

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/tribal 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 continued success over the year. FESHE has attracted the interest of numerous states and large municipal fire departments through synergy with the Training Resources and Data Exchange (TRADE) program. Web-enabled meetings between FESHE and TRADE leadership, along with academic institutions in each region, are being conducted quarterly. The NFA staff are assisting state and local agencies as they plan and conduct higher education summits. The FESHE initiative continues enhancing existing linkages and developing new ones with NFA stakeholder groups. The NFA's National Professional Development Matrix (NPDM) was revised to include the latest National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) job performance requirements (JPRs) from relevant professional qualification standards. The FESHE Conference was a major success. The High School-College Pathways Subcommittee continued evaluating mechanisms, including the use of social media, to reach the next generation of volunteer and career responders.

▪ ***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 final report was submitted and approved by the BOV on April 6, 2011.

- ***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. Two FACA-compliant national stakeholder meetings were held: one in April 2009 and one in April 2010. As a result of this stakeholder input, EMS content was added to several existing NFA course offerings, and new EMS courses have been piloted. The EMS Steering committee completed its initial work in 2010. The final report was submitted and approved by the BOV on April 6, 2011.

- ***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 four conference calls with BOV Subcommittee members and NFA staff. The group received voluminous data and reports on program activities, and several legal opinions from the FEMA Office of Chief Counsel (OCC). Several recommendations to assist the national fire service in facilitating applicant outreach were developed and included in a draft report reviewed by the BOV. A final conference call with the Subcommittee to vet the final draft report is pending; the final report will be submitted to the BOV for approval in FY12.

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. NFA Online continues to be the NFA's fastest growing training program with more than 39,059 completions in FY11.

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 NFA's first "mediated instruction" course pilot will be offered, using the new Degrees at a Distance Program (DDP) course, *Advanced Principles of Fire and Emergency Services Safety and Survival*.

The Board of Visitors supports the NFA's use of technology to expand its reach and believes continued progress in this area will be essential to address future challenges and opportunities.

The Endorsement process instituted several years ago continues to allow 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. The use of online tools for EFOP pre-course activities is still expanding.

The NFA Internship Program is bringing participants from West Point to the NETC campus, as well as from fire and emergency degree programs across the Nation. The Board of Visitors believes this type of program is extremely useful for developing citizens' knowledge about the fire and emergency services, with added potential to attract future leaders.

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

The NFA still awards Continuing Education Units (CEU) credit for all NFA courses through the International Association of Continuing Education and Training (IACET). This remains 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 22 NFA courses (20 existing and 2 new); all 22 courses received college credit recommendation. The ACE review process provides an independent and objective third-party assessment of the NFA's program quality, as well

as a tangible benefit for students who can use the credits to pursue higher education through other academic institutions.

“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 still offers many challenges from a facilities standpoint. On behalf of students and other stakeholders, the BOV appreciates the tremendous support FEMA has provided to address capital improvement and maintenance issues on campus. While much progress has been made, particularly relating to ADA compliance and energy efficiency, deferred maintenance continues to be a crucial issue. The BOV commends FEMA and NETC staff in their ongoing efforts to upgrade the physical infrastructure.

While campus facilities including the Learning Resource Center and the Publications office continue providing essential support for the work of the NFA, there remains a long 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 vital to NFA continuing to fully support the broader FEMA/DHS mission.

Enhancements in technology are providing instructors with the necessary tools to use contemporary adult learning principles and practices. Computer support for students has been provided in the form of a student computer lab with Internet access and wi-fi connections in dormitory rooms. Efforts to provide broader wireless computer access continue to receive a positive response from students and visitors.

The BOV commends the continued partnership between FEMA and NETC to test 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 its nascent efforts to promote efficiency through contractor in-sourcing.

“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/tribal 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. Throughout the year, visionary leadership was provided by the United States Fire Administration’s Deputy Assistant Administrator Glenn Gaines.

****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.****

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