by whites.

In the mid-1960s there was a series of very violent urban ghetto riots which resulted in numerous deaths, thousands of injuries, and millions of dollars in damage. Most of the riots were triggered by incidents in which white officers were policing in black ghetto areas. The national Advisory Commission on Civil Disorder was formed to study the situation.²⁰ As a result of this report and the violence of the 1960s,

police began to open new doors to minorities. In some cases, police were spurred alone by equal opportunity legislation and affirmative action programs.

The general complaint of police administrators with respect to minority-group applicants has been that not nearly enough are qualified. On the face of it, this is a plausible and defensible administrative posture, widely assumed in various facets of public affairs and usually crowned with the statement, "and we certainly can't lower our standards."²¹

The push for increased education for police came at the same time that concerns for civil rights and equal opportunity for all Americans became a national priority. The obstacle was the concern that requiring a college education for entry into policing might be discriminatory. Basically, the logic of this argument has been that racial and ethnic minorities have historically had disproportionate access to a college education.

Not surprisingly, today's police agency is typically white and male. Table 1 depicts the current police agency profile in terms of the racial and ethnic representation of sworn officers.²²

Table 1
Minority Representation in Law Enforcement Agencies

Race/Ethnicity	Police %	National %
Black	12.3%	12.1%
Hispanic	6.4%	8.0%
White	80.3%	76.9%
Other	1.0%	3.0%

Somewhat surprisingly, these proportions approximate Census Bureau demographic estimates of the United States.

Because of the concerns about discrimination in police hiring, educational levels of minorities were of particular interest. As shown in Table 2, mean educational levels of minorities were comparable to those of whites. Moreover, all minority racial/ethnic groups contained higher percentages of graduate degree holders than did whites.²³

Table 2
Educational Levels by Race/Ethnicity

	Average Level of Education	No College	Some Undergrad Work	Graduate Degree
Black	13.6 years	28%	63%	9%
Hispanic	13.3 years	27%	68%	5%
White	13.7 years	34%	62%	4%
Other	13.8 Years	19%	73%	8%

Minority Recruiting

Some law enforcement agencies seeking to hire minority members have had difficulty in locating applicants. There are a number of reasons why recruiting among minorities is often a difficult task.

The single most important barrier in recruiting minority members to apply for jobs in law enforcement has to do with the image that police officers have in the minority communities. Police are often seen as symbols of oppression. Minority-

group young people have not viewed police work as an attractive or inviting career because they have seen police organizations as predominantly white, English-speaking, and also because what they have seen of police in so-called high-crime neighborhoods hardly elevates their estimate of the occupation. In some minority communities, especially in low-income areas, to aspire to be a police officer is frequently to be regarded by one's peers as a traitor. One pays a high price for such an aspiration.²⁴

Among members of some Hispanic communities, this image may be more pronounced if they immigrated from countries in which the police were regularly used for political repression. Young people from minority communities may never consider a job as an officer because the badge carries with it too onerous a stigma. Even if someone wants to become an officer, he or she may be discouraged from doing so by friends or realities.

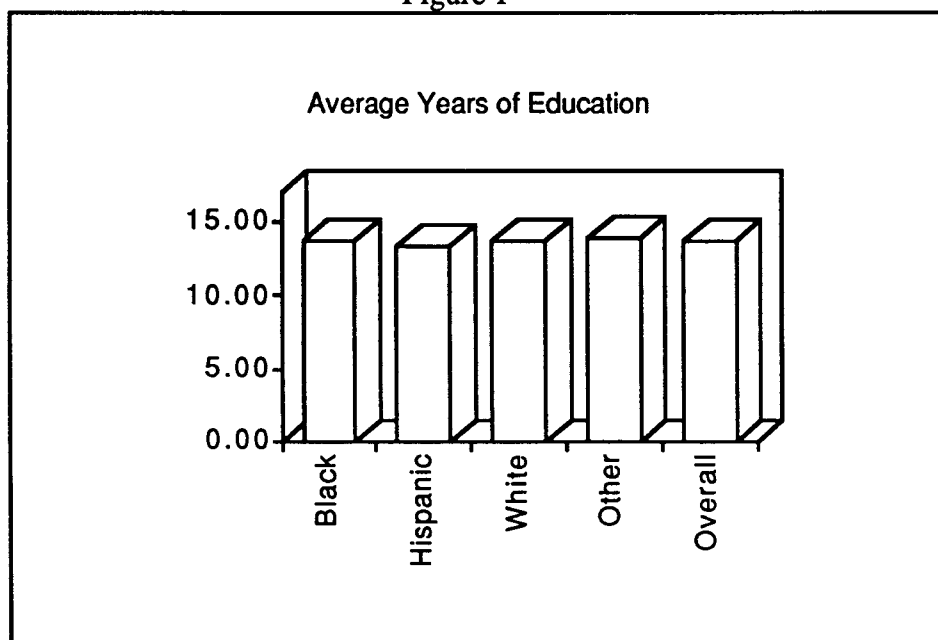
It has been found that many educated better qualified blacks do not consider policing for some of the same reasons stated above. Many that are qualified do not perceive law enforcement as an occupation that would provide them status among friends and relatives.

One of the most difficult issues facing police is the effect on minorities in establishing educational standards. As a practical matter, most large, urban police agencies have not been able to increase the number of minority officers to a level representative of the communities they serve. Many believe the addition of educational standards would reduce the pool of applicants even further while incurring the risk of the standards being viewed as a subtle way of excluding minorities from the police service.²⁵

Despite the effects of educational standards on minorities, programs can be developed that will overcome the potential discriminatory influence. The Sacramento, San Jose, and Tulsa police departments, for example, found that despite their college credit requirements for recruits, their minority representation is near parity with that of their communities.²⁶ Arlington, Texas is another city closer to home which requires a college degree that has very little difficulty in recruiting minority officers.

Many departments without a college requirement have not yet met that standard of representativeness. Thus, despite potential negative effects on minority recruitment, the problem can be overcome with organizational innovation and commitment. Figure 1 illustrates sworn officers' average years of education. These are national figures in which the officers included averaged 13.6 years of education. These figures show the average years of education by race to be very close.²⁷

Figure 1



Innovative Minority Recruiting

The key to minority recruitment is to be innovative and committed to having a diverse work force. No longer will simply running spots on television and ads in the newspaper be acceptable. Police must send a clear message that it is they who want minority police officers notwithstanding any federal ruling or affirmative action issue. Officers must remember that it was only recently that many county and state police agencies began hiring minority officers.

Officers must begin while potential recruits are still in high school and college. In the Abilene Police Department, a new program has been initiated utilizing the department's two criminal justice officers at Abilene's two high schools to recruit or to at least have minority students thinking about policing as a career.

Other innovative programs are occurring across the nation. Many departments have programs that are directed toward early recruitment efforts. Table 3 shows the total number of such programs and the percent of departments responding nationally that have such a program. This study was a national study conducted by the Police Executive Research Forum.²⁸

Table 3 shows the variety of programs that exist. Only a small number of municipal police and sheriff's departments indicated they did not have any of these programs, but 46% of the state police agencies did not have any of these programs.²⁹

Table 3
Department Programs for Students

Program	Number	Percentage
Scout Explorer Post	285	58.6
Internship Program	268	55.1
Ridealong Program	210	43.2
Student Cadet Program	89	18.3
High School Law Enforcement Program	52	10.7
No Student Programs	63	13.0
Other Programs*	61	12.6

*Included junior officer/junior deputy programs for elementary/junior high students, career day/career fairs, work-study programs, community service officer programs, school liaison programs, and summer camps/programs.

The New York City Police Department's Cadet Corps is an innovative program designed to bring officers with higher levels of education into the ranks of the nation's largest police department. It is a modest program given the size of the police force, but its implications are greater than its size would indicate. The Cadet Corps is the best effort to date to prove or disprove the long controversial theory that better educated recruits will make better police officers.³⁰

Two goals that many believed were mutually exclusive--raising the level of education among police officers and increasing the representativeness of minorities--may not be so after all. A Police Foundation study of the New York City Police Department's innovative Police Cadet Corps, funded by the National Institute of Justice and conducted by foundation researchers, Antony Pate and Edwin Hamilton, has found that the program brought 217 college graduates onto the force, 16% of

whom were black and 21.7% of whom were Hispanic. These percentages were significantly higher than those found in (1) other groups of recruits, (2) all NYPD sworn personnel, and (3) the New York City population. The results in New York run counter to long-held assumptions regarding recruiting.

In the discussions of minority recruiting, a look must be taken at general recruiting efforts by law enforcement. Many police departments do not aggressively recruit college students as compared to a general recruiting of the general public. The PERF study looked at where departments spent most of their time recruiting. Table 4 shows that over half of those responding indicated they split their recruitment efforts equally between the general public and college-educated candidates. Although the majority generally support the value of education for police officers, college-educated officers are clearly not the focus of recruiting efforts.³¹

Table 4
Departmental Recruiting Policy

Recruiting Policy	Number	Percentage
Equally Directed - College Students/General Public	263	54.1
Primarily Directed - General Public	97	20.0
Primarily Directed - College Students	32	6.6
No Defined Recruiting Practice	42	8.6
Department Does No Recruiting	31	6.4
Other*	18	3.7

*Other responses primarily indicated that recruiting was directed to minorities and women. Three departments did not respond to this question.

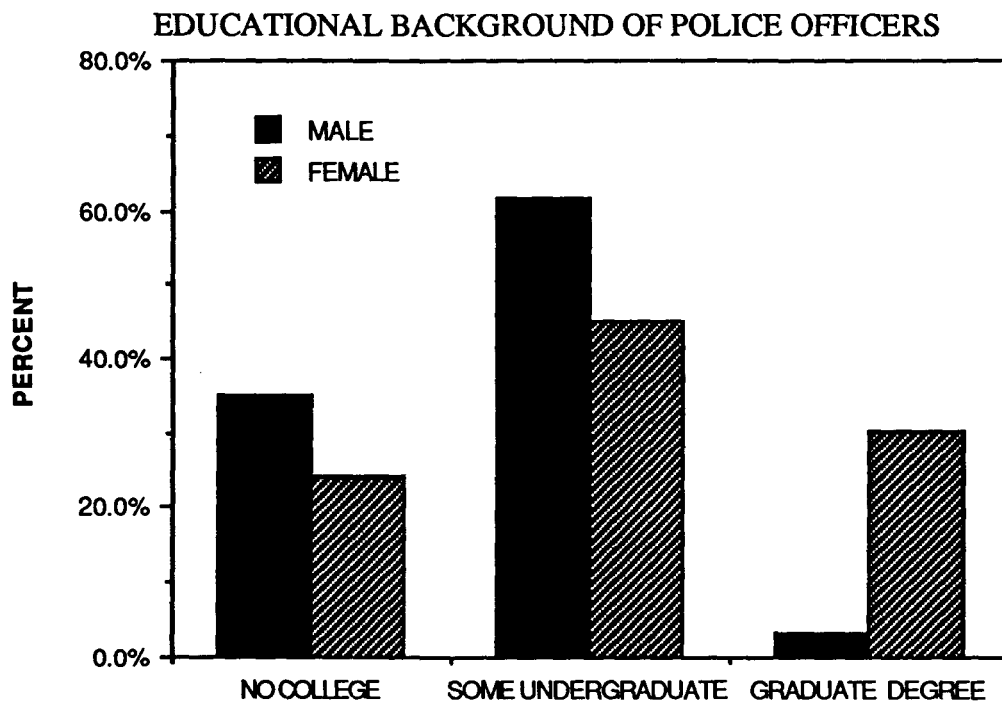
Women in Policing

Women have been involved in policing for a very short time. It was not until the early 1970s that women first began patrolling the streets, primarily in larger police departments. For most departments it was in the late 1970s and early 1980s before women joined departments, and many state agencies have only recently begun to hire women. A national study sponsored by PERF found that roughly one officer in eight in the nation's largest jurisdictions was a woman. The data showed that 12.1% of all sworn officers in these agencies were women. On a related issue, when the mean educational level of police officers is stratified by gender, male officers average 13.6 years of education and female officers average 14.6 years--a full year more than male officers. Table 5 and Figure 2 depict educational level by gender.

Table 5
Educational Level of Police Officers by Gender

Educational Level	Male	Female
Mean Years	13.6 years	14.6 years
No College	34.8%	24.1%
Some Undergraduate	61.7%	45.1%
Graduate Degree	3.3%	30.2%

Figure 2



Significant differences become apparent when the distribution is examined. Among male officers, 34.8% had no college credits, whereas 24.1% of female officers had not attended college. Conversely, 22.8% of all male officers had either a four year or a graduate degree, whereas 44.6% of female officers held these degrees.³²

One may reasonably ask why female educational levels were notably higher than the men's. One possibility is that police departments give greater scrutiny, consciously or not, to female applicants. A second possible explanation is that women who choose to enter law enforcement believe that they have to be more competitive to enter this male-dominated field. This researcher personally agrees with the latter in that many female applicants come from college criminal justice programs; therefore they tend to either have college hours or have completed their

college education. While yet others may be leaving other careers which require a degree such as public school teacher.

In all likelihood, all of these reasons contribute to the higher educational level of women in law enforcement. Thus, education does not appear to be an employment barrier for women.

CHAPTER IV

LEGAL AND LIABILITY ISSUES

Affirmative Action

It is probably fair to say that affirmative action has been the focal point of public debate over civil rights in this country during the past decade. Affirmative action means any measure adopted to correct or compensate for past or present discrimination. Many will say that affirmative action used to meet hiring quotas is nothing but reverse discrimination.

It is much easier to understand affirmative action to correct the present but where it really gets difficult is in the usage of affirmative action to correct the past. Many present day managers are at the mercy of the courts because of their predecessor's discriminatory practices. Generally courts, including the Supreme Court, have upheld affirmative action uses as it deals with public safety. However, there has been a softening of that posture in the last couple of years.

So where does that place law enforcement if it is to move to increased educational requirements for police officers? Courts have held that while the requirement of college education for entry into police work may be discriminatory, the requirement may, nonetheless, stand if it is validated as a bona fide occupational qualification (BFOQ).³³

If college is established as a BFOQ, then that should not negate the need by police administrators themselves to develop affirmative action plans to hire minorities and women. In fact, the prudent administrator should invigorate the affirmative action program because of the educational requirement's discriminatory effects. This

issue can be overcome by using creative recruiting, new programming and review of conflicting policies can all contribute to the effective recruitment of minority members.

Court Cases and Educational Requirements

An on-going issue in police management is the need for higher education for police officers and how this would be interpreted by the courts. Many did not feel that a higher education requirement could be quantitatively validated to show job-relatedness and secondly was the fear of discrimination toward minorities. Based on the case of Davis v. City of Dallas 777 F.2d 205 (5th Cir. 1985, Certiorari Denied to Supreme Court May 19, 1986), both of these issues can be overcome.

Part of the court's decisions in Davis was that the police hold a unique position with respect to public risk and responsibility. Such a position indicates that higher standards of qualifications can be effectively established on the basis of job-relatedness because police decision-making requires the added dimension of judgment. The court also did not require the formal job-related validation process as per the APA standards in the EEOC guidelines if it can be shown that the validation process cannot be effectively accomplished. The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals in Davis supports this argument by stating that the "skills required for the positions in question were not capable of specific identification and quantification."

Davis v. Dallas is not alone in its affirmation of education requirements for police officers. Uniformly, the courts have recognized the unusual nature of police work and have held the requirements were appropriately job-related. Castro v. Beecher 459 F.2d 725 (1st Cir. 1972) affirmed the Boston Police Department's high school diploma requirement citing the recommendations of the President's

Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice (1967) and the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (1968). The court noted that "these reports . . . constituted a deliberate value judgment that professionalization of the police is a major goal in our increasingly complex society" (Castro at 735).³⁵

In making a decision on an employment criterion such as higher education, the court in Spurlock v. United Airlines, Inc. 475 F.2d 216 (10th Cir. 1972) stated that when the job clearly calls for a high degree of skill and the economic and human risks involved in hiring an unqualified applicant are great, the employer bears a corresponding lighter burden to show that his employment criteria are job related. ... The courts, therefore, should proceed with great caution before requiring an employer to lower his pre-employment standards for such a job.³⁶

Liability Issues

Police executives are clearly concerned about effective service delivery, responding to public needs and professional officer performance. An underlying aspect of all of this is police liability issues. The impact of liability on police management has emerged as a paramount issue during the past decade. High speed pursuit, excess use of force, misuse of information, and family violence issues are just a few of the issues that police managers face that have liability possibilities.

One reason for this impact is the increased number of lawsuits filed against police which result in payments of staggering judgments. Police administrators' policy responsibilities related to liability must focus on two elements: (1) reducing liability risk and (2) obtaining liability insurance (at affordable rates). The most

typical liability issues are associated with poor officer judgment resulting in civil rights complaints; officers who are ill-prepared to perform the wide array of police duties in a responsible, professional manner.³⁷

The relationship between higher education for police and police liability must now be examined. David L. Carter and Allen D. Sapp, in affiliation with the Police Executive Research Forum, conducted such a study in 1984 on the effect of higher education on police ability.³⁸ The authors found no research which directly addressed the effect, if any, of higher education on police liability. However, related research does exist from which the authors offer suppositions. The following is a summary of that report:

The propositions set forth in this article bear important policy implications for police executives. Police administrators must be concerned with reducing liability risk, not only because it is an ethical responsibility, but also because of the pragmatic implications of resource management. It has been argued that an important factor in meeting both of these concerns is a formal college requirement for sworn police personnel. Such a requirement may reduce the risk of officer misconduct or negligence and reduce liability insurance cost. Police executives must be willing to introspectively examine their own department's liability experiences and study the education-liability relationship. Only with further policy research will the benefits of the authors' propositions be realized.³⁹

CHAPTER V

PRESENT STATE OF EDUCATION IN POLICING

A Look at Present Educational Levels

The Bureau of the Census has estimated the median educational level of all persons aged 25 and over is 12.6 years. The median educational level of the U.S. population has increased steadily and rapidly since 1960, when it stood at 10.6 years. The most rapid increases have been among blacks, whose median educational level was 9.8 years in 1970. Among Hispanics, the median in 1970 was 9.6 years. Table 6 shows the present day educational level of police officers today by race compared to the general population.⁴⁰

Table 6
Comparison of General Population and Police
Educational Levels in 1988

Race/Ethnicity	General Population Education Level	Police Education Level
Black	12.2 Years	13.6 Years
Hispanic	11.3 Years	13.3 Years
White	12.6 Years	13.7 Years
MEDIAN	12.6 Years	13.6 Years

The average level of education continues to slowly increase but then so does the nation as a whole. Many departments such as Kansas City's educational average is well over 14 years but yet Kansas City does not require more than a high school degree.

A recent survey in the Dallas-Ft. Worth Metroplex area shows that 7 out of the 11 largest cities in the Metroplex require at least 30 hours of college. Probably the state of California is the leader in departments requiring some college hours as a minimum requirement.

One of the most interesting surveys conducted has been with the Federal Bureau of Investigation's National Academy. The Academy consists of large classes, or sessions, of sworn police officers from municipal, county, and state law enforcement agencies across the country. Typically, those attending are supervisors and mid-managers. The mean educational level of those attending in 1974 was 13.48. The mean in 1988 was 15.20, almost two more years of average college hours.

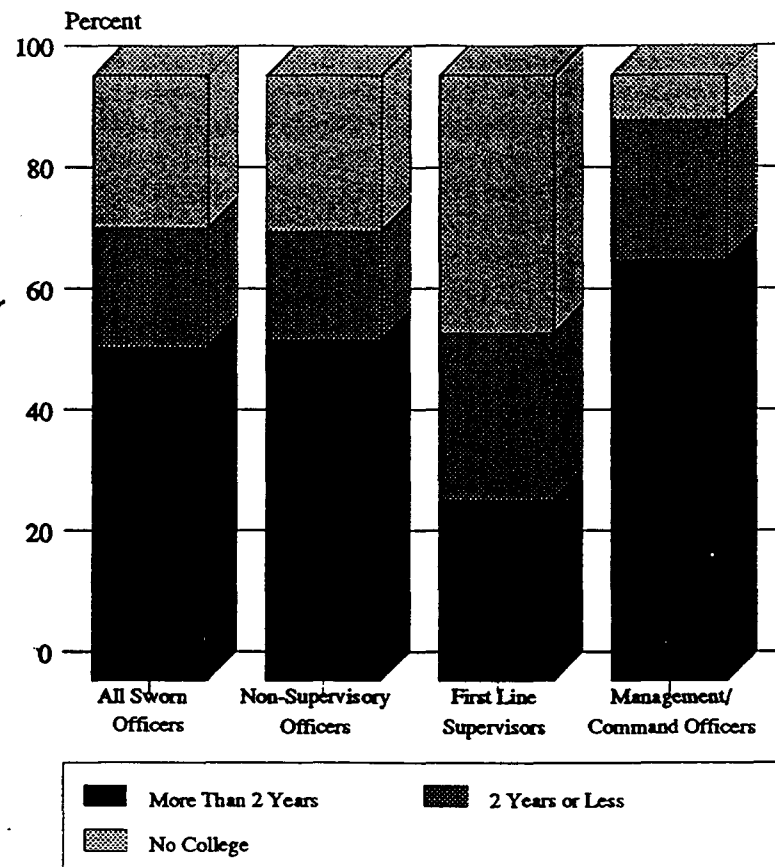
What the Critics are Saying

There are basically two areas that critics of college education in policing point to. One of those is that some believe that it just does not require a college degree to become a police officer. Critics argue that they would prefer someone with plain good common sense who will follow orders and someone who can be depended upon. The other is it is very difficult to retain college educated officers. They become bored, lose interest and become very frustrated.

Probably the area that is the most critical of requiring a college education comes from first line supervisors. Figure 3 shows a very interesting comparison of first line supervisors and patrol officers. Among first line supervisors, 42.5% had no college education. Almost 52% of patrol officers had more than two years of college. This is a critical issue that will have to be addressed in the coming years by police managers.⁴¹

Figure 3

Police Agency Profile: College Education Of All Sworn Officers



Another area that has been somewhat critical of higher education in policing has been others in government. Most of their concerns are in the affirmative action area and minority hiring.

Benefits of a College Education

Various studies have been conducted to determine what the actual benefits of a college education would be to law enforcement. Generally, studies have shown that officers with a college education develop a broader base of information for decision-making and have additional years and experiences for increasing maturity. Officers are less rigid in decision-making being more innovative and flexible when dealing with complex policing programs and strategies. One of the most important is a better understanding and tolerance for persons with different lifestyles and ideologies, which could translate into more effective communication and community relationships in the practice of policing. With the movement toward community policing, this becomes very important. Research has provided significant findings of how a college education would benefit police officers.⁴²

Recent Educational Requirements

Today in almost every publication of law enforcement news, a particular police agency requiring some form of educational requirement will be addressed. In Minnesota, for instance, legislators are considering a bill that would require schools, colleges and universities offering higher education for police to develop a joint plan to integrate their curriculums into a single degree program. Many feel that this is the first step towards requiring a college degree for law enforcement in the state of Minnesota.

The Warwick, Rhode Island Police Department has recently become the first in that state to require 60 college credits to be a police officer. Police Chief Wesley Blanchard said the requirement will help the department attract recruits with well-

rounded educations. "We must raise our standards if we truly wish to professionalize police service," said Blanchard.⁴³

The latest step toward educational requirements for police comes from President Clinton's "Police Corps" proposal. His plan calls for putting 50,000 college educated officers on the street. His plan should help to promote higher education and professionalization of police work. While there are many details to be worked out with the plan, most all police managers support the proposal.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

As the 21st century draws near, it is apparent that law enforcement personnel will continue to face complex social problems and increasingly sophisticated criminal behavior. Additional demands for police service will increase. Police managers will demand additional accountability, efficiency, and effectiveness. With the coming of community and problem oriented policing, it becomes very clear that police management is focusing its efforts toward a more proactive style of policing. This will require a different type of officer, in some instances, than in the past. Management will want officers who have an enhanced ability to reason and coordinate resources and, most importantly, possess many interpersonal skills.

Any police department establishing a college education requirement for employment should develop a policy paper validating college education as a bona fide occupational qualification as it uniquely relates to the department. A policy paper should be developed as the first step in the establishment of a college requirement. This will help prepare the department for any challenges to the new requirement.

While the courts have upheld education requirements for police, it should be incumbent on police managers to take the lead in establishing their own affirmative action programs. Police managers should develop innovative, intense minority recruiting programs. They should clearly send a message that they want a truly diverse work force. Managers will need to closely monitor police liability issues and evaluate their own personnel requirements.

Studies have shown, primarily by supposition, that college education makes for a better police officer; however, the debate will continue as to whether it should be required as an entrance qualification. Probably the best argument against it is that officers become frustrated and bored with the job quicker.

One issue police managers are facing today which may become even more dramatic in the near future is the discrepancy in educational levels of entrance level patrol officers vs. first line supervisors. Studies show veteran first line supervisors to average almost two years less than patrol officers. It becomes even more dramatic when compared to police managers. This could be an issue of great concern if not addressed by management.

The question for the 21st century is not whether college education is needed for police officers, but rather how much and how soon can it get started? It has been twenty-six years since the recommendations of the 1967 Presidential Commission were made. Twelve years have elapsed from the target date the 1973 Commission set as the year all police officers should be required to have a college degree. Perhaps it is time for policing to begin the process of requiring educational entry requirements. Based on individual department needs, the needed policies may be phased in over a number of years with the ultimate goal of requiring a baccalaureate degree.

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