

**Department of Homeland Security/Federal Emergency Management Agency
U.S. Fire Administration
National Fire Academy Board of Visitors
Meeting Minutes
March 28-29, 2007
National Emergency Training Center
Building H, Room 300**

Attendees:

The following U.S. Fire Administration/National Fire Academy Board of Visitors (USFA/NFA BOV) members were present for the meeting:

Dr. Robert S. Fleming (Chairperson)
Professor, Rowan University
1406 Heather Lane
West Chester, Pennsylvania 19380

Ms. Helen Johnson (Vice Chairperson)
Executive Consultant
State Firemen's and Fire Marshals' Association
5810 Charles Schreiner Trail
Austin, Texas 78749

Dr. Sandy Bogucki
Associate Professor
Section of Emergency Medicine
Yale University School of Medicine
464 Congress Avenue
New Haven, Connecticut 06519-1315

Chief Art Cota (via teleconference)
Shasta College Fire Department
11555 Old Oregon Trail
Redding, California 96003

Chief Donald R. Oliver
Wilson Fire/Rescue Services
307 West Hines Street
Wilson, North Carolina 27893

Captain Jack Reall
President, Columbus Firefighters Union, IAFF 67
1380 Dublin Road, Suite 103
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Mr. Gary Togle
National Fire Protection Association
1 Batterymarch Park
Quincy, Massachusetts 02169-7471

The following member was not present for the meeting:

Chief Warren McDaniels (Retired)
7097 W. Tamaron Boulevard
New Orleans, Louisiana 70128

FEMA/USFA staff in attendance:

Mr. Charles Dickinson, Acting U.S. Fire Administrator
Dr. Denis Onieal, Superintendent, NFA
Dr. Kirby Kiefer, Deputy Superintendent, NFA
Ms. Terry Gladhill, Program Analyst, NFA
Ms. Teressa Kaas, Secretary, NFA
Ms. Cindy Wivell, Secretary, NFA
Mr. Ron Face, Director, NETC Management, Operations, and Support Services
Dr. Cortez Lawrence, Acting Director, National Fire Programs (NFP)
Mr. Hugh Wood, Chief, NFP Response Section
Mr. Ken Farmer, Chief, NFP Fire and Prevention Leadership Section
Mr. Bill Lewis, Education Specialist, NFP
Mr. Stephen Foley, Fire Training Specialist, NFP Response Section
Mr. John Carnegis, Fire Program Specialist, NFP Response Section
Mr. Loney Nunemaker, Instructional Systems Specialist, NFP Fire and Prevention Leadership Section

March 28

CONVENE BOV MEETING/WELCOME

Dr. Robert Fleming, Chair, Board of Visitors

Dr. Denis Onieal, Superintendent, National Fire Academy

Dr. Fleming welcomed the members of the Board and briefly discussed the meeting's agenda items. Chief Art Cota participated in the meeting via telephone. Dr. Fleming asked that, if there are items not listed on the agenda that members feel they should discuss, please bring them to the attention of the board. The Learning Management System (LMS) update from Ms. Trina Clever that was scheduled for March 29 will be moved to March 28. Dr. Fleming turned the floor over to Dr. Onieal for a brief welcome and information overview.

Dr. Onieal announced that Ms. Cindy Wivell will no longer be attending the Board of Visitors meetings as she moves to a new position, and Ms. Teressa Kaas will be filling in for her.

FOLLOWUP FROM JANUARY CONFERENCE CALL

Mr. Gary Togle moved for the January conference call minutes to be accepted as presented. There was a second by Ms. Helen Johnson. All were in favor. Meeting minutes were approved.

ACADEMY PROGRAMS**Dr. Denis Onieal, Superintendent, National Fire Academy****Dr. Kirby Kiefer, Deputy Superintendent, National Fire Academy**

Dr. Onieal reported that the target date for the LMS system be online is May 1, 2007. Questions should be held for this afternoon's briefing.

The schedule for FY08 has been finalized. There will be thirty 2-week cycles of classes and fifteen 1-week cycles of classes. It is estimated that half of the student body will be attending 1-week classes next year per the numbers. A total of \$862,000 has been set aside in the budget for all 2-week courses in FY08 (stipends, housing, travel, etc., all included).

Copies of a graphic depicting the program delivery descriptions were distributed (NFA sponsored and State sponsored). On the backside is a chart which shows who is responsible for paying for the instructor(s), stipends, course materials, classroom/facility expenses, and certificates. Copies will also be provided to the State Training Directors. In response to a question about the delivery of the revised 6-day courses, only one has been delivered as a pilot.

Long-term evaluation is scheduled to be online by July. The evaluation request goes out 4 to 6 months after course completion. The evaluation form contains questions on what effect attending an Academy course had on an individual student's job performance. A decrease in the response rate is anticipated. The current response rate is about 60 percent. Dr. Onieal asked the Board for their thoughts on how to stress the importance of reporting. Chief Oliver stated that the numbers aren't bad; but the more people you get responding/reporting back, the more accurate the numbers will be. Dr. Fleming suggested that the student acceptance letters state that there will be a long-term evaluation after class completion. Dr. Onieal responded that adding a statement certainly could be done, but will the students take the time to read that information? Chief Cota added that maybe students shouldn't receive their certificate of completion until they complete the evaluation.

USFA's transition into FEMA will occur on Sunday, April 1, 2007. Mr. Ron Face will provide additional information. Dr. Onieal is hopeful that, in the efforts of transitioning back to FEMA, a center core curriculum is accomplished, and a National Incident Management System (NIMS) is established that everyone accepts, as well as maintaining issues and trying to avoid a central administration of schools.

Dr. Onieal spoke about the process for instructor procurement. There will be one NETC process established for instructors who want to teach at the Academy [or at the Emergency Management Institute (EMI)]. The process for USFA will begin with a member of the Academy staff. This person will receive all applications and screen them for completeness and then forward the application package to the appropriate training specialist for further action. The applicant may be required to come in for a day to demonstrate teaching the course, attend the course, sit in on the course, or send in a video of instructing. The training specialist will either accept the application or send a response letter to the applicant stating why he/she was not accepted. The instructor applicant will also have to meet other requirements. (NOTE: The purpose of the upcoming changes is to comply with the current Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR), simplify and standardize the procurement process, make the process more open to more instructors, and eliminate or reduce structural impediments that have crept into the process over a number of years. This process is being coordinated among the Procurement Office, the FEMA Office of

General Counsel, USFA's Management Operations and Student Support, NFA, and EMI. When complete, there will be one, common, standardized, FAR compliant instructor procurement process for the NETC.)

At the last meeting, NFA reported a release of new, updated 2-day courses to the States. Twelve have been sent since that last meeting, and 42-45 courses have been updated. Dr. Onieal mentioned the struggle that is occurring to retrieve the 75-5a application forms from the States. The electronic transfer of data from the States isn't acceptable.

Dr. Onieal touched briefly on the Incident Command System (ICS) courses. He stated that the courses are being transitioned to the new LMS system. He also stated that, rather than requiring an ICS course as a prerequisite for FY08, it will be strongly recommended. Dr. Kiefer noted that the *Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Specialist* courses have exploded in demand. More instructors are needed.

FACILITY/BUDGET

Mr. Ron Face, Director, NETC Management, Operations and Support Services

Mr. Face provided an update on security, budget, and facilities.

The FY07 budget has been settled. USFA received its money; whereas other components of FEMA are just now getting money. With the transition, there are challenges in all support functions. FEMA is not prepared to provide support in personnel areas; therefore, DHS will continue this support.

Procurement is moving along very smoothly. About 3 weeks ago, the Information Technology Services (ITS) staff was made part of FEMA. Mr. Face also reported that FEMA is well situated with the Chief Counsel's Office/Public Affairs.

The new Office of Management and Budget examiner visited the campus and met with USFA staff members. Mr. Face shared his concerns about the amount of money that has been granted to colleges and universities for government official and emergency personnel training, when that training conducted here is accomplished with less money.

The question was raised about the status of the ongoing DHS training facility inventory. Mr. Face responded that three separate contracts had been awarded over the past 2 years to do this task, and it is still a work in progress. These contracts were terminated because contractor costs did not cover necessary reports and findings.

Campus sidewalks are being prepared for replacement; and as the weather gets nicer, various windows will be replaced. As far as inclement weather, the last storm was mostly snow with some sleet (7 inches of snow). The campus was shut down; however, the classes were not impacted as they continued to run. Because of the forecast, graduation was held early. Students were offered bus transportation to the airport in case they opted to change their flights to the night before. Indiana/Georgia State Weekend was held that weekend. The FEMA Frederick Logistics Center chose to go with the NETC hazardous weather program.

There is a new Sheriff in Frederick County; he put together a new Standard Operating Procedure with NETC for an emergency situation where campus security is needed. The Sheriff's Department will provide services to us within 30 minutes of the emergency. We are now negotiating with the Pentagon Police that have units working in this area to establish an interagency agreement where personnel would be available to NETC as 24-hour campus security during national security emergencies. This may cost more than a contracted security company, but it will be professional.

All deferred maintenance is up-to-date. The regularly scheduled maintenance either has been or is being implemented. The campus has a 5-year maintenance plan and a 5-year capital plan that entails replacing and fixing items within those two groups. Dr. Fleming asked about computer replacement. One-third of the computers are replaced every year. Servers and routers are replaced based on the manufacturer's life expectancy.

It is anticipated that an on-campus WiFi system will be implemented in approximately 2 years, depending on funding. The least expensive contract bid was \$1.5 million. If this system is not available campus-wide, there will be many complaints on why it is available in one building and not another. Students may access the Internet through an existing system which requires the use of a credit card; they are not happy with this set-up. Captain Jack Reall suggested checking into it with the county. Many counties are now implementing WiFi systems, and there is a possibility of getting it for a much lower cost or even for free. Mr. Face stated that security issues are one of the biggest hurdles with this system.

STATUS OF USFA/PREPAREDNESS DIRECTORATE/FEMA

Mr. Charlie Dickinson, Acting U.S. Fire Administrator

Mr. Dickinson welcomed the group and discussed a few legal matters that are taking place within the Government, including Chief Greg Cade's Senate confirmation hearing as U.S. Fire Administrator. The committee that will vote up to the full Senate is not scheduled to meet until after the Easter holiday. It looks like early May for a start date for Chief Cade.

With the journey that is going on with the 6-day and 10-day courses, Mr. Dickinson firmly believes that USFA is increasing opportunities, not taking them away. We are in a transformation period and learning new methodologies as we move into a new generation.

Credentialing was discussed. Dr. Onieal stated that the Credentialing report was forwarded to the National Incident Management System Integration Center, and it is being tested in the National Capital Region. Dr. Fleming asked how long it will take to get credentialing, for example, in Pennsylvania. Mr. Dickinson's response was years. The intention is to make it mandatory if you need Federal funds. (NOTE: Credentialing is a subcommittee of the BOV. This subcommittee produced a report containing the fire service credentialing recommendations and forwarded it to the BOV. The BOV, chaired by Dr. Fleming, reviewed and then approved the subcommittee's recommendations for credentialing without comment or edit. Those recommendations were then forwarded to Mr. R. David Paulison, the U.S. Fire Administrator at the time. He approved, signed, and forwarded those recommendations.

Mr. Dickinson asked about the feedback from the States on the terrorism grant money. Is the fire service getting any of the money? Chief Oliver responded that the highway patrol holds all the

money in his State; they are going to purchase a radio communication system. Captain Reall stated that luckily in his State, they already had this type of radio system set-up, so they were fortunate to have had part in the use of that grant money.

NATIONAL FIRE PROGRAMS

Dr. Cortez Lawrence, Acting Director, National Fire Programs

Dr. Lawrence welcomed the Board members. He introduced several new staff members including Messrs. Ken Farmer, Stephen Foley, Loney Nunemaker, and John Carnegis.

Mr. Hugh Wood discussed the ESF-4 position in which Mr. Carnegis is now acting. A conference call within FEMA was held this week, a cooperative agreement was discussed. Mr. Wood introduced Mr. Stephen Foley who came from the U.S. Capital Police. Mr. Foley began as a National Response Plan Program Exercise Coordination Liaison. He then created a position in order to "hook up" with other agencies to help include information into training programs. This was a unified approach to develop ESF-4 training. Mr. Wood then turned the floor over to Mr. Foley for a brief overview and status of the Incident Management Team (IMT) training programs.

There were 18 deliveries of Type 3 All-Hazard Incident Management Team classes, and there are other classes scheduled through June. The course has been reduced from 7 days to 6 days. Mr. Foley would like to reduce the course to 5 days, except there are still a lot of students that have not gone through the ICS 300 and 400 courses. The final revisions will be done in June, including updates and rollouts from the NIMS and National Response Plan (NRP) processes. The USFA Position Specific Task Books that are being used for the course must be signed as tasks are completed. After next month, there will be only one ICS 300 and one ICS 400 course for both NFA and EMI.

The current Command and General Staff course is being revised to *Command and General Staff for Local IMTs*. This course also will include updates on NIMS and NRP. Mr. Foley is coordinating efforts with Mr. Bob Bennett and other staff. This course will be equivalent to ICS 300 and 400. The final revisions are due from the current contractor by the first week in August.

COURSE CONVERSIONS

Mr. Bill Lewis, Education Specialist, National Fire Programs

Mr. Lewis distributed a document on the course conversions and their status, pointing out significant points for the 12 courses listed on the handout

- Course 1: *Water-Based Fire Protection Systems*--Mr. Nunemaker is doing in-house algebra and other mathematics for the course.
- Course 3: *Strategies for Community Risk Reduction*--New 2-week course that is replacing *Leading Community Risk Reduction (LCRR)* and *Strategic Analysis of Community Risk Reduction (SACRR)*--spin off of 6-day LCRR.

- Course 4: *Command and Control Decision-making at Multiple Alarm Incidents*--6-day pre-course; working with LMS templates to create a new version of simulation training; pilot for course has been moved to the end of September.
- Course 5: *Hazardous Materials Operations*--Developed with new standard NFPA 472; can be delivered locally or statewide with a stronger Instructor Guide for expert performers; set up like an encyclopedia of issues.
- Course 7: *Administration of Public Assistance for Community Recovery*--Course being developed with Burt Clark.
- Course 10: *NFIRS Project Manager*--Had a pilot course in March--due to high level of experience in pilot, the 6-day course received lower ratings than the 2-week version.
- Course 10A: *NFIRS Standards of Coverage Design and Analysis*--Issues with the original design.
- Course 10B: *NFIRS Program Management: Data Analysis Tools for Decisionmaking and Marketing the Fire Department*--Issues with the original design.

Mr. Lewis also presented an overview of the three Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness (HMEP)/National Response Team TC (NRT TC) training Web sites that are under construction. These Web sites are housed under NRT at the test level. After the testing is completed, the Web sites will go to USFA or LMS Web sites after management review.

- Web site 1: Volunteer Emergency Services Support--E-Drills similar to Mr. Robert Neale's coffee break training; instructional graphics as well as links to Quick Facts and Hazmat Ops Self Assessment and remedial Refresher Training.
- Web site 2: The Quick Facts--Online encyclopedia; initial information areas will be Hazmat, Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), and ICS.
- Web site 3: HMEP Training Program Management Site--Searchable HMEP guidelines, course assessment tools and wizard; online database; link to Quick Facts.

LMS SYSTEM UPDATE

Ms. Terry Gladhill, Program Analyst, NFA

Ms. Gladhill, on behalf of Ms. Clever, reported on the LMS system updates. In Phase I, an Interagency Agreement with Go-Learn will cost approximately \$552,000. The main challenge is putting together infrastructure (staff). Ms. Juliann Frantz, Ms. Diane Close, Ms. Joyce Glass, Ms. Julie Davis, and Ms. Terri Little, all Academy staff members, have a hand in working on the system. Configuring the system involves lots of training and Certification/Accreditation (C and A) security. Interphase is taking 75-5 application data into the LMS and linking the LMS system with NETC's admission system. The templates for the system are very important for new development. The new templates that were received are not up to par, so the team is working on revisions to those templates. The "look" needs to be appealing, so staff members have been working diligently on those revisions. The system will be mirrored off of the USFA home page. Also staff members are working on the evaluation instruments, a help desk which will be supported by Tier 2 staff through NFA's editorial and program support contractor (SCSC), and the course certificates.

There are 22 courses on the virtual campus system; hopefully, all of these courses will be migrated to the LMS. Currently, nine courses are loaded on the system for testing. This will be a three-phase testing. During the last week of April, those nine courses will be tested; and on May 1, live testing, using members of the on-campus student population, will occur in the computer lab. In late May, the goal is to test the courses with the off-campus population. In June and July, a projected soft “open” to the system will occur; then in August, in conjunction with Fire-Rescue International conference, make the announcement that the system is up and running. Money is in place for Phase II, and the projected running of Phase II is scheduled to begin in August. Ms. Gladhill will send the link to any Board members who would be interested in helping with the testing.

Thursday, March 29

NFA STRATEGIC DIRECTION DISCUSSION

Ms. Helen Johnson, Vice Chairperson

Ms. Johnson welcomed the group and announced that she would be conducting the meeting. Dr. Fleming would be participating in the meeting via telephone. She reviewed discussion points for the group including where we have been, where we are, and where we want to go.

Where we have been:

- How responsive is the Academy to the needs of the fire service--doing a lot more today with education.
- Instructors and qualifications--significant progress in selection process.
- Long-Term Evaluation--significant progress as well.
- Facilities--mainly updates when report out, no big issues or discussion topics arise.
- Availability to come to the academy--administration has done a great job.
- Talk about substance more than any other issues.
- Board took a stand to encourage appointing a career Superintendent--high point in significant changes. Low point to this was the reorganization and the breaking off of the curriculum piece from the Academy. Would like to see no division within the organization.
- The Board does not micromanage things, but more descriptive as the end results.
- Development of the Executive Fire Officer Program (EFOP) and the positive impact that it has had on the fire service leadership.
- Guiding through process of getting into EFOP as well as getting minority groups involved.

Dr. Fleming asked Dr. Onieal if there were any more fire service stakeholders meetings held. Dr. Onieal stated that they tried not having stakeholders meetings, and everyone seemed relieved that there was one less meeting to attend. No one complained that they weren't being held.

Where we are: Strategic Direction and Responsibilities

Before the discussion began, Dr. Fleming asked that this be a strategic direction discussion, not a strategic direction plan. Dr. Onieal asked that the discussion please stay in line with the charter. Copies of the current charter were distributed to all Board members. The charter will expire next

June. Ms. Johnson reviewed points of the charter—including the objectives and scope of activities--before beginning the discussion.

Dr. Onieal started the discussion by stating that there should be an attempt to have a vision of what the fire service is going to be in 15 to 20 years and what the Board needs to be doing to prepare for that. The second issue is that the fire service is going to have to become more tuned in with social services within an agency. If we are going to be successful, there needs to be more social service techniques than fire service techniques. The third issue is that we are going to discover that fire is not a race or ethnic issue, rather an economic issue – if you are poor, you are at a higher risk. From the Academy’s point of view, Dr. Onieal asked, how are we going to deal with that? We are going to be dealing with more technical hazards. Chief Oliver responded to Dr. Onieal by stating that, in his department, it is more than just fire, it is education, literacy, ethics, etc. He agreed that it is going to be more and more of a social fight. We need to educate people on how to respond. He also agreed that the technical issues are going to be a hardship and that he thinks you can get more of that education locally, but the social standpoint needs some major direction.

Captain Reall stated that Emergency Medical Services (EMS) is no longer the advanced care that people expect when they call 9-1-1. Now EMS is just help for the public. We are the health care for the United States. It is only going to get worse before it gets better. We need to develop how we identify the social network that we have in place and the developing of a system. Are we developing any kind of system to develop a way of teaching this kind of level? We are not preparing our membership for that. He doesn’t believe that there is a good system set up to identify what we are going to need in the future. Dr. Bogucki stated that a strategy for achieving that is having the instructors take the time to hear what the students are wanting out of their classes and the future. Captain Reall stated that we need to be looking at who are going to be the instructors in the future, not who the instructors are now. Interaction involves not just being knowledgeable in the subject.

Captain Reall discussed the volunteer fire service. In the past 10 years, there has been a heavy focus on recruitment and retention, and none on paramedics/EMS teams. Education is focused on the fire service, but not on emergency response from paramedics. Here at the Academy, there is very little focus on this group.

Dr. Fleming is concerned that the instructor cadre may be becoming stagnant, and that NFA is not filtering enough new faces and new opportunities for instructors to teach. It is the attitude of people that are willing to learn and teach as well as engage and interact. You can not teach attitude, but you can identify the attitude and the people. Ms. Johnson stated that this problem is not just here on campus; it is happening within the States and within all the local fire services. How do you encourage the younger generation to leave their families and use their time to come and teach? Dr. Fleming responded by stating that maybe, with some of the courses being shortened from 2 weeks to 1 week, there may be more of an interest in instructing over a shorter amount of time.

Review of Discussion / Issues

- Views and vision for the fire service.
- Mental issues that will be more in the future than we have experienced in the past.
- More involvement in the EMS as the baby boomers age.

- How we as the fire service can be more in tune with social service and how we can prepare the fire service.
- More and more technical hazards and how we continue to deal with more natural hazards.
- Educating our people and how to deal with these evolving issues.
- Developing courses for the future.
- Intelligence gathering and how we will be aware and use it.
- Generational issues: who are we planning and grooming to take our places in the realm of instructors as well as agencies and departments?
- Development of programs and identifying up and coming leaders and how we bring them into the process.
- Setting up study groups to develop an advanced degree-granting process for college credit and the institute option for a degree program with the research component.

ADJOURNMENT

Dr. Onieal closed the meeting by thanking the Board for allowing us to dream and give the opportunity to explore new ideas.

Ms. Wivell will set a date for the next meeting. It will probably be a conference call, probably sometime in the summer. There is a possibility that the Board may be able to do a teleconference via satellite TV. She will get more details when the meeting is set.

Ms. Johnson adjourned the meeting at 11:00 a.m.