

**Department of Homeland Security  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
U.S. Fire Administration  
Board of Visitors for the National Fire Academy  
August 15, 2022  
J-102**

**Attendees:**

The following members of the Board of Visitors for the National Fire Academy were in attendance for the Meeting.

John S. Butler (Chairperson)  
Fire Chief  
Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department  
12099 Government Center Parkway  
Fairfax, VA 22033

Dr. Michael Macey  
Director of Public Safety  
St. John's College  
1160 Camino Cruz Blanca  
Santa Fe, NM 87505

Dr. Patricia McIntosh (Vice Chair)  
Lifetime Member (Inactive)  
League City Fire Department  
555 West Walker Street  
League City, TX 77573

Steven Dubay  
Deputy Chief  
Colorado Springs Fire Department  
375 Printers Parkway  
Colorado Springs, CO 80910

Chief Kevin D. Quinn  
First Vice Chair  
National Volunteer Fire Council  
7852 Walker Drive, Suite 375  
Greenbelt, MD 20770

Kristin Crowley  
Fire Chief  
Los Angeles Fire Department  
200 N. Main Street, Suite 1770  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Thomas E. Romaine, Jr.  
Smokechaser  
Minnesota Department of Natural  
Resources - Forestry  
644 Pfaender Drive  
New Ulm, MN 56073

Dr. Mark A. Rivero  
Site Coordinator  
Southern Illinois University  
1044 Beaver Crest Court  
Henderson, NV 89015

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

Mr. Eriks Gabliks, Superintendent, NFA  
Ms. Deb Gartrell-Kemp, Program Support Specialist  
Chief Tonya L. Hoover, Deputy Fire Administrator, USFA  
Ms. Ellen Newlin, Program Specialist  
Mr. William Troup, Branch Chief, Emergency Response Support Branch, USFA  
Mr. David Millstein, Branch Chief, National Fire Data Center, USFA  
Mr. Lester Rich, Branch Chief, Response Branch, NFA  
Ms. Christine Spangler, Branch Chief, Leadership and Community Risk Reduction Branch, NFA  
Ms. Michelle Spielman, Secretary  
Ms. Tiffany Warren, Branch Chief, Training, Administration, Planning and Analysis Branch, NFA  
Mr. David Brummett, FEMA Office of Chief Counsel

Others in attendance/public attendees:

None

### **Convene Board of Visitors Meeting/Welcome**

**Chief John S. Butler, Chairperson, Board of Visitors**

**Dr. Patricia McIntosh, Vice Chairperson, Board of Visitors**

**Mr. Eriks Gabliks, Superintendent, National Fire Academy**

**Chief Tonya Hoover, Deputy Fire Administrator, U.S. Fire Administration**

Mr. Eriks Gabliks welcomed everyone to this meeting of the USFA/NFA Board of Visitors. The meeting was being conducted under regulations outlined in the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA). Everyone is a Special Government Employee (SGE). Mr. Gabliks served as the Designated Federal Officer for the meeting to make sure everyone followed the federal requirements.

Mr. Gabliks stated that Ms. Deb Gartrell-Kemp, who did a great job coordinating this group and making this meeting possible, was in the back of the room. She would make sure the meeting stayed on schedule. She also made sure everyone was able to get to the campus for the meeting and helped with everyone's travel. Ms. Michelle Spielman and Ms. Ellen Newlin were Ms. Gartrell-Kemp's backups in case anyone needed additional help with administrative functions.

Mr. Gabliks stated that the Board of Visitors agenda is published in the Federal Register. The times listed are approximate, and they might need to adjust the schedule as needed. There should be enough time scheduled for all speakers, comments and questions, as well as for interaction. Mr. Gabliks stated that under the FACA requirements, anyone wanting to send something in to be reviewed had the ability to do so. There were no comments sent in from the public.

Dextera/Leading Solutions support staff, Ms. Jennifer Vanover, would be taking notes and would compile minutes. The minutes would be prepared and sent to the meeting chair within 90 calendar days. All comments and notes would be available for public review forever; they would be archived. Mr. Gabliks advised everyone to be sure they state their name before speaking so the minutes could be recorded accurately. If anyone has notes, email them to Ms. Gartrell-Kemp so she can forward them to Ms. Vanover. Mr. Gabliks stated that for the meeting order they would follow Robert's Rules for motions.

Mr. Gabliks convened this meeting of the USFA/NFA Board of Visitors.

Mr. Gabliks introduced himself and everyone in the room introduced themselves, said what they do and where they were from and stated why they are a part of the Board of Visitors. Once everyone had the chance to introduce themselves, Mr. Gabliks turned the meeting over to Chief John Butler to start the meeting off.

Chief Butler stated that he would have said most of the stuff that he said in his introduction. Chief Butler stated that he enjoys being the chair for the Board of Visitors. He is excited that this meeting is in person and virtual. He stated that the Board of Visitors is important because it is an opportunity to give back. Chief Butler welcomed and thanked everyone for being at the meeting in person and virtually. Chief Butler turned the meeting over to Chief Tonya Hoover.

Chief Hoover stated that Dr. Lori Moore-Merrell was on her way to the Truman Symposium in Independence, Missouri. She sent her regrets for not being at this meeting. Chief Hoover stated that Dr. Moore-Merrell had a lot going on and a lot to share with the country as it relates to the USFA. She was raising the profile of the USFA throughout the country and tying it directly to important stakeholders. Chief Hoover turned the meeting back over to Chief Butler.

Chief Butler turned the meeting over to Mr. Gabliks.

Mr. Gabliks stated that a number of classes were ongoing, and he gave the Board of Visitors a printout of the classes ahead of the planned campus tour. Mr. Gabliks stated that campus is at about 65% capacity. The students are slowly being brought back on campus, and there are more classes going on. The students are engaged, happy and thriving. The goal is to be back to 100% capacity by October, meaning more classes and larger class sizes.

They were seeing enrollments fluctuate based on the local COVID-19 case counts. Students that were going to attend may not be able to because they have to cover for a colleague that is ill. The departments may not let them come because of staffing issues. There are 2 classes that are full this week. Mr. Gabliks stated that while some classes are not full, the NFA has a commitment to providing professional development opportunities for its career and volunteer students. Some students in the smaller classes have already been delayed a couple of times because of the pandemic, so they wanted to get them back on campus. There have been classes with only 5 people.

Mr. Steven Dubay asked if the instructor numbers were being adjusted with smaller class sizes. Was there just one instructor for 5 students, or are there still 2 instructors? What has been the student experience and their feedback on the smaller classes? Mr. Gabliks stated that they have

applied data to a lot of the decision-making. One example is the Managing Officer Program with a cohort of 7 and another of 9. It does not make sense to run both classes, so they are combined. The student feedback is that they either love it or hate it. They like that it is more intimate, and they have more discussion time with fewer students. About 98% of the students like the smaller classes, and 2% do not. The 2% are usually the quiet students that do not want to be pulled into discussions. Nevertheless, they are managing the instructor cadre. There are some instructors that cannot come on campus because of vaccination status. There are some that do not want to come on campus with the pandemic still going on. There is the challenge of getting people available to teach. There are weeks in which there are a lot of instructors available, and there are weeks in which there are none. They have had to cancel some classes because of that. Mr. Gabliks stated that another issue is that some agencies are paying a lot more for their people to stay there and work because of the lack of staff. The states are having the same issues.

Chief Kevin Quinn asked if they were finding that students and instructors were excited to be back on campus. Mr. Gabliks replied yes. They were excited to be on campus and were also excited about how the campus was being maintained due to the facility staff of Management, Operations, and Support Services (MOSS). Mr. Gabliks stated that the trailer at the main entrance is gone, and there is more of a professional look. Students are generally excited to be back and are interested in the class opportunities; there are a few students that have not been on campus before. Those individuals who did not know about the campus are told to tell everyone they know about their experience. The NFA hosted a national weekend. There were people from more than 15 states — including Alaska, California, Florida and Texas — on campus for 2 days. The agencies they were from could not afford to send them for a week or 2. It was not a budget issue but related to staffing.

Mr. Gabliks turned the meeting back over to Chief Butler for the selection of the Board of Visitors Officers. Chief Butler stated that they would select board officers for Fiscal Year (FY) 2023. Chief Quinn stated that he would like for Chief Butler to stay on as the chair and Dr. Patricia McIntosh to stay as vice chair. He stated that they are doing a great job. Those are the only 2 positions that needed to be filled. Chief Butler asked if there were any other nominations for those positions; there were no other suggestions for nominees. Chief Quinn motioned for Chief Butler and Dr. McIntosh to stay in those positions, and Mr. Thomas Romaine made the second motion for the positions to stay as is.

Chief Butler turned the meeting over to Chief Hoover for remarks on the strategic plan updates.

Chief Hoover stated that FEMA had just completed its strategic plan, so the USFA could start its own strategic plan. A meeting was planned in September. They would begin by walking through what the USFA strategic plan would look like. When having conversations with the fire administrator, they would need to make sure they included stakeholders and the Board of Visitors. Their first meeting would be a planning meeting, and the fire administrator would reach out to the Board of Visitors to start the process. That way, the Board of Visitors would have an opportunity to see, comment and provide input and advice for the strategic plan as it relates to the NFA. There would be more on that later. Chief Hoover then provided information about MOSS.

## **Deferred Maintenance and Capital Improvements on the National Emergency Training Center Campus**

### **Chief Tonya Hoover, Deputy Fire Administrator, U.S. Fire Administration**

Chief Hoover stated that she took over as MOSS director in December when Mr. Al Fluman retired. In about a week there will be a new MOSS director. The new MOSS director is driving cross-country with his family, and he is from California. He is very familiar with everything that is going on with the campus. His name is Mr. Vince Hodge, and they are excited to have him as the MOSS director.

Chief Hoover stated that there are some exciting things going on with MOSS. There are a number of completed deferred maintenance and capital improvement activities on campus. Chief Hoover stated that she did not care for not having a lot of students on campus, but when there is not a lot of activity on campus, that gives more opportunity to get things done. In 2021, a lot of items were completed. Some big projects were painting, roof replacements and the front trailer removal. There is a new building out front for security.

Chief Hoover stated that in 2022, there are ongoing projects and deferred maintenance that included things like fire alarm system upgrades and floor renovations. There was also some extensive work going on in Building N on floors 3 and 4; they are not touching anything historic but opening up some space in that building. NETC is on the national and state historical preservation list, so there are some limitations on what they can and cannot do. They need to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Plumbing and elevator upgrades are going on also.

Chief Hoover stated that they thought they would be further along on some of the projects but because of supply chain issues they are not. They did go through some buildings that were not being used and borrowed things to use for the buildings that were. The heating, ventilating, and air conditioning (HVAC) in the buildings on campus match the HVAC systems in hospitals. The filtration systems on campus are a replica of what goes into medical facilities because the atmosphere needs to be clean. Chief Hoover stated that the reason for not opening windows is to avoid throwing off the balance of the HVAC. She is proud of the work done to the HVAC systems.

Chief Hoover stated that campus is over 150 years old, and they are the gold star for not just FEMA but also for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Chief Hoover stated that the campus has been doing great with reducing the carbon footprint from lighting systems, from solar on all of the flat roofs to the use of ion battery vehicles and to how they recycle and reuse water-reducing flow that has been going on for years.

Chief Hoover stated that the burn range is getting improvements. They are adding classrooms and bathrooms. She stated that the current FEMA administrator is very supportive of the work going on at NETC.

Chief Hoover stated that they are increasing dorm spaces and improving existing dorm spaces. The 15 current electric carts are to be replaced. She stated that they are aware of the challenges that ion batteries have when it comes to vehicles, and the last thing they need on campus is thermal runaway

on a charging station. Chief Hoover stated that the electric vehicles will be charged at the appropriate locations and will be monitored appropriately. They will not be charged in buildings, under buildings or too close to buildings. They will be following the requirements and standards for the location of those vehicles.

Chief Hoover stated that it has been a long time since they have had Emmitsburg, Gettysburg or Frederick County first responders on campus to actually walk the site and the buildings and actually touch things. She wants to do an extensive tour and educational opportunity with the local responders so that if they would have to respond here, they know what to be aware of.

Chief Hoover stated that the Wi-Fi on campus has been an issue, and they have been working on it for over 5 years. She is happy to report that they have received some fallback funding and are going to be doing everything they can to work on the Wi-Fi upgrade. Some difficulties are because it is an information technology (IT) system, and they have to go through a few hoops with FEMA, procurement and the contractor. Everyone is aware of what is needed, and it is just the paperwork and time that goes with it. They want to get started and the funds committed before the end of September. Heat maps from AT&T have been received and they show where the good spots are and where the bad spots are. They are working with them to get things approved.

Chief Hoover stated that 2023 projects were getting in motion. For them to obtain funding, there is an internal process with FEMA. There is an opportunity to put in a number of funding asks this year to go through FEMA, DHS, and the Office of Management and Budget. The projects are deferred maintenance projects. There are things like staffing requirements, a full-time nurse, increased security presence, capital improvement needs and IT infrastructure improvements. There is a lot of work tied to the IT infrastructure funding request.

Chief Hoover stated that there are a number of items projected for 2023. The improvements are focused on the carbon footprint and environmental considerations. While they have time and reduced capacity, they want to get the improvements done. Chief Hoover asked if there were any questions.

Dr. McIntosh asked if this was the deferred maintenance emphasis list and was it appropriate of her to think that there had been huge accomplishments over the last couple of years. It used to seem like the list was so extensive and it seemed like campus was falling apart, but it did not look or feel that way now. It seemed like so many things had been accomplished. Chief Hoover stated that she attributed that to a lot of the work of Mr. Fluman, who made sure he had an active list all the time and was constantly finding funds. Over the last few years, they have had the ability to show the importance of NETC; it is not just a plot of land. They have a number of agreements with other federal entities and memoranda of understanding (MOUs) in place if things should happen that other entities of government could use the facility and how they tie into the Secret Service, FBI, Raven Rock, Department of Defense, partners at the Department of Justice, U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), etc. They have been able to articulate the importance of the campus to the student population as well as the government.

Dr. McIntosh asked if they felt they were getting the appropriate support and funding needed to maintain and support campus. Chief Hoover stated that she thought it important that the Board of

Visitors recognize that funding is fluid. Chief Hoover stated that you keep at it whether things are 100% funded or 50% funded. The campus gets used 49 weeks out of the year by students and staff.

Chief Quinn stated that Mr. Fluman had a vision on a new building by the tennis courts. That was supposed to be a health and safety building. When a lot of college campuses start attracting students, they build new health facilities for students. Chief Quinn stated that he thought that would draw more students because the health facility now is kind of depressing. Chief Hoover stated that right now it is a room with a bed in it and an office for the nurse. Chief Quinn asked whether that was still in the capital improvements and whether it could be moved up in priority. Chief Hoover replied that it was still in capital improvements. There has been a lot of discussion about that particular building. It is closer than it has been. The health, wellness and security footprint is increasing, so that building would serve that purpose as well as dorm rooms, a fitness center and classroom space for health and safety. Chief Hoover stated that they did not get a no to the idea, but it is the whole process as FEMA looks at the landscape for all buildings. Chief Quinn stated that maybe the Board of Visitors could stress and reinforce the importance of health and safety in the annual report.

Chief Hoover stated that they have an opportunity to acquire some land adjacent to the campus. It is outside the fence line but runs up against it. Campus would like to do more ground-mounted solar panels. They are running out of flat roofs to put the solar panels on. Everyone is hopeful that they can go through the land acquisition successfully in the next couple of years.

Mr. Dubay asked how many acres the potential land was. Was it double the size of campus? Chief Hoover replied no, it was probably 10 acres, but she was not sure.

Dr. Michael Macey asked about whether, in the future, there would still be hybrid classes and video streaming across the country. If so, would there need to be an IT infrastructure for that? Chief Hoover stated that she would speak briefly on that. There could be another situation where campus would have to go back to the use of technology. She stated that because of what did happen with the pandemic, it is now known where their vulnerabilities, strengths and weaknesses are, which does go back to the IT infrastructure agenda. Chief Hoover stated that even though more students are on campus, she still uses more video and bandwidth. Like any hydraulic system, there can only be so much at one time going through a pipe. The IT infrastructure improvements are based on what they need the technology for. Chief Hoover stated that there have been conversations about virtual learning. It is nice and can reach people who cannot travel, but it is not a replacement for the in-person experience. They did an excellent job with virtual when they had to do it that way. Chief Hoover stated that it was the best work for the situation that they were in. There is a need for a strong IT infrastructure, and that is why they keep pushing for this. Campus has challenges with the phone system because the system is old.

Mr. Gabliks stated that campus does not have the IT infrastructure to do what other facilities do because they do not even have an IT department. They have a lot of talented people that know a lot of stuff, but not an actual department. NETC did do a lot with Zoom, but that is a very basic platform. They can do classes in different states, but when they bring people to NETC, they have different people from all over and can communicate in person. The students are from different states and get the experience of being around someone who does the same job but is in a different

environment. NETC is not set up as an academic facility, so they do not have the infrastructure that colleges or universities have.

Chief Hoover stated that the USFA is going through a reorganization. They need to align the USFA with the 4 stars, and that means staffing as well. They have a lot of people filling in on different positions. They have had retirements and the ability to move staff around. They have people who have been on campus for a while in new positions, and they have new people that are in new positions. They have been focusing on developing and bringing together an IT team. IT is controlled by FEMA, so all the main people are downtown. The group they have on campus, of course, is focused on the campus needs. With the potential for a section manager for IT and filling the vacant program manager position, as well as bringing other groups together, that can define that IT section. Being more than 1 person deep and sharing information across all program areas will be more efficient. A lot of work has gone on by adding a new person to the IT team. How the new person sees things and deals with things is much different than how it was dealt with 10 or 15 years ago. Campus is close to getting a student to just push a button and get their transcript without picking up a phone and talking to someone.

Mr. Dubay asked how many years Mr. Fluman worked on campus and what they owed him. Chief Hoover replied that Mr. Fluman came from the Emergency Management Institute (EMI) and served as the MOSS director for about 6 years. He had been with FEMA for a very long time. Dr. McIntosh stated that she felt that Mr. Fluman should receive big recognition in the report. Mr. Fluman did great things and got things done across the campus.

Mr. Romaine asked if the Board of Visitors could send Mr. Fluman a letter congratulating and thanking him for all he had done for campus. Everyone agreed to make it known in the report and that a letter should be sent to Mr. Fluman. Chief Quinn made the first motion, and Dr. McIntosh made the second motion.

Mr. Gabliks stated that for the NFA updates they would start with Ms. Tiffany Warren of the Training, Administration, Planning and Analysis Branch.

## **National Fire Academy Updates on Developments, Deliveries, Staffing and Admissions**

### **Ms. Tiffany Warren, Branch Chief, Training, Administration, Planning and Analysis**

Ms. Warren stated that she was going to start with talking about the Government Performance and Results Act. The end-of-year results for FY 2021 on the supervisors of students trained was 92.5%. This is the supervisor who believes that their staff are better prepared as the result of the NFA training. The target that they wanted to hit is 87%. There was a 29% increase in student responses and over 100% increase in supervisor responses. They emailed everyone the survey, so they had to opt out instead of opting in.

Dr. Macey asked how they picked 87% to be the benchmark. Ms. Warren replied that she was not sure, but she did know there is an office of programs and policy analysis at FEMA headquarters and a group that determines those metrics based on a number of factors. It is decided outside of the USFA.



Ms. Warren stated that they are aiming for more diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) with the contract instructors. They have problems with instructors not winning the bid because of travel costs, where they live, etc. They have started an analysis of looking into their set rates and levels of courses and instructors. That would require a lot of research, and they have begun. They are trying to find a set rate and still have the budget to have the same number of offerings. They have separated the travel costs from the instruction cost. There are a few IT things that need taken care of before they roll that process out. They do recognize that that is something that needs to happen.

Dr. McIntosh asked if travel had been separated or if it was in the process. Ms. Warren replied that it was in the process of being separated. She stated that hopefully on the next bidding cycle it would be separated.

Mr. Dubay asked how many contract instructors they had and how many they should have. Ms. Warren stated that she did not have the exact numbers, but she knew they needed more. She stated that she could get the numbers. There are some curricula areas that have a lot and some that do not. The few numbers can impact that budget because of the need for instructors. They are actively recruiting instructors. They had trouble this year when SAM.gov did a transition. Those issues should be resolved in the next couple of months. They do have a backup process through FEMA to get people on board because of those issues.

Ms. Christine Spangler stated that they remain grossly understaffed. It is hard to interview the instructors because of work on 2 or 3 extra curricula. There are a lot of different factors that play a role in the instructor cadre.

Mr. Gabliks stated that since he has been on campus, he has heard people talking about all the hoops that they have to go through to be an instructor on campus. He asked how they get practitioners engaged as instructors. He knows that it is hard for a working fire/emergency medical services (EMS) professional to do because they would have to take a vacation or something for a 1-week or 2-week class. They do ask people if they cannot do a week at campus to do a weekend. They can bid on 2-day classes in their region. That still does not take away from all the things they have to go through to be an instructor.

Mr. Dubay stated that his question did not take into consideration all of the different curriculum areas that they need instructors for. He thanked them for the explanation and stated that it is more complex than he expected.

Chief Butler asked if the hoops the instructors have to go through are out of their control. Ms. Warren stated that when they started having issues with SAM.gov, they tried to remove one of those hoops, and they were told quickly by FEMA finance that because of the IRS reporting, they could not remove that hoop. The majority of the hoops are because of the Federal Acquisition Regulation. FEMA finance also has hoops to go through. The hoops happen outside of the USFA.

Ms. Spangler stated that they have had numerous conversations about the issue of instructors, and once they are better staffed, they could improve the process of getting contract instructors. They talked about having quarterly open sessions with Zoom for question-and-answer discussions with instructors.

Mr. Gabliks stated that in the eyes of the government, a contract instructor is no different than any other contractor in the federal system.

Mr. Dubay stated that it was a process to get into the Board of Visitors as a volunteer.

Dr. Mark Rivero asked if they had looked into recruiting instructors from colleges or universities. Mr. Gabliks stated that most of the instructors that work on campus are also working in other venues. They do have a lot of retirees that teach on campus. Sometimes those retirees lose their recency. The longer they are out of the job, the less they are connected to what they are teaching new individuals.

Mr. Lester Rich stated that one of the effective things in the Executive Fire Officer (EFO) Program and in arson is to recruit from the student cadre. They have been looking at students that are looking to take that next step.

Chief Quinn asked whether it was a funding issue that they are not fully staffed. Ms. Spangler stated that right now it is a FEMA human resource issue. They have tried 3 times for the training specialist EFO position. It took months to get a pass-over from someone that was not appropriate for the position. She stated that her branch is about 50% short, and she has been working 3 positions. Chief Quinn stated that that issue needs to be heard and made a priority.

Dr. McIntosh asked what the metric was for contract instructors. How many do they have, and what is their average participation? Also, the DEI of that with the demographics regionwide, e.g., history, career, volunteer, etc. Ms. Warren stated that they can pull that together very quickly.

Chief Kristin Crowley asked if there were any thoughts on whether she would be able to loan out her instructors. She would pay the instructor to go teach and then somehow get reimbursed for that. Ms. Warren stated that those types of things should be addressed by a lawyer because there are some concerns about providing things that look like a discount to the federal government. There are people that would teach at the NFA for free, but they cannot ethically do so as a federal entity. In the past, they have done the overarching contract. They have had contracts with entities that would provide instructors. Some of that gets to be budget prohibited. They are open to looking at the different options, but they have to run it through FEMA legal to see if they can go that way. Chief Crowley stated that when thinking about the next generation, they have to think about how to evolve, how to recruit, how to maintain, etc. They have to entice people and make it reasonable for them to do what they do. That has to be supported from the local level all the way up to the national level. Mr. Gabliks stated that it is something that will be looked into, but nothing is easy. There are a lot of policies and procedures to go through to safeguard the organizations.

Chief Butler stated that it was an interesting concept to have a cadre of local talent. It is much easier for the fire chiefs to dispatch or seek volunteers to be dispatched to teach somewhere.

Ms. Warren stated that they had an American Council on Education (ACE) review at the end of 2021 (Nov. 29 through Dec. 3). They had 15 courses reviewed, and they all retained their previously approved credit. They have 2 new courses. 1 is a 6-week online course (M0566, "Hot Topics Research in Fire and Life Safety"), and it received 3 semester hours in the upper division baccalaureate degree category. The other is a 6-week online course (M0576, "Training Program

Design”), which received 3 semester hours in the upper division baccalaureate degree category. This year’s ACE review is scheduled from Dec. 5 through Dec. 9. ACE will let them know if those dates work. Ms. Warren stated that she does not have the list of courses that will be reviewed, but it can be provided if needed.

Dr. McIntosh asked how many courses in total had been reviewed by ACE. Ms. Warren stated that she did not have that information at hand but could get it. Mr. Rich stated that almost all the NFA courses are ACE review courses.

Chief Butler asked what elements of instructor demographics were collected for reporting. Ms. Warren replied that what they had requested so far is where they are in the country, how many do they have, which curricula areas do they go to, etc. Ms. Spangler asked whether they could collect gender and race. Ms. Warren replied that she was not sure, but she could ask about that.

Dr. Macey asked, from the perspective of the NFA, what DEI looks like and what it means. How does the NFA measure it, and how will they know of its success? Ms. Warren replied that in the overall strategic plan, they all have DEI initiatives. They are looking at what it looks like in practice and how to implement it and what their metrics would be for that. They are still in the working phase. They do know that there is an issue there. They do not have those actual goals set yet, but they are working on them. Dr. Macey asked if they had defined the terms. Ms. Warren replied they do have the FEMA definitions for DEI, but she does not have them with her. Mr. Gabliks stated that they need more diversity on campus. They need more women, more people of color and more representation outside the mid-Atlantic states. There are a lot of factors to that issue. Mr. Gabliks stated that he spoke at the Black Chief Officers Committee (BCOC) Conference last month. There were 3 people that said they would be interested in working at the NFA. The question is, would they get through the hoops and come to work on campus? Most of the instructors that work on campus now are white, male and retired.

Dr. McIntosh stated that DEI has always been a discussion, so why not put it on the agenda for next year? They have had people that have come to campus and said, “Nobody looks like me,” and they do not feel welcome, so they do not come back. They want to have a place where everybody feels welcome. Mr. Gabliks stated that it is that way with instructors and students.

Chief Quinn asked how long they had been doing ACE reviews. Mr. Rich replied probably more than 6 years because they were doing it before he started on campus. There is a 3-year cycle with ACE, and they try to get all the courses back through. New and updated courses have to go through the ACE review process. There is an uptick in the ACE reviews because the 3-year cycle is catching up, and the new stuff is being added. Mr. Gabliks stated that ACE has been around for at least 10 years. ACE means having a third-party review on how the courses are doing. Dr. Rivero stated that he believes the ACE reviews go back to 2008. It is a very productive program and has been going on for a while.

Ms. Warren stated that if anyone thinks of more things (data points) they want to know, just let her know. Her branch is the keeper of the data for the NFA. Mr. Gabliks stated that admissions does collect race on the students.

Dr. Macey asked Ms. Warren if she were sitting where the Board of Visitors is, what question she would ask. What is something that keeps her up at night? Ms. Warren stated that the thing that keeps her up at night is that they are very data rich. Some data they have to put in the system from paper records. They have been able to get the Excel data in raw form to analyze. She stated that they have a lot of dead capital, and they do not get to use it as effectively as they can. Ms. Warren stated that she would love to hear what data everyone is looking for because she will go on a search to find it or find a way to collect it.

Mr. Gabliks stated that he will cover the Education, Training and Partnerships Branch that Mr. Ken Farmer used to take care of because Mr. Farmer retired.

### **National Fire Academy Updates on Education, Training and Partnerships Branch Mr. Eriks Gabliks, Superintendent, National Fire Academy**

Mr. Gabliks stated that the challenges they have had are related to the number of retirements. They are going through the process of recruitment. Where they are at right now is that they pick their number and wait to move forward until the recruitment is opened. It can take up to 6 months just to get a position in the system to be able to recruit it. There are people that say they would love to work on campus, but they are from Utah, and the training specialists need to be on campus. Mr. Gabliks stated that he would discuss NFA Online, state fire training grants, Fire and Emergency Services Higher Education (FESHE), state weekends, and off-campus deliveries.

Mr. Gabliks stated that with FESHE, they are reimagining the position that used to be the FESHE-only position. They have kept that position vacant from a cost-saving standpoint. They do have a budget, but they do not have enough budget to cover salary and benefits. So, the NFA has to keep 2 positions vacant at all times to cover that. They are merging FESHE and state fire training grants together. Then they will have a FESHE component and a state fire training grant component. Mr. Gabliks stated that they have currently more than 100 colleges and universities involved in FESHE. They want to build that because they know there are programs that are not engaged with the NFA. There are many colleges and universities that do not offer FESHE but would love to be a partner with the NFA. For example, the EFO Program; if a school offers a master's degree in public administration, why is the NFA not working with them as an added value for the students and fire and EMS? So, they are going to have discussions about articulation agreements with those colleges and universities. The NFA is not an academic institution, but if they were partnered with a college or university that recognized the EFO Program and took so many credits, why wouldn't they do that and add value for the students? They want the position when they fill it to interact with the ACE process. It makes sense because of the relationship with the colleges and universities. They still have fire and EMS programs that do not know that NFA exists and do not know what the NFA does. They have seen a growth in homeland security and emergency management degrees. They want to work on that and be a partner with EMI higher education. The Fire Department Instructors Conference (FDIC) has offered FESHE a place to have their symposium in 2023 and fold it into their conference. Mr. Gabliks made it clear to the group that while there is nothing preventing colleges and universities from doing that, they cannot do that as a federal agency. They cannot cross a bridge and endorse a conference by saying this is the NFA FESHE Symposium at FDIC. They would have to do it differently. Mr. Gabliks stated that there would be a lot more added value

to go to FDIC. They could have an NFA FESHE meeting at FDIC without endorsing the conference.

Mr. Gabliks stated that the state fire training grants were being rolled out on that day. There would be \$20,000 allocated to each state that allows them to deliver NFA classes. They are updating the reporting requirements and processes. They plan to ask the states how many people they trained and what area they train in. They want to be able to point out the return on investment with the \$20,000. Some states do not take the \$20,000 grants from the NFA as the amount of overhead it would take to process the grant does not make it worthwhile. In some states like North Dakota, the \$20,000 is a big deal. If they take that money and deliver 10 2-day classes to career and volunteer firefighters and emergency medical technicians, that is a benefit to them that they did not have. The grants reach more than 10,000 students each year.

Chief Butler asked if the money could be repurposed if it did not get used. Mr. Gabliks said it could be. If 40 states accept the money and 10 do not, they could reinvest the funds into NFA classes, and most of those are done off campus. They send out updates to the state partners saying that they are offering 100 additional classes. Some states are active and will take the extra classes, and some states will say they have enough. They could also invest that money into developing courses on campus. If courses need to be updated, then they have the money they could use for that. When a state gets the \$20,000, and they only use \$10,000, then that money will be lost.

Mr. Romaine asked if the money that is not used could go to grants and then be given to another state that could use it. Mr. Gabliks replied that it could not under the current system because they would have to issue a notice of funding opportunity. It takes time to do the paperwork. And then how would that be judged? They are not set up to give \$12,000 or \$15,000; it is \$20,000. They do not have the staff or process to manage that because of all the different costs in different states; it is too much to factor in. If the states apply for the grant, then they can get the \$20,000.

Dr. Macey asked whether they looked at the pueblos and tribes differently. Mr. Gabliks replied that they did not. The tribes are not included in that grant because there are more than 100 tribes across the country. It is only opened to the 50 state training systems, which includes the territories. They expect the states to reach out to the tribal fire and EMS agencies in addition to the municipal fire departments, etc.

Dr. McIntosh asked if that was explicit to the contract agreement. Mr. Gabliks replied that he had not looked at that. They have had discussion with the states on that, and they do include the tribal agencies. They do have some tribes that choose not to engage with their state system because of their sovereign nation status. Each tribe is different with their relationships.

Mr. Gabliks stated that state weekends are getting back to normal. They had canceled a number of weekends this year and pushed classes back into the states. All states are coming back in 2023. From October on, all the states that were always on campus will be back. They will be offering more of the national weekends — there is an interest in those — as their budget allows. State weekends are not expensive because they are 2 days. They are looking to add focus weekends. An example would be to have a leadership weekend with different leadership classes or a command-and-control weekend, etc. They have reached out to Women in Fire and discussed having a

women's weekend at the NFA. That will give an opportunity for them to share what they are doing plus give the NFA the opportunity to work on diversity issues. They are careful about not doing the national weekends at the cost of state weekends, so they do understand the demographics there. They are having discussions with states that do not get big numbers, and they are opening up their classes to other participants. The national weekends also bring a lot of diversity into the classrooms because they are from different states, and different states do different things.

Mr. Dubay asked how many national weekends are being hosted. Mr. Gabliks replied that they have only done maybe 3 so far. They would like to try to offer 1 every quarter. That will blend in with the 20 or so state weekends. Mr. Gabliks stated that he had people this weekend say that they did not know that the NFA did those classes. People are saying that they do not know who their state training provider is. There needs to be more communication.

Mr. Gabliks stated that with off-campus classes, each state gets 9 2-day classes, and each region gets 3 6-day classes. They have reallocated classes because of COVID-19; some states were not doing these classes in state training, so they put them back in the system and other states got additional classes. All the state fire training academies work differently. They have a new partnership starting with the New York City Fire Department (FDNY)/New York State Academy of Fire Science. The NFA will be bringing 2-day classes and eventually 6-day classes to the FDNY and academy. New York City is interested in getting involved again as they have not been for a while.

Mr. Gabliks stated that they had offered a lot of Zoom classes. The benefit was that it allowed them to stay relevant, and they did not have to close the doors of campus. They did reach career and volunteer fire and EMS providers in parts of the country who had never been to an NFA class. Zoom does take away the worries and issues involved in traveling to places. They have also had international people involved in the Zoom classes. Mr. Gabliks stated that one of Mr. Rich's Zoom classes had someone from the Bahamas. Mr. Rich stated that they also had someone from American Samoa, and that person would wake up at 2 a.m. to take the class because of the time difference.

Mr. Gabliks stated that they needed to add more classes to the "display case." The 6-day classes are really the display case and get a lot of people to come to campus. The display case is a little thin and stale, so they need to add some classes. They need to bolster the 2-day offerings and do more in that area.

Mr. Dubay asked if the regional deliveries were based on the FEMA regions. Mr. Gabliks replied that they were. The NFA has a co-chair in each of the regions in fire and EMS. They get a list and figure out from the states and metros what they want to have in what region, and the NFA will bring those classes to that region.

Dr. Macey asked whether the NFA wanted to offer more than 9 classes or if they wanted to change the types of classes being offered. Mr. Gabliks replied that his primary goal was to put more classes in the display case. They have heard that people want newer classes to choose from. They have the same people from the same states that keep coming and taking classes because they have been

updated, but they want something new. They could always use more classes because, with training, it is never done. People can always learn more.

Mr. Gabliks stated that they are still working through the process of Blackboard. They are trying to connect 3 different federal systems with Blackboard. It is different from a college because the NFA has the security hoops. That system is moving forward.

Mr. Gabliks stated that they have a strong partnership with the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG). They manage the online courses S-130, "Firefighter Training," and S-190, "Introduction to Wildland Fire Behavior," for the structural wildland partners. Students could take the academic portion of wildland urban interface (WUI) firefighting and get those out of the way and then go to the training ground and do the hands-on part. Mr. Gabliks stated that in FY 2022, more than 35,000 people completed some kind of an online class as of Aug. 10. There were 387 new registrations between Aug. 1 to 8.

Mr. Romaine asked if they had an idea of the breakdown between the classes. Mr. Gabliks replied that they did not but that he could get that information. Mr. Gabliks asked if there were any more questions. There were none. Mr. Gabliks turned the meeting over to Mr. Rich with the Response Branch.

### **National Fire Academy Updates on Response Branch Mr. Lester Rich, Branch Chief, Response Branch**

Mr. Rich stated that he would go over the curricula that are in the Response Branch. Incident management and coordination have R0305, "Type 3 All-Hazards Incident Management Team," and there are a couple of developments going on. There is an entry-level all-hazards incident management team (AHIMT) course and a qualification team course. That is FEMA-initiated, and they are involved; it will be piloted at the end of the month. FEMA is looking for a search and rescue model for the AHIMTs and wants to make sure they are qualified. The AHIMT qualification course will be for that reason. More on this will follow. Mr. Rich stated that part of the campus tour would be in Building S to see the new simulation equipment.

Chief Quinn asked if that course would be Type 1. Mr. Rich replied that it is Type 3. Mr. Gabliks stated that NWCG has the Type 1 and 2 national team. Type 3 is AHIMT, and they have a partnership with NWCG that is going to adopt the AHIMT-NFA-FEMA standard and move away from the NWCG traditional standard. They have run out of teams and people. They are realizing that there are not only structural fire agencies but also government agencies. The Beltway region has a number of incident management teams. They are looking to bolster capacity for all-hazards.

Mr. Rich stated that another curricula area is EMS. There is a plan in the works that will expand the EMS cadre in the NFA, and it will include a training specialist. It will be an additional training specialist and an additional program support person for EMS. Fire and Investigative Sciences is the investigation curriculum, and that continues to move along with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) partners. They are also short staffed, so that makes the NFA down 1 full-time ATF agent. They are looking to add some 2-day courses to the Fire and

Investigative Sciences curriculum and the Hazardous Materials curriculum. They have a “Fire Investigation: Fire as a Weapon” course and a “Hazmat Response” course that are coming in as 2-day courses, which they may roll out this year. The new curriculum expansion is Responder Health and Safety. About 3 years ago, that broke out into its own curriculum area. Mr. George Morgan had that curriculum area, and he has retired, so that is assigned to a current training specialist for now. The Planning and Information Management and Training Programs curricula areas are being covered by the Response Branch for now because of the staffing issue.

Dr. Macey asked whether the AHIMT is a certification. Mr. Rich replied that it is a qualification. Mr. Rich stated that his understanding is that FEMA is looking at it based on the search and rescue model. They want to make sure that when all the FEMA teams are deployed, they have a list of federal resources to draw on to back stop and support FEMA AHIMTs. They want to make sure the AHIMTs are qualified. They want to make sure a team that has finished all their individual courses in EMI can function as a team and become qualified. Dr. Macey asked who qualifies them. Mr. Rich replied that it will be based on the curricula that was written through National Fire Programs (NFP), the NFA and FEMA. FEMA would be the qualifying agency. Mr. Rich stated that with the fire investigation courses, they do not certify students as an investigator, but they have an agreement with a professional organization that will issue a certification. Mr. Rich stated that there will be 3 teams coming in for the pilot for AHIMT.

Mr. Rich showed a slide with some definitions and a table with staffing information on it. The asterisk beside EMS is because they are trying to bolster Mr. Mike Stern with another training specialist and maybe a program support person. Responder Health and Safety shows that it has a vacant position. Mr. Dave Donohue is covering Hazardous Materials as well as Planning and Information Management and the Training Programs curricula areas. Mr. Kevin Oliver is a new hire and has taken over the Fire and Investigative Sciences curriculum. Ms. Susan Denning is the Instructional System Specialist (ISS), and there is a vacant position for an ISS because Ms. Spangler got promoted. They have a program support specialist and an administrative person also.

Mr. Rich stated that there are some courses under development. There are 3 hazardous materials courses scheduled for development this year. They are in a contract and waiting for funding. The curriculum overview for fire investigation that was done 3 years ago was delayed because of COVID-19. They are back to implementing those courses. The “Fire Investigation: Forensics” course is brand new and is getting piloted the third week of September. It will be like crime scene investigation for the fire investigator because they sometimes get caught up in floor patterns, blood spatter, etc. There is a spot near the burn range that is their “body farm.” They will have 4 shallow graves in there and some nursing mannequins, a body in a barrel (not real bodies) and some practical exercises for the forensic class. “Fire Investigation: Fire as a Weapon” is the new 2-day course that will be coming out. Every 3 to 5 years they will bring in a panel of nationwide experts to review a curriculum with the training specialist to make sure everything is on track, and that is happening for the EMS curriculum. Mr. Rich stated that they have purchased and installed the new simulation system.

Mr. Rich stated that the last slide shows the courses that are going to be ACE reviewed. They are all courses that are rereviews or have been updated. They do already have credits. Those courses are:



- F/W0166, “EMS Functions in ICS.”
- R/N0147, “Emergency Medical Services: Incident Operations.”
- R/N0615, “Hazardous Materials Code Enforcement.”
- R/N0655, “Advanced Science of Hazardous Materials/Weapons of Mass Destruction Response.”
- F/W0549, “Emergency Response to Terrorism: Strategic Considerations.”
- F/W/S0770, “Fire Investigation: First Responders.”
- R0772, “Fire Investigation: Essentials.”

Ms. Spangler stated that “Fire Investigation: Essentials” is the only 10-day course that they designed and completed internally without any contractor help. That was a success, and they are really proud of that. Mr. Rich stated that it is a popular class. Mr. Gabliks stated that there is a waiting list for that class. Mr. Rich stated that that class is unique in a lot of ways, and both firefighters and police officers take that class.

Dr. Macey asked if “developed internally” means the NFA staff. Ms. Spangler replied that it does.

Mr. Gabliks introduced Ms. Spangler; she is the branch chief of the Leadership and Community Risk Reduction Branch.

**National Fire Academy Updates on Leadership and Community Risk Reduction Branch**  
**Ms. Christine Spangler, Branch Chief, Leadership and Community Risk Reduction Branch**

Ms. Spangler stated that she came to NFA from EMI because the system is so much better. It is much more effective when there is a training specialist who is a subject matter expert (SME), and they also have an ISS. She stated that not many places have that setup, but it is a great setup.

Ms. Spangler stated that there were a couple of changes. They actually found a candidate for the EFO Program. Mr. Ed Kensler would be starting in October. He is a current instructor. The EFO Program was divided into 4 years and managed by 4 different training specialists. She did not know why they had different people working on different things with EFO and Managing Officer; there was no consistency. That is changing, and Mr. Kensler’s primary responsibility will be EFO. The way they have designed the system will support that. Mr. Keith Heckler is the training specialist for Prevention, and Mr. Mike Weller is the training specialist for Community Risk Reduction. They are both passionate about those areas. Mr. Heckler has an asterisk because he is taking on the Executive Leadership Skills Series, and Mr. Weller is taking on the safety portion of the Managing Officer Program, the first course. The WUI position is new. The Planning and Information Management and Training Programs areas have Mr. Donohue as the training specialist, and they are now with Mr. Rich’s branch. Ms. Tina Crevier took Mr. John Carnagis’ place. Ms. Crevier is the program administrator. Ms. Crevier was in the position as course support and got promoted about 2 1/2 years ago. Mr. Daniel Novak is coming over from IT to fill the course support position, which will greatly help Ms. Spangler with the data analysis she is doing now independently.

Ms. Spangler stated that the Leadership and Community Risk Reduction curricula areas are:

- EFO.
- Managing Officer.
- Leadership and Executive Development.
- Community Risk Reduction.
- Planning and Information Management.
- Training Management.
- Fire Prevention: Public Education/Technical.
- WUI.

Ms. Spangler stated that they have not done a lot with WUI; they will not until they bring someone in that is split between command and control and community risk reduction.

Ms. Spangler stated that they have some courses that are under development:

- “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Fire Service” (2-3 day).
- R/N0393, “Plans Review for Fire and Life Safety” (6 day).
- P0264, “Plan Review of Fire Alarm System Installations” (6 day).
- “Youth Firesetting Interviewing and Educational Intervention Strategies” (2 day).
- M5104, “Applications in the Exercise of Leadership: Capstone I.”
- R5204, “Applications in the Exercise of Leadership: Capstone II.”

The DEI class is going to be a 2- to 3-day class. They have engaged some national leaders in the area. They are waiting for the contract award. This would be the first of its own curriculum. There are a few plans to review courses and the youth firesetting course that is under development. Ms. Spangler stated that she will discuss more about the EFO Program as she goes on. They are in the final stage of the EFO Program. They have the community risk reduction curriculum review that is going on. A candidate that is participating in the community risk reduction curriculum review is an EFO graduate. He is recognized as a national expert, so he will bring a lot to the table.

Ms. Spangler stated that the courses that are going for the ACE review are not new courses; they are going through for a second cycle. The only new courses are the EFO courses. All the EFO courses are going to be reviewed, and they are looking for them to be graduate courses. The courses going for ACE review are:

- R/N0385, “Applications of Community Risk Reduction.”
- R/N0378, “Demonstrating Your Community Risk Reduction Program's Worth.”
- R/N0671, “Managing Effective Fire Prevention Programs.”
- R/N0673, “Service Area Risk Reduction.”
- F/W0761, “New Fire Chief: Administrative Issues.”
- R/N0335, “Administration of Public Assistance for Community Recovery.”
- R/N0492, “Emergency Resource Deployment Planning (SOC).”
- R0506, “Executive Planning.”
- R5201, “Exercise of Executive Leadership: Self.”

- R5202, “Exercise of Executive Leadership: Organization.”
- R5203, “Exercise of Executive Leadership: Community.”

Ms. Spangler stated that she got involved with the EFO Program in August 2021 as program manager. Mr. Rich had briefed out before that he was over both branches. They adopted a program management approach and released the existing EFO team. The training specialists that were doing it cared about it, but they were exhausted. When they let them go, it did put more work on Ms. Spangler, but it got them to where they are now.

Dr. Macey asked what she meant by letting them go. Ms. Spangler replied that they were let go just from the EFO curriculum. EFO for 2 to 3 years was a team approach. They had all the different training specialists meeting on a regular basis as a team, and it was very difficult to come to consensus. Everyone was just getting worn down, and being short-staffed made it worse. There was a credibility problem with the EFO Program. The first thing they did was to review the existing course materials and student feedback. The feedback was the important part. What they found is that they only had 1 1/2 classes to show for it. That gave them a sense of where they were.

Ms. Spangler showed a slide with comparisons of the programs. When she came on in August, they had lost about half of the EFO students because they did not make it through Semester 1, which was a red flag. When looking at it, in theory, it was good, but realistically someone could get a graduate degree in less time than finishing the program. Ms. Spangler was told that they switched to that program because they wanted a graduate PhD-type thesis for the research paper to push the field forward. They had to look at what they had and where they wanted to be. There was no infrastructure to support the old program. After doing the surveys, the second table on the slide is where they are now.

Ms. Spangler stated that all of the old M-coded courses were terminated when they started restructuring things. They met with the instructors to gather feedback. At first, everyone was furious that they were being terminated and they realized no one was doing the same thing and everyone was on a different page. All the instructors are back on board and happy. Mr. Gabliks stated that that tied into a question Dr. Macey had earlier asked about the high dropout rate. Ms. Spangler did some digging and found out why. Ms. Spangler stated that she went back and started reading the needs assessments from 2016. They found that they were not addressing some of those needs. When the students were being communicated to, they were getting conflicting communication. They formulated a communication strategy and got the information out to share where they were with the EFO Program and that they still cared.

Ms. Spangler stated that they have talked about the admissions system. They are using the application system as a registration system, and that is not what it is. When people apply to the EFO or the Managing Officer Program, they are not applying to a program; they are applying to a class. They historically set up a program that has requirements outside of those classes. Admissions can give a report on who finished the Managing Officer Program classes but not who finished their capstone. She stated that she had to go somewhere else for that information. Sometimes they did not even know how many EFO students they had or how many had dropped out, etc. They created a withdraw survey so that when they lost someone, they would get that survey. They built a new data tracking mechanism; it is very basic, and it is a spreadsheet. A lot of the student survey

feedback showed that the services provided by the NETC Library were very outdated. There was no fire science literature. They are looking to expand the research into public health and public administration. Ms. Spangler stated that the library did not understand why the students would need full-text articles. They are looking into partnering with some universities, but there is a lot to that process.

Dr. McIntosh asked about partnering with the United States Naval Academy. Ms. Spangler replied that they have looked at that, but that is a different agency, and they have different security measures. They are looking into all avenues. There always seems to be a barrier of sorts. They have talked with Mount Saint Mary's, and they may be able to help with some things. Unlike a university, they do not have any help for writing, and they do not want to cut someone out because they cannot write; they want them to succeed. When the survey was done in August, it showed that 33% of the current EFO students either had a graduate degree or were in a graduate degree program.

Ms. Spangler stated that they started redesigning the second course and put together contracts for the third course. They drafted a new handbook because they knew people would want to see one. Then they started planning the new capstone courses. The first course is R5201, "Exercise of Executive Leadership: Self." The second course is R5202, "Exercise of Executive Leadership: Organization." The third course is R5203, "Exercise of Executive Leadership: Community." The first course is a 10-day course. That will stay a 10-day course because the students really need that to help build relationships. They are making the next 2 courses 6-day courses. With those courses, they do have about 40 hours of pre-course work. That is to not only inform them but to prepare them for the practical application. The mediated course surveys came back showing that the students had a lot of time constraints. They want to be able to work through those at their own speed. The pre-course work will be important for ACE accreditation on a graduate level.

Mr. Dubay asked how Ms. Spangler would compare and contrast the 10- to 12-day mediated from the new model to the prior model. Is it that it is self-paced and not scheduled? Ms. Spangler replied that there are a lot of things. They did not take into consideration the amount of effort that it would take to complete the mediated portions. They gave more thought to the time put into the new courses because of all the writing and research. The times have been averaging out to about 40 hours for the second mediated course. Some feedback they got with the first mediated course was that students did not see the application with a lot of what they were doing. With the mediated courses, the students had to meet every week. They had 2 papers due a week, so it was a lot.

Ms. Spangler stated that they did stay with the self, organization and community parts. The R5203 course was traditionally a community risk reduction class, and they really broadened that for this course with some public policy. The pre-course work is for students to do interviews from different facets of their community, and when they come to class, they are shocked at what they have learned. Ms. Spangler stated that the capstone is set up to be similar to a graduate degree, and at the end, the students will have a research paper, portfolio and a presentation. The difference between this one and the old one is that it is specific to their research and topic. The thinking in that course is to really prepare them for the research paper.

Ms. Spangler stated that since January she has been meeting with all the Year 4 legacy students from every class that they had. Those meetings were very informative. It was very apparent that the Applied Research Project (ARP) process was falling apart. It was a good process, but the administration of it was not good. Before the students would come to take their resident 6-day course, they would turn in their paper and portfolio. They would do a presentation in the last 6-day course. They would make it challenging, so it is not just a presentation. They would get to see everyone's presentations. The final 6-day course would also include the Gettysburg trip.

Mr. Gabliks stated that from sitting in on the debrief of the first community course, some students said that they did not have time for the community stuff; they were too busy. It depends on where they are from because they said in some towns, the city manager said it was their job and not the fire chief's job.

Dr. Macey asked if they worked on the capstone from Day 1 to the end, or whether they took the 12 weeks to write the capstone. Ms. Spangler stated that they are made aware of it the first time they are on campus. They had one of the SMEs who is also a facilitator for the capstone come in and talk to the classes and let them know what to expect. They are doing incremental research on their projects. They want them to be exposed to everything before their final topic. This program is going to be what they make it, and some students just do it to check a box. Ms. Spangler stated that it is amazing to watch the growth.

Dr. Macey asked whether the capstone is more of a project or a thesis. What does it look like at the end? Ms. Spangler replied that in the handbook they talk about the portfolio, research paper and presentation. It is consistent with what a lot of graduate schools are doing. For the portfolio, they will pick some things they have worked on throughout the program, and they will write an introspective type of paper on that. For the research paper, they will pick a topic and do independent research on that. They will have to use peer-reviewed literature, not other ARPs, to support their topics. In the last class, they will do their presentation. The portfolio and research paper will be graded before they arrive as a resident. They do this so that if someone is really not doing well with the paper, they should not come for the course. Next month, they are piloting the first capstone course. Ms. Spangler stated that she is waiting to schedule the final capstone course to talk to the students about the first one. They would probably have to make a time between the first capstone and the second capstone for them to finish and have it graded.

Ms. Spangler is scheduling everything for the students. She stated that she is not going through NFA Admissions. She uses Survey Monkey to query the students; they would give them some choices and then she builds around that. If she has 40 students interested in a January class, then she adds that class.

Chief Butler asked if there was an increased focus on DEI in the EFO Program. Ms. Spangler replied that it is touched on very abstractly when bias is talked about in the R5201 course. It is addressed in the R5202 course. They have a fire psychologist who comes in and teaches a section (this person also helped with the rewrite of that section). Ms. Spangler stated that the students either like talking about it or they do not like talking about it. They had some issues with an instructor, and now they hand-pick the instructors for those classes. They have come up with 2 levels of criteria for instructors. The practitioner has got to be a current chief or has been one within

5 years, or an academic person who has a higher-level degree or has a specialty degree in administration, like a psychologist, etc.

Chief Crowley stated that it is good that the DEI is within the course materials, but it needs to be stressed throughout the careers of the students and through their leadership. Ms. Spangler stated that Chief Crowley was 100% right. Ms. Spangler stated that it does naturally evolve because she watches it in the classes. They did not grandfather in existing EFO instructors. She has met with all the EFO instructors to see how they are at being a leader and at being open to DEI, and there is a whole list of things she lets them know about what is expected from them.

Dr. McIntosh asked if the people who dropped out of the old program had been approached about the new program. Ms. Spangler stated that she had talked to people about coming back for the new program. So much time had gone by that they have moved on. Ms. Spangler stated that there is a comparison chart of the programs that does need to be updated. There is still a lot of writing and academic rigor, but it is distributed differently. Mr. Gabliks stated that there is more writing in the new program.

Dr. McIntosh asked about the student who made it through the first capstone but may not be ready for the second. Is there an opportunity for people to stretch out their timeline? Ms. Spangler replied that they could. The students who stay together in the cohorts form strong cliques that really impact the rest of their classes. They have talked about creating a community of practice once they get the learning management system up and running. This would be a place everyone could go and enter information, and it would have bios there for instructors. She stated that she would like to have something similar to doctors and dentists like where they could post their information, and the students could reach out to them.

Ms. Spangler showed a slide that gave some information about how often they were offering classes. Sometimes they had the same classes going on at the same time. She stated that it had been a great idea to do this. Then they have 4 instructors on campus and then everyone gets to meet everyone in the auditorium, and it is a good networking experience. Ms. Spangler stated that when meeting with the Year 4 students, it became obvious that they were not doing anything for the EFO graduates, and they should be. They do have the symposium, and they are trying to build a better relationship with the EFO section of the International Association of Fire Chiefs. In September 2022, Ms. Spangler would like to put together a quarterly EFO newsletter for posting on the website that will have alumni hotspot highlights. They will have updates of what is going on in the program, alumni highlights and instructor highlights. That will become a good networking tool for people. There will also be some revisions to the EFO admission process. They will have a website with the list of alumni. Ms. Spangler stated that she has found that people lie about being EFO graduates. She would like to have a website where there are students' names and when they graduated, and if they would choose to have their names actively linked, they can.

Ms. Spangler stated that currently they have 245 students. There were 89 that completed the first semester before COVID-19. They have had 239 class completions since January.

Ms. Spangler stated that they do need to update their application process and criteria. The criteria are vague, and the rating system is extremely vague. They need to have a rating system that is transparent so that everyone knows what they are looking for. There needs to be an essay

component. They want to engage stakeholders, but they are not sure how. They need to do this very quickly. She stated that it needs to be consistent and transparent. They have engaged the EFO section for their input. She would like to finalize this before October. They need to have a definitive time for students replying and a definitive time for reviewing. Then it does not keep people waiting.

Dr. Macey asked about the current capacity. Ms. Spangler replied that that depends on how staffed they are. She thinks they should start smaller because once the last class is done, they can take a step back and have a group of people look at the curriculum as a whole. Maybe 100 to 200 people — usually 200 — are accepted, and that is a lot. It will also depend on the criteria because they seem to have changed with keeping the numbers at a certain level. They have to be quality-specific when they are accepting people.

Chief Crowley asked about the time frame from the completion of the application to the end of the program. Ms. Spangler stated that they were counting the start of the program from the time a person finishes the first course. There are so many schedule changes all the time. From the time the student finishes the first course, they could finish in 2 years. They are giving 3 stipends a year to EFO students. If someone's schedule allows it, they could finish 3 courses in 1 year and then just focus on the capstone. Chief Crowley stated that, on average, students could finish in about 2 years. Ms. Spangler stated that without exact data, she does not like to make assumptions. They will need about 3 solid years to engage that. Chief Crowley stated that they will have a lot of younger generations coming into the profession, so that will make the people coming to the EFO Program a lot younger. Ms. Spangler stated that they want that. Mr. Gabliks stated that 2 people that took the classes last week had mentioned that when they take the next class, they would be in a different agency. Ms. Spangler stated that everyone here would probably be a stakeholder to whom they could reach out for help with the process. Ms. Spangler asked if there were any more questions about EFO.

Dr. Rivero stated that the master's degree program in his university was one of the first to transfer in 9 credits of the EFO Program. Some will allow students to transfer in 6 credits. They had people calling the project a master's thesis. He stated that it should be specific because they had students apply for jobs, and the interviewer was asking what their master's thesis topic was. When the person described the paper, supposedly it was not a thesis; it was a project. Dr. Rivero asked if the EFO Program is in line with what the people will need to move onward in the world. He stated that he knew 2 people who dropped the EFO Program because it was too confusing, and they are not going back. They were going to move on and get their master's degree and move to the next level.

Ms. Spangler stated that Dr. Rivero was right; it is not a thesis. Half of the instructors are not even qualified to grade a thesis. The current iteration of this does address everything that Dr. Rivero mentioned. Once the program goes through ACE review and it gets a graduate credit, then the schools will make the decision of what they will accept and what they will not. Dr. Rivero stated that the students should be aware of that information. Ms. Spangler stated that the current students are well aware of that. She stated that they do monthly Zoom sessions with EFO students where they can ask questions. They need to see what the ACE credits will be. She stated that she is contacted by schools that have an articulation agreement or MOU. They are trying to put together a template for the EFO Program. The schools will accept a certain level of credit, but the NFA

does not get any information. She would like for the schools to give an annual report of who is using that credit because there is no way to track it. If there were a formal agreement, they could then collect that data.

Dr. Macey asked if the capstone guidelines on the website were current. Ms. Spangler replied that they are the new guidelines. She stated that she compared the ARP with the thesis. She combined those and ran them through a bunch of faculty and a lot of different stakeholders, and that is how they arrived at where they are now. Ms. Spangler stated that the guidelines for the old thesis were never finished. When they started the program, the rubrics were not even done. The rubric for this is different. If someone is not good at writing and they had a great idea and followed through on it, they would not fail. With the old rubrics, they would have failed.

Ms. Spangler showed a slide with the Managing Officer Program numbers on it. She stated that the numbers were not accurate. They have 285 current students in the Managing Officer Program. Year 1 has 105 students, and Year 2 has 180 students. In the application period ending 2022, there was a total of 185 applicants; 94 applicants were accepted and 91 were rejected. They were not rejected because they were not qualified; it was because of space. They know they are going to be revising it, and they did not want the same problem as they had with the EFO Program.

Ms. Spangler stated that the plan is to put together a package. They know this program needs a refresh, but they are not sure how extensive it needs to be. They need to engage stakeholders and put together focus groups to figure it out. They need to do a gap analysis. So many states are doing their own training, and they need to see what is out there, but they have not had time. They need to know what infrastructure is needed to support the program. The courses for this may be fine and just need to be made relevant. There may be other areas that they want more information from. Maybe there could be a group of courses that students could pick 4 from to complete the program. Once they finish the criteria, then they could apply for a certificate instead of the NFA tracking them. This is not available to all the students, so if they want to make it available to everyone, then how could they do that? They need to engage stakeholders to see what they think, and they need to think this through. Mr. Gabliks stated that some volunteers feel excluded from this. There could be an opportunity for online versus in person. The EFO is also interested in being on the Managing Officer Program redesign. Ms. Spangler stated that she is not a fire person so she would need help with it. Where does the Managing Officer Program stop, and where does the EFO Program begin? The question they get all the time is where the students belong.

Mr. Gabliks turned the meeting over to Mr. David Brummett for the ethics briefing.

## **Ethics Training**

### **Mr. David Brummett, FEMA Office of Chief Counsel**

Mr. Brummett is the embedded attorney and the ethics counselor who advises the NFA and the Board of Visitors. Mr. Brummett stated that 7 out of 8 of the current Board of Visitors had had this briefing, and that there have been no ethics issues from any Board member this past year.



Mr. Brummett proceeded with delivering the annual Ethics Briefing as required for SGEs. The briefing consisted of a 42-slide PowerPoint presentation tailored for the Board by the Office of Chief Council.

Mr. Brummett offered to take questions from the members, either in the room or directly by email or by phone. Mr. Brummett thanked everyone for listening and concluded the briefing.

### **National Fire Academy, Superintendent's Updates**

#### **Mr. Eriks Gabliks, Superintendent, National Fire Academy**

Mr. Gabliks stated that what the Board of Visitors has heard from NFA staff is that they are moving to a student-centric approach. That is the number 1 item in the strategic plan for the NFA. There are some challenges the NFA is having with staffing, recruiting and hiring. There have been some challenges and successes on campus the past year. Health and safety; the NFA has never been through a pandemic, but they managed to get the campus open and running. They have never had a nurse, and now they have one. They are putting that in as a budget request to have a nurse on campus at all times. That is important because there was a student on campus this weekend that had chest pains. They have delivered training both on campus and off campus. They did a lot with Zoom. They did a lot of outreach and engagement with their stakeholders. They always want to engage with the Board of Visitors. They are trying to be more engaged with different organizations as they update different programs. They want to get a second set of eyes to make sure they are meeting the mark. They want to maintain partnerships with national associations, and Chief Hoover and Dr. Moore-Merrell are all in with that. Dr. Moore-Merrell has really embraced the 4 stars of the hotfoot logo: fire and EMS training, research, data collection, and prevention. They are creating partnerships with a number of different national organizations: NWCG, National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF), USCG, U.S. Secret Service (USSS), etc. The USCG has sent some of their hazardous materials people to take the hazardous materials courses. The USSS has taken the I-300 and I-400, but they decided that they need more than that. They have realized that their incident commanders need more experiences. They want to send their top-level leaders and their middle managers to some classes. They want to come to campus instead of the classes going there because there would be too many interruptions. There have been a lot of retirements. They have had people that have been on campus for about 30 to 40 years. Mr. Smiley White has been at the campus for 51 years, and he is still as active as the day he started. He still teaches for Maryland Fire and Rescue, and he loves the organization. When there are a lot of retirees, a lot of institutional knowledge is lost.

Mr. Dubay asked how many people would be at the NFA when it was fully staffed. Mr. Gabliks replied about 55 or more. What is misleading about the organization chart is the people who work on campus that are not on the chart. There is a lot of support staff on campus that are contractors. Mr. Dubay asked if they were having staffing issues too. Mr. Gabliks replied, yes, in some places. IT has had some turnover with staff and also the food service. There have also been businesses around the area having the same issues with staffing. Mr. Rich and Ms. Spangler are dealing with the issues because there is no backup until they hire people.

Chief Butler asked how to address human capital in the report when the Board of Visitors 3-legged stool is physical planning, programs and funding. Mr. Gabliks replied that it is probably through funding. It comes down to time, money and people. There are not enough people on campus to do what they want to do, but they are moving forward. There is limited funding, so they are keeping positions vacant. The American fire service has more needs than they can deliver right now. Mr. Gabliks stated that they have said no to a number of things because they did not want to overextend or underdeliver because then there would be a problem.

Mr. Gabliks stated that they had been doing a lot of conference presentations. There are a lot of organizations that they have given updates to, including:

- International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC).
- National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC).
- International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF).
- International Association of Arson Investigators.
- North American Fire Training Directors.
- Congressional Fire Service Institute (CFSI).
- National Fire Protection Association (NFPA).
- BCOC and more.

Mr. Gabliks stated that they asked the NFA staff first if they wanted to give the presentation because it is a good professional development experience for them. They also get to share the work that they are doing with their stakeholders, and they get to go to conferences. They have been very active with conferences and expos as they move out of the pandemic. Some conferences include:

- Fire-Rescue International Conference.
- FDIC Conference.
- National Association of Counties Conference.
- League of Cities; this is coming up in a few weeks.
- NFPA; this is more international interest than national interest. There were 70 countries at NFPA, and most did not know what the USFA was. They are trying to figure out how the USFA works.
- CFSI.
- Fire Expo in Lancaster, and this brings in about 10,000 people from the mid-Atlantic states.

Dr. McIntosh asked if there had been a significant increase over the past. Mr. Gabliks replied that there had been. It was also more direct. At the beginning of the year, they looked to see what conferences were happening and where they were and who was attending. There are some conferences that NFP covers that the NFA does not because the NFA does not have a stakeholder group there.

Mr. Gabliks stated that they were working with all their partner organizations in messaging. Dr. Moore-Merrell identified that their national partners message different things each month. It is confusing to the public because one is talking about candle fire safety, and another is talking about wood-burning stoves. Dr. Moore-Merrell and the communications team have created a communicator panel where they meet and discuss what the theme is for the month. The NFA has

been pushing out their information to all the infinity groups, like Women in Fire, BCOC, National Association of Hispanic Firefighters, and a new LGBTQ fire service group. They are pushing recruitments, class vacancy information and instructor recruitment out to them. They are giving them information to put on their networks. They have been involved in dozens of podcasts letting people know what the NFA does.

Mr. Gabliks stated that he wanted to share one partnership that they had bolstered over the last 2 years. They had strengthened a partnership with NFFF on campus. Twice a month, NFFF is having an open house on campus for students from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. A lot of students think NFFF is just a memorial, but it is more than a memorial. They are learning about its cancer prevention programs and its behavioral health resources. They are learning about line-of-duty deaths (LODDs) and the assistance that NFFF provides. Last week, 2 agencies that had students on campus had LODDs. The students can go to NFFF and ask them what to do on their end to make sure the families get assistance and what happens after the funeral, etc. The open house allows NFFF to share their work. Some people have mentioned the historic displays they have received from someone in California. There are 2 ocean-going containers that have fire memorabilia from across the world. There are 10,000 items in that collection. The classes are engaging and looking at LODDs especially in the health and safety arena. The students are doing a paper that focuses on a name on the wall, like how they died and how they could prevent it. They have 3 people from NFFF; one is going to Mr. David Millstein's group with NFP, and the other 2 will be working with Ms. Spangler, focusing on the health and safety arena. They will have 1 of those people go through the health and safety curriculum to see how they line up with the 16 initiatives to make sure they are covering everything. They have added NFFF classes to their schedule on campus with the state weekends. This will give the students something new. This will bring more students on campus and more professional development opportunities.

Mr. Dubay asked whether people had taken advantage of those classes and had they been well received. Mr. Gabliks replied that they had. There are people that do not know that NFFF provides classes. Mr. Gabliks asked if there were other questions.

Dr. McIntosh asked whether the students are partially back or fully back to campus from the pandemic. Mr. Gabliks replied that if he was using a number, it would be 65%. They have had classes scheduled that they postponed because of the on-and-off COVID-19 vaccination requirements. They had a plan to go back to 100% back in April or May, and then the numbers went up, so they just left it where they were. They told students that they would get back to them when classes were rescheduled. They implemented the red, yellow and green status. The red classes have 5 or fewer people, and if they do not fill it in a couple of days, they cancel it. When they cancel those classes, they let students know that there are other classes available that need students. Yellow means that the class is close to having enough people. Green means the class is good and ready to go. They hope to be at 100% by October. Mr. Gabliks stated that they will have a discussion with FEMA medical since there are new Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines on vaccinations, and that will be on Chief Hoover's list.

Mr. Dubay asked how many students would make up 100% capacity per week, and he asked how many classes that would be. Mr. Gabliks replied that there is now an average of 5 or 6 classes. They would try to bump that up to 7 or 8 a week. Mr. Rich stated that the classes have different

numbers of people, so he could not be sure exactly on the number of students. They are now scheduling the 6-day classes in addition to the 10-day classes. There are only 4 10-day classes that are consistently full. They have thought about getting away from the 10-day and mainly having 6-day classes because of time commitments. Mr. Dubay asked how many there would be if every bed had a head. Mr. Gabliks replied 400. Dr. McIntosh stated that that number is both EMI and NFA. Mr. Gabliks stated that the partnership with EMI and NFA had never been better. They both move across campus like there is no big deal because they are all FEMA components. They are on the same page, and if it is a classroom and one or the other needs it, then they use it. There are times when there may be 300 NFA students and 100 EMI and times when there are 300 EMI and only 100 NFA students. They may not run some classes if they cannot sustain them internally. If they are still down that many training specialists, they will not be at 100% capacity in October. Mr. Rich stated that there are also some construction projects planned that will affect the number of students. There were no other questions.

Mr. Gabliks turned the meeting over to Mr. William Troup.

### **U.S. Fire Administration Data, Research, Prevention and Response**

**Mr. William Troup, Branch Chief, Emergency Response Support Branch, U.S. Fire Administration**

**Mr. David Millstein, Branch Chief, National Fire Data Center, U.S. Fire Administration**

Mr. Troup stated that Mr. Richard Patrick sent his regrets for not being at the meeting. There were a lot of things going on in NFP. They partner with just about every major national fire service group, including NVFC, IAFF, IAFC and many other organizations; they are working on a lot of projects. They look at emerging issues, and if there is a problem, they try to develop a program to deal with it. Mr. Troup stated that he has looked at every single firefighter fatality and asked if there is a way the USFA could have prevented it. If not, then they will look to create a program to do so.

Mr. Troup stated that 1 issue they are looking at is the electric vehicles with response, size and technology. They are partnering with the IAFF on a project that is funded by the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT's) National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. They do receive money from other federal agencies as well as generous benefactors across campus in performing a lot of research that benefits fire and EMS, as well as the citizens they protect. The electric vehicle response project is really a great initiative. They had the opportunity with the Montgomery County, Maryland, Fire Training Academy to bring a panel of national experts together like the scientists that deal with batteries, thermal runaway and the vehicles, as well as members of the fire and EMS and law enforcement. Law enforcement are often the first ones on the scene as well as DOT responders. They are also working with their partners with DHS Science and Technology, and they are going to look at some of the technologies and operational practices. They want to take those operational practices and technologies and see if they can do an operational field assessment. That will probably be a year or 2 down the road.

Mr. Troup stated that he would like to talk about their great partnership with the NVFC on a study of the retention and recruitment of volunteer firefighters and EMS responders. They had done some great work with them on a lot of studies. They did an extensive study on volunteer retention and recruitment and are about ready to release the final report. At least 70% of firefighters are volunteers. There are a lot of challenges in a volunteer fire service. Mr. Troup stated that he is a 40-year plus volunteer firefighter. It is an incredible challenge to retain and recruit firefighters.

Mr. Troup stated that they are working on updating the “Guide to Funding Alternatives,” which is a manual on grant funding. That is one of their most popular documents. It provides A-to-Z information and a state-by-state breakdown on sources of alternative funding. Hopefully, that would be out by the end of the year.

Mr. Troup stated that Mr. Michael Pritchard is the chief of the Prevention and Information Branch. They do a lot of outreach. They do the pictorial cards that provide illustrations on fire and life safety practices. Mr. Troup stated that in Los Angeles, there are some 200 languages spoken. The pictorial cards can be used universally across the city of Los Angeles or anywhere. Mr. Gabliks showed some examples from the website.

Mr. Troup also showed some examples of the pictorial cards for fire and injury prevention efforts. Falls are a big issue in the fire service. There are a lot of calls for people falling in general. There are other things like cooking, smoking, escape planning, carbon monoxide, etc. There are a lot of multicultural things in Fairfax County. Mr. Troup stated that in his community, they had a large Hispanic population. The pictorial cards would benefit everyone in the fire service.

Mr. Troup stated that they are also doing podcasts. They are doing a series of podcasts on a monthly basis. They have done a few with Dr. Moore-Merrell and Chief Hoover on the new leadership and focus of the USFA. The one they did last month was about the research program starring Mr. Troup. The podcasts have a wide variety of messages. It is not just the USFA staff that are doing the podcasts; they have outside experts come in and talk about things of interest.

Mr. Troup turned the meeting over to Mr. Millstein.

Mr. Millstein stated that this is his second time speaking with the Board of Visitors. The first time was 4 years ago when he was a new federal employee. It was good to be back on campus in a different role. He is the branch chief of the National Fire Data Center. There are a lot of things they are looking at from the data perspective. He has been working with the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) at the national level for about 20 years — from being a contractor doing the NFIRS support to being on campus federally as NFIRS support and now as a branch chief. His fire service background is 20 plus years — both volunteer and career firefighter. He retired out of Frederick County, Maryland, in 2018. He has served in roles from a paramedic to chief officer. He has not only handled incidents from boots on the ground operationally to using the data locally, but also at the county level all the way through the national level. There are a lot of facets to fire incident data. Mr. Millstein stated that his undergraduate degree was in business. He also has a recent Master of Science in Emergency Management. With his background, this education — coupled with experience — is extremely useful in driving the future of fire incident data.

Mr. Millstein stated that they are looking to enhance the fire department registry for not only the data collected but also for the useability of the data. The fire department registry is a collection of fire department demographic data that is geocoded for specific location information and the types of assets used by the department, as well as the training levels of the responders.

Firefighter fatality reporting is an ongoing project. They are currently working on the 2021 annual report with the NFFF.

The NFIRS needs assessment project is being done by a contractor looking at the use and users of NFIRS, and it is currently in draft form. This is a really in-depth, no-holds-barred look at what NFIRS is, what it is not and what it needs to be to move forward to benefit its stakeholders. NFIRS is tricky because it is not just for firefighters, fire departments or municipalities; it is for a large and interrelated group of stakeholders, part of a much larger NFIRS “ecosystem.” A new vision of NFIRS is taking shape and is taking a fresh look at aligning the data collected with the methods of collection and what is needed by USFA and all the stakeholders. This NFIRS realignment with stakeholders does correspond with the visions of Dr. Moore-Merrell and Mr. Millstein.

Mr. Millstein stated that in terms of data and analytics, they are investigating new ways to look at and compare data. They are trying to find some of the interesting interrelationships that may be impactful to the response community and the citizens of the U.S. and beyond. One example is a socioeconomic data study that looks at the relationship between socioeconomic status and fire incidents. It is something that has been done previously, but they are taking a fresh look at it. These are types of things that they would be moving forward with — trying to identify and address the interrelationships that they may not even know exist yet, and it starts with an exploration. Mr. Millstein stated that was all he had and asked if anyone had any questions.

Dr. Macey asked if Mr. Millstein was familiar with the New York City open data and whether that was what they are moving to. Mr. Millstein replied not necessarily. Moving forward they were going to focus on what types of information would be needed based on the various stakeholder groups. “Stakeholders” meaning the fire service both at an individual level and at an agency level, and including groups such as NVFC and IAFC; academia; research; federal; and state, local, tribal and territorial partners. Mr. Millstein stated that the data analytics group met with the Fairfax County data analytics group, and they asked them questions about what it is they do and how they get their data. They said that they use NFIRS data but not all of it. A lot of the information they get is going to be “seeded” or connected from other data sets. This includes leveraging technologies such as machine learning. There is a program in the state of Virginia to take pictures of every stretch of highway every so many years. How do they identify where the fire hydrants are? Do they send out someone on light duty with a GPS to record the location or do they use something like machine learning and train a computer to identify the fire hydrant and then identify what that geocoded location is? Now it is known that the fire hydrant is there. Next year pictures are taken again, and the fire hydrant is not there. Does the fire department know that it is not there?

Dr. Macey asked if it is the community’s and public’s data. Mr. Millstein replied that the data belongs to the fire department. Dr. Macey asked why not share that data with the public, wherein quantitative analysts and others can easily access the data? Why do they not have open access to it? Mr. Millstein replied that they do. The public data release is requested via CD or DVD. It is

also available through OpenFEMA as a direct download. The disadvantage of OpenFEMA is the loss of the introductory materials that would help someone who is unfamiliar with data analytics understand what the data is. They just closed out the 2021 data. By the time the data gets in the system, it is 1 year old, a challenge the new vision of NFIRS aims to rectify.

Dr. Macey asked if anyone was mining it. Mr. Millstein replied that a lot of different people mine it. There are hundreds of requestors that pull that information for various reasons. There were no other questions. Mr. Troup stated that if anyone had any questions or needed anything to let him know.

Chief Butler turned the meeting over to Chief Quinn.

## **Board of Visitors Subcommittee Activity Reports**

### **National Fire Incident Reporting System Chief Kevin Quinn, Chair**

Chief Quinn stated that Ms. Kathy Patterson had a criteria development meeting about a month ago on campus. One of the sessions that Dr. Moore-Merrell was at the whole day was on the data and modernization in terms of updating the interrelationships. He stated that it was one of the most exciting days he has spent with the fire service in terms of its future and where Dr. Moore-Merrell sees this moving from where they are to where they will be, and it is an exciting place. Chief Quinn stated that Mr. Millstein mentioned a fresh look. They talked about that idea, and they put forth a lot of great suggestions that day. Dr. Moore-Merrell's timeline seemed pretty scripted in what she would like to see happen. There are a lot of things going on, and it does tie into the subcommittee report. Basically, they are just watching and waiting to see where they go with the modernization of NFIRS.

Chief Butler stated that the fire department he is with is fortunate to have a built-out data analytics section. It is good to see the locals work with the staff to improve data analytics.

Chief Quinn stated that at the meeting they talked about being in the field and entering 5 or 6 clicks on a device and follow-ups with the fire investigator. It is really changing the ways they do business in the field and on-the-go data collection. Chief Butler asked if there were any more questions; there were none.

### **Professional Development Initiative Update Dr. Patricia McIntosh, Chair**

Dr. McIntosh stated that they were standing by to stand by. They had been charged with doing a deep dive into the Managing Officer Program, which has been on hold. She stated that it was exciting to hear everything that was happening with EFO and its changes.

**Final Comments/Adjournment**

Chief Butler stated that there were no other comments at this time. Chief Butler turned the meeting over to Ms. Gartrell-Kemp. Ms. Gartrell-Kemp stated that the Board of Visitors members would now take the campus tour. Chief Butler thanked everyone for being there. Chief Quinn made the first motion to adjourn the meeting, and Mr. Dubay made the second motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:40 p.m.