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# Recognizing Diversity: It's About Doing the Right Thing

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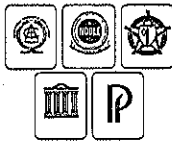
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**The Community Policing Consortium** comprises five of the leading policing organizations in the United States: the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, the National Sheriffs' Association, the Police Executive Research Forum, and the Police Foundation. The Consortium is funded by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.

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# Recognizing Diversity: It's About Doing the Right Thing

**I** believe a progressive and successful chief executive officer in a law enforcement agency should seek to obtain human diversity within the agency. Human diversity goes beyond race. It includes the full range of diversity in our society. The dif-

ferences in people may be articulated by race, religion, age, gender, disability, etc. The issue of how to diversify the work force and why we want human diversity in the workplace is still a controversial one. I think that is unfortunate because I believe diversity is an important factor in a highly effective work environment. Human diversity is promoted not because it is politically correct, not because it looks good, not to satisfy our minority constituency; it is promoted because it is the right thing to do.

An organization made up of a diverse group of individuals will make better decisions and therefore will become a more effective organization. Human diversity is good business in law enforcement and other industries. In a public-sector industry such as ours, we should lead the way in showing other industries how effective diverse organizations can and should be. The more diverse your organization, the better your decision-making process. Individuals with different backgrounds, perspectives, knowledge, skills and experience improve the quality of decision making in an organization.

The chief's role is to provide strong leadership

in the area of diversity. This means holding people accountable and responsible for diversity in hiring, assignments and promotion. Additionally, the chief should mandate diversity training for all employees and provide updated in-service training on this topic every three to five years. Lastly, the chief

and should articulate the inappropriate behavior along with the conduct expected by management. The supervisor should identify all appropriate agency documents that were violated by this demonstration of prejudice. These documents may include the agency's mission statement, val-

ues, organizational goals and objectives, policies, procedures, rules and regulations. Progressive discipline should be practiced; however, one must always consider the seriousness of the offense to determine the appropriate place to start on the progressive discipline continuum.

To maintain an environment free of prejudice, I believe two fundamental things must be accomplished. First, the behavior expectations of employees must be communicated to all. Second, when there is a breach of conduct the response from management must be swift and sure. If there is one thing all managers must be keenly aware of it is that the most common criticism from our



PHOTO BY BOBBY FOWLER

"An organization made up of a diverse group of individuals will make better decisions and therefore will become a more effective organization." Pictured are Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department deputies.

staff concerns our inability to deal with problem employees. Our philosophy in this area should be the same as it is for community policing; the key is prevention.

should ensure that the organizational policies, procedures, rules and regulations reflect the organization's philosophy and practices concerning human diversity. The chief must hold employees and managers alike accountable and responsible for compliance with these mandates. This means rewarding those who support the philosophy and penalizing those who do not.

Whenever any supervisor in a law enforcement agency observes a demonstration of prejudice from one of its officers, he or she must take immediate action. Corrective measures must be immediate

and should articulate the inappropriate behavior along with the conduct expected by management. The supervisor should identify all appropriate agency documents that were violated by this demonstration of prejudice. These documents may include the agency's mission statement, val-

*By Chief Patrick Oliver*

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