



News Release

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Major Research Initiative on Police Practices

San José – San Jose today announced the initiation of a major research initiative with a leading group of independent social scientists that will look at Police Department policies, procedures, and practices. The Consortium for Police Leadership in Equity (CPLÉ) works to improve issues of equity in policing—particularly racial and gender equity—both within law enforcement agencies and between those agencies and the communities they serve.

Made up of researchers from leading academic institutions from across the country, the CPLÉ works independently to simultaneously help police departments and communities address their own equity goals while advancing the scientific understanding of issues of equity within organizations and policing.

There has been significant recent attention, by the media and community members, on San Jose arrest statistics. The focus has been on whether or not these statistics reflect a pattern and practice of biased-based actions by members of the Police Department. This important issue has raised many questions in the community. It is clear, however, that before any conclusions can be drawn, we must all have a more in-depth understanding of their significance.

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The Consortium's work in San Jose will not only provide insights regarding the questions being raised, but will also identify opportunities to make improvement in policies, procedures and/or training. In discussions with the City, the CPLE has committed to start by engaging with interested stakeholders to ensure an understanding of community perceptions related to this issue.

"The goal of this effort is to ensure that the San Jose Police Department retains the best practices in policing, and that we sustain the credibility and trust that the community has placed in the Department over the years," said City Manager Debra Figone in announcing the initiative. "This independent review and analysis will provide a more meaningful understanding of the complex issues related to arrest data and provide insights about policing in our community."

"This is a great opportunity to team up with experienced social scientists from some of the nation's leading universities to tackle some of the complex social issues that confront police departments and their communities every day," said Police Chief Rob Davis. "The Department has a proud tradition of being a progressive agency that constantly seeks ways to improve the way we provide law enforcement services to our residents. Indeed, this is yet another opportunity for us to take a leadership role in this national effort to advance in-depth research that will serve to improve police services not only in San Jose but across the country."

Founded earlier this year, the CPLE grew out of a series of meetings between social science researchers and members of the law enforcement community. San Jose Police Department representatives have been participating in those meetings since 2005. Participating researchers come from Stanford, UCLA, University of Denver, Harvard, University of Delaware, University of Stockholm, University of Minnesota, and Rutgers. Objectivity and independence in the CPLE research is assured because the research is underwritten by a foundation and two universities.

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“It will be good for San Jose to have an outside, independent review of police practices. I am glad that the Consortium for Police Leadership in Equity is willing to take on the task at no cost to the city,” said Mayor Chuck Reed. “As one of America’s safest big cities, San Jose residents are well-served by a dedicated police force. Excellence requires a commitment to transparency and continuous improvement. I am looking forward to seeing the results from this research and learning how we can improve our work to better serve the residents of San Jose.”

“By choosing to participate, departments are making an unprecedented commitment to transparency and accountability in the areas of racial and gender equity,” said Dr. Tracie L. Keese, Ph.D., Executive Director of Operations for the Consortium.

The research team will develop the specific methodology it will use in San Jose based on the unique questions and concerns facing the City. “The researchers have helped Denver, and I believe they can help the nation,” said Gerald R. Whitman, Denver Chief of Police. A similar project in Denver led to a variety of policy changes at the Denver Police Department based on research findings.

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