

**August 19, 2022**

**VBPD and VWU Announce New Academic Partnership:  
Joint Statement by Chief Neudigate and President Miller**

**VIRGINIA BEACH, VA** – The Virginia Beach Police Department (VBPD) and Virginia Wesleyan University (VWU) are proud to announce a new academic partnership between the two organizations. Several months ago, VWU President Scott D. Miller and VBPD Chief Paul Neudigate began envisioning a partnership that would build an advanced educational foundation for sworn officers of the City of Virginia Beach where officers would broaden their knowledge and skills, deepen their understanding of human behavior, and advance their abilities in resolving conflict.

To move this concept toward reality, VWU conducted an extensive review of the VBPD Basic Recruit curriculum, where they ascertained that the initial recruit training equated to 32 credit hours that were college level and transferable, placing officers on an accelerated path for degree completion. VWU will also evaluate and accept up to 10 additional credits for previous hours obtained from another college or university. With up to 42 credit hours, VBPD officers can matriculate to VWU at a significantly discounted credit hour rate to complete their bachelor's degree in one of two paths: first is the individual officer option where officers can pursue their degree at their own pace, second is the cohort option where a group of 15-20 VBPD officers will complete the program together, taking classes online, in-person, or a hybrid of both, to complete degree requirements.

VWU is offering the cohort option to pursue a major in one of the following areas: sociology, psychology, or criminal justice. Each program also includes an internship component based on the officers' on-the-job experience. Both the police department and the University are elated to bring forth this opportunity for officers to continue their education, keeping in mind the demands of their current roles. This partnership allows officers to obtain their bachelor's degree in a supportive team environment at an affordable discounted rate.

Chief Paul Neudigate stated, "We are so grateful to VWU and Dr. Miller for this opportunity. The VBPD has historically been very proud of its academic requirements for promotion; however, not everyone has had the same opportunity for advanced education. This partnership provides a pathway to ensure we remain one of the most highly educated, large police departments in this nation while removing obstacles to advancement within the PD."

Dr. Miller opined, “Increasing polarization and conflict within the community served by the Virginia Beach Police Department and similar departments across the country requires a broader body of knowledge and skills than have been taught in the past. We are committed to being a strong community partner and are honored by the opportunity to support the VBPD with the educational resources that will allow them to achieve the highest professional standard.”

Special thanks to Dr. Deirdre Gonsalves-Jackson, Dean of the VWU Global Campus, along with Lieutenant Michele Meister, VBPD, and all of the exemplary staff from both organizations who have done the heavy lifting to get us to this point. We are extremely grateful for the legwork put in to make this partnership a reality and look forward to seeing our officers fulfill their education goals and advance their formal learning.