

[< Back](#) | [Home](#)

# Police chief leaves for FBI Academy

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After more than a decade of overseeing the safety of students at SMU, Police Chief Michael Snellgrove will soon be a student himself.

Chief Snellgrove leaves Oct. 2 and will be the first SMU Police Officer to complete the leadership training program at the FBI National Academy, one of the most prestigious law enforcement schools in the world.

For the next three months, Snellgrove will wear a mandatory uniform of color-coordinated shirts and khaki pants, live with three other students in a dormitory suite and even share a bathroom.

"It ranks up there with my appointment as a commissioned officer in the United States Air Force or training with the U.S. Army's Special Forces," he said. "It's another opportunity to challenge myself academically and physically."

In his absence, Assistant Chief Richard Shafer will be acting as chief of police.

"My goal is to provide the same professional police services that have always been provided at SMU," Shafer said. "I have worked with Chief Snellgrove for over six years and know his policies. You will not see any major changes during his absence."

Snellgrove will join top leaders and managers of state and local police departments from every state in the United States and from more than 150 other nations. He will take classes in a wide array of subjects, including law, behavioral science, leadership development and assistance with professional media. Snellgrove will earn 13 graduate credit hours at the University of Virginia. He plans to graduate on Dec. 16 and will then resume his responsibilities as SMU police chief.

"This is an opportunity for me to reflect on my own abilities and my own styles of leadership and to learn from other people, not just the instructors, but my counterparts," he said. "You can always glean ideas from classmates, particularly when you get such a diverse class."

Snellgrove is not worried about how his family will cope with his absence. While in the U.S. Air Force, he spent as much as a full year away from home.

"I have so much experience away from home," he said. "You have to learn to overcome it or you're in the wrong business." Snellgrove feels honored because he was selected among top officials. Only 0.5 percent of all law enforcement officers in the country are invited to attend. He is one of three police officers to be selected from North Texas. Also, law enforcement officers normally have to wait up to six years before being selected. Chief Snellgrove was nominated by the local FBI office and selected within two months of

applying.

"It's such an honor anytime that you are chosen above your peers from all over," he said. "That's what makes it such an honor for me."

In addition to academic classes, Snellgrove and fellow students will participate in the FBI Fitness Challenge, a set of increasingly difficult and demanding physical endurance events.

Weekly sessions, named after characters or objects in "The Wizard of Oz," start with a 1.8-mile run called "Not in Kansas Anymore" and end with the "Yellow Brick Road," a 13-mile run and obstacle course. All students who complete the FBI Fitness Challenge receive a yellow brick, listed by alumni as a valued memento.

Such physical demands meant that Snellgrove had to get in peak shape and meet the weight standard. Since January, he has lost about 50 pounds.

"I haven't been this small and able to run such great distances [since 1991]," he said.

In his free time, Chief Snellgrove, a self-proclaimed Civil War buff, plans to take advantage of staying in one of the most historic parts of the country, where there are Civil War and Revolutionary War battlefields. In addition, he plans to backpack through the Appalachian Trail over Thanksgiving.

Although he will miss his job at SMU, Snellgrove still thinks the benefits outweigh the costs.

"It's to make me a better leader and better police officer," he said. "I just hope it will enable me to come back and do a better job for SMU. That's what it's all about."

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