

**Department of Homeland Security  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
U.S. Fire Administration  
National Fire Academy Board of Visitors  
April 1-2, 2009  
Building H, Room 300**

**Attendees:**

The following National Fire Academy Board of Visitor (NFA BOV) members were present for the meeting:

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

Mr. Robert Cumberland  
Director  
Cumberland Valley Volunteer  
Firemen's Association  
222 Shipley Avenue  
Westminster, Maryland 21157

Mr. Chris Neal  
Executive Director  
International Fire Service Training Association  
930 North Willis  
Stillwater, Oklahoma 74078

Mr. Randy Novak  
Bureau Chief  
Iowa Fire Service Training  
3100 Fire Service Road  
Ames, Iowa 50011-3100

Chief Adam Thiel  
Alexandria Fire Department  
900 Second Street  
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Captain Jack Reall  
President, Columbus Firefighters Union,  
IAFF 67  
379 West Broad Street  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Chief Kelvin Cochran  
Atlanta Fire Rescue Department  
City Hall East, Suite 2001  
675 Ponce de Leon Avenue, N.E.  
Atlanta, Georgia 30308-1807

The following member was not present:

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

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)/U.S. Fire Administration (USFA)/National Fire Academy (NFA) staff in attendance:

Chief Glenn Gaines, Acting U.S. Fire Administrator, USFA  
Dr. Denis Onieal, Superintendent, NFA  
Ms. Teressa Kaas, Secretary, NFA  
Mr. Ron Face, Director, Management, Operations and Support Services  
Dr. Kirby Kiefer, Deputy Superintendent, NFA  
Mr. Rob Neale, Deputy Superintendent, NFA  
Mr. Ken Farmer, Section Chief, Leadership and Fire Risk Reduction, NFA  
Mr. Chuck Burkell, Training Specialist, Leadership and Fire Risk Reduction, NFA  
Mr. Robert Mayes, President, Columbia Southern University (CSU)

### **Wednesday, April 1**

#### **CONVENE BOV MEETING/OPENING REMARKS**

**Ms. Helen Johnson, Chair, Board of Visitors**  
**Chief Glenn Gaines, Acting U.S. Fire Administrator, USFA**  
**Dr. Denis Onieal, Superintendent, NFA**

Ms. Helen Johnson convened the meeting at 8:30 a.m. She welcomed the participants and introduced the two newest Board members. All attendees introduced themselves. Ms. Johnson stated that Dr. Denis Onieal is the Designated Federal Official for the meeting and a quorum was present to convene the meeting.

Chief Glenn Gaines gave a brief personal background. He thanked Dr. Denis Onieal for his support during the transition. Chief Gaines stated that his plan during his first 90 days of tenure is to listen and connect with people. He thanked the Board of Visitor members for the work that they do.

Dr. Denis Onieal thanked Dr. Kirby Kiefer and Mr. Rob Neale for their support during the transition while he was serving in the Acting U.S. Fire Administrator role. Dr. Onieal stated he received 8,000 e-mails since January while Acting U.S. Fire Administrator.

#### **FOLLOW-UP/FEBRUARY MEETING**

Ms. Johnson asked the members if there were any changes or remarks regarding the February meeting minutes. No additional comments were received. Ms. Johnson asked for a motion to approve the minutes. A first and second motion was received. The minutes for the teleconference on February 3, 2009, were accepted as printed by the group.

#### **CAMPUS MAINTENANCE/CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS/BUDGET UPDATE** **Mr. Ron Face, Director, Management, Operations and Support Services**

Mr. Ron Face provided a campus update and distributed a copy of his PowerPoint® presentation. He informed the group that the 2009 Appropriations Bill has been passed and signed for

\$44,979,000. This is \$1,600,000 over the 2008 budget. Of that, \$500,000 has been set aside for deferred maintenance and \$1,179,000 for National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) upgrades. He informed the group that the National Emergency Training Center (NETC) facility is worth \$100,000,000. Historically, 4 percent of a property's worth is needed for maintenance. Last week, FEMA allocated \$1,263,500 for NETC facility maintenance (\$665,000 for dorm updates). These funds are currently being used for roof repairs, gutters, heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC). On March 30, 2009, FEMA was considering \$800,000 additional money for backup generators for the campus.

Mr. Face stated they are hearing from students on a daily basis about the need for wireless connectivity on campus. He stated that they have been working on a "wireless solution" for about a year. This system is in the testing phase and should go live in the next few weeks. They are struggling with limited broadband service in Emmitsburg and with Mt. Weather. The IT staff has been working on this issue and is installing a "one net" communication system which would incorporate all FEMA computers and link all DHS agencies under one system. The NETC will be the first FEMA component to go "one net." They are also working on a multi-switching plate since the phone line was cut several weeks ago.

Mr. Face stated FEMA must submit to Congress a Master Plan showing the NETC maintenance schedule. He received back yesterday the plan that was submitted with a question regarding the campus hot water source. The hot water for campus comes from the Provincial House next door. Congress wants to know what the cost will be to get off the Provincial House connection. Also included in the plan is the building of rooms for 300 more students. He is hopeful that all things will become a reality in 3 to 5 years. He is also hoping to upgrade the Admissions System in this plan. A question was asked if there will be a linkage for State fire systems to upload information to the new Admissions System; Mr. Face replied yes.

Mr. Face gave the student participation figures for FY 2008; 9,822 applied and 5,102 attended. These figures do not include State weekends. He discussed how the Admissions Specialists handle applications to fill a class. The end result is a random selection of qualified applicants. He explained the breakdown of NFA applicants and their organization. Non-qualified applicants are notified of the reason why they were not accepted. He explained the breakdown of applications by ethnicity. He explained the data regarding paid full, paid part-time, and volunteer firefighters.

A question was asked if the 300 new rooms would affect attendance; Mr. Face stated yes and that the campus is limited by the number of rooms. It also was asked if there would be enough classroom space with the additional dormitory rooms. Mr. Face stated that a new classroom building was included in the Master Plan package with 15 classrooms. They could deliver more of the higher attended classes if new accommodations were approved. Special groups can be accommodated after the schedule is in place. It was asked if the amount of approved applicants was enough to fill the new classrooms and Mr. Face stated that for every student that is accepted, there are 7 that are denied.

It was asked what percentage of classes has been moved due to the Assistance to Firefighters Grants Program. Mr. Face stated that doesn't happen very often. Arrangements have been made with local motels in case of overbooking.

Chief Gaines commented that the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program is three times the cost if held elsewhere. He thinks of USFA as a fire service leader. It was commented that it is great to have the program here, space permitting, because there is better control.

Mr. Ken Farmer commended Mr. Ron Face on the work he has done for the NETC campus.

### **NATIONAL FIRE PROGRAMS DIVISION UPDATE**

#### **Ms. Alex Furr, Director, National Fire Programs**

Ms. Alex Furr stated that it has been one year since the Realignment. She explained that the National Fire Programs (NFP) Division is one of three divisions within USFA. The other two are NFA and the Management, Operations and Support Services Division. There are three branches in the NFP Division. They include the National Fire Data Center, the Prevention and Information Branch, and the Emergency Response Support Branch.

Ms. Furr stated the NETC Facility Plan included money to do enhancements to the NFIRS Program. She hopes to have the Web-based program implemented this year. The plan also provided funds for a second position (State/local representative) on a rotational basis. The Prevention and Information Branch includes the Learning Resource Center (LRC), the Web site, and the Publications Center. They are currently using a social networking site called Twitter and trying to find other ways to get information out to the public.

Ms. Furr stated that we now have a new librarian on board, Mr. Ed Metz.

The Prevention, Advocacy, Resources and Data Exchange (PARADE) Conference is scheduled for May 14-16, 2009, at NETC. This conference occurs every 2 years.

The National Fire Data Center is doing work on smoke alarms. The Emergency Response Support Branch is working with a wildland coordinating group to develop a crosswalk with structural firefighters.

The Incident Command System position-specific courses have been developed. The Emergency Management Institute will be issuing and numbering certificates; USFA will be involved if asked.

### **ACADEMY UPDATE**

**Dr. Denis Onieal, Superintendent, NFA**

**Dr. Kirby Kiefer, Deputy Superintendent, NFA**

**Mr. Rob Neale, Deputy Superintendent, NFA**

Dr. Onieal informed the group of the following updates:

- Because of the partnership USFA has with the wildland coordinating group, they are creating a crosswalk from structural firefighting to wildland.
- The Professional Development Model is in some stage of adoption / consideration in 22 States.
- They are currently interviewing for Terry Gladhill's position.
- The USFA's Strategic Plan is on-line.
- The Harvard Fellowship Program and the Executive Fire Officer Program (EFOP) Symposium are approaching.
- Eight *All-Hazards Incident Management Team* (AHIMT) classes have been developed.
- The PARADE subcommittee was on campus last summer. The fire marshals expressed their desire to deliver training. Dr. Onieal posed to them the issues involved, and among them they worked out a solution to provide the fire marshals with a list of NFA courses available in their States through the State training system, along with the list of POCs for State fire training. In turn, the fire marshals agreed that they would contact the State training system to help them fill fire prevention courses locally. All of that information has been sent.
- Dr. Onieal will introduce, at the Fire Department Instructors Conference, the concept of continuing education requirements and will encourage the States to join with us and award Continuing Education Units (CEUs).

Dr. Kiefer reported that a study was done regarding the need for a course in port emergency incident management. The report to Congress is now being written.

Mr. Neale gave all attendees a handout that contained an academy update. He reviewed the following information contained on the report:

- Michael Stern is putting together an Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Curriculum Advisory Committee of 20 leaders to look at the EMS curriculum in a fire service environment. Dr. Sandy Bogucki will be representing the Board on this committee.
- A list of recently launched NFA Online courses was provided. Dr. Kiefer stated that a clean-up of licenses is being done to allow for more students.
- An Internship Program has been developed to help with keeping curriculum current.
- Working with Doug Williams on a "50 state solution" to provide a consistent path for students to attend fire and arson courses. They will be handing off R205 to the States due to the limited on-campus capacity.
- A presentation on "EZ-Training" was distributed. This training provides a link to content for State and local training. They are partnering with five States for the pilot.
- Working on hands-on delivery for the *Fire Protection Systems* course. There is a high demand for the class. Looking at digital simulation to get the information out. Looking at a mentoring system that results in a certificate of training.
- A handout was distributed on the status of course development.
- Working on revisions to the Central City Manual and the simulations. Hoping to work with commercial software to get the simulations out.
- Mr. Ken Farmer is working on the Curriculum Management System.

- Incorporating lessons learned from various events into course content. Dr. Kiefer stated that a self-study instrument for EFOP has been converted to on-line and should be in place for the July classes.
- Working to configure "Adobe Connect" to support "net-meetings" and synchronous training.
- Continue to address payment issues being handled by Mt. Weather.
- 2-day courses are being handled by Myrna Mood and Terry Glunt.
- There is now an on-line tour of the campus.

### **FACA ACTIVITY REPORT/ACCREDITATION SUBCOMMITTEE**

#### **Mr. Chris Neal, Subcommittee Chair, BOV**

Mr. Neal distributed a memorandum submitting the committee's recommendations and reviewed a slide presentation with the group. It was recommended by the committee that the current policy of requiring a bachelor's degree from a regionally-accredited institution be continued based primarily on the following:

- The Army, Navy, and Air War colleges, all by policy, require a bachelor's degree from a regionally-accredited institution.
- A policy that would allow for degrees accredited other than through regional accreditation would require dedicated staff to review credentials and verify academic legitimacy.

It also was recommended that this issue continue to be investigated in more detail by the Board and staff. There was no timeline specified for review. Dr. Onieal stated that the Board members can add to the subcommittee report.

Mr. Neal moved for the report to be approved by the Board. Captain Jack Reall seconded the motion. Ms. Johnson opened the floor for any further discussions.

Mr. Robert Mayes, President, Columbia Southern University (CSU), spoke on behalf of the on-line college that was founded by his father. He expressed his concern that CSU is not accepted by NFA as an accredited college for those who want to participate in EFOP. The CSU is nationally accredited by the Distance Education Training Council. He would like NFA to accept the accreditation that Department of Education accepts. Mr. Mayes stated that regional accreditation was not pursued because of the location of the college. The CSU has 2,012 active students and 698 learning partnerships of which half are fire related.

Ms. Johnson addressed the October 2008 issue of additional staff that will be needed to evaluate and validate non-regionally accredited degrees. Mr. Burkell referenced Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) levels and how would a metric level be established to evaluate other degrees. He also stated that if we went away from the present requirement there would be no question that it would require additional staff. Ms. Johnson and Mr. Burkell stated that we want to maintain a level of integrity with the program.

Mr. Mayes stated there would not be a need for additional staff if the policy would change to accept nationally-accredited schools.

Ms. Johnson asked the group if they were ready to vote. The group agreed that the topic should remain on the front burner and that the bachelor's degree requirement should be reviewed periodically. After a motion by Chris Neal and a second by Bob Cumberland, all were in favor of the report provided by the subcommittee.

## **BOARD DISCUSSIONS/NEW ITEMS**

### **Ms. Helen Johnson, Chair, Board of Visitors**

Ms. Johnson reviewed the objectives and scope of the Board for the new members and a copy of the Charter was provided. She explained to the new members that at the October meeting the Annual Report will be developed from the activities that have transcribed throughout the year.

Dr. Onieal also distributed a Course Development Status Report for 56 courses.

Dr. Onieal distributed a revised report, on Mr. Ron Face's behalf, of the application and attendance numbers (not including State weekends). Dr. Onieal asked that the Board appoint a subcommittee to review the NFA's efforts to recruit women and people of color and to make suggestions for improvement. Ms. Johnson appointed herself, Jack Reall, Kelvin Cochran, and Adam Thiel. The subcommittee would not require any travel and the meetings would be held via teleconference. Dr. Onieal will provide a list of fire organizations/stakeholders to Ms. Johnson. The list will identify organizations to be invited to participate in the new subcommittee. The initial report will be provided at the October 2009 Board meeting.

Mr. Jack Reall asked about the trailers in front of the campus. Dr. Kiefer stated they were experimental mobile living units. They will be sprinklered. Mr. Reall expressed concern about getting the funding for expansion.

Mr. Chris Neal said there are some questions on the amount of return on our investment that is received with the Harvard Fellowship Program. It is hard to justify that level of funding. How can we get something back into service? If X number of dollars is invested, do we have the support on campus? Mr. Neal stated he would bring more information for discussion to the October 2009 Board meeting. Chief Adam Thiel said there is a quantitative measurement for calculating service time without pay such as being on a National Fire Protection Association committee.

Mr. Rob Neale distributed a list of invited participants for the upcoming EMS Curriculum Advisory Committee meeting.

## **Thursday, April 2**

### **RESUME MEETING**

#### **Ms. Helen Johnson, Chair, Board of Visitors**

The group reconvened at 8:30 a.m. Ms. Johnson addressed the group and asked for any old or new business. She stated that Dr. Kirby Kiefer was the Designated Federal Official.

Ms. Teresa Kaas and Dr. Denis Onieal will be setting the date for the next meeting.

Ms. Johnson summarized the meeting discussions:

- Mr. Chris Neal provided the Accreditation Subcommittee Report. The Board approved the committee's recommendations and agrees that this issue should continue to be investigated in more detail by the Board and staff as to additional/alternative evaluative approaches that continue to best ensure program integrity and quality.
- The Board voted to establish a subcommittee to review the application process and enhance outreach to potential applicants. The committee will provide an initial report at the October 2009 Board meeting.

Dr. Onieal asked if there should be a timeframe on the reviews regarding Mr. Mayes' issue. Mr. Bob Cumberland suggested reviewing the issue during the October 2009 meeting.

The group briefly discussed national versus regional accreditation. Ms. Johnson said the issue will be added to the agenda for the October 2009 meeting and instructed Mr. Chris Neal to bring forth additional information.

Mr. Kelvin Cochran asked about the procedures for the new subcommittee. Ms. Johnson asked if he would Chair the subcommittee and he agreed.

Mr. Randy Novak commented that Ms. Diane Close did a good job with the NFA Endorsement Program. He commended her on the quick turnaround time.

Ms. Johnson asked if there was any more new business and with no responses received, the meeting was adjourned.