

**Department of Homeland Security/FEMA  
U.S. Fire Administration  
National Fire Academy Board of Visitors  
Meeting Minutes  
April 2-3, 2008  
Building H, Room 300**

**Attendees:**

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

Dr. Robert S. Fleming (Chairperson)  
Professor, Rowan University  
1406 Heather Lane  
West Chester, Pennsylvania 19380

Chief Donald R. Oliver  
Wilson Fire/Rescue Services  
307 West Hines Street  
Wilson, North Carolina 27893

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

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

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

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

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

The following member was not present for the meeting:

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

FEMA/NFA/U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) staff in attendance:

Ms. Terry Gladhill, Program Analyst, NFA  
Ms. Teressa Kaas, Secretary, NFA  
Dr. Kirby Kiefer, Deputy Superintendent, NFA  
Ms. Terri Little, Secretary, NFA  
Mr. Robert Neale, Director, National Fire Programs Division  
Dr. Denis Onieal, Superintendent, NFA

### **Wednesday, April 2**

#### **CONVENE BOV MEETING/WELCOME**

**Dr. Robert Fleming, Chair, Board of Visitors**

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

Dr. Robert Fleming convened the meeting and welcomed all in attendance. He stated that there are enough Board Members in attendance for a quorum for business. He then turned the meeting over to Dr. Denis Onieal. Dr. Onieal stated that Chief Greg Cade is tied up with other business and could not be in attendance, and that Chief Kelvin Cochran could not be in attendance as well.

#### **FOLLOW-UP FROM JANUARY CONFERENCE CALL**

Mr. Robert Cumberland moved for minutes to be accepted from the January conference call. There was a second by Chief Don Oliver. All were in favor. Meeting minutes for January were approved. Dr. Fleming stated that the next meeting will be held in July via conference call.

#### **ACADEMY UPDATE**

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

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

**Mr. Robert Neale, Director, National Fire Programs Division**

Dr. Onieal stated that he and Chief Cade attended Warren McDaniels' funeral. Chief McDaniels passed away due to inoperable cancer. They flew to New Orleans for the viewing ceremony.

Dr. Onieal stated that Mr. Richard Johnson, a Contract Instructor and previous employee of the National Emergency Training Center (NETC), was recently on campus and had to be taken to Gettysburg Hospital. While at the hospital, Mr. Johnson was informed that he had cancer. He passed away 3 weeks later. Dr. Onieal stated that there are some who want to erect a monument for Mr. Johnson as well as something in remembrance for Chief McDaniels. Dr. Onieal warned the Board Members to be very careful if they are approached in this matter since there are Federal regulations pertaining to honoring individual citizens.

Dr. Onieal attended the International Association of Black Professional Fire Fighters (IABPFF) meeting in Dallas, Texas. He heard positive remarks made about the Executive Fire Officer Program (EFOP) at the meeting, which was unlike the past when he first came to work for the U.S. Fire Administration. Dr. Onieal gave the Board Members the handout of data sets from FY07 that he used at the meeting. These data sets show that 91,000 people applied, 84,000 being male and 7,000 being female. The data also are broken down by the type of organization, whether it be career, volunteer, combination department, etc., as well as the race or nationality of the persons who applied. The acceptance rate for NFA is 92.9 percent. On the back of the data set are stats from FY95 for comparison. Dr. Onieal also will be supplying this data to the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) at their meeting this week. Dr. Fleming stated that there should be serious discussion regarding this population, as well as future populations, with race and gender in the fire service and the students.

Dr. Onieal also stated that Fire 20/20 did a survey of the metropolitan areas, with 108 responses. Twenty percent of Metro Fire Chiefs are women or people of color.

As noted in the minutes, Chief Oliver had to leave the meeting to go to a briefing at the White House to represent the Board of Visitors.

Dr. Onieal announced to the group that Dr. Fleming's and Chief Oliver's terms on the Board of Visitors have come to an end. Four new candidates have been submitted, and the process of filling the two vacancies has begun. Dr. Onieal stated that, under the Charter, these Board Members will continue until their replacements are appointed.

Dr. Onieal stated that the new Deputy Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction is Mr. Robert Neale. Mr. Neale gave his background overview to the Board Members. Dr. Onieal then stated that Mr. Warren Campbell has been hired to replace Mr. Bob Bennett to take over the TRADE Program. Dr. Onieal introduced Mr. Campbell to the Board, and Mr. Campbell gave an overview of his background to the members.

Dr. Onieal passed out to the Board Members a packet of information regarding the Realignment. Dr. Onieal asked that the members understand that this packet is confidential and not to be shared with anyone. The Operational Realignment and Organizational Realignment are both taking place. The Operational Realignment began on March 30. The Organizational Realignment will take effect October 1. An organizational chart included in the packet shows the Realignment structure, the employees and programs, where they belong, and to whom they will report. During this Realignment, things are going to be returning to what they were originally, but with closer supervision. The Union has been a full participant all along.

Dr. Onieal used an easel pad to show the goal and process to achieve legislative professional development, what the Realignment is going to be doing, and what the goal is for the future.

Dr. Onieal passed out information regarding vacancies. Along with that he also discussed the Volunteer Incentive Program (VIP). The program already has been taken from 4 weeks to 3 weeks, and he speculates that there will be a continual decrease. Along with that he discussed the baby boomer generation (born between 1946 and 1964) who are now becoming senior citizens. Dr. Onieal went on to explain issues among senior citizens that tie into the issues among fire and emergency medical services. These issues present opportunities as well as new challenges that will be faced for many years to come.

Dr. Onieal mentioned the recent EFOP Symposium, where there was a turnout of around 200 people. Dr. Onieal read a letter from a recent EFOP student thanking them for the training that he received that has helped him with a recent volcanic disturbance on his home island in Hawaii.

Dr. Onieal turned the group over to Dr. Kirby Kiefer for an update on the instructor procurement process. Dr. Kiefer stated that the process came to a halt when there was an issue within the Emergency Management Institute process. New processes will be implemented campus-wide and are now being reviewed by the Office of the General Counsel, and we are waiting for a response. Ms. Terry Gladhill came up with an online system to replace all the email, faxes, phone, and mail for Contract Instructor bids. There is still work needed to get the kinks out of the system. All of the contracts for April are out, and all awards through June are out. Dr. Kiefer stated that they are changing the briefing with Contract Instructors as well. Background suitability process with the Federal Bureau of Investigators has been an issue as well. The electronic fingerprint process and background checks have helped out in this process, instead of everything being paper-based.

## **LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (LMS) UPDATE**

### **Ms. Terry Gladhill, Program Analyst, NFA**

Before the meeting was reconvened, Ms. Helen Johnson asked that the minutes reflect that Dr. Fleming would be returning shortly, and that she will be sitting in as Chairperson until his return. Dr. Onieal asked to note that the Board will be working with five in attendance in a temporary timeframe.

Ms. Terry Gladhill updated the Board on the Learning Management System (LMS). There are 24,000 registered users on NFA Online, with a rate of 2,000 new users per month. As of now there are nine courses posted, with the most popular being *Emergency Response to Terrorism*. The latest course, added in January, is *Awareness of Command and Control Decision-making at Multiple Alarm Incidents (Q297)*. Ms. Gladhill stated that *Fundamentals Review for ICS-300 (Q464)* and *Fundamentals Review for ICS-400 (Q466)* currently are being worked on. These online courses are about 98 percent completed and should be available online soon. The FEMA and National Wildfire Coordination Group (NWCG) are working together to implement two wildland courses (S190 and S130) on the LMS System. The NWCG will be coming to NETC for a meeting the first week of May. Currently are working with Ms. Colleen Heilig on NFIRS 494 remedial course for a pretest. Ms. Gladhill stated that, as of last Friday, the Continuing Education Units (CEUs) were all fixed and posted. The Endorsement Program, which is courses that are developed by the States, reviewed, and then adopted by NFA, will be using the online system. There will be nine online reviewers. Ms. Diane Close will be heading this process. Ms. Gladhill stated that the assessment processes used in EFOP will be online. The program is putting together the requirements and should be implemented for use in the October/November timeframe.

Mr. Neale is working on developing a 2D/3D simulation model for R222. The simulation models will go to GoLearn to review for possible posting on the LMS System. Ms. Gladhill also stated that Mr. Ed Kaplan held a meeting with Apple to discuss podcasting, iTunes, and even MySpace and Facebook for networking.

Ms. Gladhill discussed the Long-term Evaluation System that is currently in Phase II. She stated that they are hopeful to roll out this month. The icon for the evaluation Website is located on all breakout, classroom, and library computers to direct students right to the evaluation page. The evaluation is done the Wednesday or Thursday before the students graduate and leave campus. After the students sign up for the online evaluation, a letter will be sent to their managers in a 3- to 4-month timeframe asking them to complete an evaluation as well. This is to collect data on whether the course that the student completed has helped in his/her job performance. Ms. Gladhill stated that 82 percent of evaluations received from the managers showed that the NFA training course that the student had taken had improved job performance. Ninety-six percent of students stated that they believed that their performance had improved after taking the course.

## **BOARD DISCUSSION**

### **Dr. Robert Fleming, Chair, Board of Visitors**

Dr. Fleming asked that the Board Members discuss any issues and concerns regarding any matters discussed throughout the meeting as well as any concerns that the Board has.

Dr. Fleming brought up the role of the Training Specialists in relation to what happens in their classes. Some individuals tend to be more hands on and there are some who are less. There are Training Specialists who change their course materials frequently and others who are very stagnant. Dr. Onieal stated that, after the Realignment occurs, there will be two key elements of focus on this issue; the short-term end of course evaluations and the discussion and feedback given at the Superintendent's Luncheons about the course material. This will be something Mr. Neale will be heavily involved with. The major challenges predicted for the future after the Realignment include ACE Accreditation and Capital Improvements, including dorm and classroom space. These are all short-term challenges.

Dr. Fleming adjourned the meeting at 2:40 p.m.

### **Thursday, April 3**

## **RESUME MEETING/BOARD DISCUSSION**

### **Dr. Robert Fleming, Chair, Board of Visitors**

Ms. Teresa Kaas handed out the current Charter to all the Board Members. Dr. Onieal asked that everyone review the Charter for reference and for ideas for the October meeting.

Chief Oliver reported to the group that he did a walk around of the campus and found the facility to be to his approval. Dr. Fleming stated that he thought the Dining Hall hasn't been up to the level that it has been in the past. Mr. Cumberland agreed with Dr. Fleming. He has noticed things like the glasses not being restocked and people having to use Styrofoam cups instead.

Captain Jack Reall has noticed that the campus has been very busy with some off-campus visitors such as school children and group visitors. It has been holding the students up in getting their lunches and dinners, and causing them to be late or running behind for their classes. Captain Reall suggested that maybe there could be some sort of schedule for the different classes to go and get their food so that there isn't a rush at once. Dr. Fleming stated that he doesn't think that we should have to change our schedules to suit others coming in; they should change to suit us and the students. Captain Reall also stated that the dorms (C Building in the new and old parts) are starting to show their age, such as door handles being marked up and the doors themselves rubbing when you open them. Chief Oliver stated that he noticed that there needs to be some painting done on some of the buildings.

Chief Oliver discussed the guard shacks at the entrances of the campus. He noticed some work being done by maintenance in the buildings and wondered if there was some security activity going on. Dr. Onieal stated that as far as he knows there aren't any changes being made.

Mr. Cumberland asked about the air conditioning and heating issues discussed prior in J Building. Dr. Onieal stated that they are trying to keep up on this problem. We have to be ahead of the temperature and it is very hard to keep up with the old system.

The group discussed that at the October meeting there needs to be some decisions made and brought up in the report about maintenance. Dr. Onieal stated that there will be a briefing during the teleconference in July by Mr. Ron Face.

Dr. Fleming wanted to discuss the conversion of the 6-day courses. Dr. Onieal stated that there are 17 courses in transition, 5 of them are up and running. We are looking this year at training over 600 more students with these new offerings. Mr. Neale stated that as of today there are eight or nine new course offerings. This has been a very positive experience, with positive feedback. The students like taking these 6-day classes instead of the 2-week courses so they aren't away from their homes and jobs as long. They also like that the classes are being reorganized and reworked instead of trying to cram 2 weeks' worth of work into 6 days. Mr. Neale stated that the Training Specialists' most frustrating challenge is being asked to take these classes and condense them with no guidance, such as what learning objectives need to be used, what guidelines need to be followed, etc. Mr. Neale stated that, in his new position of Deputy Superintendent, he wants, with this Realignment, to get into the classrooms and observe to see what changes can be made to modernize the curriculum, what is working and what isn't working, what can be added to the course, what the feedback from the students is, etc.

There was much discussion among the Board in regards to training materials from the classes and how they are used to teach their departments and groups. Mr. Neale discussed training materials for a course that was developed to teach but now is being used strictly online and all the information can be downloaded (handouts, training materials, etc.) and used. In the future this could be a possibility for many other courses for better use as training tools within the departments. Dr. Fleming stated that the bottom line is that people who come here and take the classes need to go back and tell others about what they have learned and encourage others to come and take these courses and join these programs.

Dr. Fleming asked that Dr. Onieal discuss the VIP courses. Dr. Onieal stated that he will not get rid of the VIP Program, but make more opportunities available for the volunteers. He is looking into the future of mixing the VIP classes among the normal weekly/monthly schedule. The hardest part is convincing the volunteers that you are trying to help them out by giving them more training opportunities and not trying to get rid of the program.

Dr. Fleming stated that he looked at the facility and stopped by the Student Computer Lab and he was amazed at how fast the system worked and how wonderfully user-friendly it was. This will be even better with the WiFi System.

Dr. Sandy Bogucki discussed her concerns that, during this meeting, the Board, as she sees it, has not accomplished anything that the Charter states should be accomplished. She stated that maybe we can have a certain meeting format so that the responsibilities listed in the Charter are always taken care of at every meeting. For example, when reviewing the programs from Dr. Onieal and Dr. Kiefer, the Board should have a way to judge them against their own perspectives, but also against the mission that has been assigned. The Board's function is to bring back the higher level focus. Dr. Fleming stated that we need to focus on that area of the Charter and support the focus of the mission. In October, the Board needs to make sure to have all the briefings in the appropriate areas. It might have helped if, at this meeting, there had been a facilities briefing as well as a budget meeting. This should be a focus at all Board meetings, and the Board needs to provide a value for the time that has been spent here. Dr. Bogucki stated that, as we continue to build a structure based on the responsibilities listed in the Charter, each of the areas in the Charter need not only a report-out of what is going on but also how we are going to be able to move toward the long view or the mission in the future. She also stated that she doesn't want to see a written formal agenda, more of a template or matrix to follow at each meeting to make sure that the mission is being accomplished and perceived. Dr. Onieal responded by reiterating to the group that each one of them is very valuable and their accomplishments exceed his expectations. Their time here is very valuable and it is always made the best of and always very insightful and useful. The Board can do whatever they want while they are here, whether it is a campus tour to look at the facility, meeting with the students and discussing their experiences, visit classrooms, joining Superintendent's Luncheon, etc.

Dr. Onieal stated that at the next Board meeting Mr. Ron Face should do a briefing for the Board regarding the status of capital improvements and maintenance repair. He also asked that the Board ask for an update on the Realignment, in respect to the mission and not personnel; budget submission to FEMA also should be discussed, what the results are from the Congressional Fire Services Institute Dinner, and associated activities on the Hill.

Dr. Fleming stated that the Board needs to schedule the next teleconference call as well as the October meeting that usually ties in with the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial weekend. The Board decided on the dates: October 1, a travel day, October 2 to 4, the formal meeting dates, with October 4 being considered a half day, and October 5, the travel day, with the flexibility to stay for the Memorial weekend. All were in favor of these dates.

The next teleconference call will be held Tuesday, July 22, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon EST.

Chief Oliver briefed the group on the White House meeting with Secretary Chertoff. He stated that they were the first group within the fire service that the Secretary met with.

Secretary Chertoff spoke about DHS aspects, about NFA, and about the training benefits from the 6-day classes. He took some question-and-answer sessions. Chief Cade spoke after Secretary Chertoff and also took some questions. Representatives were there from the IAFC Board, Hispanic Firefighters Board, NAC, and most fire service organizations. There were approximately 30 people present.

Chief Oliver moved to adjourn the meeting. There was a second from Dr. Bogucki. All were in favor.