

Overcoming obstacles: SUNY Broome, Sheriff's Office create the Confidence Course

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Without missing a beat, the runners reached up for the rungs and swung effortlessly on the monkey bars. Another sprint, and then they leaped on platforms, bypassed the stairs with a quick jump in the gravel and then lumbered through a dual row of tires.

The trial didn't end there. They teetered precariously on logs over a pit of murky water and then sprinted uphill, leaping a wall and then clambering through plastic pipes. Then, they ran again through the woods, before one final sprint.

Law enforcement officers never know what they'll face on patrol – a foot race, a clamber over a fence, a race across uncertain terrain. The new Confidence Course, a partnership between SUNY Broome and the Broome County Sheriff's Office, will help them prepare for the physical challenges of the job.

"These are things officers when they are on patrol chasing somebody will come across," Broome County Sheriff David Harder said Oct. 8, during the course's grand opening. "We designed the course that way."

The course is built on college property, adjacent to both the sheriff's office and the college's nature preserve. Many local businesses contributed to the course's creation.

The project came about organically, said SUNY Broome President Kevin E. Drumm. Graduates from SUNY Broome's Criminal Justice program who were accepted into the Law Enforcement Academy found that they were prepared academically – but fell short on some of the physical requirements, he noted.

The Criminal Justice program recently held a [Mock Physical Fitness Screening Test](#) to help them prepare for what they'll face in the academy, and started a department Fitness Club to boost awareness.

Criminal Justice students will use the Confidence Course for training, in addition to academy recruits – a move that will help them prepare for their future careers.

"Building partnerships has been a high priority for the college," President Drumm said.

Both Academy recruits and Criminal Justice students ran the course Thursday for viewers. While many were in excellent shape, they were visibly challenged by the constant need to run, jump, climb and crawl.

“We’ve got some work to do,” Broome County Sheriff’s Deputy Sgt. Sam Davis told two young recruits as they crossed the finish line.



SUNY Broome and the Broome County Sheriff’s Office unveil the new Confidence Course to train future law enforcement officers

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