



Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Office

700 East Fourth Street
Charlotte, NC 28202

T (704) 336-2543 • F (704) 336-6118

www.mecksheriff.com

GARRY L. MCFADDEN
SHERIFF

RODNEY M. COLLINS
CHIEF DEPUTY SHERIFF

TELISA E. WHITE
CHIEF OF DETENTION

MEDIA ADVISORY FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT: Dejah Gilliam, Public Information Manager

dejah.gilliam@mecklenburgcountync.gov

O: (980) 314-5170

M: (704) 564-3234

MCSO Criminal Justice Partnership Program - Piedmont International University

(CHARLOTTE, NC) - Sheriff McFadden and Piedmont International University are pleased to announce their partnership for MCSO staff to be able to receive scholarships and other benefits including college credit toward completing their education at PIU. On Friday, March 6, 2020, Sheriff McFadden; Dr. Pettitt, President of PIU; Dr. Edens, Vice President of PIU; and Dr. Gopalan, Vice Chancellor of PIU signed a memorandum of understanding for the partnership.

MCSO staff function in a highly challenging environment, they are exposed to conflict, trauma, mental health difficulties, and violence daily. Despite this reality, law enforcement personnel enter the field often without the educational support that would enable them to perform optimally or cope with occupational stressors and lead fulfilling lives.

Across the United States, about two-thirds of law enforcement personnel enter the force with a mere high school diploma supplemented by vocational training. Unsurprisingly, officers without a college degree experience worse employment outcome: more disciplinary problems, citizen complaints, civil rights violations, and higher prevalence of complaints about excessive use of force. Equally, research shows that officers with 4-year college degrees experience fewer complaints and are less likely to use excessive force.

Accordingly, there is a considerable body of support for equipping officers with a college education. However, actual progress has been slow and legacy recruitment practices continue to be utilized resulting in skills deficits for the needs of the 21st century law enforcement context. This partnership is put in place to implement community-focused and successful law enforcement delivery by enhancing the capabilities of our staff. The benefits include reduced legal expenses, lower conflict with the community, greater trust, and enhanced officer morale.

Staff benefits include but aren't limited to the following:

- Everyone with **BLET receives 1 year of credit into PIU's undergraduate degrees** – business; criminal justice; public health; social work, interdisciplinary studies; history; humanities; education; information systems; business analytics.
 - This allows you to graduate in 3 years saving time and money.
- Employees with **undergraduate degrees** can receive credit toward postgraduate degrees such as PIU's **MBA and MA Leadership** program if you have 3 years of work experience.
- Employees with **postgraduate degrees** can receive credit into PIU's **PhD Leadership** program.
- Every employee is eligible to receive a **\$500 scholarship** regardless of which degree you enroll in.
- PIU's fees are exceptionally affordable - about **\$12,000 per year**; most people would qualify for Pell grants, tuition reimbursement, etc., bringing the actual out of pocket expenses down to a trivial amount.
- The curriculum is **state-of-the-art** and comparable to elite universities.
- Every degree has been designed based on the **US Bureau of Labor Statistics** data on skills likely to be in demand over the next decade.
- PIU degrees are future-focused and prepare graduates for 21st century skills gaps.
 - Every degree program offers **international study** opportunities;

