

**Department of Homeland Security
Preparedness Directorate/U.S. Fire Administration
National Fire Academy Board of Visitors
Meeting Minutes
October 5-7, 2006
Building H, Room 300**

Attendees:

The following National Fire Academy Board of Visitors (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

Chief Art Cota
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 Tokle
National Fire Protection Association
1 Batterymarch Park
Quincy, Massachusetts 02169-7471

The following members were not present for the meeting:

Chief Warren McDaniels (Retired)
100 City Park Avenue
New Orleans, Louisiana 70119

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

Department of Homeland Security/U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) staff in attendance:

Mr. Charles Dickinson, Acting Administrator, USFA
Dr. Denis Onieal, Superintendent, National Fire Academy (NFA)
Dr. Kirby Kiefer, Deputy Superintendent, NFA
Ms. Terry Gladhill, Program Analyst, NFA
Ms. Trina Clever, Instructional Systems Specialist, NFA
Mr. Ed Kaplan, Education Specialist, NFA
Ms. Cindy Wivell, Secretary, NFA
Mr. Ron Face, Director, NETC Management, Operations and Support
Dr. Cortez Lawrence, Director, National Fire Programs (NFP)
Mr. Bill Lewis, Chief, Prevention and Leadership Development Branch, NFP
Mr. Gordon Sachs, Training Specialist, Response Branch, NFP

October 5

CONVENE BOV MEETING/WELCOME

Dr. Robert Fleming, Chair, Board of Visitors

Dr. Denis Onieal, Superintendent, NFA

Dr. Fleming welcomed the members of the Board and briefly discussed the meeting's agenda items. Dr. Fleming asked that, if there were any items not listed on the agenda that members felt they should discuss, please bring them to the attention of the Board. He then turned the floor over to Dr. Onieal for a brief welcome and information overview.

Dr. Onieal discussed personnel changes; Dr. Cortez Lawrence has been appointed as Superintendent of the Emergency Management Institute (EMI), as well as keeping his position within the National Fire Programs Division until further notice.

The State Training Directors have expressed their concern with curriculum development. Mr. Ed Roper is the new President of the North American Fire Training Directors. Out of the 50 State Training Directors, 17 have been replaced this year. Dr. Onieal has been working with staff to develop an overview for new State Training Directors. Another initiative is to rename NFA's delivery programs by using very fundamental descriptions. This should help to simplify the process

The USFA is moving back into the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) with a projected completion date of March 31, 2007. Dr. Onieal offered to share a copy of the legislation. Some of the highlights include:

- The Director/Administrator will be Cabinet level during disasters.
- The Fire Administrator will be at the Deputy Secretary level.
- The Noble Training Center will be going to the Center for Domestic Preparedness.
- The Office of Grants and Training, formerly ODP, will be part of FEMA also.
- EMI and NFA will be back in the same organization.

STATUS OF USFA/PREPAREDNESS DIRECTORATE

Mr. Charlie Dickinson, Acting Administrator

Mr. Dickinson welcomed the group and gave a status overview of the USFA/Preparedness Directorate. Earlier this year when the BOV convened, there was discussion on what was going to become of FEMA. Since that meeting, George Foresman has become the Under Secretary. The Preparedness Directorate is authorized 1,000 full-time employees (FTEs) including USFA staff, with 650 employees on board. Thus, there is a push to hire. USFA has 103 FTEs on board, 133 authorized.

With USFA's move back to FEMA, it is anticipated that there will be more collaboration between NFA and EMI. . One of the challenges with the transition will be keeping track of what goals and accomplishments are supposed to be fulfilled. Mr. Dickinson will be working to return the Fire Act Grants back to the USFA. The figures show that 80 percent of the population is protected by only 27 percent of the America's fire service, and these figures should be much higher.

There will be a full-time person with a fire service background working at the National Operations Center. This should help with communicating threats to the local fire chief. A conduit was needed for that awareness.

Because the Fire Service needs to be more involved with intelligence, Mr. Dickinson then turned the discussion to the budget. He stated that the budgeting process is up to date and work is now being done for the 2008 budget. He gave figures to the group to show that from the late 1990's to early 2000's the budget was less and less.

When asked about the wildland training, Mr. Dickinson responded that current initiatives are a result of a report to Congress that came out about 3 years ago. The volunteer fire service was asked what issues and shortfalls they had with regard to wildland/urban interface. It was found that some States are way ahead of others. The strategy is to have local firefighters trained to attack the fire until Federal forces arrive on site. The training would be delivered through the Web or through local training agencies. The bottom line is to have folks with the necessary qualifications. As far as interstate/intrastate, the International Association of Fire Chiefs is working to establish mutual agreements. There is no mandate. Fire chiefs will have to want to do it.

ELECTION OF BOARD OFFICERS

On proper motions and vote, Dr. Fleming will serve as the Chair and Ms. Helen Johnson the Vice Chair for FY2007. No further nominations were received.

FOLLOWUP FROM JULY MEETING

On a proper motion and vote, the minutes for the July meeting were accepted as presented.

Chief Art Cota asked about the Deputy Superintendent Kirby Kiefer's visit to the Naval Post Graduate School. Dr. Kiefer reported that they have a lot of the same philosophies as the Academy. The Graduate School is heavily supported by Grants and Training. Their cost for an instructor per semester is \$25,000. They offered to share their curriculum with us and are interested in a partnership with the Academy for outreach to Government officials.

FACILITY/BUDGET

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

Mr. Face noted that a lot of the authorities contained in Public Law 93-498 were re-delegated to the Under Secretary for the Preparedness Directorate.

Staff members are closing out the FY2006 accounting books. Out of \$44.4 million, there is only \$100,000 to \$200,000 unspent (after taxes). There may be some outstanding bills that will come in.

The FY2007 budget is \$46.849 million. All service contracts are subject to increases as a result of Department of Labor wage grade increases. Some of the utility bills for the National Emergency Training Center (NETC) have doubled.

Painting has taken place on a few buildings, and repairs to cracked sidewalks are planned. Chief Don Oliver commented on the excellent work that has been done on the Chapel as well as the surrounding offices in that building. There was mention that the handicapped button on the front door of C Building is not functional. Mr. Face will follow up.

Dr. Onieal commended the work of Mr. Face and his staff.

NATIONAL FIRE PROGRAMS

Dr. Cortez Lawrence, Director, NFP

Mr. Hugh Wood, Chief, Response Branch, NFP

Mr. Bill Lewis, Chief, Prevention and Leadership Branch, NFP

Mr. Gordon Sachs, Training Specialist, Response Branch, NFP

Mr. Gerry Bassett, Training Specialist, Prevention and Leadership Branch, NFP

Mr. Lewis provided a status report on the 6-day course conversion project. The handout listed the courses and what the status is for each. Also distributed was a Course Development Meeting and Delivery Schedule list, showing all the dates of the planned development meetings as well as the proposed subject matter experts and the target dates for pilots. One of the new courses is a 2-week and a 6-day course entitled *Executive Management of Risk Reduction Programs* (actual title to be determined). This course will be replacing the *Leading Community Risk Reduction* and *Strategic Analysis of Community Risk Reduction* courses in the Executive Fire Officer

Program. Mr. Lewis will be meeting with management to discuss the extensive pre-course packet that will have to be completed before taking this new course.

A model is used during the Phase I and Phase II meetings, but that information cannot be released until it has been reviewed by management. Once it has been reviewed, copies will be given to the BOV members.

Mr. Lewis also distributed copies of the "Vermont Avenue Incident" comic as well as the newest comic, "Hendrick's Park" to all the Board members for their review and reading enjoyment. These are representative of a new training/information medium called "a graphic simulation." It was developed as an alternative strategy to reach training audiences that are not currently reached by current training mediums.

Mr. Sachs gave a PowerPoint® presentation with a handout to the BOV members regarding the National Incident Management System / Incident Command System (NIMS /ICS) training. This is not for public distribution. He reviewed the NIMS ICS Training Requirements as well as the different training levels. All responders need to be trained to the ICS-100 level; single resource leaders must be trained to the ICS-200 level; all serving as division supervisors, task force leaders, or branch directors must be trained to the ICS-300 level; and Command and General Staff positions will need ICS-400 training. The development of this training was a partnership between the National Wildland Coordinating Group, the Forest Service, USFA, and EMI. The objectives for these developed courses were published in the NIMS National Standard Curriculum Training Development Guide.

Mr. Sachs briefly talked about equivalency which means that all of the courses teach the core concepts and principles of the ICS. In this case, equivalency refers to compliance with the NIMS, not necessarily performance.

With regard to NIMS, a new National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standard is being developed, with the support of the NIMS Integration Center (NIC), with the intent that it will be added to the NIC's critical standards list. This will be NFPA 1026, *Standard on Incident Management Personnel Professional Qualifications*. The standard, if approved, will become effective in the fall of 2007 or the spring of 2008.

Dr. Cortez Lawrence commended Mr. Lewis for his time as Branch Chief. A new person has been hired and will be coming on board in the near future.

PLATEAU LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM/DEMONSTRATION

Ms. Trina Clever, Instructional Systems Specialist, NFA

Ms. Terry Gladhill, Program Analyst, NFA

Under Secretary Foresman tasked USFA to establish a center of excellence for distance learning within the Preparedness Directorate. Ms. Clever and Ms. Gladhill provided an overview on the Plateau Learning Management System (LMS). The LMS is a Web-based database application that tracks learners and the courses that they have access to or have completed. It allows administrators to perform tasks such as registering learners, enrolling learners into courses, launching courses, reading course completions and grades, and generating reports.

The USFA's online training site will be called NFA Online (name changed since October meeting). NFA Online courses are intended for fire and emergency service personnel, first responders, emergency management personnel, and the general public. NFA Online is powered by the Plateau LMS and provides a "one stop shop" where the first responder community can find training and education as well as develop virtual communities through collaboration and information sharing.

Ms. Clever and Ms. Gladhill introduced the group of USFA staff who will be implementing this project. Among those are Ms. Diane Close, Ms. Julie Davis, Ms. Joyce Glass, and Ms. Terri Little. This group will be working diligently to get the LMS running and to keep track of all aspects of the system.

There are three phases of the LMS. For FY2007 there is funding to implement Phase I but not Phases II or III. All the aspects of each phase and whether they have been completed, not completed, or are still an ongoing project were outlined. Also in the presentation was the USFA LMS Implementation "Road to Success." This presentation focused on the need for an adequate infrastructure, needed to support the component processes that comprise distance education at USFA. These component processes include requirements determination, establishing a budget, executing acquisition strategy, identifying security requirements, marketing of the LMS/NFA Online, conducting staff training, identifying staffing requirements, project management, and conducting project evaluation.

After the presentation there was some discussion among the members of the Board on whether or not these few employees are enough to get this LMS up and running along with juggling their other full-time positions. Chief Oliver stated that he thought the Board should report that they feel that more staff is necessary.

A demonstration of NFA Online is being planned for the near future.

October 6

RESUMPTION OF MEETING

Dr. Robert Fleming, Chair, Board of Visitors

Dr. Fleming welcomed the Board members back to the meeting and reviewed the agenda for the day. Chief Cota asked for a copy of a matrix showing current dates, information, and current updates for all NFA courses. On a proper motion and vote, it was agreed that the Board should make the request. Dr. Onieal will provide the information to the BOV members.

FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ACT SUBCOMMITTEE/UPCOMING FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES HIGHER EDUCATION MEETING

Mr. Ed Kaplan, Education Specialist, NFA

Mr. Kaplan welcomed the Board back to the NETC and distributed a handout entitled "National FESHE Committees: An FACA-Authorized BOV Sub-Committee" to all Board members. He

reviewed the information contained in the handout. He also provided the following updates on the Degrees at a Distance Program (DDP):

- For the DDP course conversion, *Fire Investigation Analysis* was finished last week; the revision of The Community Fire Threat course begins next week. NFA and the Empire State College, who has been very active in the conversion of the DDP courses, were nominated for one of the Sloan Consortium awards for the most outstanding learning and education program. That announcement will be made during the first week of November.
- Mr. Kaplan estimated that all courses should be available on CD-ROM by the end of the year, and he plans on running them through at least one semester before they are released. FESHE certificates will be an NFA certificate per core course, degree (concentration); permission has been granted to use the FESHE logo. There are six core courses.

Mr. Kaplan discussed the upcoming Fire and Emergency Services Higher Education (FESHE) meetings. He stated that the dates are changing. He asked that there be someone present from the BOV for both sets of meetings. The first set is for Emergency Medical Services and Line of Duty Death groups, scheduled for October 31 – November 3. The second meeting is for the FESHE Steering Committee, the National Fire Science Curriculum Committee, and the Prevention Advocacy Resources and Data Exchange (PARADE) committee, December 14-16.

Dr. Fleming asked Mr. Kaplan for his hopes and his accomplishments for the upcoming year:

- at least three to four professional development summits;
- EMS education and LODD course; and
- conversion of courses.

Mr. Kaplan is hopeful that in the future, he can take the competencies, remove the fire-specific, and target EMS facilities.

There is a FESHE node on the Walk of Home. The dedication was held in June.

ETHICS REVIEW

Ms. Jodi Kramer, Office of Chief Counsel

Ms. Kramer reviewed ethics for Special Government Employees with those BOV members who were present. This session met the annual requirement for refresher training for the members. For the Office of Government Ethics Form 450, it is better to over report, than under report.

ACADEMY PROGRAMS

Dr. Denis Onieal, Superintendent, NFA

Dr. Onieal reviewed the Student Application and Acceptance Data he distributed to the group. The handout shows the differences in percentages and numbers for applicants and attendees from 1995 to 2005 in a number of categories.

Captain Jack Reall is very impressed with the number of female students on campus. He is happy to see such a great increase from 1995 to present. He gives the NFA major kudos for all

the hard work and dedication to the fire service. He is glad to see that all the students are treated as equals no matter what rank they are. No one is put on a pedestal.

He also described the long-term evaluation process and shared some charts on a number of factors listed below. These percentages were generated from evaluations provided by supervisors of students:

- Information Gained is Like to Improve Department Performance.
- Course Contributed to Attendee's Professional Development
- Course Improved Attendee's Job Performance

The Academy receives independent evaluations from a number of sources: the student evaluation, the student's supervisor evaluation, the State and local training systems, and the American Council on Education who reviews the Academy's courses for credit recommendation.

Dr. Onieal also shared a graphic of the National System for Fire Training which breaks down the number of students trained at the NFA, a combined effort of NFA and the State, at the State level, a combined effort of the State and the local, and at the local level.

Dr. Onieal will be attending the Women Chief Fire Officers conference in Chicago in November.

Campus staff members have been approached about having NETC be the site of the EMS Memorial. It currently resides in Virginia. Legislation would be needed.

A National EMS Caucus is being formed.

2007 MEETINGS

After discussions, there were a couple of timeframes and dates identified for meetings in 2007. Two conference calls are planned—one at the beginning of January, the other in June. An on-campus meeting will be held March 27-29 (2-1/2 days), with March 26 and 30 designated as travel days. A meeting is also planned for October 2008.

October 7

WORK SESSION (October 6 and 7)

The BOV members discussed a number of items to include as part of the annual report. They included:

Programs

- Adequate staff and funding for the Learning Management System / Distance Learning Center.
- Distance education/blended learning.
- Course conversion / 10-day to 6-day.
- Curriculum development.

- Stakeholder input process.
- Higher education initiative.
- Evaluation/utilization of feedback.
- Diversity of students/strategies appear to be working.
- Relationships – Training Resources and Data Exchange (TRADE), PARADE, FESHE, States, and fire service organizations.
- Endorsement.
- Course delivery / States.
- Delivery efficiencies/partnering.

Facilities

- Improvements to buildings and grounds.
- Stewardship.
- Technology/infrastructure.
- Acknowledge/commend staff.

Funding

- Stewardship.
- Transportation and utility cost.
- Increase student stipends.
- Appropriate funding for development.
- Timeliness of filling vacant staff positions.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.