

## **Fiscal Year 2010 Meeting Schedule**

October 2-3, 2009                      \*                      February 2, 2010  
April 28-29, 2010

The National Fire Academy (NFA) Board of Visitors (BOV) reviewed the Academy in three areas of responsibility and submitted the following annual report.

***“An examination of Academy programs to determine whether these programs further the basic missions which are approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).”***

The NFA continues to be a mission-critical organizational unit within FEMA/DHS in supporting FEMA’s mission to support citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from and mitigate all hazards. The NFA has a track record of effectiveness and efficiency in fulfilling this mission.

The traditional role of NFA has expanded over the years in response to changing FEMA/DHS priorities. Courses have been developed and updated to address new challenges in the interest of ensuring the uniformity of the course content being delivered by FEMA/DHS to all emergency responders. The training courses that have been developed and implemented in the National Incident Management System area are illustrative of the significant work that has been accomplished.

The NFA continues to play a key role in working with stakeholder groups and soliciting their input with respect to course development and delivery. This single point of contact with organizational stakeholders has improved customer service with respect to the new challenges faced by these stakeholders.

As with any other academic institution, the NFA BOV serves as the conduit for the receipt of official stakeholder input. NFA stakeholders include not only the staff, faculty, and students, but also the federal/state/local agencies

and organizations that rely on the NFA for critical support in the face of continued threats to our Nation from natural and technological disasters, both accidental and intentional.

To facilitate this process, the BOV has established the following subcommittees:

▪ ***Professional Development***

The Fire and Emergency Services Higher Education (FESHE) initiative experienced significant success over the year, highlighted by the roll-out of the StarFESHE concept which leverages social networking technologies to build momentum for professional development throughout the Nation. In addition, the National Professional Development Model (NPDM) was revised to include “Experience(s)” and “Self-Development” as explicit facets of professional development. FESHE has attracted the interest of numerous states and large municipal fire departments through synergy with the Training Resources and Data Exchange (TRADE) program, including a meeting between FESHE and TRADE leadership. The NFA staff are assisting state training systems as they plan and conduct higher education summits. The FESHE initiative continues enhancing existing linkages and developing new ones with NFA stakeholder groups. For example, the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE) adopted the competencies from the NFA’s National Professional Development Matrix (NPDM) for its Chief Fire Officer Designation (CFOD). The FESHE Conference was a major success. The High School-College Pathways Subcommittee finalized its mission, vision, and values to promote the fire service as a volunteer/career opportunity for the next generation.

▪ ***TRADE***

The TRADE Subcommittee was formed to “review purposes and goals of TRADE to see if they are still relevant to the fire and emergency services.” The subcommittee reviewed and updated TRADE membership criteria. Two teleconference meetings were held with stakeholders to address various issues including the further integration of EMS and professional development communities. The draft report has not yet been submitted to the BOV as a result of the lapse in its charter.

- ***EMS***

The NFA continues to include more Emergency Medical Services (EMS) content in its courses. In response to the USFA Reauthorization Act of 2008, the BOV established an ad hoc EMS Steering Committee to convene relevant stakeholder groups to create a path for curriculum development and delivery; this is in addition to the ongoing initiative by FESHE to include EMS as part of its integrated professional development strategies. The EMS Steering committee completed its initial work in 2010, however, the final report was not submitted to the BOV as a result of the lapse in its charter.

- ***Applicant Outreach***

The BOV established a Subcommittee to explore ways of enhancing outreach to potential NFA applicants, particularly those from underrepresented groups. A broad stakeholder group was formed from organizations that represent firefighters from minority groups and participated in three conference calls with BOV Subcommittee members and NFA staff. The group received voluminous data and reports on program activities. Several recommendations to assist the national fire service in facilitating applicant outreach were developed and included in a draft report reviewed by the BOV. However, the final report has not yet been submitted to the BOV as a result of the lapse in its charter.

While many students from across the Nation attend NFA classes offered at the National Emergency Training Center (NETC) campus in Emmitsburg, Maryland, NFA continues to leverage its resources through delivery of Regional and State courses and a growing number of distance education course offerings through the Internet.

Of particular note is NFA's partnership with the National Wildland Coordinating Group (NWCG) to deliver online courses to provide structural firefighters the didactic portion of the requirements for Wildland certification. The NFA and NWCG also partnered to develop the skill sets to help structural firefighters meet the Wildland certification standards.

The NFA staff continues to pursue new applications for technology in course delivery, administration, and information dissemination. One example is the implementation of an online contract instructor bid process. Plans are in place to further extend the simulation laboratory capabilities through the use of the Internet.

The Endorsement process instituted several years ago has allowed State training systems to submit courses that they have developed for consideration as “NFA endorsed courses” and to share with other States. The Endorsement process is now completely electronic for collection, distribution and peer review.

The Executive Fire Officer Program (EFOP) continues to play a crucial role in the preparation of the next generation of fire and emergency services leaders. A number of enhancements in this program have been made over the past year, including an increase of the minimum application requirements from an associate degree to bachelor degree. The use of online tools for EFOP pre-course activities also expanded.

The NFA Internship Program continues to attract participants from West Point as well as fire and emergency degree programs across the Nation.

The pilot project to convert 2-week courses to 1-week courses continues and will likely result in the conversion of some additional courses in the future. The NFA will continue to monitor student enrollment and application data to determine the future of this initiative.

The NFA now awards Continuing Education Units (CEU) credit for all NFA courses through the International Association of Continuing Education and Training (IACET). This is beneficial to a growing number of NFA students who are required to meet continuing education requirements for certification.

The American Council on Education (ACE) conducted its annual review of 18 NFA courses. 17 courses were reviewed and received college credit recommendation; one course was elevated from three to four credits.

***“An examination of the physical plant of the Academy to determine the adequacy of the Academy facilities.”***

The size, age, and scope of the NETC campus present many challenges from a facilities standpoint. The BOV is pleased with the tremendous support FEMA has provided to address the deferred maintenance issues on campus. While progress has been made, particularly relating to ADA compliance and energy conservation, deferred maintenance continues to be a crucial issue.

The BOV commends FEMA and NETC staff in their efforts to upgrade infrastructure in the most energy efficient manner possible.

There exists a continuing and documented need to expand the NETC facilities to accommodate the addition of 300 students per class cycle. This will require additional classroom, lodging and support space and will be crucial to NFA continuing to fully support the FEMA/DHS mission.

Campus facilities including the Learning Resource Center and the Publications office continue to provide essential support for the work of NFA. The installation of back-up generators for all buildings was completed in 2010.

Enhancements in technology are providing instructors with the necessary classroom instructional tools to enhance student learning. Computer support for students has been provided in the form of a student computer lab with Internet access. Efforts to provide wireless computer access continue to receive a positive response from students and visitors.

The BOV commends the partnership between FEMA and NETC to continue testing prototype disaster housing. This is one more example of the USFA commitment to support the all hazards mission of FEMA/DHS.

The BOV commends the United States Fire Administration (USFA) on providing professional Information Technology (IT) staff to support campus computing activities.

***“An examination of the funding levels for Academy programs.”***

The USFA and NFA continue to demonstrate commendable stewardship with respect to the limited resources they are allocated, particularly in these tight fiscal times.

Still, by providing the critical foundation for our Nation’s fire and emergency services providers, it remains imperative that NFA receive necessary funding in accordance with its mission and the expected role it plays within FEMA/DHS.

In addition to funding for program development and delivery, increased funding is needed for expanded campus facilities and the maintenance of current facilities.

Appropriate funding will be needed to ensure the adequacy of the campus IT infrastructure to support the growing number of courses that are delivered online.

In summary, the NFA BOV finds that the Academy is well positioned, at present, to fulfill its articulated mission. Its progress over the past year has been commendable. However, the ability to continue addressing the crucial aspects of its mission to support federal/state/local responders is potentially at risk due to the possibility of future budget constraints.

The credit for all of the achievements referenced in this report belongs to the dedicated and passionate staff and leadership of NFA and the other USFA units that support this work. Superintendent Denis Onieal, Deputy Superintendents Kirby Kiefer and Robert Neale lead this talented staff. Management, Operations and Support Services Director Ron Face and his staff deserve much credit for the NETC facility improvements and National Fire Programs Director, Alexandra Furr and her staff who have made significant contributions to the curriculum and classroom experience for students. Throughout the year, visionary leadership was provided by the United States Fire Administration's Deputy Assistant Administrator Glenn Gaines and former Fire Administrator Kelvin Cochran.

**\*\*It is important to note that the work of the NFA BOV was curtailed during 2011, including the cancellation of two planned meetings and suspension of subcommittee activities, due to the lapse of its charter.\*\***

## **Fiscal Year 2010 Board of Visitors**

### **Helen Johnson, Chair**

Executive Director (Retired)  
State Firemen's and Fire Marshals' Association of Texas  
Austin, Texas

### **Sandy Bogucki**

Associate Professor  
Section of Emergency Medicine  
Yale University School of Medicine  
New Haven, Connecticut

### **Robert Cumberland**

Maryland Director  
Cumberland Valley Volunteer Firemen's Association  
Westminster, Maryland

### **Chris Neal**

Stillwater, Oklahoma

### **Randal Novak**

Bureau Chief  
Iowa Fire Service Training Bureau  
Ames, Iowa

### **Jack Reall**

Captain  
President, Columbus Firefighters Union, IAFF 67  
Columbus, Ohio

### **Adam K. Thiel**

Fire Chief  
Alexandria Fire Department  
Alexandria, Virginia