

FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

**UNITED STATES
FIRE ADMINISTRATION**



ACTION PLAN

November 1999

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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

As part of our commitment to revitalize the U.S. Fire Administration, a group of six fire service professionals met to assist the acting Chief Operating Officer (COO) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) staff in drafting an action plan for the USFA during the week of July 11-16, 1999. The Action Plan Working Group reconvened on October 21-22, 1999, to review the numerous comments submitted in response to the Draft Action Plan. The result of these efforts is this document. This plan is a major milestone in setting the direction of the Federal fire programs into the next century. I want to commend all of those involved for their commitment and support of this endeavor.

Many groups and individuals provided input as the Working Group discussed the myriad of issues and programs of the USFA. Although this list is not all encompassing, I would like to acknowledge several of those whose insights were included in this process. First, the Report of the Blue Ribbon Panel provided invaluable guidance to the Action Plan Working Group, as the previous report was relied upon throughout the week. The staff of the National Fire Academy (NFA) proposed a number of important recommendations through its Task Force on Business Plan Projections. The USFA's Fire Management and Technical Programs Division submitted similar and equally important suggestions regarding the public education, research and data collection activities of the USFA. The NFA's Board of Visitors submitted details on how to make the NFA a world class organization, and the North American Fire Training Directors provided further comment about the NFA and its delivery of programs to and through the States. TRADE, the Training Resources and Data Exchange, provided a list of many issues not previously considered by the Working Group. Individuals offered comments, some in writing and some verbally, to the Chief Operating Officer and the working group. All were evaluated and contributed to the process.

The first meeting of the Action Plan Working Group was directed by the Acting Chief Operating Officer, Chief Richard Marinucci. The second meeting was directed by both Chief Marinucci and the newly hired, permanent COO, Chief Ken Burris. The success of their leadership and efforts on this plan provides clear endorsement of the wisdom of establishing the COO position.

The Action Plan Working Group brought vast experience and expansive knowledge about the fire service to writing this plan, and the final product is outstanding. COO Ken Burris and Administrator Brown will use this document as a guide in working with the staff to implement actions and programs. The Action Plan is dynamic in nature, and addresses numerous complex issues affected by Agency policies and budgetary constraints.

This plan demonstrates FEMA's commitment to improve services and support to the Nation's fire services. We have made significant progress in the past year. We look forward to the continued support and partnership with the fire services and broader emergency management community this Plan is designed to serve.

James L. Witt
Director
Federal Emergency Management Agency

INTRODUCTION

The Action Plan document represents a continuation of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) efforts to make significant changes within the United States Fire Administration (USFA). After the Blue Ribbon Panel released its report, FEMA Director James L. Witt asked Chief Richard A. Marinucci to join the USFA as the Senior Advisor on fire issues to Director Witt. Subsequently, Chief Marinucci was named the Acting Chief Operating Officer, and the Action Development Working Group was created. This Group was convened after careful consideration of the most effective means of devising a flexible yet strong guiding document for the USFA.

The goal of the Action Plan Working Group was to provide recommendations to guide the USFA toward its goal of becoming a world class organization. The major facets of the plan address the core mission, leadership, communication, staff development, advocacy, partnership, and marketing. Success in these areas will set the standard for all federal fire programs and directly influence services at the state and local level. The Working Group looked to develop leadership and advocacy within the USFA so that the changes begun by the Blue Ribbon Panel would continue and be institutionalized.

This Action Plan is not a traditional one in that it does not cover monetary recommendations or discuss profit-making initiatives. However, if followed, the plan will help re-establish the USFA as a leader in fire prevention, training, education and research initiatives. The plan will also help create an organization that is better able to react quickly, lead the fire service in recognizing and addressing new issues as they arise, and to demonstrate creative and innovative problem solving skills.

The USFA has adopted a new mission statement that clearly defines the USFA as the umbrella organization of the National Fire Academy, management and technology activities and logistical support. The specific functions include: the National Fire College, extension and distance learning, research data and public education, student services and support. The Chief Operating Officer, Chief Ken Burris, and the USFA management team will assign responsible parties for implementing the recommendations of the plan and researching associated costs. Responsible parties will be assigned within 30 days after this document's adoption.

INTRODUCTION (continued)

Beginning Sunday, 11 July, 1999, selected fire service professionals met at the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland to review the operations of the U.S. Fire Administration and the National Fire Academy to begin the development of an action plan for continued improvement of the organization. The personnel were divided into review groups to identify their general areas of responsibility during the review/interview process as well as possible areas of concern. The following personnel were convened and organized as follows:

- **Chief Richard Marinucci — Chair**
Acting Chief Operating Officer, USFA

- **Management and Technical Programs — Review Action Plan Input**
Chief Ron Coleman / California State Fire Marshall (retired)
Chief Mike Smith / Fresno (CA) Fire Department
 - NFIRS (marketing, participation, use, analysis, everyone vs. statistical sampling)
 - What is the constituency? Need a census?
 - Public education – what should our role be?
 - Research – partnerships, NIST

- **National Fire Academy — Review Action Plan Projections**
Chief Rich Powell / Saginaw Township (MI) Fire Department
Assistant Chief Monica Higgins / San Diego (CA) Fire Department
 - Course development/length
 - Fire Chief training course
 - Instructors/Permanent staff/Adjuncts
 - Low bid process
 - Student Selection
 - Executive Fire Officer program
 - Fire prevention program at the EFO level
 - Inclusion of allied professionals
 - Simulation labs
 - Regional delivery
 - Handoff courses
 - Degrees at a Distance
 - Harvard program
 - Scholarships
 - Campus capacity
 - Technology of classrooms
 - Leadership platform
 - Relationship with ICS
 - Evaluation process

INTRODUCTION (continued)

- **Organization and Staff Development — Review Current Organizational Structure**
Chief John Rukavina / Ashville (NC) Fire Department
Chief Fred Windisch / Ponderosa (TX) Fire Department
 - Education of employees – CEs
 - Sabbaticals and secondments
 - Promotional opportunities
 - Employee selection
 - Grievance procedure – employees and contractors
 - Adjunct relation with institution
 - Bidding process for contractor services
 - Reporting relationships
 - Merging of disciplines (Functional vs. team approach)
 - Training vs. education
 - “Academy” vs “college”

The group convened from Sunday, 11 July, through Thursday, 15 July, 1999, to complete their interviews, identify specific issues that require attention and formulate specific recommendations to address the concerns. Issues and concerns were identified and addressed in the following manner:

- **Issue Analysis Outline** developed:
Minimum information required, organized in a standardized fashion, to provide effective input into the Action Plan Development Process.
 - **Statement of Issue**
[short, concise, clear identification of problem/issue — one or two sentences.]
 - **Background information/Justification**
[information that provides sufficient data to clearly understand the issue in context to the overall situation/system, as well as the reason why the recommendation is needed.]
 - **Recommended action(s)**
[identification of the complete, precise, specific actions that provide the necessary steps to resolve the issue or correct the problem.]
 - **Cost/Requirements**
[identification of the approximate cost of implementing the recommendations as well as any legislative changes, labor contract constraints, etc., that may be required.]
 - **Responsible party / Time table**
[identifies the organization/entity with the primary responsibility to correct the problem and an anticipated time table for addressing/completing the recommendation.]

INTRODUCTION (continued)

Issues were identified and Issue Analysis Outlines developed for a variety of concerns. The Issue Analysis Outlines were developed somewhat by category and have been organized accordingly in the following manner:

- Core Mission Issues

- Leadership & Communications Issues

- Staff Development Issues

- Advocacy, Partnerships & Marketing Issues

On October 21st and 22nd, 1999, The Working Group was reconvened. During this meeting, the group reviewed and incorporated pertinent comments and suggestions from the open comment period.

CORE MISSION ISSUES

ISSUE ANALYSIS OUTLINE

Issue Category: Core Mission

Number: 1

Statement of Issue:

There is an unresolved question of whether the appropriate role for the NFA is training, education, or some combination of both.

Background Information/Justification

Since the establishment of the National Fire Academy in 1979, there has been an ongoing debate over the question of whether the Academy should offer “training” or “education” to its customers. In reality, to both meet present customer demands and to anticipate future customer requirements, the Academy needs to deliver both training and education – training via regional partnerships and education via a “National Fire College” within the NFA.

[NOTE: In the context of this issue, “training” is defined as technical “hands-on” skills display and development, involving state-of-the-art technical applications; “education” is defined as the process of acquiring knowledge and developing the associated reasoning and judgement.]

Recommended Action(s)

- Develop, execute, and publish a policy establishing the NFA’s dual roles in fire service training and education, including the following elements:
 - The NFA should utilize the fire service body of knowledge to focus on education with support to training elements.
 - The NFA will research and synthesize current fire service issues to produce education and training courses. The NETC will be primarily utilized as an educational facility to maintain a national focus, use its resources, nationalize the standardization of course content and encourage networking.
 - Technical training courses will be handed off to partners after piloting and validation. Educational courses should remain at the NETC based on efficiency and addressing emerging trends.

ISSUE ANALYSIS OUTLINE

Issue Category: Core Mission

Number: 2

Statement of Issue:

Emergency service providers are delivering services that PL 93-498 (as amended) does not authorize the USFA to address.

Background Information/Justification

USFA perception of its relationship with the fire community mission is dated (e.g., fire service's urgent embrace of terrorism-response task versus USFA "we-don't-have-the-resources" response). Specific examples include EMS, which has become a major function of the fire service community. The observation is that the USFA is addressing subjects that they do not have legislative authority. Although, FEMA has stated that the fire service is the community addressing these issues.

Recommended Action(s)

- Continually monitor fire service activities in order to identify emerging customer needs and promote any necessary change.
- Transmit the legislative authority concern to the recommissioned America Burning committee and FEMA.

ISSUE ANALYSIS OUTLINE

Issue Category: Core Mission

Number: 3

Statement of Issue

Existing curriculum may not be at the forefront emphasizing and providing leadership regarding leading-edge issues; the development process must be shortened to meet the needs of customers.

Background Information/Justification

A lack of coordination exists between identified fire problems and the developed curriculum. Too much emphasis is placed on process instead of content. This leads to extended development time frames for curriculum development and delivery. There are a number of recommended actions listed under this issue analysis. These must be addressed in a comprehensive and unified manner not piecemeal.

Recommended Action(s)

- Define and prioritize curriculum development based on established national training/educational requirements.
- Establish cross-divisional teams within USFA.
- Evaluate existing State programs and private sector training/educational courses and integrate them into current NFA offering.
- The Chief Operating Officer shall evaluate the NFA staff's curriculum development recommendations for implementation.
- Use committees or teams to better develop curriculum.
- The Board of Visitors shall be used to recommend curriculum needs.
- Continually investigate new technologies and, where feasible, incorporate into the development and delivery of courses.
- Establish the Program Chairs' authority and responsibility as "project manager" for development, delivery, and revision of courses.
- Develop a method to further refine and develop the effectiveness of NFA courses.
- Develop a more rigorous course delivery evaluation and feedback process to address the fire problem nationally and improve existing curriculum.
- Include the adjunct/contract faculties in an effective corrective action process to address and/or resolve issues relative to curriculum and deliver through the program chair.
- Tailor shorter resident courses that may require more compressed schedules and requirements for work prior to course attendance.
- Investigate existing "fast-track" process (e.g. TRADE) and its applicability to the NFA for implementation.

ISSUE ANALYSIS OUTLINE

Issue Category: Core Mission

Number: 4

Statement of Issue

There is no timely process for review of resource commitment to products or activities to determine their relevance or significance.

Background Information/Justification

Over the passage of time, certain products and activities become obsolete but they continue to be offered even though their relevance is in question (e.g., classes where significant time is spent on how to complete forms).

Recommended Action(s)

- Develop and implement an annual review program of all USFA deliverables that aligns priorities of the USFA's mission.
- Consider using outside stakeholders for program development (e.g. TRADE, NAFTD, etc.)

ISSUE ANALYSIS OUTLINE

Issue Category: Core Mission

Number: 5

Statement of Issue

There is no coordination between course development and delivery and publication distribution systems.

Background Information/Justification

There are over 200 USFA publications. Many of these items support the utilization of various curriculum concepts, but have not been integrated into their development. There should be a direct relationship between publications and course delivery. There is an awareness that staff has made key first steps in using technology to produce and distribute materials.

Recommended Action(s)

- Course instructors shall be required to continually review a current list of available publications and products and identify and promote the use of those materials in class.
- Relevant publications shall be linked to a curriculum component and identified accordingly.
- Continue and expand the use of camera-ready, downloadable materials, and CD-ROMs for distribution, to reduce shipping and printing costs.
- Create a model plan or checklist to provide information to customers and instructors when new publications/products become available.
- Continue to post all hand-off material for instructional documents in downloadable form on the Internet.

ISSUE ANALYSIS OUTLINE

Issue Category: Core Mission

Number: 6

Statement of Issue

Publications that have application to current courses and/or issues are not being read because of the impression that the material is outdated.

Background Information/Justification

Many documents have dates on them that are four or five years old. The dates printed on the covers give the impression that the material is outdated and that the information is out of date even though it is the most current information available.

Recommended Action(s)

- Dates on publications shall be replaced with edition numbers to encourage readership and indicated on the cover accordingly.
- Dates shall be indicated on an inside page of all documents instead of being identified on the covers.

ISSUE ANALYSIS OUTLINE

Issue Category: Core Mission

Number: 7

Statement of Issue

The National Fire Academy is not utilizing other delivery systems to reach full potential.

Background Information/Justification

The Blue Ribbon Panel report identified an ineffective partnership with State training programs, universities and other stakeholders with the NFA. In addition, too many students are being turned away. There have been numerous studies on delivery systems that have been developed but not implemented.

Recommended Action(s)

- Technical resident courses (hazmat, arson, etc.) shall be delivered regionally by the NFA in locations identified by and in conjunction with TRADE members.
- The NFA shall maintain its focus on executive level management, advanced technical training and the introduction of new ideas into the fire service.
- Develop a plan to ensure actions are taken to better utilize distance learning technology.
- Partner with public and private local, state, national and international entities (e.g. DoD's Garland Fire Academy) to improve and expand deliverables and products.
- Identify educational and training systems that have better technological capabilities to improve internal and external delivery capabilities (e.g., teleconferencing, computer-based training, private enterprise, etc.).
- Increase the number of off-campus NFA deliveries through State training systems to increase student access and course attendance opportunities.
- Develop more avenues of access (e.g., "entry points", internet, scanning, hours of operations) to allow more students to take advantage of the NFA courses and to encourage diversity.

ISSUE ANALYSIS OUTLINE

Issue Category: Core Mission

Number: 8

Statement of Issue

The USFA should reinstate and expand full financial support of fire service fellowships for Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government Program for Officials in State and Local Government.

Background Information/Justification

At one time the USFA fully supported the program but starting in 1995 funding was reduced. After that, the USFA's role was limited to participant selection and the NFPA and IAFC assumed responsibility for the balance of the program. Educational experience derived through Harvard's Kennedy School of Government program provides excellence in leadership on a national level. Having a fire service presence at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government provides stature for the fire service nationally.

Recommended Action(s)

- Restore funding to support the reinstatement and expansion of fellowships.
- Consider the expansion of the number of fellowships.
- Pursue alternative funding sources for additional fellowships through private partnerships.

ISSUE ANALYSIS OUTLINE

Issue Category: Core Mission

Number: 9

Statement of Issue

No program exists to develop fire prevention leadership comparable to the well-established and well-regarded Executive Fire Officer Program.

Background Information/Justification

A need exists to develop the KSAs and leadership skills of effective fire prevention leaders and elevate the importance and understanding of fire prevention and protection on a par with the skill development characterized by the Executive Fire Officer Program. The United States will be facing challenges due to upcoming changes in model code processes including a national fire code, performance codes, and fire modeling.

Recommended Action(s)

- Establish an Executive Fire Prevention Officer (EFPO) Program comparable in stature to the Executive Fire Officer Program.
- Develop program in conjunction with model code organizations, state fire marshals, inspector-certification organizations, and similar stakeholder organizations.
- Evaluate impact of EFPO program on staff and facilities and address.
- Review opportunities to work with the FEMA Mitigation Directorate.

ISSUE ANALYSIS OUTLINE

Issue Category: Core Mission

Number: 10

Statement of Issue

The current on- and off-campus student population may not reflect the geographic and demographic diversity of the United States fire service.

Background Information/Justification

There is a perception of a lack of diversity within the student population however; it is uncertain what the diversity population is. Correspondingly, there is a perception that the student selection process may not adequately address diversity issues. The USFA/NFA and national fire service would benefit substantially from increasing the diversity in USFA programs.

Recommended Action(s)

- Develop a fire service census that captures demographic information that will help clarify the perception issue and establish baselines and benchmarks for USFA activities.
- Distribute demographic information and student participation to nationally recognized organizations on an annual basis.
- Develop more avenues of access (i.e., “entry points”) to allow more students to take advantage of the NFA courses and to encourage diversity. This would include:
 - Allowing chiefs to designate the assignment of personnel.
 - Providing scholarships to select associations and groups by the BOV.
 - Establishing outreach to allied professional groups (e.g., burn centers, etc.).
- Each course shall have minimum job-related performance qualifications.
- Develop a marketing plan to reach the diverse groups.
- Recruit instructors to increase diversity to better reflect the fire community.
- Transmit this request to the recommissioned America Burning committee.
- Encourage participation from the federal fire department population (e.g. DOD, USDA Forest Service).

ISSUE ANALYSIS OUTLINE

Issue Category: Core Mission

Number: 11

Statement of Issue

The capacity of the NETC campus is inadequate to handle the volume of current and potential applicants for resident programs and the support of those programs.

Background Information/Justification

There is no capacity to accommodate expanded course offerings driven by emerging issues. Due to space and budget limitations the NFA cannot accept all qualified applicants for courses on campus. It is reasonable to anticipate a significant increase in applicants due to expanded diversification efforts and expanded population increases.

Recommended Action(s)

- Develop a short- and long-range (three to five year) capital improvement plan that addresses projected needs and the focus of which is on the delivery of user services. This shall include the expansion of dormitory, classroom and office space.
- Study the potential use of Mount Weather as an additional site for resident courses.
- Consider offering resident technical training courses at regional sites.

ISSUE ANALYSIS OUTLINE

Issue Category: Core Mission

Number: 12

Statement of Issue

The fire safety and related research and development agenda should be a higher priority of the Federal government.

Background Information/Justification

Adequate funding is not available for a comprehensive research agenda. There is also no capacity to anticipate and respond to emerging trends and patterns. Therefore, there is a limited ability to identify needs. The FRAM Report supports the fact that research needs attention and/or additional support for ongoing research. There are many topics that have not been adequately studied and prioritized. In addition, there are many public, private and educational organizations that are doing R&D domestically and internationally, and whose resources could be tapped in support of fire safety in the United States.

Recommended Action(s)

- USFA shall develop a comprehensive national fire research agenda and incorporate it throughout the budgetary process.
- Develop partnerships with other allied public and private organizations (e.g., SFPE, CPSC, NIST, Dept of Defense, NWCG, UL, etc.) performing fire research.
- Incorporate student participation in research initiatives.
- Create fellowships and internships for participation in research projects.
- Pursue partnerships with research universities and colleges and seek MOUs when feasible.
- Transmit this issue to the recommissioned America Burning committee.
- Establish federal sector and non-fire service organization (e.g. AIA) stakeholders teams that identify and pursue opportunities to mitigate and reduce fire and related risks.

ISSUE ANALYSIS OUTLINE

Issue Category: Core Mission

Number: 13

Statement of Issue

The USFA's management information system (MIS) does not always yield reliable, useful, or timely information for purposes of management decision-making processes.

Background Information/Justification

A comprehensive management information system is essential to the near and long term viability of the USFA. The USFA will fall short in accomplishing its mission without comprehensive and accurate data. The Action Plan Development Team encountered many cases where the information presented was incomplete, unavailable, or unintentionally misleading.

Recommended Action(s)

- Develop a comprehensive integrated management information system that reflects the meaningful activities and components of the entire USFA.
- Assure that the current management information system technology is state-of-the-art.

ISSUE ANALYSIS OUTLINE

Issue Category: Core Mission

Number: 14

Statement of Issue

There is a need to enhance the collection of comprehensive data to support USFA and partner/customer analysis and policy decisions.

Background Information/Justification

NFIRS

Unless the local fire department utilizes paper reports, participation in NFIRS requires either software provided by the state or the purchase of commercial software packages. The USFA allows states to distribute their NFIRS 5.0 Data Entry Tool to local fire departments, however the USFA provides support only at the state level. Local fire departments must go to the state or their software vendor for technical support.

There is no federal mandate that requires participation by states or local fire departments, and there are few incentives to participate. Participating states and metropolitan fire departments (departments protecting a population of 500,000 or more) receive technical assistance and training through the National Fire Information Council (NFIC), whose activities are funded by the USFA.

There are some fiscal issues related to NFIRS participation. Departments may report one year and not the next year due to staffing, funding constraints, politics, and leadership.

In 1999, the USFA began to implement NFIRS 5.0, which is an all-incident based reporting standard to document the full range of fire department activity.

OTHER

There is a need to strengthen information partnerships with allied professional organizations (e.g. IAFC, IAFF, NASFM, CPSC, NFPA, ICMA, NVFC, USDA Forest Service, etc.).

USFA makes summarized NFIRS data available through a variety of means including publications and the web site. However, detailed queries of the national fire database are only available upon request. There is only a limited marketing effort to identify and contact possible customers for information compiled through NFIRS data. There are few mechanisms for getting the message out to demonstrate the commercial, manufacturing and public applications of having accurate fire data.

ISSUE ANALYSIS OUTLINE (continued)

Issue Category: Core Mission

Number: 14

The current NFIRS database contains fire department records identified by participating states. This may include records for fire departments as well as individuals fire stations (depending upon how the state assigns FDID numbers). Furthermore, no FDID records exist for non-participating states. This raises doubts about the numbers of actual fire departments that exist. There is no baseline data available that effectively defines composition, capabilities, and activities of the nation's fire service.

Recommended Action(s)

- Encourage active State participation in the NFIRS program through financial incentives, timely dissemination of national statistics, access to the national fire database for queries and condition access to FEMA/USFA resources (e.g. grants, publications, NFA attendance, etc.) on NFIRS participation.
- Increase staffing at the USFA to meet current program demands to assist states with the implementation of the latest version of NFIRS. Future staffing increases should be commensurate with the growth of participation in the NFIRS system.
- USFA staff should provide NFIRS technical support, documentation, and trend analysis to the states and information partners. Provide appropriate resources dedicated to managing NFIRS marketing.
- Use fire data to better educate Congress on the continuing threat and cost of fire (direct and indirect).
- Use latest version of NFIRS, in conjunction with survey instruments (e.g. fire service census) to identify and maintain the demographics of fire departments in the United States.
- Identify and assess target audiences and determine how best to reach them.
- Involve external partners to compile and share data. Expand information partnerships.
- Identify the statistical validity of NFIRS data published in reports.
- Provide additional resources to NFIC tied to performance criteria dedicated to marketing and expanding participation in NFIRS through partnerships with states, locals and allied professional organizations. This may require amending the USFA/NFIC cooperative agreement to specifically address marketing issues.
- Provide an overview of purpose and benefits of fire reporting and an introduction to latest version of NFIRS at all courses held by the NFA (e.g. staff developed handouts, video, etc.).
- Provide linkage between NFIRS and code performance entities via the NFIRS design, review, and effectiveness plan.
- Expand computer resources to adequately support instructors and students.

ISSUE ANALYSIS OUTLINE

Issue Category: Core Mission

Number: 15

Statement of Issue

There is no procedure to involve the USFA in significant incidents.

Background Information/Justification

There is a limited mechanism to send staff to significant incidents or issues (e.g., fire, hazmat, EMS, mass casualty, US&R, etc.) to collect information that can be utilized by the USFA to produce products used by the entire fire community. The USFA does not have visibility at significant incidents. Contractors have been used to do the post-incident reports. There is a concern that allowing staff to respond to incidents or issues to gather information may interfere the staff's ability to accomplish their normal workload.

Recommended Action(s)

- The USFA must aggressively pursue participation in the FEMA response plan to declared disasters and emergencies.
- Develop a protocol to determine when and where members of staff would be deployed to gather information on an incident.
- Involve partners to utilize both internal and external existing technical expertise to gather information from the field that lends itself to the development of lesson-learned educational products and documents.
- Utilize field representatives to identify incidents and participate in information gathering.
- Products generated from site visits shall be integrated into current NFA course offerings to provide real-world scenarios for training purposes.
- Pursue partnerships with the FEMA Response and Recovery Directorate for undeclared disasters.
- Evaluate the possibility of having the USFA assume the administration of FEMA first response programs (e.g. US&R).

LEADERSHIP & COMMUNICATIONS ISSUES

ISSUE ANALYSIS OUTLINE

Issue Category: Leadership & Communications

Number: 1

Statement of Issue

There is a widely stated concern by fire service community, FEMA, and USFA staff that the leadership within USFA needs strengthening.

Background Information/Justification

Poor morale also exists in many segments of the USFA workforce. There is a lack of sense of purpose/mission/vision. Documents such as the White Paper, A Campaign for a Stronger USFA, The Blue Ribbon Report, and this committee among others identified a lack of leadership as a significant issue in strengthening the future of the USFA.

Recommended Action(s)

- Continue weekly management team meetings with Senior Managers.
- Develop individual performance plans to establish measurable, attainable and mutually agreed upon objectives with the Senior Management staff.
- The Senior Managers shall be held accountable for the performance plans implementation.
- Develop an organizational plan that establishes training opportunities for appropriate staff positions.
- Develop a plan to create an environment that promotes cooperation, teamwork, creativity and innovation.
- Develop a plan that provides temporary re-assignments for appropriate staff to broaden horizons and exposure (e.g., IPAs, sabbaticals, mentorship programs, etc.).
- Review and amend the Action Plan annually.

ISSUE ANALYSIS OUTLINE

Issue Category: Leadership & Communications

Number: 2

Statement of Issue:

There are major communication weaknesses between the USFA and FEMA that have serious consequences.

Background Information/Justification

Horizontal and vertical communications between the various elements within the USFA do not adequately provide for effective internal and external coordination. There is also the perception of compartmentalization within the USFA is creating gaps in communications about productivity, information exchange, and priorities that result in inefficiencies and ineffectiveness. As a result, divisions appear to be operating in a manner that impedes the sharing of information between divisions. (Anecdotal examples include; missed opportunities for fully funded development of badly needed courses, duplication of effort in development of customer products, etc.). In addition, there is some evidence of little or no interaction or response within the USFA in areas where the fire service interest is obvious to the customers (e.g., terrorism).

There is no uniform information-sharing process that provides status updates and promotes teamwork within USFA. The behavior of the organization does not reflect that all personnel subscribe to the USFA mission. There have been five major reorganizations in the last ten years. Previous reorganizations, by themselves, have not resulted in improving communication and closing performance gaps.

ISSUE ANALYSIS OUTLINE (continued)

Issue Category: Leadership & Communications

Number: 2

Recommended Action(s)

- Develop strong organizational linkage (communication/coordination) between and among USFA components. (Refer to the COO's Reorganizational Task Force)
- The Chief Operating Officer must lead the open communications effort across the USFA organization. Examples of this leadership include attending regular FEMA senior staff meetings, providing a written summary of meetings to staff, etc.
- Produce and distribute a monthly newsletter on campus and at Headquarters that includes updates, accomplishments, etc.
- The Board of Visitors shall be a strong and active organization with staff support, independent USFA resources for its activities, and shall continue to have a direct reporting relationship with the FEMA Director through the Chief Operating Officer.
- The Board of Visitors shall meet quarterly and report annually. At least one of the meetings shall have an open agenda to allow the Visitors to interact easily with the staff.
- The Chief Operating Officer and Director shall meet with stakeholders at least annually.
- The USFA shall take advantage of its own organizational development staff to conduct and facilitate staff development activities (e.g., team building, effective project management, etc.).
- First line supervisors and managers shall conduct, at the minimum, a monthly staff meeting to discuss status of goals, objectives and priorities.
- Formalize and document action-planning process to set deadlines and deliverables dates.
- The Chief Operating Officer and Director shall consider meeting with stakeholders outside the fire service community.

ISSUE ANALYSIS OUTLINE

Issue Category: Leadership & Communications

Number: 3

Statement of Issue:

There are not always baselines and benchmarks in place to measure the effectiveness of the USFA in meeting its work plan objectives.

Background Information/Justification

Issues of adequate accountability are raised when task deadlines are established and subsequently not met, but those issues are not always resolved. Realistic, measurable and achievable goals and objectives have not been clearly identified for the USFA personnel. The GPRA's deal with such broadly defined goals that it is difficult to measure personnel performance (measurement tools are not defined). Not all employees feel a connection to the current employee recognition system.

Recommended Action(s)

- The Superintendent, Branch Chiefs and supervisors must ensure that specific, measurable, and meaningful performance indicators are established and monitored on a monthly, quarterly and yearly basis and that they are completed within established timelines.
- Management must effectively utilize the range of the system of recognition/reward for exemplary performance of deserving teams and individuals, and celebrate that performance.
- Pursue additional means of recognition.

ISSUE ANALYSIS OUTLINE

Issue Category: Leadership & Communications

Number: 4

Statement of Issue:

There is a conflict between the process of product development and delivery of that product in the classroom.

Background Information/Justification

There is a conflict between the process orientation of curriculum development and the content needs of instruction. Adjuncts are frustrated with the disregard of their input and respect for their field experience. The full time staff feels powerless as a result of USFA's failure to resolve this conflict. As a result, the customers are aware of and equally frustrated with this conflict.

Recommended Action(s)

- Develop and implement a team approach, with the Program Chair as the "project manager".
- Require the integration of development with the delivery process.
- Add adjunct faculty to the development and update/revision team.

ISSUE ANALYSIS OUTLINE

Issue Category: Leadership & Communications

Number: 5

Statement of Issue

The USFA should attempt to better reach future leaders and promote a more diverse student population.

Background Information/Justification

The number of students participating in EFO program classes has remained relatively unchanged since 1988. Limiting participation to chief officers often results in lack of diversity. In addition, there is a need to better develop company officers who will eventually become future leaders. The expansion of the EFOP will provide more access to women and minorities who presently do not qualify for EFOP but are in company level officer positions. This does not require an abandonment of present EFOP requirements. It would allocate a limited number of positions for those candidates who have a strong record of professional accomplishment. (Selection criteria would be developed). PL 93-498 also provides for this activity. Corresponding resources to support course delivery costs, instructor costs, stipends, dormitory space, administrative staffing, applied research project review/evaluation costs, etc. will be required.

Recommended Action(s)

- The EFO program shall be expanded to:
 - Establish a system that allows each U.S. Senator to nominate one individual for the EFO program each year,
 - Allow the Board of Visitors to identify three related professional organizations each year who shall have up to five nominations for EFO positions,
 - Increase the number of students by allowing a limited number of middle management officers to attendVia predetermined selection criteria developed by the Program Chairs.
- Develop an alternate selection process for target audience candidates, to include an assessment of analytical, comprehension skills, and the student's ability to handle the EFO curriculum for target audience candidates.

ISSUE ANALYSIS OUTLINE

Issue Category: Leadership & Communications

Number: 6

Statement of Issue:

Emergency service providers are delivering services that are not being addressed by USFA products in a timely fashion.

Background Information/Justification

USFA perception of its relationship with the fire community mission is dated (e.g., fire service's urgent embrace of terrorism-response task versus USFA "we-don't-have-the-resources" response). The timeline to develop a proposal, grant a contract, and receive a product can be three or more years.

Recommended Action(s)

- Develop a "fast track" capability for priority issues that allows deliverables to reach the field in time to meet customer needs.
- Empower employees to be creative and innovative to meet customer requirements.
- Continually monitor customer activities in order to identify emerging customer needs.
- Identify and eliminate constraints to "fast-track" development.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

ISSUE ANALYSIS OUTLINE

Issue Category: Staff Development

Number: 1

Statement of Issue:

Minimum qualification selection methods and evaluation methods for staff and adjunct faculty are not widely known (and in some cases do not exist).

Background Information/Justification

Better information sharing results in improved teamwork. The present perception of the selection process of adjunct faculty, for example, is “it’s not what you know, but who you know.” Although the USFA relies overwhelmingly on adjunct/contract faculty, there is no mechanism to identify adjunct concerns that go beyond subject matter areas. In some cases, the adjunct faculty has difficulty communicating subject matter concerns to full time staff. There is no liaison/focal point for adjuncts/part time instructors (e.g., “little stuff”/ “just-another-brick-in-the-wall syndrome”). There is no way to follow up on suggestions for improvement.

There is a perception among active and potential adjunct/contract faculty that the “bid system” of instructor selection in its present form is inequitable and interferes with the quality of instruction. Inclusion of travel expenses as part of an adjunct/contract instructor’s bid invariably prejudices the ability of otherwise competent instructors outside the mid-Atlantic area of the United States to submit a “competitive” bid. In the same manner, this “bid system” gives undue weight to proximity of adjunct/contract faculty to NFA.

Minimum qualifications and selection methods for staff and adjunct faculty should continue to meet Federal workforce diversity goals. “New hire” information is not regularly shared among customers and staff.

ISSUE ANALYSIS OUTLINE (continued)

Issue Category: Staff Development

Number: 1

Recommended Action(s)

- Disseminate staff and adjunct selection, evaluation criteria and work opportunities annually, and announcements of new appointments immediately.
- Identify and task a full time USFA staff member with responsibility for liaison/ombudsman services for the adjunct/contract faculty.
- Include the adjunct/contract faculty in an effective and timely corrective action process to address and/or resolve issues.
- Develop a plan that supports the development of a teaching cadre that represents the diversity of the fire service community.
- Institute a bid system that neutralizes the effect of basic travel expenses by deleting from bid consideration travel expenses of \$750 or less. Consider an alternative of a flat rate for instructor travel.
- Actively recruit competent instructors who possess a combination of experience, education and training.

ISSUE ANALYSIS OUTLINE

Issue Category: Staff Development

Number: 2

Statement of Issue:

There are no defined continuing education requirements for USFA staff.

Background Information/Justification

Public fire protection services in the United States are undergoing significant change. If the USFA staff is to continue to meet customer expectations that they represent the “leading edge” of fire service education and research, they must regularly refresh and enhance their skills through a well-defined continuing education process.

Recommended Action(s)

The USFA shall develop a continuing education program for appropriate staff that includes, but is not limited to:

- Consultation and interaction with other subject matter experts, both inside and outside the fire service.
- Field assignment at customer worksites.
- Exchange programs with leading-edge fire protection services and state/baccalaureate education and research institutions via secondment/details and the use of the Intergovernmental Review Act.
- Participation in state-of-the-art post graduate seminars, workshops and/or courses.
- Preparation for, and active participation in, professional conferences and seminars related to the field of expertise (e.g., presentation of learned papers at a professional conference, etc.).
- Submission of learned papers for publication related to the field of expertise in relevant periodicals and books.

ISSUE ANALYSIS OUTLINE

Issue Category: Staff Development

Number: 3

Statement of Issue:

Promotional tracks for the USFA staff should not require someone to have to abandon the core function of their position (teaching, technical development, support) in order to achieve further career advancement.

Background Information/Justification

The potential exists for staffers competent in a critical skill to be compelled to set aside those skills in order to advance within USFA's promotional system. This can result in loss of availability of hard-earned, potentially irreplaceable expertise.

Recommended Action(s)

- Review existing promotional rules to ensure the flexibility exists to preserve the availability of those critical skills, and seek modification where required.
- Review use of permanent instructors as a means of enhancing instructional quality.
- Investigate applicability of innovative salary range methods (banding, etc.).

ISSUE ANALYSIS OUTLINE

Issue Category: Staff Development

Number: 4

Statement of Issue

The USFA staff (full time and adjunct faculty) do not have informal methods to resolve personal and organizational conflicts.

Background Information/Justification

Full time and adjunct staffs have communicated to the Chief Operating Officer that they did not have a method to voice their legitimate concerns in an effective way.

Recommended Action(s)

- Establish an informal process for conflict resolution and train personnel on these informal processes.
- Ensure that management continues to demonstrate commitment to these processes and continually measure outcomes.

ADVOCACY, PARTNERSHIPS & MARKETING ISSUES

ISSUE ANALYSIS OUTLINE

Issue Category: Advocacy, Partnerships & Marketing

Number: 1

Statement of Issue

The Federal fire program does not have a designated spokesperson and lacks a coordinated effort.

Background Information/Justification

There is a perception that there is no apparent advocate in the Federal Government to promote the fire service. There is also a perception within the fire service community that there is no advocate for FEMA/USFA/NFA within the fire service. The FEMA/USFA/NFA and the fire service community will need to advocate/support/promote the Action Plan.

Recommended Action(s)

- The US Fire Administrator must serve as liaison between the Federal fire program, allied professionals and fire service community.
- The Chief Operating Officer shall coordinate the efforts/activities of the USFA.
- Stakeholders shall continue to advocate and support the USFA Action Plan.
- Increase activity with the FEMA Office of Public Affairs.

ISSUE ANALYSIS OUTLINE

Issue Category: Advocacy, Partnerships & Marketing

Number: 2

Statement of Issue

Awareness of the overall mission of the USFA (and how the all risk approach fits together to achieve that mission) is limited and not currently emphasized through courses, publications, and word of mouth.

Background Information/Justification

There is no common understanding of the mission, organizational roles and responsibilities, or the deliverables of this system. There is also no regional support for the USFA because there is no USFA presence in the ten FEMA Regions. At one point there was a USFA representative in each of the ten FEMA Regions. These positions were eliminated, which in turn eliminated the access point for local and State customers to the USFA and vice-versa.

There is a perception that there is limited advocacy within FEMA for the USFA. This includes a perception within the fire service community that FEMA/USFA is not strongly representing the fire service. There is no budget to support networking and informational activities through conference, work group, training participation, etc.

Recommended Action(s)

- The US Fire Administrator and senior USFA staff must effectively address issues of representation and advocacy among Federal agencies and public and private local, state, national and international entities.
- All USFA products need to emphasize the USFA mission and organizational structure.
- Regular information on USFA activities shall be distributed to the Board of Visitors and allied organizations.
- The USFA needs to be linked with national allied organizations and conference program planning committees in order to take advantage of opportunities to deliver a consistent and continuous message regarding USFA mission and program deliverables.
- Funds must be allocated for travel to facilitate participation of USFA staff in national activities.
- Pursue the re-establishment of USFA representatives at each FEMA Regional Office and utilize those field representatives to participate in After-Action Reviews on significant incidents as the USFA representative.
- USFA facilitate a focus group on the future in partnership with other agencies (e.g., IAFC Annual Summit Meeting or the TRADE Biannual Meeting, etc.).
- Establish relationships between USFA and FEMA regional representatives who share common responsibilities.
- Create a partnership within FEMA in order to enhance USFA and other FEMA programs (e.g., PT&E, R&R, Mitigation, etc.).

ISSUE ANALYSIS OUTLINE

Issue Category: Advocacy, Partnerships & Marketing

Number: 3

Statement of Issue:

There is a perception that affiliation with an institution of higher education would (a) increase instructor pride and commitment and, (b) provide students with immediately available (and transferable) college credit.

Background Information/Justification

While some NFA/USFA staffers believe that NFA should be a degree-granting institution, similar agencies elsewhere in government (e.g., the FBI Academy) have affiliated their programs with baccalaureate-level educational institutions, where faculty hold joint appointments and students receive college credit through the affiliated institution.

Recommended Action(s)

- Pursue affiliation with a college (or colleges) that deliver related undergraduate and post-graduate degrees, beginning with the seven open learning program universities.
- Solicit a partnership with EMI in developing matriculation agreements with colleges and universities.

ISSUE ANALYSIS OUTLINE

Issue Category: Advocacy, Partnerships & Marketing

Number: 4

Statement of Issue

In order to create leading edge course materials and deliverables, NIST and other research and development findings/publications should be incorporated into the development process.

Background Information/Justification

Originally, research by the NFPCA was required by law. The mandate was lost when NFPCA was reorganized into USFA. There is a memorandum of understanding with NIST to rebuild this relationship, but there is no process in place to make sure that new research findings are incorporated into course materials. In addition, some Program Chairs do not utilize NIST research findings. Appendix E of the Blue Ribbon Panel Review as well as the FRAM report set forward specific topics for research.

Recommended Action(s)

- Amend the NIST/USFA memorandum of understanding to require relevant research findings to be included in curriculum development and conduct.
- Create a linkage between the curriculum development team and the NIST where none exists and formalize in areas where NIST has been utilized.

ISSUE ANALYSIS OUTLINE

Issue Category: Advocacy, Partnerships & Marketing

Number: 5

Statement of Issue

The USFA has not aggressively pursued opportunities for partnership in data collection, curriculum development and delivery, technology applications, public safety education, and research and development.

Background Information/Justification

There is a very large community of interests that deal with fire-related issues. Many members of that community are involved in activities that could contribute significantly to the achievement of the USFA mission. Those members include trade associations, government agencies, private businesses, allied professions, etc. Partnerships could include other national, State, local and international entities, both public and private. The USFA should attempt to leverage opportunities to acquire information, package and distribute products.

Recommended Action(s)

- Develop an MOU process to streamline the ability of the USFA to partner with other entities (e.g., NHTSA, CDC, FAA, DOJ, DOD, U.S. Forest Service, etc.).
- Communicate with other agencies frequently to develop strategies to be pursued.
- Create and convene partnership groups and establish clear goals and objectives. These partnerships shall address common issues that contribute to the achievement of the USFA mission, and shall aggressively monitor productivity.
- Restore full USFA participation in NWCG.
- Pursue enhancement of anti-terrorism partnership with US DOJ.
- Expand pursuit of joint planning and ventures with EMI in areas such as IEMS, ICS, hazmat, terrorism, and simulation so as to expand learning opportunities, maintain consistency of programs, and reduce duplication of efforts.

ISSUE ANALYSIS OUTLINE

Issue Category: Advocacy, Partnerships & Marketing

Number: 6

Statement of Issue

Currently there is little emphasis placed on the development of program-enhancing partnerships with private industry.

Background Information/Justification

Feedback from external entities indicates that USFA and NFA have missed opportunities for partnering in these areas.

Recommended Action(s)

- Develop a system to allow partnerships to occur. Develop more partnerships with college and universities to expand NFA influence upon how the fire problem is studied in the United States (i.e., continued support of Fire and Emergency Services Higher Education Consortium).
- Identify and become involved in key meetings where attendance would help foster new partnerships or strengthen existing ones.
- Seek partnerships with corporate sponsors for exposure and enhancement of NFA programs.
- Explore the creation of a foundation for the purpose of enhancing U.S. fire programs.
- Develop an on-campus annual "Fire Chief Update" workshop.

ISSUE ANALYSIS OUTLINE

Issue Category: Advocacy, Partnerships & Marketing

Number: 7

Statement of Issue

The USFA is not taking full advantage of modern technologies to reach customers have the potential for the greatest impact on the future fire service.

Background Information/Justification

Resident curriculum development and delivery methods have remained largely static and classroom-bound since 1980.

Recommended Action(s)

- Develop a formal process to evaluate and utilize current technology to support USFA mission.
- Leverage technology to speed up product development.
- Network with existing organizations to leverage resources and information about available technology.
- Enable customers to interact with USFA on-line (e.g., class registration, transcript request on-line, etc.).
- Establish direct partnership linkage with public and private local, state, national and international entities to offer off-site services.
- Investigate the potential of live fire demonstration technology for use as an educational and research tools in resident courses (e.g., backdraft/flashover, arson investigation cell in partnership with ATF).
- Expand access to the Learning Resource Center (e.g. longer hours, Internet access, etc).

ISSUE ANALYSIS OUTLINE

Issue Category: Advocacy, Partnerships & Marketing

Number: 8

Statement of Issue

There is no comprehensive marketing plan for USFA products and services.

Background Information/Justification

The Action Plan Development Team has not been able to identify a comprehensive marketing plan that addresses all aspects of the USFA. The USFA has developed many products that are of value to the fire service community, however there is evidence that the fire service community is unaware of them.

Recommended Action(s)

- Develop a comprehensive marketing plan that addresses all USFA activities.
- Consider assembling a partnership for effective marketing.
- Consider regular submissions of one-page articles for interest group publications to include new products, promotions, personnel, partnership issues, action events, statistics, schedules, etc.

ISSUE ANALYSIS OUTLINE

Issue Category: Advocacy, Partnerships & Marketing

Number: 9

Statement of Issue

USFA document distribution needs to target specific audiences in order to maximize the visibility and utilization of appropriate materials.

Background Information/Justification

The USFA has produced over 200 reports, pamphlets, brochures, etc. addressing issues being raised by the fire community, but these publications do not necessarily reach the appropriate target audience where they would have the most impact (e.g., all risk, fire service, public, legislature, allied organizations, etc.). Publications that reach and are used by the appropriate audiences are the best advocate of the USFA mission. There are limits on the quantities of publications that customers can obtain unless the customers prepare utilization plans.

Recommended Action(s)

- As publication topics are identified, USFA shall produce a planned distribution list to better target the appropriate audience.
- Enhance the distribution of publications through the use of camera-ready artwork for local printing.
- Develop and implement a customer feedback system for publication use and effectiveness.
- Develop print and web site model utilization plans so that customers can acquire multiple copies of publications with minimal effort.
- Develop a guide for web publication catalog users.

ISSUE ANALYSIS OUTLINE

Issue Category: Advocacy, Partnerships & Marketing

Number: 10

Statement of Issue

There is a perception that some current classes are not always filled to capacity.

Background Information/Justification

Current statistics as presented demonstrate a significant no-show/vacancy rate in current resident programs. Some are filled by department substitution and waiting lists. Last minute substitutions create financial impacts to USFA, students, employers, etc. The perception of a vacancy rate results in applicants who were not allowed to attend becoming dissatisfied.

Recommended Action(s)

- Develop and implement a data collection system that accurately reflects the utilization of the NETC facility.
- Review the current method of vacancy “backfill” and explore alternatives (e.g., local fill, employer and/or employee subsidy, etc.).
- Continue limiting the number of class offerings of courses that are not regularly filled.
- Establish a waiting list for local fill, employer/employee subsidy, and federal agencies.

LIST OF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

LIST OF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Issue Category: Core Mission

- Develop, execute, and publish a policy establishing the USFA/NFA's dual roles in fire service training and education. (Refer to the proposed organizational chart in the Introduction.)
- Develop a "fast track" capability for priority issues that allows deliverables to reach the field in time to meet customer needs.
- Empower employees to be creative and innovative to meet customer requirements.
- Continually monitor customer activities in order to identify emerging customer needs.
- Define and prioritize curriculum development based on established national training/educational requirements.
- Establish cross-divisional teams within USFA.
- Evaluate existing State programs and private sector training/educational courses and integrate them into current NFA offering.
- The Chief Operating Officer shall evaluate the NFA staff's curriculum development recommendations for implementation.
- Use committees or teams to better develop curriculum.
- The Board of Visitors shall be used to review and recommend curriculum needs.
- Continually investigate new technologies and, where feasible, incorporate into the development and delivery of courses.
- Reaffirm the Program Chairs' authority and responsibility within their respective areas of expertise for curriculum development.
- Develop a method to further refine and develop the effectiveness of NFA courses.
- Develop a more rigorous course delivery evaluation and feedback process to address the fire problem nationally and improve existing curriculum.
- Include the adjunct/contract faculties in an effective corrective action process to address and/or resolve issues.
- Tailor shorter resident courses that may require more compressed schedules and requirements for work prior to course attendance.

LIST OF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Issue Category: Core Mission (continued)

- Develop and implement an annual review program of all USFA deliverables that aligns priorities of the USFA's mission.
- Course instructors shall be required to continually review a current list of available publications and products and identify and promote the use of those materials in class.
- All publications that are created shall be linked to a curriculum component and identified accordingly.
- Increase the use of camera-ready and downloadable materials for distribution, to reduce shipping and printing costs.
- Create a model plan or checklist to provide information to customers and instructors when new publications/products become available.
- Dates on publications shall be replaced with edition numbers to encourage readership and indicated on the cover accordingly.
- Dates shall be indicated on an inside page of all documents instead of being identified on the covers.
- Technical resident courses (hazmat, arson, etc.) shall be delivered regionally by the NFA in locations identified by, and in conjunction with, TRADE members.
- The NFA shall maintain its focus on executive level management, advanced technical training and the introduction of new ideas into the fire service.
- Develop a plan to ensure actions are taken to better utilize distance learning technology.
- Partner with public and private local, state, national and international entities to improve and expand deliverables and products.
- Identify educational and training systems that have better technological capabilities to improve internal and external delivery capabilities (e.g., teleconferencing, computer-based training, private enterprise, etc.).
- Increase the number of off-campus NFA deliveries through State training systems to increase student access and course attendance opportunities.
- Develop more avenues of access (e.g., "entry points") to allow more students to take advantage of the NFA courses and to encourage diversity.

LIST OF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Issue Category: Core Mission (continued)

- Restore funding to support the reinstatement and expansion of fellowships.
- Consider the expansion of the number of fellowships.
- Pursue alternative funding sources for additional fellowships through private partnerships.
- Establish an Executive Fire Prevention Officer (EFPO) Program comparable in stature to the Executive Fire Officer Program.
- Develop program in conjunction with model fire prevention code organizations, inspector-certification organizations, and similar stakeholder organizations.
- Evaluate impact of EFPO program on staff and facilities and address.
- Develop a fire service census that captures demographic information that will help clarify the perception issue and establish baselines and benchmarks for USFA activities.
- Distribute demographic information and student participation to nationally recognized organizations on an annual basis.
- Develop more avenues of access (e.g., “entry points”) to allow more students to take advantage of the NFA courses and to encourage diversity. This would include:
 - Allowing chiefs to designate the assignment of personnel.
 - Providing scholarships to select associations and groups by the BOV.
 - Establishing outreach to allied professional groups (e.g., burn centers, etc.).
- Each course shall have minimum job-related performance qualifications.
- Develop a marketing plan to reach the diverse groups.
- Recruit instructors to increase diversity to better reflect the fire community.
- Develop a short- and long-range (three to five year) capital improvement plan that addresses projected needs and the focus of which is on the delivery of user services. This shall include the expansion of dormitory, classroom and office space.
- Study the potential use of Mount Weather as an alternate site for resident courses.
- Consider offering resident course at regional sites.
- Develop a clearly defined research agenda and incorporate it throughout the budgetary process.

LIST OF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Issue Category: Core Mission (continued)

- USFA shall develop a comprehensive national fire research agenda.
- Develop partnerships with other allied public and private organizations (e.g., CPSC, National Institute of Building Sciences, Dept of Defense, NWCG, UL, etc.) performing fire research.
- Incorporate student participation in research initiatives.
- Create fellowships and internships for participation in research projects.
- Pursue partnerships with research universities and colleges and seek MOUs when feasible.
- Develop a comprehensive management information system that reflects the meaningful activities and components of the USFA.
- Assure that the current management information system technology is state-of-the-art.
- Encourage active State participation in the NFIRS program through incentives (timely dissemination of national statistics) and sanctions (NFA attendance conditioned on NFIRS participation).
- Increase staffing in the NFIRS program in accordance with the growth of participation in the NFIRS system to collect and process data. The new staff would provide technical support, documentation, and trend analysis to the states.
- Use fire data to better educate Congress on the continuing threat and cost of fire (direct and indirect).
- Identify and maintain the demographics of fire departments in the United States by conducting a fire services census.
- Identify and assess target audiences and determine how best to reach them.
- Involve external partners to compile and share data. Expand information partnerships.
- Database information shall be shared between the Admission Office and the Publications Office.
- Develop a tiered census system. Identify the authority having jurisdiction, demographics, individuals, etc.
- Verify statistical validity of an NFIRS sample.
- Provide appropriate staff dedicated to managing NFIRS marketing.

LIST OF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Issue Category: Core Mission (continued)

- Provide additional resources to NFIC dedicated to marketing NFIRS by expanding participation in NFIRS through partnerships with States, locals and allied professional organizations. This may require amending the USFA/NFIC cooperative agreement to specifically address marketing issues.
- The USFA must aggressively pursue participation in the FEMA response plan to declared disasters and emergencies.
- Develop a protocol to determine when and where members of staff would be deployed to gather information on an incident.
- Involve partners to utilize both internal and external existing technical expertise to gather information from the field that lends itself to the development of lesson-learned educational products and documents.
- Utilize field representatives to identify incidents and participate in information gathering.
- Products generated from site visits shall be integrated into current NFA course offerings to provide real-world scenarios for training purposes.

LIST OF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Issue Category: Leadership & Communications

- Continue weekly management team meetings with Senior Managers.
- Develop individual performance plans to establish measurable, attainable and mutually agreed upon objectives with the Senior Management staff.
- The Senior Managers shall be held accountable for the performance plans implementation.
- Develop a plan that establishes training opportunities for appropriate staff positions.
- Develop a plan to create an environment that promotes cooperation, teamwork, creativity and innovation.
- Develop a plan that provides temporary re-assignments for appropriate staff to broaden horizons and exposure (e.g., IPAs, sabbaticals, mentorship programs, etc.).
- Review and amend the Action Plan annually.
- Adopt the new mission statement that clearly defines the U. S. Fire Administration as the umbrella organization of the National Fire Academy, management and technology activities and logistical support.
- Develop strong “dotted-line” organization chart linkage (communication/coordination) between and among USFA components. (Refer to the proposed organizational chart in the Introduction.)
- The Chief Operating Officer must lead the open communications effort across the USFA organization. Examples of this leadership include attending regular FEMA senior staff meetings, providing a written summary of meetings to staff, etc.
- Produce and distribute a monthly newsletter on campus and at Headquarters that includes updates, accomplishments, etc.
- The Board of Visitors shall be a strong and active organization with staff support, independent USFA resources for its activities, and shall continue to have a direct reporting relationship with the FEMA Director through the Chief Operating Officer.
- The Board of Visitors shall meet quarterly and report annually. At least one of the meetings shall have an open agenda to allow the Visitors to interact easily with the staff.
- The Chief Operating Officer and Director shall meet with stakeholders at least annually.

LIST OF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Issue Category: Leadership & Communications (continued)

- The USFA shall take advantage of its own organizational development staff to conduct and facilitate staff development activities (e.g., team building, effective project management, etc.).
- First line supervisors and managers shall conduct, at the minimum, a monthly staff meeting to discuss status of goals, objectives and priorities.
- Formalize and document action-planning process to set deadlines and deliverables dates.
- The Superintendent, Branch Chiefs and supervisors must ensure that specific and measurable goals, objectives and tasks are established and monitored on a monthly, quarterly and yearly basis and that they are completed within established timelines.
- Management must effectively implement the system of recognition/reward for exemplary performance of deserving teams and individuals.
- Develop and implement a team approach, with the Program Chair and/or Lead Instructor as the responsible agent.
- Require the integration of development with the delivery process.
- Add adjunct faculty to the development and update/revision team.
- The EFO program shall be expanded to:
 - Establish a system that allows each U.S. Senator to nominate one individual for the EFO program each year.
 - Allow the Board of Visitors to identify three related professional organizations each year who shall have up to five nominations for EFO positions.
 - Increase the number of students by allowing a limited number of middle management officers to attend.
- Alter the current selection criteria to include an assessment of analytical, comprehension skills, and the student's ability to handle the EFO curriculum.

LIST OF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Issue Category: Staff Development

- Disseminate staff and adjunct selection, evaluation criteria and work opportunities annually, and announcements of new appointments immediately.
- Identify and task a full time USFA staff member with responsibility for liaison/ombudsman services for the adjunct/contract faculty.
- Include the adjunct/contract faculty in an effective and timely corrective action process to address and/or resolve issues.
- Develop a plan that ensures that the teaching cadre represents the diversity of the fire service community.
- Institute a bid system that neutralizes the effect of basic travel expenses by deleting from bid consideration travel expenses of \$750 or less. Consider an alternative of a flat rate for instructor travel.
- Actively recruit competent instructors.
- The USFA shall develop a continuing education program for appropriate staff that includes, but is not limited to:
 - Consultation and interaction with other subject matter experts, both inside and outside the fire service.
 - Field assignment at customer worksites.
 - Exchange programs with leading-edge fire protection services and state/baccalaureate education and research institutions via secondment/details and the use of the Intergovernmental Review Act.
 - Participation in state-of-the-art postgraduate seminars, workshops and/or courses.
 - Preparation for, and active participation in, professional conferences and seminars related to the field of expertise (e.g., presentation of learned papers at a professional conference, etc.).
 - Submission of learned papers for publication related to the field of expertise in relevant periodicals and books.
- Review existing promotional rules to ensure the flexibility exists to preserve the availability of those critical skills, and seek modification where required.
- Review use of permanent instructors as a means of enhancing instructional quality.
- Establish an informal process for conflict resolution and train personnel on these informal processes.
- Ensure that management continues to demonstrate commitment to these processes and continually measure outcomes.

LIST OF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Issue Category: Advocacy, Partnerships & Marketing

- The US Fire Administrator must serve as liaison between the Federal fire program, allied professionals and fire service community.
- Assign the NFA Superintendent to become the focal point for advocacy of NFA issues.
- The Deputy Superintendent shall be given the temporary responsibility for implementation of those sections of the Action Plan that affects the National Fire Academy under the direction of the Chief Operating Officer.
- The Chief Operating Officer shall coordinate the effort/activities of the Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent.
- The US Fire Administrator and senior USFA staff must effectively address issues of representation and advocacy among Federal agencies and public and private local, state, national and international entities.
- All USFA products need to emphasize the USFA mission and where the NFA, MOSS and M&T fit into the USFA organization.
- Regular information on USFA activities shall be distributed to the Board of Visitors and allied organizations.
- The USFA needs to be linked with national allied organizations and conference program planning committees in order to take advantage of opportunities to deliver a consistent and continuous message regarding USFA mission and program deliverables.
- Funds must be allocated for travel to facilitate participation of USFA staff in national activities.
- Re-establish USFA representatives at each FEMA Regional Office and utilize those field representatives to participate in After-Action Reviews on significant incidents as the USFA representative.
- USFA facilitate a focus group on the future in partnership with other agencies (e.g., IAFC Annual Summit Meeting or the TRADE Biannual Meeting, etc.).
- Pursue affiliation with a college (or colleges) that deliver related undergraduate and post-graduate degrees, beginning with the seven open learning program universities.
- Solicit a partnership with EMI in developing matriculation agreements with colleges and universities.

LIST OF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Issue Category: Advocacy, Partnerships & Marketing (continued)

- Amend the NIST/USFA memorandum of understanding to require research findings to be included in curriculum development and conduct.
- Create a linkage between the curriculum development team and the NIST where none exists and formalize in areas where NIST has been utilized.
- Develop an MOU process to streamline the ability of the USFA to partner with other entities (e.g., NHTSA, CDC, FAA, DOJ, DOD, Department of Forestry, etc.).
- Communicate with other agencies frequently to develop strategies to be pursued.
- Create and convene partnership groups and establish clear goals and objectives. These partnerships shall address common issues that contribute to the achievement of the USFA mission, and shall aggressively monitor productivity.
- Restore full USFA participation in NWCG.
- Pursue enhancement of anti-terrorism partnership with US DOJ.
- Expand pursuit of joint ventures with EMI in areas such as IEMS.
- Develop a system to allow partnerships to occur. Develop more partnerships with college and universities to expand NFA influence upon how the fire problem is studied in the United States (e.g., continued support of Fire and Emergency Services Higher Education Consortium).
- Identify and become involved in key meetings where attendance would help foster new partnerships or strengthen existing ones.
- Seek partnerships with corporate sponsors for funding and exposure of NFA programs.
- Develop an on-campus annual "Fire Chief Update" workshop.
- Develop a formal process to evaluate and utilize current technology to support USFA mission.
- Leverage technology to speed up product development.
- Network with existing organizations to leverage resources and information about available technology.
- Enable customers to interact with USFA on-line (e.g., class registration, transcript request on-line, etc.).

LIST OF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Issue Category: Advocacy, Partnerships & Marketing (continued)

- Establish direct partnership linkage with public and private local, state, national and international entities to offer off-site services.
- Investigate the potential of live fire demonstration technology for use as an educational tool in resident courses (e.g., backdraft/flashover, arson investigation cell in partnership with ATF).
- Expand access to the Learning Resource Center.
- Develop a comprehensive marketing plan that addresses all USFA activities.
- Consider assembling a partnership for effective marketing.
- Consider regular submissions of one-page articles for interest group publications to include new products, promotions, personnel, partnership issues, action events, statistics, schedules, etc.
- As publications are produced, USFA shall produce a planned distribution list to better target the appropriate audience.
- Leverage the distribution of publications through camera-ready artwork.
- Develop and implement a customer feedback system for publication use and effectiveness.
- Develop print and web site model plans so that customers can acquire multiple copies with minimum effort.
- Develop a guide for web publication catalog users.
- Develop and implement a data collection system that accurately reflects the utilization of the NETC facility.
- Review the current method of vacancy/backfill and explore alternatives (e.g., local fill, employer and/or employee subsidy, etc.).
- Continue limiting the number of class offerings on courses that are not regularly filled.

LIST OF PLANS TO BE DEVELOPED

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Issue Category — Core Mission

- Create a model plan or checklist to provide information to customers and instructors when new publications/products become available.
- Develop a plan to ensure actions are taken to better utilize distance learning technology.
- Develop a marketing plan to reach the diverse groups.
- Develop a short- and long-range (three to five year) capital improvement plan that addresses projected needs and the focus of which is on the delivery of user services. This shall include the expansion of dormitory, classroom and office space.

Issue Category — Leadership & Communications

- Develop individual performance plans to establish measurable, attainable and mutually agreed upon objectives with the Senior Management staff.
- Develop a plan that establishes training opportunities for appropriate staff positions.
- Develop a plan to create an environment that promotes cooperation, teamwork, creativity and innovation.
- Develop a plan that provides temporary re-assignments for appropriate staff to broaden horizons and exposure (e.g., IPAs, sabbaticals, mentorship programs, etc.).

Issue Category — Staff Development

- Develop a plan that ensures that the teaching cadre represents the diversity of the fire service community.

Issue Category — Advocacy, Partnerships & Marketing

- Develop a comprehensive marketing plan that addresses all USFA activities.
- As publications are produced, USFA shall produce a planned distribution list to better target the appropriate audience.
- Develop print and web site model plans so that customers can acquire multiple copies with minimum effort.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ATF	U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
BOV	Board of Visitors
CDC	Center for Disease Control
COO	Chief Operating Officer
CPSC	U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission
DOD	U.S. Department of Defense
DOJ	U.S. Department of Justice
DOT	U.S. Department of Transportation
EFOP	Executive Fire Officer Program
EFPO	Executive Fire Prevention Officer Program
EMI	Emergency Management Institute
EMS	Emergency Medical Services
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FRAM	Fire Research Agenda Meeting (USFA)
GPRA	Government Performance and Results Act
IABPFF	International Association of Black Professional Fire Fighters
IAFC	International Association of Fire Chiefs
IAFF	International Association of Fire Fighters
ICMA	International City/County Management Association
IEMS	Integrated Emergency Management System
IFE	Institution of Fire Engineers
IFMA	International Fire Marshals Association
IPA	Intergovernmental Personnel Action
ISFSI	International Society of Fire Service Instructors
KSA	Knowledges, skills and abilities
M&T	Management and Technology
MIS	Management Information System
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MOSS	Management Operations and Student Support
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding

Federal Emergency Management Agency

U.S. Fire Administration

Action Plan

NACO	National Association of Counties
NAFTD	National Fire Training Directors
NAHF	National Association of Hispanic Firefighters
NETC	National Emergency Training Center
NFA	National Fire Academy
NFIC	National Fire Information Council
NFIRS	National Fire Incident Reporting System
NFPA	National Fire Protection Association
NFPCA	National Fire Protection and Control Administration
NFRDC	National Fire and Rescue Diversity Coalition
NHTSA	National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
NIBS	National Institute of Building Science
NIST	National Institute of Standards and Technology
NTIS	National Technical and Information Service
NTSB	National Highway Safety Board
NVFC	National Volunteer Fire Council
NWCG	National Wildfire Coordinating Group
R&D	Research and Development
SFPE	Society of Fire Protection Engineers
TRADE	Training Resources and Data Exchange
UL	Underwriters Laboratories
USCG	U.S. Coast Guard
USFA	U.S. Fire Administration
US&R	Urban Search & Rescue
VA	U.S. Veteran Administration
WFS	Women in the Fire Service, Inc.

LIST OF REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

The following documents were submitted to the Action Plan Development Work Group:

- Report of the Blue Ribbon Panel
- FY98 Annual Report for Management Operations and Student Support
- USFA Management Operations and Student Support Presentation to the USFA Management Plan Development Team
- USFA Fire Management and Technical Programs Division's Action Plan Input
- NFIRS 5.0 Project Status
- Letter from the North American Fire Training Directors
- Letter from the State of Connecticut
- Letter from Training Resources Data and Exchange
- Memo from the Board of Visitors for the National Fire Academy
- Memo from the Action Plan Projection Task Force of the National Fire Academy