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A Modest Proposal for Fire and Emergency-related Doctoral Research

Doctoral research in fire-related topics is, by necessity, multidisciplinary. Engineering, psychology, physiology, public administration or policy, physics and economics are but a few areas with ample opportunities for fire and emergency-related research. In order to further the fire and emergency profession there is a great need for professionals in the field and in academia to identify research topics and theories that students across many disciplines that will increase the body of knowledge.

The FESHE Curriculum Committee proposes that an on-going forum be provided that will allow identification of general and specific areas of concern that need appropriate and in depth research. Furthermore, there may be industry related funding sources that have not been tapped to conduct such research that our various members could help to identify. We believe that just within our own ranks there are those seeking advanced degrees that could benefit from such an effort as could our students and those of potential partners across many disciplines.

Of course, the usefulness of any research is limited by its availability. We believe that forums for presentation and accessible repositories for documentation are crucial in order to utilize research results to further our profession and ultimately increase the safety of the American people. Peer reviewed journals are the gold standard of research publication. We applaud Oklahoma State University for the establishment of such a journal and encourage others to look at further opportunities for such publications to take root and for all academic programs to make use of such publications in their teaching and learning efforts.

The establishment of an internet based journal would be great addition to the accessibility of data and research even though traditional academia has not fully embraced this concept. The National Fire Academy is also a logical repository for research. Government funding to initiate and sustain such an effort may continue to be an issue for some time to come but private or corporate funding may be available for such an effort.

Electronic and hard-copy access to raw or other unpublished research results and data would be helpful even if such were not done with the intention of publication if such data could be used by Masters or Doctoral students to supplement their own original research. As an example, NFA could require that Executive Fire Officer Research be submitted electronically and then that research could be catalogued and made available electronically through the LRC.

Respectfully Submitted,
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