



# Austin Police Department

Report of Independent Evaluator - APD Training Academy

October 19, 2021

# Role of Independent Evaluator

APD Training Academy

## Objectives:

- **Independently verify implementation of the Kroll recommendations and assess whether APD is:**
  - Developing a transformational police academy that openly and honestly addresses issues of racial and gender equity.
  - Emphasizes de-escalation tactics that minimize the use of force.
  - Incorporates diverse perspectives through community partnerships.
  - Develops into a dynamic learning academy that promotes resilient officers through effective and inclusive adult learning instruction.

**Develop a Transformational, Best-in-Class Police Academy**

# Summary Assessment

144<sup>TH</sup> Cadet Class at the Halfway Point

## Positive Additions to Training

- 30 additional hours of community engagement programming.
- Two-week community orientation program (Community Connect).
- Groundwater Analysis Racial Equity training for Academy staff and cadets.
- 8-hour course on the History of Police and Race in America.
- Expanded physical fitness training.
- Community and academic input to ensure that racial equity and procedural justice are paramount considerations in all aspects of cadet training.

# Setting the Tone

144<sup>TH</sup> Cadet Class

## Pre-academy Messaging

- **The mission of the Academy is to train future APD officers to:**
  - Serve the community.
  - Treat everyone with dignity and respect.
- **Increased sensitivity to**
  - Community concerns
  - Cultural competency
  - Critical thinking
  - Adult learning
- **Cadet survey:** Most cadets (91.4%) believe their instructors have positively emphasized community engagement and community policing.

# Increased Community Engagement

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## Community Connect Project



- Provided cadets with valuable community perspectives.
- Prioritized community concerns.
- Encouraged cadets to embrace their role as guardians by meaningfully engaging with members of the Austin community.

# Increased Community Engagement

144<sup>TH</sup> Cadet Class

## Community Engagement Programming

- 37 hours of community engagement and lived experience programming.
  - Community-focused content led by community leaders and activists from a wide variety of community organizations.
  - Reinforces the importance of empathy when interacting with the diverse communities that cadets will serve as sworn officers.
- Life Anew
  - Refugee Services of Texas
  - Jail to Jobs
  - Mothers Against Drunk Driving
  - Aging Services Council of Central Texas
  - Measure Austin / Data Integrity
  - Father of Transgender Child
  - National Alliance on Mental Illness\*
  - Just Liberty\*
  - Texas Association for the Deaf\*

\* - Scheduled

# Racial Equity Training

144<sup>TH</sup> Cadet Class

## Groundwater Analysis of Racial Inequities

- Two-day workshops for all cadets and Academy staff (Joyce James Consulting LLC).
- “APD is moving towards making systemic change as evidenced by their willingness to be intentional, deliberate, transparent, and vulnerable in recognizing the long history of racism in all helping systems and by inviting the community to engage in every step of the process.”\*
- Visibility and involvement of APD leadership provides “credibility to the effort to engage APD officers, staff, and community in new and different dialogues essential for addressing racial inequities.”\*
- Feedback from cadets and APD officers have “conveyed appreciation for the community members’ stories and perspectives.”\*
- “[I]t is possible to bridge the communication gap and strengthen relationships between the community and APD.”\*

\* - Report of JJC to Office of Police Oversight

# Increased Cultural Competency / DEI Training

144<sup>TH</sup> Cadet Class

## Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

- History of Police and Race in America
- Multiculturalism and Human Relations
- Transgender / LGBTQ+ Community
- Basic Spanish Training
- Victims of Crime

## Ethical Policing

- Professionalism and Ethics
- Racial Profiling
- Professional Policing
- Sexual Harassment
- Constitutional Law



# Use of External Subject Matter Experts

144<sup>TH</sup> Cadet Class

## Co-facilitated Teaching – 144<sup>TH</sup> Cadet Class

- History of Police and Race in America
- Interacting with Transgender Individuals
- Policing and the LGBTQ+ Community
- Basic Spanish Training
- Victims of Crime
- Interacting with Individuals who are Deaf\*
- Fair and Impartial Policing\*
- Some staff are reluctant to embrace the co-facilitated teaching model. This remains an area needed for improvement.

\* - Scheduled

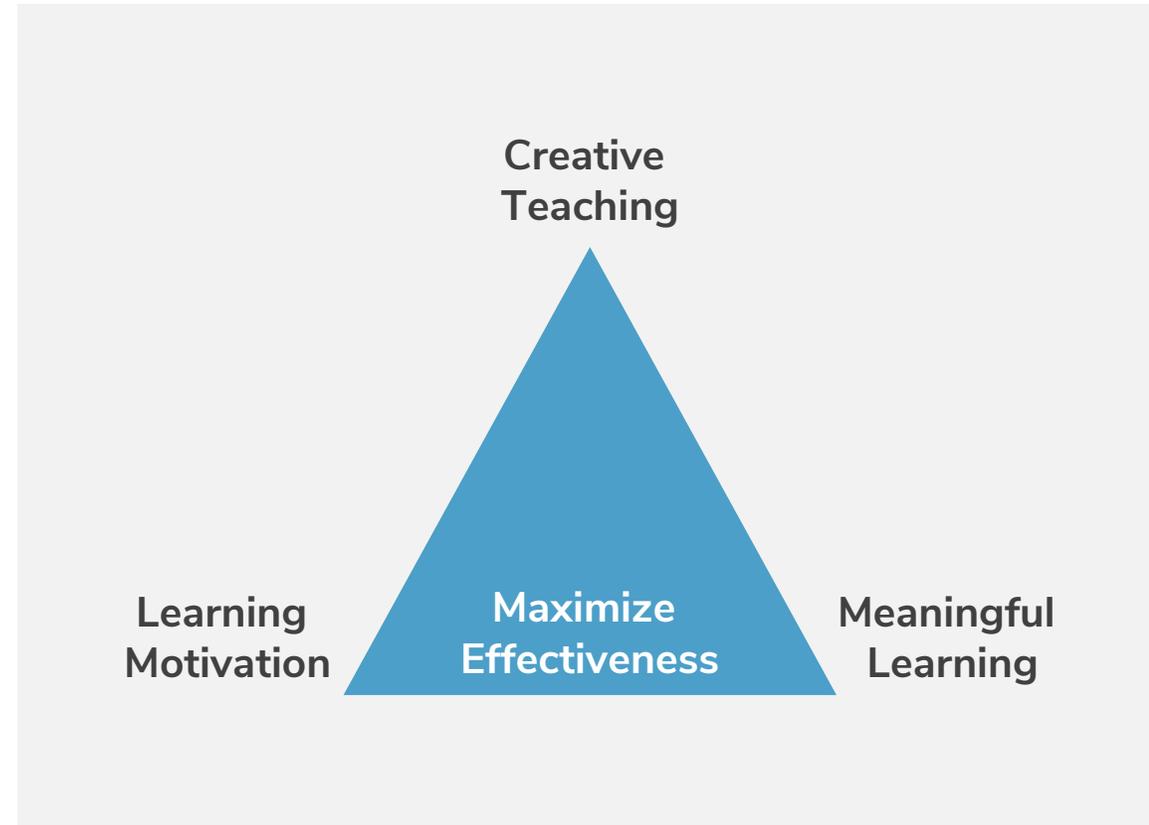


# Adult Learning Teaching Model

144<sup>TH</sup> Cadet Class

## Improved Focus on Adult / Active Learning Concepts

- Less emphasis on verbatim reading of material.
- Good use of:
  - Visual aids and handouts
  - Class discussion
  - Q & A encouraged
  - Case studies
  - Role plays
- More instructional videos are needed.



# Academy Culture

144<sup>TH</sup> Cadet Class

## Military-style Culture

- Important to:
  - Chain of Command
  - Discipline
  - Collective Accountability
- Some concerns with mixed messaging

## Combined with Academics and Adult Learning

- Classroom – based learning
- Community engagement
- Study sessions / weekly exams



# De-escalation Training

144<sup>TH</sup> Cadet Class

## De-escalation Training

- Academy instruction includes an emphasis on de-escalation training and tactics, including:
  - ICAT (Integrating Communications, Assessment, and Tactics), an evidence-based best practice designed by the Police Executive Research Forum.
  - Verbal communications as a de-escalation tactic.
  - Instructors know the material and exhibit a positive attitude toward the subject matter.
  - Kroll will continue to monitor other related training, including how the Academy teaches force options, which is scheduled in mid-October.



# Defensive Tactics / Stress-induced Training

144<sup>TH</sup> Cadet Class

## Team-building Exercises (TBX)

- Well-planned and executed.
- Created a physically and mentally stressful environment through exercise and problem solving.
- Emphasized the importance of teamwork and leadership in a positive and controlled environment.

## Defensive Tactics

- Self-defense exercise (formerly “Will-to-Win”) occurred after cadets were properly trained on defensive tactics.
- Instructors were professional, displayed highly competent self-defense skills, and effectively conveyed pertinent information.
- All cadets successfully completed.



# Health and Wellness

144<sup>TH</sup> Cadet Class

## Physical Fitness

- Academy has more than doubled physical fitness training.
- PT is separated from classroom training.

## PT Assessment Standards

- Academy staff is evaluating historic data to determine how fitness standards within the Academy relate to working as an officer in the department.

## Mindfulness and Resiliency

## Mentorship Programs



# Division Manager / Training Supervisor

## Roles and Responsibilities

### Division Manager

- Dr. Anne Kringen started on March 15, 2021.
- **Division Manager has played a crucial role in ensuring that:**
  - Kroll recommendations are implemented.
  - Lesson plans are revised, adult learning methods incorporated, and Academy Curriculum Review Committee recommendations are properly considered.
- Written clarity is needed concerning the role, responsibilities, and authority of the Division Manager to enhance the long-term sustainability of implemented reforms (Section 5.4).

### Training Supervisor

- Phil Axelrod started on August 2, 2021.
- Training Supervisor provides valuable assistance with curriculum development and standardization of lesson plans and course materials.

# Increased Community Input

Curriculum and Video Review Committees

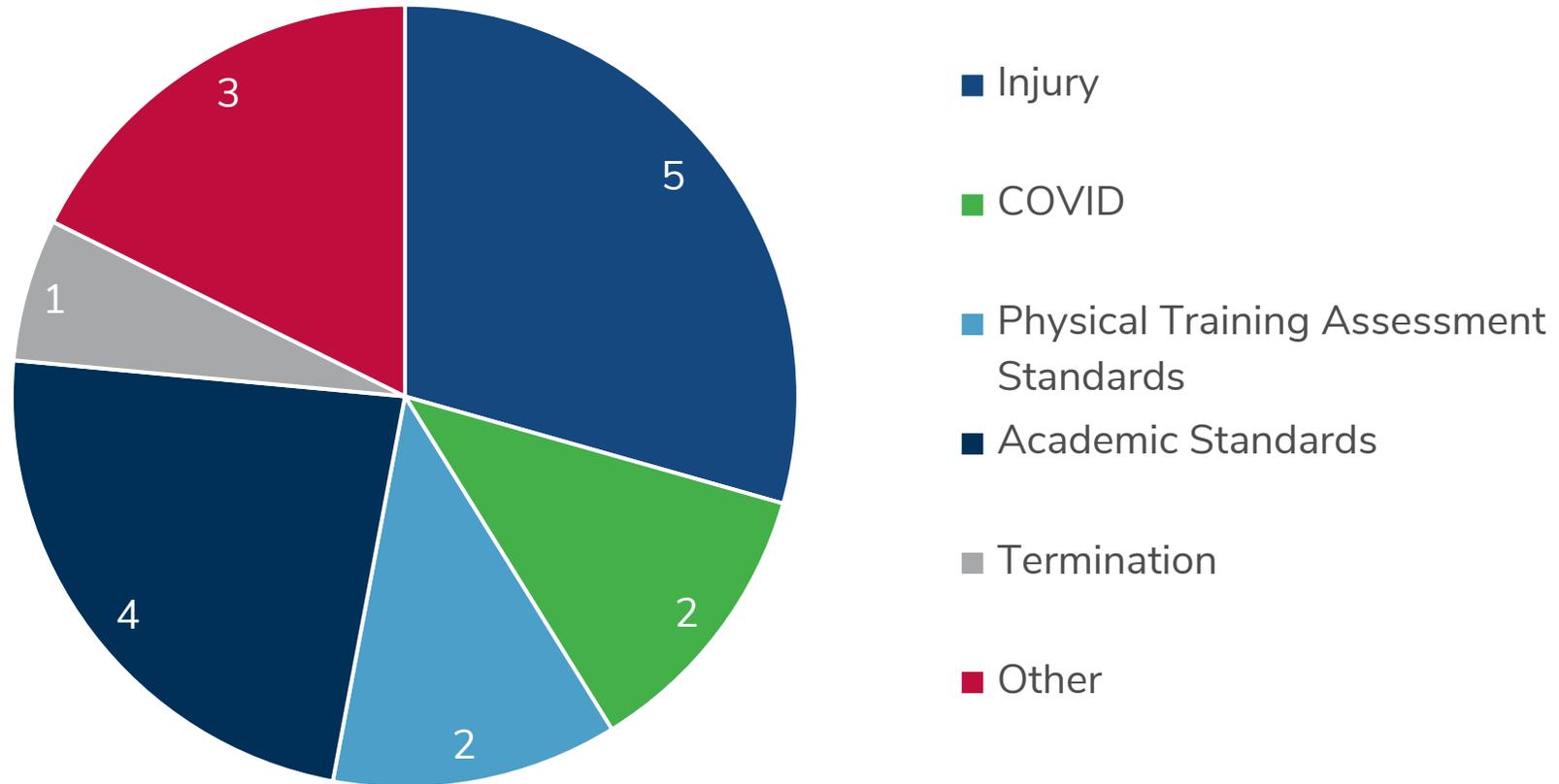
## Impact On Class Diversity

As of October 8, 2021:

- 19 cadets have separated from the 144th cadet class due to injuries, academic failures, Covid-19, and other reasons.
- 19% attrition rate is in line with past cadet classes.
- **Impact on diversity:**
  - Black cadets have declined from 17% to 15% of the cadet class.
  - Female cadets has declined from 18% to 15% of the cadet class.
  - Kroll will continue to closely monitor cadet separations throughout the remainder of this cadet class.

# Exits by Reason

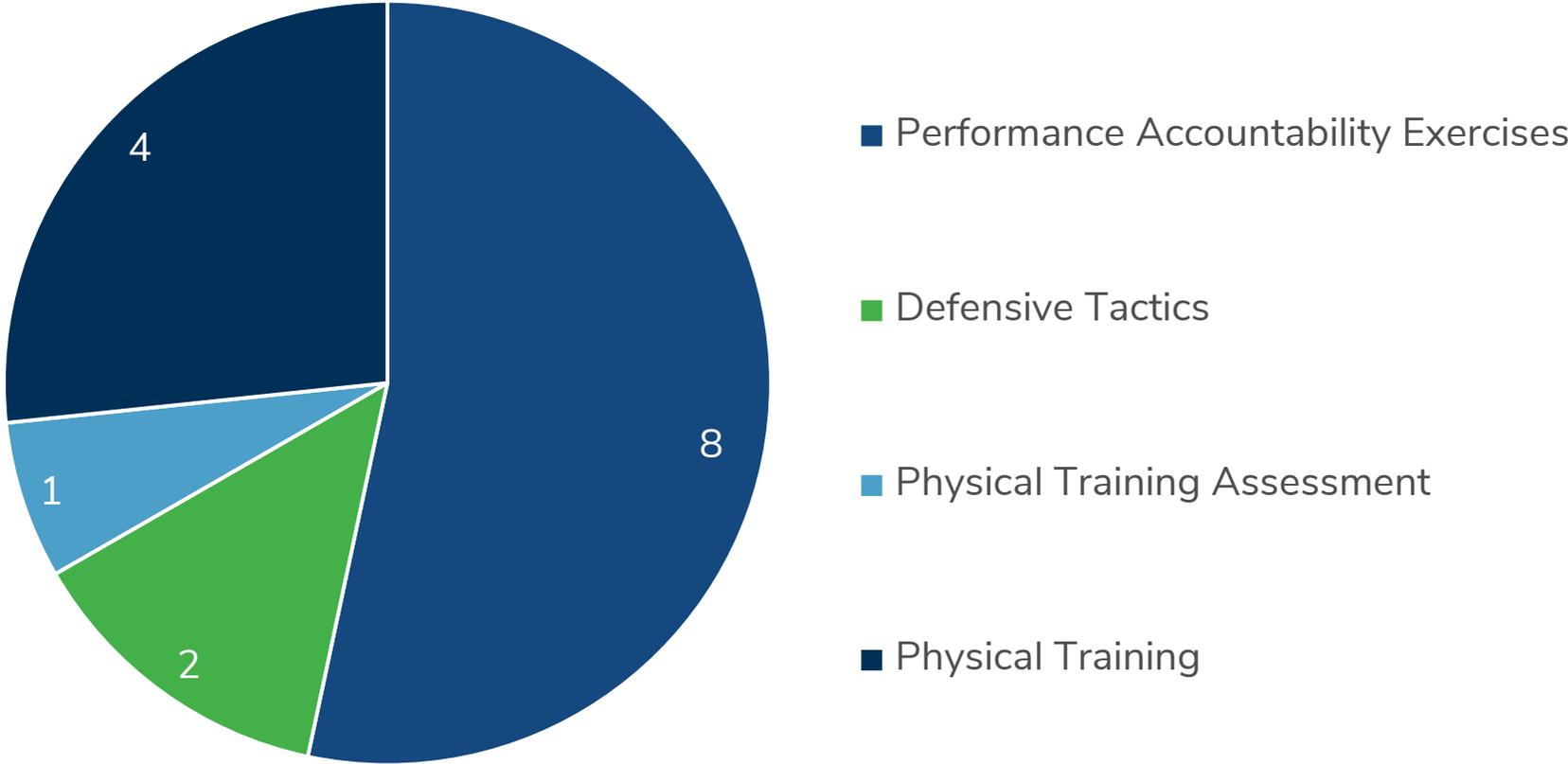
144<sup>TH</sup> Cadet Class



# Cadet Injuries / Test Failures / Separations

144<sup>TH</sup> Cadet Class

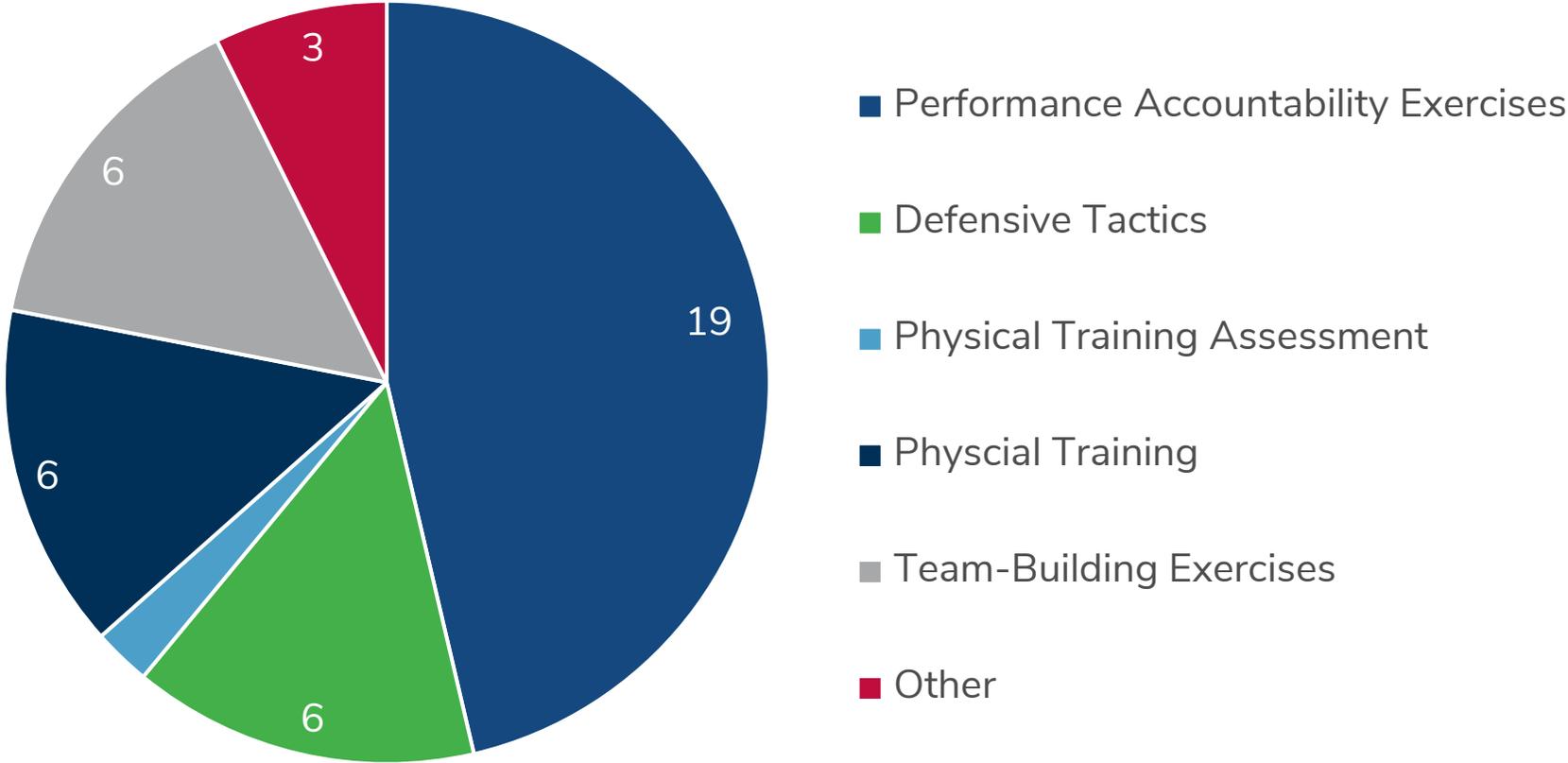
### Major On-duty Injuries by Trainings



# Cadet Injuries / Test Failures / Separations

144<sup>TH</sup> Cadet Class

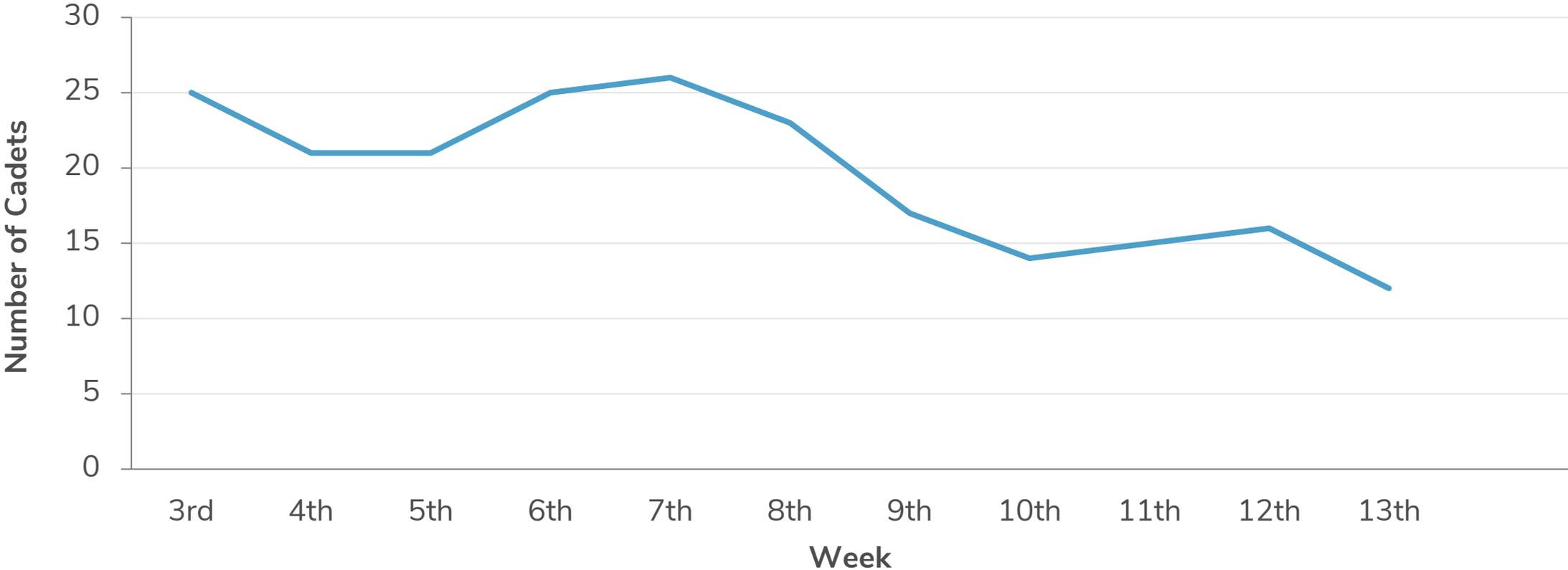
### Minor On-Duty Injuries by Training



# Findings

## Cultural Competency Training

Cadets with Cummulative Averages under 80%



# APD Implementation (1/2)

144<sup>TH</sup> Cadet Class

## APD Implementation of Kroll Short-Term Recommendations

- Civilian leadership – Division Manager / Training Supervisor (*clarity needed*)
- Purchase and implement a Learning Management System (*in progress*)
- Re-formulate Community Video Review Panel (*clarity needed*)
- Separate physical stress-inducements from academics (*adjustment needed*)
- Expanded community participation / engagement (*in progress*)
- Increase use of external content experts in DEI-related courses (*in progress*)
- Proactively reach out to cadets who separate (*verification needed*)
- Develop and expand mentorship programs (*partially completed*)

# APD Implementation (2/2)

144<sup>TH</sup> Cadet Class

## APD Implementation of Kroll Long-Term Recommendations

- Consult with Media Literacy Experts (*in progress*)
- Increase diversity of Academy staff (*in progress*)
- Evaluate physical assessment standards (*in progress*)
- Build recovery time between cadet classes (*under consideration*)
- Develop and incorporate additional content on procedural justice (*in progress*)
- Collaborate with mental health experts and advocates (*in progress*)
- Research effective peer intervention training programs (*under consideration*)
- Research ways to incorporate more training on cognitive decision-making and emotional intelligence skills (*under consideration*)
- Field Training Officer program recommendations (12-15) (*in progress / under consideration*)

# Recommended Adjustments / Improvements

144<sup>TH</sup> Cadet Class

## Additional Kroll Recommendations – Further Adjustments / Improvements

- Improve community review process for instructional videos / expand video library
- Adjust how performance accountability measures are administered
- Adjust timing/scheduling of Community Connect
- Re-institute Cadet Ride-Out Program
- Clarify the role, responsibilities, and authority of Division Manager position
- Improve scheduling coordination (Learned Skills Unit and Cadet Training Unit)
- Address staffing needs of Learned Skills Unit
- Address needed improvements to Academy facilities

# Questions?

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