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North Campus

November 28, 2012

**MEMORANDUM**

To: Dr Jorge Guerra, Executive Director  
Workforce Education & Partnerships

From: Dr. Hector Garcia, Director  
School of Justice

Re: USDOE RFI: Promising & Practical Strategies

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The following document is provided in response to your request for results, strategies, practices and successes in certificate, credential, graduation and placements rates for the School of Justice as per the US Department of Education RFI. As noted, the aforementioned activities must have improved the rates of postsecondary success, transfer or graduation. As a result of this request, we have highlighted the following practices/strategies for your review-

\*Career Technical Education

- Part Time Independent Classes

\*Criminal Justice Academics

- College Credit Certificates/Career Pathways

As always, feel free to contact me with any questions relating to this matter. Thank you for your consideration and time.

## MEMORANDUM

Re: SOJ USDOE RFI: Promising & Practical Strategies

### **I. Career Technical Education**

#### *Part-Time Independent Law Enforcement Certification Classes*

Hundreds of potential students, including non-traditional age students, identified a desire to enroll and complete the State of Florida Basic Law Enforcement Recruit Training Program (BRTP) but were hampered by the traditional format of the BRTP and the lack of being sponsored for these positions by employing agencies. These potential students were primarily engaged in duties and/or obligations during the timeframe of the BRTP ( Mon-Fri from 700 am to 500 pm for approximately 6 months ). These obligations included employment and family responsibilities which prevented them enrolling and completing their required certification training. In addition, due to the state of the local economy, the practice of hiring a recruit and sponsoring them through the BRTP by a local police agency was discontinued. With the development of the Part-Time (non-traditional) BRTP, students were accommodated with regards to their time availability and the unique format allowed them to complete the program and become state certified law enforcement officers without being sponsored by local law enforcement agencies. What otherwise seemed like an insurmountable obstacle for their students became a manageable and viable means to achieve their means through a non-traditional Independent PT BRTP.

#### **i. Description of Promising & Practical Strategy**

The Part-Time Basic Recruit Training Program (PT BRTP) provides a non-traditional career technical education training format for students facing challenges and obstacles that prevent them from realizing their career goals. Non-traditional age students and underrepresented students faced challenges, such as employment, family obligations and lack of sponsorship from local law enforcement agencies, that prevented them from entering and completing the BRTP. With the development and implementation of the Independent PT BRTP, students did not have the barrier of the traditional (Mon – Fri ,

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700 am to 500 pm) BRTP schedule or the need to be sponsored by the local law enforcement agency as this class was now independent. The PT BRTP schedule ( Tue – Thu 600 pm – 1000 pm & Sat 800 am to 400 pm for approximately 12 months ) and the independent status of the students afforded them the flexibility to achieve their career goals and attain their certifications as law enforcement officers.

- ii. College Completion Obstacle addressed (including problem dimensions/obstacles targeted by the intervention)

The major obstacles that were overcome by this strategy were the exclusive offering of the BRTP in its traditional and customary format and the lack of sponsorship by local law enforcement agencies. In order to mitigate and prevent these obstacles from affecting students, the Independent PT BRTP was developed and successfully implemented.

- iii. Theory of Action (providing the basis for the intervention)

The PT BRTP was conceptualized as a result of qualitative and quantitative feedback from employing law enforcement agencies but mainly from potential students. The feedback data was captured on telephone call logs, inquiries regarding other means to attain certification in the non-traditional manner, interviews with potential students and inquiries from students in the traditional BRTP. In addition, local law enforcement agencies also expressed support for the Independent PT BRTP as this afforded them the opportunity to quickly hire students who had completed the Independent PT BRTP and successfully passed their certification examinations. The local law enforcement agencies cited the fiscal prudence of the program as their funding no longer afforded them the opportunity to sponsor students in the BRTP whereby this strategy provided them with candidates that were certified and ready to begin work immediately.

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iv. History of how the promising and practical strategy was developed

The Independent PT BRTP was developed through the feedback from potential and current students, local law enforcement agencies and the Miami Dade Police Chiefs Association. The idea provided a vehicle for the provision of ready-to-hire students who fit into many non-traditional student categories (underrepresented students, non-traditional age students and part time students).

v. Description of how outcomes were measured and evaluations of the strategy

Outcomes were measured based on the overall number of Independent PT BRTP academies that were launched ( student enrollment) and their success in passing the State Officer Certification Examination (SOCE) as illustrated below:

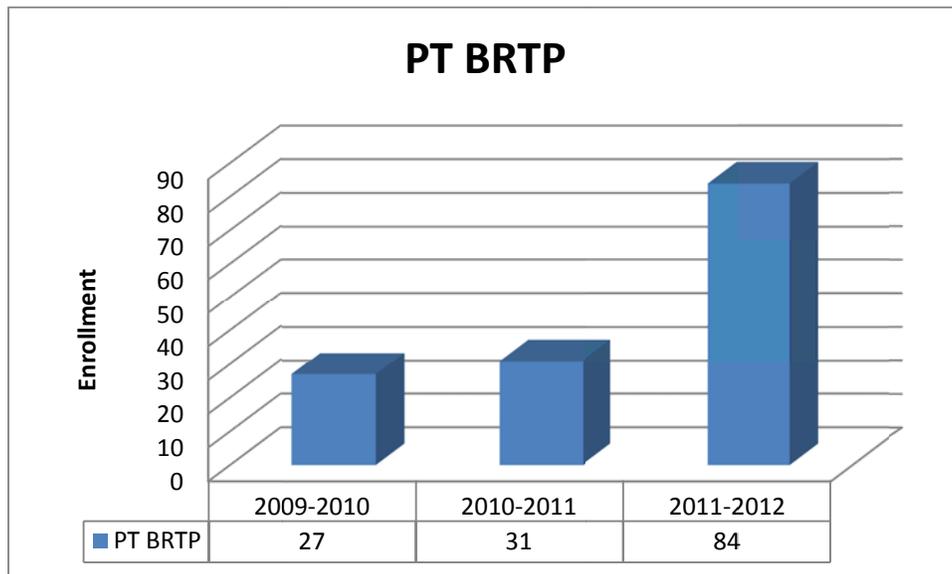


Chart 1:PT BRTP Enrollments

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Summary of Data:

2009 -2010

One Independent PT BRTP 27 students

Disaggregated SOCE Pass Rate 78%

2010 -2011

One Independent PT BRTP 31 students; Approximate 13% increase in enrollment

Disaggregated SOCE Pass Rate 81%

2011- 2012

Three Independent PT BVRTP 84 students; Approximate 270% increase in enrollment

Disaggregated SOCE Pass Rate 92 %

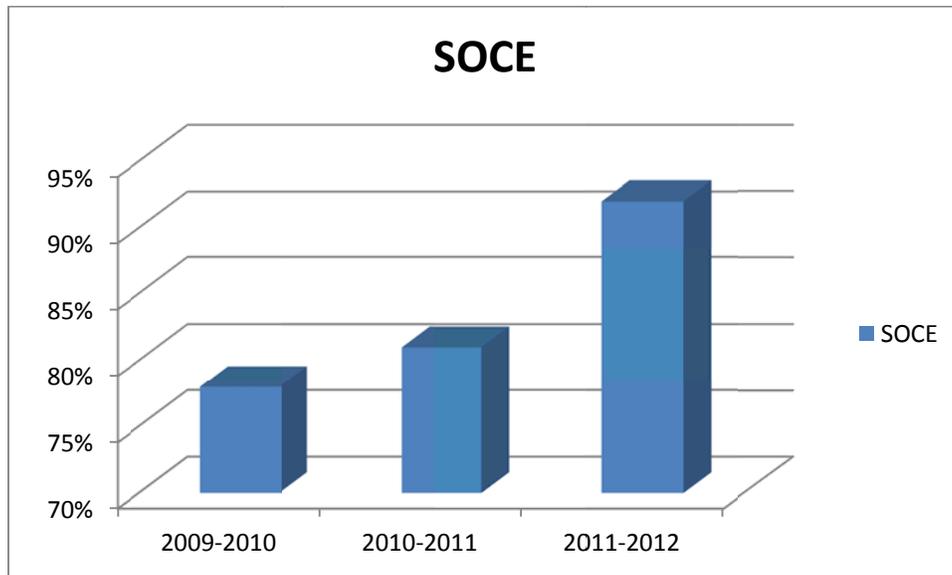


Chart 2 SOCE Results

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**II. Criminal Justice Academics**

*College Credit Certificates*

The School of Justice Department of Criminal Justice has identified practical strategies for improving Career Pathways achievement through the College Credit Certificate program (CCC) and a learning community with the Transportation Security Administration's Associates Program.

Our career pathway starts with dual enrollment students, who qualify, can take CCC courses while still in high school. Upon graduation of high school, they can continue to finish their CCC, then move into an AS degree. Upon graduation, a student can move to a BAS (Bachelor of Applied Science) Degree and then through articulation agreements on to a graduate degree program at St. Thomas University.

i. Description of Promising & Practical Strategy

The CCC is a workforce-driven concept that employs industry-driven competencies to provide a career pathway for degree attainment. The CCC program prepares students for entry-level employment in the field of criminology with a specialty in Crime Scene Investigation, Forensic Science and Homeland Security. Students can work in the various fields, with job opportunities including forensic technician, medical examiner investigator, insurance investigator, legal investigator, forensic paralegal, crime-scene laboratory-technician. Students, upon completion of the CCC, are aligned to continue their formal education at Miami Dade College (MDC) to earn an Associate in Science degree.

Secondly, the TSA Associates Program is a learning community that was developed in an employer partnership with the TSA. The TSA Associates Program is en-coupled with on-the-job training. Its modular curriculum was

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designed to have stackable credits utilizing three courses selected by TSA as their foundational base for their required in-service training. These courses are:

- DSC 1006 – Intro to Homeland Security
- DSC 2590 – Intelligence Analysis and Security
- DSC 2242 – Transportation and Boarder Security

The Homeland Security College Credit Certificate was developed by enhancing the TSA Associate Program and adding two additional courses CCJ 1191 Human Behavior in Criminal Justice and CJL2062 Constitutional and Legal Procedures or Evidence. This is the Florida’s first College Credit Certificate in Homeland Security with 15 college credit hours applicable to an Associate of Science Degree (See Figure 1).



Figure 1.

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- ii. College Completion Obstacles address (including problem dimensions/obstacles targeted by the intervention)

The CCC program is designed to hurdle college completion obstacles by adjusting to the workforce market. New financial aid requirements present foreseeable barriers, compressing students from 18 semesters to 12 semesters of financial aid qualification. The CCC program provides intermediate steps of accomplishments that employers recognize as basic skills that are desired for job placement at entry-level positions. This achievement gap closure supports retention by interconnecting CCC, AS and BAS programs. MDC SOJ programs further aid students by streamlining their educational process to help ensure program completion and succession through school specific academic advisement.

Our employer partnership with TSA has supported MDC's intervention as TSA provides funding for the texts and course fees for the first three Homeland Security CCC courses for homeland security. Upon successful completion of those courses, stipends for the two remaining CCC Homeland Security courses are awarded the students.

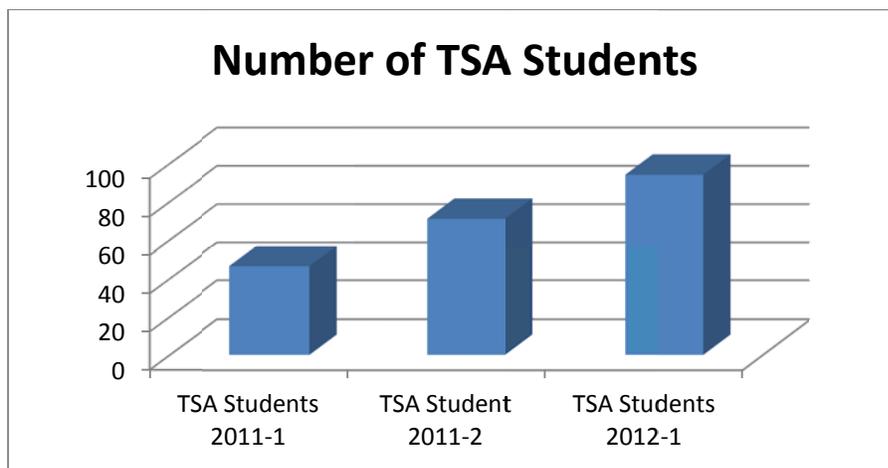


Figure 2

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Expectations of continued growth and sustainment are anticipated as recruiting efforts and increased advisement activities support higher enrollment numbers that have increased for the past three semesters (see Figure 2). Marketing efforts have increased the Homeland Security College Credit Certificate to be offered college wide. The Homeland College Credit Certificate program has attracted students from other institutions, as well bachelor level graduates to enroll to enhance their basic skills in due to program’s accelerated learning capabilities Over the past three semesters(including the summer session), non –TSA student enrollment in the Homeland Security courses have increased.(see Figure 3).

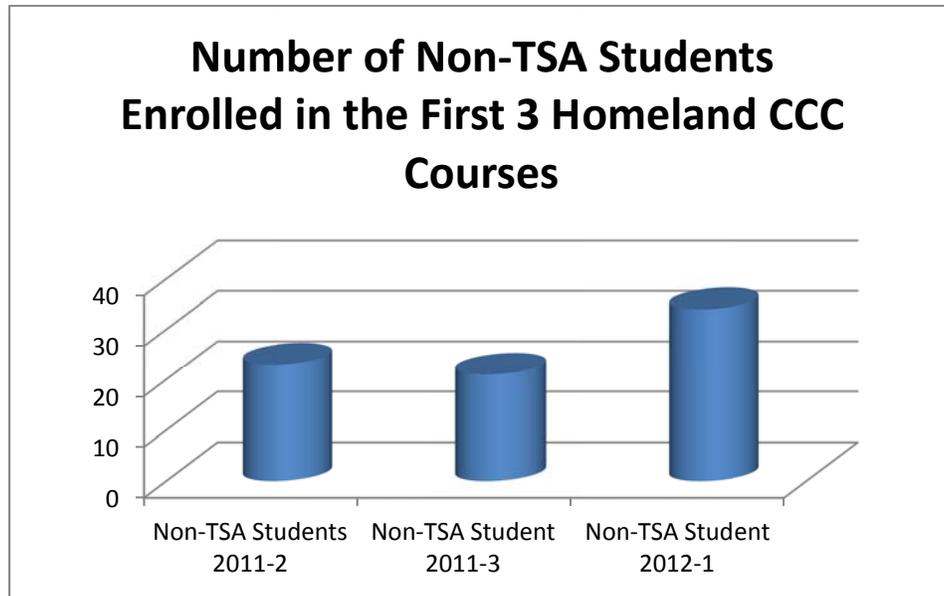


Figure 3

iii. Theory of Action (providing the basis for the intervention)

MDC SOJ’s underling postulation with the CCC program is to move from the current state to the desired future of aligning the realities of educational limitations to a streamlined process. SOJ looks to connect the CCC program as a strategy of action to create employer partnerships for critical relationships for needed instruction and desired student learning. Further, the utilization of evidence-based practices for instructional improvement of information taught

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to the students are specifically designated for work-force need. The School of Justice is utilizing the CCC design to transform programs into practice.

The Homeland Security CCC features faculty that are practitioners in the in the field of homeland security which equates equate to high levels of knowledge in the discipline. Faculty participates in the development of assessments that provide evidence of the transference of knowledge. Most importantly, faculty members are aware of the methodology to test their students' knowledge and skill against the requirements of the CCC curriculum. Therefore, as a result, students will demonstrate higher levels of performance in their application of skills.

iv. History of how the promising and practical strategy was developed

Two years ago, the TSA started an Associates Program for TSA employees who had not completed or did not currently have an AS degree. We consulted the MDC School of Justice Advisory Board on trends and practices and problems identified in the various criminal justice fields of employment. We were contacted by TSA who expressed a need for their officers to gain education and training in the academic discipline of homeland security. According to the TSA, approximately 19% of the current TSA employees had a terminal degree of a high school diploma. Program surveys suggested a need for this type of educational program for the Miami International Airport (MIA) TSA group. The MDC SOJ entered into a contractual agreement to offer Homeland Security college credit courses to TSA employees at MIA. As a result, a new state College Credit Certificate in Homeland Security and three new Homeland Security credit courses were developed, approved and are available for all interested MDC students.

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- v. Description of how outcomes were measured and evaluations of the strategy

Assessment was designed by the faculty in 2011-2 to augment the AS Program students. Subsequently, The CCC courses are at the AS level and the assessments are applicable to the CCC courses. The enhancements will be fielded and data will be collected in 2012-1.

Specifically, the following five college wide learning outcomes have been adopted as Program Level Outcomes.

1. **Data**--Use data to support *Criminal Justice Policy Development*
2. **Culture**--Create strategies to examine *Cultural Beliefs about Right and Wrong*
3. **Ethics**--Effects of *Ethical Decisions on Professional Behavior*
4. **Communication**--Communicating differences about *Crime Control and Due Process*
5. **Logical reasoning**--Use *Logical Reasoning to Improve the Criminal Justice system*

The five Program Learning Outcome's (PLO's) had preliminary assessments by the faculty using a specific set of 20 questions for the AS program. The faculty developed four questions for each PLO that would assess student attainment of that particular outcome. The questions were not part the course grade and students were advised about the purpose of the assessment prior to administration. The assessment was administered at the end of 2011-2. This is the fourth administration of the assessment of the PLO's. Review of the assessments has resulted in an addition to AS degree PLO's. The AS degree is workforce driven and has hands-on assessment for the program. The overall results of the 2011-2 assessment shows that 22% of the students were Emerging, 29% were Developing, 28% were Proficient and 21% were

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Exemplary. Further assessments and evaluations are ongoing as part of our continuous improvement model.