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The Citizen Police Academy: Assessment of a Program's Effects on Community and Officer Attitudes

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THE CITIZEN POLICE ACADEMY: ASSESSMENT OF A PROGRAM’S EFFECTS ON COMMUNITY AND OFFICER ATTITUDES

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of Psychology
Western Kentucky University
Bowling Green, Kentucky

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Industrial/Organizational Psychology

By
Shannon Leigh Cook

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THE CITIZEN POLICE ACADEMY: ASSESSMENT OF A PROGRAM'S EFFECTS ON COMMUNITY AND OFFICER ATTITUDES

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Director of Thesis

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The study was conducted in order to determine the effects of the Citizen Police Academy (CPA) program on community and officer attitudes. The two main goals of this program are to increase officer awareness of community concerns and to raise community awareness about the police department. Surveys were distributed to three groups: employees of the Bowling Green Police Department, all alumni of the CPA, and a random sample of the local community. Participants were asked their attitudes regarding crime prevention, awareness of police officers’ activities, and the effectiveness of the CPA program. T-tests and ANOVAs determined that police officers who had participated with the CPA did not express significantly more support for the CPA program than did those who had not participated with the program. Community members rated officer awareness of community concerns lower than did the officers themselves. Finally, alumni were able to identify obscure programs discussed by the CPA significantly more often than were community members. Results of this assessment seem to indicate that the CPA is successfully meeting its goal of increasing community awareness about the police department. Use of these results for improving the program are discussed.
The Citizen Police Academy: Assessing a Program’s Effects on Community and Officer Attitudes

Policing in the United States is influenced by the vast experiences of thousands of diverse departments. Policing policies not only affect the officers and the department but also the citizens in each community (Scott, 2002). Officers’ acceptance of departmental policy may affect them in many positive ways -- such as greater job satisfaction, increased support from the community, and better relationships within the department (Yates & Pillai, 1996). Community members realize benefits such as commitment to crime prevention, greater knowledge of police operations, and customized police service (Brown, 1989). As such, the philosophies that govern these policies may affect citizens’ attitudes toward the department, even though the average citizen is not aware of the policy or the philosophy.

Eras in Policing

Hahn (1998) divided the history of policing into three distinct eras: (a) the political era, (b) the reform era, and (c) the era of community policing. The political era, which spanned roughly from the late 1840s through the early 20th century, was marked by close ties between the police and local politicians. Officers generally lived in the area in which they patrolled, and directives were handed down from politicians to the beat officers. Ties between these politicians and the officers were so close that officers were often viewed as simply a part of the local political machinery. This period in policing history was marked by widespread corruption.
Demand for services of these officers often came directly from the local politicians or from citizens themselves. Officers provided many services to the community -- including helping needy families, providing coal in the winter, and playing “Santa Claus” for needy children -- as well as the regular duties of crime prevention and control. Success of the department was measured by the satisfaction of the citizens within an officer’s beat. (Hahn, 1998).

The reform era gave rise to what is now referred to as “traditional” policing. Policies put into place during this time were in direct response to the corruption of many police departments. During this era, authority and the legitimacy of the police were taken out of the hands of politicians and placed with the department itself.

Officers during this period, which began in the 1930s, began to shift focus from the “social service” types of duties they had performed in the past to a job that was focused on law enforcement and little else. In fact, the climate within departments became such that officers viewed any type of “non-police” jobs as unnecessary and an impediment to performing their “real” jobs. Officers went from participative members of the community in which they lived to impartial law enforcers viewed by the community as both distant and neutral.

Traditional policing was the dominant philosophy for over 40 years, and remains in use in some areas today (Hahn, 1998). Over the years, certain distinguishing characteristics have emerged. Traditional policing is reactive to crime, with most work generated in response to community calls for service. Officer contact with the community is limited, and planning is centered on internal police data, rather than community
concerns. Officers within the traditional policing system are restrained in their roles (Brown, 1989). Innovation is not rewarded. Areas such as recruitment, training, and supervision are all based on military models, marked by a very authoritative style and a focus that is more on adventure than on service to the community (Brown, 1989).

The turbulent decades of the 1960s and 1970s stimulated renewed interest in what types of policing styles would work best (Brown, 1989). A massive research effort was launched in the 1970s to analyze policing issues (Ward, 1991). These studies produced findings that would lead to the development of a more community-oriented approach to law enforcement (Kelling, Pate, Ferrara, Utne, and Brown, 1981; Schwartz & Clarren, 1977; Sherman, Milton, & Kelly, 1972). The traditional policing philosophy held that more officers on the street would lead to a decrease in the incidence of crime and an increase in crimes solved; however, this belief was refuted by research. For example, Kelling, Pate, Dieckman, & Brown (1974) conducted a study in Kansas City that showed increasing the presence of officers through more frequent patrols did not increase citizens’ awareness of officers’ presence. Crimes such as burglary, auto theft, larceny, robbery, and vandalism also were not reduced by increasing patrols. Other studies also showed that random patrol did not necessarily reduce the crime rate, lessen citizens’ fear of crime, or increase an officer’s chances of apprehending a criminal (Brown, 1989). The answer, it seemed, lay not in more officers on the street but in a different strategy combining officer and community efforts.
The Shift to Community Policing

Findings such as those cited alerted law enforcement officials to the fact that the traditional methods of policing were not nearly as effective as once believed. A major focus in the changes that occurred in the law enforcement field during the 1980s was improving police-community relations. Incorporating citizens’ concerns into the policing philosophy marked a change from the traditional methods of planning based on internal police data. The shift to community policing also addressed the rise in citizens’ fears of crime. Increased contact between citizens and police officers would, in turn, increase citizens’ awareness of the efforts made by officers to control crime (Brown, 1989).

Community policing is rapidly becoming a very popular policing philosophy. Dicker (1998) reported that 61% of local law enforcement agencies throughout the U.S. either have or are planning to implement a community-oriented policing program. Dicker also noted that community policing refers not just to one specific program but to an array of programs that fall under this one governing philosophy. Berkowitz and Marans (2000) examined a program started by the city of New Haven, Connecticut, designed to address the impact of violence. This program established a partnership between child mental health officials and the New Haven Police Department to help lessen the harmful effects of children’s exposure to violence. Cordner (2000) discussed several cities that have employed community policing approaches in dealing with persons who have mental illness. Other activities, such as foot patrols and “knock and talks,” in which officers introduce themselves to local residents may also be useful in a community policing strategy (Rohe, Adams, & Arcury, 2001).
Officials and researchers in Houston, Texas, examined programs instituted in other cities to try to discover why they often faded into obscurity soon after implementation (Brown, 1989). Such programs included the foot patrol experiments in Newark, New Jersey; the problem-solving project in Newport News, Virginia; and the Basic Car Plan and Senior Lead-Officer programs in Los Angeles. Houston was one of the first major cities to institute an organization-wide effort to utilize the community policing philosophy (Hahn, 1998). Houston’s police department approached the development of community policing as a two-phase project. The first phase involved putting into place specific programs that allowed the citizens of the community to become more involved in the policing effort. Phase Two involved changes within the department in areas such as recruitment, training, evaluations, and rewards. As this phase was aimed at changing the deeply ingrained philosophies of traditional policing, it was put into place over a five-year period, to help lessen resistance by the officers. Houston’s commitment to the community policing philosophy remains a standard by which many other cities model their own implementation programs.

Community policing has also been referred to as problem-oriented policing. Rather than relying on the reactive techniques used in traditional policing, this new philosophy is focused on being proactive. Departments that adapt community policing are looking at ways to solve problems before they arise. Police officers are given much more freedom to experiment with alternative problem-solving techniques, and the law enforcement role of these officers is not the main focus of the job (Kennedy & Veitch, 1997).
Brown (1989) stated that the core values of community policing differ from those of the traditional philosophy. Citizen involvement is more highly valued and community suggestions often become part of policy. Not only are the officers accountable to the department but also to the communities which they serve. Power is decentralized, as beat officers assume more responsibility in decision-making, and creativity in problem-solving is encouraged, and often rewarded.

In traditional policing, beats were constructed in ways to meet the needs of the police department. However, under the community policing philosophy, beats are drawn according to the natural boundaries of neighborhoods. Officers are permanently assigned to a beat, rather than being on a rotation. This system increases police-citizen interaction, allows officer to become more sensitive to community needs, and alleviates fears of the community regarding crime (Brown, 1989).

Another city that evaluated the institution of a community policing program was Edmonton, Alberta (Kennedy & Veitch, 1997). This city looked at the effectiveness of community policing as it affected the crime rates. Researchers looked at variables that may have spurred a considerable drop in the reporting of crimes in Edmonton. Variables such as a reduction in the at-risk population, changes in laws, and community policing policies were examined. Data were collected from an annual survey of Edmonton residents on community attitudes toward police performance, public safety concerns, and confidence in police. Crime statistics were gathered from reports by the City of Edmonton and Statistics Canada, a branch of the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics.
The multiple outlets created for reporting crimes under the community policing philosophy were partly responsible for the drop in reported crimes. This reduction was due to the fact that many non-emergency problems were being reported to the community reporting outlets rather than dispatching a car to handle the call. Thus, although reported crimes for this city went down during the time period studied, the number of non-emergency "problems" rose considerably.

As in the United States, Canada has also experienced a major shift in its police departments to the community policing philosophy in the last 10 to 15 years. The city of Windsor, Ontario, also conducted an evaluation of its newly instituted community policing programs (Schneider et al., 2000). The study looked at the attitudes of officers, community members, and small businesses in the neighborhood regarding the perceived effectiveness of the program. Researchers in Windsor found that officer attitudes toward the program were favorable among officers who were actually involved in the community policing program, but not among officers who were not involved. Neighborhood attitudes toward and awareness of community policing were all found to be favorable, as well. The positive effects for business owners following implementation were an increase in unsolicited police visits to the business, more time spent giving information on how to prevent reoccurring problems, and a decline in calls for service.

Greene (1999) compared the "zero-tolerance" policing of New York City with that of the more community-oriented policing used in San Diego. Factors examined were crime rates, arrest statistics, and citizen complaints in both cities. San Diego began the implementation of a community policing program in the late 1980s, while New York
went with a policy of “zero-tolerance” toward crime in the early 1990s. While New York reported increases in both felony and misdemeanor arrests, San Diego arrest rates declined. Crime rates in both cities were reported to have decreased during the study, although San Diego’s decrease was more marked than that of New York City. Finally, the number of complaints against the police in San Diego fell after implementation of the community policing program, while New York has noted an astronomical rise in complaints such as excessive force and police brutality. Presented together, these data provide support for the effectiveness of a more community-oriented policing technique.

*Changing Roles and Organizational Resistance*

In order for community policing to be truly effective, changes must occur that are organization-wide and affect all members of the department. One of the most difficult challenges to departments considering this change is officer resistance to the program, as well as organizational resistance as a whole (Dicker, 1998). The military-like atmosphere in departments where traditional policing is being replaced by community policing presents a difficult obstacle in the path toward implementing these fundamental changes.

Past studies have assumed widespread support of officers for the community policing philosophy (Yates & Pillai, 1996). Recent studies have suggested that this assumption may not, in fact, be the case. Dicker (1998) cited such factors as low levels of organizational trust, a perceived difference in community policing officers, and job involvement in the determination of how resistant officers will be to the community policing approach.
Yates and Pillai (1996) identified four factors that may influence attitudes toward community policing: commitment, support, frustration, and strain. The authors found that officer attitudes vary with the presence or absence of job strain. Higher levels of strain in officers were related to lower support for the community policing philosophy. Support was related to strain, in that officers who felt less support from government officials reported higher levels of strain. Support and commitment also affected the fourth variable, frustration. The results of this study did not support the assumption that most officers support the community policing approach.

A fundamental factor in officer resistance to community policing is that institution of this philosophy results in major changes in the role of the officer (Vinzant & Crothers, 1994). These authors noted that re-evaluation and restructuring of the role of patrol officers is essential to the effective implementation of community policing. Patrol officers must be viewed as street-level leaders, with the authority to use innovative problem-solving techniques. Officers are the direct link between the department and the community. The level of discretion used by these officers determines whether community policing is being implemented in the ways intended by policy makers. This model of street-level leadership insists that community values must be considered in the implementation of policy and the discretion of officers enforcing these policies. Failure of officers to consider these values may lessen the effectiveness of community policing and increase the frustration of officers.

Novak, Smith, and Engel (2002) studied the influence of community policing on officers' decision to arrest. The study examined the differences between community
police officers and beat officers when making the decision to arrest a citizen. The study did not find a significant effect of officer assignment on decision to arrest; however, some situational variables were different for the two sets of officers. Beat officers were more likely to arrest males, intoxicated citizens, and hostile or noncompliant citizens than were their community policing counterparts. This difference may be due to the fact that community police officers are more familiar with the community members, and may have information about community values not available to the beat officers.

*Individual Factors and Community Policing*

In 1998, Miller studied gender issues as they relate to community policing. Traditional policing is marked by a preponderance of masculine values and a gendered division of labor. In this male-dominated field, female officers have traditionally struggled to gain acceptance and respect from their male counterparts. The shift toward community policing has seen an increase in more feminine constructs such as care, connection, and relational concerns. Miller argued that it is vital for these traditionally masculine organizations to embrace the more feminine, social-worker oriented style of community policing in order for the programs to be successful. Officers expressing “too much” concern have been condemned or denigrated in the past; however, this expression of concern for the community is a fundamental premise in the community policing philosophy. Miller suggested that the masculine bias of traditional policing might sabotage community policing unless organization-wide changes in the values of police officers are instituted.
Another individual factor that may be influenced by community policing is the recruitment of minority applicants. Recruitment of minorities is a high priority in the community policing philosophy (Perrott, 1999). Minority officers increase the feeling of representation among minority community members. Racial prejudice of officers and society were seen as significant obstacles in the recruitment of minority applicants. This study indicated that recruitment of minority officers into communities they represent may have a positive effect on acceptance of community policing.

**Community Policing Programs**

The shift toward community policing has seen the institution of many new programs across the country. Programs such as neighborhood crime watches, foot patrols, and citizens police academies have all been born of this philosophy. Despite the widespread acceptance of community policing and its programs, little empirical evidence exists to support the effectiveness of these programs (Schneider et al., 2000). Hahn (1998) noted that evaluation of these programs is made difficult by the varying definitions of “success” of such programs. Also, it is difficult to compare programs in different stages of implementation.

Of the various community policing programs, the Citizen Police Academy (CPA) in particular has gained widespread popularity in the United States. The idea of an academy for citizens was born in the Devon and Cornwall Constabulary in Great Britain. The “Police Night School”, as it was known there, was started in 1977 to familiarize community members with the police department and its functions. The course met once a week for 10 weeks.
The first program of this kind in the United States was in Orlando, Florida (Aryani, Garrett, & Alsabrook, 2000). The Orlando department organized its CPA in 1985 as a week-long class for residents to become more aware of law enforcement operations. The program was organized similar to the program in Devon and Cornwall as a 10-week, hands-on learning experience covering topics such as police administration, narcotics, and firearms safety. The overwhelming popularity of the program has since spawned programs across the country.

In summary, the transition to community policing arose from the strong desire of police departments across the country to incorporate citizens’ concerns into the policies that affect these same citizens. Prior to the advent of community policing, beat officers’ main focus was on the law enforcement side of the job. While the traditional policing philosophy remains in effect in some communities, the vast majority of departments today have begun to utilize community policing policies and programs.

Most CPAs cite two primary objectives or goals: (a) to increase community awareness of the police department and its daily operations, and (b) to increase officer awareness of community concerns. Despite the popularity of these programs throughout the country, little empirical data supporting their “effectiveness” exists.

The city of Bowling Green, Kentucky implemented its own CPA in 1996. At the time of this project, eleven classes had graduated this program; however, no formal evaluation of its effectiveness has been conducted. The department expressed interest in evaluating the effectiveness not only from the citizens’ point of view but also to gain insight into officers’ attitudes regarding the program.
Current Study

This study was undertaken as a means for determining the effectiveness of the CPA program in meeting its two goals of increasing community awareness of the police department and officer awareness of community concerns. In order to determine the program’s effectiveness, several hypotheses were proposed:

Hypothesis 1: CPA alumni will report higher levels of awareness of police activities than will nonparticipating members of the community.

Hypothesis 2: Officers who participate with the CPA will report higher levels of support for the program than will nonparticipating officers.

Hypothesis 3: Officers’ self-reported levels of community awareness will be higher than levels of officer awareness reported by community members.

Hypothesis 4: CPA alumni will identify significantly more programs offered by the BGPD than nonparticipating community members.

Method

Participants

Three different groups of participants were identified for this study. The first group consisted of all alumni of the eleven previous CPA classes. Surveys were mailed to all 196 men and women who had completed the CPA course over the last six years. Of these, 87 were returned, for a response rate of 44%. Mean age of participants in this sample was 51.79 years. The sample was 86.2% white and 11.5% African-American, with no other minorities represented. Over half of the alumni (55.2%) held college degrees.
The second group was composed of a random sampling of citizens of Bowling Green. To obtain that sampling of community citizens, phone numbers were randomly selected from the directory. The local directory lists zip codes as well as phone numbers. Zip codes were sampled in the same proportions as those represented by the members of the CPA alumni. A list of 220 phone numbers was generated, and 96 participants chose to respond, a rate of 43.6%. This community sample was 43.8% male and 55.8% female. Mean age for this sample was 39.45 years. Over half (57.1%) of the sample was white, but several minorities, including African-American (23.1%), Hispanic (4.4%), and Asian-American (3.3%), were also represented. The final 12.1% of the sample reported their ethnicity as “other.” Only 39.8% of the community respondents held a college degree.

The final group consisted of all employees, both sworn and non-sworn, of the Bowling Green Police Department (BGPD). The BGPD employs approximately 150 persons, and 96 returned surveys, a response rate of 64%. Surveys were administered to sworn officers, as well as non-sworn administrative staff. This sample was 61.7% male and 38.3% female. The average age of BGPD employees was 35.69. The majority of employees were white (93.8%), with the rest of the sample consisting of African-American (5.2%) and Asian-Americans (1.0%) members. Approximately 90% of the employees reported at least some college experience. Employees in the sample had an average of 9.78 years on the job.

Materials
Alumni and Community Survey. A cover letter was mailed with the Alumni Surveys describing the study in detail. Consent was implied when participants filled out and returned the survey. The Alumni Survey (see Appendix A) included five demographic questions. These questions asked for participants' age, gender, ethnicity, education level, and income level. Sixteen items related to the CPA followed the demographic questions. CPA-related items were constructed to be answered using a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Items measured the participant's familiarity with the daily duty of officers, willingness to participate in community policing programs, and social problems of concern to the community.

Instructions for the Phone Survey described the study in detail, and consent was implied when participants agreed to respond to the survey. The Community Phone Survey (see Appendix B) was identical to the alumni questionnaire, with the exception of two questions on the alumni survey that asked specifically about attitudes toward the police department both before and after participation in the CPA.

Bowling Green Police Department Survey. The BGPD Employee Survey (see Appendix C) consisted of eight demographic items. These items asked for participants' age, gender, ethnicity, years on the job, rank, and education level. A final item was also included to assess the employee's level of participation in the CPA. Fifteen items concerning the employee's attitudes toward the CPA were also included. Some items were modified from scales used in Dicker's (1998) study on officer resistance to community policing.

Procedures
Data was collected following approval by the Human Subjects Review Board at Western Kentucky University. The community was sampled using the same zip codes represented by members of the CPA alumni, in approximately the same proportions. A phone survey was chosen for the community group rather than a mail out survey, due to the likelihood of poor return rates.

To aid in administering a phone survey, a script was developed for interviewers. A standardized method of administration was used to ensure that each participant received identical instructions. Participants were informed that information would remain confidential. Contact numbers for both the police department and researchers at the university were provided for further questions about the survey.

Members of the CPA alumni association were notified of the upcoming survey both in the monthly newsletter and in an Alumni Association meeting. Following notification, surveys were mailed out with a cover letter explaining the nature of the research. Two weeks after the original surveys were mailed, a follow up letter was sent out as a reminder to return the surveys. An extra copy of the survey was also included.

Employee surveys were administered to sworn officers during daily roll call meetings. Roll call meetings are conducted before the start of an officer’s shift. Officers were asked to complete the surveys before leaving for patrol and to place them in a secure box located in the police department building. Assurances were made to the officers that their answers would remain anonymous. Administrative and support employees were given surveys through the departmental mail and asked to leave them in
a secure box located in the station. As an individual incentive, one participant’s name from each shift was drawn for a $25 gift certificate to a local restaurant. A pizza party was also offered as a group incentive for the shift with the most members returning surveys.

**Results**

Hypothesis 1 proposed that the CPA alumni would report higher levels of awareness of police activities than would nonparticipating members of the community. Scores for level of awareness were calculated by summing two items from the community and alumni surveys. These two items were *I know what a police officer’s daily work duties are*, and *Police officers spend an adequate amount of time patrolling neighborhoods.* Table 1 presents correlations for these items.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I know what a police officer’s daily duties are.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.22**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Police officers spend an adequate amount of time patrolling neighborhoods.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). N = 181.

Ratings for these items were made using a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating Strongly Disagree, and 5 indicating Strongly Agree. The results of this test showed that CPA alumni ($M = 7.71$, $SD = 1.20$) reported significantly higher levels of awareness of police activity than did nonparticipating community members ($M = 7.09$, $SD = 1.76$), $t$ (178) = 2.72, $p < .05$. These results support our hypothesis that alumni members would
report higher levels of awareness of police activities. Means and standard deviations for each item are listed in Table 2.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Alumni</th>
<th>Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I know what a police officer's daily work duties are.</td>
<td>4.24 (.71)</td>
<td>3.44 (1.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Police officers spend an adequate amount of time patrolling neighborhoods.</td>
<td>3.46 (.96)</td>
<td>3.66 (1.09)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hypothesis 2 examined the differences in level of support for the CPA between employees who had participated with the program and those who had not. This score was determined using 4 items from the employee survey that directly addressed the CPA program. These items were: The CPA is effective in informing the community about the police department; the CPA is effective in improving the image of police officers; the CPA is useful only as a public relations tool (reverse scored); and the CPA provides an effective means for me to learn more about community members' concerns. Ratings for these items were also made using a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Correlations among these items are reported in Table 3.

Participating employees ($M = 15.25, SD = 2.42$) did not show significantly more support for the CPA program than did those employees who had not participated ($M = 15.11, SD = 2.21$), $t (93) = .871, p = .386$. which did not support our hypothesis. Group means and standard deviations for each item are reported in Table 4.
Table 3

Intercorrelations Between Officer Awareness Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <em>The CPA is effective in informing the community about the police department.</em></td>
<td><strong>.62</strong></td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.50**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <em>The CPA is effective in improving the image of police officers.</em></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>.25</strong></td>
<td>.51**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. <em>The CPA is useful only as a public relations tool.</em> (reverse scored)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. <em>The CPA provides an effective means for me to learn more about community concerns.</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Correlation is significant at the .05 level. **Correlation is significant at the .01 level.

Although participating employees did not show more support for the program, both groups’ mean scores were very high, indicating department-wide support for the CPA program.

Table 4

Means (Standard Deviations) for Officer Awareness Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>CPA Involved</th>
<th>CPA Non-Involved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <em>The CPA is effective in informing the community about the police department.</em></td>
<td>4.29 (.72)</td>
<td>4.09 (.78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <em>The CPA is effective in improving the image of police officers.</em></td>
<td>4.27 (.84)</td>
<td>4.24 (.67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. <em>The CPA is useful only as a public relations tool.</em> (reverse scored)</td>
<td>3.17 (1.24)</td>
<td>3.07 (.96)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. <em>The CPA provides an effective means for me to learn more about community concerns.</em></td>
<td>3.70 (.76)</td>
<td>3.71 (.71)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hypothesis 3 predicted that employees’ self-reported levels of awareness regarding community law enforcement concerns would be higher than the levels of officer awareness perceived by both citizens’ groups. This hypothesis was tested using one item that was included on all three scales: Police officers know which law enforcement issues are important to my community (community surveys), or I know which law enforcement issues are important to my community (employee survey). Responses were given using a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to test the differences between the groups. The between groups difference was not significant $F(2) = 2.84, p < .06$, indicating no difference in levels of awareness between the employees and the community. While there were not significant differences, all three groups rated officer awareness high, with a community survey mean of 4.02 (SD = 1.13), mail survey mean of 3.91 (SD = .82), and an officer survey mean of 3.71 (SD = .77).

To further examine the differences between levels of awareness, an open-ended question was asked of both groups. On the community and alumni surveys, participants were asked to list the most important law enforcement concern that they had. On the employee survey, respondents were asked to identify which law enforcement concern they felt was most important to the community. Responses were then sorted into categories by the researchers. The only response in the top three of all three samples was concerns for personal safety. The community’s concerns were in the miscellaneous
category and included issues such as terrorist threats, identity theft, and language barriers between the officers and the city’s growing immigrant population. The top concern reported on the alumni survey was drugs. The employees reported that police department staffing issues (e.g., adequate numbers of officers on patrol) would be the greatest concern of the community. The top three responses of all three groups are listed in Table 5. For the complete list of responses, see Appendix D.

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample</th>
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<th>Concern</th>
<th>Percentage of Sample</th>
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<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Miscellaneous (terrorism, identity theft, etc)</td>
<td>40.6</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Personal safety</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Violent crime</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alumni</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Drugs</td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Miscellaneous (terrorism, identity theft, etc)</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Personal Safety</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Police Department Staffing Issues</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Personal Safety</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Traffic Issues</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hypothesis 4 predicted that *alumni members would be able to identify significantly more programs offered by the police department than would nonparticipating*
community members. In order to determine familiarity with police programs, a scale was constructed that included four prominent programs with which most community members should be familiar; four obscure programs, mentioned specifically in the CPA course, but which most community members should not be familiar; and four fake programs, that were created by the researchers. Respondents were asked to rate how familiar they were with each of the twelve programs using a three point scale ranging from (1) very familiar to (3) not familiar at all. Thus, higher scores on this scale would indicate less familiarity.

For this scale, respondents were given three sum scores: one for the prominent programs, one for the obscure programs, and one for the fake programs. These sum scores were then compared separately using t-tests. On the prominent scale, CPA alumni ($M = 6.14, SD = 1.61$) reported significantly higher levels of familiarity than did non-participating community members ($M = 7.35, SD = 2.90$), $t (177) = -3.41, p < .001$. When scores on the obscure scale were compared, the same results were found, with alumni ($M = 8.13, SD = 2.01$) rating themselves significantly more familiar than did community members ($M = 8.81, SD = 2.67$), $t (177) = -1.90, p < .03$. Finally, on the fake scale, no significant difference was found between groups, with both the community sample ($M = 8.71, SD = 2.04$) and the alumni sample ($M = 8.96, SD = 2.56$) reporting high levels of unfamiliarity.

Discussion
The results of this study show some support for the CPA program. CPA alumni members were more familiar with police department activities than were nonparticipating community members. CPA alumni were also able to identify significantly more programs offered by the police department than were non-participating community members.

Regarding Hypothesis 1, which stated that CPA alumni would report more awareness of police activities than would nonparticipating community members, our results were supported. The indication is that the CPA goal of making community members more aware of police department activities is being adequately met.

Our second hypothesis regarding the effects of participating in the CPA on officer attitudes toward the program was not supported. Officers who participated with the program did not report higher levels of support for the program. It is encouraging, however, that both those officers who did not participate in the CPA as well as those who did reported high levels of support for it. These results contradict those found by Schneider et al. (2000) who found support for community-based policing programs only among officers who had participated in the programs. The high levels of support among our nonparticipating officers may be a result of social desirability, as the CPA program was heavily endorsed by both the former and current chief of police.

Our results also contradict those of Yates and Pillai (1996) who found that most officers did not support such community policing programs. One explanation for this contradiction may be that nearly half of the employees with the Bowling Green Police Department have participated in some way with the CPA, which might have elevated
departmental support for the program. Participation in community policing programs in
the Yates and Pillai study was limited to only a few officers. As only a select few officers
in the Yates and Pillai study participated in the CPA, information about the positive
aspects of the program may not have filtered throughout the department as readily as has
happened in the Bowling Green Police Department. It could be that more officers’
participation within a department affects even the attitudes of the nonparticipating
officers towards CPA. Further, officers in the Yates and Pillai study saw involvement in
the community policing program as a special privilege to be given only to certain
officers. Officers in our sample are strongly encouraged to participate, and participation
is not limited to a select few.

There was no significant difference in the self-reported levels of community
awareness of officers and community and alumni perceptions of officer awareness
(Hypothesis 3). The open-ended questions posed to all three samples indicate that officers
may not be truly aware of the law enforcement issues that are of greatest concern to the
community. The fact that the primary concern of the employees was police department
staffing issues indicates that these employees may, in fact, have been reporting the issue
that is most relevant to them and not the community. Although police department
employees are keenly aware of the number of officers on patrol, Kelling et al. (1974)
reported that increasing the numbers of patrol would not necessarily increase citizen
awareness of officers’ presence. These findings may help to explain why the community
members in our study did not identify staffing issues as a top concern.
Hypothesis 4 was supported by examining community and alumni levels of awareness about programs offered by the police department. The four prominent programs used on this scale were D.A.R.E., Crimestoppers, Neighborhood Watch, and K-9. All of these programs are publicized through the local media and should be familiar to most members of the community. Our results indicated that the alumni were significantly more aware of these programs than were community members. While no difference was expected for these prominent programs, these results strengthen support for the CPA in its mission to increase community awareness of police department activities.

On the obscure scale, we did, however, expect a difference. Programs used for this scale were Police Explorers, Robbery Prevention, Victim Advocates, and Cops in Shops. These programs are less publicized, but all are expressly discussed in the CPA curriculum. Therefore, alumni members, as predicted, were significantly more familiar with them than were community members.

The fake scale of the program included four programs that are not real programs offered by the police department. We did not expect a significant difference in levels of awareness here, and none was found. Both groups reported a high level of unfamiliarity with these programs. To our knowledge, this study is the first to look at community familiarity with specific departmental programs such as these.

Limitations of the Study

There are some limitations to this study. In order to design a study that looked at both community and officer attitudes, survey items were constructed so that they could be applied to both the officer and community samples, with a slight change in wording. The
true effect on attitudes might be better examined by conducting separate studies for the officers and the community. Separate studies might allow for more specific questions targeted toward each group to help identify the areas where the program is not meeting its goals.

Only one item was used to examine Hypothesis 3. We found no significant difference in how aware officers felt they were and how aware the community perceived them to be. The results of the open-ended question, however, signal that there are differences in those law enforcement issues that are important to the community and those that the officers think are important to community members. A future study asking respondents to rank order the concerns found here might be a better method for determining if the groups agree on which items are important to the community.

Implications of the Study

The CPA is a community policing program that was created to increase both the community’s awareness of police department activities as well as police officers’ awareness of community concerns. The results of this study seem to indicate that this program has been successful in partially meeting that goal. Community members who have participated in the CPA program were better able to identify both prominent and obscure programs offered by the police department. Alumni members also reported significantly higher levels of awareness of police department activities than did non-participating community members.
Officer awareness of community concerns is one area in which the CPA seems to need improvement. The growing number of immigrants within the community is placing a special demand upon the department to increase sensitivity and awareness toward this population. Recruitment efforts, within both the department and the CPA program itself, to include officers who speak Spanish, for example, might help to increase this sensitivity.

Further suggestions regarding how to improve officer awareness of community concerns are needed. However, it is important to note that this lack of officer awareness may not be entirely a failing of the CPA. Over half of the employees who responded to the survey had not participated in the CPA, thus meaning that a majority of officers reporting their awareness of the CPA had not even participated in the program. Increasing officer awareness of community concerns may be accomplished simply by increasing the number of officers who participate in the program.

Taken as a whole, our results provide support that the CPA is successfully meeting its goal of informing the community about the police department. The second goal of the CPA, making officers aware of concerns that are important to the community, has been shown to be less successful. Law enforcement agencies today find themselves under the close scrutiny of the public more than ever -- for example, the attention given to the officers involved in the Rodney King scandal. Programs such as the CPA play a vital role in reducing misunderstandings between officers and the community they serve. Citizens who participate in this program are better able to understand decisions made by law
enforcement officers. In turn, officers are better able to make decisions while keeping in mind the residents of the communities they serve.
References


http://www.policefoundation.org/docs/foundation.html


Police Foundation Publications. Retrieved August 30, 2002, from

http://www.policefoundation.org/docs/foundation.html


Sample Cover Letter for Alumni Mail-out

Shannon Cook  
Department of Psychology  
Western Kentucky University  
1 Big Red Way  
Bowling Green, KY 42101

Dear Citizen Police Academy Alumnus,

We are currently conducting research for the Bowling Green Police Department regarding the effectiveness of the Citizen Police Academy. We would like to ask you and your fellow CPA alumni to complete a short survey to help us determine how well the program is working. Results of this survey will also help the Police Department continue to improve this program for future participants. Answers to this survey will be kept confidential. No identifying information will be collected. Participation in the survey is voluntary.

This survey is also the focus of Shannon Cook's thesis, a requirement for graduation from the Industrial/Organizational Psychology program at Western Kentucky University. The supervising professor on this project is Dr. Jackie Pope. Any questions you have regarding the survey may be addressed to Shannon Cook, Dr. Pope, or Captain J.R. Wilkins with the Bowling Green Police Department. We appreciate your assistance in helping us to improve this important program.

Sincerely,

Shannon Cook, Principal Investigator  
(270) 542-7675

Jackie Pope, Faculty Sponsor  
(270) 745-2695

Captain J.R. Wilkins, BGPD  
(270) 393-4516
Survey of the BGPD Citizen Police Academy

Please take a few moments to complete this survey of the BGPD Citizen Police Academy. Answers will remain anonymous.

1. Age _____  
2. Male ___ Female ___  
3. Ethnicity: White ___  
  African-American ___  
  Hispanic ___  
  Asian/Asian-American ___  
  Pacific Islander ___  
  Other ___  
4. Highest Level Of Education  
  a. High School Diploma/GED  
  b. Some College  
  c. College Degree  
  d. Advanced Degree  
5. Income Level:  
  a. Under $24,999  
  b. $25,000 - $49,999  
  c. $50,000 - $74,999  
  d. $75,000 or Above  

In this section, please respond to items using the following scale:

1 – Strongly Disagree  2 – Disagree  3 – Neutral/Unsure  4 – Agree  5 – Strongly Agree

SD  D  N  A  SA

1. I know what a police officer’s daily work duties are.  
   1  2  3  4  5  

2. Police officers are concerned with community problems.  
   1  2  3  4  5  

3. Most police officers treat citizens fairly.  
   1  2  3  4  5  

4. Citizens are a valuable source of information for police officers.  
   1  2  3  4  5  

5. I am not interested in participating in crime prevention programs.  
   1  2  3  4  5  

6. I have heard of the BGPD Citizen Police Academy.  
   1  2  3  4  5  

7. Crime prevention programs are an effective way to reduce crime.  
   1  2  3  4  5  

8. Police officers spend an adequate amount of time patrolling neighborhoods.  
   1  2  3  4  5  

9. I have had contact with members of my police department.  
   1  2  3  4  5
10. The CPA is effective in informing the community about the police department.  

11. The average citizen is not well-informed about the police department.  

12. Prior to attending the CPA, I held a positive view of the police department.  

13. Patrol officers should participate in the CPA.  

14. Police officers know which law enforcement issues are important to my community.  

15. Upon completing the CPA, I held a positive view of the police department.  

16. Please tell us what area of crime prevention is most important to you.

The following items concern programs offered by the BGPD. For these items, please indicate whether you are:
- 1 - Very familiar with the program
- 2 - Somewhat familiar with the program
- 3 - Not familiar at all with the program

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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<p>| 1. D.A.R.E. |
| 2. Police Explorers |
| 3. Babysitter Safety/Awareness |
| 4. Crimestoppers |
| 5. Robbery Prevention |
| 6. Provide-A-Ride |</p>
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<td>7. Neighborhood Watch</td>
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<td>8. Victim Advocates</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Handgun Safety</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. K-9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Cops in Shops</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Self Defense for Women</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample Follow-Up Letter for the Alumni Mail-out

Shannon Cook  
Department of Psychology  
Western Kentucky University  
1 Big Red Way  
Bowling Green, KY 42101  
March 18, 2003

Dear CPA Alumnus,

Recently you received a letter requesting your participation in a survey of the Bowling Green Police Department’s Citizen Police Academy. A second corrected survey was also mailed shortly following the first. If you have already returned this corrected survey, we would like to thank you very much for your time. However, if you have not yet completed the survey, we would like to ask you to complete and return one at this time. For your convenience, a second copy of the corrected survey is enclosed. (Please return the survey only if you failed to return the corrected survey.)

The participation of alumni like you strengthens the results of this research. It is our goal to have everyone fill out and return these surveys. We would like to insure that everyone’s voice is heard as we attempt to continue to improve the program for future participants. We appreciate your time and effort in making our CPA the best it can be. As this is part of my thesis research, I feel obligated to also apologize for the confusion with the original mail out. A simple typographical error has lead to extra work on all of our parts, and for this I am very sorry. I appreciate the patience and understanding of our CPA alumni as I gather this research.

Sincerely,

Shannon Cook, Principal Investigator  
(270) 542-7675

Jackie Pope, Faculty Sponsor  
(270) 745-2695

Captain J.R. Wilkins, BGPD  
(270) 393-4516
Appendix B: CPA Phone Survey
Instructions for Administration of CPA Phone Survey

This phone survey is being conducted as part of a program evaluation for the Bowling Green Police Department’s Citizen Police Academy. Please follow the script as it is written, so that we can maintain equal treatment of the participants. Speak slowly and clearly, repeating items and instructions as necessary.

When participant answers the phone, say:

Hello. My name is _________ and I am calling on behalf of the Bowling Green Police Department. We are currently conducting research on the effectiveness of one of our community programs. I was wondering if I could ask you a few short questions about the police department?

If the participant declines, thank them before ending the call. If they agree to answer questions, say:

We appreciate your cooperation! This survey is very short and should take approximately 5 – 10 minutes to complete. We would like to remind you that participation in this survey is completely voluntary. First I would like to ask you some questions about yourself. All of your answers will remain confidential, and no identifying information will be included with the results.

Ask the first 5 questions of the survey. Next, read the brief instructions for the next 16 items that are printed on the survey. Make sure that participant understands the numerical values assigned to the scale before proceeding. The final 12 items have a different numerical scale, please read the directions and ensure that participant understands the new values.

Upon completion of the survey, say:

Once again I would like to thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your answers will help us to determine if the police department’s Citizen Police Academy is an effective program, and to make any improvements necessary. If you are interested in becoming involved with this program, you may contact Sergeant Penny Bowles at 393-4717. If you have any further questions about this research, you may contact Shannon Cook at 779-3696. Thank you again and have a nice evening/day.
Survey of the BGPD Citizen Police Academy (Phone Survey)

Please take a few moments to complete this survey of the BGPD Citizen Police Academy. Answers will remain anonymous.

1. Age _______ 2. Male__ Female__ 3. Ethnicity: White _______ 
   African American _______ 
   Hispanic _______ 
   Asian/Asian American _______ 
   Pacific Islander _______ 
   Other _______

4. Highest Level Of Education
   e. High School Diploma/GED
   f. Some College
   g. College Degree
   h. Advanced Degree

5. Income Level:
   a. Under $24,999
   b. $25,000 - $49,999
   c. $50,000 - $74,999
   d. $75,000 or Above

In this section, please respond to items using the following scale:

1 – Strongly Disagree  2 – Disagree  3 – Neutral/Unsure  4 – Agree  5 – Strongly Agree

1. I know what a police officer’s daily work duties are.  1 2 3 4 5
2. Police officers are concerned with community problems.  1 2 3 4 5
3. Most police officers treat citizens fairly.  1 2 3 4 5
4. Citizens are a valuable resource of information for police officers.  1 2 3 4 5
5. I am not interested in participating in crime prevention programs.  1 2 3 4 5
6. I have heard of the BGPD Citizen Police Academy.  1 2 3 4 5
7. Crime prevention programs are an effective way to reduce crime.  1 2 3 4 5
8. Police officers spend an adequate amount of time patrolling neighborhoods.  

9. I have had contact with members of my police department.  

10. The CPA is effective in informing the community about the police department.  

11. The average citizen is not well-informed about the police department.  

12. Patrol officers should participate in the CPA.  

13. Police officers know which law enforcement issues are important to my community.  

14. I have a positive view of the police department.  

15. Please tell us what area of crime prevention is most important to you.

The following items concern programs offered by the BGPD. For these items, please indicate whether you are:

1. Very familiar with the program  
2. Somewhat familiar with the program  
3. Not familiar at all with the program

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Program</th>
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<td>1. D.A.R.E.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Police Explorers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Babysitter Safety/Awareness</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Crimestoppers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Robbery Prevention</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>---</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Provide-A-Ride</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Neighborhood Watch</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Victim Advocates</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Handgun Safety</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>10. K-9</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Self Defense for Women</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C: BGPD Employee Survey of the Citizen Police Academy
BGPD Employee Survey of the Citizen Police Academy

Please take a few moments to complete the following survey. All survey responses will remain anonymous. Data viewed by the department will be summarized, with no individual identifiers.

1. Age _______  2. Male___ Female___  3. Ethnicity: White _______
   African-American ______
   Hispanic ______
   Asian/Asian American ______
   Pacific Islander ______
   Other ______

4. Years on the Job _______

5. Rank (if sworn officer) _______________________

6. Highest level of school completed:
   a. High School Diploma/ GED
   b. Some College
   c. College Degree
   d. Advanced Degree

7. Have you participated in the Citizen Police Academy (CPA)?
   a. yes
   b. no

8. If yes, in what capacity did you participate? (e.g. teaching classes, drive along program, etc.)

Citizen Police Academy

Please use the following scale to rate these items:
1 – Strongly Disagree  2 – Disagree  3 – Neutral/Unsure  4 – Agree  5 – Strongly Agree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>A</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. The community has an interest in being involved in crime prevention

2. Community policing is a fundamental part of my job.
3. The CPA is effective in informing the community about the police department.  

4. The average citizen is not well-informed about the police department.  

5. The CPA is effective at improving the image of police officers.  

6. Patrol officers should participate in the CPA.  

7. The CPA is useful only as a public relations tool.  

8. I know which law enforcement issues are important to my community.  

9. The CPA provides an effective means for me to learn more about community members’ concerns.  

10. Police officers are concerned with community problems.  

11. Most police officers treat citizens fairly.  

12. Citizens are a valuable resource of information for police officers.  

13. Crime prevention programs are an effective way to reduce crime.  

14. Police officers spend an adequate amount of time patrolling neighborhoods.  

15. Please tell us what you think is the most common concern of citizens in this community regarding crime prevention.
Appendix D: Responses to Open-Ended Question by Sample
### Employee Responses to Open-Ended Question

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Response</th>
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<td>62.5</td>
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<td>Personal Safety</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>74.0</td>
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<td>Drugs</td>
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<td>9.4</td>
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<td>Traffic</td>
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<td>Juvenile Crime</td>
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<td>Miscellaneous</td>
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### Mail Survey Responses to Open-Ended Question

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<th>Percent</th>
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### Phone Survey Responses to Open-Ended Question

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