

Leadership Strategy for Equitable and Just Policing Education and Training at Valencia College, Orlando, Florida, U.S.

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Abstract

In the summer of 2020, as social conflict polarized the United States and calls to reform and defund the police were heard across the nation, Valencia College stepped up and redefined its role to better serve students **by taking steps to improve the training and education of the next generation of law enforcement** and thereby to strengthen the community. A call to action by the college president to discuss adequate and inadequate law enforcement training and education led to engagement in deep conversations for solutions and fundamental change and efforts to be responsive and lead the training needs of local law enforcement agencies. To this end, the School of Public Safety adopted a holistic approach to seek solutions through a community, organizational, and administrative lens, based on the Public Affairs Triumvirate Leadership Strategy (Goltz, 2020). In this leadership strategy, three constructs with select approaches are grounded in traditional leadership ethics and dimensions. The strategy guided the School of Public Safety to the foundation and development of a collaborative strategic impact plan so Valencia College could aim to be an “agent of change” in the community by elevating equitable and just law enforcement education and training in central Florida. This endeavor also adopted a governance framework and Valencia College assembled a diverse thirty-member Equitable and Just Policing Education and Training Task Force to seek recommendations from the community. A theory of change, from a quantum perspective, grounded the recommendations from the Task Force to reframe law enforcement

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education and training at Valencia College, thus offering solutions in a turbulent environment. Solutions included changes to the law enforcement curriculum that are being assessed through equity-minded learning outcomes, the adoption of a learning management system designed to enhance supplemental training in the law enforcement academy, a broadened equitable and just policing training strategy for officers and leaders in the field, deeper partnerships with criminal justice programs at regional high schools, and a leadership role in an ever-growing community resiliency group in central Florida.

Résumé

Pendant l'été 2020, alors que les conflits sociaux pullulent aux États-Unis, le Collège Valencia redéfinit son rôle afin de mieux former et instruire la prochaine génération de policiers. Le président du collège encourage de sérieuses conversations pour trouver des solutions ainsi que des changements fondamentaux en éducation et en formation, et la School of Public Safety adopte une approche holistique afin de chercher des solutions sur la base d'une perspective communautaire, organisationnelle, et administrative inspirée d'une Stratégie de leadership fondée sur le triumvirat des affaires publiques (Goltz, 2020). Dans cette stratégie, trois construits basés sur une éthique de leadership traditionnelle guident le collège vers la création et le développement d'un plan d'impact stratégique et collaboratif lui permettant de devenir un « agent de changement » en priorisant une éducation et une formation en maintien de l'ordre en Floride centrale qui soient justes et équitables. Le projet comporte un cadre de gouvernance spécifique, et le collège a créé un groupe de travail diversifié dont le but est d'obtenir des recommandations de la part de la communauté. Une théorie du changement fondée sur une perspective quantique est à la base de recommandations pour recadrer l'éducation et la formation en maintien de l'ordre au collège au moyen de solutions telles que : des modifications au curriculum, y compris des évaluations fondées sur des critères d'apprentissage équitables; l'adoption d'une stratégie de formation plus englobante; des partenariats plus étroits avec les écoles secondaires; et un rôle de leadership en Floride centrale dans un groupe de résilience communautaire en pleine croissance.

Keywords / Mots clés : design principles, design thinking, leadership, public affairs triumvirate, theory of change / principes de design, conception créative, leadership, triumvirat d'affaires publiques, théorie du changement

Introduction

The American Association of Community Colleges (2021) indicates the vital and evolving role of community colleges is to serve students and communities and to strengthen the nation. Community colleges have an important role in serving society and the training and education of our community's law enforcement officers is no exception because each community must seek to define the police mission based on the capabilities that make the greatest contribution to the quality of life. Hennen (1994) adds local community needs require local solutions, and the police must develop a practical mission by identifying the right fit between its capabilities and its

environment. Collaboration to identify the right fit started decades ago in the 1970s when many law enforcement agencies in the United States turned to community colleges to train their officers.

Today, a large percentage of our nation's law enforcement officers are trained at community colleges. In Florida, there are 23 community colleges that train many of the 48,000 law enforcement officers in the state (Florida Department of Law Enforcement, 2019, 2021). Over several decades, law enforcement agencies have heavily relied on community colleges for formal training in their police academies and in degree programs to prepare students for careers in the field. Valencia College, a community college in Orlando, Florida, has a long history of criminal justice education and law enforcement training and offers local solutions for its district of responsibility through **a mission of targeted collaboration.**

Valencia College

Valencia College has become an innovative leader in education with a national reputation for student success. The college opened its doors in 1967, and in 2011 was named the inaugural winner of the Aspen Prize as the top community college in the nation for 2011–2012. The Aspen Institute—a Washington, D.C. educational and policy studies centre—selected Valencia College for this prestigious award based on an overall **graduation rate** nearly three times that of other colleges, as well as the **high job placement rates** of its workforce training programs (Valencia College, 2021a).

Law enforcement education and training

Criminal justice education and law enforcement training at Valencia College began in 1968 with the Law Enforcement Associate of Science (A.S.) Degree. This program, currently the Criminal Justice A.S. Degree, has burgeoned over the past several years and is the second largest at the college. Valencia College's institutional research reports the enrollments in this program have increased from 2,917 in academic year 2012–2013 to 4,166 in 2019–2020, a 43% increase over this seven-year period.

In 1996, the college began offering basic law enforcement academy training at the Criminal Justice Institute with a mission to train and educate students for law enforcement certification in the state of Florida. This institute is certified by Florida's Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission to deliver all Commission-approved curriculums to law enforcement and corrections officers in the state. Valencia College serves over 45 organizations that comprises state, county, and municipal law enforcement and corrections agencies (Valencia College, 2021b). Overall, there are approximately 3,700 law enforcement officers in Valencia College's service district of Orange and Osceola Counties in central Florida.

In 2006, the college opened a world-class 77,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art training facility for this mission. This facility is the hub for the School of Public Safety where over 200 students attend the law enforcement academy each year. Additionally, there are nearly 1,700 enrollments in advanced/specialized law enforcement and corrections training in a variety of topics, including supervisors and mid-level managers from regional law enforcement agencies who attend the college's 160-hours Public Safety Leadership Development Certification Program each year.

Summer of 2020: Social challenges between law enforcement and community

In 2020, law enforcement faced major challenges. To many, it was a “crisis” with calls to defund and reform the police. According to Rushin and Michalski (2020), many civil rights activists have called to defund or abolish American police departments. This crisis has been ongoing since at least 2014 when a **deadly police shooting** in Ferguson, Missouri, **led to a diminished public perception of police**, as well as a general increase in public scrutiny of law enforcement that was intensified by social media (Jackson & Lee, 2019). **Continued deadly force directed at marginalized communities** across the United States in 2020 has exacerbated this crisis, widening the rift between the police and the communities they serve. In the midst of this crisis, community colleges throughout the United States have started taking steps to evaluate training for police officers and build strategies for equitable and just policing.

Call to action after the death of George Floyd

In early June 2020, a week after the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota, Valencia College’s president, Dr. Sandy Shugart, communicated an urgent call to action to the leaders of the School of Public Safety at the college. As the crisis between law enforcement and the community grew and protests swept throughout the country, to include central Florida, President Shugart suggested the leaders assemble a team beyond the college to discuss adequate and inadequate law enforcement training and education, engage in deep conversations for solutions and fundamental change, and be responsive and lead the training needs of local law enforcement agencies. In addition, as the ongoing crisis loomed in early July 2020, Dr. Shugart eagerly met with several central Florida law enforcement leaders, including the Orlando Police Chief and Orange County Sheriff, the two largest law enforcement agencies in central Florida, to discuss their needs and solicit suggestions for an “equitable and just” policing education and training framework at all levels at Valencia College.

Following this call to action by President Shugart, Dr. James McDonald, a retired police sergeant and the Executive Director of the Business and Organizational Leadership Bachelor of Applied Science Degree Program at Valencia College, contributed his thoughts by offering a compelling discussion at the college to influence change in the occupational culture of policing in our democratic society. In his unpublished paper, McDonald (2020) suggests that deep systemic change in policing is beyond the ability of Valencia College, but the curriculum in the law enforcement academy is a logical starting point to support cultural change. He adds culture is nothing more than a vehicle for sharing information, therefore, to affect a change in the occupational culture of law enforcement, the academy experience presents a primary opportunity to review and expand foundational education and training in the basic training environment to include legitimacy, procedural justice, implicit bias, emotional intelligence, and self-regulation. McDonald emphasizes the core attitudes and values of the newest generation of police officers are formed in the academy.

McDonald’s paper also discusses several domains beyond the law enforcement academy. He highlights the domains of professional development, leadership training, and higher education, and he suggests the Peace and Justice Institute at Valencia

College could create an ecosystem, which over time could promote a culture that enhances the values of equitable and just policing practices (McDonald, 2020). To support this internal discussion at the college, Marenin (2004) indicates the best way to prepare officers for policing based on democratic values is through an andragogy approach to their education and training. This approach is grounded in experimental learning, oriented toward problem-solving, that emphasizes critical thinking and the values and goals of a democratic society. Valencia College did just this and heeded this approach by enhancing its andragogy to educate and train police officers in turbulent times through a concentrated initiative in the police academy and with the incumbent police force.

In October 2020, President Shugart announced four opportunity and equity initiatives at Valencia College. The first initiative summoned a curriculum review, redesign, and training initiative at the School of Public Safety. Shugart charged a diverse task force to review and revise curriculum and tactical training and introduced equity-based specialized and advanced training for incumbent officers and leadership development. To do this work, the college selected an equity leadership model with centralized leadership under a council of representatives. The representatives came from law enforcement, the community, the college's Peace and Justice Institute, faculty and staff, and leaders from the School of Public Safety. This group was tasked with providing recommendations regarding the creation and implementation of strategic initiatives associated with equity in education and training for law enforcement.

Public Affairs Triumvirate Leadership Strategy

The summer and fall of 2020 offered leaders in higher education an opportunity to adopt sustainable leadership models to seek curriculum and training recommendations, and solutions for institutions with a responsibility to educate their public safety workforce. Particularly, a focused leadership approach was needed that could be replicated by other colleges to connect theory to practice, and essentially support a cultural change in policing through curriculum changes and training. Shortly after Valencia College president's call to action and the presentation of McDonald's paper, an overarching and broad leadership model was adopted to guide the School of Public Safety in this endeavor, the Public Affairs Triumvirate Leadership Strategy. This scientific leadership strategy is grounded in utilitarianism, consequentialism, and deontology, and involves the consideration, assessment, and alliance of three forces or constructs: Community, Administration, and Organization. It is a defined research method and confirmed model that defines the abstract concept of public leadership through eight distinct steps and guides higher education and public leaders when problem solving in a community. This method is oriented towards problem-solving, emphasizes critical thinking and the values and goals of a democratic society, and aligns with Marenin's (2004) approach.

This method is defined in the book *Higher Education Leadership Strategy in the Public Affairs Triumvirate: College and Community Engagement* (Goltz, 2020). In the book, Goltz presents these forces, a public affairs triumvirate, that work together "to rethink community policy connections, and transform practice, develop innovation, strengthen communities, and transform lives" (2020, p. 5). It is a sustainable leadership model (see Table 1).

Table 1. Public Affairs Triumvirate Strategy

Leadership Steps	
1. Assess the community and its components	Ecological, typological, and/or conflict approaches
2. Assess the organizational setting	Rational, natural, and/or open systems
3. Select the organization systems model and describe the model levels	Social psychological, structural, and/or ecological levels
4. Identify institutional levels and isomorphic forces	Organizational field, population, and individual organization <i>Forces:</i> Coercive, mimetic, and/or normative
5. Select administration approach	Managerial, political, and/or legal
6. Identify community policy connections and policy goals	Law, regulation, ruling, or decision <i>Goals:</i> Equity, efficiency, security, or liberty
7. Identify governance opportunities and partnerships	Information exchange, knowledge transfer, democratization and decentralization of decision-making, inter-institutional dialogue
8. Frame selection and reframing	Structural, human resource, political, and/or symbolic frames

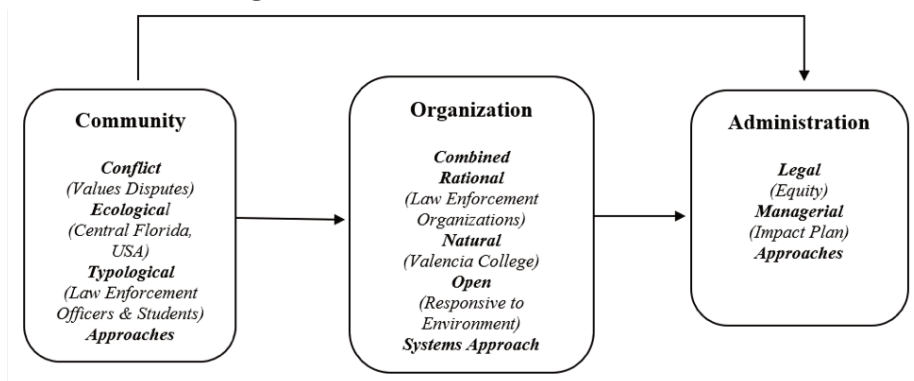
Note: from Goltz (2020, pp. 51–52), Public Affairs Triumvirate Strategy Template

First, the leader should assess the “Community” through one or more approaches, the ecological, typological, or conflict approach. Next, the “Organizational” setting must be assessed, and leaders must consider whether the collaborating organizations operate in rational, natural, or open systems, or a combination of each. The leaders must also realize an organizational systems model describes the level of their organization’s involvement in the strategy, and this level may be social psychological, structural, or ecological. Within the organizational setting, the leader should also understand institutional levels and consider the isomorphic forces that may affect their leadership strategy. Last, the leader must consider the managerial, political, or legal “Administrative” approach, or a combination of these. After the three public affairs forces are assessed, the leader must identify community policy connections, and seek governance opportunities and partnerships. In the end, this model may re-frame the leader’s organization.

For the following reasons, a “quantum” leadership approach of this nature was needed to guide this important assessment of law enforcement education and training at Valencia College’s School of Public Safety, and this model guided and impacted the function of a task force that deliberated and offered recommendations for equitable and just policing. First and most important in the Public Affairs Triumvirate Leadership Strategy, leaders in higher education must ask a fundamental question: what is the driving force that is leading the organization’s participation, or even resolution of a community challenge? (Goltz, 2020). In this strategy model, the Community conflict was the driving public affairs force to influence a change in Organization and Administration.

Additionally, leaders adopting the Public Affairs Triumvirate Leadership Strategy must understand a triad of components within each of the public affairs constructs. These components are incorporated in a methodical strategy template, an eight-step holistic approach, in Goltz (2020). The components selected and illustrated in this model enhance the relationships among the three public affairs forces, offers breadth and guidance, and strengthens the overall leadership strategy. The assessment of the Community, Organization, and Administration, (see Figure 1) and the components within each, comprise the first five steps in the strategy template, as listed in Table 1.

Figure 1. Public Affairs Triumvirate Model



Assess the Community

The Community construct includes the ecological, typological, or conflict approaches. Briefly, the ecological approach considers the territory or geographic areas under consideration, the typological approach considers organic and specific relationships, and the conflict approach considers economic, political, or values disputes (Goltz, 2020, p. 29). As indicated in this leadership model, all three approaches within the Community construct were considered in this strategy.

Foremost, in this circumstance, the conflict approach explains why the Community is the primary justification to change Organization and influence Administration. In the Community construct, conflict-defined values disputes and leaders at the college knew their law enforcement training and education had to be a contributor in efforts to prevent conflict between law enforcement and the community. Also, in this construct, the law enforcement community of 3,700 law enforcement officers served by Valencia College in **Orange and Osceola Counties** in central Florida defines ecology and typology. Typology also encompassed the demographics of students within the college’s Criminal Justice A.S. Degree and law enforcement academy programs to **meet the regional workforce needs to reflect the ever-changing demographics of the community.**

College leaders also believed another level of typology needed to be assessed, the **demographics of the instructors and faculty at the School of Public Safety.** This was important because having faculty at an institution that more closely reflects the racial and ethnic population of students minimizes identity threat and could contribute to the students’ ability to see themselves as college material (Verschelden, 2017). Likewise, the college leaders believed an ethnically diverse pool of instructors holds true to overcome identity threat for students in the police academy.

Table 2 indicates the assessment of the student population in both programs closely represents the demographics of the residential population of Valencia

College's service area. Conversely, the demographics of the faculty and instructors indicate a need to evaluate diversity across some areas of these programs.

Table 2. Typology: student and instructor demographics

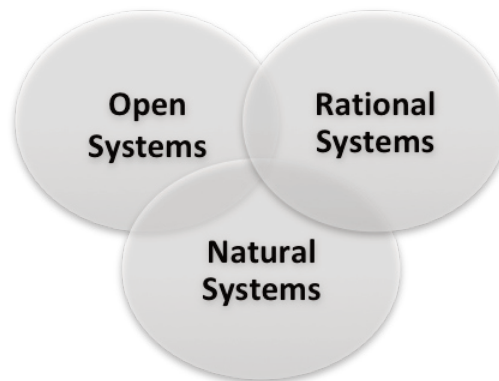
	African American	Caucasian	Hispanic	Other
2020 population estimates				
Orange Co.	21.4%	38.9%	33.6%	
Osceola Co.	10.6%	30.5%	55.2%	
2020–2021 population estimates				
Criminal Justice A.S. Degree Faculty	23%	67%	10%	
Criminal Justice A.S. Degree Students	21.3%	21.3%	48.2%	9.2%
Police Academy Students	18.5%	29.3%	43.9%	8.3%
Police Academy Instructors	14%	60%	24%	

Notes: 2020 population estimates are from the Bureau of Economic and Business Research at the University of Florida; 2020–2021 student demographics are from Valencia College's Institutional Research; faculty and staff demographics are from Valencia College's School of Public Safety.

Assess the Organizational setting

Generally, there are three settings in the Organization construct: rational, natural, and open systems (see Figure 2). Scott and Davis (2007) indicate rational systems are technical with functional rationality, highly formalized social structures with explicit and clearly defined goal specificity.

Figure 2. Organizational model with systems



Whereas natural systems are structured with distinct beliefs and behaviors of its participants who recognize the value of perpetuating the organization as an important resource. “The organization itself is a major asset, a valuable resource to be captured” (Scott & Davis, 2007, p. 30) and informal and personal structure of social

collectives are of greater importance than a formal structure. Open systems have connections to their environment with a throughput of resources, flows, and activities that are linked to shifting coalitions from their environment. In this system, the environments shapes, supports, and infiltrates organizations. With the arrival of the open system models in the 1960s, organizational studies were rapidly combined with rational or natural system assumptions and arguments. Thus, open systems were quickly combined with rational systems first, then natural systems later (Scott & Davis, 2007). In many strategies, the open system is combined with either the rational or natural system, or both.

In this strategy model, at the Organizational level, Valencia College is defined as a natural system, while law enforcement organizations are certainly defined as rational. Regarding law enforcement organizations, Worden and McLean (2017) report these organizations serve conventional technical-rational purposes and have adopted

structural forms that are widely considered desirable to achieve desired outcomes. These operate in a culture where institutional forces compel policing to maintain a bureaucratic form with numerous policies and procedures and a quasi-military chain of command.

Conversely, it is difficult to portray colleges as rational actors because these organizations have been considered loosely coupled systems where subunits are almost autonomous, and core activities have been characterized by ambiguity (Fumasoli & Stensaker, 2013). Additionally, Berger and Milem (2000) indicate the complexity of social collectives structured around the accomplishment of education has created a need for a better way to describe and understand the social phenomenon of these organizations. Kuh (2003) adds a **postconventional view of colleges**. Instead of being orderly, linear, and goal-directed, these organizations **encourage information sharing in various directions and interactions within, across, and beyond their boundaries to respond to developing circumstances**. Accordingly, colleges fit within the natural systems perspective.

Although these organizations operate in somewhat disparate systems, law enforcement in rational systems and colleges in natural systems, it is in the open system where they come together to leverage their relationships and dependency on each other. For that reason, in this leadership model it is imperative to understand the important role the open system plays in Valencia College's mission to enhance equitable and just policing education and training. Marenin points out "the ultimate goal of police training in any democracy is the capability to make situational judgements which are in accord with democratic societal and legal norms and expectations" (Marenin, 2004, p. 108). Therefore, law enforcement organizations must operate in the open system for the resources and expertise for their education and training needs in a democratic society, and many law enforcement agencies have turned to community colleges to train their officers as indicated earlier.

There is much literature support for the open systems dynamic in this model because a college is a needed stakeholder and resource to stimulate change or progress in the community. Fumasoli and Stensaker (2013) report that organizational changes in higher education institutions have been observed due to changes in the environment. This gives prominence to the college as an open system because it interrelates mutually, with multiple reciprocal relations with its environment. Most important, a postconventional view offered by Kuh (2003) emphasizes colleges are complex open systems influenced, and changed, by external events and rapidly changing conditions. In this specific case, Valencia College is the primary training and education resource for law enforcement organizations and can stimulate change when this vocation faces turbulence in the community. Hence, education becomes a central feature for society (Fumasoli & Stensaker, 2013) within the open system, specifically when law enforcement organizations and colleges collaborate to seek solutions for challenges inside and outside these organizations. In this combined Open-Rational and Natural Systems Model, leaders at Valencia College understood their responsibility to be a primary education and training resource for law enforcement organizations within its district in central Florida, especially for the strategy towards equitable and just policing education and training.

Additional complexities of the organization construct to be considered: system model levels, institutional levels, and isomorphic forces

In the era of the open systems model that has transformed the field of organization studies, Scott and Davis (2007) introduce combining perspectives and expanded levels within this new paradigm. These are the social psychological, structural, and ecological levels. Within the Public Affairs Triumvirate Leadership Strategy, leaders in higher education should further consider these levels as they continue to assess their college's role in a combined open system model.

At the social psychological level, the organization and decision makers are more open to their environment by making adjustments to their internal decision-making apparatus and they institutionalize innovation by operating in an evolutionary fashion. The organization also utilizes an existing collection of performance programs but must be willing to settle for acceptable as opposed to optimal solutions. At the structural level, the organization gives equal attention to the technical and social components in their design of the work systems while striving to develop effective and efficient structures by embracing a rational system perspective in the open system. At the ecological level, the organization is an actor in a wider system where contingency, resource dependence, population ecology, and networks are important (Scott & Davis, 2007).

In Valencia College's quest for equitable and just policing education and training, the leaders ensured these expanded levels of the institution contributed to their strategy. At the **social psychological level, the leaders at the School of Public Safety designed an open dialogue for decision-making beyond college employees and their traditional law enforcement stakeholders** by inviting several others to work with them. These were members of the college's Peace and Justice Institute, a local and state politician, members of local government, leaders and staff from community organizations, social service employees, university professors, and a high school program coordinator. At this social psychological level, it was important a task force offered contemporary voices, innovation, and best practices in the evolution of the education and training for the police in a democratic society.

At the structural level, Valencia College was already primed for this strategy by designating the School of Public Safety as **the first "School" at the college on December 17, 2014**. This designation created an efficient and effective structure for the college's mission to educate and train regional law enforcement officers, which is outlined in the college's School of Public Safety Resolution:

- a. Promote and deliver public safety education and training to students and public and private emergency and security providers by providing contemporary programming to raise knowledge, skills, and standards across all public safety disciplines.
- b. Provide research and development of strategic training and education planning to individual public safety service providers and agencies and create a new paradigm toward a more professional and educated public safety workforce.
- c. Emphasize intentional service integration training and education and serve as a central location for the coordination of curricu-

lum, advisory functions, evaluation, and assessment for all public safety programs at Valencia College.

Each item in the resolution developed an effective and efficient structure at Valencia College's School of Public Safety to provide a strategic assessment of its law enforcement education and training while embracing a rational system perspective, in the open system, to seek recommendations and implementation of contemporary programming.

At the ecological level, Valencia College is the one of the main actors in the wider law enforcement system where they network as a primary resource for education and training for police officers in their central Florida district of Orange and Osceola Counties. At this level, while operating in the natural system, the college plays a major contingency role as the region seeks education and training solutions for ever-changing law enforcement and community dynamics, especially as the region developed a strategy for equitable and just policing.

After considering these expanded levels of institutional theory, an added complexity of the organizational construct is the assumption that organizations are deeply embedded in a particular social context. Next, leaders in higher education must understand organizational structural arrangements are significantly influenced by distinct cultural and political elements in their environment. Consequently, there are three "levels of influence" that comes with a legacy: the organizational field, organizational population, and the individual organization (Scott & Davis, 2007). At the highest level, the macro level, Valencia College's School of Public Safety is a natural organization within the rational law enforcement "field." The college has the responsibility to educate and train the law enforcement workforce within an open system. At the organizational "population" level, Valencia College is responsible for the law enforcement training and education in Orange and Osceola Counties in central Florida. At the lowest level, the micro level, the college serves nineteen "individual" municipal, county, and state law enforcement organizations. These range from large law enforcement organizations with 800 to 1,600 officers to a very small organization with 15 officers. These levels of influence contribute to the final phenomenon in the Organizational construct to be understood by leaders, isomorphism.

Although the law enforcement agencies within Valencia College's geographic region, or population level, vary greatly in size, they are also very similar. By the nature of work of these organizations, they are particularly susceptible to strong forces in their environments that shape their activities and structure (Worden & McLean, 2017). Frumkin and Galaskiewicz (2004) agree. They report that government organizations are more vulnerable to institutional forces than other organizations, and law enforcement organizations are structured around it and react to the phenomenon. These organizations mimic each other and become very similar to each other; thus, institutional isomorphism promotes their success and survival.

Isomorphic forces are imbedded in law enforcement because they are often "coerced" to "mimic" their peers. These organizations adopt structures and activities that are overtly or covertly mandated by other organizations they are dependent upon, and this adoption stems from political influence and the need for legitimacy. Therefore,

coercive, mimetic, and normative isomorphism results from standard responses to uncertainty and these organizations naturally mimic their peers. **Isomorphism creates legitimacy for organizations, makes organizations operate like their peers, and allows organizations to disseminate ideas through social and professional networks** (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Mizruchi & Fein, 1999). Understanding the strength of this phenomenon in policing, Valencia College sought to leverage isomorphic forces to establish equitable and just law enforcement programming and curriculum that would naturally spread throughout regional law enforcement organizations. This leverage would lead to sustained change through an education and training strategy to police academy students and the incumbent law enforcement workforce.

By way of explanation, leaders in higher education have an opportunity—a responsibility—to leverage isomorphic forces within institutional levels to affect professional and cultural change within a sector through directed and strategic education and training. The Organization context in this holistic strategy is compounded so it was important for Valencia College’s leaders to understand their place in the Operational and Natural Systems Model, a model with combining perspectives and expanded levels, role identity in the institutional levels of policing, and the need to leverage isomorphic forces to create and implement their equitable and just policing education and training strategy.

Select the Administration approach

In this strategic model, Administration is influenced by both Community and Organization and is an important component in the latter stage in the leader’s strategy. Like the other public affairs forces, three approaches can be considered in Administration: managerial, political, or legal approach. The managerial approach considers effectiveness, efficiency, and economy, the political approach considers representativeness, political responsiveness, and accountability, and the legal approach considers due process, rights, and equity (Goltz, 2020).

In Valencia College’s strategy within this construct, equity and effectiveness were key, therefore the legal and managerial approaches were considered pertinent. Besides, equitable and just policing education and training was one of the **four “opportunity and equity” initiatives** announced by President Shugart in October 2020, and the School of Public Safety contemplated the legal approach because the college’s 2030 Strategic Impact Plan called for the use of equity and opportunity to examine all areas of the organization. Accordingly, the managerial approach equated to the college’s Impact Plan and a collaborative strategic planning cycle was very important for several reasons in this strategy.

First, Sanaghan (2009) reports strategic collaboration in higher education improves organizational capacity with constructive and challenging thinking to solve complex problems. Second, Bryson (2011) indicates public organizations must understand their internal and external contexts to respond effectively to changes in their environment. Last, leaders in higher education should consider a simple question proposed several decades ago by Keller (1983) to shape academic strategies and effectiveness: what should our college aspire to be ten years from now? Keller also believed the fundamental aim of strategic planning is one of linking the forward di-

rection of the academic organization with the movement of historical forces in the environment. Valencia College's **2030 Strategic Impact Plan** aims to answer Keller's question, with the movement of forces within its environment, by building upon its foundation as a **learning-centered college** with the use of an **equity and opportunity lens** to examine success in several areas, including equitable and just law enforcement education and training.

Within the Administration construct, a precise goal of the managerial approach in this leadership strategy was the development of the Impact Plan and Valencia College sought to be an **"agent of change"** in the community by elevating equitable and just law enforcement education and training in central Florida through the plan. The Impact Plan was spurred by quantum leadership with the college's drive to lead from the future (Goltz, 2020), a claim supported by Overman (1996) who believes quantum leadership is the new Administration science on becoming "rather" than being, and it constructs our reality rather than waiting for it to be determined. This leap for leaders is accomplished in the final steps of this strategy model (as noted in Table 1): 6) identify community policy connections, 7) identify governance opportunities and partnership, and 8) formulate a strategy to reframe the organization. These certainly promoted collaboration, so Valencia College could better understand their internal and external contexts while shaping a long-term strategy at the School of Public Safety.

Identify community policy connections

An essential element in the Public Affairs Triumvirate Strategy is a leader's intuition to assimilate community policy connections in their work, the sixth step in the strategy template (Goltz, 2020). In essence, the constructs in the Public Affairs Triumvirate have a role in substantive policy in our communities, and utilizing this strategy encourages leaders in higher education to not only understand the importance of the policy environment, actors, and goals, but to incorporate a policy connection into their work. Consequently, as the work of the task force began, it was important to identify principal community policy connections.

The first charge for the task force was the review of an important policy connection related to law enforcement training, a report from the Florida Senate Criminal Justice Committee (2020) regarding de-escalation, use of force, duty to intervene, and behavioral health response. This report resulted from the Senate Criminal Justice Committee's review of another state report released in 2017 by the Florida Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission, *Strengthening the Bonds Between Law Enforcement and the Public: Community Safety Recommendations*. The goal of this report was to address the concerns of citizens and to ensure a safe community. Of note, four employees from Valencia College, to include this author, served on a Community Safety Workgroup as advisors and subject matter experts to contribute to the report (Florida Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission, 2017).

Within the policy environment, the Florida Senate Criminal Justice Committee's report made "decisions" on future law enforcement academy and post-academy training at the School of Public Safety, and a review of this report was an important first step for the task force. In October 2020, the task force discussed the reports to identify and highlight several items they agreed upon as important in creating a new paradigm

in law enforcement training and education at the School of Public Safety. With a strong community policy connection established, workshops within the purview of the design principles continued each month to build upon the recommendations already published by the Florida Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission in 2017 and later suggested by the Senate Criminal Justice Committee in 2020.

Identify governance opportunities and partnerships

Next, in complex work such as this, where innovative and transformative recommendations suggested solutions beyond Valencia College, “governance” was an important and necessary action in the final stages of the adopted Public Affairs Triumvirate Leadership Strategy. It has an essential role in collaboration across disciplines and concepts (Goltz, 2020). Identifying governance opportunities is the seventh step in the strategy template, in particular contextual governance, where diverging interests of stakeholders must come together for cooperation to seek solutions and action to enhance the college’s equitable and just policing education and training initiative.

Briefly, key methodologies relevant to the governance framework are innovation, negotiation, and transformative partnerships around terms such as system-wide information exchange, knowledge transfer, democratization, decentralization of decision-making, and inter-institutional dialogue (Reddel, 2002). The new form of governance is based around the interactions of the socio-political system involving the public, private, and civil sectors (Daly, 2003), and it is essentially **anti-hierarchical and anti-bureaucratic by dissolving the traditional boundaries between the public and private actors** (Sehested, 2003)—all important elements for Valencia College in this strategy model.

Explained next, the Equitable and Just Policing Education and Training Task Force offered an exclusive form of the governance framework with a decentralized architecture that created information exchanges across diverse systems and sectors. In the end, this collaboration led to recommendations for the development and strengthening of law enforcement education and training at Valencia College and future efforts in this work. A decentralized governance framework will be needed for the implementation of the recommendations to influence the unique social challenges debated by this task force.

Task force

Shortly after the adoption of the Public Affairs Triumvirate Leadership Strategy, President Shugart directed the School of Public Safety to assemble a diverse, community-based team of internal and external stakeholders to examine this high-profile area of education and training. Valencia College was primed for this extraordinary endeavor. Kisker (2021) confirms Valencia College has design thinkers who involve stakeholders early with a commitment to widespread communication and collaboration. She adds the college also has the habit of identifying a “primus” who is closest to the work with the responsibility to ensure that input and feedback are gathered. While the college’s design thinkers started to ponder the task force and its mission, the Vice President over the School of Public Safety was selected as the primus.

President Shugart informed the primus to direct the leaders at this School to partner with Valencia College's Peace and Justice Institute (PJI) to connect with community stakeholders for the task force. The PJI was a unique internal stakeholder for the School of Public Safety, and a strong community asset. In 2009, PJI was humbly formed by a small group of faculty, staff, students, and administrators with a "theme of peace" and an ongoing conversation about the values of Valencia College. Over a decade later, in the early 2020s, the PJI had grown with a 37-member advisory board, a board with representatives from many sectors in central Florida (Valencia College, 2021c). Curiously, in his paper, McDonald (2020) named PJI as one of the domains to promote change in law enforcement, thus supporting President Shugart's partnership he ordered between the School of Public Safety and PJI.

In Fall 2020, the School of Public Safety and PJI assembled the Equitable and Just Policing Education and Training Task Force. This was a 30-member panel of experts made up of college leaders, faculty and staff, law enforcement leaders and officers, a local and state politician, members of local government, leaders and staff from community organizations (to include the Central Florida Urban League), social service employees, a university professor, and a high school program coordinator. The task force was diverse with eight African American males, three African American females, two Hispanic males, one Hispanic female, one Iranian American female, one Muslim female, nine Caucasian males, and five Caucasian females. This group was charged with the work suggested by President Shugart: discuss adequate and inadequate law enforcement training and education, engage in deep conversations for solutions for fundamental change, and be responsive and lead the training needs of local law enforcement agencies.

Leadership dimensions and design thinking for the task force principles

Leading up to the first task force meeting, design principles were needed to establish a set of values for the group that acted as a compass to focus on the mission of equitable and just law enforcement education and training at Valencia College. The four design principles were influenced by the Public Affairs Triumvirate leadership dimensions across each construct (Goltz, 2020), and the Design Thinking Strategy outlined by Brown (2008).

Within the Public Affairs Triumvirate, there is a unique trio of leadership dimensions in each construct. These contribute to a comprehensive and focused architecture for leaders in higher education when they opt to use this leadership approach to rethink their organization's community connections to solve problems. Within the Community construct, the dimensions of coalition building, collaboration, and social awareness expand the leader's strategy in the ecosystem. The Organization-oriented dimensions are strategy, systems thinking, and vision. The dimensions within Administration are creativity and innovation, task orientation, and performance drive. All dimensions encourage a much larger perspective on the organization's future, improve the quality of the leader's decisions, and build trust with the community (Goltz, 2020).

Across all constructs, the leadership dimensions were considered when developing the design principles for the task force. Additionally, Brown (2008) highlights

characteristics of significance in the design thinking process, and many paralleled and complemented the Public Affairs Triumvirate leadership dimensions. Brown suggests **empathy, integrative thinking, optimism, experimentalism, and collaboration in the design process**. All the leadership dimensions and the design thinking characteristics from Brown were foundational to the design principles that welcomed and encouraged the task force members to express their perspectives and to engage in empathetic dialogue of their diverse perspectives. Ultimately, the task force agreed on the following design principles to:

1. Review and assess the current education and training at the School of Public Safety to identify deficits in the curriculum that leave law enforcement officers with a **lack of historical perspective** to better serve **those who have been racially and economically marginalized** and disproportionately impacted by the criminal justice system.
2. Identify opportunities to add curriculum to the School of Public Safety academic and training programs that will help officers understand **trauma-sensitive practices, identify their implicit biases, and develop their emotional literacy and cultural awareness** to promote equitable and just policing practices that increase trust in the police among historically marginalized communities.
3. **Solicit public feedback and scrutiny of police training** to build trust and create transparency to bring about sustained racial equity in the actions of the police.
4. Implement additional training and education **to supplement the state curriculum** where there are opportunities to promote equitable and just policing practices.

With a motivated task force assembled, design principles in place, and the decision to meet each month from September 2020 through February 2021, the School of Public Safety planned monthly task force activities that were grounded in the intentions of the design principles to seek recommendations and create a “theory of change” for the School of Public Safety.

Task force workshops

In November, the task force learned about police simulations training and the VirTra simulator at the School of Public Safety. The task force was introduced to this simulator and how it prepares law enforcement officers with reality-based training with nationally certified curriculum for de-escalation and judgmental use of force, requiring the human performance aspect of cognitive neuroscience and human physiology (VirTra, 2021). In December, the task force conducted a “community perspectives and police encounters” workshop. This **workshop offered testimonials about negative encounters with law enforcement** from two task force members and other community members selected by task force organizers. The goal was to support the **value of testimony** in law enforcement education and training to build empathy and understanding of the impact each police encounter may have on a citizen, officer, and the community.

In January 2021, several best practices, programs, and ideas, each aligning with the design principles and mission, were presented to the task force: public perception

and testimony in the police academy, police encounter exercises, crisis intervention, mental health services and law enforcement partnerships, adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), and high school programs and partnerships. Additionally, many “equitable and just policing” components of the State of Florida’s revised law enforcement academy program were highlighted as the new curriculum was scheduled for implementation on July 1, 2021, by the Florida Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission. This Commission approved numerous curriculum revisions that came from the 2017 report, *Strengthening the Bonds Between Law Enforcement and the Public: Community Safety Recommendations*, highlighted as a community policy connection.

Leadership on the task force believed it was crucial to assess the new curriculum, therefore 20 task force members reviewed nine chapters of relevance for content related to procedural justice, implicit bias, police legitimacy, **trauma informed practices**, emotional intelligence, crisis intervention, communication, de-escalation, and officer wellness. These chapters included the introduction to law enforcement, communications, legal, interviewing and reporting, serving your community, crimes against persons, traffic stops, firearm training, and defensive tactics. Although the task force reported a vast improvement in the curriculum, they noted improvements could be made in each chapter and offered several curriculum suggestions:

- Self-assessment of implicit bias when entering the police academy
- Officer mental health and wellness
- Racial intelligence and engagement
- Transition of the officer mindset from call to call
- Trauma-informed approach and the understanding of ACEs
- Vicarious and secondary trauma in policing
- History of policing
- Power, control, and authority of law enforcement
- Explanation of authoritarian behavior
- Guardian vs. warrior distinction
- Understanding communication with different ethnic groups
- Understanding communication in diverse communities
- Enhanced listening skills
- History of law and precedent of laws
- Distinguish the role of prosecution, defense, and legal advisors
- Add the practical use and competencies of the law
- Proper officer mindset when interviewing suspects and victims
- Effects of neuroscience on interviews with suspects and victims
- Trauma-competency in report writing
- Add crisis intervention training
- Proper approach, tone, and communication tactics of officers(s) when contacting and speaking to vulnerable populations
- Learn the community, build relationships in the community, and uphold community policing philosophy
- Expand victim identification and rapport concepts
- Fair, respectful communication and effective listening during traffic stops

- De-escalation training with practical application in firearms and defensive tactics
- Human performance dynamics

The findings of this review supported the task force’s advisory role. They provided the recommendations to the director of Valencia College’s Criminal Justice Institute for discussion in Florida’s Training Center Director Committee curriculum meetings.

Also in the January 2021 workshop, the task force received a detailed explanation of key items of central importance in law enforcement: social contract theory, perception, legitimacy, and procedural justice. Guest speaker Dr. Randy Nelson, Director of the Center for Law and Social Justice at Bethune Cookman University in Daytona Beach, Florida, explained the social contract theory and the power of perception in his presentation “Effective Community Engagement Through Two-Way Accountability.” A task force member, Dr. Jacinta Gau, Associate Professor in the Department of Criminal Justice at the University of Central Florida, discussed legitimacy and procedural justice. She emphasized legitimacy as the foundational principle for any governmental entity and reminded the task force that procedural justice was important to officer safety because every police–citizen encounter is an opportunity for an officer to either demonstrate or diminish legitimacy.

Task force recommendations

At the task force’s final meeting in February 2021, the group completed their work by identifying concerns in three areas: 1) law enforcement academy training, 2) community collaboration and partnership, and 3) the public safety workforce. Within these key areas, the task force made ten recommendations, listed in Table 3, and settled on a working theory: **Law enforcement is what the community experiences.**

Table 3. Task force recommendations

Area of concern	Recommendations
<p>Law Enforcement Academy Training</p> <p><i>Concern: deficits in equitable and just policing topics</i></p>	<p>Implement the revised law enforcement academy curriculum by July 1, 2021, with additional “police and citizen” encounter training and scenarios, and testimonials from citizens</p> <p>Assemble a work team, to include the Peace and Justice Institute and citizens, in the development and implementation of scenarios and testimonials</p> <p>Implement the history of policing, crisis intervention, emotional intelligence, self-regulation, bias-aware policing, and neuroscience, epigenetics, ACEs, and resiliency (NEAR) training in academy programs</p> <p>Identify and assign a diverse pool of passionate and “guardian” minded instructors, and add instructors from diverse sectors to teach the new curriculum in the law enforcement academy</p>

Table3 (continued)

Area of concern	Recommendations
<p>Community Collaboration and Partnership</p> <p><i>Concern:</i> help officers understand trauma sensitive practices, identify their implicit biases, and develop their emotional literacy and cultural awareness to promote equitable and just policing practices that increase trust in the police among historically marginalized communities, while soliciting public feedback and scrutiny of police training to build trust and create transparency in order to bring about more racial equity in the actions of the police.</p>	<p>Establish a community group, an extension of the task force, to meet two to three times a year to review and discuss the implementation and results of the task force recommendations in the School of Public Safety Impact Plan</p> <p>Establish a Civilian and Teen Academy Program at the School of Public Safety</p> <p>Advance the training of behavioral response units (BRUs) in the region with Deveraux Advanced Behavioral Health</p> <p>Advance NEAR training in the region with the Peace and Justice Institute and the CRC (Creating a Resilient Community) Network to create a “trauma-informed” law enforcement workforce through advanced/specialized training</p>
<p>Public Safety Workforce</p> <p><i>Concern:</i> attract a diverse pool of students to college public safety programs to offer regional public safety agencies an expanded pool of diverse applicants, and add diversity to the School of Public Safety leadership and instructor pool, to include instructors from diverse sectors to reflect the community served</p>	<p>Support the criminal justice programs at East River, Jones, Lake Nona, and Boone High Schools to enhance diversity and access to Valencia College’s criminal justice degree programs, and encourage hiring students from these programs at regional departments through the Central Florida Public Safety College and Career Readiness Program</p> <p>Implement and promote officer wellness and “trauma-informed” programs</p>

Goltz

Leadership Strategy
Training

Theory of change

The broad list of recommendations, aligned with the task force design principles, appeared as a comprehensive description of how a desired change could occur between the community and law enforcement. For that reason, the recommendations were, in a sense, a theory of change. Theory of change emerged in the 1990s at the Aspen Institute (2021) as a means to model and evaluate comprehensive community initiatives, and is a methodology to promote social change through planning, participation, and evaluation. It defines long-term goals and then maps backward to identify necessary preconditions. Accordingly, in the theory of change context, these recommendations are intended to:

1. Increase equity and inclusion in the public safety student population at Valencia College to reflect the community served in its district.
2. Enhance trust and legitimacy between public safety in all communities, especially marginalized communities in central Florida.
3. Increase the rates of crime solving through more cooperation with public safety.
4. Assist regional law enforcement agencies with alternatives in lieu of arrests and punishment for human behavior and mental health challenges in our community.

5. Reduce crime in central Florida communities.
6. Create a positive impact in areas effected by ACEs.
7. Create better living conditions and quality of life in our communities, enhancing the community's financial and social health, equity, and security.
8. Enhance the safety of public safety personnel.

Additionally, theory of change, a depiction of the quantum characteristic and many steps within the Public Affairs Triumvirate leadership strategy, is a forecast that shows what conditions must exist for other conditions to come into being. This was precisely the mission of the task force to assess the current conditions for recommendations to change the conditions listed above. This task force “led from the future” and agreed on design principles in the micro, at Valencia College’s School of Public Safety, and at the macro level, the central Florida community, and applied quantum logic to raise awareness of the universe around them. Of note, Overman (1996) notates this perspective decades ago. The action and early results from the task force recommendations support a theory of change for Valencia College and its community.

Frame selection and reframing

A final consideration of the Public Affairs Triumvirate Strategy is a leader’s understanding of “frames” and “reframing,” the eighth and final step in the strategy template (Goltz, 2020). A frame is defined as a **mental model or a set of ideas and assumptions to help a leader understand and negotiate a particular territory**, and they identify four different frames that help leaders find clarity and meaning amid organizational challenges. There are structural, human resources, political, and symbolic frames (Bolman & Deal, 2008):

- Structural frame – a blueprint for officially sanctioned expectations and exchanges among internal players and external stakeholders
- Human resource frame – the understanding of people and their symbolic relationship with organizations
- **Political frame – views organizations as roiling arenas hosting ongoing contests of individual and group interests**
- Symbolic frame – forms an umbrella for ideas from several disciplines, including organization theory and sociology (Bolman & Deal, 2008).

The **Equitable and Just Policing Education and Training Task Force fell within the political frame** because of the nature of the work and the propositions of this frame that organizations are coalitions of assorted people and interest groups, and coalition members have enduring differences in values, beliefs, information, interests, and perceptions of reality (Bolman & Deal).

Next, after the identification of an applicable frame, leaders have an opportunity to change the script and appearance of their organization and how the audience sees the organization. This is “reframing” and leaders who wish to change their organization’s script must understand reframing requires another skill, the ability to break

frames. **Reframing** is examining the same situation from multiple vantage points and **changing lenses when things do not make sense or are not working** (Bolman & Deal, 2008). Therefore, this task force provided multiple vantage points for Valencia College, and the recommendations offer the School of Public Safety new options for reframing law enforcement education and training to “change the script” for more equitable and just policing. As implementation has occurred on some recommendations, early results indicate this.

Action and early results

Immediately after the task force offered recommendations, the School of Public Safety selected **two “ambassadors”** to begin implementation. One ambassador is a Valencia College criminal justice faculty member and program chair, assigned on a faculty fellowship to the School of Public Safety to implement the recommendations, and the other is a retired Orlando (Florida) Police officer who is a facilitator on the PJI and instructor at the School of Public Safety. An important community connection was also made prior to the task force for the college. In 2019, the School of Public Safety joined the Creating a Resilient Community (CRC) Network in central Florida and became the “lead” for the public safety sector.

The CRC is a network for community members, professionals, and leaders to collaborate across nine sectors in a movement to prevent ACEs, heal from trauma, and build resilience in central Florida. The network collaborates across sectors and communities to transform the region and build resilience (PACEs Connection Central Florida, n.d.). Not only did the relationship with the CRC add another partner to the contextual governance tactic, the Open-Rational and Natural Systems Model of the leadership strategy for this project was expanded. This became a significant resource in the open system for the implementation of the task force recommendations.

Law enforcement academy training

Valencia College adopted the revised law enforcement academy curriculum in July 2021, and immediately engaged in “equity minded” learning outcome assessment of law enforcement academy students. This assessment measures the effectiveness of the curriculum as it relates to bias-free policing, de-escalation, and diverse communication. The college is also implementing a learning management system to add supplemental learning materials in the law enforcement academy environment. Additional training materials, to include neuroscience, epigenetics, ACEs, and resiliency (NEAR) are available within the CRC network and a training strategy has been implemented to introduce these concepts to students.

Community collaboration and partnership

The CRC Network has emerged as a crucial partner in Valencia College’s mission to enhance equitable and just policing education and training. The CRC network consists of nine sectors (education, government, health and wellness, nonprofit, faith-based, criminal justice, business, child welfare) and will be a resource for implementation of many recommendations from the task force by offering numerous

training resources and community connections. Task force members have been encouraged to join the public safety sector in this community network as an extension of the task force activities.

The leaders at Valencia College's School of Public Safety also serve on several groups to help build a "resilient" community. These are the Central Florida Crisis Intervention Steering Committee, Orange County Heroin Task Force, Central Florida Tri County Alliance on Human Trafficking, and Crimeline Central Florida. In an important and ancillary way, these groups offer more expertise and resources for equitable and just policing education and training. These leaders also bolstered their collaboration with four local high schools, with nearly 600 students in criminal justice career pathway programs, to cultivate future candidates for their police academy and other criminal justice programs at the School of Public Safety.

Law enforcement workforce

Policing is one of the most complex and difficult jobs in society (Marenin, 2004), and such difficulties were clearly heightened in the summer of 2020. Therefore, specialized training for the incumbent law enforcement workforce and leaders was a top priority to respond to public demands for service. Valencia College quickly acted on the task force recommendations and implemented a plan of action to offer fair and impartial policing, de-escalation tactics, and racial and emotional intelligence engagement (RITE).

Conclusion

Highlighted in this article, the Public Affairs Triumvirate leadership strategy offered a comprehensive and methodical approach to enhancing equitable and just policing education and training, a leadership philosophy confirmed through science and applied to service (Goltz, 2020). This eight-step model and strategy can be used by leaders in higher education when they are tasked to seek solutions for complex challenges across their community, organization, and administration.

In the wake of turbulence between law enforcement and the community across the nation, the School of Public Safety at Valencia College was tasked to discuss adequate and inadequate law enforcement training and education, engage in deep conversations for solutions and fundamental change, and to be responsive and lead the training needs of local law enforcement agencies. The adoption of the Public Affairs Triumvirate Leadership Strategy offered a unique and holistic approach to extend leadership boundaries, and considered three forces or constructs (community, organization, administration) with a trio of approaches to seek solutions for equitable and just police education and training.

Early in this endeavour, the School of Public Safety was directed to assemble a team beyond the college, a community task force, and this comprehensive leadership strategy along with design thinking offered guidance to establish clear design principles for the work of the task force, which led to several recommendations in three key areas for the School of Public Safety's Impact Plan. From a quantum perspective, the recommendations offer new options for reframing law enforcement education and training at Valencia College and have established a theory of change with long-

term goals in the community that map backward to current conditions. Subsequently, action and early results are leading to **a new paradigm at the college.**

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