

Cops return to hit books after work in real world

By STEPHEN HILLS
Of the Emerald

Working police officers are returning to the University through a program offered by the school of Community Services and Public Affairs.

The Law Enforcement Education Program is unique in this state, Coordinator Ken Viegas says.

"It makes me, as an academic person, remain up to date and have a better idea of what is occurring in the field," Viegas says.

"Students come into the classroom with specific ideas of what they need, and place special demands on their professors. They challenge you to make your presentations realistic."

Having officers in classes helps break down stereotypes, Viegas says.

Television police shows have the effect of creating an image which doesn't always connect with reality, he adds. "Sometimes an officer will give students a chance to ride in his patrol car for an evening to get a better idea of what it's really like."

The CSPA-sponsored program provides an opportunity for law enforcement personnel to increase their job skills by returning to school.

The program is open to court employees, jail employees, juvenile counselors, parole officers or almost anyone in detention work.

However, "in-service" returning students are not limited to taking CSPA courses. "The strength of our program is its great variety," Viegas says. "It is truly interdisciplinary. We're interested in broadening."

While police academies teach special skills to officers, Viegas stresses that it is not the University's role. "Here, they get the ability to analyze material. They learn how to use and conduct research. Officers get a chance to view situations in other nations and around the United States, so mistakes are not repeated."

Common majors for LEEP students are sociology, political science, counseling, or even business administration.

"While some might want to upgrade their scale in terms of business administration for management techniques," Viegas says, "others study therapeutic recreation."

Primary funding for the LEEP program

during the past nine years has come from the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, an agency of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Viegas says the LEAA has been critical of programs which are "too technical." This year the LEAA awarded a \$36,900 grant to the University in support of LEEP through next summer.

The grant covers tuition expenses for currently employed criminal justice workers seeking a degree in the academic discipline of their choice. In order to qualify, they must also take law-related courses such as theories of crime and the causes of delinquency.

"There is no set percentage of such courses required" says Viegas. "It's based on a personal contract suited to the individual."

Viegas counsels all the officers himself. Each local criminal justice department has a training officer or supervisor with whom Viegas meets each term. The training officers then encourage their subordinates to contact the professor in order to set up a personal program of study.

About 30 officer students are enrolled in the program this term, most of whom carry a part-time course load, Viegas says.

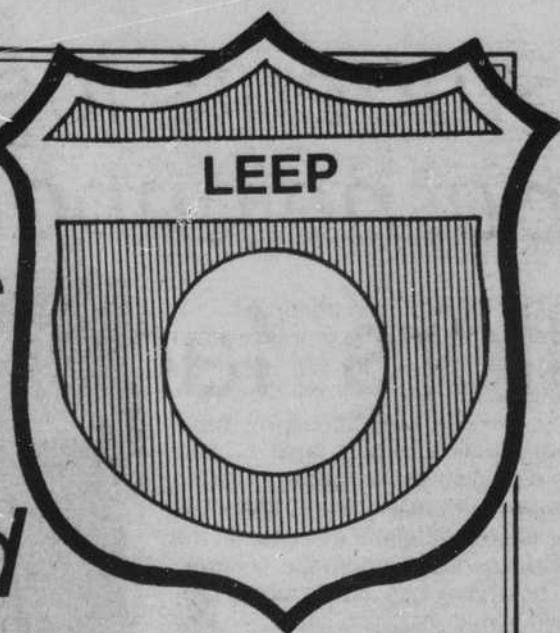
"Some Portlanders still work and come here, and other corrections people come to the University from as far away as Florida on a leave-of-absence," he says.

While none of the LEEP courses are closed to general students, Viegas believes a special program is needed for them too.

"People from counseling and sociology often go into the justice field," he says, adding that political science, management, and corrections education people could benefit from studies in justice administration.

"Law students already come to me," he says. "We need such an institute for focus; it will help us collaborate. We'd like to bring faculty together and develop a curriculum connecting courses for a person from any major."

A tentative proposal for an "Institute of Law and Justice" is now being reviewed by the University. "We hope for some action this year," Viegas says.



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