



PITTSFIELD POLICE DEPARTMENT
LAW ENFORCEMENT JIU-JITSU PROGRAM:
SECOND PHASE PROGRAM EVALUATION REPORT
CHIEF MIKE WYNN
MARCH 2022



INTRODUCTION

For approximately the last twenty-one weeks, the Pittsfield Police Department (PPD) has been conducting a pilot program focused on implementing the martial art of Brazilian Jiu-jitsu (BJJ) into the department's internal training program. A cohort group of volunteers were recruited to begin training BJJ outside of the existing department training program, as an enhancement to their arrest and apprehension skills. A written agreement was signed with a local martial arts center to develop a custom, law enforcement specific training program for delivery to the cohort volunteers. Over the past twenty-one weeks, cohort participants have logged nearly 400 hours of supplemental training. Participants have self-reported increased confidence in their ability to prevail in a ground-based confrontation. Participants have also self-reported higher degrees of knowledge and proficiency in a representative sample of ground control techniques that are commonly taught in a BJJ program. 90% of participating officers have indicated that they find the program beneficial for both their professional development and their officer survival skills.

BACKGROUND

In the summer of 2021, the Pittsfield Police Department began exploring the possibility of creating a police specific Brazilian Jiu-jitsu program to supplement the Department's standard defensive tactics (DT) and Use of Force (UoF) training. The impetus to begin this exploration was a white paper produced by the Marietta, Georgia Police Department outlining their police Jiu-jitsu program (Culpepper & King, 2021).

In the fall of 2021, in response to an initial inquiry to gauge interest in participating in a police specific Jiu-jitsu program, twenty-two (22) PPD members responded that they would be interested in such a program. This number did not include Police Chief Michael Wynn, a long-time student of BJJ, who is also a participant in the program. In September 2021, PPD executed a signed agreement with ZenQuest Martial Arts Center of Lenox, MA to pilot the proposed Law Enforcement Jiu-jitsu (LEJJ) program. Based on the terms of this initial agreement, Chief Wynn accepted fourteen (14) participants into the pilot program. Including Chief Wynn, the initial pilot cohort consisted of fifteen (15) Pittsfield Police Officers.

Under the terms of the pilot program, ZenQuest created one law enforcement specific BJJ class to be held once per week for the PPD cohort, plus a small number of police officers from other agencies. In addition to this dedicated class, pilot participants are permitted to attend up to two (2) additional martial arts (BJJ, karate, or Muay Thai) classes each week under the terms of the agreement.

Prior to beginning the pilot program, Chief Wynn created a pre-program survey to be administered to participants. In order to provide a control group against which to measure progress, those department members who had expressed an interest in participating in the program but were not accepted into the pilot were also asked to complete the pre-program survey. Twenty-three (23) department members (100%) completed the pre-program survey.

METHOD

The Law Enforcement Jiu-jitsu Program (pre-survey) collected demographic information including gender and years of service, as well as perceptions of initial police

academy ground fighting training, additional ground fighting training, prior experience with ground fighting in the field, confidence level in the officers' abilities in a ground fight, and knowledge/competence in nine (9) common ground fighting fundamental techniques (Wynn, 2021).

Respondents to the pre-survey consisted of four female officers and nineteen male officers. Three of the female pre-survey respondents were identified as participants in the pilot program. 12 male pilot participants participated in the pre-survey (Table 1; Figure 1).

TOTAL SAMPLE (CONTROL AND PARTICIPANT GROUPS)

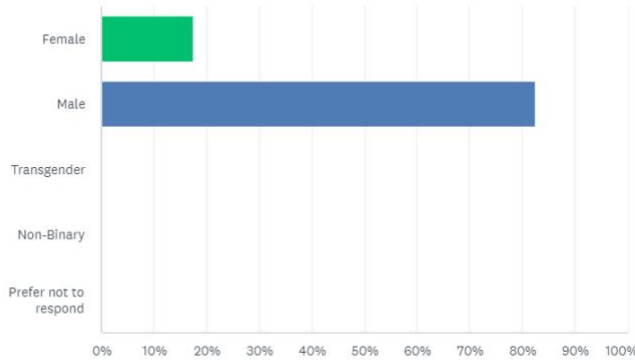
Table 1: Pre-survey participants by Gender

GENDER		
	Female	Male
Total Participants	4	19
Pilot Members	3	12
Control Group	1	7

Figure 1: Gender

Respondent's Gender

Answered: 23 Skipped: 0



Respondents to the pre-survey represented a wide range of experience and years of service. Nine pre-survey respondents reported having less than five years of service. Five reported serving between five and nine years. Three respondents reported having ten to fourteen years of service. One respondent indicated they had served fifteen to nineteen years. Five respondents indicated that they had served as police officers for over twenty years. The variation within the experimental group was less pronounced. Within the pilot program, three officers reported less than five years of service, three reported five to nine years of service, two reported ten to fourteen years of service and three reported more than twenty years of service. (Table 2; Figure 2)

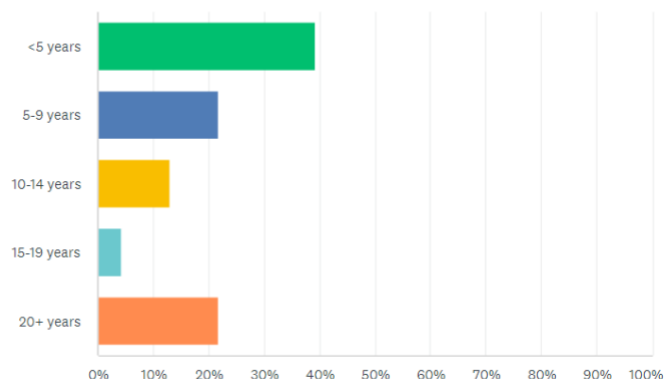
Table 2: Participants' Years of Service

YEARS OF SERVICE					
	<5	5-9	10-14	14-19	20+
Total Participants	9	5	3	1	5

Figure 2: Years of Service

Years of Service

Answered: 23 Skipped: 0

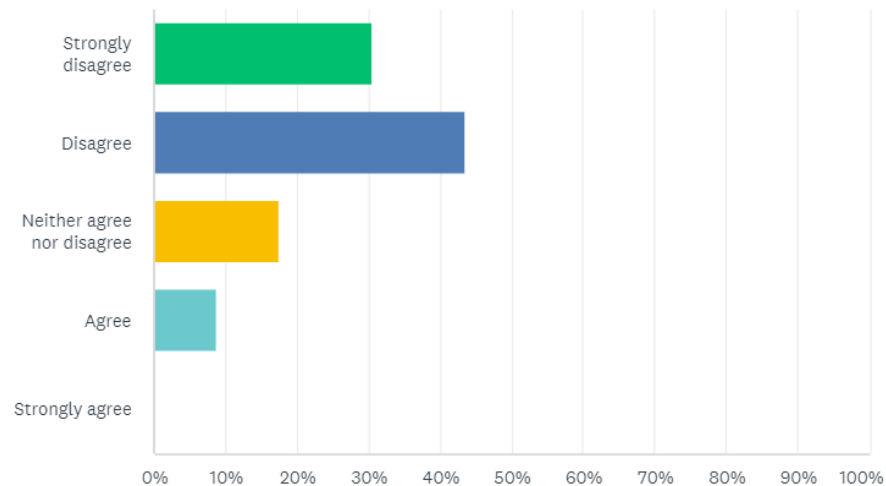


Pre-survey respondents were asked to respond to a series of statements regarding their training and experience with ground fighting or grappling, prior to implementation of the LEJJ pilot program. The first statement was “I received adequate training in ground defense/ground fighting/grappling in my basic police academy training.” This response was collected utilizing a five-point Likert Scale, with responses ranging from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree.” 30.43% of respondents indicated that they Strongly Disagreed that their basic academy training in ground fighting was adequate. An additional 43.48% responded that they Disagreed that their initial training was adequate. In all 73.91% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that their training was sufficient. (Figure 3)

Figure 3: Adequacy of basic academy training

I received adequate training in ground defense/ground fighting/grappling in my basic police academy training

Answered: 23 Skipped: 0

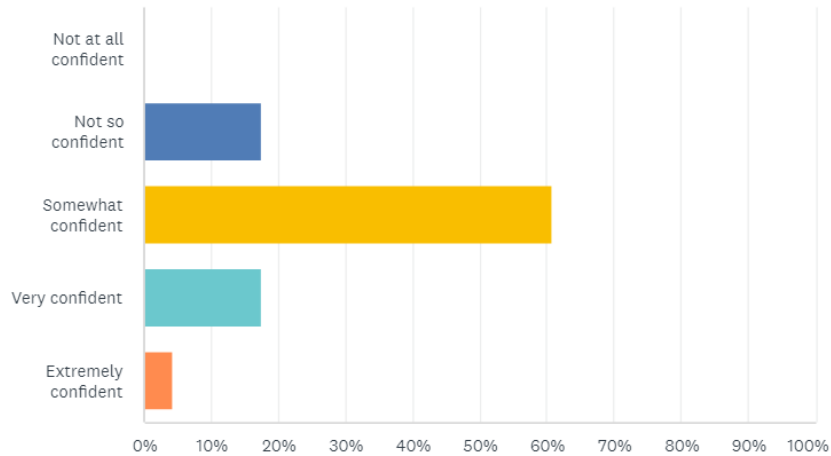


Respondents were also asked to respond to the statement, “I am confident in my abilities to prevail and win in a ground fight/ground defense situation. This response was also collected utilizing a five-point Likert Scale, with responses ranging from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree.” 17.39% of respondents indicated that they were “Not So Confident.” 60.87% indicated that they were “Somewhat Confident.” Overall, 78.26% of respondents indicated that they were somewhat confident or less in their ability to prevail in a ground fight. Only 17.39% of respondents indicated that they were “Very Confident” in their ground fighting ability. (Figure 4)

Figure 4: Confidence in Abilities in a ground fight

I am confident in my abilities to prevail and win in a ground fight/ground defense situation.

Answered: 23 Skipped: 0



Respondents were next asked to respond to the statement, “During my career, I have been involved in an empty hands fight that went to the ground.” This response was collected with a binary yes or no answer. 78.26% of respondents indicated that they had been involved in a fight that went to the ground. Fourteen (14) respondents, or 100%, with over five years of service replied to this statement affirmatively. (Figure 5; Figure 6)

Figure 5: Prevalence of ground conflicts by respondents

During my career, I have been involved in an empty hands fight that went to the ground

Answered: 23 Skipped: 0

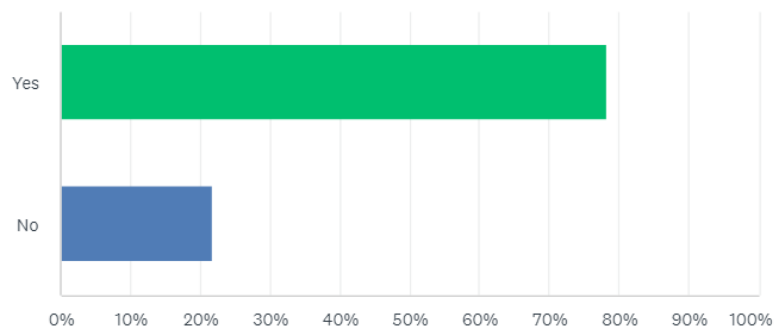
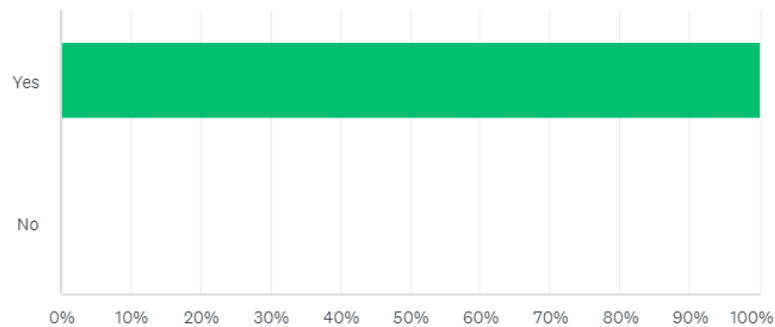


Figure 6: Prevalence of ground conflicts, respondents more than 5 years of service

During my career, I have been involved in an empty hands fight that went to the ground

Answered: 14 Skipped: 0



To evaluate knowledge, competency, or proficiency in ground defense, pre-survey participants were asked to rate their familiarity with nine (9) foundational grappling techniques. Knowledge of these techniques was rated on a five-point Likert Scale with responses ranging from “I have heard this term” to “I could demonstrate/perform this technique.” Within the pre-survey respondents, the skill with the highest response to “I could demonstrate/perform this technique” was the Top Mount position with 23.81% of respondents indicating that they could demonstrate the position or perform it in the field. (Table 3)

Table 3: Pre-survey skill knowledge

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	I HAVE HEARD THIS TERM	I AM VAGUELY FAMILIAR WITH THIS TERM	I AM FAMILIAR WITH THIS TERM	I CAN DESCRIBE/EXPLAIN THIS TERM	I COULD DEMONSTRATE/PERFORM THIS TECHNIQUE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Top Mount	14.29% 3	33.33% 7	14.29% 3	14.29% 3	23.81% 5	21	3.00
Bottom Mount	28.57% 6	38.10% 8	4.76% 1	14.29% 3	14.29% 3	21	2.48
Top Side Control	38.10% 8	23.81% 5	14.29% 3	9.52% 2	14.29% 3	21	2.38
Bottom Side Control	57.14% 12	9.52% 2	28.57% 6	0.00% 0	4.76% 1	21	1.86
Open Guard	42.86% 9	9.52% 2	28.57% 6	4.76% 1	14.29% 3	21	2.38
Closed Guard	42.86% 9	9.52% 2	28.57% 6	4.76% 1	14.29% 3	21	2.38
In opponent's Guard	42.86% 9	9.52% 2	28.57% 6	0.00% 0	19.05% 4	21	2.43
Clinch	33.33% 7	23.81% 5	9.52% 2	19.05% 4	14.29% 3	21	2.57
Side Clinch	47.62% 10	19.05% 4	14.29% 3	4.76% 1	14.29% 3	21	2.19

The first PPD LEJJ class was held on Monday, October 18, 2021. All fifteen (15) pilot participants were in attendance. However, one participant had suffered a recent on-the-job injury. That officer was able to observe, but not to participate.

Since beginning the pilot in October of 2021 the LEJJ program has logged nineteen (19) weeks of class participation rosters. During this period, the pilot cohort has recorded 391 hours of Jiu-jitsu training completed. The average number of classes attended per participant is twenty-six (26). Six (6) pilot participants have logged over thirty (30) hours of instruction each. This thirty hours represents the equivalent of 3.75 years of mandatory in-service training on defensive tactics and use of force.

In January of 2022, pilot participants were asked to participate in a second survey. This survey, the Law Enforcement Jiu-jitsu Program (3-month survey) was designed to measure changes in perception and skill among the pilot participants. This survey was not administered to the control group. Eleven cohort participants (73.3%)

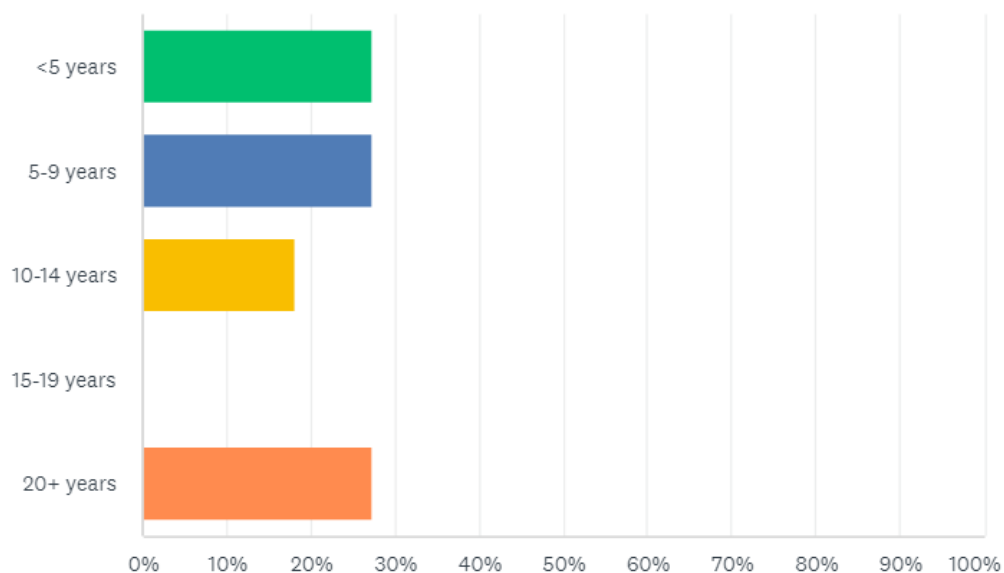
completed the 3-month survey. Survey participants were asked the same demographic question regarding gender and years of service (Wynn, 2022). (Figure 7)

PARTICIPANT GROUP 3-MONTH SURVEY

Figure 7: LEJJ Pilot Participants' Years of Service

Years of Service

Answered: 11 Skipped: 0

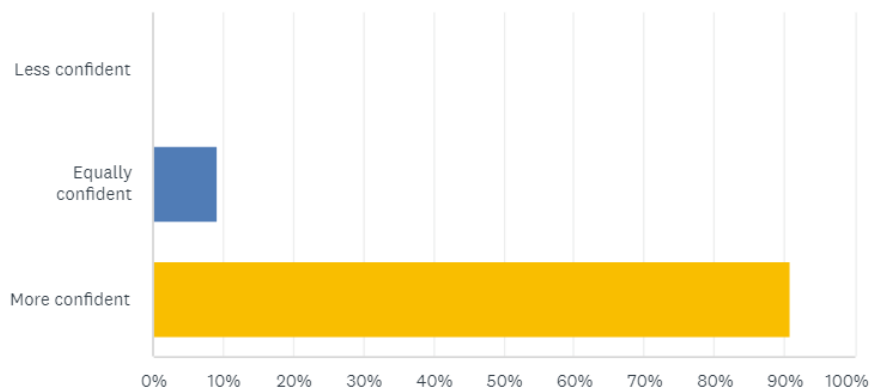


Respondents were then asked to respond to the statement, “I am more confident in my abilities to prevail and win in a ground fight/ground defense situation since beginning the LEJJ.” This statement was evaluated on a three-point Linkert Scale ranging from “Less Confident” to “More Confident.” One participant indicated that they were “Equally Confident.” The other 10 respondents responded that they were “More Confident” (90.91%). (Figure 8)

Figure 8: 3-month Survey Confidence Measure

I am more confident in my abilities to prevail and win in a ground fight/ground defense situation since beginning the LEJJ?

Answered: 11 Skipped: 0



The respondents were then asked to rate their familiarity, knowledge, and proficiency on the same nine (9), principal skills or techniques from the pre-survey. For eight of the nine techniques respondents’ belief that they could perform or demonstrate the techniques increased significantly. The percentage change in perceived ability ranged from 99% to 226% among the respondents. (Table 4; Table 5)

Table 4: LEJJ 3-month Survey Skill Knowledge

	I HAVE HEARD THIS TERM	I AM VAGUELY FAMILIAR WITH THIS TERM	I AM FAMILIAR WITH THIS TERM	I CAN DESCRIBE/EXPLAIN THIS TERM	I COULD DEMONSTRATE/PERFORM THIS TECHNIQUE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Top Mount	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	18.18% 2	9.09% 1	72.73% 8	11	4.55
Bottom Mount	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	36.36% 4	9.09% 1	54.55% 6	11	4.18
Top Side Control	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	9.09% 1	18.18% 2	72.73% 8	11	4.64
Bottom Side Control	9.09% 1	0.00% 0	27.27% 3	9.09% 1	54.55% 6	11	4.00
Open Guard	9.09% 1	0.00% 0	27.27% 3	9.09% 1	54.55% 6	11	4.00
Closed Guard	9.09% 1	0.00% 0	27.27% 3	9.09% 1	54.55% 6	11	4.00
In opponent's Guard	9.09% 1	0.00% 0	18.18% 2	18.18% 2	54.55% 6	11	4.09
Clinch	9.09% 1	0.00% 0	45.45% 5	0.00% 0	45.45% 5	11	3.73
Side Clinch	9.09% 1	0.00% 0	72.73% 8	0.00% 0	18.18% 2	11	3.18

Table 5: Survey Comparison Weighted Averages

TECHNIQUE	PRE-SURVEY WEIGHTED AVERAGE	3-MONTH SURVEY WEIGHTED AVERAGE	Percentage Change (%Δ)
Top Mount	3.00	4.55	+155
Bottom Mount	2.48	4.18	+170
Top Side Control	2.38	4.64	+226
Bottom Side Control	1.86	4.00	+214
Open Guard	2.38	4.00	+162
Closed Guard	2.38	4.00	+162
In Opponent's Guard	2.43	4.09	+166
Clinch	2.57	3.73	+116
Side Clinch	2.19	3.18	+99

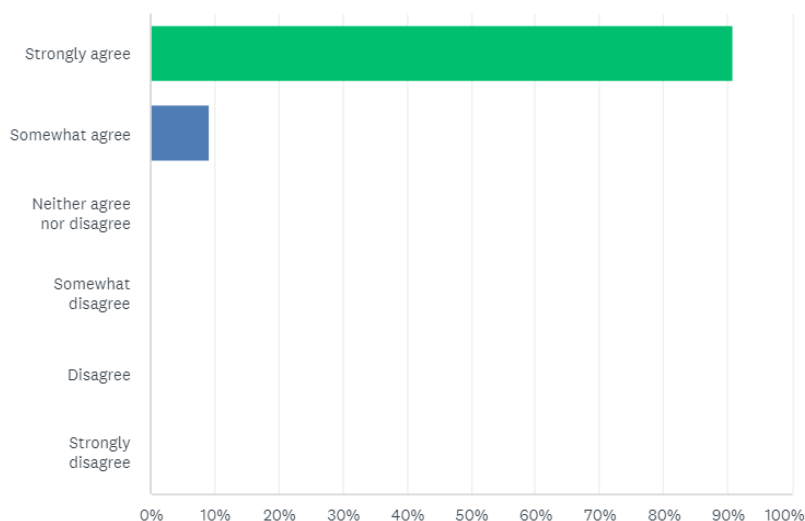
After completing their ratings on familiarity, knowledge, or proficiency with the techniques, pilot participants were asked to rate their belief that the LEJJ program is beneficial to their professional development and officer survival. This statement was evaluated using a 6-point Likert Scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly

Agree.” One program participant indicated that they “Somewhat Agree” that the program is beneficial. 10 participants indicated that they “Strongly Agree” that the program has benefitted them (90.91%). (Figure 9)

Figure 9: Program Benefit

I think that the LEJJ program is beneficial to my professional development and officer survival.

Answered: 11 Skipped: 0



CONCLUSION

The Pittsfield Police Department Law Enforcement Jiu-jitsu program is in the second three-month phase of the pilot program. This phase is dedicated to data collection, analysis, and development of bid specifications for the development of a permanent program. At this point in the pilot, the LEJJ program has demonstrated considerable success.

On all performance metrics identified in the program pre-survey and the three-month program evaluation survey program participants have shown improvement. Degree of confidence in participants’ ability to prevail in a ground-based confrontation has increased for 90% of participating officers. Knowledge and ability to perform

foundational skills has increase for all but one of the identified skills. 90% of participating officers have indicated that they find the program beneficial for both their professional development and their officer survival skills.

Earlier this year, after approximately four months of study, six (6) members of the pilot program earned their first stripes on their Jiu-jitsu white belts. This milestone is a significant accomplishment for this group of officers, most of whom had no prior martial arts experience or training.

Two weeks prior to beginning the pilot another department member, in similar circumstances, sustained a significant knee injury while attempting to take a subject to the ground, but not having any knowledge of Jiu-jitsu based techniques. On Halloween night 2021, one program participant after only two (2) LEJJ classes, successfully utilized a class-taught Jiu-jitsu takedown to safely detain a criminal defendant and maintain control of the subject, while awaiting the arrival of their backup. Neither the defendant nor the officer sustained any injuries.

In November of 2021, the Pittsfield Police Department was informed by the department's liability insurance carrier, the Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association (MIIA) that the program proposal had been reviewed and selected to receive a liability risk mitigation grant to off-set program costs. This grant award was made before any programmatic data had been collected. As this report shows, this investment has been well worth it and the LEJJ program is producing benefits for the participants, the department, and the community.

References

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