

# Local Law Enforcement in North Carolina: Examining Media, Social Media, and Other Factors that Influence Recruitment

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Barriers to Recruitment (rank order)

- Perceived dangerousness of the job
- Pay
- Negative portrayal in the media
- Negatively viewed by the public
- Too much stress related to job

### Agency Factors to Promote for Recruitment

- Opportunities for promotion
- Ability to diversify responsibilities
- Relationship or partnership with state and federal agencies
- Comradery
- Public interaction with agency

### Role of Media

- Individuals do not believe they are influenced by media, whether it is traditional or online. However, they do believe that others are swayed.
- When asked in general which sources of information are influential, traditional media is important, particularly with those who will not pursue law enforcement. This contradicts the finding that individuals do not believe they are influenced by the media and warrants further investigation.

### Role of Social Media

- Social media is believed to influence others' perceptions of law enforcement, but not the respondent's perceptions.
- Recruitment efforts on social media is not influential.

### General

- Students with fewer earned credit hours were more likely to pursue law enforcement as a career.
- Females, particularly white females and those with more credit hours, are less likely to perceive law enforcement as a suitable career.
- Those who plan to pursue law enforcement as a career indicated that they intend to enter BLET most likely between the Spring of 2017 and the Fall of 2017.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. Strengthen relationships across high school and middle school students

- Participate or create a club or organization to focus on providing services to the community
- Host a summer camp
- Mentorship program

### 2. Strengthen relationships with community college and university faculty and the respective programs.

- Citizen Police Academy tailored to students
- Ride Along programs
- Student employment/volunteer programs

### 3. Pay

- Education incentive/reimbursement programs
  - Flexibility to pursue programs
  - Not specific to CJ
- Paid BLET or initial training
- Hiring bonus for specialized training or skills

**4. Employee Ambassador Initiative.** Provide existing officers, beyond recruiters, the tools and incentives to actively promote law enforcement as a career and their respective department.

### 5. Strengthen relationship with local traditional media outlets.

- Liaison officer dedicated to building relationship with media
- Proactively provide media outlets access to positive stories and initiatives

**6. Utilize social media.** While respondents did not indicate that they are influenced by social media, they strongly believed others are.

- Utilize social media to promote positive interactions with the community
- Promote community events
- Highlight valued community supporters
- Post videos that project a positive image of the agency and the officers

## **PURPOSE OF STUDY AND METHODOLOGY**

### **Purpose of Study**

The North Carolina Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission is the state commission that licenses police and correctional officers. Part of the Commission's purpose is to help these agencies attract and retain the best possible people. Periodically, the Commission conducts a recruitment and retention study to assess what factors attract candidates to law enforcement careers, what factors keep them on the job, and what factors drive officers out of the profession. In the Commission's 3 year system plan, another study such as this was required. Dr. Tammatha Clodfelter of the Government and Justice Studies Department at Appalachian State University agreed to conduct the study.

The focus of this specific study is to examine factors that influence one's decision to pursue law enforcement as a career. In recent years, enrollment in Basic Law Enforcement Training (BLET) has declined across the state of North Carolina. It is speculated that beyond known barriers to recruitment, such as pay, contemporary issues are influencing individuals' perceptions of law enforcement. Specifically, the role of media and social media are questionably painting law enforcement in a negative light, and consequently steering potential recruits away from the profession.

Scientifically isolating the effects of perception is incredibly difficult. Further, when this study began, very little guidance through academic or practitioner literature was available to model questioning about the influence of media and social media on the decision to become a law enforcement officer. In essence, this is a novel study regarding perceptions and recruitment of law enforcement within the realm of perceptions created by media and social media.

### **Sampling Approach**

To be invited to participate in the study, numerous criteria had to be met. First, the university or community college had to offer a degree program in Criminal Justice. For community colleges, this could also include Criminal Justice Technology. Examples of programs not included were Basic Law Enforcement Training (BLET), concentrations of Criminal Justice, Criminology, or Forensic Criminology in other disciplines such as Sociology or Psychology, or institutions that offered Criminal Justice courses as general electives without a standing program. BLET was excluded because the primary focus of the study was to ascertain why individuals choose to become officers, but before they commit to that decision to the degree that enrolling in BLET implies.

After every community college and university that met the initial criteria of having a degree program in Criminal Justice was identified, the next step was determine which programs offered Introduction to Criminal Justice (CJC 111 or CJ 1100) or Law Enforcement Procedures/Police Process (CJC 121 or CJ 2120). For Wave 1, every university that offered at least one of those courses were selected and half of the community colleges that offered one or both were included. For Wave 2, the remaining half of the community colleges were solicited. The universities were not solicited twice because of the likelihood that the same students would be in both waves.

Upon completion of the list of eligible schools and corresponding faculty of the courses, the research team, with the assistance of Charminique Branson and Trevor Allen, made a concerted effort to contact the faculty member of the selected course(s) to gain support for the study. This was critical because the

faculty member ultimately disseminated the survey information on our behalf. This approach was determined to be the best option because we could not gain access to a global list of community college or university students and their email addresses in North Carolina and therefore could not reach them directly. Further, some institutions required an independent IRB approval beyond the review successfully completed by Appalachian State University to be provided a contact list, and this was not feasible due to the potential volume of schools with this requirement. Overall, there was little known resistance to this approach. However, it is unknown how many faculty disregarded the request without communicating their lack of desire to participate.

An initial recruitment letter was sent to the faculty member via email by Trevor Allen (Appendices A and B) prior to the launch. It was decided that the recruitment letter and following solicitation with the survey link should be disseminated by Mr. Allen to demonstrate the necessity and importance of this study to the NCCJETS. Faculty members were asked to provide their students the information about the survey and the link. They could do this however they wished: notification in class, Blackboard, Moodle, etc. After the initial solicitation, Mr. Allen sent two reminders.

### **Study Participants**

A total of 435 students from both waves initiated the survey. Participants were excluded from the final sample if they did not explicitly give consent (n=11) or did not clearly indicate that they were not a current law enforcement officer (n=18). Those excluded comprised of approximately 7% of the survey respondents. The final sample includes 406 university and community college students<sup>1</sup> across North Carolina with 305 students in Wave 1 and 101 in Wave 2<sup>2</sup>.

Below is a summary of the demographics of the study participants.

- **Sex:** 59.7% Female; 40.3% Male
- **Race:** 58.6% White/Caucasian; 28.7% Black/African American; 11.2% Hispanic; 11.5% Other
- **Orientation:** 86% Heterosexual; 6.7% Prefer Not to Answer; 6.3% Homosexual/Bisexual; 0.9% Other
- **Relationship Status:** 57.8% Single, never married; 25.5% Single, but cohabitating; 16.8% Other
- **Total # of Credit Hours Earned:** 26.2% 15-29; 21.2% Less than 15; 18.2% 90 or more, 34.5% Other

### **Survey Methodology**

A link to the survey was disseminated by the faculty member and the method of delivery was at their discretion. Once the student accessed the online survey, they were first asked formal consent for their participation. They were explained the purpose of the study and assured the study was formally

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<sup>1</sup> Survey participants were not asked if they attended a community college or university to retain anonymity. However, students were asked to provide an email address if they wished to participate in the raffle. For Wave 1, 49 raffle entrants utilized a university email, 7 had distinct community college email addresses, and 48 were not specific to any school. Wave 2 only consisted of community college students, which totaled 101 included participants.

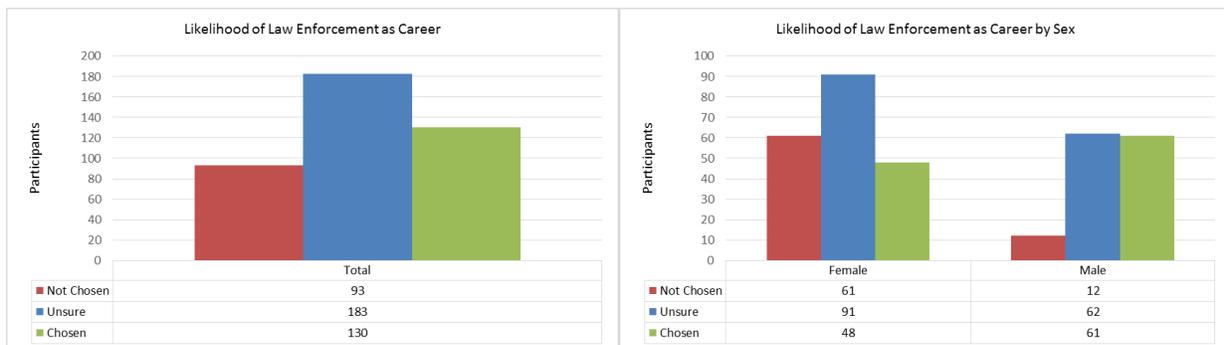
<sup>2</sup> Because the waves differed in time and inclusion of university students, the groups were compared across various demographics such as sex, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, expected income upon graduation, total number of credit hours earned, relationship and parental status, and involvement. The only group difference that was significant was Race/Ethnicity. Wave 2 composed of roughly 72% white students, while Wave 1 had 54% white students.

approved by Appalachian State University. They were also provided contact information if they had any questions.

The survey was created to gain insight into three distinct groups of individuals based on their likelihood of pursuing law enforcement as a career: Those who have already chosen law enforcement (but not formally pursued it yet), those considering law enforcement, and those who have decided against law enforcement. After responding to this question, the participant was routed to a series of questions relevant to their indicated career path. The varied series of questions allowed for a more tailored outlook of their perspective. Each line of questioning was estimated to take 20 minutes to complete.

### GENERAL FINDINGS

In total, 406 respondents indicated their likelihood of pursuing law enforcement as a career. Most were unsure (n=183). Differences in likelihood to pursue law enforcement as a career emerged by sex ( $p = 0.000$ ), as expected and commonly noted in other research. Interestingly, the number of credit hours had a significant relationship with the likelihood to pursue law enforcement. As the number of earned hours increased, the likelihood to select law enforcement as a career decreased [ $r(325) = -.254$ ;  $p = .01$ ]. The likelihood to pursue law enforcement was not influenced by any other demographic such as race/ethnicity, number of minor children, academic success, marital status, sexual orientation, or involvement in campus and athletic activities.



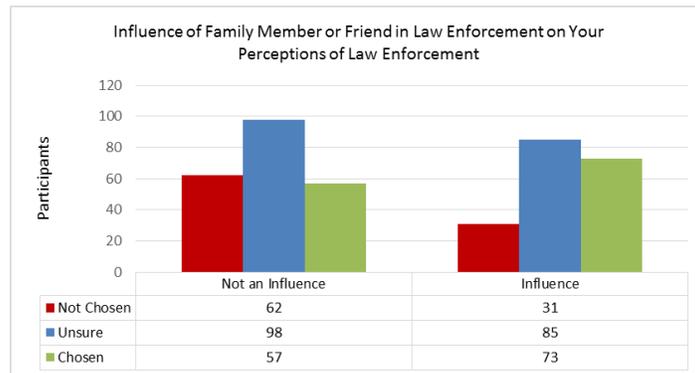
### INFLUENTIAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Each respondent was asked to select the sources of information that influences their perceptions of law enforcement. They were not restricted in the number of sources that could be chosen. As shown in the table below, the primary sources of influential information instructor/professor, family member or friend in law enforcement, and traditional news (e.g., television, radio, newspaper, or magazine). Traditional news was particularly important for those who will not pursue law enforcement as a career (most commonly selected), and those that are unsure (3<sup>rd</sup> most selected).

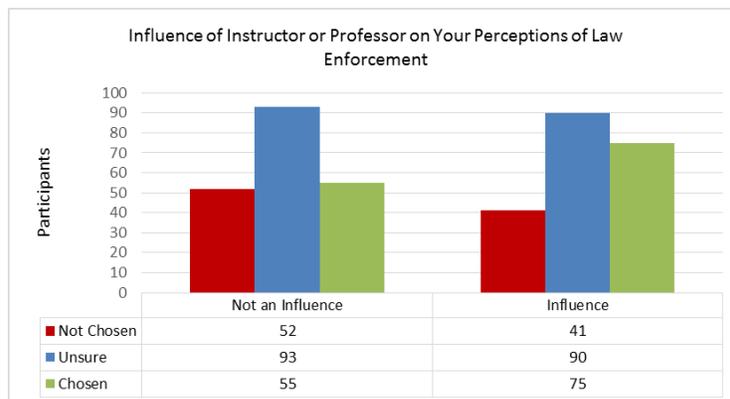
	Overall <sup>3</sup>	Chosen <sup>4</sup>	Unsure <sup>5</sup>	Will Not Choose <sup>6</sup>
1 <sup>st</sup>	Instructor/Prof	Instructor/Prof	Instructor/Prof	Traditional News
2 <sup>nd</sup>	LE Family/Friend	LE Family/Friend	LE Family/Friend	Personal Exp.
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Traditional News	Personal Exp.	Traditional News	Instructor/Prof
4 <sup>th</sup>	Personal Exp.	Traditional News	Personal Exp.	Online News

### Differences across Career Trajectories

Those who chose law enforcement as their career trajectory were more likely to indicate that a family member or friend in law enforcement influenced their perceptions ( $p=0.003$ ).



Instructors or professions were identified as the most common source of information that influenced an individual's perceptions of law enforcement. While statistically significant group differences did not emerge, the pattern was informative. For those who have already chosen law enforcement as a career, they were more likely to indicate this source of influence than those who were unsure and decidedly not pursuing law enforcement (57%, 49%, and 44% respectively).



<sup>3</sup> Overall: Instructors (206); LE Family Member/Friend (189); Traditional News (180); Personal Experience (176)

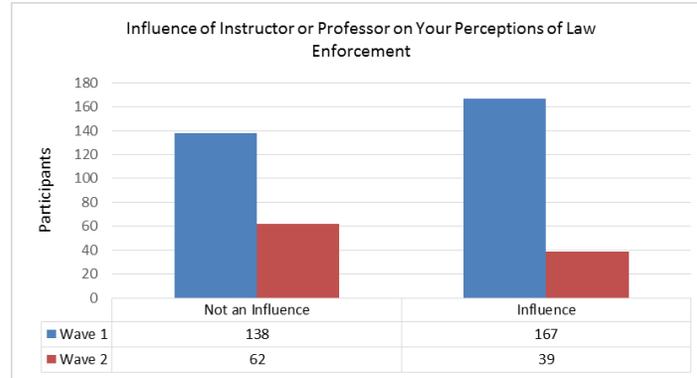
<sup>4</sup> Chosen: Instructor (75); LE Family Member/Friend (73); Personal Experience (55); Traditional News (50)

<sup>5</sup> Unsure: Instructors (90); LE Family Member/Friend (85); Traditional News (81); Personal Experience (78)

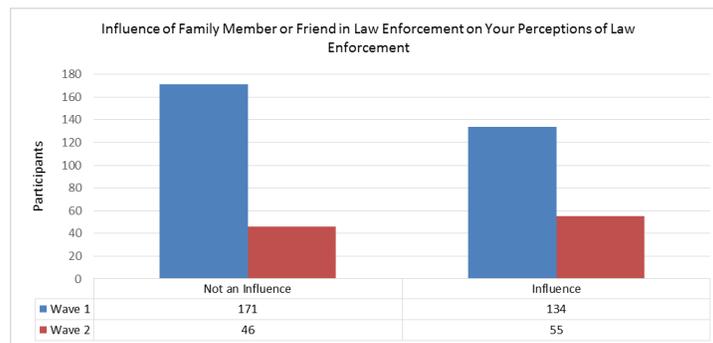
<sup>6</sup> Will Not Choose: Traditional News (49); Personal Experience (43); Instructors (41); Online News (35)

### Differences across Waves

Wave 1, which included university students, were more likely to indicate that faculty members influenced their perception ( $p=0.005$ ).



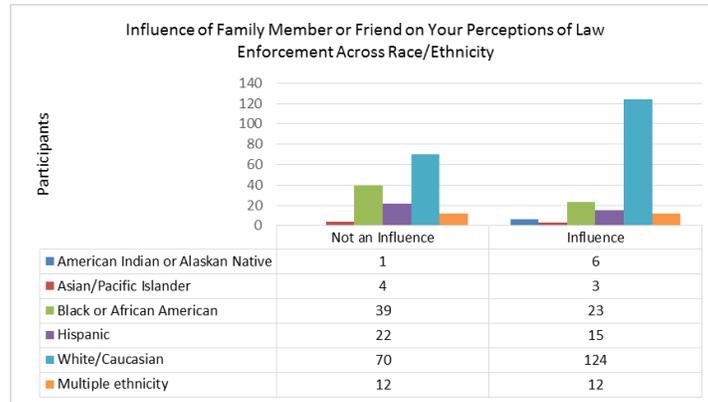
A second, not but not statistically significant, difference emerged across Waves. Wave 2, exclusively community college students, were more likely to indicate that a family member or friend in law enforcement influenced their perceptions of law enforcement ( $p \leq 0.10$ )



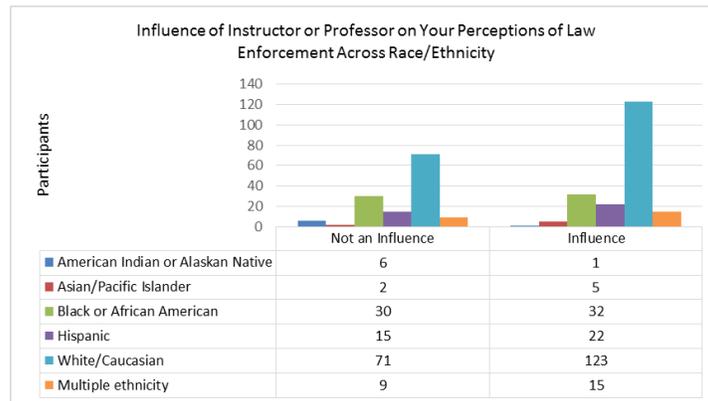
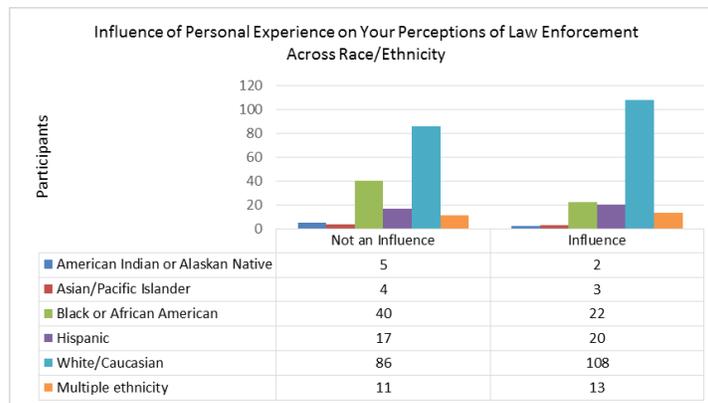
### Differences across Race

Because racial composition of the first wave significantly differed from the second wave, sources of information were compared across the racial groupings to determine if there was a difference.

The most significant finding is that differences do exist across race when the source of information is a family member or friend in law enforcement ( $p=0.001$ ).

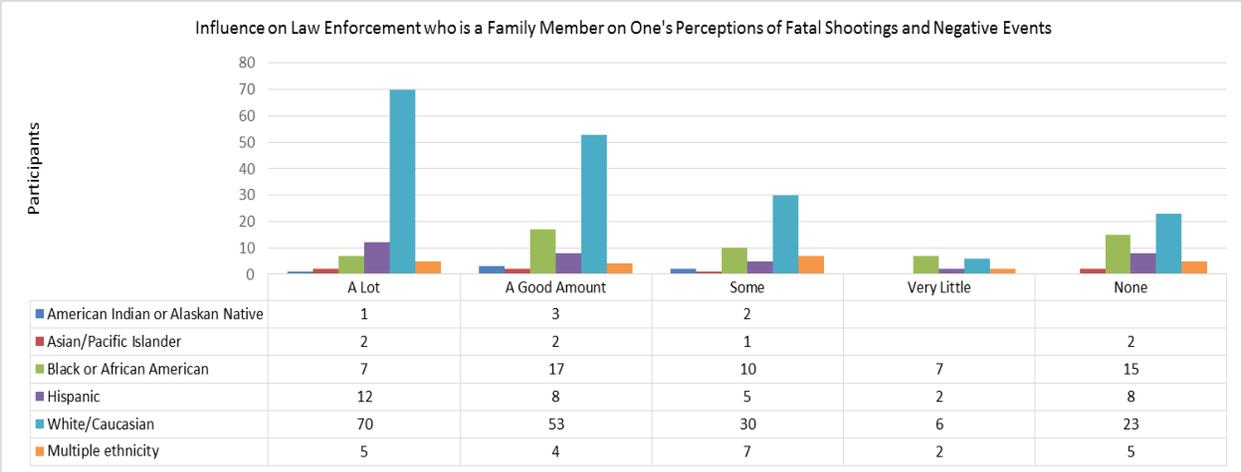


Two interesting patterns emerged, but did not reach statistical significance ( $p \leq 0.10$ ). The influence of personal experience and instructors/professors both differed across race.



### **Influence of Individuals on Perceptions: Fatal Shootings and Other Negative Events**

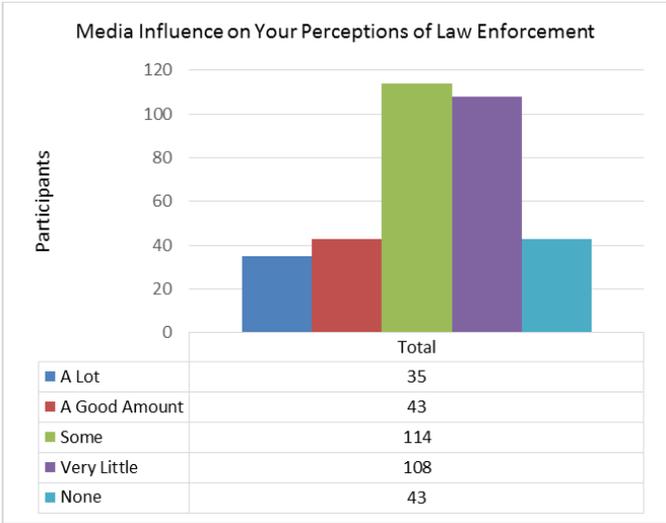
Respondents were asked how much influence individuals have on their perceptions of law enforcement when discussing fatal shootings of citizens by law enforcement and other negative events. The relationships in question were individuals in law enforcement (family member, friend, teacher/instructor, and significant other) and those not in law enforcement (family member, friend, teacher/instructor, and significant other). No type of relationship influenced one's career trajectory more than another. When the source of information was a law enforcement officer that is a family member, group differences emerged by race ( $p \leq 0.05$ ).



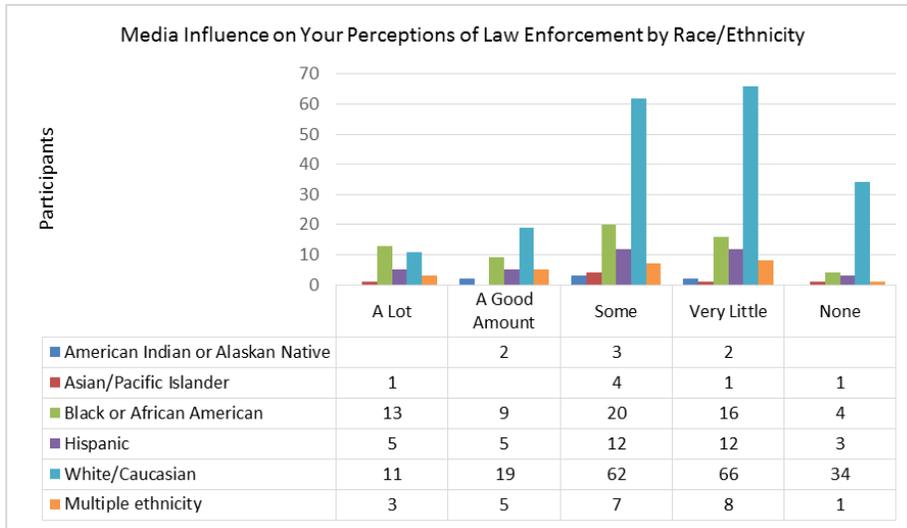
**ROLE OF MEDIA AND SOCIAL ON PERCEPTIONS OF LAW ENFORCEMENT**

**Media Influence on One’s Own Perception of Law Enforcement**

Respondents indicated that the media only influenced their perceptions some or very little. The media did not influence individuals across the career trajectories differently. Also, when the students took the survey did not matter in terms of media influence. This relationship was assessed due to the question that heavier news coverage after the first wave was collected may have influenced respondents.

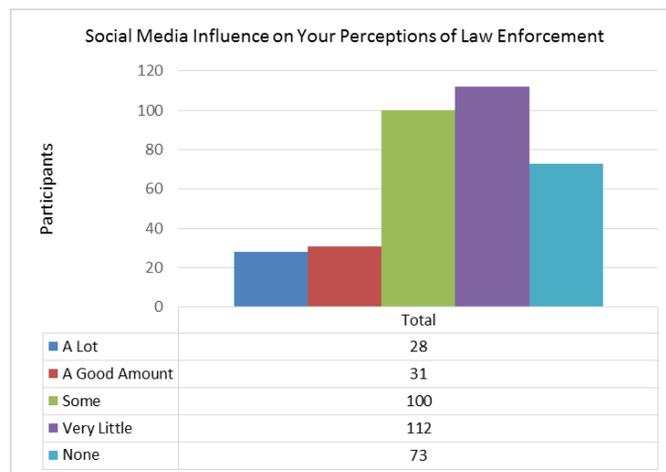


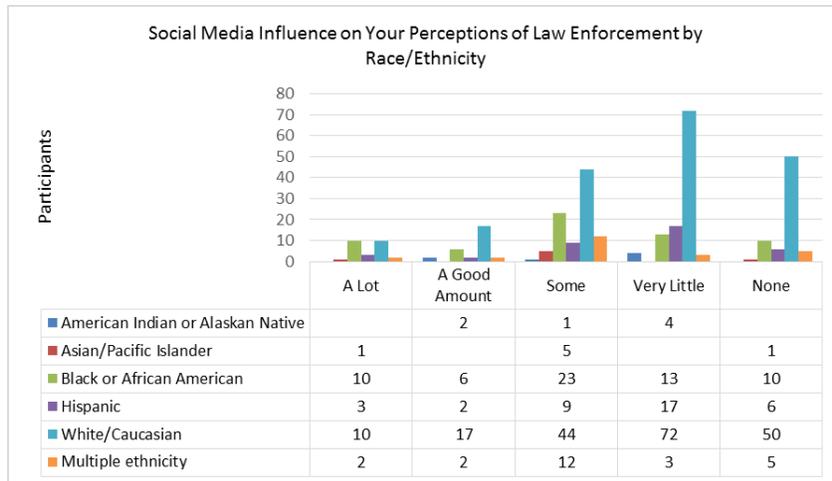
Important to note is that there was a difference across race/ethnicity and media influence, albeit not statistically significant ( $p \leq .10$ ). Of those that indicated that the media had a lot of influence on their perceptions ( $n=33$ ), 39% were Black/African American.



### Social Media Influence on One’s Own Perception of Law Enforcement

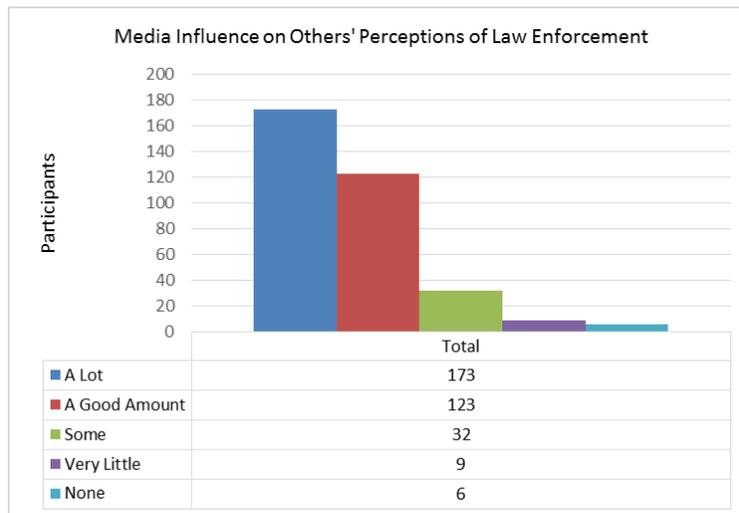
Respondents did not feel that social media influenced their perceptions of law enforcement a great deal. Most said they either were swayed very little or some. Differences were not present across career trajectories or when the survey was taken. However, how social media influenced their perceptions did differ across race/ethnicity ( $p = 0.003$ ). Of the 28 that indicated social media had “A Lot” of influence on their perceptions, 36% were Black/African American and 36% were White/Caucasian. Whereas, a greater difference was seen between the groups for the most common response of “Very Little” with 12% and 64%, respectively.





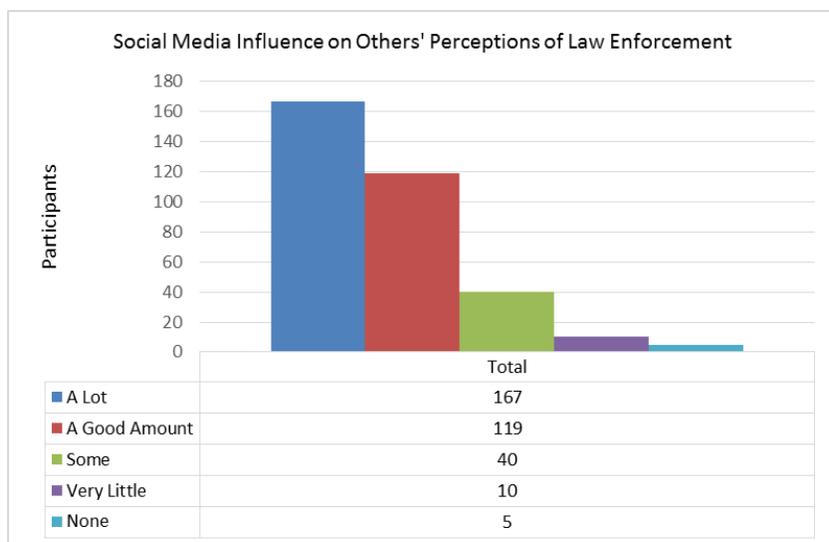
### Media Influence on Others' Perceptions of Law Enforcement

Respondents were asked if they believed the media (traditional or online) could shape an individual's perception of law enforcement. Interestingly, they overwhelmingly thought the media had "A Lot" or "A Good Amount" of influence on others. This is in stark contrast to whether they believed the media influenced themselves. How individuals indicated their beliefs of media influence did not change according to their career trajectory, time when the survey was taken, or their race.



### Social Media Influence on Others' Perceptions of Law Enforcement

Similar to media, the majority of the sample felt that social media had "A Lot" or "A Good Amount" of influence on others' perceptions of law enforcement. Career trajectory, time when survey was taken, nor race/ethnicity challenged this pattern. Further, again like media, respondents believe themselves to be more resistant to the influence of social media than other individuals.



### CAREER TRAJECTORIES<sup>7</sup>

After selecting a career trajectory, the respondent was asked a series of question relevant to their career path. Those who were interested or confident in pursuing law enforcement were asked their reasons for pursuing this career, objective and subjective factors considered when selecting an agency to apply to, perceived effectiveness of recruitment approaches, and general factors they dislike about law enforcement.

#### Selecting Law Enforcement as a Career

Two questions were posed to the “Chosen” and “Unsure” groups: Three *most* important reasons to pursue law enforcement and three *least* important reasons to pursue law enforcement. Both groups responded with the same top three reasons they were attracted to law enforcement: Helping others, the excitement or thrill of the job, and the ability to arrest and punish criminals.

When asked the three least important reasons to pursue law enforcement, both groups agreed that the authority to drive a vehicle at high speeds and the desire to carry a weapon for work was not important to them. They disagreed on the third least important reason, as those who have already chosen this profession indicated that pay was one of their least important reasons. Whereas, those who were unsure indicated that the ability to arrest was an unimportant reasons. It is interesting to note that the unsure group indicated in sequential questions that the ability to arrest and punish criminals was one of their most important reasons and least important reasons to pursue law enforcement.

THREE MOST IMPORTANT REASONS TO PURSUE LAW ENFORCEMENT			
	1 <sup>ST</sup> REASON	2 <sup>ND</sup> REASON	3 <sup>RD</sup> REASON
<b>CHOSEN<sup>8</sup></b>	Helping Others	Excitement/Thrill Job	Ability to Arrest
<b>UNSURE<sup>9</sup></b>	Helping Others	Excitement/Thrill Job	Ability to Arrest

<sup>7</sup> Rankings were determined by creating index scores for each question.

<sup>8</sup> Range: 247 - 6 (highest = most important reason). Helping = 247; Excitement = 96; Arrest = 82

<sup>9</sup> Range: 325 – 14 (highest = most important reason). Helping = 325; Excitement = 120; Arrest = 109

<b>THREE LEAST IMPORTANT REASONS TO PURSUE LAW ENFORCEMENT</b>			
	<b>1<sup>ST</sup> REASON</b>	<b>2<sup>ND</sup> REASON</b>	<b>3<sup>RD</sup> REASON</b>
<b>CHOSEN<sup>10</sup></b>	Drive High Speeds	Desire to Carry Weapon	Pay
<b>UNSURE<sup>11</sup></b>	Drive High Speeds	Desire to Carry Weapon	Ability to Arrest

### Most Undesirable Factors of Law Enforcement

In the table immediately below, the top 5 most undesirable factors of law enforcement are presented. Interestingly, how law enforcement is portrayed by the media and viewed by the public are important factors to those pursuing or unsure of pursuing law enforcement. However, these factors were not important to those who already decided to pursue another career path. It should be restated that gender differences emerged among those who were not pursuing law enforcement, and these factors may be gender related.

<b>TOP 5 MOST UNDESIRABLE FACTORS OF LAW ENFORCEMENT</b>			
<b>FACTOR</b>	<b>CHOSEN</b>	<b>UNSURE</b>	<b>WILL NOT CHOOSE</b>
<b>1<sup>ST</sup></b>	Neg Media Portrayal	Neg Media Portray	Too Dangerous
<b>2<sup>ND</sup></b>	Viewed Neg by Public	(Tied) Viewed Neg by Public	Pay
<b>3<sup>RD</sup></b>	Pay	(Tied) Pay	Too Much Stress
<b>4<sup>TH</sup></b>	Lack of Community Respect	Too Dangerous	Lacks Physical Size/Strength
<b>5<sup>TH</sup></b>	Too Dangerous	Patrol Officer Assignment	“Boot Camp” type Police Academy

After ranking the least desirable factors across the career trajectories, the three variables were combined to create an overall score. The top three factors included: dangerousness, pay, and negative portrayal in the media. These factors were further analyzed to examine potential relationships with other factors not previously identified, but the findings lacked statistical support.

<b>UNDESIRABLE FACTORS OF LAW ENFORCEMENT</b>				
	<b>CHOSEN</b>	<b>UNSURE</b>	<b>NOT CHOSEN</b>	<b>OVERALL</b>
Extensive review of personal history	52	105	41	198
Too dangerous	150	224	180	554
Too much stress related to job	136	198	128	462
Requires physical size/strength that I don't possess	58	128	106	292
Interested in law enforcement, but not working as a patrol officer	63	217	56	336
Pay is not high enough	168	230	131	529
Negatively viewed by the public	200	230	68	498
Negative portrayal in the media	238	246	36	520
Not suitable profession for someone with a degree	10	23	11	44

<sup>10</sup> Range: 129-9 (highest = least important reason). High Speeds = 129; Weapon = 100; Pay = 83

<sup>11</sup> Range: 209-14 (highest = least important reason). High Speeds = 209; Weapon = 141; Arrest = 98

The idea of attending a "boot camp" like Police Academy	42	70	75	187
Profession is not prestigious enough	15	29	9	53
Negative experience with a police officer	28	48	23	99
Lack of respect from the community	163	148	43	354
Could not use deadly force on a person	39	52	47	138
I'm not comfortable with the paramilitary structure of police departments	23	20	50	93
Not a family friendly profession	56	83	34	173
Uncomfortable being in position of authority	20	23	14	57
Lack of minorities in policing	49	58	32	139
Sexual harassment and gender discrimination	65	112	45	222

**Intended Career Path for Those NOT Pursuing Law Enforcement (n=82)**

Those who indicated they would not pursue a career in law enforcement was asked to identify what type of career in criminal justice did they intend to pursue? The most common response was that they did not intend to pursue any position in criminal justice. This finding could be due to Introduction to Criminal Justice or Police Process (and their community college equivalents) being offered as an elective or general education requirement.

<b>Intended Non-Law Enforcement Career Path</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Do not intend to pursue any position in CJ	32.9%
Legal (e.g., attorney, paralegal, legal assistant, District Attorney)	15.9%
Unsure, but it will be related to CJ	15.9%
Victim Services	11%
Courts Administration	6.1%
Other	6.1%
Community corrections	4.9%
Policing-Civilian	4.9%
Corrections	2.4%

**Media Viewership and Social Media Viewership and Engagement across Career Trajectories**

- No group differences or significant relationships across career trajectories on average amount of time a day viewing or engaging media or social media.
- No differences across career trajectory groups how much time a day spent reading, watching, or listening to the news in any format. However, a weak relationship yet significant relationship emerged that indicates those that spending more time discussing the news with someone in person is more likely to pursue law enforcement as a career [ $r(334) = 0.127$ ;  $p = 0.02$ ].
- No differences across career trajectory groups for how many times one engages in actions related to social interaction, social media interaction, and media viewership. However, individuals that indicated they had chosen law enforcement as a career watched more news channels on television

per day [ $r(337) = .121$ ;  $p = 0.027$ ] and visited more news websites per day [ $r(337) = 0.133$ ;  $p = 0.015$ ]. Both of these relationships are considered to be very weak.

## RECRUITMENT

### Recruitment Approaches

The groups that had chosen to pursue law enforcement and were unsure of their career paths were asked to indicate the likelihood that a particular recruiting approach may increase their interest in an agency. The response options ranged from highly unlikely to highly likely. How they responded to one recruitment approach would not impact their response to another approach. In other words, they were not asked to rank them. Similar to the other questions that indicate a rank, index scores were calculated.

As shown below, the two groups ranked the top 3 factors in the same order. These were prior interaction with the agency (e.g., internship, ride alongs, cadet program), traditional (career fair, bulletin boards, radio/television ads, agency websites), and employee referral networks. Interestingly, the scores between traditional recruitment efforts and employee referral networks were very close for both groups.

The least interesting approach for both groups was social media (Facebook, LinkedIn, Pinterest, YouTube, Twitter, Vine). Taken together with the finding that social media does not influence their individual perceptions of law enforcement, it may be that social media is not a source of influence for law enforcement for this relative age group.

THREE MOST INTERESTING RECRUITMENT APPROACHES			
	1 <sup>ST</sup> MOST INTERESTING	2 <sup>ND</sup> MOST INTERESTING	3 <sup>RD</sup> MOST INTERESTING
<b>CHOSEN<sup>12</sup></b>	Prior Interaction	Traditional	Employee Referral Networks
<b>UNSURE<sup>13</sup></b>	Prior Interaction	Traditional	Employee Referral Networks

### Selecting a Specific Agency

The literature and previous recruitment studies suggest that numerous factors influence the decision to apply to a specific agency. Because some reasons were more objective than others, we asked two separate questions. The first question asked to rank factors that are commonly promoted for recruitment. The second question asked the respondents to determine what subjective factors mattered to them, in rank order.

#### Objective factors.

The objective factors to be ranked were location of department, size of department, geographic description of location (i.e., urban or rural), base pay, incentives to further education, quality of equipment, opportunities for promotion, opportunities to diversify responsibilities, and extent of agency's partnerships or collaboration with state and federal agencies.

<sup>12</sup> Range: 475-334 (highest score = most interesting). Prior interaction = 475; Traditional = 408; Employee Referral = 400; Community members = 370; Social media = 334.

<sup>13</sup> Range: 608 – 429 (highest score = most interesting). Prior interaction = 608; Traditional = 537; Employee Referral = 528; Community members = 496; Social media = 429

Among those who have chosen law enforcement, the top 3 primary factors considered were opportunities for promotion, opportunities to diversify responsibilities, and base pay. For those who were unsure, they cared most about base pay, followed by opportunities for promotion and partnerships and collaborations with state and federal agencies, respectively. While pay is clearly a consideration, the potential for advancement cannot be overlooked as a marketing tool.

The “chosen” and “unsure” groups were consistent in their three least important reasons to selecting a specific agency. The lowest ranked response, or least important factor, was the size of the department. The second lowest response was quality of equipment, and then followed by geographic description of the location of the department.

<b>THREE MOST IMPORTANT REASONS TO SELECTING SPECIFIC AGENCY: OBJECTIVE</b>			
	<b>1<sup>ST</sup> REASON</b>	<b>2<sup>ND</sup> REASON</b>	<b>3<sup>RD</sup> REASON</b>
<b>CHOSEN<sup>14</sup></b>	Opportunities for Promotion	Diversify Responsibilities	Base Pay
<b>UNSURE<sup>15</sup></b>	Base Pay	Opportunities for Promotion	Partnerships/Collaborations with State and Federal Agencies

**Subjective factors.**

The subjective factors to be ranked were reputation of the agency, belief or perception of comradery or communities within the agency, family and/or friends are current or former employees of the agencies, opportunities for public the interact with the agencies (e.g., citizen policy academy), and agency would be a good “stopping stone” for one’s career path. For both trajectory groups, the belief that the agency would be a good “stepping stone” for their career path was the most important factor. Comradery, ability for the public to interact with the agency, and the reputation of the agency followed. Compared to the other options, having family and/or friends be currently or formerly employed was not important.

<b>THREE MOST IMPORTANT REASONS TO SELECTING SPECIFIC AGENCY: SUBJECTIVE</b>			
	<b>1<sup>ST</sup> REASON</b>	<b>2<sup>ND</sup> REASON</b>	<b>3<sup>RD</sup> REASON</b>
<b>CHOSEN<sup>16</sup></b>	Stepping stone agency	Public Interaction with Agency (e.g., Citizen Police Academy)	Comradery within agency
<b>UNSURE<sup>17</sup></b>	Stepping stone agency	Comradery within agency	Reputation of agency

**FEMALES IN LAW ENFORCEMENT**

<sup>14</sup> Range: 417-737 (lowest score = highest ranking). Promotion = 417; Responsibilities = 477; Pay = 482.

<sup>15</sup> Range: 625 – 1023 (lowest score = highest ranking). Pay = 625; Promotion = 670; Partnerships = 691

<sup>16</sup> Range: 279 – 414 (lowest score = highest ranking). Stepping stone = 279; Public Interaction = 295; Comradery = 298

<sup>17</sup> Range: 371 – 637 (lowest score = highest ranking). Stepping stone = 371; Comradery = 415; Reputation = 423

Recruiting females in law enforcement has been a longstanding problem. Females who are interested in law enforcement are motivated by the same factors as male. However, other obstacles create barriers to entering the profession. This sample revealed that females are more likely to believe they do not belong in law enforcement, particularly across white females.

#### **Perceptions of Women in Law Enforcement by Gender**

- Males are more likely to think “females are well respected in law enforcement.” ( $p \leq 0.05$ )
- Females are more likely to indicate they think “people wonder why a woman would be attracted to police work.” ( $p \leq 0.05$ )
- Females are more likely to believe that “police work doesn’t fit traditional female roles.” ( $p = 0.00$ )

#### **Perceptions of Women in Law Enforcement by Race/Ethnicity**

- Minorities are more likely to think “women in law enforcement are well respected.” ( $p \leq 0.05$ )
- White/Caucasian are more likely to think “police work doesn’t fit traditional female roles.” ( $p \leq 0.05$ )

#### **Perceptions of Women in Law Enforcement by Total Number of Credit Hours Earned**

- Students with 60 or more credit hours are more likely to think that “police work doesn’t fit traditional female roles.” ( $p \leq 0.05$ )
  - Those with higher amounts of credit hours are more likely to be females.

## Appendix A: Sample Recruitment Letter for Faculty at Community Colleges

Greetings faculty,

The North Carolina Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission via Appalachian State University is conducting a study regarding students' desire to select law enforcement as a career. We are trying to discern why fewer people are considering this as a career path. While it is clear that people make choices based on pay, benefits, and job responsibilities, other influences may not be as transparent. We teamed with Appalachian State University for the design of the methodology and survey, as well as obtain Institutional Review Board approval.

Your course was randomly chosen from a list of every community college in North Carolina offering *Law Enforcement Operations* or *Introduction to Criminal Justice*. Therefore, your students have the same opportunity to voice their opinion as any other student taking one of these classes this semester. The same survey is being sent to students at all universities across North Carolina with a Criminal Justice degree program. We hope this sampling approach provides a robust perspective of students across the state.

The survey should take no longer than 20 minutes. Their responses are anonymous because you are the primary point of contact. Email address is the only identifying information collected for students who wish to participate in the drawing for a \$50 Visa Gift Card. The information will be collected in a separate survey to eliminate any possibility of connecting their email address with their responses. Three total gift cards will be given. Participants are not required to enter the drawing.

It is imperative we ascertain students' perspective toward law enforcement as a career. The integrity and longevity of the profession is contingent upon recruiting the best possible candidates, so participation in this online survey is extremely helpful. Please disseminate the survey to your Law Enforcement Operations or Introduction to Criminal Justice courses and share the provided information about the survey. The link and survey information will be sent in approximately two weeks.

The aggregated results of the study will be presented to the Commission, and will be disseminated to the appropriate practitioner and academic outlets.

Your participation is critical to the success of this project. Only through your willingness to help can we better understand the career considerations of today's students. If you have any questions regarding the study, please contact Trevor Allen at 919-779-8205.

Sincerely,

Trevor Allen  
Deputy Director, North Carolina Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards  
North Carolina Department of Justice  
[tjallen@ncdoj.gov](mailto:tjallen@ncdoj.gov) | 919-779-8205

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## Appendix B: Sample Recruitment Letter to Faculty at Universities

Greetings faculty,

The North Carolina Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission via Appalachian State University is conducting a study regarding students' desire to select law enforcement as a career. We are trying to discern why fewer people are considering this as a career path. While it is clear that people make choices based on pay, benefits, and job responsibilities, other influences may not be as transparent. We teamed with Appalachian State University for the design of the methodology and survey, as well as obtain Institutional Review Board approval.

All universities in the North Carolina University system with a Criminal Justice program were selected for the university sample. Because of the difficulty of acquiring course schedules, each departmental website was reviewed to identify those who research or teach in the policing area. If it was unclear which faculty member would be the most appropriate, the departmental chair was noted. The same survey is being sent to students at 30 randomly chosen community colleges across North Carolina. We hope this sampling approach provides a robust perspective of students across the state.

The survey should take no longer than 20 minutes. The responses are anonymous because you are the primary point of contact. Email address is the only identifying information collected for students who wish to participate in the drawing for a \$50 Visa Gift Card. The information will be collected in a separate survey to eliminate any possibility of connecting their email address with their responses. Three total gift cards will be given. Participants are not required to enter the drawing.

It is imperative we ascertain students' perspective toward law enforcement as a career. The integrity and longevity of the profession is contingent upon recruiting the best possible candidates, so participation in this online survey is extremely helpful. Please disseminate the survey to your Introduction or Policing or Introduction to Criminal Justice courses and share the provided information about the survey. The link and survey information will be sent in approximately two weeks.

The aggregated results of the study will be presented to the Commission, and will be disseminated to the appropriate practitioner and academic outlets.

Your participation is critical to the success of this project. Only through your willingness to help can we better understand the career considerations of today's students. If you have any questions regarding the study, please contact Trevor Allen at 919-779-8205.

Sincerely,

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