



Dear National Fire Academy Student:

The faculty and staff of the U.S. Fire Administration's (USFA's) National Fire Academy (NFA) are pleased that you have been accepted into the *Executive Development* (ED) course. This course is designed for executive-level administrators and officers, focusing on the skills and attributes of leadership at the executive level.

The design of the ED course consists of four major curriculum or content areas: exercising leadership, applied research, managing and leading change, and diversity. Each of these areas has relationships with the others, and additional curriculum areas such as service quality and creativity are linked and referenced as well. Through a combination of theory, self- and observer-based feedback provided through assessment instruments, case study analysis, reflection, and introspection, the course offers the opportunity to enhance both personal and organizational development and capacity.

**Please note the following precourse requirements:**

As a student in the ED course, you will be required to participate in a 360° Multi-Rater Assessment process through NFA's Online Distance Learning Web site. You must be or become a registered user of NFAOnline at [www.nfaonline.dhs.gov](http://www.nfaonline.dhs.gov) at least 8 weeks prior to your class attendance to be assigned and access the assessment instruments. Please see the immediately following letter from Charles Burkell for more information.

You will also be required to successfully complete the Applied Research Self-Study course (Q123) prior to your attendance at the ED course. This independent study course is only accessible through NFAOnline.

The Q123 course prepares NFA Executive Fire Officer Program (EFOP) participants to engage in and complete applied research, a required element of the EFOP. Throughout the EFOP, participants must complete four Applied Research Projects (ARPs), one for each course. The Q123 was recently updated to be compliant with the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA), 6th ed. ARPs must be completed according to APA style. Additionally, Q123 features NFA procedural requirements for completing the ARPs.

**If you move or change jobs during the year, please write to Admissions with your new mailing address, email address, and other pertinent information.** Both Admissions and the Academy need this information. A telephone call with your new address is not sufficient.

In making plans for your stay at the NFA, please be aware of the fact that this course will require a great deal of reading. In terms of making plans for your weekend, it is important that you leave

sufficient time for class preparation. (Note: On some interim Saturdays, the National Fallen Firefighter Foundation (NFFF) may be offering their course *Taking Care Of Our Own*. If you are invited to participate in this 6-hour program, time will be available to do so.)

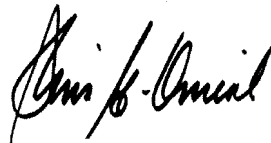
Those individuals who are enrolled within the EFOP are responsible for completing an ARP as a postcourse activity to fully satisfy the requirements of the program.

End-of-class graduation ceremonies are an important part of the course and you are expected to attend. Please do not make any travel arrangements to leave campus until after you and your classmates graduate.

Increasing numbers of students and instructors are bringing laptop computers to campus. You alone are responsible for the security and maintenance of your equipment. The Academy cannot provide you with computer software, hardware, or technical support to include disks, printers, scanners, etc. There is a limited number of 120-volt AC outlets in the classrooms. A Student Computer Lab is located in Building D and is available for all students to use. It is open daily with technical support provided in the evenings. This lab uses Windows XP and Office 2007 as the software standards.

Should you need additional information related to course content or requirements, please feel free to contact Mr. Charles Burkell, Executive Development Curriculum Training Specialist at (301) 447-1072 or email [Chuck.Burkell@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:Chuck.Burkell@fema.dhs.gov)

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Denis Onieal". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D".

Dr. Denis Onieal, Superintendent  
National Fire Academy  
U.S. Fire Administration



Dear *Executive Development* Student:

Congratulations on your acceptance into the U.S. Fire Administration's (USFA's) National Fire Academy's (NFA's) *Executive Development* (ED) course.

Your 2 weeks at the NFA will be busy and challenging. Please plan to spend time studying during the interim weekend.

In order to properly prepare for the ED course, it is necessary to ask you to complete several tasks in advance. Please read the following instructions carefully.

**360° Multi-Rater Assessment Instruments (immediate action required):** Attendance in the ED course requires participation in a 360° Multi-Rater Assessment process through NFA's Online Distance Learning Web site. The 360° Multi-Rater Assessment process consists of three assessment instruments: the Adaptive Leadership Instrument, the Executive Leadership Assessment, and the Organizational Culture Assessment. In order to access the assessment instruments, you must be or become a registered student in NFAOnline at [www.nfaonline.dhs.gov](http://www.nfaonline.dhs.gov) at least 8 weeks prior to your class attendance.

- Once you become a registered student in NFAOnline, a system administrator will assign the assessment instruments to you and you will receive a system-generated email from [NFAOnlinehelp@dhs.gov](mailto:NFAOnlinehelp@dhs.gov) with further instructions and a job aid. If you are not a registered user of NFAOnline, the assessments cannot be assigned to you and you will not receive referenced email notification.
- Each of the three assessment instruments is multirater in nature. This means that each instrument has a "self" component (you will complete this part for each instrument) and an observer component. You will identify and ask eight observers (up to 24 different people) to complete each of the three assessment instruments. As a result, the feedback report you receive during class will contain both self- and observer-rating information. The system is designed to protect the identity of your observers; please convey this fact to your observers when you ask them to participate.
- The government has invested considerable resources in the 360° Multi-Rater Assessment process. We believe each of the assessments will provide you with valuable feedback during your course of instruction.
- **Failure to complete and submit the self-assessment component for each of the three instruments by the stated due date will remove your eligibility to attend this ED course offering.**

- **Likewise, failure for your observers to complete and submit their components for each of the three instruments by the stated due date will remove your eligibility to attend this ED course offering.**
- These assessments will need your immediate attention. Both you and your observers must complete the assessments at least 2 weeks prior to your course start date.

**Applied Research Self-Study Course (Q123):** The Applied Research Self-Study course (Q123) has been developed by the NFA to provide you with specific skills that will be critical to successful completion of the research component of the ED course and the four Applied Research Projects (ARPs) required in the Executive Fire Officer Program. In an effort to minimize the classroom time required to address the basic aspects of the ARP process and procedures, **Q123 must be successfully completed prior to your attendance at the ED course. Students enrolled in ED who arrive at NFA without having successfully completing Q123 may be dismissed from the class and the EFOP, as this is a mandatory prerequisite.**

- Q123 is only accessible through the NFA Online Distance Learning Web site at [www.nfaonline.dhs.gov](http://www.nfaonline.dhs.gov). You must be a registered user of NFAOnline to access Q123. In addition to reviewing the Research Self-Study Guide and Research Self-Study Workbook contained within Q123, you will need to purchase the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th ed.*, typically referred to as the *APA Manual*. The *APA Manual* will be used throughout the 4-year program to accomplish your research projects and can be purchased at most local and online bookstores.
- Q123 contains a final exam of 35 questions. A minimum score of 70 percent on the final exam is required for successful completion of Q123. Students who do not achieve the required minimum score may perform remedial study and retest.

For questions concerning the assessment instruments or Q123, contact Roxane Strayer at [roxane.strayer@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:roxane.strayer@fema.dhs.gov) or (301) 447-1642.

**Leadership On The Line:** The leadership content of the ED course is based on the principles contained in the book titled "Leadership On The Line" by authors Ronald A. Heifetz and Marty Linsky.

- To get the most from this course, you must purchase and read this book prior to the start of class. You can purchase the book from many local and online bookstores. You can also purchase the book from the Harvard Business School Press at Web site address: [http://harvardbusinessonline.hbsp.harvard.edu/b02/en/common/item\\_detail.jhtml?id=4371](http://harvardbusinessonline.hbsp.harvard.edu/b02/en/common/item_detail.jhtml?id=4371)
- Study questions for "Leadership On The Line" that must be completed prior to your arrival are located on the EFOP ED precourse Web site at: [www.usfa.fema.gov/training/nfa/efop/r123-pcm.shtm](http://www.usfa.fema.gov/training/nfa/efop/r123-pcm.shtm). These questions will help ensure you are well prepared for the course content and subsequent discussions.

**Adaptive Challenge Activity and Presentation:** Think of an adaptive problem that you are currently experiencing in your professional or personal life. More than likely, more than one will come to mind. Once you narrow the list, select one and then **prepare a brief (one-page) statement of this leadership challenge.** Ideally, the selected problem will be current, but a past one is okay as long as it is one for which unresolved issues remain.

Background:

- In contemplating all of the adaptive problems in your life, presumably, you will bring something from your work setting, but it could be from your personal, civic, or community areas as well. (Ideally, whatever problem you choose will be more of an adaptive problem than a technical one in nature.)
- Refer to "Leadership On The Line" (Heifetz, R. and Linsky, M., 2002) if you need to do so regarding the differences between adaptive and technical problems.
- You need not reveal the identities (by name) of the other individuals, organizations, or the settings involved, but write enough of a description. The norm is that when the adaptive challenge will be presented and discussed by you (with your colleagues), all conversations will stay in the room.
- This is a required element of the course and you will actually receive a grade for the activity as part of the overall course evaluation plan.

Should you have any questions regarding these assignments, please feel free to call me at (301) 447-1072. We look forward to your arrival.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charles J. Burkell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "C" and "B".

Charles J. Burkell  
Training Specialist  
Leadership and Fire Risk Reduction Section  
National Fire Academy