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Columbia-Oriented Policing Program

Overview of Columbia & Community-Oriented Policing

The City Council of Columbia declared support for Community-Oriented Policing in Resolution 23-18 in February 2018. Their resolution sited the 2014 Mayor's Task Force on Community Violence which recommended a Community-Oriented Policing model four years previously.[1] Also cited in Resolution 23-18 are the "Vehicle Stop Reports" which have shown racial disproportions since data was first collected. The Vehicle Stop Report in 2016 showed a disparity index of 3.13 for black drivers[2] and in 2019 the disparity index was 3.51 for black drivers.[3]

The Community-Oriented Policing report written in 2018 failed to take into account community member suggestions and failed to propose an actual community-oriented policing plan.[4] However, what is included in that report are specific and various suggestions by community members in different wards. Stakeholders were invited to share their thoughts and ideas; such suggestions simply weren't taken into account.

Since 2018, there has been a Vehicle Stop Committee which was created under Chief Jones' supervision. Among his requests, he charged the committee to "Find solutions/methods/processes to fill data gaps and set a timeline for research. Identify policing training/best practices that should be examined for changes…Make recommendations to me as the committee comes to consensus."[5] Such analysis, factfinding, and recommendations for further data collection are obviously important, but the disparity index that remains is egregious and demonstrates a more immediate need for action.

In "Comments on 2019 CPD Data" written by Don Love to comment on the 2019 Vehicle Stop Data Report, Committee member Love, points out that saturation patrols and pretext stops may contribute to disparity. While Chief Jones is sited saying that the CPD will not use saturation patrols, there is no sited response yet to the discussion of pretext stops. In a draft of the Committee's "Data Check-off List" from their September meeting, they recommend further check-offs for pretext stops—requiring officers document more information regarding those stops which would allow for closer review of disparities. The draft of the report explains that check-offs that document facts leading to arrest is a part of bias-free policing. Both the "Data Check-off List" and Don Love's "Comments on 2019 CPD Data" request further data and the latter asks for an explanation from CPD as to the legitimacy of stops and justifications for the disparity in traffic stops. Although Community-Oriented Policing is mentioned and praised in Love's "Comments on 2019 CPD Data", there are no actionable items suggested to make a Community-Oriented Policing plan—there are only further questions.

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[1] Council Bill No. R 23-18, Columbia, MO.
https://www.como.gov/CMS/granicus/downloadfile.php?id=17786&type=attachment
[2] Vehicle Stop Report, Columbia, MO. 2017. https://www.como.gov/CMS/pressreleases/view.php?id=4933
[3] Love, Don. "Comments on 2019 CPD Data," May 2020.
[4] Pratt, Pat, "CPD Community Policing Report Now Dead On Arrival," *Columbia Daily Tribune*. Jan 12, 2019.
https://www.columbiatribune.com/news/20190112/cpd-community-policing-report-now-dead-on-arrival
[5] 2019-04-23 Chief's Charge, Vehicle Stops Working Group

The Community-Oriented Policing report failed to create a plan that CPD could follow and although the Vehicle Stop Committee is the source of important data collection recommendations, they are not a source of action. This is not to say that Community-Oriented Policing has been removed from the city's agenda. In September 2020's "Columbia Policing Update" by Chief Jones, the "Columbia Policing Plan Intended Outcome" describes that it shall "Provide citizens with proximity to the officers who serve them to promote shared power and responsibility" (2) and included in "Key Actions to Achieve the Outcome" are "Training for police officers will be infused with community-oriented philosophy" (5). The report states that "It is proposed that instruction in policing tactics and competencies should be meshed with these principles: guardianship; partnership; human connections; cultural awareness and understanding; fairness; life consequences; and quality of life" (5) but what exactly does this look like? Has the CPD included these many principles and how do they intend to accomplish such training?

In the later discussion of "Data Collection" within the "Columbia Policing Update," the importance of the Vehicle Stop Committee comes to light once more. "When evaluating training and practices, CPD will use data to help measure effectiveness, fairness and efficiency. The Department will work with the community to examine areas of concern, eg., vehicle stops, and seek solutions to help address community and policing issues. As described in section I.A. above, the Chief's Vehicle Stop Committee is advising on data collection, officer training and changes in procedures and practice" (10). In "Comments on 2019 Columbia Police Department Incident-Based Data," suggestions about future data collection are clear, but recommendations regarding training aren't evident, and implied suggestions in procedures and practice will achieve little.

The Columbia Policing Update also includes "2020-2021 Strategies" which focuses on adopting community policing into CPD.[6] This section goes so far as to say that "Everyone at CPD contributes to community policing, but there is uncertainty about what people in the community expect" (24). However, there is also a lack of specificity on how community policing is being put into effect, in terms of both policy and training.

What can be gleaned from the Community-Oriented Policing report, the Chief's Vehicle Stop Committee, and the Columbia Policing Update, is that there is a strong foundation of data relating to vehicle stops and community members' perceptions, values, and recommendations. And although there may still be more data needed, also evident is a sustained interest in enacting community-oriented policing. What is missing from these initiatives and reports, are actionable steps toward community-oriented policing.

One such step toward community-oriented policing could be a Columbia police officer leadership program modeled after Police for Tomorrow and New Orleans's police program, EPIC. The program I propose, Columbia-Oriented Police Program, is a competitive 12-month program with monthly 4-hour sessions that provide peer-on-peer support, workshops taught by University Professors and other community members on topics specific to Columbia, and discussion forums and activities involving the public. The program would culminate in a capstone project of officers' own choosing.

This program would fulfill several "Key Actions to Achieve the Outcome" within the Columbia Policing Update. It would ensure that "Training for police officers will be infused with community-oriented philosophy" (5), it would be a "joint training opportunity" (5) in which community members will be included, and it will be conducted in "various formats and by a wide range of community instructors…" (5).

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[6] Chief of Police Geoff Jones, *Columbia Policing Update*, 23, September 2, 2020

Such a program would also further the "Columbia Police Department Accountability for Task Force Recommendations" from the Mayor's Task Force on Community Violence relating to "CPD Contributions to Fulfilling Enforcement Recommendations." This leadership program will include training in several areas which officers may request: "community policing philosophy; cultural competency; bias-free policing; implicit bias; customer service; and Columbia history and culture" (61). One of the Enforcement Recommendations is, "A system of professional development and promotion should be instituted that rewards the softer skills of relationship building, community involvement and cultural competency" (61). This competitive program which focuses on those softer skills could serve as a preference point toward future promotions. Another recommendation is that "The Columbia community should develop programs to help officers feel appreciated and respected, to aid in recruitment of the highest quality officers that are representative of the diversity of Columbia" (62). This program would provide support for officers and aid in developing mutual respect between community members and police.

Impact of a Police Officer Leadership Programs

In New Orleans, NOPD and community partners developed EPIC, Ethical Policing Is Courageous, in 2014. Although focused on peer intervention, the program does more than empower intervention, "At its core, EPIC is an officer survival program, a community safety program, and a job satisfaction program."[7] Among its outcomes are "Higher morale; Better retention and recruitment; Increased public trust; Happier, healthier, and more stable officers." After completing EPIC, they also see "Fewer citizen complaints."[8]

Another Police Leadership program is ProjectABLE, created by the Georgetown University Innovative Policing Program and Sheppard Mullin law firm. Police departments, the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission, and experts have all helped develop this program. Among their upcoming virtual events is "ABLE Virtual Open House" during which "…a series of experienced speakers will discuss the principles of active bystandership in the context of policing, and share concrete steps any department can take to employ active bystandership training to reduce harm to civilians, reduce harm to officers, and drive cultural change."[9]

A more all-encompassing project is the "Police for Tomorrow," a two-year fellowship program for newly recruited officers with monthly workshops. This program includes mentorship, educational workshops, and community action. The program is fairly comprehensive: "Among the topics covered are new approaches to policing, current issues in criminal justice, the role of police in a diverse and democratic society, race and criminal justice, and the future of policing. Some workshops are led by speakers from community organizations, universities, and government, and all the fellows are offered an opportunity for mentoring by senior MPD personnel."[10] Data-driven effects can be hard to determine but Professor Brooks

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[7] EPIC, City of New Orleans. http://epic.nola.gov/home/#what
[8] EPIC Overview, EPIC, City of New Orleans. http://epic.nola.gov/epic/media/Assets/EPIC-Overview.pdf
[9] "Upcoming Active Bystander Events," Georgetown Law. https://www.law.georgetown.edu/innovative-policing-program/active-bystandership-for-law-enforcement/events/
[10] "Police for Tomorrow: Creating a New Generation of Leaders," March 2019, Volume 12, Issue 2, *Dispatch.* https://cops.usdoj.gov/html/dispatch/03-2019/police_for_tomorrow.html#:~:text=Designed%20to%20inspire%20and%20challenge,mending%20frayed%20relations%20with%20minority

who developed the program describes other effects, "…some departmental leaders say they have seen a positive change in the officers on the street and that they have gotten positive feedback from the community members." Participants have "overwhelmingly positive" feedback.

Programs such as these three have demonstrated the many great effects of investing in our community-police relationships through alternative types of training and education. The city of Columbia could also benefit from an Officer Leadership program. Home to multiple universities and an invested community, Columbia is well situated to develop a similar program. Stakeholders are asking for community-oriented policing and programs like these create an environment for real cultural shifts.

An Overview of the program

The Columbia-Oriented Policing Program is a one-year, competitive program for new police officers with monthly workshops that focus on different topics related to community-oriented policing. The program will begin with an interview process, wherein officers who have been on the CPD for two years or less will be invited to apply. Applicants will be interviewed by three people—a city official, police representative, and a community member. Eighteen officers will be selected on the basis of their openness to community-oriented policing and discussions of social injustice, and their interest in future police leadership positions. These criteria are based off of the "Police for Tomorrow" program at Georgetown.

Monthly sessions will include peer-to-peer support time, an educational component run by professors and other community members, and an activity with community stakeholders such as an open discussion forum. Some subjects will be taken from EPIC, ABLE, and Police for Tomorrow, and others will be Columbia specific to further community-police relationships.

The program will culminate in an independent capstone project of the officer's choosing. It must in some way engage the community and it must draw on techniques or topics they've learned from previous sessions. This will help officers cement understanding and demonstrate the way these concepts can be put into practice in the community.

This proposed program takes into account the data from the community feedback meetings from the "2018 Community-Oriented Policing Report" while also taking substantial actions to manifest such a philosophy. Every single workshop developed for this program directly addresses suggestions and/or possible measurements of success brought up in the "World Café Community Meetings." In four of the seven meetings the relationship between the police and youth was explicitly mentioned. One of the sessions will focus on juvenile brain development and the community-based activity will involve local youth. Many community members suggested more racial bias training which this program provides. There were many who also suggested that there should be more interactions between community members and police—each session provides an opportunity for this.[11]

Similarly, intended results for this program are aligned with many community stakeholders' measures of success. In the "2018 Community-Oriented Policing Report," raising officer morale and citizen satisfaction were mentioned multiple times as ways to determine how successful Community-Oriented Policing is. The models which this program is based upon tout these exact results. In community meetings held by the NAACP and the City Manager, they described a range of priorities community members would like to see in community-oriented

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[11] Chief of Police Geoff Jones, *Columbia Policing Update*, 20-35, September 2, 2020

policing. In regards to their discussions of police and "Cultural Diversity," their list of priorities include training, interaction, and that it should be ongoing.[12]

The Columbia-Oriented Police Program would directly fulfill many of the stakeholders' suggestions, it provides new opportunities for education and support for officers, and it brings Community-Oriented Policing tactics and philosophies to the CPD.

Program Goals

1. Create and sustain a philosophy of community-oriented policing within officers
2. Steadily develop a cultural shift within the police department wherein community-police partnerships are encouraged
3. Peer-to-peer mentorship that increase morale of officers and increase accountability
4. Community and police interactions and conversations that address social justice issues
5. Education on topics meaningful to the Columbia community and that uphold long-term community-oriented policing goals
6. Leadership training with a focus on equity and community

Program Sessions

Each of the monthly sessions will include peer-on-peer mentorship, activities with the community, and educational workshops run by experts in various fields. The community activities will be directly related to the educational workshops. The workshop topics follow below:

Trauma Informed Policing*

Systemic Racism***

LGTBQIA+ Safe Space***

Overcoming Implicit Bias***

Columbia History

Juvenile Brain Development***

Personal Wellness and Mental Health***

Over Criminalization and Mass Incarceration*

Homelessness*

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[12] Chief of Police Geoff Jones, *Columbia Policing Update*, 37, September 2, 2020
* Topics derived from "Police for Tomorrow"

Bystander Action[**]

Community Leadership[*]

The program will culminate in a capstone project of each officer's own choosing. The projects will build upon and solidify understanding of topics taught in the various sessions.

[**] Topics derived from EPIC
[***] Topics derived from community members suggestions in Community-Oriented Policing meetings