

Law Enforcement Advisory Program Committee Minutes

Thursday, October 17th, 2024

Time: 11:30 a.m.

Brett Houser Intern Dean/Director for Health & Public Safety
Jeff Caudill, Director of POST Programs
Valerie Hudson, Director of Risk, Safety and Security
Paige Lovitt, Counselor for Imperial Valley College
Garth Dale, Chief of Police for Blythe Police Department
Aaron Reel, Chief of Police for Imperial Police Department
Manuel De Leon, Chief Deputy-Support Services & P.I.O.
Jonathan Blackstone, Police Commander for Brawley Police Department
Max R. Sheffield, Captain for Imperial Police Department
Jessica Prock, IVC Division Administrative Secretary for Health & Public Safety
Rhonda Ruiz, IVC Administrative Assistant, Law Enforcement Programs
Daniel Guzman, Imperial Valley College Police Academy Student
Luis Sandoval, Imperial Valley College Police Academy Student

1. Call to Order

A. Intern Dean/Director Houser called the meeting to order at 11:41 a.m.

2. Approval of Minutes

M/S/C Coordinator Caudill and Chief De Leon approved the April 18th, 2024 meeting minutes as submitted.

3. Appointment of Chair

Chief Dale nominated Chief Reel as chair of the Law Enforcement Advisory Program Committee. Coordinator Caudill seconded. The committee voted unanimously to appoint Chief Reel as Chair.

4. Old Business

A. Range Instructors/Range School

Intern Dean/Director Houser reported on the ongoing need for specialized instructors in various learning domains, including range, arrest controls, use of force, and physical training. Currently, the program employs ten specialized instructors for these areas, he emphasized the importance of recruiting additional instructors to meet the program's growing demands.

He further stated that his professional development funds are primarily allocated for faculty and part-time faculty, which limits the recruitment of professional or subject matter experts. To enhance the program and support the professional development of agency personnel, Intern Dean/Director Houser respectfully asked that committee members consider granting requests for additional 1070 instructor opportunities, depending on their budget availability.

The program aims to expand its instructor base, as schedules are developed a year in advance, and continued success hinges on bringing in qualified instructors.

B. AICC Equivalency

Intern Dean/Director Houser discussed the training requirements established by POST for AICC training in the academy program, separate from the 1070 requirements. It was noted that the academy is actively pursuing an AICC equivalency process for instructors with teaching experience in various capacities within the agency.

It was explained that POST mandates specialized AICC training, but there are emerging opportunities to recognize prior training and experience through an equivalency assessment. This process involves evaluating an instructor's teaching background and relevant training received.

Concerns were raised regarding staffing shortages, as agencies find it challenging to send personnel away for extended periods. Intern Dean/Director Houser emphasized the need for new perspectives and representation within the academy, and the intention to consider equivalencies for existing instructors at the police departments, particularly for roles such as range masters who already possess foundational adult education skills.

The group was encouraged to remain informed about discussions related to AICC equivalency and to consider how this approach may benefit staffing and instructor development.

LEAC members were asked to continue to evaluate potential AICC equivalencies for instructors in their departments and report back on outcomes.

C. Winter AJ 141 course

It was announced that the Imperial Valley College will have an upcoming winter AJ 141 course, which provides the PC 832 certification. The Imperial County Sheriff's Office and Probations Department have already inquired about securing spots in the class.

It was explained that, as the course is held at a college, specific enrollment requirements must be adhered to, preventing the ability to prioritize certain agencies for enrollment. However, there is some flexibility regarding class capacity. The current cap for AJ 141 is set at twenty-five students, but the academy can potentially accommodate an additional five students, representing a twenty percent increase.

Intern Dean/Director Houser urged agencies to confirm their needs promptly to ensure that available spots can be allocated efficiently. Additionally, it was highlighted that if agencies plan to enroll CSOs or their Explorers, they should be aware that individuals aged 18 to 21 will require a DOJ letter for participation.

Agencies interested in enrolling personnel in the AJ 141 course should communicate their needs to Administrative Assistant Rhonda Ruiz as soon as possible to facilitate enrollment requirements.

5. New Business

A. Install update force/option simulator

The successful installation of a new force option simulator was announced. It came with a cost of \$ 296,00, which was funded through lottery money. The previous system was eight years old and had transitioned to telephonic support for the last two years.

Upon the yearly contract renewal with Virtra, it was communicated that support would no longer be available, prompting the proposal for the new system.

The new simulator includes all new equipment, with no components reused, and is expected to provide support service for at least the next five years.

The enhanced features of the simulator will improve training for recruits, particularly in communication and decision-making during high-pressure scenarios.

Intern Dean/Director Brett Houser extended an invitation to committee members and council members to tour the facility and experience the simulator firsthand, emphasizing its value in enhancing understanding of law enforcement challenges.

B. Budget Enhancement-Two new patrol vehicles (IVC)

Intern Dean/Director Houser presented a proposal to obtain two additional patrol vehicles, increasing the fleet from two to four. This request stems from the continued expansion of the program and the need to effectively train more students in traffic stop procedures.

The current setup allows for forty students, but with only two vehicles, training opportunities are limited. The importance of providing students with ample practice, ideally allowing each recruit to participate multiple time in exercises to meet training standards was emphasized.

Intern Dean/Director Houser called for Chief Reel to make a motion to purchase two additional patrol vehicles. The motion was seconded by Chief Dale and Captain Sheffield. The motion was unanimously passed.

Discussion followed expressing a hope to purchase within the current fiscal year. However, concerns were raised about ongoing supply chain issues affecting vehicle availability, particularly with Ford SUVs.

Captain Sheffield shared recent experiences with vehicle orders, noting delays and cancellations, and cautioned against the hybrid models due to previous issues with performance.

The discussion included the need to expose students to various vehicle configurations, including different types of patrol cars. Chief Dale proposed the installation of mock-ups in the vehicles to familiarize students with technology and equipment.

C. Facility Use Agreements

The Committee was presented with the introduction of a facilities use agreement, noting that for many years, agencies have generously allowed the use of their units for training purposes during traffic collisions, vehicle stops, and crime scenarios.

Intern Dean/Director Houser highlighted an incident involving a borrowed unit that was damaged, raising concerns about liability and financial responsibility. To maintain good relationships among partners, an agreement is necessary to clarify responsibilities.

A draft of a facilities use agreement, modeled after similar agreements used by the fire program, has been drafted. This MOU aims to streamline the process for local law enforcement agencies wishing to use Imperial Valley College facilities, such as the obstacle course and track and field for trainings.

The goal is to simplify the current procedures, which often require lengthy facility use request through the Office of Student Affairs. Currently, agencies need to go through Miriam Trejo from Student Affairs to use Imperial Valley College's facilities.

D. Work Test Sample Battery and Pellot B

It was announced that agencies are welcome to utilize classrooms if they wish to conduct their agencies Pellot B testing.

For the future, agencies will be able to conduct their Work Test Sample Battery when our new regional facility is built.

E. AB 89-Modern Day Policing Degree (Fall 2025)

A motion was made by Intern Dean/Director Houser to discuss AB 89-Modern Day Policing Degree for Fall 2025 to the next meeting. The motion was seconded by Coordinator Caudill.

F. Class 9 start date (January 2026)

Intern Dean/Director Houser presented a proposal to adjust the schedule of class nine academy from a July start to a January start, lasting through December. This change follows a historical shift from a three-semester, eighteen month program to a one-year program initiated in 2021.

The new schedule would allow for better management of training scenarios, particularly during extreme heat conditions that have been documented as causing injuries during summer sessions. The safety and performance of participants are primary concerns.

The proposed timeline would allow for the last segment of training, which includes scenarios, to occur in cooler weather, thereby reducing liability and enhancing training effectiveness.

The EVOC (Emergency Vehicle Operations Course) in San Bernardino, were contacted about this change and said they are open to adjusting their schedule to accommodate the change.

Counselor Lovitt asked when class nine's open enrollment for applications would start. Intern Dean/Director Houser estimated late October or early November of 2025. He felt this would align with the transition to the new schedule, as DOJ clearance letters are required within three months of the start date.

Chief Dale shared insights from experiences with other institutions, specifically noting the challenges faced by College of the Desert, which runs fewer modules and has a longer enrollment process. The effectiveness and popularity of the current Imperial Valley College program were praised.

A motion was made to support the proposed change in the Academy's schedule from July to January. The motion was seconded by Captain Sheffield and Chief Deputy De Leon. The motion was approved unanimously.

Intern Dean/Director Houser indicated that there would be opportunities for additional training and certification classes during the gap, and plans to seek input on local training needs via email.

G. Bridge - Exercise Science Faculty and Academy

A bridge will be incorporated with the Lifetime Fitness Program with the Imperial Valley College's Exercise Science faculty to incorporate their expertise into the program. This will enhance the training with more dynamic, job-specific movements rather than traditional exercises and assist with the increasing class sizes.

H. Scenario-Based Learning Activities in Learning Domains

More Scenario-Based learning will be infused into the training curriculum to better prepare recruits for real-world situations such as traffic stops and crimes in progress, rather than relying solely on theoretical instruction.

The intention is to provide students with hands-on practice, improving their preparedness for field training officer (FTO) programs and ultimately their future careers.

There will be a need for volunteers to participate in training exercises, acting as victims or other roles during scenario-based practices. This will provide valuable experiences for recruits and enhance the training environment.

I. FTO Program/graduation success/concerns

Committee members were asked to provide feedback to our academy on recruits who have been hired with the department and go through their FTO program. Intern Dean/Director Houser informed them that adjustments can be made to the program to accommodate any concerns they have.

J. High School Criminal Justice Programs

Input was requested from the advisory committee on ways to reach out to high school programs and offer support. Intern Dean/Director Houser felt that there should be early exposure to career fields and degree programs for high schools. He also noted that there seemed to be a lack of law enforcement and fire programs and requested the committee start thinking about the potential for expanding dual enrollment opportunities. They were encouraged to reach out to their local jurisdiction high schools for interest and support.

K. LEAC input on the graduation ceremony

Intern Dean/Director Houser requested feedback from the committee on how to improve the graduation ceremony to make it more meaningful and memorable for recruits and their agencies with a goal of creating a smooth and impactful ceremony that highlights the investment and support from agencies. He requested committee members email him ideas by April.

L. Potential Increase in PC 832

Jail deputies are now required to have the PC 832 course prior to being appointed as a peace officer; there may have been a misunderstanding on the timeframe on the required training. There is the possibility that the college will begin to receive a higher demand for the course. Bureau Chief Hollar has instructed presenters to contact POST and discuss the possibility of increasing the number of presentations offered.

6. Adjournment

M/S/C Chief Blackstone/Chief Dale the meeting adjourned at 12:32 p.m.