Investing in Police Leaders

The Detroit Police Department Leadership Academy at the Mike Ilitch School of Business

Police officers are empowered to prevent crime and protect the public, and their positive impact on the community increases when they are part of a well-managed force. As officers rise through the ranks, they require knowledge and skills not often taught in a conventional law enforcement education.

Effective police departments need commanders who can manage personnel, incorporate technology, develop resources and communicate with the public. This is particularly important in a large, urban force like the Detroit Police Department (DPD). Detroit’s economic revival will continue on its current trajectory only if residents and visitors feel safe and protected. This means investing in effective and well-managed public safety.

The Mike Ilitch School of Business at Wayne State University is launching a new program to build management skillsets within the DPD and the Wayne State University Police Department (WSUPD). The program will equip department leaders with the tools and acumen held by high-achieving managers, so they can serve the community by building and maintaining a force that operates at peak performance.
The Detroit Police Department Leadership Academy is a unique program designed specifically for current leaders and officers seeking advanced responsibilities in the DPD and WSUPD.

Launched in January 2018, the academy builds on officers’ educational backgrounds, skills and work experiences while offering opportunities to learn about the latest research on leadership issues and practices. The program will unite top thinkers and notable practitioners across multiple disciplines in an interactive environment that invites deep analysis, collaborative exchange and creative problem solving by current and future law enforcement leaders.

The curriculum focuses on contemporary management principles, finance, human resources, communication and leadership development. Participants learn through case studies with clear connections to the business of police work. This training prepares graduates for future growth, while providing a more efficient, responsive police force.

Nominated by their commanders in the DPD or WSUPD, officers will complete 16 credits in five months and receive a Graduate Certificate in Business upon completion of the program. Those with a desire for further study will have credits toward a full MBA degree that can be completed at the Ilitch School. Courses are led by Ilitch School faculty members, as well as accomplished Michigan business and government professionals from around the metro Detroit area.

The Detroit Police Department Leadership Academy began with a request from Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan, who sought partnership from the Ilitch School to create better executive training opportunities for DPD officers.

Though the city of Detroit and Wayne State will provide tuition for their officers, additional philanthropic support will enhance the program’s impact and provide participants with a unique, executive-level experience that they can put in service for the city. Gifts at all levels will create a program with skilled educators and business professionals to provide mentorship programs, academic support, applied learning opportunities and more.

The academy’s first cohort includes 30 officers from the DPD and WSUPD, and the program aims to educate more than 100 participants in its first three years. Academy graduates will provide a vital public good, making Detroit a safer place to live, work and do business.

You can help support and develop the city’s future police leaders through an investment in the Detroit Police Department Leadership Academy. To learn more, contact our philanthropy professionals.