



Montana Law Enforcement Degree Program Proposal

Sen. Susan A. Webber, SD 8
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SUPPORT OF OUR LAW ENFORCEMENT

I have always advocated for our people in blue, black, green, and brown. These people go out daily and put their lives on the line to protect our Montana Communities. It is time we did everything we could to provide for them.

I have two police officers in my family. I know what police officers go through daily. Though I am more familiar with tribal police departments, in a single 12-hour shift, law enforcement officers respond to animal attacks; aid in the search for missing individuals; conduct a rescue mission; conduct the initial investigation of assaults, domestic violence, rapes, and murders; cover high-speed pursuits and traffic accidents; participate in illegal drug raids; etc.

Tribal police officers must have forty hours of specialized training in federal law beyond basic police officer training standards (POST), state law, and tribal law.

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Law Enforcement Degree - A Proposal

This proposal creates a Law Enforcement bachelor's degree program recognized by the Montana University System, Office of Commissioner of Higher Education, Montana Department of Justice, and Bureau of Indian Affairs Law Enforcement Services.

The MUS system will decide on the title of this degree, or it may fit into existing university programs, i.e., Criminal Justice, Sociology, counseling, etc.

This law enforcement degree will honor the experience and existing specialized training required of police officers. Credit for military experience will also be included in this degree.

This proposal does not create an alternative to the Montana State Police Academy but provides college credit for individual police officers' experience and training. Academy training will be translated into college credit, which will become the foundation of this degree.

Who Is Eligible

This degree program will be open to all law enforcement officers from Ekalaka to Eureka and the Bitterroot to Glasgow, Montana.

This program will be open to all current law enforcement officers as defined in the MCA¹.

Officers may opt in or out when they enter the Academy. Should they opt out, they will have the opportunity to opt in at any time during their service.

Montana University System/Tribally Controlled Community Colleges

This proposal will require the Montana University System University (MUS) and the seven tribally controlled community colleges to build a formula for evaluating an individual officer's military service experience, police officer years of service and expertise, and all specialized training.

All MUS/TCCC institutions will have similar evaluation processes that fit existing degree program requirements or build individually structured programs as agreed upon by the institutions and the police officer(s).

The model for this type of programming already exists. It is called the Two-Plus-Two Model and is offered by several MUS and TCCC colleges.

Objectives and Benefits of this Program

Objectives	Benefits
Promotion and Career Advancement	A degree will assist an officer in department promotions and career advancement when openings arise.
Salary	A degree can equate to a high salary.
Recruitment	The possibility of obtaining a degree while working would be a great recruiting tool for smaller, rural police departments.
Academy Trainers	The Academy needs a pool of trainers who have experience and credentials. This would help create that pool.
Civilian Career	Should an officer leave law enforcement, they will have a degree to assist them in their civilian careers.

Additional Training Suggestions

Suggested training courses for this degree include administrative and management courses necessary to manage a police department. These courses may include personnel management, federal and state contract management, fiscal management, federal/state/tribal law, etc.

Existing Law Enforcement Degrees

An internet search for an existing law enforcement degree program in Montana and nationwide resulted in only online courses.

MSU offers a Bachelor of Science degree in Sociology with a Criminology Emphasis. MSU's Criminology Emphasis focuses on law, the system, the social structure of criminal behavior, and society's efforts to understand and control crime. According to their website, the program offers students the ability to "...understand social differences and stratification, criminal law and procedure, the sociology of deviance, and inequality." There is no mention of cultural awareness in criminal justice, reservation of contemporary issues in criminal justice, or technology in criminal justice.

Suggested Degree Programs

- Criminal Justice / Sociology - Cultural Awareness in Criminal Justice - Reservation of Contemporary Issues in Criminal Justice.
- Criminal Justice / Public Administration - Leadership and Management in Criminal Justice Organizations - Effective Patrol and Community Policing, and Crisis Intervention for Police.
- A combination of the two depends on the individual law enforcement officer.

Example of One Tribal Police Officer's Experience and Training

This is an example of one tribal police officer's experience and training. Non-tribal officer training is not available.

Military and Law Enforcement Service

Military Experience
(Four years 20 weeks)

War of Iraq
War of Afghanistan

Law Enforcement Service
(14 years)

Tribal Law Enforcement
BIA Law Enforcement
Criminal Investigator
Drug Investigator

Montana Public Safety Officer
Standards and Training (POST)

Montana High Patrol Training

Continuing Education Training and Specialized Training

- Montana Public Safety Officer Standards and Training (POST)
- Montana Peace Officer Advanced Training

- Montana Peace Officer Supervisory Training
- MDOJ Standardized Field Sobriety Training/Intoxilyzer
- MDOJ Traffic Radar
- MDOJ Impact / Expandable Weapons
- MDOJ Oleoresin Capsicum (OC) Spray
- Montana Law Enforcement MPAT Proctor Certification
- Montana Highway Patrol NHTSA Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement Training
- Distracted Driver Training
- Speed Monitoring Devices and Doppler Radar Certification
- DOI, BIA Office of Justice Services, Opioid Overdose Prevention, including using naloxone to prevent death from an opioid overdose.
- DOI NSC Defensive Driving I & II
- Street Survival Training
- Blue Courage: The Heart and Mind of the Guardian, IADLEST Certified
- Leadership and Mastering Performance Management: Phase I & II
- U.S.A. Department of Homeland Security, Federal Law Enforcement Training Center - Indian Law Basics
- U.S.A. Department of Homeland Security, Federal Law Enforcement
- BLES Taser Conducted Energy Weapon X-2 Certification
- BIA Search Warrant Writing Training Program
- TASER Conducted Electrical Weapon Certification
- SANS Security Awareness Training (STH-2)
- Training Center – Active Shooter Threat Instructor Training Program
- IACP Drug Evaluation and Classification Program
- PPCT Defensive Tactics Basic Certification
- CEVO I & II – Police Certification
- US Marshal Assistance
- Drug Enforcement Assistance

Tribal police officers - specialized training:

- Indian Country criminal investigator training
- Death investigations
- Child physical and sexual abuse investigations
- Domestic Violence, adult physical and sexual assault investigations
- Gang and drug trafficking investigations
- Crime scene management and evidence collection
- Crisis negotiation and tactical training
- Child forensic interviewing
- Interviewing and interrogation.

Presidential Initiative for Indian Country

President Biden’s initiatives for Indian Country recognize the critical role that tribal police departments, courts, and victim services agencies play in addressing crime on Indian reservations. His administration looks to increase funding for the tribal justice systems as part of this initiative. A Tribal Criminal Justice Program will fit into his tribal initiatives.

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ⁱ The definition includes “a police officer, deputy sheriff, undersheriff, highway patrol officer, an investigator appointed by the Department of Justice, fish and game warden, park ranger, or other public safety officer certified by the public safety officer standards and training (POST) council, or a sheriff.