

**MINNESOTA WEST
LAW ENFORCEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 29, 2011**

The Minnesota West Law Enforcement Advisory Committee met on Tuesday, March 29, 2011, in room 203 at the Minnesota West – Worthington Campus.

Present: Beth Bents, Chief Mike Cumiskey, Lt. John Ebner, Det. Sgt. Kevin Flynn, Mike Fury, Mark Holden, Lt. Joel Mickle, Kayla Meyerdirk (former graduate), Markus Murphy, Dustin Seiler (Law Enforcement Club President), Dr. Richard Shrubbs, Lt. Brian West, Dr. Jeff Williamson;
Recorder: Angela Hoffman

Absent: Dustin Roemeling

Welcome

Mark Holden, Law Enforcement Program Coordinator, called the meeting to order and thanked everyone for their attendance. He asked individuals to briefly introduce themselves as there are a number of new faces on the Committee since the last meeting which was held on November 9, 2009.

2011 Licensing Exam Schedule for POST

Mark Holden referenced the 2011 Minnesota POST Board licensing examination schedule. Minnesota West anticipates 13 students will be taking the POST exam this year.

PPOE School Certification Renewal Visit – Held March 24, 2011

Mark Holden informed the Committee that Minnesota West underwent its PPOE School Certification renewal process on March 24, 2011. Minnesota West's AS Law Enforcement Program will be receiving recommendation for the maximum 5 year approval at an upcoming POST Board meeting. One topic that was brought forward during the re-certification process when reviewing the program's five year statistics is the gender breakdown of the individuals who had taken the POST exam and failed (handout provided). Mark asked the Committee for their thoughts on why this differential may be occurring.

Law Enforcement Student Handbook Changes

Mark Holden informed the Committee of a few, minor updates that will be made to next year's student handbook to provide necessary clarification for students. Black socks will be required to be worn with the uniform and long hair will be required to be pulled back for females.

Recruitment and Promotion

Mark Holden and Committee members discussed various recruitment and promotional opportunities. At times, there appears to be a gap in the information being sent out or the methods used to send out information. Some opportunities available may assist students who are unsure if they want to continue to pursue a law enforcement degree or are naïve to the reality of the profession. Chief Mike Cumiskey discussed a new collaborative effort between Minnesota West and the Worthington Police Department for a Community Service Officer position. The position can be held by a formally accepted student and will obtain work-study funds. Positions such as these are looked upon favorably during the hiring process. Lt. Brian West will provide contact information for Dennis Lasenberry who works with agencies on diversity recruitment. Markus Murphy provided information regarding the Law Enforcement Program's new Facebook page.

Program Grade Requirements

Currently, students accepted into the AS Law Enforcement Program are required to have grades of “C” or better in all degree required courses (general education and technical) in order to graduate with the AS degree (i.e., complete the academic component). In order for students to be eligible to take the POST test, completion of both the academic component and skills training is needed. Mark Holden brought forward an option for discussion that would no longer require the general education component of the AS Law Enforcement degree to meet the “C” or better requirement. All technical courses would still need to meet the “C” or better requirement. Mark Holden indicated that the Law Enforcement Program hesitates to incorporate this type of change because it would lower the standards required of the graduating students and believes it would possibly hurt the program. In order for students to graduate with a degree in any program at Minnesota West, students need to have a C average. As the AS Law Enforcement Program requirements currently exist, students are being held up from graduation because they are not able to successfully complete all of their courses the first time with the “C” or better. After discussion, the Committee felt it was not beneficial to change the degree requirements at this time. The grade requirement reflects back positively on Minnesota West. It was noted that the academic background of Minnesota West’s graduates that have been hired by agencies represented on the Committee has never been an issue. The grading requirement may actually present itself as a way that students “weed” themselves out of the profession.

What are agencies looking at regarding hiring new officers?

Mark Holden opened the floor for comments/suggestions on what departments are looking for during their hiring processes. Aspects of professionalism through the presentation of oneself and in how situations are handled were noted as important. Lt. Joel Mikle indicated that the follow-up of some of the little details that add to professionalism are appreciated. Tattoos and piercings and how each agency is handling these instances through the implementation of new policies were discussed. Current law enforcement students should view themselves as a commodity ready to go into the workforce.

What changes could be made to improve the program?

Committee members felt the program does a good job of preparing students for the profession. Dustin Seiler indicated that current, second year students have indicated they would like to see additional physical agility requirements in their courses. Committee members recommend that a survey of past graduates be completed to identify what the strengths and weakness are in the education they received as they enter the workforce. Mark Holden informed the Committee of changes to the admission process (no longer interview applicants or require a written paragraph) that were required as a result of an Office of Civil Rights audit. Students are required to review/sign off on the Minimum Selection Standards form before admission to the AS Law Enforcement Program can be received. Committee members would like to see the Law Enforcement Program grow in numbers.

What changes have you seen in policing in the past couple of years?

Committee members have seen a lack of “real life” experience in some of their new hires. The individuals are naïve to what is the reality of the profession. This is not viewed as a problem resulting from the education they received.

Can the college do more to help agencies with training needs?

The Minnesota West Law Enforcement Program tries to bring presenters on campus every other year for students and staff from area law enforcement agencies to attend. Some committee members present indicated they have attending these presentations in the past and agreed these presentations have been nice, especially for receiving continuing education hours.

Mark informed the committee that collaboration with law enforcement agencies in order to cover the expenses of bringing presenters to Minnesota West may be necessary. It is the goal of the program to continue to offer these types of opportunities.

Other

Mark Holden informed the Committee that a meeting will be scheduled for next fall. Committee members will be notified of the date as soon as it is determined.

Respectfully submitted,

Angela Hoffman