

## Background – Legacy Executive Fire Officer Program

Since the Executive Fire Officer (EFO) Program was conceived, this premier training program has been providing senior fire, rescue, and emergency service officers and others in key leadership roles with the opportunity to enhance their knowledge, skills, attitudes, and abilities. In 2016 the National Fire Academy (NFA) contracted an independent review of the EFO Program to include extensive data collection from EFO graduates. In response to recommendations outlined in the review (shown in italics below) the NFA has attempted to restructure the program to address these specific issues:

- *Provide mentorship throughout the ARP writing process; set up consistent standards for ARP evaluation.* The 2021 Program is structured so that there is only one, in-depth Capstone Research Paper (CRP), as opposed to the Applied Research Papers (ARPs) previously required for each course. Students receive in-depth assignments throughout the program to strengthen research skills and receive in-depth feedback from instructors. The *Capstone I*, a 10-week instructor-led mediated course, focuses on the research paper with critical input and advice from at least two subject matter experts.
- *Scale down the number of ARPs but have assignments every year to maintain progress.* The 2021 Program is structured with challenging 500-word to 10-page, writing assignments integrated into course materials throughout the program. Students focus literature reviews and original research on one, in-depth Capstone Research Paper (CRP).
- *Keep topics updated to align with what is going on around the world and add contemporary topics with real world application.* The 2021 Program focuses research on the critical issues identified in the [\*21<sup>st</sup> Century Fire and Emergency Services\*](#) white paper. Course content is also redesigned to be current and relevant. Focus is expected to evolve over time as events occur.
- *Include distance learning options and ensure frequent contact throughout distance learning courses.* The 2021 Program incorporates distance learning through extensive pre-course work for two courses, and through one mediated, online capstone course.
- *The majority of respondents indicated the program should be kept at four years; however, many requested a fast track.* The 2021 Program allows students to move through the program as soon as they can complete the research writing work and milestones, retain an 80% or higher grade in each course, and as NFA scheduling permits. Without NFA scheduling limitations, a student could complete the program in as little as two years.
- *Reduce some courses to one week.* The 2021 Program reduced the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> resident courses from a 10-day format to a six-day format and created online pre-coursework to ensure the same caliber of academic rigor is retained, and ideally, improved upon.

Additional considerations in the structuring of the 2021 EFO Program:

- The interaction, facilitated discussion, and activities have always been, and continue to be, essential components of the resident courses. Therefore, foundational elements such as literature reviews, data collection and analysis, and writing are fostered in the online course components, giving students the autonomy to process the information at a digestible pace and evidence the knowledge gained through various writing assignments.
- The capstone presentation requirement is an evolution of the legacy defense. Moving from a closed forum into a public presentation, students continue to receive expert scrutiny as with the traditional ARP defense, and now must perform under the pressure of a real-life public forum. The public forum also allows for all students to review and learn from the work of their peers.

## LEGACY TO 2021 COMPARISON

Legacy EFO Program		EFO Program 2021	
1 <sup>st</sup> Year	<b>10-Day Executive Development</b>	R5201	<b>10-Day Exercise of Executive Leadership: Self</b>
	25-page ARP due in six months/advisor assigned for completion of the paper		
2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	<b>10-Day Executive Risk Analysis of Community Risk Reduction</b>	R5202	Pre-Course Work Self-paced, online to include required reading, literature review, data collection, and preliminary analysis in preparation for the resident course. At least five written assignments due. Approx. 40 hours
	25-page ARP due in six months/advisor assigned for completion of the paper		<b>Six-Day Exercise of Executive Leadership: Organization</b>
3 <sup>rd</sup> Year	<b>10-Day Executive Analysis of Fire Service Operations in Emergency Management</b>	R5203	Pre-Course Work Self-paced, online to include required reading, literature review, data collection, and preliminary analysis in preparation for the resident course. At least five written assignments due. Approx. 40 hours
	25-page ARP due in six months/advisor assigned for completion of the paper		<b>Six-Day Exercise of Executive Leadership: Community</b>
		M5104	<b>10-Week Capstone I</b> Instructor-led, online course that integrates the concepts and deliverables throughout the program and reviews research considerations to ensure student success. Eight papers due ranging from 500 words to 10 pages.
4 <sup>th</sup> Year	<b>10-Day Executive Leadership</b>	R5204	<b>10-Day Capstone II</b>
	25-page ARP (later in the legacy program students could resubmit a previous paper)		30+-page research paper due 10-page portfolio paper with artifacts due
	Defense with three SMEs		Public defense/persuasion presentation

Shading denotes resident coursework.