

Anti-Racism Taskforce (ART) Town Hall with Bryan, College  
Station and UPD Police Chiefs  
Wednesday, July 22, 2020

Additional questions:

**1. What changes have been made in de-escalation training in light of recent events? What training is provided to new officers and is the training of veteran officers being updated?**

Our agencies are regulated by the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) and accredited by the Commission of Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA).

Our agencies require de-escalation whenever possible, safe, and appropriate.

De-escalation training is TCOLE mandated in Peace Officers Academy. All new Cadets are required to complete this class before graduation and licensing. Many of our continuing education trainings include de-escalation, including our annual Use of Force training.

**2. Currently, the rate of fatal shootings and use of force hasn't decreased since the protests for Arbery, Taylor, and Floyd - per data collected by the Washington Post. What changes have your police departments made in response to these protests?**

Our agencies have always endeavored to build and maintain positive relationships with all members of our community. Following recent events in other parts of the nation, we've responded to opportunities by continuing to engage community members in honest and open dialogue. Our CALEA Accreditation has held us accountable and kept our policies progressive.

**3. What is the median age of officers hired by your police departments? Do you feel that it should be higher? How many of these officers live in the communities that they police? Are they required to reside in their jurisdictions?**

The median ages of officers hired by our agencies are about the mid-20s. We seek to hire the best candidates who meet our stringent hiring requirements.

The majority of our agencies' officers live within the Bryan/College Station Community. While it's not required for our officers to live within their jurisdictions, officers are required to respond in a timely manner.

**4. Is there a particular reason that police union collective bargaining agreement negotiations are not open to the community? What can we do to allow the community to be more of a part of these union contract negotiations?**

Texas is a "right-to-work" state, preventing the existence of unions. We do not have police unions in the B/CS Community.

**5. What does your department do to maintain accountability among its officers? I don't feel that we can trust our police department when an officer's actions can be expunged if an investigation is not completed within 180 days of an incident.**

CALEA Accreditation provides our agencies the opportunity to voluntarily demonstrate our commitments to excellence in law enforcement. CALEA standards require a best-practice system of written directives, sound training, clearly defined lines of authority, and routine reports. Checks and balances are built into how our agencies function, including requiring the use of body and in-car camera systems, requiring supervisors to randomly review officers' videos, requiring reports to be reviewed by supervisors, and requiring use of force incidents to be reviewed by an officer's entire chain of command.

None of our agencies expunge officer's records.

**6. The city of Dallas publishes police responses to resistance that is open access. This helps the community investigate and maintain accountability, <https://www.dallasopendata.com/Public-Safety/Police-Response-to-Resistance-2016/99fn-pvaf>. I have not been able to find any equivalent for the Bryan or College station PDs. Is this information available? Can it be?**

As CALEA Accredited agencies, our agencies complete annual use of force reports; these are available to the public through the Texas Public Information Act.

**7. If another officer shoots an unarmed man while that man is fleeing and is not a threat, will you arrest the officer? We have not seen this in the past.**

All citizens, including officers, are entitled to the same protection of due process. In any investigation, the successful prosecution of the case should be the desired outcome. The facts and circumstances of an investigation guide the decision for an on-site arrest. All officer-involved shootings are presented to a Grand Jury to ensure the officers' actions are in compliance with the law.

**8. There are eight steps found to reduce killings at the hands of police and saves lives. These include:**

**1. ban chokeholds and strangleholds**

Our agencies prohibit the use of any technique restricting the intake of oxygen that can cause serious injury or death.

**2. require de-escalation**

Our agencies require the use of de-escalation techniques and other alternatives when possible, safe, and appropriate before resorting to higher levels of force.

### **3. require warning before shooting**

When it is safe and practical, our agencies' officers are trained to provide warnings before using force.

### **4. require exhausting alternatives before shooting**

Any force our officers use must be objectively reasonable and necessary to effectively accomplish lawful objectives while protecting the public and our officers' lives. That may include the level and immediacy of the threat or danger, the person's ability to carry it out, and alternative methods of force. Deadly force shouldn't be used against those whose actions threaten only themselves or property. Officers are trained to use the minimum amount of force necessary to subdue a suspect.

### **5. duty to intervene - require officers to report these incidents immediately to supervisor**

Officer must intervene and report if they observe the use of excessive force. Officers have a duty to aid and assist any citizen, including a person who may be receiving force that would be considered unreasonable or excessive.

### **6. ban shooting at moving vehicles**

Our agencies prohibit shooting at a moving vehicle unless a person in the vehicle is threatening the officer or someone else with deadly force by means other than the vehicle, or the vehicle is operated in a manner deliberately intended to strike an officer or another person.

### **7. restrict most severe types of force to the most extreme situations**

Our agencies require the use of de-escalation techniques and other alternatives when possible, safe, and appropriate before using force or using higher levels of force. Officers may use deadly force only when it is objectively reasonable under the totality of the circumstances. Use of deadly force is justified in defense of human life from what is reasonably believed to be an immediate threat of death or serious injury.

### **8. require comprehensive reporting on all.**

Our agencies require officers to complete reports for all use of force incidents. These reports are reviewed and scrutinized by the officer's chain of command.

**Can each police chief comment on their commitment to these principles and other concrete steps they are taking to reduce conflict.**

As nationally accredited law enforcement agencies, we adhere to the best practices and highest standards in our industry. That means we continually review our policies and practices to ensure our officers conduct themselves with the highest level of professionalism and integrity.

We are entirely and unequivocally committed to protecting, serving, and proactively engaging with everyone in our community.

**9. I feel like there should be training on the dispatch side to send 911 calls to appropriate departments. For mental health calls are there social workers etc. that can be put on a list for these calls to be routed. Please comment.**

Calls to 9-1-1 dispatch, whether an emergency or not, can potentially involve unsafe environments or situations. Even when available, many mental health providers will currently not respond to situations until an officer is on scene and has confirmed that the scene and situation are safe. It can be added that diagnosing a situation over the phone can be difficult. We would not want to leave our community and citizens in danger or in need if a situation were not interpreted correctly over the phone. Our officers have also been trained in working with people in crisis, how to recognize signs of crisis, and how to contact the appropriate service providers in a timely manner. We do often find referral agencies to better support the community's needs.

**10. Do the chiefs feel the current amount of training for prospective officers is sufficient? What do they think about requiring officers to have several more weeks or months of classroom training, or even a college degree/social work requirement?**

Yes. The state mandates that an officer must attend a mandatory 800 hour Basic Peace Officer Course. All of our local agencies exceed the 800 hour requirement set forth by the State of Texas. In law enforcement, it is impossible to train an officer and equip them with explicit detail on what to do in every situation. The key in training prospective officers is finding the right officer to begin with. We are looking for diverse candidates from all walks of life and educational backgrounds who can relate to citizens, have exceptional problem-solving skills, and understand customer service while enforcing the law.

**11. Regarding the issue of excessive force, can police officers be trained to shoot at limbs rather than have a bullseye on the heart during shooting training? Relevant in situations when someone is running away and not an immediate threat.**

Officers should not be shooting at anyone that is not an immediate threat to the officer, or another person. Officers are trained to shoot at the center mass of a person because it is the largest target and has the highest probability of hitting the target and stopping the threat. Just like citizens, officers are responsible for every bullet that is fired out of their weapon. If an officer were to try and shoot a person in the arm or leg there is a higher probability of the bullet missing the intended target. Another common misconception is that shooting a person in the leg is less deadly. The human body contains many large arteries that run through the arms and legs. If struck by a bullet these arteries can also be fatal.

**12. In many interviews with police chiefs across the country after the Floyd incident it appears they are frequently in adversarial relationships with the a police union leaders, where their attempts to improve the climate in their department is hampered by unions. Could the chiefs comment?**

We do not have Unions locally. Texas is a “right to work” state.

**13. I have first hand off-duty discussions with College Station officers reflecting the “thrill of the hunt” mentality when chasing individuals who may be suspects. Please comment.**

While the context of this statement is unclear, what is clear is that officers are themselves members of our community who have dedicated their professional lives to helping others and to making our community a safer place to live, work, and visit. While working each and every day to better our community, officers can experience a strong desire to catch those responsible for hurting or wronging others, and most enjoy tracking down criminals who wish ill on our community. In doing so, the use of force is sometimes not only unavoidable, but both reasonable and necessary – it is our experience that officers do not enjoy being called upon to use force. The dangers posed to everyone involved make using force something officers go through great steps to avoid.

**14. What types of training would be affected if you would lose funding or had to cut your budget? Tactical? Mental health?**

In short, any budget cuts would affect training and the service delivery we provide. We would find ways to continue training required by the state. Any outside training of our agency would likely be reduced due to travel fees and registration costs of training.

**15. What are the police doing to change the interaction between themselves and civilians, since racial tensions are now very high?**

We continually strive to build & maintain positive relationships with our community members. Being a CALEA-accredited agency ensures each individual officer continues to serve the community in the highest professional standard in a way that meets our

department mission and values. Recent social issues have actually helped create more opportunity for open dialogue, such as this.

**16. What de-escalation protocols do you have in place?**

Due to accreditation standards, de-escalation is included in our training and policy. Officers should use de-escalation techniques whenever it is possible, safe, and appropriate. De-escalation is embedded in most of our training, including our annual use of force training. In all of our scenario-based training, there is a de-escalation aspect. Our officers are trained to de-escalate situations rather than escalate. De-escalation should be used whenever possible and when such delay will not compromise the safety of the officer or another and will not result in the destruction of evidence, escape of a suspect, or omission of a crime, and an officer shall allow an individual time and opportunity to submit to verbal commands before force is used.

**17. You discussed your belief that more funding should be allocated to mental health professionals to address crisis situations, rather than police officers. My understanding of the movement to “defund the police” is to remove some money from police budgets to put toward things like mental health care, community programs, etc. that reduce crime rates and remove pressure from police departments. How do you see your perspective as different from this movement to reallocate funds to other efforts to reduce/appropriately address crime?**

We agree mental health professionals need more funding, however, not at the expense of defunding the police. Our efforts to respond to mental health calls and other calls would be challenging if our budgets were reduced. Reallocation of police funds would decrease the budget, staffing, training, and equipment for law enforcement agencies. This would also negatively impact the many other services that police routinely provide.

Mental health professionals provide a valuable service to many in crisis. However, these professionals do not have the authority, by law, to take someone against their will to seek immediate help at a mental facility. If someone is in an emergency crisis, mental health professionals call law enforcement to have the person taken to a facility for treatment.

**18. Why was private student information released on a public platform with no regard for the safety of those students?**

UPD Response:

When a member of the public makes an open records request for a TAMU PD police report, the request goes through the TAMU Office of Open Records (OOR). When UPD is notified of such a request, the responsive document is sent to OOR which reviews

and determines – if anything – needs to be redacted. The documents are released in compliance with the Texas Public Information Act. TAMU PD police reports are considered *law enforcement records* (as opposed to student records), which means that certain privacy laws concerning the release of student information do not apply. As a public entity, Texas A&M University is required by law to release no more and no less information than that which is mandated by state law and set by legal precedent. Once a record is released to the public, the requesting person may distribute it on any platform they choose.

**19. How prevalent (if at all) is warrior training and fear-based training in the Bryan and College Station departments and how does this level of training compare to de-escalation training?**

Police cadets receive initial inoculation in the academy which focuses on survival-oriented training to help them recognize the dangerous elements police encounter and work to protect those involved. Officers are trained, and required by policy, to continually use sound judgement, decision making, problem solving, and de-escalation skills. Active threat response training focuses on training officers to stop active killing and save as many lives as possible rather than waiting for tactical units to arrive.

**20. How do you feel about the fact that Breonna Taylor’s murderers haven’t been apprehended?**

We cannot provide a comment on any active case in which all the facts have not yet been made public.

**21. What screening standards are used in hiring process of your police officers?**

All Texas officers must meet the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) hiring standards. In addition to the TCOLE standards, our applicants must successfully complete:

1. Initial Application
2. Written Exam
3. Physical Fitness Assessment (BPD & CSPD)
4. Preliminary Interview
5. Polygraph Exam
6. Background Investigation
7. Oral Interview Board
8. Chief’s Interview
9. Psychological Exam
10. Medical Exam
11. Drug Screen

**22. What would cause you pause or raise an alarm about an applicant for your police department?**

We endeavor to hire well-qualified candidates who possess a good moral compass and a servant's heart. Any indication that a candidate cannot fulfill our mission and values would end the hiring process for that applicant.