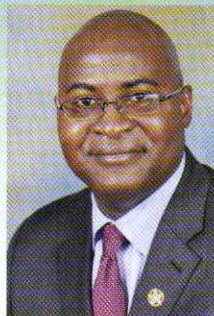


BSO and Nova Southeastern Public Safety Partnership: Bridging Theory and Practice

By Leslie Taylor, Ph.D.



community control and communications dispatch – function as a “research lab” for joint collaboration. Projects have been undertaken or are underway in reducing juvenile delinquency, diverting mentally ill detainees to treatment centers, as well as researching stress in police, detention officers and communication dispatchers.

Over the years, Broward Sheriff’s Office has enjoyed a long and beneficial partnership with Nova Southeastern University. The scope of the partnership has increased from its initial goal of providing educational and professional development for employees to a more research-oriented and community-based effort.

The partnership involves enrolling agency employees in certificate and degree programs, educating managers in the Executive Leadership Program (ELP) and hosting command-level summits. Supervised by a board of advisors, the partnership has undertaken conferences and symposia to disseminate information to the community. Researchers and practitioners are writing grants to fund projects in areas such as community policing, domestic violence, homeland security, juvenile justice and jail management.

This collaboration is unlike other partnerships in the criminal-justice field that are established to target a specific problem area because NSA is involved in a multitude of joint initiatives to solve problems that affect both the agency and the community. The agency’s specialty areas – law enforcement, detention, fire rescue,

Research and collaboration undertaken within these areas have directly benefitted the community and improved best practices within the agency.

The work performed by public-safety agencies generally touches the lives of every resident in the communities they serve. In this partnership, the community benefits from the education and training of first responders and public-safety employees. Furthermore, the community’s quality of life is improved when real-life and practical solutions are identified to address complex issues.

Agencies such as the BSO are being required to incorporate evidence-based practices in the delivery of services, and research is necessary to fulfill such requirements. One of the partnership’s successes that demonstrates how dramatic change can be brought about is the establishment of “Freedom House,” an initiative that will divert about 400 individuals with mental illness and co-occurring disorders to a treatment facility annually.

Jails have become the largest providers of mental health care, creating a heavy financial burden on agencies and their communities. This diversion program – a direct result of collaborative re-

search with NSU and Henderson Mental Health Center – provides treatment options in a safe house for offenders, instead of in jail. The program is rehabilitative, cost effective and provides tangible impact on the operations of the Broward jail, residents in the program and the overall community.

The partnership’s main goal is to find creative solutions for problems within the agency and in the community through research and joint initiatives. We are excited about the immense contribution, the added value and the benefits of this collaboration in improving the quality of life for public-safety employees and the community in general.

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Florida Sheriffs Association Calendar of Events 2011



- Executive Leadership Conference for Law Enforcement, Corrections & Administrative Personnel (formerly Administrative Management and Jail Conference), May 9-12, 2011, PGA National Resort & Spa, Palm Beach Gardens, FL

- FSA Summer Conference, July 31-August 3, 2011, Hilton Daytona Beach Oceanfront Resort, Daytona Beach, FL

Find more information on these and other training opportunities through our website: www.flsheriffs.org (Training calendar and Conference links).