

**The Bill Blackwood  
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**Mentoring Our Own: An Analysis of a Promotion-Based Mentoring  
Program Within the Travis County Sheriff's Office**

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**An Administrative Research Paper  
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**by  
Lieutenant Arthur G. Cardenas**

**Travis County Sheriff's Office  
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## **ABSTRACT**

The development and maintenance of diverse workforces continues to be a major challenge for major corporations and organizational leaders. To this end many of the nation's corporations are utilizing systems geared towards employee development and advancement. One such system is the mentoring program. Law enforcement agencies share the same challenges as corporate organizations and the need for professional development systems, such as mentoring programs, is important.

In order to analyze the potential benefits that a promotion-based mentoring program might have on a law enforcement agency, a study was conducted within a major central Texas sheriffs department. The study included a survey of law enforcement officers within this agency to determine whether or not a promotion-based mentoring program would be accepted and utilized. In addition a promotion-based mentoring program was developed and implemented and the program was examined to determine if it had any impact on this department's promotional process.

Results of the survey indicated that a majority of the law enforcement officers, who participated in this study, would accept and utilize a promotion-based mentoring program. Likewise, the implemented mentoring program did have a positive impact on the department's promotional process.

It is concluded that law enforcement agencies, similar to the one which was the focus of this study, would be positively impacted by the implementation and utilization of a promotion based mentoring program and law enforcement officers within these agencies would greatly benefit from such programs.

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## **Introduction**

The recruitment and retention of qualified employees continues to be a major priority among the nation's corporations. Closely aligned with this is the challenge to develop and maintain a diverse workforce. This can be attributed to the fact that the demographics of the nation are changing. According to an article published in a "Career Exposure" website (1994), statistics compiled by the National Multicultural Institute indicate that women will have already comprised approximately 47% of the nation's workforce by the year 2000. This same study also revealed statistics which indicate that over the next 20 years the U.S. population will grow by 42 million. Hispanics will account for 47% of the growth, Blacks 22%, Asians 18%, and Whites 13%. Yet another recent survey conducted by the Higher Education Forum and the National Alliance of Business (2000) showed that 81% of adults think that it is important to have employees of different races, cultures, and backgrounds in the workplace. The management of diversity can therefore be understood as corporate America's reaction to rapid cultural and sociological changes (Becker, Erviti, Shelley, 1997). To this end many major corporations have developed and are utilizing diversity training programs. While diversity-training programs are indeed valuable, other systems are still necessary in order to assist every employee in their professional development and advancement. With this interest in mind, many corporations have developed and implemented mentoring programs. Many organizational leaders who are concerned with employee development and diversity management realize this and are utilizing mentoring processes to achieve these goals.

Such programs generally include guiding, counseling, tutoring and exposing

employees to training positions and assignments that allows for the formation and development of management skills. Law enforcement agencies are no different from corporate organizations. As with corporate organizations, law enforcement agencies also seek to recruit and retain competent employees and to manage diversity within their ranks.

The question arises as to whether or not the implementation of a promotion-based mentoring program, where none exists, would be accepted and, more importantly, utilized by officers who aspire to hold positions of rank within their respective agency. A follow up question would be whether a formal mentoring program would actually help officers during the promotional process. To better understand this complex issue, a study regarding the implementation of a promotion-based mentoring program will be conducted within one central Texas law enforcement agency. The agency chosen for this study will be the Travis County Sheriff's Office.

The Travis County Sheriff's Office encompasses Austin, the State capitol, and the views expressed by citizens and government officials alike are considered by many to be liberal. The agency is responsible for the incarceration of persons arrested in the county as well as for providing law enforcement services in the unincorporated areas of the county. The population served by the agency is approximately 100,000 citizens. The agency operates under an Equal Employment Opportunity Plan (EEOP) which is submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice and which conforms to the standards delineated in the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations. The Sheriff comments (M. Frasier, equal employment opportunity plan, January 20,2000) that the agency is committed to addressing the underutilization of minorities in several areas of its workforce based on

Travis County's Community Labor Statistics.

The agency is divided into three operational bureaus. A corrections bureau, a support services bureau, and a law enforcement bureau. For purposes of this study the trends in the agency's law enforcement bureau will be focused on. Reasons for diversity trends within the law enforcement bureau's management corps have never been examined. Moreover, while this is not the main focus of this study, the issue will be discussed. The main focus of this study will be the analysis of the implementation of a promotion-based mentoring program within the department's law enforcement bureau.

It is hypothesized that officers assigned to the law enforcement bureau of the Travis County Sheriff's Office will accept and utilize a promotion-based mentoring program. The program will be designed to mentor potential leaders of the agency, which will hopefully in turn serve to increase diversity within the management ranks of this bureau. To accomplish this study a questionnaire will be developed and distributed to all officers assigned to the department's law enforcement bureau. A small portion of the questionnaire will attempt to investigate officers' perceptions regarding the diversity issues within the management structure of the department's law enforcement bureau. Another portion of the questionnaire will attempt to investigate whether or not the agency's law enforcement officers believe that a formal mentoring program would be beneficial to an officer going through the promotional process. The study will also try to determine whether the officers assigned to the law enforcement bureau would accept and utilize such a mentoring program as a means in which to achieve positions of rank. In addition, this study will also include the formation and implementation of a formal promotion based mentoring program which will be analyzed to determine if it has any

effect (positive or negative) in future promotions of officers participating in the program.

It is hypothesized that the mentoring program, that will be developed and implemented as a result of this study, will serve to enhance the overall diversity of the Travis County Sheriff's Office by providing needed guidance, counsel, and tutoring to all officers who seek to promote to positions of rank. It is hoped that the results of this study will be utilized by other similarly structured law enforcement agencies throughout the state who are challenged with issues involving the recruitment/retention of competent employees and the management of diversity within their workforce.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

The practice of mentoring, and the principles associated with it, can be examined by studying ancient works of literature. Kent (2000) in an article published on a Learning Resource Center website, states that, according to the Chinese Book of History (6th century BC), "those who seek mentoring will rule the great expanse of heaven." In Hebrew scriptures the relationship between Moses and Joshua is chronicled in the early books of the Old Testament. Moses' appointment of Joshua as general of the Israelite army prepared Joshua to eventually assume the role of leader of the entire nation of Israel as they entered the promised land. Christian scriptures also depict mentoring relationships. Probably the most significant being the relationship between Jesus and his disciples as he prepared them to carry on his ministerial work.

Kapur (1997) in an article written for Indian Express Newspapers, refers to the relationship held between Telemachus and Mentor as chronicled in Homer's *Odyssey*. In the eighth century BC, the Greek writer Homer wrote an epic poem describing Odysseus' adventures during his 10-year voyage home after the Trojan War. While he was gone he

entrusted the care and education of his beloved son, Telemachus, to his faithful friend Mentor. Almost three thousand years later that man's name has come to mean a wise and trusted counselor. The term mentoring is used to describe the dynamics shared between a more experienced person guiding a less experienced person who is pursuing a specific goal. Other similar terms are role model, counselor, advisor, coach, and teacher.

Popular mentoring relationships throughout history have been those shared by Plato and Socrates, Sigmund Freud and Karl Jung, General Patton and General Eisenhower.

Society's traditional view of mentoring is that of a process (formal and informal) whereby an older more experienced person helps and guides a younger person by providing career guidance and counseling; thus enhancing not only that person's career but also his/her life (Shea, 1992). According to Carruthers (1993) most interpretations regarding the practice of mentoring fall into one of two categories:

1. Those which stress the professional development of the mentee only;
2. Those which emphasize both the professional and personal development of the mentee.

While mentoring is traditionally associated with a principle used in the industry/corporation culture, it has also historically been a practice used within the education culture, the health services culture, and within community based organizations.

In the education culture, the Teaching and Learning Project (also known as the Tasmanian Project), which was conducted between 1988-1989, was the basis and foundation for the introduction and implementation of mentoring systems for not only probationary teachers but also for more experienced teachers preparing for principal positions (McCann, Rutherford, 1993). This project enabled educators to come together

to share ideas regarding their teaching practices, allowed secondary and primary teachers to network, and allowed principals from other school districts to interact with each other.

In regards to the health services culture, Kitchin (1993) describes a mentoring style known as preceptorship, which is widely used in the nursing profession. This style of mentoring attempts to help recently graduated nursing students as they make the transition from the classroom to the hospital floor. The preceptorship method seeks to provide real life learning experiences by pairing up senior clinical nurses with newly graduated nurses.

Mentoring programs have also been utilized within community based organizations such as the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts of America, Police Athletic Leagues, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, and National 4-H Councils. In these settings mentors offer the benefits of their knowledge, experience, concern, and wisdom to younger citizens (Galbraith, Cohen 1995).

Large business corporations, especially those that are based in America, are utilizing the principles of mentoring on a more frequent basis. Corporations typically utilize these programs as tools for employee retention, leadership development, and diversity management. Crosby (1999) states that in the corporate world, mentoring programs have become as common as annual reports and are credited with helping to bridge gaps between minority employees and managers. The mentoring process is also considered as one of the best ways to help an employee fulfill his or her potential within an organization (Jensen, 2000). Faced with budget cuts, many corporations utilize mentoring programs as a cost-effective way in which to develop future leaders. Kent (2000), in an article published on a Learning Resource Center website, comments that

mentoring programs serve to preserve "institutional memory" by sharing information and experience from one to another. Given the concerns of employee recruitment and retention, corporate leaders are realizing that on-the-job training and self-development are essential elements to ensure success within the organization (Sullivan, Harper, 1996). Sullivan and Harper also comment that every leader in an organization must play a role in the development of subordinates. It is further explained that in order to give structure to these two elements (on-the-job training and self-development) a leader must utilize counseling, coaching, and mentoring principles.

Along with leadership development, mentoring programs are increasingly being utilized by corporations as tools for diversity management. This is in addition to traditional training in diversity issues. According to an article produced by Management Mentors (2000), the need for mentoring programs is especially acute for minority employees in the corporate world. The article also explains that minority employees (women and people of color) consider mentoring as powerful tools with which to be empowered. In fact, minority employees view mentoring as a crucial strategy which aids in personal development and advancement. In writing about a minority mentoring program conducted by Inclusion Systems Inc., Matheny (1998) commented that such programs act as a dual benefit strategy. The mentor gets insight into the issues affecting minorities and thus both parties benefit from the arrangement. Ernst (2000) cites a 1999 Catalyst study where 47% of the 1,700 female minority executives surveyed said that not having an influential mentor created a barrier for them.

In speaking of issues regarding diversity management, one must not overlook the perception held by minority employees, which is commonly referred to as the glass

ceiling. The perception held is that upper management positions are reserved for white males. Reery (1993) states that the glass ceiling, although an invisible barrier, does exist and suggest that a way of eliminating it lies in realizing that a flaw exists in the entire process of mentoring rather than in conscious racism or sexism. Reery also comments that in order for diversity management to succeed, mentoring must be taken out of the hands of individual executives and made part of a carefully planned program that accomplishes the long term goal. Reery is also quick to explain that minority-mentoring programs should not be viewed as affirmative action programs where standards are lowered to meet specific numerical goals. Rather, the minority mentees should be selected because of their leadership potential.

Those who study economic patterns realize that population growth is the key to economic growth. Overholser (2000) makes an editorial comment that immigration is the main factor affecting the nation's population growth. This immigration trend brings with it racial diversity, which in turn sparks economic vitality. It is of little wonder that corporate leaders are more and more utilizing mentoring programs as tools for diversity management.

As has been discussed, the principles associated with mentoring have been valuable tools for developing leadership and managing diversity within the education, health services, and corporate cultures. Law enforcement agencies are faced with these same challenges (employee retention, leadership development, and diversity management). While many opportunities are available for law enforcement officers there is still much work to be done in regards to these challenges.. Mentoring programs would greatly assist in this endeavor. Issues regarding affirmative action and consent decrees

have resulted in mandatory cultural diversity training for a majority of the nation's law enforcement agencies. In addition, in some jurisdictions the courts have imposed certain rules which govern the hiring and promotion of minority officers. Notwithstanding, many minority law enforcement officers still find it difficult to promote.

Anderson (1995) in an article published on a CNN website comments that members of the National Black Police Association have publicly stated that white males still dominate the law enforcement profession. The same article quotes a Cincinnati, Ohio civilian review committee's statement that "the police have years of hard work ahead to erase racial and gender bias." Conversely, Shiner (1996) states that individuals should be given equal opportunity in hiring and promotions but that hiring or promoting an individual solely because they are part of a certain gender or minority class should be avoided. Shiner's research also reveals that there is a very real need, especially within small departments, to maintain staffing levels with personnel who are representative of the communities they serve. In addition, Shiner's data demonstrates the importance of diversity management within law enforcement agencies.

Strandberg (2000) comments that according to the executive director of the Women and Policing Institute, women are still disproportionately screened out in the selection process for advancement in some agencies. Strandberg also indicates that as a remedy to this trend active recruitment and retention efforts, such as mentoring, must be implemented. According to Davis (1994) a large percentage of minorities remain in entry-level positions during their entire careers as law enforcement officers. Davis cites hostility from within agencies dominated by white males as being a major obstacle for minorities aspiring to promote to executive positions within their agencies. Davis

recommends the utilization of mentoring groups and organized support groups as methods in which to change these trends.

In a report issued by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (1998) it is discussed that women officers may face gender discrimination and a glass ceiling that inhibits promotion. This same report, compiled from a survey of this organization's members, states that there are very few mentoring programs for women officers and such programs would be beneficial.

Finally, Whetstone (1998) comments that prejudice and discrimination still exist in police departments though it is not perceived as a matter of concern to whites. Whetstone explains that the glass ceiling exists for African-Americans, perhaps more dramatically than for females. Whetstone suggests that a formalized promotion-based mentoring program (one-on-one) may be effective in identifying and encouraging officers with leadership potential, including minority and female officers.

While mentoring has traditionally been considered as an effective tool for leadership development and diversity management, there are still some disadvantages which can occur if the process is not carefully thought out. Carruthers (1993) explains that if the mentoring program is not carefully monitored then several situations can occur which can diminish the relationship. They are described as elitism, the Matthew effect, the Salieri phenomena, jealousy, and perceived threat. Elitism occurs when either the mentor or mentee become jealous when they see their colleagues being recognized professionally. The Matthew effect (taken from the Gospel of Matthew 25:29) can occur when gifted mentees find mentors more easily than less gifted or minority mentees. The Salieri phenomena (based on the story of the court composer Salieri who kept the genius

of Mozart from public recognition) can occur when a mentor prevents the work of the mentee from receiving public recognition. The jealousy disadvantage (also referred to as spouse jealousy) can occur in some incidents where a cross-gender relationship has been established. Spouses (of either the mentor or mentee) can become jealous because of the cross-gender mentoring link. The perceived threat disadvantage can occur if mentors become jealous of gifted mentees and consider them as being professional threats.

Shea (1992) suggests that disadvantages occur during the mentoring process when the mentor reverts to the following unproductive behaviors - criticism, giving too much advice, and rescuing mentees from their own folly. Shea explains that instead of these behaviors, the mentor should utilize objective and creative approaches to encourage beneficial change. Such approaches would include listening more and allowing the mentee to fail occasionally as a method by which to teach. Jensen (2000) explains that a disadvantage associated with mentoring programs occurs when a chosen mentee becomes known as the "chosen one" by other members of the organization. If not remedied this can create resentment which can compromise the effectiveness of the organization. Crosby (1999) also suggests that mentoring programs can be less than advantageous for the organization when it causes morale problems among those not chosen as mentees. Careful planning and monitoring is stressed.

Loden and Rosener (1991) recommend that informal coaching and tutoring programs be substituted for mentoring programs. They explain that in organizations that do not value diversity, mentoring only helps to preserve the status quo of the dominant group and perpetuate the homogenous ideal. Loden and Rosener feel that coaching and tutoring programs are more beneficial in that they tap the skills of employees at all levels

and can utilize the expertise and talents of many.

The review of literature formed a basis for this study and was used as a foundation for the development and implementation of the promotion-based mentoring program which was utilized.

## **METHODOLOGY**

As was discussed in the introductory portion of this study, the Travis County Sheriff's Office currently operates under an equal employment opportunity plan. The department recognizes that minorities are underutilized in several areas of the TCSO workforce (based on 1999 Community Labor Statistics) and as was previously discussed the department is committed to addressing and correcting this trend. Taking this into consideration, along with the material and information gathered through the literature review, an analysis of the implementation of a promotion-based mentoring program within the department's law enforcement bureau was conducted. Factors influencing this study were as follows:

- The department has never had a formal large scale mentoring program in place.
- While mentoring programs are often used for career development/advancement they are also utilized as tools for managing diversity.

To bring focus to this study the following research questions were examined and applied to the law enforcement bureau of the department:

- Will officers accept and utilize a promotion based mentoring program?
- Will the mentoring program have an impact (positive or negative) on the outcome of bureau's promotional process?
- Will the mentoring program have any future effect on the diversity makeup within the

bureau's supervisory ranks?

It is hypothesized that the department's law enforcement officer's will accept and utilize a promotion-based mentoring program and that this program will serve to enhance the overall diversity of the bureau's supervisory ranks by providing all program participants with guidance, counsel, and tutoring which will assist in their promotional goals.

The methodology followed while conducting this study consisted of three phases:

1. An analysis of workforce utilization within the department's law enforcement bureau.
2. An analysis of officers' responses to a survey/questionnaire pertinent to the study topic.
3. The development and implementation of the mentoring program.

The first phase consisted of analyzing the workforce utilization of the department's law enforcement bureau (including the supervisory staff). This was accomplished through a review and analysis of the department's personnel records from the year 2001.

The second phase utilized a written questionnaire for the purposes of obtaining data regarding officers' willingness to accept and participate in a promotion-based mentoring program. In addition, the questionnaire also sought to obtain data regarding officer's perceptions as to why minority officers were underutilized within the supervisory corps of the bureau.

The third phase consisted of the development and implementation of a promotion based mentoring program within the department's law enforcement bureau. This phase also included tracking the effectiveness of the program both as a means of career advancement and as a tool for diversity management.

The department's law enforcement bureau has a program in place whereby officers holding the rank of senior deputy are assigned to various sections of the Criminal Investigation Division (Auto Theft, Environmental Crimes, Narcotics). While in this assignment officers receive on-the-job training pertaining to criminal case investigations and preparation. This program does adhere to the theories associated with mentoring and it is highly beneficial for the officers chosen for the assignment. The only negative aspect, in regards to this program, is that due to budgetary restraints and staffing concerns only a limited number of officers can be assigned to this program.

In addition, the department has a supervisory course which is mandated for all officers who have been recently promoted. This course, two weeks in duration, provides newly promoted officers with basic supervisory skills and includes topics such as diversity management, critical incident stress management, supervisory ethics, and team building. Once again, while extremely valuable and informative, this course is designed for newly promoted officers and is short in relation to long term mentoring.

While this mentoring program was made available to all officers of the law enforcement bureau, the officers specifically targeted were those holding the rank of senior deputy and who expressed interest in participating in the department's promotional process for the rank of detective. Even though the rank of detective is not considered as a supervisory rank within the department's chain of command, it is nonetheless a position of rank which must be held before promoting to the rank of sergeant. Officers holding the rank of detective are investigators who are assigned criminal cases. As per departmental policy, officers holding the grade of senior deputy for at least two years are eligible to participate in the promotional process for the rank of detective. The same

holds true for officers in the rank of detective (striving to promote to the rank of sergeant) and sergeant (striving to promote to the rank of lieutenant). The ranks of captain and major are administrative appointments and there is currently no promotional process associated with these ranks. The department's promotional process includes a written examination and an oral review board.

A crucial aspect of this pilot program is the recruitment of supervisors (sergeants, lieutenants, and captains) to act as mentors. Recruitment of mentors was achieved through personal contact/solicitation of supervisors possessing at least two years of supervisory experience. Fifteen supervisors (sergeants, lieutenants, and captains) served as mentors for this pilot program.

Officers of the law enforcement bureau were given notice of the implementation of this mentoring program (via departmental e-mail and posted notices) in June 2001 in preparation for the department's promotional process in June 2002. . This provided a one- year period in which to implement the program and study the impact. Mentees were then paired (at random) with mentors for the one- year period. Initially, 25 officers (14 White males, 2 White females, 2 Black males, 6 Hispanic males, and 1 Hispanic female) responded to the notice and were paired with supervisors to begin the mentoring process. Included among these 25 was 1 officer who was already in the rank of detective who was seeking to promote to the rank of sergeant. This detective participated in the mentoring program for only a short period and took part in the 2001 promotional process for the rank of sergeant. Two officers (White males) participated in the program after implementation had begun and towards the completion of the process. These two officers where nonetheless paired up with a supervisor for the duration of their involvement in the

program.

Mentors were given simple instructions:

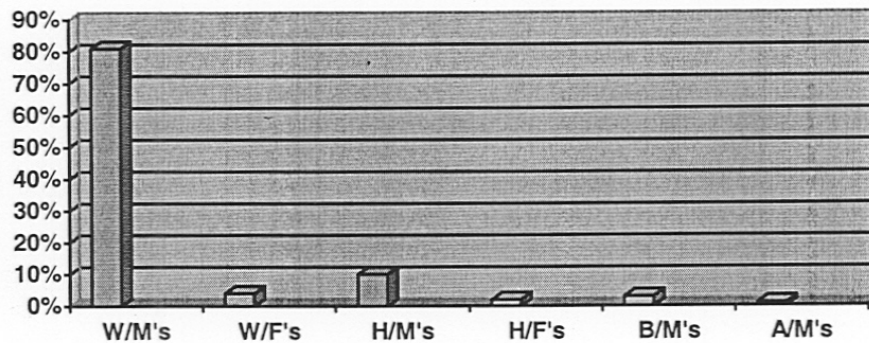
- Motivate the mentees to maintain good study habits.
- Expose the mentees to real life supervisory scenarios and critique reactions to the scenarios
- Cultivate professional mentor/mentee relationships.

As part of the overall mentoring process, practice examinations were prepared and administered to those participating in the program. These examinations were structured in a similar format as the detective written examination which is administered as part of the promotional process. Topics covered included departmental rules/regulations, civil service rules/regulations, Texas penal code, Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, and the Texas Family Code. In addition, printed supervisory scenarios were distributed to those participating in the mentoring program. The mentees were instructed to respond (in writing) to these scenarios and then return them to their mentors for critique. Likewise, mentees were provided with practical skills relating to performance before an oral review board (dressing appropriately, responding to questions professionally and body language during the interview).

## **FINDINGS**

According to the department's 2001 personnel records, the Travis County Sheriff's Office law enforcement bureau consists of 223 sworn officers including supervisory staff. The bureau employs 180 White Males (81% of workforce), 9 White Females (4% of workforce), 22 Hispanic Males (10% of workforce), 4 Hispanic Females (2% of workforce), 7 Black Males (3% of workforce), and 1 Asian Male (less than 1 % of

workforce). The 2001 workforce breakdown for the Travis County Sheriff's Office law enforcement bureau is presented in Figure 1.



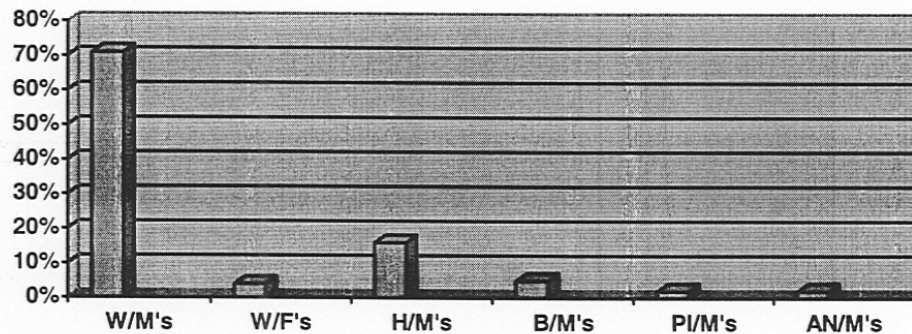
**Figure 1.** Year 2001 workforce breakdown for TCSO law enforcement bureau.

According to the department's 2001 personnel records, the law enforcement bureau's supervisory staff is a structured chain of command which consists of 1 major, 2 captains, 8 lieutenants, and 23 sergeants. Of these 34 supervisory positions 5 are occupied by minority officers (1 Hispanic Male captain, 1 White Female lieutenant, 1 Hispanic Male lieutenant, and 2 Hispanic Male sergeants). In other words, minority officers comprise approximately 15% of the supervisory staff in the law enforcement bureau.

As was discussed in the methodology section of this study, an internal questionnaire was utilized and disseminated to the 223 members of the department's law enforcement bureau (including supervisory staff). The questionnaire was distributed internally to the law enforcement bureau's 223 sworn officers. Those participating in the survey were instructed to keep their identities anonymous and were assured that their answers would be used solely for analysis in this study. The questionnaire sought to examine officers' willingness to utilize and participate in a promotion-based mentoring program. In addition, the questionnaire sought to examine officers' perceptions regarding diversity

issues within the bureau's supervisory corps.

Of the 223 questionnaires handed out, a total of 82 were returned. 58 were returned by White male officers (71%), 3 were returned by White female officers (4%), 13 were returned by Hispanic male officers (16%), and 4 were returned by Black male officers (5%). Two questionnaires were returned by officers who described themselves as Pacific Islander males (2%) and 2 questionnaires were returned by officers who described themselves as American Native males (2%). The ethnic composition of the officers who responded to this questionnaire is presented in Figure 2.



**Figure2:** Ethnic composition of officers who responded to the questionnaire.

An analysis of those questionnaires which were returned reflect that 79% of those responding would utilize and participate in a promotion-based mentoring program. Once again, this includes both supervisors and line officers.

Officers' perceptions regarding diversity issues within the department's supervisory ranks were varied and interesting. Forty-one percent of white male officers responding to the questionnaire cited certain social norms and practices (good -ole boy system, glass ceiling, demographic makeup, and apathy among minority officers) as being reasons why more minorities were not represented in the supervisory ranks. 36 % of minority officers responding to the questionnaire (Black, Hispanic, and females) also cited some of these

same social norms and practices as being mitigating factors regarding the lack of minority representation within the bureau's supervisory ranks.

A mentor/tutor model was utilized for this pilot program. This model combined the guidance/counseling components associated with traditional mentoring along with tutorial components which should be beneficial for the officers preparing for the Travis County Sheriff's Office promotional process (which includes a written examination and oral review board). The pilot mentoring program was implemented in June 2001 in preparation for the Travis County Sheriff's Office promotional process scheduled to occur in June 2002. A total of 25 officers participated in this pilot mentoring process. Of these 25, 40% were minority officers. Of these 25, 14 officers took part in the department's 2002 promotional process for the ranks of detective and sergeant. The remaining 11 officers have opted to participate in the mentoring program for an additional year before taking part in the promotional process. Of those 14 officers participating in the 2002 promotional process, 28% were minority officers. Six officers ranked among the top 10 on the promotional eligibility list for the rank of detective. Of these 6 participants, 33% were minority officers (Hispanic and Black).

The detective (White male) who participated in the mentoring program (and who took part in the 2001 promotional process for the rank of sergeant) was promoted in May 2002 as is currently holding the rank of sergeant in the patrol division.

## **DISCUSSION/CONCLUSIONS**

The analysis of the implementation of a promotion-based mentoring program was the focal point of this study. It is understood that generally mentoring programs are utilized by organizations as a means of career development and advancement. However,

mentoring programs can also be utilized as tools for the management of diversity. The Travis County Sheriffs Office was the participating agency for this study. This agency operates under an equal employment opportunity plan and its administrators are committed to addressing issues concerning the under utilization of minorities within the agency's workforce. The agency is comprised of three bureaus (corrections, support services, and law enforcement) and for the purposes of this study the law enforcement bureau provided the survey sample. The bureau is staffed by 223 officers (including supervisors) with minority officers comprising 19% of the workforce. This bureau's supervisory corps is staffed with 34 officers with minority officers comprising 15% of the overall makeup. Notwithstanding, all 223 of the bureau's officers were surveyed and the mentoring program which was developed was made available to all of the bureau's personnel who were participating in the promotional process for the year 2002. The questions examined during this study were as follows:

- Will law enforcement officers of the Travis County Sheriffs Office accept and utilize a promotion-based mentoring program?
- Will this mentoring program prove beneficial for officers utilizing it by helping them to obtain a promotion?
- Will the mentoring program help to manage diversity within the supervisory corps of the law enforcement bureau?

The hypotheses, which were developed, are as follows:

- Law enforcement officers of the Travis County Sheriffs Office will accept and utilize a promotion-based mentoring program.
- The mentoring program will be beneficial to officers utilizing it by helping them

to obtain a promotion.

- The mentoring program will serve to increase diversity within the department's law enforcement bureau.

A review of the data compiled during this study indicates the following:

- 79% of the officers (supervisors and line staff) who responded to the internal questionnaire stated that they would participate in a mentoring program if one was implemented
- A total of 25 officers participated in this pilot mentoring program
- 1 of these 25 officers took part in the 2001 promotional process for the rank of sergeant and was promoted to the rank of sergeant in May 2002
- 13 of these 25 officers took part in the 2002 promotional process for the rank of detective.
- Of the 25 officers who participated in the pilot mentoring program, 40% were minority officers (female, Hispanic, and Black)
- Of the 14 officers who participated in the pilot mentoring program (and took part in the department's 2002 promotional process), 28% were minority officers (female, Hispanic and Black).
- 6 of the top 10 officers on the 2002 eligibility list for the rank of detective were those who took part in the mentoring program. 33% of these 6 participants were minority officers (Hispanic and Black).

Based on this data, the conclusion can be made that officers within the law enforcement bureau of the Travis County Sheriff's Office have readily accepted and are utilizing the mentoring program. It can also be concluded that this pilot mentoring

program was beneficial to the participants in that it has already helped one officer receive a promotion to the rank of sergeant. Additionally, as was stated above, 6 officers who participated in this mentoring program are currently ranked in the top 10 on the promotional eligibility list for the rank of detective and are currently awaiting promotion to that rank.

Based on data that was compiled it is difficult to determine at this time whether or not this mentoring program has served to increase diversity within the law enforcement bureau of the Travis County Sheriff's Office. While the data suggests that minority representation in the supervisory ranks will not be affected by this pilot program (at least for the year 2002), the adage "time will tell" seems to be appropriate. It is hoped that as the mentoring program continues and is further developed, more minority officers will continue to accept and utilize this program and thereby achieve their promotional goals. Despite this, the findings that were garnered tended to support the hypothesis which was developed as part of this study.

The implementation of this mentoring program proved to be challenging and several factors did cause a hindrance. As was discussed earlier, the program mentors were recruited through personal contact. Initially, those mentors who were recruited expressed great excitement and were enthusiastic about being part of this program. However, a major complaint expressed by some of the officers being mentored was that their assigned mentors were not spending enough time preparing them for the promotional process. To remedy this the mentors were once again contacted and asked to re-evaluate their willingness to participate in this program. This tactic proved to be beneficial and the mentor/mentee was reestablished. Another added element, which

might serve to increase the effectiveness of the program for the future, would be to offer formal training to supervisors in relation to mentoring. Furthermore, more group related activities would serve to alleviate this problem as well. In other words, group study sessions, mock oral boards, and more practice examinations would no doubt benefit the mentee while at the same time taking some of the burden from the supervisors who were acting as mentors.

Another factor which caused a hindrance during this study was that concerning communication. Even though all officers were notified of this program (by departmental e-mail, posted notices, and word of mouth) several claimed that they did not know that the program was in effect. In fact, two months before the formal promotional process was scheduled to begin several anonymous officers attempted to file a departmental grievance regarding this issue. The grievance focused on the summation that the officers who had been participating in the mentoring process (since its inception in June 2001) had an unfair advantage over them. This grievance was quickly dismissed when it was proved that notices of the mentoring program had been distributed to all officers of the department and that the program was available to all officers of the law enforcement bureau. To remedy this in the future notices will be posted more vastly, more personal contacts will be made, and first line supervisors will be contacted in person so that they can recruit from their own commands.

This study is relevant to the law enforcement field in that it provides not only a model for a promotion-based mentoring program but it also explains how the program was developed and implemented. All law enforcement agencies that strive to work on leadership development, while at the same time striving for diversity management, will

be effected by this study.

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