USU Eastern's POST program first in state, possibly nationally, to offer broadcast classes

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USU Eastern POST graduate, Frank Tapia, now works as a Carbon County Deputy

Utah State University Eastern's Police Officer Standards and Training program is the first in the state and possibly first in the nation to offer broadcast classes to POST students.

Scott Henrie, associate professor of criminal justice at USUE, proposed the idea of offering broadcast classes at the POST administration's quarterly meeting in Salt Lake City. Eastern sponsored the summer meeting and had instructor Jason Marshall teach a five-minute criminal justice class to the participants from an IVC classroom, originating from the Price campus and broadcast it to the main Taylorsville site.

“Everyone liked the broadcast idea and believed it was the same as if students were in the actual classroom,” Henrie said.

Rural sheriffs also liked the concept because their communities could afford to give their officers more training if it could be done electronically. Travel costs for small departments becomes prohibitive with tight budgets within their departments.

Henrie immediately offered the Price POST program to students in Blanding, Utah. Five students signed up last fall and have a higher GPA than their cohorts on the Price campus, he said. The Blanding students travel to Price for a one-day critical incident team training and a tour of the Utah State Prison. They also have firearms and additional scenario-weekend training.

Monitoring the Blanding students is Lehi Lacy who works for the Blanding Police and the USU Eastern Blanding security office.

Each year Henrie takes the POST class to tour the Utah State Prison to witness firsthand what the largest correctional facilities in the state looks like. “Some of the topics learned in the prison tour are forced cell entry training as well as head-count training. We like students to see what it is like to be incarcerated.”

POST students attend classes five nights a week from 5-10:30 p.m. fall and spring semesters; 386 hours in the fall and 302 in the spring. Graduation is held in mid-April 2019.

When Henrie developed the program five years ago, he wrote the classes to fit within the USU criminal justice program and would transfer and/or count towards an associate or bachelor's degree.

The USU Eastern POST program is in its fifth year, averaging 10 students graduating in each class. He believes this year’s students encompass the most successful class with all members passing the law-core-foundation classes. These are the Special Functions Officer (SFO) classes which allows an officer to work in civil service, ordinance enforcement and animal control jobs plus the Basic Corrections Officer (BCO) classes which allows an officer to work in more “hands on jobs.”

Because the POST program gives academic training, all classes qualify for federal financial aid. Henrie says tuition and fees are $6,250 plus equipment, uniforms and other out of pocket expenses.

The classes are taught by 26 officers who specialize in different law enforcement areas plus Henrie and Marshall. He also brings in Sergeant Peter Quittner from Utah County who is a member of its bomb squad to teach his expertise in the program.

With eyes on growth, Henrie wants to introduce virtual reality into the program to help in training and theory classes. He is also working on a two-year criminal justice online degree program.

Visit Police Office Academy for details.