




MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council Members

FROM: Interim Assistant City Manager Bruce Mills 

DATE: March 16, 2023

SUBJECT: **APD Training Academy: Curriculum Review Process Assessment by Kroll**

This memorandum provides the completed review by Kroll and Associates on the curriculum review process.

Kroll recommends that the existing process be replaced with a new community input and curriculum review structure by creating two separate advisory bodies – a Community Advisory Council and a Professional Advisory Committee. City management and Austin Police Department staff are working together to assess these recommendations and move forward with community partners.

Please contact me or Elise Renshaw (Elise.Renshaw@austintexas.gov) should you have questions or would like additional information.

cc: Jesús Garza, Interim City Manager
Chief Chacon, Austin Police Department

Attachment

APD Training Academy: Curriculum Review Process Assessment

March 1, 2023

Prepared for
City of Austin, City Manager's Office

Status
Final Report

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1 INTRODUCTION

On December 1, 2022, the City of Austin, through the City Manager's Office (CMO), retained Kroll to review the Austin Police Department (APD) Training Academy's curriculum review process, including the progress and effectiveness of the Academy Curriculum Review Committee (ACRC or Committee) during the 145th Cadet Class.¹ The CMO asked that Kroll specifically assess how well Academy staff and the Committee worked together in reviewing course curriculum, shared perspectives on how curriculum can be more inclusive of community concerns, and documented recommended changes to curriculum. In addition, Kroll was asked to research and gather information from other police agencies and communities who have established mechanisms for obtaining community input and perspectives in police training programs and curricula review.

Throughout this project, Kroll has consulted and collaborated with Joyce James Consulting LLC (JJC), which has been working with community groups and ACRC members to ensure that community perspectives are fully represented. In conducting this review and assessment, and consistent with our scope of work, Kroll:

1. Conducted individual and group meetings with members of the ACRC to discuss what worked well, what went wrong, and how the process can be improved.
2. Conducted individual and group meetings with relevant Academy staff and APD instructors for their perceptions of how effectively the Committee and APD functioned and how to improve APD and community cooperation.
3. Reviewed video recordings of all Committee meetings from November 2021 to July 2022.
4. Reviewed the documents and materials contained in a shared Google documents drive that APD and Committee members utilized to share curriculum and course materials, comments and recommendations, and other relevant documentation.
5. Researched and gathered information from other police agencies who have developed community advisory panels or other mechanisms for seeking community and academic input into police training curriculum.

In conducting this assessment, Kroll has continued to be guided by the belief expressed in our April 2021 assessment of the APD Training Academy that, while it is not possible to achieve perfection in policing or police training, "building a long-term system of internal and external review of training methods and Academy effectiveness is essential to institutionalizing the search for excellence. Training police officers to become community-oriented, empathetic, compassionate, and resilient guardians of the public in a dynamic and diverse city, while promoting officer health and wellness, is a constantly evolving process. For this reason, police academies should be in a constant state of review and improvement."²

This report summarizes Kroll's findings and recommendations consistent with these principles.

¹ Contract Number CT 4400 22112900102 (December 1, 2022).

² See *Austin Police Department: Review and Assessment of Training Academy ("Kroll Assessment")*, April 23, 2021, p. 108; <https://www.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=359317>

2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the outset, we wish to commend the community members and Training Academy staff who put in time and effort to review and improve training curriculum through the Academy Curriculum Review Committee. The extent of community input into police training attempted by the ACRC process in 2021-2022 far exceeds anything tried by most police agencies in the United States. Despite frustrations and setbacks, the City of Austin's commitment to establishing a mechanism for meaningful academic and community input into how APD prepares future sworn officers is exceptional.

2.1 Key Findings

As discussed in greater detail in this report, Kroll's assessment of the curriculum review process found that the ACRC functioned for most of its existence without a clearly defined mission and scope, which hampered its effectiveness from the beginning. Nor were there established meeting protocols to guide how recommendations and Academy responses were to be documented. Committee members became frustrated with how little impact their work appeared to have on cadet training. That Committee members could not observe how the courses under review were taught further hampered the effectiveness of the process.

Although Academy staff suggested that the ACRC process led to internal discussions with instructors that positively impacted the tone and delivery of course instruction and raised awareness around issues of language usage and messaging, no one disputes that few curriculum changes have been documented. Kroll's assessment also found:

- There was no defined process for Committee recommendations and actionable items. Committee members did not always speak with one voice, as individual comments were frequently inserted onto an assortment of documents, which sometimes proved confusing to Academy staff.
- The Committee frequently directed its comments and criticisms towards wide-ranging policing issues that impact American society, rather than to specific and well-reasoned curriculum changes necessary for APD consumption. While addressing impactful societal issues is important and essential for building community trust, Academy instructors believed that many issues raised by the Committee required input from APD executive leadership before any curriculum changes could be adopted.
- Although the ACRC was originally intended to address how such things as DEI principles, de-escalation, trauma-informed content, and adult learning can be effectively incorporated consistently throughout Academy training, some of the Committee's focus extended beyond that original scope.
- Most ACRC meetings did not produce a concise set of specific recommendations, and Academy staff rarely reported back to the Committee concerning prior comments and suggestions. This further contributed to the perception that little progress resulted from the Committee's input.
- Ultimately, the process failed to establish true police-community collaboration. A lack of trust existed from the beginning that was never resolved.
- There remain institutional barriers within APD and a resistance to re-thinking training approaches and curriculum content among some sworn instructors. This is partly due to a lack of executive leadership oversight of and involvement in Academy affairs.

- Finally, although a set of revised Cadet Training Unit Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in February 2022 attempted to clarify the Division Manager’s decision-making authority over changes to cadet instruction and curriculum at the Academy, there remains a general feeling among sworn staff that the Division Manager, as a civilian employee, has no authority to impose directives on sworn members, and that sworn members are only required to respond to sworn chain of command. APD’s failure to enforce the revised SOPs has contributed to the Academy’s resistance to change.

2.2 Recommendations

Kroll recommends that the existing ACRC process be replaced with a new community input and curriculum review structure by creating two separate advisory bodies – a Community Advisory Council and a Professional Advisory Committee as described below. Alternatively, if the existing ACRC process is to be continued, it should be re-formulated with a more defined scope and better protocols. Whichever model is selected, we recommend that APD leadership also convene regular neighborhood strategic planning meetings within each APD sector.

Preferred Model: Replace the ACRC with a Community Advisory Council and a Professional Advisory Committee. As discussed in Section 5.2.1, Kroll recommends that the ACRC process be replaced with a new community input and curriculum review structure by creating two separate advisory bodies, each with a different focus.

- The **Community Advisory Council (CAC)** would include a broad representation of community members and would meet quarterly with Academy and APD leadership to discuss pre-determined topics of interest to community members. The agenda would be set ahead of time by a smaller working group of CAC leaders, a third-party community facilitator, and the Division Manager. Its primary focus would be to ensure that cadet training includes a comprehensive understanding of the diverse communities within Austin, the expectations of officers when interacting with members of the community, and the type of police department the community wants and expects. Any written recommendations and action items arising from CAC meetings would be addressed by APD leadership, with Academy leadership ensuring that the CAC’s concerns are shared with the Professional Advisory Committee working groups (discussed below) and properly reflected in the training curriculum.
- The **Professional Advisory Committee (PAC)** would consist of academic and other subject-matter experts that would form working groups consisting of 2-3 subject-matter experts and appropriate Academy instructors and staff to review and improve curriculum and course content within their areas of expertise. The subject-matter experts within each working group would collaborate with Academy instructors and staff to watch in-class instruction, review and revise course content supported by evidence-based research and best practices, and recommend improvements to course instruction and delivery. A minimum of two working groups would be formed each year with responsibility for reviewing all course content (generally consisting of multiple classes) within their focus areas.

In combination, these two advisory bodies would allow for (1) robust community input through the CAC into how APD trains and prepares cadets to serve the citizens of Austin, and (2) meaningful and substantive improvements to training curriculum through the PAC working groups. Academy and APD leadership would more regularly engage with the community through the quarterly CAC meetings, and instructors would work collaboratively with the PAC subject-matter experts from a variety of fields to make evidence-based improvements to Academy instruction. An Academy staff representative would be required to ensure that

CAC concerns and input are considered by the PAC working groups when reviewing and revising course content.

Kroll believes that this two-committee approach would enable the Academy to make meaningful and significant improvements to curriculum content and course instruction with greater buy-in from Academy instructors. Moreover, to increase transparency and accountability, APD should regularly update its website to describe the work of the CAC and the PAC and explain how their efforts are impacting cadet and in-service training.

Alternative Model: Better Define the Mission and Process of the ACRC. As described in Section 5.2.2, if for any reasons the existing ACRC process is to be continued, it should re-formulated with (1) a defined mission and scope, (2) established meeting protocols, (3) a process for documenting actionable Committee recommendations, (4) an accountability process that requires APD to provide responses to all Committee recommendations, (5) a neutral, objective third-party facilitator, (6) in-person meetings whenever possible, (7) an initial period devoted to trust-building, (8) a defined agenda and schedule, (9) transparency into class instruction by allowing Committee members to observe how certain courses are taught and presented to cadets, and (10) a process governing how Committee members are selected, what subject-matter expertise may be desired, and what is expected of all participants.

Neighborhood Strategic Planning Meetings: In Section 5.2.3, Kroll additionally recommends that APD hold community-focused quarterly strategic planning meetings at the Sector level. These meetings would be designed for APD leadership and Sector Commanders (as well as Academy leadership) to hear from community members and groups within each of the Austin police sectors and to address community concerns about crime and policing methods specific to those neighborhoods.

Additional Recommendations: Apart from a revised process of curriculum review and community input into cadet training, Kroll recommends that (1) Academy instructors and supervisors be retrained on the provisions and expectations of the revised Cadet Training Unit SOPs, and (2) instructors and supervisors who fail to abide by the SOPs be held accountable.

Additionally, it is important for the top levels of APD leadership to publicly express and demonstrate their commitment to police-community collaboration efforts. As part of the department's accountability to the community, it is essential that APD leadership publicly affirm the work of community advisory panels as necessary, legitimate, and beneficial to APD and the City of Austin. An Assistant Chief of Police should be designated to implement these recommendations and oversee efforts to increase transparency and accountability. Finally, Kroll recommends that APD provide additional staff support at the Academy—by making the Community Engagement Specialist a full-time position and creating a Community Liaison position—to ensure effective and sustainable implementation of these recommendations and better department responsiveness to community concerns.

3 ACADEMY CURRICULUM REVIEW COMMITTEE (Fall 2021 – Summer 2022)

The Academy Curriculum Review Committee (ACRC or Committee) was established in May 2021 to provide a mechanism for APD to receive community and academic input into academy training and to make curriculum more inclusive of community concerns. Since its inception, the ACRC has reviewed APD Training Academy (Academy) course curricula to help APD better address issues of racial and gender equity, emphasize de-escalation, incorporate diverse perspectives through community partnerships, and promote resilient officers through effective and inclusive adult learning instruction. In this section, we provide a general overview of the ACRC to assess how effectively Academy staff and instructors collaborated with Committee members, what impact it had on cadet training, and whether improvements can be made to the structure, purpose, and functioning of the Committee that will allow for greater police-community trust and partnerships.

3.1 Purpose and Scope of Committee

In Kroll's 2021 assessment of the Training Academy, we recommended that APD "formalize an internal review committee responsible for reviewing each instructor's syllabi and curriculum and suggesting ways to improve each class in the Academy." Kroll noted that Dr. Anne Kringen, who had recently been appointed Division Manager of the Academy, a newly created position designed to improve curriculum planning and the incorporation of adult learning concepts into academy training, was in the process of forming an Academy Curriculum Review Committee. Kroll suggested that "[t]he committee should include the new Division Manager and soon-to-be-hired Training Supervisor, along with selected Academy supervisors and instructors, and outside academic and community representation."³

Kroll also discussed the ACRC's intended purpose and focus:

- With the assistance of the Division Manager and the Training Supervisor, and in coordination with the Commander and Academy supervisors, all course content, including courses taught by the Learned Skills Unit and Cadet Training Unit, need to be evaluated for ways to incorporate DEI content into all aspects of training. The current siloed approach, which essentially isolates DEI courses from police tactical training, should be modified to ensure consistency of messaging and a fundamental emphasis on the humanity and complexity of the citizens APD serves and protects. "Checking the box" once a course is completed needs to be resisted. Teaching about multiculturalism and the importance of community relations in week one will be undermined if we then train "warriors" to counter all threats in later weeks. All courses should be reinforced, formally and informally, throughout the cadet training program.
- Cadets must be thoroughly and effectively trained in all proper defensive tactics, arrest and control techniques, crowd control, and so on. But the messaging throughout the Academy needs to consistently emphasize the ethical responsibilities of policing, teach a sensitivity to legitimate community fears that are based in history, and recognize the complexity and nuance of the human beings that cadets will interact with daily. Cadets must understand that more than 95% of day-to-day policing is more akin to social services

³ *Kroll Assessment*, p. 93.

than policing. The single most important skill that a police officer can develop is the ability to effectively interact with and relate to a diverse community of people in ways that are honest, authentic, and transparent. Implicit messages, whether from training videos or course content, suggesting that certain people or neighborhoods are more “dangerous” than others, must be resisted and countered.⁴

The initial scope of the ACRC was set forth in a document dated May 11, 2021, stating that the Committee would initially consist of six community members, three of whom will have academic backgrounds, and three current APD officers. The Office of Police Oversight (OPO), Victim Services and the Equity Office were also to have at least one staff member per organization participating on the Committee, which was to report to the Academy Division Manager or the Academy Training Supervisor.

Members of the Committee were initially organized into three working groups. Each working group was to include a non-academic community member, an academic, an APD representative, and at least one representative from OPO, Victim Services, or the Equity Office. According to the original scoping document, each working group was to be assigned one lesson plan per month and have two weeks to assess and verify, where applicable:

- (1) acceptable inclusion of **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) content** in lesson plans, or isolating areas where DEI content can be incorporated, including recommending areas of focus for instructors and recommending resources to utilize to better include DEI content into the lesson plan.
- (2) acceptable **active learning components** in lesson plans, or isolating areas where active learning components can be included, including specific ideas for enhancing active learning.
- (3) that **de-escalation** is emphasized in lesson plans, or recommended areas where de-escalation messaging can be included [and] recommending specific content or resources.
- (4) acceptable inclusion of **community teaching** partners/subject matter experts in lesson plans or making recommendations where a community teaching partner/subject matter expert might be utilized including specific recommendations for individuals or organizations that might have substantial knowledge of the subject matter.
- (5) acceptable inclusion of **Spanish** language instructions in lesson plans, or isolating areas where active learning components can be included, including specific recommendations and resources.
- (6) acceptable implementation of **trauma-informed training** in lesson plans, or isolating areas where trauma-informed training can be included, including specific recommendations and resources.
- (7) that presentations, handouts, and other materials are appropriately developed and that these materials supplement the lesson plan. Verifying all elements above within these materials.⁵

The full committee was to meet once a month to discuss the comments and recommendations from each working group. Kroll found, however, that this process was short-lived, as some Committee members wanted to have input into material they were not assigned, some desired larger group meetings, and more input was demanded from Academy staff. After disbanding the working groups, the Committee collectively

⁴ *Kroll Assessment*, p. 94.

⁵ Academy Curriculum Review scope document, May 11, 2021, pp. 2-3.

attempted to review and revise three lesson plans per month with meetings every two weeks, but this also proved untenable, as the Division Manager did not have sufficient support and resources and Committee members had limited time to devote to Committee work.

Eventually, APD proposed that the Committee limit its meetings to one per month and review approximately two courses per month. The Committee, however, has repeatedly expressed concerns that its guidance and input are not being sufficiently addressed by APD, and there was no process in place for APD to provide feedback to the Committee concerning to what extent the Committee's input was being considered and what, if any, revisions were made to lesson plans and course content following the Committee's input.

For most of the Committee's existence, the process essentially revolved around Committee members inserting individual comments and recommendations into the applicable lesson plans contained on a shared Google Docs drive. This resulted in sometimes lengthy lesson plans with numerous individual comments from various ACRC members, some of which were discussed during the monthly Committee meetings. Other comments were simply reflected in the documents to be reviewed by APD staff.

As the ACRC progressed into 2022, some meetings were devoted simply to re-defining the process that should govern the Committee's work with no course content discussed or reviewed. In the seven months the ACRC operated during 2022, only a handful of courses were reviewed and discussed in substance, which led to increased frustration expressed by Committee members and APD staff alike.

3.2 The Committee in Operation (November 2021 – July 2022)

Kroll reviewed video recordings of the 12 ACRC meetings held from November 2021 through July 2022, which totaled approximately 24.5 hours. Due to the format of the Zoom recordings, Kroll could only see participants as they spoke.⁶

Most ACRC meetings followed the same format, with Academy Training Supervisor Phil Axelrod acting as facilitator and starting each meeting by reading established ground rules, which included respectful discourse and a collaborative environment where "everyone's voice is valuable." Axelrod frequently shared his screen by showing a Word document relevant to the curriculum module being discussed, and he often took notes throughout the meeting on the same shared document. At various times, Axelrod indicated that the notes would be reviewed by training instructors, supervisors, and other relevant staff.⁷

Except for the meetings devoted to process, most Committee meetings attempted to cover one or two lesson plans. Throughout the meetings, Committee members discussed the lesson plans broadly while also offering specific recommendations. Meetings were largely collaborative and respectful, though tensions and frustrations became more obvious as the meetings progressed. Specifically, some community members expressed significant frustration with the lack of transparency in the process, as well as the time constraints of reviewing entire lesson plans in two hours. In one instance, on May 25, 2022, a community member expressed frustration that the "Force Options" curriculum, which was previously reviewed in 2021, remained largely unchanged despite the Committee having proposed many changes during its first review.

⁶ Several Committee members complained to Kroll that some APD officers who attended the Zoom meetings did so with their cameras off, and in some cases without commenting. Because the Zoom meetings were recorded in speaker format as opposed to gallery format, Kroll was unable to verify how frequently participants had their cameras off. Of the people who spoke, including APD staff and community members, most had their cameras on. Kroll observed that, occasionally, some speakers had their camera turned off, including a few APD instructors and some community participants.

⁷ Kroll notes that Kimberly Horndeski, a certified mediator and facilitator, was brought in to help facilitate ACRC meetings starting on May 25, 2022. She assisted in the facilitation responsibilities during the May 25, 2022, meeting and acted as facilitator on June 29, 2022. Axelrod participated in both those meetings but neither he nor Horndeski were present for the final meeting on June 27, 2022.

On July 27, 2022, one member described the process as “opaque” and expressed frustration that ACRC members had devoted considerable time and effort with no apparent return in terms of clarity, transparency, accountability, and tangible action. During meetings held in June and July 2022, Lt. Elijah Myrick of the Cadet Training Unit suggested incorporating a two-month feedback loop, which would allow training instructors time to review the Committee’s recommendations, make appropriate revisions to the lesson plans, and report back to the Committee. However, the work of the Committee was paused after the July 27, 2022, meeting and the proposed feedback loop was never implemented. Moreover, because lesson plans were reviewed in one month without any follow-up discussions in later months, there was little if any discussion at each meeting about whether the notes and recommendations from the prior meeting had been reviewed and incorporated into lesson plans. This siloed approach to reviewing curriculum prevented the Committee from receiving desired feedback on how their input may have impacted the course curriculum.

While many of the meetings reviewed by Kroll appeared largely collaborative, the areas of tension largely related to process, as opposed to the content of the lesson plans being reviewed. Some of the more intense disagreements and discussions are noted below.

- December 8, 2021

While discussing concerns about accountability and APD’s failure to implement recommended lesson plan changes, one Committee member stated, “We need to stop pointing fingers and we need to accept that changing the training may require all of us take a little bit of risk.” In response, the instructor stated that, although he understood what the ACRC was trying to accomplish, APD executive leadership needs to put the recommended curriculum change in writing for it to become part of the training. A second Committee member expressed frustration, stating that the Committee was at an impasse and essentially wasting its time “unless we have complete buy-in from the very top of the department, and this is communicated from the top.” In response, Phil Axelrod explained that instructors do not change or dictate policy; rather, they make recommendations to the assistant chiefs. A third Committee member also expressed frustration with the process, stating that the Committee “heard from [several] instructors that they discuss discretion verbally, and we were just asking to put it in the lesson plan, and then we face this high level of resistance.”

- February 23, 2022

A disagreement developed between an instructor and a Committee member concerning ways to prepare cadets for the TCOLE [Texas Commission on Law Enforcement] examination while also ensuring that they learned and understood APD-specific policies and protocols. The instructor commented that cadets simply memorize information for a test, which he likened to the way in which college students learn. The Committee member, a college professor, took exception to this, which led to a heated exchange. Axelrod tried to refocus the conversation, stating, “This is getting confrontational, and it doesn’t need to.” Despite Axelrod’s attempts, a tense debate continued. Another member tried to refocus the conversation and requested that they “level set” by discussing the objectives of the Committee. It was agreed that a “reset” would occur at the beginning of the next meeting. [During the July 27, 2022 meeting, a Committee member referenced a lack of resolution to this incident and stated, “I think this space is constructed in a way that’s inhospitable to some community voices.”]

- June 29, 2022

During this meeting, a community member expressed visible frustration with the process and criticized Axelrod’s handling of the meetings, to which Axelrod stated, “I do not appreciate getting

yelled at in this meeting.” The outside facilitator (Kim Horndeski), who had been brought in the previous month to help facilitate dialogue, tried to resolve the conflict, but the parties were not satisfied. The community member stated, “I don’t appreciate the microaggression. I wasn’t yelling. I didn’t curse. I’m expressing urgency in a professional manner. If you don’t like that, I would look inside yourself and ask why.”

Later in the meeting, the community member again referenced microaggressions and expressed skepticism about Horndeski’s role. While stating she respected Horndeski, she believed a moderator should have an “anti-racist background... I don’t agree to be governed by Robert’s Rules of Order or, you know, [a] code of ethics... you know, rules of white civility frankly. So, I think there’s a lot of issues internally just how this is being run that is triggering to me.”

The community member further referenced “systemic inequity of the process,” stating, “we are extremely lacking in a voice that can ground us in a non-racist and inclusive, equitable process.” She expressed that “this is a racist process” and explained that she has experienced panic attacks every meeting. Another community member also expressed concerns about Horndeski’s role and that an anti-racist background would better serve the Committee.

- July 27, 2022

During this meeting, neither Axelrod nor Horndeski were present, and the meeting was led by Assistant Chief Jason Staniszewski. The community member who was upset at the last meeting reiterated her belief that the ACRC structure and process suffers from microaggressions and racism. She felt humiliated at the last meeting, wanted an apology, and commented on Axelrod’s absence. Assistant Chief Staniszewski replied, “It’s important to us that all the members here feel safe and respected in this setting and that also extends to the members of our department and the training and recruiting. So, at this time, there are issues that he has that we need to work through before he comes back.” The community member stated that, in her mind, the subtext of that statement was that Axelrod does not feel safe and that the community member needs to be removed. Staniszewski clarified that he did not intend to leave that impression.

Following this meeting, the ACRC process was placed on hold pending an independent review and assessment of the process and a determination of how the process can be improved.

3.3 Concerns of Committee Members

On August 5, 2022, shortly after the final ACRC meeting was held and the process was placed on pause, six Committee members submitted a memorandum to the City Council and City Manager asking for “immediate action to ensure the curriculum review process results in a higher quality curriculum for the education of new police officers and, ultimately, culture change.”⁸ According to the memorandum, “racial bias, militarism, and poor teaching methods were all issues [the ACRC was] created to address” and, while some “modest improvements” have been observed, Committee members are “losing faith that this process as it is currently structured will result in change.”⁹ The memorandum emphasized a “deeply entrenched resistance to change” within APD and, as referenced below, noted several barriers to change and causes for inertia:

⁸ Memorandum from Community Members of the Police Academy Review Panel to Austin City Council and City Manager, August 5, 2022, p. 1.

⁹ *Ibid.*

- *Officers as teachers.* “Since most police officers assigned to the Academy are not experts in history, law, the interplay among government branches, physiology, psychology, poverty or trauma, their work is autodidactic and often grounded deeply in police culture and how they themselves were trained.”¹⁰
- *Institutional and cultural narratives.* “In a system that authorizes police officers to develop curriculum, officers resist changes that seem to them to undermine or challenge police culture.” This is reflected in an emphasis by instructors on “officer safety vs. public safety” and by material that suggests “policing is under attack by those who don’t ‘understand’ it, rather than recognizing that real structural harms are at the root of the widening gap between police and the public.”¹¹
- *Structure of committee.* Some APD officers who participated in ACRC sessions were perceived as hostile to the process. The memorandum called for opening the Committee to allow for more community members to offer input, adding additional academic and legal expertise in the topics being taught, and requiring Academy staff to come to the meetings prepared to collaborate without controlling the collaboration.
- *Structure of practice/sessions.* “The committee has become a space where community members make suggestions and recommendations to an audience that doesn’t close the loop with any report about if or how those recommendations are incorporated into the teaching of cadets.” The Committee’s work has resulted in few changes and APD has rarely informed the Committee about what changes have been made.
- *Focus on DEI rather than all Council directives.* The memorandum opined that the Committee’s directive “includes broadly migrating the department from a ‘Warrior’ to a ‘Guardian’ culture as well as addressing structural racism. Instead, the overall (misguided) orientation of our process is focused on adding new content that is seen by APD as limited to DEI only and is a source of inertia.”¹²
- *Role of the Chief and Senior Leadership.* “Often when committee recommendations focus on making clear the preferred choice among legally allowable options for the exercise of officer discretion, instructors demand a directive from the Chief.”¹³ This was a source of contention in ACRC sessions focused on search and seizure, use of force, and racial profiling. Without clear directives from APD leadership, and without leadership addressing instructor resistance to change, little can be accomplished.

The memorandum additionally noted that when the Committee reviewed modules that had previously been reviewed, it found that “little if anything” had been changed, which “led to the inescapable conclusion that the process as it is currently designed simply isn’t working.”¹⁴ There was “no feedback loop” and “no accountability.”¹⁵ When the community finds that certain types of police behavior is unacceptable, the police response is often that the officer acted consistent with his or her training. It is thus “imperative that we address the training and start to bridge the chasm between how officers view the world and how the people

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

they are supposed to police view the world.” If community members consider the process to be “a waste of time, the opportunity to improve will be lost.”¹⁶

Many similar concerns were expressed individually by Committee members interviewed by Kroll (in collaboration with Joyce James Consulting), including the following:

- “I don’t recall any time the Chief or Assistant Chiefs have publicly voiced, or formally internally messaged to staff the importance of the [ACRC]. They take credit for it. They point to it as innovative on national television. But in their comments to the [Public Safety Commission], for instance, there’s really no support for the group or the process. Instead, they are defensive about what they haven’t done and seem focused on individual members of the Committee they can designate as non-cooperative.”
- “I don’t feel like there is a real commitment from APD leadership.”
- “The work is ultimately about culture change. Where is the evidence of that change in APD responses to either the recommendations of the Committee, or to the public?”
- APD never really worked out a process for recommendations/improvements. We never got to the place where Academy staff looked at ACRC as a valuable resource. The Academy did not look at this as something that could make them better.
- Any adjustments to process by itself do not address the Committee’s main concern – a lack of APD good faith participation.
- Accountability must include transparency in the process itself – make the courses accessible to the committee. The lesson plan is one thing; how the instructor delivers it is another thing altogether.
- The ACRC never received any feedback from APD. Most of the modules reviewed were unchanged, except for grammar and punctuation. There was insufficient time to give and receive feedback in any meaningful way.
- We never achieved common ground with the instructors that there was a need for substantive change. That was never embraced by APD. We felt that we were unable to break through.
- We had no way to address the political and policy issues that are deeply embedded in social and cultural norms.
- “I thought that APD would consider recommendations and that there would be dialogue about those recommendations. But it did not play out that way because the process was not set up for success.”
- There was an undercurrent of “us v. them” throughout many of the meetings.
- “Some officers at the Academy need to overcome their thin skins. If someone says something with passion or emotion, folks need to not react so defensively. Take a deep breath – people get upset, hear what they are saying, continue.”

3.4 Concerns of APD Staff

Kroll interviewed six Academy staff members, including the Training Supervisor, Community Engagement Specialist, and four instructors/supervisors who had participated in several ACRC meetings. Kroll also discussed its findings in meetings with the Assistant Chief over the Academy, the Commander, and the

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

Division Manager. As noted below, many of APD's concerns mirrored those expressed by Committee members, including frustrations with the lack of a defined process, an acknowledgement that the system of documenting recommendations and APD responses was disorganized or non-existent, a general lack of trust with the intent and purpose of the Committee, and a lack of effective communication. Based on our discussions with Academy personnel, we highlight APD's key concerns below.

- Academy staff received input in the form of scattered comments that were not necessarily recommendations, and from many different voices, which were difficult to compile into a workable document.
- We never really resolved what the process was. Were comments early enough, so we could talk about them? What came out of the meeting that we could pass on to instructors? How did chain of command fit in? These were all constant sources of tension.
- Some community members were uncomfortable with the written format and only wanted to speak during the meetings.
- When the ACRC was created, it did not have a clear scope of work and guideposts. We were not set up for success – the command from leadership was simply, “Just get it done, go.” This was not tenable from the perspective of the people who had to do the work.
- Although a lot of the resistance to changing curriculum based on the Committee's input was due to defensiveness on the part of instructors, there also was a lack of trust in Committee members. There have been a lot of personal attacks that have come out of the meetings, which has reduced APD's trust in the Committee's work.
- Certain Committee members were all about politics. One member leaked things to various media sources whenever the member did not like what APD was doing. On other occasions, complaints were made to City political representatives without attempting to address concerns with Academy leadership. This further eroded trust.¹⁷
- Another member became emotionally charged during the meetings; the member's attacks were perceived as personally focused, which was extremely counterproductive.
- Expertise comes in a lot of forms, both academic and experiential. But comments and criticisms need to be constructive to be productive.
- The volume of work that was attempted, especially in the first several months of the ACRC, was completely unrealistic. We did not have the time and resources to accomplish what the Committee wanted. And the Committee understandably became increasingly upset by the lack of apparent feedback and progress.
- What many Committee members are asking for is sweeping cultural change at APD, but this is not realistic with a curriculum review committee. Culture does not change quickly. Many of the issues brought up during ACRC meetings concern broader issues relating to policing nationally.

¹⁷ In certain email correspondence reviewed by Kroll, it appeared that some Committee members were quick to lodge unjustified personal attacks that insinuated negative motives on certain Academy staff members while copying City political representatives or requesting action by, in at least one case, the Ethics Office, the Human Rights Commission, and the Equity Office. In Kroll's judgment, these actions further eroded the trust and collaboration needed to make the ACRC process work effectively.

- The Committee has no defined mission or goal. Many of the meetings were opportunities to air grievances around systemic issues concerning policing in American society rather than specific changes to a particular course curriculum.
- If recommendations concern ways to improve adult learning and delivery of content, we can address it. But if the recommendations are asking for significant changes to content, we need executive leadership buy-in. Some of the meetings turned into commander forums, but we did not have anyone at that level to approve the requested changes.
- The lack of involvement or commitment from senior leadership (e.g., Commander or Assistant Chief) was frustrating. Having these decision makers involved would be a positive development.
- Officers have a minimum of 23 years until retirement, so influencing APD culture from a small group of cadets will take a long time. But the reforms implemented during the 144th cadet class are making a difference. There have been many positive reports about cadets doing good things as officers – those cadets have higher expectations and received more comprehensive training.
- What the Committee members did not see is how many meetings internally we had at the Academy discussing what a lesson plan is supposed to be and how to change tone and messaging.
- This needs to be a truly collaborative process. We are trying to make quality changes and adjustments, but time is needed to research and think through adjustments.
- APD did not prepare instructors as much as it should have for the Zoom meetings – many were just told to show up. The instructors needed more context and guidance.
- In a few instances, instructors were directed to attend ACRC meetings while performing street overtime duties in a patrol car. That led to some of them not turning on video while multitasking.
- Many felt the inability to meet in person impacted the relationships between Committee members and staff.

It was also noted that, since the ACRC was formed, the Academy has had four different Commanders, overseen by three different Assistant Chiefs. While this reflects the department's continued challenges with staffing, including retirements and resignations that have resulted in restructured roles and responsibilities within the department, the amount of transition within the Academy has impacted sustainable process implementation as new command perspectives are incorporated with each personnel change.

Finally, beyond transitional personnel, the initial process placed the responsibility of implementation on the Division Manager alongside the responsibility of conceptually guiding curriculum development and revision. This situation was challenging in that implementation is inherently administrative and the staff ultimately implementing changes consists of sworn instructors. Because administrative processes within APD are defined based on existing rules and structures that exist within the context of sworn chain of command, placing implementation responsibilities with the Division Manager (who is considered outside the sworn chain of command) over sworn instructors created operational challenges. This perceived gap in the Division Manager's authority has resulted in a lack of responsiveness by certain instructors and supervisors to requests from the Division Manager regarding recommended changes to the curriculum.

3.5 Overall Effectiveness

It is important to highlight that the creation of the ACRC and attempts over the past two years to implement a collaborative process of incorporating outside community and academic perspectives into police training is a noteworthy development in the annals of modern policing. The level of community input into police

training that the ACRC process has attempted is not something frequently emulated in police agencies throughout the United States. What the City of Austin, APD, and the community representatives serving on the ACRC have tried to do is engage in a substantive and detailed review of how Austin trains its cadets to become newly sworn officers in service to the community.

Nevertheless, many ACRC participants are frustrated with the lack of substantive progress made in effecting change in police culture and how APD cadets are trained. Most Committee participants feel their input had little impact on Academy operations. In Kroll's judgment, most of the frustration is connected to the lack of a clearly defined process and mission guiding the ACRC, unrealistic expectations of certain community representatives, and a lack of communication and transparency on the part of APD.

There was no defined process in place for the Committee to provide curriculum recommendations to the training academy. Individual committee members inserted comments on a variety of documents that were uploaded onto a shared Google Doc drive, including lesson plans, PowerPoint presentations, and course handouts. These comments were made in a variety of ways. At times they were provided as comment bubbles within documents. Other times they were provided as in-text revisions. In some cases, members of the Committee wrote comments in new documents. As a result, Academy staff received a mishmash of comments, criticism, and recommended changes on inconsistently formatted documentation for each class reviewed. Given that individual Committee members each prepared their own response documents, these varied approaches to providing commentary resulted in many different documents being delivered to the department for any single class. The nature of the documentation proved confusing as some comments did not provide specific recommendations and comments provided by different Committee members at times conflicted.

On a few occasions, the Committee tried to come up with an agreed set of recommendations. A member of the Training and Education team would identify major themes and set an agenda to discuss the comments and agree upon recommendations; however, conflict over which comments to include as recommendations limited the productivity of these meetings.

Given these varied challenges, few of the meetings resulted in an agreed set of specific recommendations. While the Academy has worked to address general issues in curriculum based on the overall concerns expressed by the Committee, Kroll could identify no available list of specific Committee recommendations, and everyone we interviewed confirmed that the work in 2022 did not generate such a list.

Kroll also found that there were many missed opportunities for establishing true police-community collaboration. A lack of trust from the beginning was never resolved. During some ACRC meetings, Academy instructors became visibly perturbed and offered curt or conclusory answers to Committee members' questions. At other times, there was spirited discussion and debate without any resolution, which caused all parties to leave frustrated. This lack of resolution appeared to be an ongoing issue that hindered progress. Although a third-party facilitator was brought in for the May and June 2022 meetings, even the facilitator failed to gain the trust of all participants.

During the ACRC meetings reviewed by Kroll (from November 2021 to July 2022), the following Academy courses were scheduled for review or discussed in some fashion: Civilian Interaction Training, Interacting with Deaf and Hard of Hearing Individuals, ICAT (Integrating Communications, Assessment, and Tactics), Juvenile Offenders, Verbal Communications (scheduled for review but not discussed), Racial Profiling, Fair and Impartial Policing, Multiculturalism and Human Relations, Force Options, and US and Texas Constitution. While the lesson plans on the shared Google Docs drive for these courses contain many individual comments of ACRC members and some APD staff, with a few exceptions, there is little documentation of what, if any, revisions were implemented for any of the courses. Nor is there any

indication of how the Committee's discussions affected the tone or content of course delivery when the classes were ultimately taught at the Academy.

Kroll learned that the responsibility for updating and changing the course material based on Committee members' comments was the responsibility of the Cadet Training Unit. Although Phil Axelrod, as Training Supervisor, led and took notes at most of the ACRC meetings, as a civilian employee within APD, he is considered outside the chain of command of sworn officers. Axelrod explained to Kroll that, when he asked instructors to consider the Committee's comments and make appropriate changes, he typically received no bottom-up feedback from the instructors. Although changes were made to the format and content of Multiculturalism and Human Relations, the Racial Profiling course was revised and slightly improved over the course of multiple sit-down meetings with the instructor, and Force Options received multiple rounds of refinement, he otherwise received no formalized responses to any of the requested changes for any of the courses, except for Racial Profiling.

Although APD attempted to revise the process and scope of the ACRC to address concerns over the workload and time requirements involved in revising course content, this was met with limited success.

Moreover, the ACRC repeatedly expressed frustration with APD's insistence that TCOLE-related content in the lesson plans and course materials could not be revised (because cadets must be tested on that content for their state certification requirements). Committee members believed the TCOLE content was often outdated and contrary to the demands of a modern 21st century police force. To address these concerns, the Division Manager worked with the ACRC to draft a memorandum to TCOLE with a list of recommended changes that the Committee and APD agreed upon. TCOLE responded that it would consider the recommendations during its next two-year internal audit process. Shortly thereafter, TCOLE sent out a clarification that academies and police departments are permitted and expected to update their material so long as the major objectives of the required material are met. APD has interpreted this directive as allowing the Academy to "add to, but do not take away from" the TCOLE content in its curriculum.¹⁸

Despite the perceived shortcomings of the ACRC process, Kroll found that there were nevertheless positive results from the ACRC's work and collaboration. The constitutional law course, which was a source of much tension and disagreement when it was reviewed, was significantly improved by APD bringing in a constitutional law professor to help teach the course. The Victim Services module was also significantly improved due to the Committee's and APD's collaboration. Finally, some progress appears to have been made on further developing and implementing adult learning principles.

¹⁸ Kroll has previously confirmed the accuracy of this statement in discussions with TCOLE staff members.

4 COMMUNITY INPUT INTO POLICE TRAINING ACROSS THE UNITED STATES

Kroll conducted research into examples of police departments that seek community input into police training, including the development of training curriculum and lesson plans, and consulted with academy directors at other agencies who oversee some form of community advisory panel. Kroll also inquired of academy directors through the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) for other agency examples. Most of the responses obtained through the IACP inquiry indicated that those agencies do not have any mechanism for community input into police training. Finally, Kroll consulted with Professor John Firman of the American University School of Public Affairs in Washington, DC, a long-time researcher and instructor on police reform and police-community relations in the United States, for his input and knowledge of police-community collaboration on training issues.

Based on our research and discussions, Kroll identified the below examples of police-community collaboration into police training that is being tried in other agencies across North America.

4.1 Baltimore Police Department

In 2019, the Baltimore Police Department (“BPD”) “created the Community Training Review Committee (CTRC) to ensure community feedback on the creation and delivery of training for BPD members. The CTRC is comprised of community members and community organizations, selected through an application process. This community partnership ensures a variety of diverse community voices help shape the training that will direct BPD’s future operations.”¹⁹

A 2020 Community Policing Report for the department stated that the committee met once in 2020 in a virtual meeting where “the group provided feedback for our EPIC (Ethical Policing Is Courageous) training. The group suggested recognizing officers for their intervention, a suggestion that was adopted by BPD. The CTRC also provided feedback on the EPIC pledge, pin and the banner that officers signed after attending the training.” The report further stated, “BPD is looking to make improvements to the Community Training Review Committee including but not limited to frequency of meetings, areas/topics of training discussed, and the level of collaboration between BPD and members.”²⁰

In May 2022, the BPD Consent Decree Implementation Unit’s Twitter account authored a post announcing that the CTRC “met in person for the first time in over two years due to the pandemic.”²¹

Kroll spoke with Gary Corder, PhD, Academic Director of the Education and Training Section of the BPD. Dr. Corder noted that the CTRC was created because of a federal consent decree that includes several training mandates pertaining to in-service training. The consent decree requires that BPD seek input from community stakeholders when developing all new in-service training programs (it does not apply to entry-level basic training). The CTRC is supposed to meet at least quarterly; however, since the pandemic, it has not met as frequently as intended. The CTRC is made up of one resident from each police district, selected from the District Commander’s Advisory Committees, and includes academic experts and representatives of non-profits, faith-based institutions, and victims’ groups. Dr. Corder said that there is not much animus

¹⁹ <https://public.powerdms.com/BALTIMOREEMD/documents/435325>

²⁰ <https://www.baltimorepolice.org/sites/default/files/2021-07/Community%20Policing%20Report%202020%20-%20Final.pdf>

²¹ https://mobile.twitter.com/BPD_CDIU/status/1522629553138585600

or anti-police hostility on the CTRC, and the community participation in the training has been well received by instructors.

Since its inception, the BPD has sought input on 2-3 in-service courses per year. The draft curriculum is posted on BPD's website and public comments are solicited. If the input is not incorporated into the curriculum, BPD must explain why (this is also reviewed by the Department of Justice pursuant to the consent decree mandates). The community's comments and feedback are posted on the website at the end of the public comment period, at which point Dr. Cordner and applicable BPD officials must decide what to do with the input. Replies to the comments are sent to the person(s) who submitted the comment. The department continues to post draft curriculum for public comment, along with proposed changes to policies.

The public comment period lasts 30 days and, after BPD reviews and considers the comments, any proposed changes are put out for another 15-day public comment period. The new curriculum, once finalized, is taught to BPD officers in a pilot instruction class and CTRC members are invited to attend. Additional pilot classes are scheduled thereafter.

The department does not have a similar process in place for entry level training, although many of the courses developed for in-service training are eventually transitioned into the entry-level academy.

4.2 Los Angeles Police Department

Kroll also spoke with Luann Pannell, PhD, Director of Police Training and Education for the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD). Dr. Pannell is "responsible for the review and evaluation of all LAPD training curricula to ensure relevancy, continuity, and compliance with State and Federal criteria and Department policy. She researches best practices in police training and adult learning to continually improve and advance LAPD training. In keeping with this role, Dr. Pannell led the team responsible for the complete redesign of the LAPD Academy in 2008."²²

Dr. Pannell spoke with Kroll about the LAPD's efforts, led by her team, to collaborate with various groups and constituencies in Los Angeles. She has developed and enhanced a variety of community relationships with LAPD that has resulted in new training. In designing new LAPD training, her team has incorporated feedback from several key communities on topics such as Fair and Equitable Policing for the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) Community, and Mental Illness and Autism.

In her role as Training Director, Dr. Pannell created a Professional Advisory Committee (PAC), on which she serves with two community co-chairs to ensure there is diverse community input into police training. There is no set or defined mission of the PAC, and it differs from a curriculum review committee in that the PAC does not specifically review curriculum, but instead advises and assists on broader issues and special projects, such as looking into the most recent literature on implicit bias training and evidence-based policing, revising training bulletins on interacting with the deaf and hard of hearing community, removing religious head coverings, and other topics of interest at any given time. The agenda is set by Dr. Pannell in collaboration with her two community co-chairs.

The PAC tries to meet every other month, with a preference for in-person meetings. The committee consists of approximately 14 members, including academic specialists, psychologists, and people with experience in diversity training and cultural competency. Typically, there are 9-10 members in attendance at each

²² <https://www.lapdonline.org/command-staff/pannell-luann/>

meeting. The members are asked to sign a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) to prevent their discussions from leaking to the press.

In addition, the Training and Education Division has held several community forums, and LAPD holds quarterly community forums that seek community input into policing and police training. The attendance at these forums has varied, from as many as 80 community members to as few as ten regular attendees.

4.3 Louisville Metro Police Department

According to the Louisville Metro Police Department’s (“LMPD”) website, the department established a Training Advisory Board (“TAB”) “to provide an opportunity for interested citizens to voice community concerns and offer recommendations regarding various aspects of the LMPD training offered to recruits and sworn members.” The website further states that the board, which meets quarterly, consists of 12 uncompensated community volunteers and four members of the LMPD.²³

Established in 2016, according to a 2018 IACP publication, “This 12-member volunteer board reviews, analyzes, and informs the way the LMPD recruits and trains police officers.”²⁴ The publication additionally quoted Dr. Michael Cunningham, vice chair of the board and a University of Louisville professor regarding the work of the TAB: “We can look into any aspect of training—both for new recruits and for in-service—that the community is interested in.”²⁵

4.4 New Orleans Metro Police Department

According to the New Orleans Police Department (“NOPD”) Operations Manual effective June 2017, a Training Advisory Committee (“TAC”) was established for “evaluating the Department’s training needs and develop its training programs.” More specifically the manual outlined the following “Policy Statement” relative to the TAC:

- 1) The Training Advisory Committee will provide feedback on an annual training needs assessment of the entire Department, which is developed by the Commander of the Education & Training Division. The training needs assessment, along with input from the Training Advisory Committee, will form the basis for the Department’s Master Training Plan for the upcoming year.
- 2) Ongoing review will serve to develop the most current training methods and enhance the knowledge and professional skills of the members of the Department.²⁶

The same operations manual stated the Training Advisory Committee would be comprised of 12 members, one of whom would be a “community representative from the Police-Community Advisory Board, selected by the Mayor’s Office of Neighborhood Engagement.”²⁷

According to a December 2019 article in *The Lens*, US District Court Judge Susie Morgan, who was presiding over the consent decree following a 2011 Justice Department investigation, noted significant improvement to training. According to the article, “Lead monitor Jonathan Aronie, NOPD representatives and lawyers for the Justice Department touted the NOPD’s improved training curriculum, new standard

²³ <https://www.louisville-police.org/230/Training-Division>

²⁴ https://www.theiacp.org/sites/default/files/2018-11/IACP_PMP_Community%20Leadership.pdf

²⁵ https://www.theiacp.org/sites/default/files/2018-11/IACP_PMP_Community%20Leadership.pdf

²⁶ <https://nola.gov/getattachment/NOPD/Policies/Chapter-33-1-1-Training-Advisory-Committee-EFFECTIVE-6-18-17.pdf/>

²⁷ <https://nola.gov/getattachment/NOPD/Policies/Chapter-33-1-1-Training-Advisory-Committee-EFFECTIVE-6-18-17.pdf/>

operating manual, the establishment of a training advisory committee and the hiring of an academics director and a curriculum director.”²⁸

4.5 Portland Police Bureau

According to the City of Portland website, a Training Advisory Council (TAC) was established in January of 2012 by Portland City Council Resolution 36912. “The TAC’s mission is to provide ongoing advice to the Chief of Police and the Training Division in order to continuously improve training standards, practices and outcomes through the examination of training content, delivery, tactics, policy, equipment and facilities.”²⁹ Among the TAC’s objectives are to:

1. Provide observations and recommendations regarding the effectiveness and adequacy of the [Portland Police Bureau (PPB)]’s employee training programs, initiatives and facilities;
2. Review training “best practices” and emerging training strategies and make recommendations on their applicability to the PPB;
3. Propose recommendations for training enhancements with the goal of improving the Bureau’s delivery of policing services to the community; and
4. Review quarterly and annual PPB Force Analysis Summary Reports to discern patterns relevant to the training of PPB’s employees and the carrying out of their duties.³⁰

A 2012 article in *The Oregonian* about the TAC stated it was “the first citizens group in city history that will have input on officer training.”³¹ The TAC website publishes all recommendations, reports, and resolutions that have been issued by the TAC since 2016. The TAC has issued formal recommendations and comments on such issues as health and wellness training, procedural justice, emotional intelligence, ABLE training, restorative justice, and many other topics.³²

According to a *KATU* article, a report prepared by a member of the TAC in 2019 noted that Black drivers “made up about 15% of traffic and pedestrian stops citywide.”³³ Also in 2019, according to *The Oregonian*, TAC members “expressed frustration . . . that the police chief rejected one of their key recommendations to include race and ethnicity data from the U.S. Census Bureau in police reports that track use of force by officers.”³⁴

A September 2021 *Portland Copwatch* publication stated that recommendations were adopted at the TAC’s May and July meetings pertaining to leadership and crowd control training.³⁵ A January 2022 *Portland Police Bureau* publication stated that the PPB completed an Active Bystandership for Law Enforcement training, which was developed with the active participation of TAC members. Dr. Jim Kahan, a TAC

²⁸ <https://thelensnola.org/2019/12/17/monitors-say-nopd-academy-now-in-compliance-with-federal-consent-decree/>

²⁹ <https://www.portland.gov/police/tac>

³⁰ <https://www.portland.gov/police/tac/about-tac>

³¹ “Activists invited to apply for seats on police advisory panel,” *The Oregonian*, September 7, 2012.

³² <https://www.portland.gov/police/tac/ppbtacres>

³³ “Portland police look at big changes to traffic stops to address disparities,” *KATU*, June 2, 2021.

³⁴ “Portland police reject community panel’s recommendation to add race, ethnicity data to reports on use of force,” *The Oregonian*, November 15, 2019. Kroll notes that, as pointed out in our Phase B report in which we examined use of force and stop and arrest data of the Austin Police Department, using Census Data to determine if stops are racially biased is not a methodologically valid benchmark according to the leading research in the field. See *Evaluation of Austin Police Department: Use of Force / Public Interactions / Recruitment, Selection, and Promotions*, January 21, 2022, pp. 2, 41.

³⁵ <https://www.portlandcopwatch.org/PPR84/trainingac84.html>

member, was quoted in the article, “I saw a very promising course that was excellently delivered by the presenters and the objectives were solid... We at the TAC think this is really promising and we think this could be a great big game changer for PPB and we look forward to seeing it grow.”³⁶

4.6 Arlington (Texas) Police Department

According to an August 2020 Office of Community Oriented Policy Services (“COPS”) – Recruitment and Training Commissioners report, “The Arlington Police Department has a training advisory board that consists of citizens and law enforcement personnel. The advisory board determined that officers are required to have 24 hours of annual discretionary training to meet the needs of the agency and the community. The agency also requires officers to have an additional 16 hours of annual training to meet standard law enforcement, legal, and ethical requirements.”³⁷

In June 2020, the department’s Twitter account noted there were two vacancies on the Training Advisory Board and the department wished to fill them with community members of diverse backgrounds.³⁸ Additionally, a February 2021 Arlington Texas Unity Council Report made the following mid-term recommendation: “Invite concerned members of the community to review training videos/materials and their relevance and understand the selection process of training materials (to the extent where training is not compromised). Incorporate this review process with the current police training advisory board and possibly appoint one member of the unity council to the training advisory board.”³⁹ Kroll identified limited additional information about this board through open-source research.

4.7 Wichita Police Department

The City of Wichita, Kansas, created the Wichita Citizens Review Board to assist the Wichita Police Department (WPD) with community outreach and to advise the department about community concerns. According to the WPD website, the Board assists “in policy development, education and communications related to racial and other biased-based policing. The Board also will conduct reviews of post discipline findings of the Professional Standards Bureau in alleged officer misconduct matters upon the request of the Chief of Police. There are no more than thirteen (13) members who serve on the board. The thirteen members are appointed by the City Manager.”⁴⁰

The term length for the review board, which meets quarterly, is 2 years, and the term limit is 4 terms. The purpose of the board, according to the City of Wichita website, is to “pay specialized attention to certain areas affecting our community and to make recommendations to better inform City Council decisions.”⁴¹

4.8 Rochester Police Department

According to a June 2017 *WHAM* article, the Rochester Police Department (RPD) was “working on establishing a Police Training Advisory Committee, which will be made up of both RPD representatives and community members.” The article further stated that the committee would focus on “proposed and current

³⁶ <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/police/news/read.cfm?id=392134>

³⁷ <https://www.justice.gov/file/1353801/download>

³⁸ <https://twitter.com/ArlingtonPD/status/1268933633710215171>

³⁹ https://cdn5-hosted.civiclive.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_14481062/File/City%20Hall/Government/Mayor/Unity_Council/Unity_Council_Report.pdf

⁴⁰ <https://www.wichita.gov/WPD/Pages/CitizenReviewBoard.aspx>

⁴¹ <https://boardsict.wichita.gov/board/2039>

police training procedures,” and members would be “asked to recommend training procedures and priorities based on input from the community, as well as create a means for an ongoing community dialogue.”⁴²

In a July 2020 *National Post* article, the former deputy chief of community relations engagement for the Rochester Police Department wrote:

One of the things I did prior to retirement was set up a police training advisory committee. I populated that committee with as wide a spectrum of the community as I could, from those who were vehemently opposed to the Rochester Police Department, to those who were hugely supportive of the police department.

I sat them down in a room and I had two asks for them. One, that they advocate for us in the community when questions of our policy, our training or our procedures came up from the citizens. Two, that they would make recommendations from the community back to the Rochester Police Department to determine exactly how the community wanted to see us operate.⁴³

In March 2021, a document entitled “Community Response to Governor Cuomo’s Executive Order 203” listed several groups, including the Rochester Police Training Advisory Committee, under the subheading “Implement and support programs that provide increased and effective community engagement.”⁴⁴

4.9 Florida State

The state of Florida has a Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission (“CJSTC”) “to ensure that all citizens of Florida are served by criminal justice officers who are ethical, qualified, and well-trained.”⁴⁵ According to a March 2021 criminal justice committee packet on the Florida Senate website, the CJSTC created an advisory group in 2015 to “discuss the relationship between law enforcement and the community, and to create law enforcement training that more directly addresses this.” The group was comprised of “law enforcement executives; training personnel; consultants; former CJSTC members; citizens; and representatives from the Florida Sheriffs Association, the Florida Police Chiefs Association, the State Law Enforcement Chiefs Association, the Police Benevolent Association, and the Fraternal Order of Police. In 2017, the CJSTC adopted the Strengthening the Bonds of Trust between Law Enforcement and the Public report.”⁴⁶

Ashley K. Penning (“Penning”), Florida Department of Law Enforcement Chief of Training, in email communication with Kroll, stated that the report was “developed with a group of subject matter experts that included law enforcement officers, supervisors, instructors, training center directors, and community advocates over the course of two years” and implemented into the Law Enforcement Basic Recruit Training (LEBRT) in 2018.

According to the 2021 Florida Senate packet noted above,

CJSTC staff has already implemented some of the recommendations from the report in the [LEBRT], namely the addition of 49 communication exercises that are designed to build recruits’ skills with both communication and critical thinking/decision making. Staff continue to incorporate the recommendations into each edition of the B RTP. A standing group of subject matter experts

⁴² “RPD to create new community-driven training advisory committee,” *WHAM*, June 20, 2017.

⁴³ “We need to reimagine, not abolish, police,” *National Post*, July 9, 2020.

⁴⁴ https://www.cityofrochester.gov/uploadedFiles/Departments/Mayor/_Documents/Executive%20Summary.pdf

⁴⁵ <https://www.fdle.state.fl.us/CJSTC/Commission.aspx>

⁴⁶ <https://www.flsenate.gov/Committees/Show/CJ/Meeting%20Packet/5121>

(officers, supervisors, instructors, training center directors, and psychologists) was formed as the Community Safety Report advisory group in 2019 and they provided further recommendations for ways to effectively incorporate the recommendations into future editions.

All the recommendations from the report were to be addressed in the 2021 curriculum, subject to CJSTC approval, with an effective date of July 1, 2021.⁴⁷

4.10 New York Police Department

According to an undated New York Police Department (“NYPD”) publication,

A Training Advisory Committee (TAC) was formed in November 2014, comprising eight members from various New York City communities who have advised the Training Bureau on the content of the three-day training program and will continue to review training needs, courses and issues. The goal in forming the committee was to establish an inclusive group of community and other stakeholders, representing all boroughs and [reflecting] the diversity of the city. The Department intends to increase the committee’s membership, while keeping the committee small enough to function effectively as a working group. The larger committee will empanel several sub-committees to focus on curricula design, expansion of the field training community partner program, executive development and community instructors in the Academy. The Training Advisory Committee will advise on new curricula prior to adoption by the academy.⁴⁸

Kroll identified limited information about this board through open-source research. However, according to a July 2016 article, Michael McQuillan, a history teacher at the School for Global Studies, served on the NYPD TAC in 2015 and 2016, and stated in a July 2016 article that the TAC aided in NYPD shifting from training based on lectures to scenario-based role plays. The TAC also helped NYPD review its Implicit Bias curriculum and take steps toward reinforcing training insights and content for seasoned field officers and mentored rookies alike.” McQuillan added that the TAC “made me for once feel hopeful that long-term change could occur.”⁴⁹

4.11 Other Examples

The Amarillo (Texas) Police Department (APD) has a Training Advisory Board (TAB) that includes several prominent and diverse community leaders. According to a 2017 APD Racial Profiling report, the TAB “provides guidance to the department’s leadership and staff on training related matters such as course offering, training standards, and curriculum.”⁵⁰ A 2019 Racial Profiling report further stated that the TAB “provides guidance to the department’s leadership and staff on training related matters such as course offering, training standards, and curriculum development.”⁵¹ This board remains active according to recent media reports.⁵²

Similarly, the Aransas Pass (Texas) Police Department (APPD)’s Training Division reports to a Training Advisory Board (TAB) comprised of both law enforcement and public members. The TAB is responsible for advising on the development of curricula, policies and procedures, identifying specific training needs, and

⁴⁷ <https://www.flisenate.gov/Committees/Show/CJ/Meeting%20Packet/5121>

⁴⁸ <https://www1.nyc.gov/html/nypd/html/home/POA/pdf/Training.pdf>

⁴⁹ <https://historynewsnetwork.org/article/163323>

⁵⁰ <https://www.amarillopolice.org/Resources/2017AmarilloPoliceDepartme.pdf>

⁵¹ <https://www.amarillopolice.org/Resources/2019RacialProfileReport.pdf>

⁵² “Amarillo area Our Town briefs,” *Amarillo Globe-News*, April 10, 2022.

determining the type, frequency, and location of courses to be offered.⁵³ According to the department's website, the TAB "recently met to review our law enforcement training from 2022 and our training plan for 2023."⁵⁴

According to an April 2016 article in the *Weekly Gleaner*, a "training advisory roundtable comprised of policing, civil liberties, human rights, and youth experts" was created "to provide feedback to the Ontario Police College in developing a new training curriculum for all police officers in Ontario [Canada]."⁵⁵

Finally, according to a July 2021 press release issued by the Office of the Tennessee Governor, the Tennessee Law Enforcement Training Advisory Council (LETAC) was formed "with the purpose of advising on developments in policing needs and training best practices. The council consists of law enforcement agency stakeholders, members of the General Assembly, community leaders, and subject matter experts."⁵⁶ The LETAC was formed following the creation of Tennessee's Law Reform Partnership in July 2020.⁵⁷

⁵³ <https://police.aptx.gov/training-review-2022/>

⁵⁴ <https://police.aptx.gov/training-review-2022/>

⁵⁵ "Human Rights Groups Cautiously Optimistic on Abolishing of Carding," *Weekly Gleaner*, April 14, 2016.

⁵⁶ "Gov. Lee Convenes Law Enforcement Training Advisory Council," Office of the Tennessee Governor press release issued July 2021.

⁵⁷ "Gov. Lee, Sullivan Co. sheriff join authorities at Tennessee Law Enforcement Training Advisory Council," *WJHL*, July 22, 2021.

5 ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Kroll wishes to emphasize that the creation of the ACRC and attempts in Austin over the past two years to implement a collaborative process of incorporating community and academic perspectives into police training is a significant development, not only in Austin but nationwide. The extent of community input attempted by the ACRC process is not something frequently emulated in police agencies throughout the United States. What the City of Austin, APD, and the community representatives serving on the ACRC have attempted is a substantive and detailed review of training curriculum that directly impacts how Austin prepares its cadets to become sworn police officers in service to the community.

Kroll commends the community members and APD staff who participated in the ACRC meetings in 2021 and 2022. Despite the frustrations and tensions that many of the participants felt, and despite a general feeling that the Committee did not make significant progress on the curriculum reforms hoped for, there was nevertheless productive discussion, dialogue, and shared perspectives.

5.1 Analysis

Any efforts to improve police training must understand and appreciate the extent of community mistrust in policing across the United States. This climate of police mistrust undoubtedly impacts how certain elements of the Austin community perceive APD officers. Recent events, from high-profile use-of-force incidents in Austin, to the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis in 2020 and the brutal beating and murder of Tyre Nichols more recently in Memphis, calls into question how police officers are taught to think, respond, and perceive threats to their own safety and that of the community. When citizens see and read about how seemingly benign events can quickly turn tragic during a police encounter, they have every right to question how police are conditioned to think, how they view members of the community, how police culture influences officer's perceived threats, and how police training impacts all of it.

As Kroll has emphasized in past reports, reform-minded police leadership and transparency are essential to building strong community trust. The concerns of community stakeholders in Austin, as voiced through City Council resolutions on re-imagining public safety, as well as the statements of community members who have served on the ACRC these past many months, have clearly articulated the community's desire for a police department that is well-led, transparent, and eager to work with the community. The Austin community wants a police department with truly visionary leadership; supervisors and mid-rank officers that connect leadership concepts to patrol officers; and patrol officers that engage in critical thinking and ethical decision-making. It all starts with training.

In conducting this assessment, Kroll found that the ACRC process lacked a clearly defined mission and did not adequately document and measure progress to curriculum reform in 2021-2022. Many Committee members were frustrated that their comments and recommendations appeared to have little impact on how cadets are trained. Reviewing lesson plans and course curricula, without seeing how the courses are taught and delivered, prevents any ability to measure whether the Academy effectively trains cadets to be community-oriented, empathetic police officers, or whether any progress has been made in changing the culture of APD from a paramilitary-style police academy to a guardian-centric institution. Most Committee members believe that their efforts failed to create positive reforms to how police are trained in Austin and that community input has had little impact on Academy operations.

Academy staff insisted that the current process had more impact than is easily documented – for example, many of the Committee's comments were internally discussed with instructors, and these discussions

improved the tone and delivery of their course presentations. The Committee's input also helped instructors become more aware of issues around language, semantics, and messaging that is not easily reflected in a revised lesson plan. But staff acknowledged that many of the frustrations expressed by Committee members are real and resulted from an ill-defined process and mission.

Kroll found that some of the Committee members' frustrations were due, in part, to both unrealistic expectations on the part of certain community representatives and to a lack of communication and transparency by APD.

Based on Kroll's interviews of Committee members and Academy staff, consultations with Joyce James Consulting, review of the last 12 ACRC meetings, and review of the documentation contained in the shared Google Doc drive, we make the following key findings and observations:

- There was no defined process in place for the Committee to provide curriculum recommendations to the training academy. Individual Committee members made comments on a variety of provided documents including curriculum documentation, PowerPoint presentations, and course materials (e.g., handouts). These comments were made in a variety of ways. At times they were provided as comment bubbles within documents. Other times they were provided as in-text revisions. In some cases, members of the Committee wrote comments in new documents. The nature of the documentation often proved confusing to Academy staff as some comments were inconsistent and others contained questions or criticisms but did not provide specific recommendations, which should have been the primary objective of the Committee.
- In practice, the ACRC too often directed its input towards broader societal issues that impact American policing generally, rather than to specific and well-reasoned curriculum changes necessary for APD consumption. The broader issues are important to address, and essential for building community trust and promoting culture change within APD. The Committee's input on these broader issues, however, was frequently commingled with attempts at curriculum "oversight" and adjustments to course content. In Kroll's view, such input would more likely obtain buy-in from APD if offered from subject-matter experts working in close collaboration with Academy staff and instructors. As one Academy supervisor told Kroll, when discussing major police reforms and policy changes, "If you don't get sworn [officer] buy-in, it will not happen."
- Committee members believe that culture change was an essential part of their mission; however, as discussed in Section 3.1, the original focus of the ACRC was intended to be limited to recommending how concepts of DEI, de-escalation, trauma-informed content, and adult learning can be effectively incorporated consistently throughout Academy training. When the Committee's comments addressed broad policy issues or substantive changes to course content, Academy staff felt restricted by what they could realistically do without executive leadership approval.
- Given these challenges, few of the meetings resulted in an agreed set of specific recommendations. While the Academy has worked to address general issues in curriculum based on the overall concerns expressed by the Committee, there is little documentation showing specific Committee recommendations and Academy responses to those recommendations.
- Equally as important, there was no defined process for Academy staff to report back to the Committee with what changes, if any, were made to curricula based on Committee members' comments. Each monthly meeting typically addressed the 1-2 courses under review with no feedback loop regarding the Committee's expressed concerns about the curricula examined the previous month.

- There were also many missed opportunities for establishing true police-community collaboration. A lack of trust existed from the beginning that was never resolved. During some ACRC meetings, Academy instructors became visibly perturbed and offered curt or conclusory answers to Committee members' questions. At other times, there was spirited discussion and debate without any resolution, which caused all parties to leave frustrated. This lack of resolution appeared to be an ongoing issue that hindered progress. Although a third-party facilitator was brought in for the May and June 2022 meetings, this did not have the desired effect, as even the facilitator failed to gain the trust of all participants.
- Although APD attempted to revise the process and scope of the ACRC to address concerns over the workload and time requirements involved in revising course content, this was met with limited success.
- There remain institutional barriers within APD to re-thinking training approaches and curriculum content among some sworn members of Academy staff. These obstacles include a resistance to change, the continued use of flawed lesson plans and course materials, an inability or unwillingness on the part of some instructors to seek out innovative training materials or subject matter expertise outside of the department, and a lack of executive leadership oversight and involvement in Academy reforms.
- Moreover, although the position of Division Manager is supposed to have decision-making authority over changes to cadet instruction and curriculum at the Academy, there remains a general belief among sworn staff that the Division Manager, as a civilian employee, has no authority to impose directives on sworn members, and that sworn members are only required to respond to sworn chain of command. Kroll has learned that the revisions made last year to the Standard Operating Procedures (as recommended by Kroll) concerning the role and responsibilities of the Division Manager, which were intended to clarify that the Division Manager and her staff have final authority over curriculum changes, have not been implemented effectively. This lingering issue has continued to result in a lack of responsiveness by some instructors and supervisors to requests and instructions from the Division Manager. This, in turn, adds to the resistance to change within the Academy.

5.2 Recommended Community Input Process Improvements

Based on our assessment of the ACRC, review of other models of community input into police training and curriculum development, and after considering the information gathered during interviews of community members and Academy staff, Kroll recommends that APD and the City of Austin replace the existing ACRC process with a new community input and curriculum review structure. As discussed in Section 5.2.1 below, Kroll recommends the creation of two separate advisory bodies: (1) a Community Advisory Council containing a broad representation of community members from diverse backgrounds and lived experiences, and (2) a Professional Advisory Committee consisting of academic or subject-matter experts that would collaborate with Academy staff in forming a working group focused on curriculum and course content within their areas of expertise.

Alternatively, if the existing ACRC process is to be continued, it should be re-formulated with a more defined scope and better protocols as discussed in Section 5.2.2.

Whichever model is selected, APD leadership should also convene regular Neighborhood Strategic Planning Meetings within each APD sector, as discussed in Section 5.2.3.

5.2.1 Preferred Model: Replace the ACRC with a Community Advisory Council (CAC) and a Professional Advisory Committee (PAC)

Kroll recommends that the ACRC process be replaced with a new community input and curriculum review structure through the creation of two separate advisory bodies, each with a different focus.

Community Advisory Council

First, create a **Community Advisory Council (CAC)** containing a broad representation of community members from diverse backgrounds and lived experiences. The CAC would meet quarterly with Academy and APD leadership (e.g., Chief or Assistant Chief in charge of the Academy, the Academy Commander, the Academy Division Manager, and 2-3 Academy supervisors) to discuss pre-determined topics of interest to community members. The meetings would be coordinated and led by a third-party facilitator, and the agenda would be set ahead of time by a smaller working group of CAC leaders, the community facilitator, and the Division Manager. This would allow APD to ensure that appropriate personnel can be present to address the identified issues and concerns and discuss how the Academy trains cadets (or FTOs and other in-service training) related to the topics of concern. The person or firm hired as the third-party facilitator would lead and guide the discussions and coordinate action items, if any, that the CAC may from time-to-time recommend.

The primary focus of the CAC would be to help ensure that cadet training includes a comprehensive understanding of the Austin community, the expectations of officers when interacting with members of the community, and the type of police department the community wants and expects. It is not meant to be a community forum designed to air grievances but would instead be a working committee that offers constructive recommendations and other meaningful input. This type of advisory council would allow APD to meaningfully examine how the recommendations or issues of concern can be effectively included in curriculum or otherwise addressed in cadet training. Any written recommendations and action items arising from CAC meetings would be addressed by APD leadership at the next scheduled meeting, with Academy leadership ensuring that the CAC's concerns are documented and shared with the Professional Advisory Committee working groups (discussed below) and properly considered when reviewing and revising training curriculum.

The CAC would consist of a chair and one or more co-chairs, who together with the third-party facilitator would take the lead on setting the agenda (in coordination with the Academy Division Manager), formulating written recommendations and actions items arising from CAC meetings, and other reports or recommendations the CAC believes appropriate. Ultimately, APD executive leadership and Academy leadership must ensure that all community concerns are properly addressed in the training curriculum.

Professional Advisory Committee

Second, create a **Professional Advisory Committee (PAC)** of academic and other subject-matter experts that would form working groups consisting of 2-3 subject matter experts and appropriate Academy instructors and staff to review and improve curriculum and course content within their areas of expertise.⁵⁸ The subject-matter experts within each working group would collaborate with the relevant Academy instructors and staff to watch in-class instruction, help revise and improve course content and instruction that is supported by evidence-based research and best practices, and recommend improvements to course instruction and delivery. An Academy staff representative would be designated to ensure that each working

⁵⁸ There ultimately should be a larger pool of academic and subject-matter experts that serve on or are available to the Professional Advisory Committee, but each working group would typically consist of 2-3 subject-matter experts working in collaboration with Academy staff on a select assortment of training courses.

group is provided with all relevant and documented concerns and recommendations that arise out of CAC meetings.

The working groups would meet with Academy staff on a quarterly basis, with consultation and communication occurring as needed in-between meetings. A minimum of two working groups would be formed each year with responsibility for reviewing all course content (generally consisting of multiple classes) within their focus areas.

In combination, these two advisory bodies would allow for (1) robust community input through the CAC into how APD trains and prepares cadets to serve the citizens of Austin, and (2) meaningful and substantive improvements to training curriculum through the PAC working groups. Academy and APD leadership would more regularly engage with the community through the quarterly CAC meetings, and instructors would work collaboratively with subject-matter experts from a variety of fields to make evidence-based improvements to Academy instruction. An Academy staff representative would be required to ensure that CAC concerns and input are considered by the PAC working groups when reviewing and revising course content.

Kroll believes that, over time, this two-committee approach will greatly enhance the Academy's ability to make meaningful and significant improvements to curriculum content and course instruction with greater buy-in from Academy instructors.

Moreover, to further increase transparency and accountability with the community, APD should be required to regularly update its website describing the work of the CAC and the PAC, addressing the CAC's documented concerns and recommendations, and explaining how the combined efforts of the CAC and PAC have impacted training.

5.2.2 Alternative Model: Better Define the Mission and Process of the ACRC⁵⁹

Alternatively, if the City wishes to keep the ACRC in its present form, it should only do so with the following adjustments:

- *Mission and Scope of Committee.* Develop a defined mission and scope that governs the Committee's work and that is limited to specific areas of focus, such as how to ensure that cadets understand what is expected of them in the community, how to build trust between APD and the community, how the Academy can better instill a guardian-centric approach to police training, and ways for the Academy to consistently emphasize empathy, professionalism, ethics, de-escalation, racial and gender equity, and critical thinking throughout all Academy training. The mission should include a commitment to true collaboration between APD and the Committee members.
- *Meeting Protocols.* Develop consistent, detailed processes for how Committee meetings are to function, including protocols for addressing and resolving open issues and recommendations from prior meetings. For example, if the Committee makes a set of recommendations after a full review and discussion of a particular course, there needs to be a set timeline as to when those recommendations are to be addressed by APD (i.e., accepted and implemented or rejected and explained).
- *Document Committee Recommendations.* There must be a defined process concerning how the Committee makes and documents recommendations. The Committee needs to speak with one

⁵⁹ Some of the process improvements discussed here may also be applicable to and help guide aspects of the Community Advisory Council, such as established meeting protocols, documentation of CAC recommendations, accountability requirements, hiring of a third-party facilitator, holding in-person meetings, creating an established agenda and schedule, efforts to increase Academy transparency, and guidelines for committee selection and makeup.

voice. Individual comments from different Committee members on a shared Google Doc drive, while helpful during an initial review, should be concisely assembled into a workable list of actionable items before APD is asked to consider and study them.

- *Accountability*. APD must be held accountable to ensure that Committee recommendations are considered and to clearly explain what, if any, action it has taken in response. Where APD does not agree with a recommendation or believes it cannot be implemented, it should explain why the recommendation cannot be followed. Conversely, when it does agree with a recommendation, it should explain how that recommendation has been implemented or otherwise impacted training.
- *Third-Party Facilitator*. An experienced and mutually acceptable third-party facilitator should be hired to lead and guide the discussions and ensure everyone present is actively engaged in good faith discussions, that the discussions remain civil and respectful, and that action items are addressed and accounted for. The facilitator should have a background and expertise in DEI issues and process change, but the facilitator should remain neutral and objective regarding the outcome of any discussion.
- *In-Person Meetings*. Whenever possible, ACRC meetings should be held in-person. The location of the meetings can vary, with some meetings held at the Academy, others in City Hall or another mutually acceptable and available City facility, or any other agreed-upon location. Kroll believes that in-person meetings are essential for building rapport and trust among participants, which leads to better and more productive conversations.
- *Trust-Building Exercises*. To further build trust among Committee participants, including community members and Academy staff, the first two meetings should be devoted to team building to allow everyone to get to know each other and feel comfortable with the discussions. It is essential that key principles of building trust be understood and agreed to by all participants, such as the 13 behaviors set forth in the Covey Principles regarding trust building:⁶⁰
 - *Talk Straight*
 - *Demonstrate Respect*
 - *Create Transparency*
 - *Right Wrongs*
 - *Show Loyalty (to the process and each other)*
 - *Deliver Results*
 - *Get Better (develop feedback systems and respond to them)*
 - *Confront Reality*
 - *Clarify Expectations*
 - *Practice Accountability*
 - *Listen First*
 - *Keep Commitments*
 - *Extend Trust*
- *Agenda and Schedule*. For every 12-month period, the Committee should start with a written schedule showing when meetings are to be held and what topics or courses are to be discussed at each meeting. The schedule should include a realistic time frame to allow for meaningful review and comment, discussion and dialogue, and a built-in feedback loop to ensure that any recommended action items from prior meetings are addressed.

⁶⁰ <https://resources.franklincovey.com/the-speed-of-trust/the-13-behaviors-of-high-trust>

- Transparency into Class Instruction. To help further build trust with the community, and to allow Committee members to see first-hand how a course under review is presented in the classroom, the Academy should be as open and transparent as possible. The Academy should not be a secretive institution, walled off from the rest of the community. A process should be established for ACRC members to attend and observe Academy classes that are being reviewed by the Committee or taught after the Committee has considered and discussed curriculum and content. Attendees can appropriately be required to agree to written protocols governing their behavior, which may include signing a non-disclosure agreement (NDA)⁶¹ or other process that requires internal discussion and good faith attempts at resolution before information can be shared outside of the Committee process. But allowing Committee members to attend certain classes and observe Academy instruction will only enhance the quality of input from the Committee and promote positive dialogue with instructors and staff.
- Committee Selection and Makeup. A defined process should be developed for how Committee members are selected, what subject-matter expertise may be desired, and what commitments will be required of all participants. The ACRC should consist of a broad representation of the community and ideally should include subject-matter experts in the fields of law, psychology, mental health, community engagement, effective communications, and other relevant areas.

5.2.3 Neighborhood Strategic Planning Meetings at the Sector Level

In addition to whichever option above is adopted and implemented, Kroll recommends that APD also hold quarterly **Neighborhood Strategic Planning Meetings** in each APD sector. These meetings would better enable APD leadership and Sector Commanders to hear from community members and groups within their areas of command and to address community concerns specific to the neighborhoods within each police sector.

Ideally, the third-party facilitator assigned to the CAC would help coordinate and lead each of the Neighborhood Strategic Planning Meetings. The Academy Commander and/or Assistant Chief over the Academy should also attend these meetings. The community concerns across sectors may vary and require differing responses. To ensure accountability, the Sector Commanders would be required to meet quarterly with APD executive leadership to discuss the overall concerns of their communities and develop appropriate policy changes, if any. This process would allow for more effective community-oriented policing strategies desired by the communities affected.

Having Academy leadership represented at the Neighborhood Strategic Planning Meetings would further ensure that the Training Academy is aware of and considering the concerns of the various communities that cadets are being trained to eventually serve.

⁶¹ As noted in Section 4, the Los Angeles Police Department requires members of its Professional Advisory Committee to sign an NDA, which has helped to instill trust between the PAC and LAPD since the PAC was formed in 2008. The purpose of an NDA is not to silence public criticism but to encourage collaboration and mutual trust. A properly crafted NDA would not prevent Committee members from publicly addressing generalized concerns about the effectiveness of APD training to the City Manager, City Council, Office of Police Oversight, and other City agencies, but it would preclude disclosing the content of what are intended to be collaborative discussions and candid dialogue with Academy instructors and staff.

5.3 Additional Recommendations

Kroll also makes the following additional recommendations:

- **Enforce the Cadet Training Unit Standard Operating Procedures.** Kroll believes it is imperative that the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) concerning the revised role and responsibilities of the Division Manager and Training Staff that were put into place in February 2022 must be enforced. As addressed in Kroll's *Final Report of Independent Evaluator* (February 16, 2022), the revised SOPs require that curriculum, course materials, and instructional techniques utilized in training be approved under requirements established by the Division Manager. All requests from the Division Manager to any Training Staff team member shall be treated with urgency and completed in a timely manner consistent with the Division Manager's request. Any requests from the Division Manager to Training Staff are to be treated and acted upon as if they were given by the Commander over Training. Finally, the process for reviewing lesson plans, including checks on incorporating adult learning/active learning, is included in the SOPs, and all lesson plans "must be approved by the Training Staff supervisors (up to and including the Division Manager) prior to the time that the class is to be presented." (Cadet Training Unit SOP, p. 12).

As the then Academy Commander told Kroll on February 8, 2022, the Division Manager "has ultimate authority over what teaching products we deliver" and "the ultimate say over the teaching product that goes out or does not go out" at the Academy."⁶² As noted in Kroll's report, "in the long run, these written policy directives will help sustain implemented reforms by formalizing the processes that ensure continued improvement in Academy teaching methods, curricula development, instructor training development and opportunities, and meaningful academic and community input into Academy instruction."⁶³

Accordingly, Kroll recommends that (1) Academy instructors and supervisors be retrained on the provisions and expectations of the revised Cadet Training Unit SOPs, and (2) instructors and supervisors who fail to abide by the SOPs should be held accountable through APD's disciplinary process.

- **Demonstrate APD Leadership Support for Community Input.** The top levels of APD leadership should repeatedly and consistently express and demonstrate commitment to police-community collaboration efforts. It is important to show respect and appreciation for everyone who is committed to helping the department become better and to building mutual bonds of trust between APD officers and the communities they serve. As part of the department's accountability to the community, it is essential that APD leadership publicly affirm the work of the ACRC and other advisory panels as necessary, legitimate, and beneficial to APD and the City of Austin; and that the goal of police-community collaboration is to enhance officer and community safety (public safety) in all police-citizen encounters.
- **Increase Transparency and Accountability.** To ensure that APD is fully engaged in the community input and curriculum models outlined above, the department should designate an Assistant Chief to be responsible for implementing these recommendations, reporting out to relevant City stakeholders, and ensuring that all documented concerns and recommendations from

⁶² *Final Report of Independent Evaluator: APD Training Academy*, February 16, 2022, Section 5.4, p. 41.

⁶³ *Ibid.* p. 41.

the various committees and forums are adequately considered and addressed through timely feedback to the applicable committees and by posting meaningful updates to APD's website.

- ***Make the Community Engagement Specialist a Full-time Position.*** The role of Community Engagement Specialist, which is currently a part-time staff position reporting to the Division Manager, should be made a full-time position. This would permit the Community Engagement Specialist to interact more effectively with community representatives and ensure that community engagement programming during cadet training is sufficiently supported and includes a broad and diverse representation of community groups and individuals with lived experiences. Expanding the Community Engagement Specialist role into a full-time staff position would also assist APD in sustainably implementing the desired community input process improvements.
- ***Create a Community Liaison Staff Position.*** APD should also create a new Community Liaison position to ensure that Academy staff and instructors are informed of and responsive to all community input and recommendations. The Community Liaison position would report to the Division Manager and be responsible for, among other things, coordinating appropriate Academy attendance at and participation in all CAC meetings, the PAC working groups (or alternatively, the revised ACRC process), all Neighborhood Strategic Planning Meetings, and any other community-based meetings and forums. This position would be responsible for ensuring that CAC recommendations and input are provided to and considered by the PAC working groups, and that Academy staff timely and effectively communicates responses to all CAC recommendations and input. This position would also be responsible for regularly updating the APD website concerning the Academy's work with and accountability to the community and advisory committees.
- ***Suggested Reading List.*** Community participants, academic and subject-matter experts, and Academy instructors and staff should be asked to read critical literature in support of the ultimate goals and objectives of their work in improving police training and helping APD to be more responsive to community concerns, racial and gender equity, de-escalation, and empathetic policing. The following suggested reading list from Professor John Firman of American University is a starting point and can be revised or updated as needed:
 - *Re-Envisioning Police Training in the U.S.: Rejecting the Status Quo, Speeding the Pace of Progress Toward a True 21st Century Model* (American University School of Public Affairs).⁶⁴
 - *President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing* (Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2015).⁶⁵
 - *Transforming the U.S. Justice System: Rejecting the Status Quo, Speeding the Pace of Reform* (American University School of Public Affairs, May 2019).⁶⁶

⁶⁴ https://www.american.edu/spa/jlc/upload/policing-report_v8-web.pdf

⁶⁵ https://cops.usdoj.gov/pdf/taskforce/taskforce_finalreport.pdf.

⁶⁶ <https://www.american.edu/spa/jpo/upload/transforming-the-us-justice-system-full-report.pdf>

6 KROLL PROJECT TEAM



Mark Ehlers is the **Engagement Leader** of Kroll's work with the City of Austin. Ehlers has 35 years of combined legal and investigative experience in the public and private sectors, specializing in government and university investigations, discrimination, and harassment in the workplace, and alleged ethical violations. He is currently a managing director in Kroll's Philadelphia office. Prior to joining Kroll, Ehlers served for 18 years as an Assistant United States Attorney, first in the District of Columbia, where he served in the Homicide and Sex Offense Units, and later in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, where he served on the Organized Crime Strike Force. Since joining Kroll, Ehlers has conducted numerous internal investigations and best practice reviews for a diverse array of public and private sector clients, including the University of Cincinnati Police Department (review and investigation of a UCPD officer's fatal shooting of an unarmed motorist) and North Carolina State Highway Patrol (review of hiring and selection practices, training and supervision following public reports of police misconduct), among others. Ehlers received a B.A., *magna cum laude*, from Wittenberg University, and a J.D., *with honors*, from George Washington University.



John R. "Rick" Brown is a former Lieutenant Colonel and Deputy Commissioner for Administration and Professional Responsibility of the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP). During his 29-year tenure, Brown oversaw the PSP's reform and accountability efforts in the areas of misconduct, sexual harassment, use of force, and early intervention/risk management initiatives. He developed the PSP's Equal Employment Opportunity Office's statewide liaison program and had oversight of citizen complaints that alleged discrimination or disparate treatment. Brown also oversaw the PSP's five-year Police-Citizen Contact Project, which utilized applied research techniques to assess the extent to which PSP officers engaged in racial or biased-based policing. Brown subsequently oversaw the implementation of proactive training and operational strategies to monitor and prevent racial profiling. In 2010, following a distinguished career in law enforcement, Brown created Transparency Matters, LLC, a certified Minority-owned Business Enterprise ("MBE") that focuses on building transparent policing policies and process change that provides organizational efficiencies, accountability, diversity, community education, training, and monitoring.



Daniel Linskey, former Superintendent-in-Chief of the Boston Police Department, is a nationally renowned expert in urban policing, training, and police-community relations. As Head of the BPD from 2009 to 2014, Chief Linskey developed and oversaw the BPD's social media, recruitment, community outreach, and engagement strategies, which have been cited as among the best practices in police management in the United States. Chief Linskey also changed the management and response of BPD to large-scale public disorder events. He oversaw the peaceful and successful management of the Boston Occupy movement and earned an international reputation for planning and overseeing major special events, and as the Incident Commander during the Boston Marathon Bombing Attack. Chief Linskey was part of a team sent to St. Louis County to assist the Department of Justice with an assessment of the St. Louis County Police Department and collaborative reform project following the events in Ferguson, Missouri in 2014. He is a frequent commentator on proper police tactics for national news organizations.



J. Larry Mayes is serving as a Project Advisor on community engagement strategies and civilian input into local policing. Mayes has worked with government officials and community leaders for more than two decades. From 2004 to 2010, Mayes served as the Cabinet Chief of Human Services for the City of Boston, where he led joint government/community-based initiatives to reduce crime and stabilize communities. Currently he serves as Senior Vice President of Government and Community Relations for Catholic Charities in Boston, where he leads the organization's statewide government relations strategies and policies. From 2014 to 2019, Mayes served on the Community Ombudsman Oversight Panel, which reviews the Boston Police Department's Internal Affairs citizen complaint cases.



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