Managing Training: A Challenge for the Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers is Resulting in Success

By Cynthia Atwood, FLETC Assistant Director

The word "curriculum" comes from a Latin word meaning "racetrack" or "course." Both are appropriate when considering the continuousness of a racetrack as well as the continuous cycle of curriculum development, review, and revision associated with a course of study. At the Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers (FLETC), curriculum development and review for hundreds of training programs is a high priority. Curriculum is constantly evaluated and updated to ensure it is relevant and meets the needs of law enforcement officers and agents charged with protecting people and infrastructure, while upholding the rule of law in a constantly changing environment.

Background

The FLETC provides basic and advanced training to students from more than 90 federal partner agencies as well as law enforcement officers from state, local, rural, tribal, territorial and international agencies. During fiscal year 2012, FLETC trained more than 69,000 students at four training delivery points (TDP) in Artesia, New Mexico; Charleston, South Carolina; Cheltenham, Maryland; and Glynco, Georgia; at export locations throughout the U.S. and overseas; and through a variety of electronic methodologies. In 2010, the FLETC undertook an intensive Bottom-Up-Review (BUR) of its operations and enacted organizational changes to consolidate processes and procedures associated with law enforcement training management into one enterprise-focused directorate. Since its inception on October 1, 2011, the Centralized Training Management Directorate (CTMD) has steadily progressed toward the centralization of curriculum development and delivery of all FLETC training programs. This approach has already helped ensure coordination and collaboration in training development and a consistent training experience for students across the enterprise.

The Way We Were

The FLETC's basic training programs have historically been managed by what is presently known as the Glynco Training Management Division (TMD). However, prior to the central-ization of training management, the FLETC's more than 100 advanced training programs were managed individually by various program managers across FLETC's four domestic TDPs. This approach worked well when the name "FLETC" was synonymous with one site—Glynco, Georgia. As the FLETC's operations expanded to include additional TDPs, the need for effectively managing training programs led to the establishment of a TMD at each of the four FLETC domestic TDPs. However, the TMDs continued to operate in a decentralized fashion. What this meant for the FLETC's partner agencies and customers was the very real challenge of navigating a system with inconsistent processes and procedures. The results of the BUR provided the impetus needed for the FLETC to move forward with organizational changes reflective of its growth and maturation as a leader in law enforcement training.

The BUR clearly demonstrated the FLETC's partner agencies and other customers were uncertain how to initiate a training request for delivery of an existing program or the development of a new program. Moreover, there was no single point of entry for initiating training requests, and a lack of consistency in the information required to initiate a request. Confusion existed with regard to program management responsibilities and authorities among the four domestic sites. While FLETC has always maintained high standards of training development and delivery, this decentralized approach naturally resulted in inefficiencies and lack of collaboration in program development, as well as inconsistencies in program delivery. With the establishment of the CTMD, the responsibilities for training management have been elevated to a headquarters' level under one enterprise wide program manager, enabling a global view of all FLETC training to better meet the needs of our customers.

"It's just smart business to look at the big picture before making small decisions," said Angela Hrdlicka, executive director for the Inspector General Criminal Investigator Academy and a federal partner organization representative. "Once fully implemented and realized, I believe CTMD's strategy will make FLETC more efficient and responsive to its customers, the

(partner organizations). I also expect that it will ensure more consistent training delivery of the same program at various sites."

How it Works

The Assistant Director for the CTMD now serves as FLETC's Enterprise Program Manager (EPM). Essentially, training management efforts have moved away from individual divisional program "ownership" to "neutral program ownership" emphasizing that all training programs are FLETC training programs.

A primary goal for the CTMD was the establishment of a single point of entry for all training requests. The development of the Centralized Training Management Information Site (CTMIS) made this goal a reality. The CTMIS is an innovative information sharing tool which has become the cornerstone of effectively managing training programs across the enterprise. Through the CTMIS, a highly effective beginning to end process was established for the FLETC's customers. Under the new process, all training requests are received by one of FLETC's Training Management Divisions for review, coordination, referral, or other action. The requestor identifies the type of training needed, the agency requesting the training, the preferred delivery location and dates of the training, and a brief description of the training requested.

The new process provides a snapshot of all training requests received and processed across the enterprise. Such transparency not only enables a quick determination of which sites have the resources and instructors to support the request, but ensures an enterprise wide view of the types of programs being requested.

For the first time in FLETC's history, subject-matter experts in various curricula can quickly exchange information about lesson plans, program syllabi, curriculum development and review, program evaluations, training risk mitigation, and accreditation. The collaborative tool is also enabling the FLETC to save valuable time for its instructor cadre. For example, the CTMIS hosts a lesson plan template that provides lesson plan development teams the opportunity to collaboratively develop lesson plans, student texts, and other training resource materials, all in a user friendly template that contains step-by-step curriculum development and revision guides. The CTMIS also contains a Lesson Plan Repository for all approved lesson plans. The repository enables enterprise wide lesson plan development teams to concurrently update curriculum regardless of actual location. This tool is enabling more subject matter expertise involvement which helps ensure the most up-to-date, relevant techniques are included in training development and revision. Additionally, the CTMIS site includes the FLETC's Consolidated Programs Registry; a detailed listing of all FLETC approved programs and a brief description of each program.

"CTMD has evolved into the functional organization that the (FLETC Field Training Directorate) thought it could become when discussions began about centralized training management," said Joseph W. Wright, assistant director for the FLETC Field Training Directorate. "Their ability to be a single point of focus for consolidated training management to support both FTD and (the Glynco Training Directorate) in staffing requested programs has truly set us on a clear path to being ONE FLETC."

Equally important to centralized training management is what occurs once the training is delivered. At the conclusion of the training, an End of Class Report (EOCR) is generated. The EOCR is an evaluative tool that documents the curriculum delivered, and captures student feedback and relevant information for management's consideration in program review and revision. Recently, an electronic process for tracking upcoming Curriculum Review Conferences was added to the CTMIS, allowing all stakeholders access to relevant information for planning and coordination.

Success

The implementation of the beginning to end process has proven successful with the FLETC's partners. The FY12 PO Satisfaction Survey showed an increase of 12.1 percent in satisfaction with the FLETC's training request and approval process (rising from 78.1 percent to 90.2 percent).

"Under CTMD, all FLETC advanced training programs are now managed utilizing the same tried and true program management model as the basic training programs," stated Cynthia Atwood, FLETC assistant director for CTMD. "The progress we've collectively achieved is resulting in a more uniform approach to accreditation, more efficient use of resources, and enhanced communication across all training delivery points and with FLETC's partner organizations and other customers. The enterprise-wide coordination of both curriculum development and review required under centralized training management is naturally supportive of Director Patrick's 'One FLETC' approach to training. Effective tools, processes, and procedures are in place, enabling the organization to track trends and conduct analysis of all training requested and delivered. This valuable information can assist training managers with understanding resource and training requirements, resulting in better responsiveness to customer needs. That's what it's all about." ✪