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Executive Leadership

Planning for a Smooth Transition: Is the Arlington Fire Department on Track to Provide

Competent Leaders for its Future?

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Abstract

The Arlington Fire Department (AFD) has always done an excellent job of providing the

organization with leadership training designed to ensure competent leaders for its future. The

problem is that the AFD stands to lose over half of its experienced leaders to retirement over the

next five years. Evaluative research was used to analyze and describe data in order to provide

the organization with an outline of industry standards, information on other organizations with

similar challenges and insight relating to the development of competent leaders. This was

accomplished through literary reviews of standards, related articles, interviews, and multiple

feedback instruments.

The research questions provided information regarding professional development and

evaluated it against the current AFD program. Those research questions included; What does the

AFD currently provide in the way of leadership training? What do industry standards provide in

the area of the educating an organizations leaders? How does the AFD's current Officer

Development Program (ODP) compare to standards set fourth by the fire service? What do other

departments provide for education in the area of preparing future leaders? The results provided

the AFD with information on key components and recommendations for change to the current

Officer Development Program that will translate into the successful development of competent

leaders.

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Competent Leaders for its Future?

Introduction

The goal of every Officer Development Program (ODP) should be to provide incumbent

and future officers with the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful in supervisory,

management, administrative and executive positions (IAFCODH, 2003, p. 10). The Arlington

Fire Department (AFD) has always done an excellent job of providing the organization with

leadership training designed to ensure competent leaders for its future. The problem is that the

AFD stands to lose over half of its experienced leaders to retirement over the next five years.

While the department has developed several initiatives designed to develop future leaders, it has

not been determined if those initiatives are capable of producing competent leaders. The purpose

of this research is to determine if the AFD's plan for preparing future leaders is on track to

provide the organization with competent leaders. The results of this research should provide the

organization with an outline of industry standards, information on other organizations with

similar challenges and insight for the development of competent leaders.

Evaluative research was used to analyze and describe data to make a decision. (National

Fire Academy [NFA], 2004, p 4-17).

This applied research project will address the following questions:

a)   What does the AFD currently provide in the way of leadership training?

b)   What do industry standards provide in the area of the educating an organizations leaders?

c)   How does the AFD's current Officer Development Program (ODP) compare to standards

set fourth by the fire service?

d)   What do other departments provide for education in the area of preparing future leaders?

Background & Significance

The City of Arlington (COA) is an urban community located in the heart of the metroplex between Dallas and Fort Worth in North Central Texas. Arlington is the home to the Texas Rangers baseball club, Six Flags Over Texas, Hurricane Harbor Water Park and in 2009, will be the home to the Dallas Cowboys football franchise. In 2001, the city entertained over 6.8 million visitors at those and many other attractions (City of Arlington [COA], 2005, p. 11). Estimates show that in 2006, the city occupied over 100 square miles and has a population over 364,000. (North Texas Council of Governments [NTCOG], 2006).

The AFD is a career department with 498 members staffing 16 fire stations utilizing a 24/48-shift schedule. The department provides fire protection, emergency medical, hazardous material, technical rescue, swift water, explosive ordinance disposal (EOD), arson investigation and fire prevention services within the city limits and mutual aid to six cities that borders it. In 2007 the department responded to over 35,000 unit responses (Nicole Cupps, personal communication, June 16, 2008).

The department currently utilizes the ranks of Firefighter (FF), Apparatus Operator (AO), Lieutenant (LT), Captain (CA) and Battalion Chief (BC) in the Operations Division all managed by three Assistant Chiefs (AC's) and the Chief of the Department. Although the Lieutenant rank is the first official supervisory rank, Apparatus Operator's are frequently called upon to work "out of class" (OOC) in that position when a regularly assigned Lieutenant is off. In the Arlington Fire Department, Lieutenants are assigned to engine companies but, can work OOC in the place of a Captain. Captain's are assigned to quints but, can work OOC in place of a Battalion Chief.

The organization officially began its education of incumbent and future leaders in the early 1990's. The Managing Company Tactical Operations (MCTO) curriculum developed by the US Fire Administration was utilized to train current and future company officers and provided the foundation for what became the departments Member Development program. The MCTO curriculum provided members with the skills necessary to manage company tactical operations. Although the program was considered to be industry standard for the training of company officers, once delivered, MCTO was never reinforced nor was a refresher program taught after some years of practical application.

In 2000, the first Member Development program was developed and delivered to the ranks of Apparatus Operator and Lieutenant. The program was developed by members within the organization and did not follow any established curriculum. The program did however, involved 32 hours of classroom and 24 hours of practical application which included a focus on crew resource management, basic fire ground tactics targeting single-family occupancies, the Incident Command System, building construction, communication, and the managerial aspects of the Lieutenants position. Later that year, the Captains member development program was delivered. This program again followed no established curriculum but, included all education provided in the Lieutenants program but, focused on fire ground tactics involving large commercial and multi-family occupancies. After completion of the course, participants were provided an internal certification.

In 2004, the organization changed the name of the member development program to Emergency Operations (EO). The curriculum for EO however, remained the same. Also that year, the organization adopted the Fire Officer I & II (FOI & FOII) certification offered by the Texas Commission on Fire Protection as the next step in the education of incumbent and future

leaders. This certification utilizes curriculum provided by the International Fire Service Training

Associations (IFSTA) *Fire Department Company Officer* and the International Association of

Fire Chiefs (IAFC) *Fire Officer Principles and Practice* texts.   The first FOI class began in

January of 2005 and as of today, all CA's and BC's hold the FO I & II certifications along with a

majority of the AO's and LT's. The first FOI class was taught using a distance learning

environment while subsequent ones were taught in the traditional classroom. All students were

evaluated for competency prior to completing the course through structured responses and

performance assessments.

As part of advancing the education of the department's leaders, the organization decided

that EO along with the FO I & II certifications would also be tied to the promotional exams for

the ranks of LT and CA. As part of this certification, members wanting to participate in the LT's

promotional exam would be required to hold the EO and FO I certifications beginning with that

exam in 2007. Members wanting to participate in the CA's exam would also be required to, in

addition to the requirements for LT's, hold the FO II certification beginning with the exam in

2009. Although the certifications were tied to the promotional process for these ranks, all

company officers from the rank of LT to BC were required to hold all three certifications.

Another part of the training of incumbent and future leaders involved the training

division's development of interactive training in 2007. These drills utilize the departments AFD

TV training channel to transmit scenarios to companies watching in the field. The training staffs

along with selected guest facilitators interact with crews in the field to "brain storm" potential

solutions to a given incident as it relates to department policy, ICS and critical decision making

skills. Individuals from every rank are called upon to provide their potential movements related

to the incident via phone to the training academy which is also transmitted over the TV for

everyone else to hear. Although the training involves every facet of incident mitigation, it is targeted toward new and upcoming officers and how they would respond to the given problem. The program has proven to be very successful in exposing those leaders to high risk low frequency incidents.

Night drills are also conducted yearly and involve every company in the city over all three shifts. This training involves a one-alarm assignment and a scenario at the drill field or another designated venue. Companies are asked to respond to the incident as if it was real and provide critical decision making and tactical placement of men and equipment to mitigate the incident. During these drills, consistent application of NIMS/ICS is required and special emphasis is placed on company officers utilizing critical decision making skills, command and control and appropriate tactical assignments all within department standard operating procedures.

In an effort to comply with the Homeland Security directive, the AFD has provided NIMS 100/200, 300/400 & 700/800 training. Beginning in 2006, everyone in the organization was required to complete the requirements for NIMS 100/200 & 700/800 training. In 2008, the ranks of CA and above were required to complete NIMS 300/400 training.

The AFD's promotional process for the position of AO, LT and CA are given every two years. The AO's exam is given on the opposite year of the LT's and CA's in an effort to reduce the cost of administering the exam. All three exams involve a written exam covering industry publications, fire department and city policies/procedures but, the Company Officers also involves a tactical assessment, role play exercise and either an in-basket or oral resume presentation. The AO's exam replaces the role play and oral resume portion with a driving and pumping practical exam. All three processes also include points for college education.

The COA utilizes the Texas Municipal Retirement System (TMRS) as the retirement vehicle for all city employees. Currently, any firefighter can retire after twenty years of service, at any age, in the TMRS system. In doing so, the employee agrees to take a drastically reduced amount as a pension. Since 1987, only sixteen firefighters have taken advantage of the "twenty and out" benefit. For the purpose of this research, the twenty year benchmark does fall into the "eligible to retire" category. The current average years of service at retirement are 25 years.

The Operations Division operates with 277 uniformed members. Of those, one hundred thirty are FF's, sixty five are AO's, fifty one are LT's, sixteen are CA's, twelve are BC's and three are AC's. As of June 19, 2008, one hundred thirty eight or 50% of the operations division are eligible to retire. That number includes forty eight Company Officers, all twelve BC's and all three AC's. These numbers represent 77% of the total organizations leaders.

This applied research project relates to one of the United States Fire Administration (USFA) Operational Objectives "to respond appropriately in a timely manner to emerging issues" (National Fire Academy Executive Fire Officer Program Applied Research Self Study Course [NFA EFOP ARSSC], 2004, p. 3-4).

Literature Review

The purpose of this literary review is to evaluate the organization and its leadership training, other organizations experience's along with industry standards and disseminate what essential components can be associated with the development of incumbent and future leaders. The review includes historic organizational information, the findings of other researchers in the fire service, public and private sectors along with fire service industry standards that pertain to educating leaders. The literature should provide information pertaining to all facets of leadership training and education.

The literary review was organized around four specific research questions that were developed to help facilitate answers about the research topic. Those questions included: a) What does the AFD currently provide in the way of leadership training? b) What do industry standards provide in the area of the educating an organizations leaders? c) How does the AFD's current Officer Development Program (ODP) compare to standards set forth by the Fire Service? d) What do other departments provide in the area of preparing future leaders?

a)   What does the AFD currently provide in the way of leadership training?

Research found that the AFD conducts a 56 hour EO course annually. The course is targeted toward incumbent and future officers but, because most of the incumbent Company Officers have already taken the course, firefighters have been allowed and encouraged to participate. After successful completion of this course, the department provides an internal certification. As of 2007, that EO certification is required for incumbent LT's and CA's along with those seeking those ranks through the promotional process. The course utilizes a core group of instructors from the CA and BC ranks to deliver the course. The curriculum was developed by the Member Development Team and focuses on crew resource management, basic fire ground tactics, ICS/NIMS, building construction, reading smoke and communication. The final three days of the course utilizes practical application scenarios to "bring it together" (Jeff Holloway, personal communication, August 6, 2008).

It was also found that the AFD currently requires and provides the FO I & II certification through the Texas Commission on Fire Protection (TCFP). Both classes provide a 40-hour curriculum and the training is conducted by the fire training academy with the state proctoring the written exam and issues the certification. The research provided information that like the EO certification, FO I & II is a requirement for the ranks of LT and CA along with those seeking the

rank of LT through the promotional process in 2007 and those seeking the rank of CA beginning in 2009. This certification utilizes curriculum provided by the International Fire Service Training Associations (IFSTA) *Fire Department Company Officer* and the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) *Fire Officer Principles and Practice* along with AFD specific curriculum. Research also found that to date, all incumbent Company Officers along with everyone on the current LT's and CA's promotional list hold these certifications and therefore are considered competent in these disciplines. This author also found that Bill McQuatters (Personal communication, August 21, 2008), Battalion Chief of Training, explains that the AFD's ODP stresses the importance of both education and training. This author did not find any research linking a mentorship component to the AFD's program nor did he find research to support the role of higher education in the program. Research was found that indicated the AFD did provide points for higher education on all promotional processes excluding the BC's.

That research led this author to information on measuring competency and validation during an interview. David Oujesky, CA/instructor with the ODP, established that the programs competence assessment tools consists of "An objective written exam, multiple choice and I believe some true/false questions are given at the end of the course, and a performance assessment evaluation tool is used during the scenario portion of the course" (Personal communication, October 27, 2008). Other research provided information from Jeff Holloway, BC/Instructor who established "we have yet to answer the questions of validating the curriculum, testing/assessing methods, and developing the policy that supports a failure especially in consideration that this course is mandatory for promotion eligibility ". He went on to add "We have struggled with validating the curriculum for years" (Personal communication, October 27, 2008). Information from BC Hartz (Personal communication, October 27, 2008) also added "I

believe that each student leaves the ODP exposed to a curriculum that prepares them to handle an incident more effectively than they could prior to attending". When asked the follow up question *"Are we confident they are competent because we have a competency structure that is valid and reliable that we developed"?* Jeff Holloway replied "No, the structure has not been validated…. This is especially challenging when they return to their shift/battalion that doesn't not support the concepts" (Personal communication, October 27, 2008).

This author discovered that the AFD also provides NIMS training to everyone in the organization. The research uncovered that NIMS 100/200 & 700/800 were required and provided to everyone in the organization. For the rank of CA and above, NIMS 300/400 was required and provided. Other research uncovered that the current ODP does not provide any element of NIMS training or reinforcement outside of the normal ICS components.

Research also found that the AFD training staff, along with operations BC's, conducts night drills annually. "Night drills consist of practical application exercises designed to demonstrate actual incidents with an emphasis on tactics, command/control and ICS.NIMS" (Kirk Turner, personal communication, August 21, 2008). He goes on to explain "the goal of night drills is to encourage future leaders to practice their leadership in a controlled atmosphere and to develop consistency in the application of ICS/NIMS". In order to ensure consistency, the same drill is conducted on all three shifts and involves everyone in the operations division.

Other research found that the AFD training staff conducts interactive training quarterly. Interactive training involves selected companies that react to a scenario by using radio communications to mitigate the incident in a controlled atmosphere. It was also determined that the training staff uses the fire departments cable channel to introduce the scenario, provide pictures/video updates and at the end, critiques the incident with a panel of Company Officers

and/or BC's. Although only selected companies participate in any given scenario, every fire station is tuned into the training. The drills are designed to stimulate the development of incident objectives and the execution of a tactical plan from both incumbent and future leaders. The scenarios can also call on FF's to react and give their impression of the best course of action. Like night drills, the same drills are conducted on all three shifts and

b)   What do industry standards provide in the area of the educating an organizations leaders?

Research found that the Texas Commission on Fire Protection (TCFP) provides curriculum and certification support to Texas fire departments along the lines of professional development. The website explains that the commission's mission "is to help protect the lives and property of the citizens of Texas by developing and enforcing professional standards for the fire service" (TCFP, 2008, n.p.). The web site goes on to explain that the commission's strategic plan involves two major goals:

- to provide education and assistance to the fire service, and

- to enforce statewide fire service standards.

Other research found that the only curriculum the commission provides targeted toward fire service leaders is the FO I & II certification. It was also discovered that in order to be eligible for either of these certifications, each candidate must possess, in conjunction with the basic firefighting certifications, Fire Service Instructor I also provided by the commission. It was found however, that these certifications or voluntary and are not required by the state or commission in order to be a fire officer.

Research also found that the TCFP establishes minimum requirements for the FO I curriculum (Appendix A). The TCFP also defines a FO I candidate as:

An individual who may supervise fire personnel during emergency and non-emergency work periods; serve in a public relations capacity with members of the community; implement departmental policies and procedures at the unit level; secure fire scenes and perform fire investigations to determine preliminary cause; conduct pre-incident planning; supervise emergency operations; or ensure a safe working environment for all personnel. (n.p.).

This author also uncovered that the FO I certification process cover's a 60 hour curriculum that requires the following subject matter and recommended hours be covered:

- General   4

- Human resource management   6

- Community and Government relations   6

- Administration   4

- Inspections and Investigations   4

- Emergency Service Delivery   10

- Health and safety   8

- Performance skills*   18

Further research found the minimum requirements for the FO II curriculum (Appendix B). As with FO I, the TCFP also defines a FO II candidate as:

As an individual who may evaluate the performance of personnel; deliver public education programs; prepare budget requests, news releases, and policy changes; conduct inspections and investigations; supervise multi-unit emergency operations; and identify unsafe work environments and take preventive action; or review injury, accident, and health exposure reports (n.p.).

Further research uncovered that the FO II certification processes also cover's a 60 hour curriculum that requires the following subject matter and recommended hours be covered:

- General   1

- Human resource management   10

- Community and Government relations   0

- Administration   10

- Inspections and Investigations   10

- Emergency Service Delivery   8

- Health and safety   9

- Performance skills*   12

Other research uncovered that in order to become certified; candidates must successfully complete the core curriculum, performance skills requirements and pass a written examination. It was also uncovered that the curriculum for both Fire Officer programs came in part from the following text:

- *Fire and Emergency Service Company Officer*

- *Fire Officer Principles and Practices*

- *NFPA 102, Standards for the Fire Officer Professional Qualifications*

- *Standards for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications* and *Standards Manual for Fire Protection Personnel.*

The author could uncover no research that indicated the TCFP provides curriculum or guidance on the FO III or IV certifications.

This author also uncovered a program developed by the Fire and Emergency Service Higher Education Program (FESHE) in conjunction with the U. S. Fire Administration's

National Fire Academy (NFA) called the FESHE network of emergency services-related

education and training providers. Working with coordinators of two and four-year academic fire

and emergency medical services (EMS) degree programs, FESHE establishes their mission is to

"Establish an organization of post-secondary institutions to promote higher education and to

enhance the recognition of the fire and emergency services as profession to reduce loss of life

and property from fire and other hazards" (FESHE, 2008, n.p.). FESHE provides a National

Professional Development Model (Appendix C) for both fire and EMS that integrates training,

education, and certification. FESHE goes on to establish "None of these models are promotional

ones; rather, they are competency-based professional development paths supported by their

training, higher education, and certification elements" (n.p.).

Research also established that FESHE's strategic goal includes: Working collaboratively,

the professional development community will produce a:

- National model for an integrated, competency-based system of fire and emergency
  services professional development.

- National model for an integrated system of higher education from associate's-to-
  doctoral degrees.

- Well-trained and academically-educated fire and emergency services preparing the
  nation for all hazards

The FESHE model for the fire service also includes FO I thru IV along with

undergraduate and graduate degrees as milestones in professional development. The model also

stresses the importance of education and training as avenues to developing fire service leaders.

This author found research that establishes NFPA 1021, *Fire Officer Professional*

Qualifications, as a guideline of minimum requirements for the Fire Officer. It's scope goes on

to identify "this standard shall identify the performance requirements necessary to perform the duties of a fire officer and specifically identifies four levels of progression" (NFPA, 2003, p. 1021-5). It also establishes "the purpose of this standard shall be to specify the minimum job performance requirements for service as a fire officer" (p. 5). The standard also identifies the requirements for FO I – IV and establishes those certifications as the path for progression to a complete fire officer. The standard goes on to say "it is not the intent of this standard to restrict any jurisdiction from exceeding these minimum requirements" (p. 5).

Research found that the *IAFC Officer Development Handbook* (IAFCODH*)* provides what is considered as an industry standard in the education of organizational leaders. The publication uses the term "Professional Development" as a broad term for the development of the fire services incumbent and aspiring officers. Established in 2003, the IAFCODH (2003) establishes "professional development is the planned, progressive life-long process of education, training, self-development and experience" and organizes the handbook based on these four distinct elements (p. 1).

Research also found that the IAFC recognizes a model that "clearly illustrates the importance of both education and training" (p. 5) (Appendix D). The model includes FO I thru IV certifications along with undergraduate and graduate degrees as key components to the education of leaders in an organization and provides a general guideline of what should be included in each discipline.

Other research into the handbook establishes the importance of mentorship in developing a fire officer. It explains a good mentor "does not tell you what to do but rather gives you options, challenges you to see the big picture, encourages, identifies areas for improvement and helps you refine your skills" (p. 3). It also establishes "with those resources available, you can

draw upon their wisdom and experience to shape your own skills and style as a leader" (p. 4).

Sager (2005) also echoes the impact of mentoring in the development of future leaders. He also

adds "the mentor also provides the new officer with a confidante who can provide honest

feedback, not only on the operational outcome but, also on the new officer's style and demeanor"

(n.p.). In his interview with FDNY BC John Salka, LaMoria (2007), in his EFO paper *Command

Officer Development for the Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department,* also identified the

critical importance of mentoring in an ODP by establishing "The interview was significant for

the research as it solidified the importance in including mentoring as a part of the learning

process" (p. 18).

That research led this author to the measuring section of the handbook. The section starts

off by establishing "much of a journey's success is measured by progress along the way….in this

context, we measure progress through credentials" (p. 6). It also clarifies "you should clearly

understand that your objective is not the credential but rather the knowledge, skill or ability to

which the credential attests. The credential documents your achievements and therefore is an

essential component" (p. 6). It also identifies "we want our officers to have the knowledge and

skills necessary to be successful in supervisory, management, administrative and executive

positions" (p. 7). This is established as a key statement aimed at helping the handbook users

understanding that professional development is not solely about certifications and degrees (p. 7).

That information led this author to research by Malloy and Uman of Vital Research.

Malloy and Uman (2005), in discussing measuring competency explained:

> In any educational or professional setting, making good decisions about competency is
>
> difficult, at best. Certification decisions –whether or not to certify an individual in a
>
> profession or trade – are particularly complex; organizations must create sound

assessment procedures to ensure that appropriate decisions about the knowledge and

skills of individuals are made (n.p.).

The two went on to provide information on three main types of assessment strategies

used to make decisions about achievement and competency in certification settings. Those

include:

- Structured responses (pre-selected responses)

- Constructed response (constructs correct answers)

- Performance assessments (responds to some sort of prompt)

The research also established "Organizations must create sound assessment procedures to

ensure that appropriate decisions about the knowledge and abilities of individuals are made"

(n.p.). Malloy and Uman also established the importance of Validity and Reliability as key

concepts associated with all assessment strategies. Validity is defined as "the degree to which a

test measures the knowledge and skills it is suppose to measure" (n.p.). Reliability is defined as

"the degree to which the results from one assessment would be similar if the assessment were

administered again (with no additional education or training)" (n.p.). Their research also

cautions about advantages and disadvantages and the importance of knowing which assessment

strategy is right for your certification program (n.p.) (Appendix E). It concludes by establishing:

> Multiple measures of performance will yield the best and most dependable information
>
> about competency. If you are making high stakes certification decisions, it is particularly
>
> important to have as much information as you possibly can about the knowledge and
>
> skills of candidates (n.p.).

That research led this author to Moyer and his writings on defining and measuring

competencies. Moyer (2001) believes that competency has two meanings. He explains "the first

addresses the ability of an individual to perform effectively in a job relevant area. The second is a definition of what is required of an individual for effective performance" (p. 2.).

Moyer goes on to establish the different types of competency definitions as being either Direct Statement of Key Element definitions. He explains Direct Statement definitions as "a single sentence, paragraph, or brief description of that conveys the meaning of the competency" (p. 2.). He also explains that the level of detail can range from one or two words to a lengthy paragraph and each are usually rated and used to target learning needs or evaluate performance (p. 2.). Key Element definitions utilize a paragraph or brief descriptor in combination with additional key elements that further details or aspects of successful performance in the competency. Like in the Direct Statement definition, Key Elements are rated and help to establish an overall rating of competency.

Other research provided this author with information from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) on the National Incident Management System (NIMS). It was determined that DHS unveiled NIMS in 2004 after President George W. Bush signed *Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD)-5, Management Of Domestic Incidents* to develop and administer the system. It was discovered that NIMS "was developed so responders from different jurisdictions and disciplines can work together better to respond to natural disasters and emergencies, including acts of terrorism" (FEMA, 2008, n.p.). It was also uncovered that "NIMS benefits include a unified approach to incident management; standard command and management structures; and emphasis on preparedness, mutual aid and resource management" (n.p.). The research also established that although NIMS was not created exclusively for fire officers, "the implementation of National Incident Management System training is a major initiative across the nation" (Lindstrom, 2006, n.p.).

c)   How does the AFD's current Officer Development Program (ODP) compare to standards

set forth by the Fire Service?

Research found that the AFD does utilize the TCFP for curriculum and certification for

their FOI & FOII program. The AFD also provides, with TCFP oversight, the Fire Instructor I

curriculum as part of the FOI & II program. It was also discovered that the AFD compares to the

TCFP recommended core hours and exceeds that recommendation by providing information on

AFD specific topics. Although these curriculums are not required, the AFD has decided to

provide them in order to provide a consistent curriculum (Bill McQuatters, personal

communication, August 21, 2008). Research also found that the definitions of FOI & II

candidates provided by the TCFP matched the philosophy of the AFD program.

Research discovered that the AFD's ODP does not necessarily follow the FESHE

National Professional Development model. It does however, by default, provide incumbent and

future leaders with the basic certifications as mandated by the TCFP for employment and, also

provides FO I & II certifications which are not mandated by the TCFP. It was also discovered

that the AFD does not actively promote higher education but, includes points for higher

education on the promotional exams for all ranks except for BC. The research did not provide

information from the TCFP on the FOIII & IV certifications.

During research, this author also discovered information that appears to show the AFD

ODP does compare to the NFPA 1-1021, *Fire Officer Professional Qualifications,* in at least the

FOI & II arenas and their requirements. Research also found a similar set of standards set fourth

by the TCFP. Therefore the research shows that the AFD adheres to both of these standards.

Other research has found that the AFD's ODP compares to the IAFCODH recognition

that their model "clearly illustrates the importance of both education and training" but did not

support the element of mentorship in developing the fire officer (IAFCODH, 2003, p. 5). The research did stress the importance of mentoring as a standard in professional development. Other research found by LaMoria (2007) in his findings concluded "The interview was significant for the research as it solidified the importance in including mentoring as a part of the learning process" (p. 18). In comparison, the AFD program does not include mentoring as a component.

Other research provided information on measuring competency as a part of the credentialing process. Malloy and Uman provided research that stressed "certification decisions - whether or not to certify an individual in a profession or trade – are particularly complex; organizations must create sound assessment procedures to ensure that appropriate decisions about the knowledge and skills of individuals are made" (n.p.). Holloway (personal communication) provided "we have struggled with validating the curriculum, testing/assessing methods, and developing the policy that supports failure especially in consideration that this course is mandatory for promotion eligibility" (October 27, 2008).

Malloy and Uman also provide research on three main types of assessment strategies used to make decisions about achievement and competency in certification settings. Those included:

- Structured responses (pre-selected responses)
- Constructed response (constructed correct answers)
- Performance assessments (respond to some sort of prompt)

That research shows a comparison to Oujesky who provided information on the AFD assessment strategy as "An objective written exam, multiple choice and I believe some true/false questions are given at the end of the course, and a performance assessment evaluation tool is used during the scenario portion of the course" (Personal communication, October 27, 2008).

Other research provided information on the importance of NIMS training to incumbent and future officer candidates. The AFD has provided NIMS training, at varying levels, to everyone in the organization. Research also uncovered the fact that recurrent NIMS training has not occurred and is not currently part of the ODP.

<div align="center">Summary</div>

This research papers purpose was to determine if the AFD's plan for preparing future leaders is on track to provide the organization with competent leaders. This author is confident that the research cited contains significant findings that will translate into recommendations for the development of competent leaders for the AFD's future.

<div align="center">Procedures</div>

Research began at the National Fire Academy's Learning Resource Center (LRC) in Emmitsburg Maryland on May 28, 2008. The STAR card catalog system helped this author find articles from fire and emergency service periodicals, technical references, other EFO papers, and current fire service standards encompassing multiple topics on succession planning, leadership education and officer development. The search included using the key words succession planning, leadership training, leadership, management, officer development, and professional development to produce a literature reference list.   Other information was collected from Arlington Fire-Rescue documents including historical information from the department's archives.

This author also conducted interviews with members of the AFD's Officer Development team and members of the training academy. These interviews were conducted in order to gather more information on the department's ODP, history, pitfalls, curriculum and moving forward

information. This was all in an effort to better understand how our program was developed and where the program would take the AFD in the future.

The "Conducting Interviews" Section of the *EFOP Applied Research Self-Study Course* provided guidance when interviewing these subject matter experts. Each was asked key questions specific to their areas of knowledge.

Other information was collected during interviews conducted with BC's Jeff Holloway, Don Hartz and CA David Oujesky all faculty instructors with the ODP. They were asked specific questions on the delivery of the current Officer Development curriculum including how competency is established/measured. Other historical information from the department came from Analyst Nicole Cupps including incident statistics and ODP information came from the departments training Lieutenant Kirk Turner.

Two feedback instruments were utilized to solicit feedback from members of the organization that have participated in the ODP and other departments with similar challenges pertaining to the training and competence of future leaders (Appendix F & G). The purpose of the first feedback instrument was to gain information on how other departments have prepared their members as leaders and what they considered to be key components of that education process. The second instrument assisted in determining if the AFD's program was effective in the eyes of the participants and solicit information on what they thought made the program and ultimately themselves successful. Both feedback instruments were developed using questions that would help this author address the research questions.

Because the size or complexity of any one department does not indicate the existence or success of an ODP, the sample size for the fire service feedback instrument was determined by

utilizing participants in the EFO program. The goal was to solicit information from any city that might have a program in which they provided education to incumbent or future leaders.

The introductory e-mail and feedback instrument link was sent out to potential respondents on October 5, 2008, using Survey Monkey, a free an online site that provides software to develop and collect the desired information via a series of questions and posted on the National Society of Executive Fire Officers web site. The site in-turn provides statistical information regarding the responses provided. That information was disseminated for relevance and the outcome provided in the results section question a) of this ARP.

The definition of evaluative research is "the systematic process of collecting and analyzing data to make decisions" (National Fire Academy Executive Fire Officer Program Applied Research Self-Study Course [NFA EFOP ARSSC], 2004, p. 14).

Assumptions and Limitations

For the purpose of this research the assumption was made, when placing significance on the number of potential retirees, that everyone in the organization with at least twenty years of service are eligible to retire.

There were significant limitations on the actual number of samples utilized for the feedback instrument. In this research, this author utilized Survey Monkey, an online survey tool, to collect feedback. Although the survey link was only sent to other EFO students and publicized on an EFO alum website, there was no way to place an accurate sample framing on the instrument.

Other limitations involved the exclusion of some forms of technical education that could also be credited with fostering competent leaders. Certifications like hazardous materials technician and technical rescue technician were excluded from the research with the admission

they do have a place in the education of competent leaders but, have not found their place in the

arena of industry standard.

<div align="center">Results</div>

a)   What does the AFD currently provide in the way of leadership training?

The AFD conducts a 56-hour Emergency Operations course and a 40-hour each FOI &

FOII class at the departments training academy. Each class is tied into the promotional process

with the EO and FOI classes being required to take the LT's promotional exam and the FOII

curriculum being required to take the CA's promotional exam beginning in 2009. It was

determined that the Texas Commission on Fire Protection provides the certification exam and

certificate and utilizes curriculum provided by the International Fire Service Training

Associations (IFSTA) *Fire Department Company Officer* and the International Association of

Fire Chiefs (IAFC) *Fire Officer Principles and Practice* along with AFD specific curriculum.

The programs instructors struggle with measuring competency but do utilize competency

assessment tools. The department has not validated the curriculum or testing/assessment

methods nor has it developed policy that supports a failure. The program instructors believe that

when exposed to the curriculum, students are prepared to handle an incident more efficiency.

The AFD has provided NIMS training to everyone in the organization. The research

determined that everyone in the organization has received 100/200 & 700/800 dating back to

2006. Other information gathered established the fact that for the rank of CA and above that

NIMS 300/400 was also required and provided. It was also established that there have been no

recurrent NIMS training and NIMS is not included in the current Fire Officer Development

training program.

The AFD conducts night drills annually. Night drills were found to encourage future leaders to practice their leadership in a controlled atmosphere in an attempt to foster consistency in the application of ICS/NIMS. It was also established that the same drills are conducted on each shift for every company to ensure consistency.

The AFD training division conducts Interactive Training on a quarterly basis. Interactive Training utilizes the department training cable channel along with portable radios and the telephone to provide information and solicit feedback from companies city-wide to mitigate a give scenario. It was determined that the desired outcome for the drills include the development of incident objectives and the execution of a tactical plan from both incumbent and future leaders.

A feedback instrument was developed and the link distributed to some 150 members of the department that had taken either the EO, FOI or II curriculum delivered by the department. The goal was to establish some feedback on the department's views of the programs, the delivery method, instructors and their overall feeling about how the program impacted their leadership abilities.   A sample framing of 150 Feedback instruments were sent out for completion. The sample framing produced a sample size a 58 or 39% return over a two-week period.

Question one asked about demographic information including years on the job, rank, years in rank and age. Sixteen or 28% indicated they had been on the job between 21-25 years. Twenty-one or 36% indicated they were from the Apparatus Operator rank.   Thirty-four or 58% indicated they had been in rank between 1-5 years. Twenty-nine or 50% were between the ages of 40-50.

Question two asked, "How long has it been since you completed your Fire Officer training?" The potential answers were broken down into four possible categories including: EO

and FOI & II. Only fifty-seven or 98% responding to the EO section, fifty-eight or 100% answering the FOI section and forty-seven or 81% answering the FOII section. In regards to EO four or 7% indicated it had been between 0-6 months since their training compared to seven or 12% for FOI and zero for FOII. Three or 5% indicated it had been between 6m-5 years for EO compared to zero for FOI and one or 2% for FOII. Twelve or 21% indicated it had been between 1-2 years for EO compared to fourteen or 24% for FOI and twelve or 25% for FOII. Twelve or 21% indicated it had been between 2-4 years for EO compared to thirty-three 57% for FOI and nine or 19% for FOII. Twenty-two or 38% indicated it had been between 2-4 years for EO compared to three or 5% for FOI and one or 2% for FOII.. Four or 7% indicated that they had not taken EO at all compared to one or 2% for FOI and nineteen or 40% for FOII.

Question three asked, "Where the objectives for these programs clearly stated?" Forty-five or 76% indicated that the objectives were clearly stated while seven or 12% indicated that they were not and another seven or 12% were undecided.

Question four asked, "When thinking about the structure of these programs, what part you considered to be of most benefit to you?" The potential answers were broken down into seven possible categories including: Distance learning format, classroom format, project assignments, practical scenarios, text assignments, rank/caliber of instructors and exposure to the officers rank (during scenarios). One or 2% indicated the distance learning format. Twenty-six or 44% indicated the classroom format. Ten or 17% indicated the project assignments. Fifty-two or 88% indicated practical scenarios. Zero indicated the text book assignments. Seventeen or 29% indicated the rank/caliber of instructors and forty-two or 71% indicated their exposure to the officer's rank as a huge benefit in the training.

Question five asked, "When looking back at the areas taught, what one specific area did you feel provided you with the most added knowledge?" The potential answers were broken down into four possible categories including: communication, command presence, critical decision making, department policy, department history and practical application scenarios. Twenty-nine or 51% chose communication. Nineteen or 33% chose command presence. Thirty-five or 61% chose critical decision making. Seven or 12% chose department policy. One of 2% chose department history while forty-four or 77% chose practical application scenarios.

Question six asked, "As delivered, do you feel these officer development program(s) met your needs?" The potential answers were broken down into four possible categories including: EO, FOI & II and four choices including yes, no, time will tell and undecided. The question only yielded fifty-five or 95% responding to the EO section, fifty-eight or 100% answering the FOI section and thirty-five or 60% answering the FOII section. In regards to EO, forty-seven or 81% indicated yes the program had met their needs while three or 5% indicated no, two or 3% indicated time will tell and three or 5% indicated undecided. In regards to FOI, twenty or 34% indicated yes while twenty-four or 41% indicated no, eight or 14% indicated time will tell and seven or 12% were undecided. In regards to FOII, thirteen or 22% indicated yes while nine or 15% indicated no, four or 7% indicated time will tell and nine or 15% were undecided.

Question seven asked, "Do you feel you were given adequate opportunity to provide feedback about the program(s)?" Forty-five or 76% indicated yes while fourteen or 24% indicated no.

Question eight asked, "Do you feel like the Command Staff supported these programs and their outcome?" Forty-five or 76% indicated yes while fourteen or 24% indicated no.

Question nine asked, "If you could change anything about any of these three programs, what would it be?" This was an open-ended question with only fifty or 86% answering the question. Those responses are detailed in Appendix H, Organization Feedback Responses.

Question ten asked, "What would have made these programs a better learning experience for you?" The potential answers were broken down into four possible categories including: instructors, different curriculum/learning environment, different classmates, different frame of mind (yours), more time in classroom and more time with scenarios. Fifteen or 28% indicated different curriculum/learning environment. Three of 6% indicated different classmates. Seven or 13% indicated different frame of mind. Fourteen or 26% indicated more time in the classroom while thirty-eight or 70% indicated more time with scenarios. This question also left the respondent with the opportunity to provide free text responses; those are also included in appendix G, Organization Feedback Responses.

b)   What do industry standards provide in the area of the educating an organizations leaders?

The TCFP provides minimum standard's, curriculum and certification support for professional development and enforces statewide fire service standards. In the realm of officer development, the curriculum is limited to FOI & II. The certifications curriculum was developed utilizing the text's; *Fire and Emergency Service Company Officer, Fire Officer Principles and Practices*, *NFPA 1021, standards for the Fire Officer Professional Development* and *Standards for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications and Standards Manual for Fire Protection Personnel.* In order to be granted these certifications, besides the basic firefighter certifications, FOI & II candidates must possess a Fire Service Instructor I certification. All of these certifications are voluntary and not required to be a fire officer within the State of Texas. The State of Texas provides no guidance on the FOIII & IV certifications.

FESHE has developed a network of emergency services-related education and training providers. The mission is to establish a organization of post-secondary institutions to promote higher education and enhance the recognition of the fire and emergency service. A model had been developed for both fire and EMS that integrates training, education and certification. This model is not designed to be a promotional one but is designed to be a competency based professional development path supported by training, higher education and certification elements. The model includes the certifications FOI thru IV along with associates, undergraduate and graduate education as milestones to developing future leaders.

NFPA 1021, *Fire Officer Professional Qualifications,* provides a guideline of minimum requirements for the fire officer. It provides four levels of progression including FOI thru IV. It stresses the fact that it does not restrict any jurisdiction form exceeding the minimum requirements.

The *IAFC Officer Development Handbook* utilizes the term Professional Development to as it introduces a standard for the development of incumbent and future fire service leaders. It is organized into four elements including; Education, Training, Experience and Self development. In its model the IAFC recognizes the FOI thru IV certifications along with undergraduate and graduate degrees as key components to the success of organizations leaders. It also identifies the importance of mentoring in developing an incumbent or future fire officer. Sager and LaMoria also identify the importance of mentoring in an ODP as key to the learning process and providing the ability to draw on wisdom and experience.

The IAFC also provided information on the importance of measuring and links measuring progress through credentials. It also establishes importance is not the credential but, the knowledge, skill or ability to which the credential attests.

Malloy and Uman provide information on measuring competency and the importance in developing sound assessment procedures. They also provide information on assessment strategies used to help achieve competency in certification settings which included structured responses, constructed responses and performance assessments. They stress the importance of creating a sound assessment procedure to ensure the appropriate decision about the knowledge and abilities are made. They established the importance of validity and reliability as key elements associated with all assessment strategies. They stress that knowing which assessment strategy is right for your organization is key to your certification process.

Moyer provided information on defining and measuring competencies. Addressing the ability of the individual to perform the job effectively and defining what is required are key to measuring competencies. There are two types of competency definitions; direct statement and key element. Direct statement involves a sentence, paragraph or brief sentence that addresses the meaning of the competency. Key element utilizes the same descriptors and adds an additional key element that further details aspects of successful performance in the competency. Either way, both these measurements are rated to provide an overall rating of competency.

The DHS has mandated the use of NIMS by the fire service. It was designed to bring together different jurisdictions and disciplines when working on natural disasters and emergencies including acts of terrorism. It provides a unified approach to incident management, standard command and management structures with an emphasis on preparedness, mutual aid and resource management. Although it was not created just for Fire Officers, it is a major training initiative and should be included in professional development.

c)   How does the AFD's current Officer Development Program (ODP) compare to standards
        set fourth by the fire service?

The TCFP is the governing entity providing curriculum and certification support to Texas Departments. The AFD does provide FO I & II certification to all Company Officers in accordance with standards set forth by the TCFP. Recommendations established by FESHE, IAFC and NFPA 1021 also support the AFD's program. The FO III & IV certifications are included as recommendations by FESHE, IAFC and NFPA 1021 but, the TCFP does not provide a curriculum for these certifications.

Mentorship in an ODP is an important part of developing incumbent and future leaders. The AFD does not include a mentoring component to their ODP.

Measuring competence with valid and reliable assessment tools is a critical part of measuring competence in an ODP. The AFD does provide a component designed to measure competence. That component has yet to be validated.

NIMS is mandated training designed to provide a unified approach to incident management, standard command and management structures with an emphasis on preparedness, mutual aid and resource management.

d)   What do other departments provide for education in the area of preparing future leaders?

A feedback instrument was developed and the link was distributed to current students of the EFO program and also posted on the National Society of Executive Fire Officers website. This produced a sample size of 42 over a four-week period. It was determined through the feedback instrument that out of the forty two returned, twenty two or 52% of the departments did not have any kind of ODP.

Question one asked for the participant to provide their department's name. Thirty nine or 93% of the respondents provided their department's name.

Question two asked for demographic information including department strength, population served and 2007 total incidents. Twenty two or 52% indicated their departments strength was between 50-100, six or 14% between 100-150, two or 5% between 150-200, three or 7% between 200-300, two or 5% between 300-500 and six or 14% were over 500.

In population, twenty four or 57% of the departments were between 50-100,000, nine or 21% between 100-250,000, two or 5% between 250-500,000 and five or 12% over 500,000.

In 2007 total incidents, seventeen or 40% were between 1000-5000, eight or 19% were between 5000-10,000, five or 12% between 10-15,000, three or 7% between 15-20,000, two or 5% between 20-30,000, five or 12% over 50,000.

Question three asked, "Does your department offer a formalized officer training program targeted toward incumbent/future leaders?" Twenty two or 52% indicated they did not have any formalized training targeted toward current /future leaders while twenty or 47% indicated they did.

Question four asked, "Who is required to attend your program?" The potential answers were broken down into four possible categories including: everyone, Firefighters, Drivers, Officers, Chief Officer and no one is required to attend. Only twenty five one or 60% answered this question. Three or 14% indicated everyone in the organization was required to attend. Three or 14% indicated firefighters. Two or 9% indicated drivers. Six or 28% indicated Officers. Two or 9% indicated Chief Officers while nine or 43% indicated no one is required to attend.

Question five asked, "What, if any, curriculum is used to provide this training?" The potential answers were broken down into four possible categories including: Department, State, IFSTA, IAFC and other. Seventeen or 90% indicated the curriculum was department developed.

Nine or 47% were state developed. Six or 31% were IFSTA. Two or 10% were IAFC and eight or 19% indicated other curriculum was used. The others responses included; College and regional influences.

Question six asked, "In regards to an officer training program, does your department perform an effectiveness evaluation?" Only twenty one or 50% answered this question. Of those ten or 48% indicated yes while eleven or 52% indicated no. Those indicating no were told to skip to question 8.

Question seven asked, "How does your department evaluate effectiveness?" The potential answers were broken down into four possible categories including: Scenario evaluation, Field evaluation, written evaluation, Observation by a field training officer, observation by a mentor and annual evaluation. Only 30 or 71% answered this question. Of those five or 45% indicated scenario evaluation. Another five or 45% indicated field evaluation. Seven or 64% indicated written evaluation. Five or 45% indicated Field Training Officer. Two or 18% indicated observation by a Mentor. Three or 27% indicated annual evaluation while another three or 27% indicated other means. Of those other responses included; bi-annual evaluation and peer evaluation.

Question eight asked, "Does your training program tie in with your promotional process?" Only 21 or 50% answered this question. Fifteen or 71% indicated yes while six or 29% indicated no. The follow-up to the question asked "if yes, how". Fourteen or 67% elaborated to their yes response. Most additional feedback indicated that the program was required prior to being able to take a promotional exam for the officer rank.

Question nine asked, "What do you consider to be some key components in your training program?" This was an open-ended question with 100% providing at least one key component. Those responses are provided in appendix I

Question ten provide the respondent an opportunity to receive a copy of the final ARP by e-mail and were asked to submit their e-mail address. Nine or 21% provided an e-mail address.

<center>Discussion/Implications</center>

It does appear that the research provided information supporting the fact that the AFD currently already supports incumbent and future leaders with a substantial amount of leadership training. That training includes EO, FO I & II, NIMS, Interactive Training and, Night Drills. The FOI & II certifications are considered to be industry standard and are supported by the FESHE National Professional Development Model, NFPA 1021, *Fire Officer Professional Qualifications*, *IAFC Officer Development Handbook* and the IAFC Education and training model. It's also worth noting that the FESHE Professional Development Model and the IAFC Education and Training model are eerily similar. Having said that it was also obvious that all of these industry leading standards advocate the FO III & IV certifications. What was concerning to this author was the fact that the TCFP did not support, with curriculum, these certifications even though the research did establish them as key components. FESHE may have down played their significance when they established "None of these models are promotional ones; rather, they are competency-based professional development paths supported by their training, higher education, and certification elements" (n.p.). In comparison, Bill McQuatters (personal communication, August 21, 2008), also established that the ODP stresses the importance of both education and training.

It also appears that measuring competency continues to be a struggle with the AFD. Although I get the feeling that all of the instructors that participated in the interviews believe the program produces competent leaders, Jeff Holloway (personal communication, October 27, 2008) may have put it best when he answered the question *Are we confident they are competent because we have a competency structure that is valid and reliable that we developed*? with "No, the structure has not been validated…. This is especially challenging when they return to their shift/battalion that doesn't not support the concepts". Another, maybe more fair synopsis of the competency portion of the program may have come from Donald Hartz (Personal communication, October 27, 2008) when he added "I believe that each student leaves the Officer Development Program exposed to a curriculum that prepares them to handle an incident more effectively than they could, prior to attending". This author took this to mean that although they are confident in the program, they are not confident in the validation process.

NIMS can be considered a key component in any training targeted toward leaders. The research established that although NIMS was not created exclusively for officers, "the implementation of the National Incident Management System training is a major initiative across the nation" (Lindstrom, 2006, n.p.). It was determined that the AFD currently provides NIMS training, at different levels, according to rank but, none of the AFD training includes any level of NIMS training beyond the basic ICS component. It was also determined that the AFD conducts no re-current training on NIMS other than the initial certifications.

This author believes that although Emergency Operations, Night Drills and Interactive Training are considered as key components within the AFD, their importance is only supported within the AFD. They cannot however, be ruled out as key components to a comprehensive ODP even though the research did not support that premise.

What was interesting about the results from the AFD feedback instrument was the majority in each category under question and the odd mix it provided. It was intriguing to see that 28% of the respondents had been on the job between 21-25 years. Just as surprising was the fact that 36% represented the AO rank, a rank that this author would not have figured provided that much participation in the survey. That 36% had only been in rank between 1-5 years. And last, 50% of the respondents were between the ages of 40-50 years of age. These findings would indicate to this author a thirst for knowledge within the AO rank, maybe out of thirst for their new position/responsibility and certainly one that we may not be currently paying that much attention to.

The most significant information provided by the organization was what they thought were significant components to the AFD's ODP. In questions nine & ten respondents were asked "*If you could change anything about any of these three programs, what would it be"?* and *What would have made these programs a better learning experience for you"?* Most identified practical application scenarios, or some variation, as responses to these questions. This author took that to mean that if they could change anything, they would have appreciated more time with scenarios and to make the program better, they would like more practical application scenarios.

It was already known but, significant to re-identify that the TCFP provides minimum standards, curriculum and certification support to Texas fire departments. The TCFP's goals were established as:

- To provide education and assistance to the fire service, and

- To enforce statewide fire service standards

It was disheartening to discover that the TCFP only provided standards on the FO I & II certifications and did not included III & IV. This was not unlike other research discovered in this ARP.

FESHE was new to this author and until introduced in the Executive Leadership class at the NFA, would not have been considered as a significant finding in this field. But after researching their goals, they are in fact changing the way the Fire Service looks at educating incumbent and future leaders. It is also significant to see that FESHE's mission is to "Establish an organization of post-secondary institutions to promote higher education and to enhance the recognition of the fire and emergency services as profession to reduce loss of life and property from fire and other hazards" (FESHE, 2008, n.p.). This is a desperately needed educational avenue in the fire service. It was also encouraging to see that FESHE did not establish the Professional Development Models as a promotional path rather, they are competency-based professional development paths supported by their training, higher education, and certification elements (n.p.). The FO III & IV certifications appear in the FESHE model but, does not address where those certification can be achieved.

This author found research on NFPA 1021, *Fire Officer Professional Qualifications* as surprising. I expected more in a national standard but was surprised to see the FESHE research surpass my expectations as a guideline of minimum requirements for the Fire Officer. This standard only served to reinforce the fact that FO I thru IV was the current standard and included those as a path to a complete Fire Officer. Once again, the FO III & IV appears but is not supported as an avenue for achieving these certifications.

The *IAFC Officer Development Handbook* provided research similar to the FESHE Professional Development model. It also outlined standards for the development of incumbent

and future fire service leaders. In comparison to the FESHE model the IAFC also established significant elements as; education, training, experience and self development. Again similar to the FESHE model, the IAFC recognizes FO I thru IV as key to the success of an organizations leaders. The document did not however, provide any information on how to achieve the FO III & IV certifications.

The IAFC did provide some interesting information on mentoring in developing a fire officer. The handbook established "with those resources available, you can draw upon their wisdom and experience to shape your own skills and style as a leader" (IAFCODH, 2003, p. 4). This information took this author into a different direction and established mentoring as a key component. This fact was supported by research found by LaMoria (2007) in his EFO paper when he established the critical importance of mentoring in the ODP by establishing "the interview was significant for the research as it solidified the importance in including mentoring as a part of the learning process" (p. 18). Mentoring was also identified as a key component by other departments in the feedback instrument. In contrast, the AFD does not include a mentoring component in its program. This author still considers mentoring as a component worth exploring further. Because of the findings, this research could be considered as industry standard.

Another avenue not anticipated at the start of the ARP was measuring competence. Malloy and Uman probably provided some of the most significant information on measuring competence and the importance in developing sound assessment procedures. Malloy and Uman (2005), in discussing measuring competency established the process as a key component by explaining:

In any educational or professional setting, making good decisions about competency is difficult, at best. Certification decisions –whether or not to certify an individual in a

profession or trade – are particularly complex; organizations must create sound

assessment procedures to ensure that appropriate decisions about the knowledge and

skills of individuals are made (n.p.).

They also provided information on the importance of validity and reliability and did

establish them as key components associated with all assessment strategies. Malloy and Uman

established Validity is defined as "the degree to which a test measures the knowledge and skills

it is suppose to measure" (n.p.). Reliability is defined as "the degree to which the results from

one assessment would be similar if the assessment were administered again (with no additional

education or training)" (n.p.). Both of these measures can be considered significant to an ODP.

Another significant finding was Moyer and Uman's cautions about the advantages and

disadvantages and the importance of knowing which assessment strategy is right for your

certification program (n.p.).

In addition to Malloy, Uman, and Moyer provided crucial information on defining and

measuring competencies. In contrast, Moyer provided more details on defining competency and

techniques to establishing methods of providing an overall rating of competency by utilizing

different testing techniques. Malloy and Uman (2005), in discussing measuring competency

explained:

In any educational or professional setting, making good decisions about competency is

difficult, at best. Certification decisions –whether or not to certify an individual in a

profession or trade – are particularly complex; organizations must create sound

assessment procedures to ensure that appropriate decisions about the knowledge and

skills of individuals are made (n.p.).

This information also provided clarity on it importance and was considered significant.

There is no doubt that NIMS has established itself as a significant component to the fire service. The fact that NIMS "was developed so responders from different jurisdictions and disciplines can work together better to respond to natural disasters and emergencies, including acts of terrorism" (FEMA, 2008, n.p.) begs for its inclusion in any ODP. Other supporting research found that "the implementation of National Incident Management System training is a major initiative across the nation" (Lindstrom, 2006, n.p.). In comparison, the AFD did provide the initial training and to some degree provides NIMS/ICS in every training class. It is also obvious that there is no re-current training on NIMS at any level.

Again, I think it's obvious that FO I thru IV can be considered a key component to developing incumbent and future leaders. That fact is supported by the recommendations by FESHE, NFPA 1021, the IAFC Officer Development Handbook and TCFP. It is reassuring that the AFD has already adopted the FO I & II curriculum and has even folded it into the promotional process. The AFD seems to provide this education to its leaders utilizing the definitions for a candidate for both FO I & II established by the TCFP.   It is still baffling that all of these industry standards can present these as standards but the FO III & IV seem to be allusive.

Another significant finding included measuring competency as part of the credentialing process. Again, this came as a surprise and was not included in as a potential finding when this research started. It is obvious that the AFD has some confusion when it comes to candidates that exit their program and the level of competence they have achieved. While I believe they are confident the assessment tools they have in place are providing competent leaders, the research established that "we have struggled with validating the curriculum, testing/assessment methods, and developing the policy' (Jeff Holloway, personal communication, October 27, 2008). I am

confident that the AFD has an assessment strategy that follows the finding, to some degree, of Malloy and Uman who established structured responses, constructed responses and performance assessments. That compares to Oujesky who provided information on the AFD assessment strategy as "An objective written exam, multiple choice and I believe some true/false questions are given at the end of the course, and a performance assessment evaluation tool is used during the scenario portion of the course" (Personal communication, October 27, 2008).

The feedback instrument did produce information about other departments and their programs and indicated that twenty two or 52% of the departments did not have any kind of ODP. This was surprising considering all of the research supporting the development of incumbent and future leaders. It may have been that the wording of the instrument did not make clear the definition of an ODP.

It was obvious that the smaller departments were in the majority when it came to having a program with 52% of those only having department strength of 50-100 members. That corresponded to a population of between 50-100,000 people. Department considered "Metros" having a program only accounted for 5-14% in department strength and between 5-12% in population. Research for another paper might be why smaller departments consider this a priority and bigger ones did not.

Even more interesting was the fact that only 60% answered when asked "who was required to attend your program?" The highest at 42% indicated no one while 28% indicated officers. It was encouraging to see that although not widespread, the numbers did support the company officer rank being a prime audience.

It was also encouraging to see that the majority of departments did indicate the use of department specific curriculum as part of their program. Another significant percentage

indicated the use of state curriculum in their program. These compare to the AFD program which almost exclusively utilizes these two resources.

Another interesting revelation was found in the departments providing an effectiveness evaluation as part of their program. 48% indicated that they did provide one. The follow-up questions asked how they provided that evaluation. 45% indicated the use of a scenario evaluation and 64% also indicated the use of a written evaluation, processes also used by the AFD. Only 18% indicated the use of Mentors even though it appears to be industry standard.

In another validation of the AFD program, 71% of the respondents indicated their program did tie into the promotional process. This also speaks to the validity of the AFD program.

<div align="center">Recommendations</div>

Based on the literature review, feedback instrument, interviews, and the analysis of the results of this applied research project, it has been determine that the AFD's plan for preparing future leaders can be considered as on track to provide the organization with competent leaders. Additionally, the research provided some key components, some used by the AFD and some not, which will provide a foundation for an even more successful ODP. It also provided a path for more research in the area of mentoring and performance evaluations that are worthy of exploration.

The results of this research should provide the organization with an outline of industry standards, information on other organizations with similar challenges and insight for the development of competent leaders. The following are recommended changes/enhancements to the current ODP based on the research extracted from this applied research project.

1. Continue the path of Fire Officer I & II certification for all Company Officers. This

   program is supported by industry standards and has shown to be successful. The

   program should also be expanded to provide advanced training on the components of

   NIMS and included practical scenarios utilizing positions of NIMS that Company

   Officers are not usually exposed to.

2. Adopt the FESHE Professional Development Model or develop a similar AFD

   specific model to enhance the training and education of incumbent and future leaders.

   Higher education is quickly becoming a part of the self development landscape in the

   fire service. The AFD has an excellent opportunity to place itself on the tip of the

   spear in this realm and to truly develop national leaders. By providing the

   organization with a path, the AFD also demonstrates a buy in to this standard of

   education.

3. Continue the Fire Officer I & II certification requirement for promotional exam. The

   true reward for promotion is the fact that the individual has taken every educational

   opportunity available to self-develop. The department should considering assigning

   point totals based on their success in achieving certification through a model similar

   to the FESHE Professional Development model.

4. Explore and develop a set of performance measures and a skill assessment instrument

   based on validity and reliability. The research has established that multiple measures

   of performance will yield the best information on competency. The instructors of the

   AFD ODP are confident they are producing competent leaders but, do not have the

   process in place to ensure their work. A reliable and valid process should be

   developed that provides complete the complete confidence that everyone exiting the

program is at the same level and has successfully achieved certification.   The process

should not focus as much on achieving the credential but, should focus on the

knowledge, skill and ability of the student.

5. Develop and incorporate a mentoring component to the ODP curriculum. The

    research supported the importance of mentoring in the development of the company

    officer. Members who have participated in the AFD's professional development

    model would be perfect candidates for the mentoring position.

6. Include an advanced NIMS component to the EO and FO curriculum. NIMS was

    established as a major initiative across the nation and one that appears not to be going

    away. The fact that the AFD has provided the initial training for everyone is

    admirable but, by not truly embracing the concept through inclusion in recurrent

    education, as it stands will not provide the competency needed for the department's

    leaders.

7. Work with the Texas Commission on Fire Protection to develop the FO III & IV

    curriculum. It is obvious that while the industry is considering FO III & IV as desired

    certifications, the TCFP is not providing the support needed to achieve these

    certifications.

This author is also confident that the results have provided the AFD with

recommendations that if taken, will translate into the production of competent leaders for its

future.

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Appendix A TCFP Fire Officer I Minimum Standards

Chapter 451 - Fire Officer
Subchapter A - Minimum Standards for Fire Officer I Certification

§451.3 - Minimum Standards for Fire Officer I Certification
Preceding rule: 451.1 - Fire Officer I Certification -
Next rule: 451.5 - Examination Requirements

a.   In order to be certified as a Fire Officer I an individual must:

1. hold certification as Structural Fire Protection Personnel, Aircraft Rescue Fire
    Fighting Personnel, or Marine Fire Protection Personnel; and

2. hold Fire Service Instructor I certification through the commission; and

   A. possess valid documentation of accreditation from the International Fire
       Service Accreditation Congress as Fire Fighter II and Fire Officer I; or

   B. complete a commission approved Fire Officer I program and
       successfully pass the commission examination as specified in
       Chapter 439 of this title (relating to Examinations for Certification).
       An approved Fire Officer I program must consist of one of the
       following:

   i.   completion of a commission approved Fire Officer I Curriculum as
        specified in Chapter 9 of the commission's Certification Curriculum
        Manual;

   ii. completion of an out-of-state and/or military training program that
        has been submitted to the Commission for evaluation and found to
        be equivalent to or exceed the Commission approved Fire Officer I
        Curriculum; or

   iii. successful completion of 15 college semester hours consisting of
        the following courses or their equivalent:

        (I) Fire Prevention Codes and Inspections, 3 semester hours;

        (II) Fire and Arson Investigation I or II, 3 semester hours;

(III) Fire Administration I, 3 semester hours;

(IV) Firefighting Strategies and Tactics I or II, 3 semester hours; and

(V) Company Fire Officer, 3 semester hours.

b. Out-of-state or military training programs which are submitted to the commission for the purpose of determining equivalency will be considered equivalent if all competencies set forth in Chapter 9 (pertaining to Fire Officer I) of the commission's Certification Curriculum Manual are met.

c. College courses will be considered equivalent if the course description is substantially similar to the course description contained in the Workforce Education Course Manual (WECM) from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating

Appendix B TCFP Fire Officer II Minimum Standards

Chapter 451 - Fire Officer
Subchapter B - Minimum Standards for Fire Officer II Certification

§451.203 - Minimum Standards for Fire Officer II Certification
Preceding rule: 451.201 - Fire Officer II Certification -
Next rule: 451.205 - Examination Requirements

a.   In order to be certified as a Fire Officer II an individual must:

1. hold certification as Structural Fire Protection Personnel, Aircraft Rescue Fire Fighting Personnel, or Marine Fire Protection Personnel and;

2. hold Fire Officer I certification through the commission; and

3. hold, as a minimum, Fire Service Instructor I certification through the commission; and

   A. possess valid documentation of accreditation from the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress as Fire Officer II; or

   B. complete a commission approved Fire Officer II program and successfully pass the commission examination as specified in Chapter 439 of this title (relating to Examinations for Certification). An approved Fire Officer II program must consist of one of the following:

   i.   completion of a commission approved Fire Officer II Curriculum as specified in Chapter 9 of the commission's Certification Curriculum Manual;

   ii. completion of an out-of-state and/or military training program that has been submitted to the Commission for evaluation and found to be equivalent to or exceed the Commission-approved Fire Officer II Curriculum; or

   iii. successful completion of 18 college semester hours consisting of the following courses or their equivalent:

   (I) Fire Prevention Codes and Inspections, 3 semester hours;

(II) Fire and Arson Investigation I or II, 3 semester hours;

(III) Fire Administration I, 3 semester hours;

(IV) Fire Administration II, 3 semester hours;

(V) Firefighting Strategies and Tactics I or II, 3 semester hours; and

(VI) Company Fire Officer, 3 semester hours.

b. Out-of-state or military training programs which are submitted to the commission for the purpose of determining equivalency will be considered equivalent if all competencies set forth in Chapter 9 (pertaining to Fire Officer II) of the commission's Certification Curriculum Manual are met.

c. College courses will be considered equivalent if the course description is substantially similar to the course description contained in the Workforce Education Course Manual (WECM) from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Appendix C FESHE Professional development models
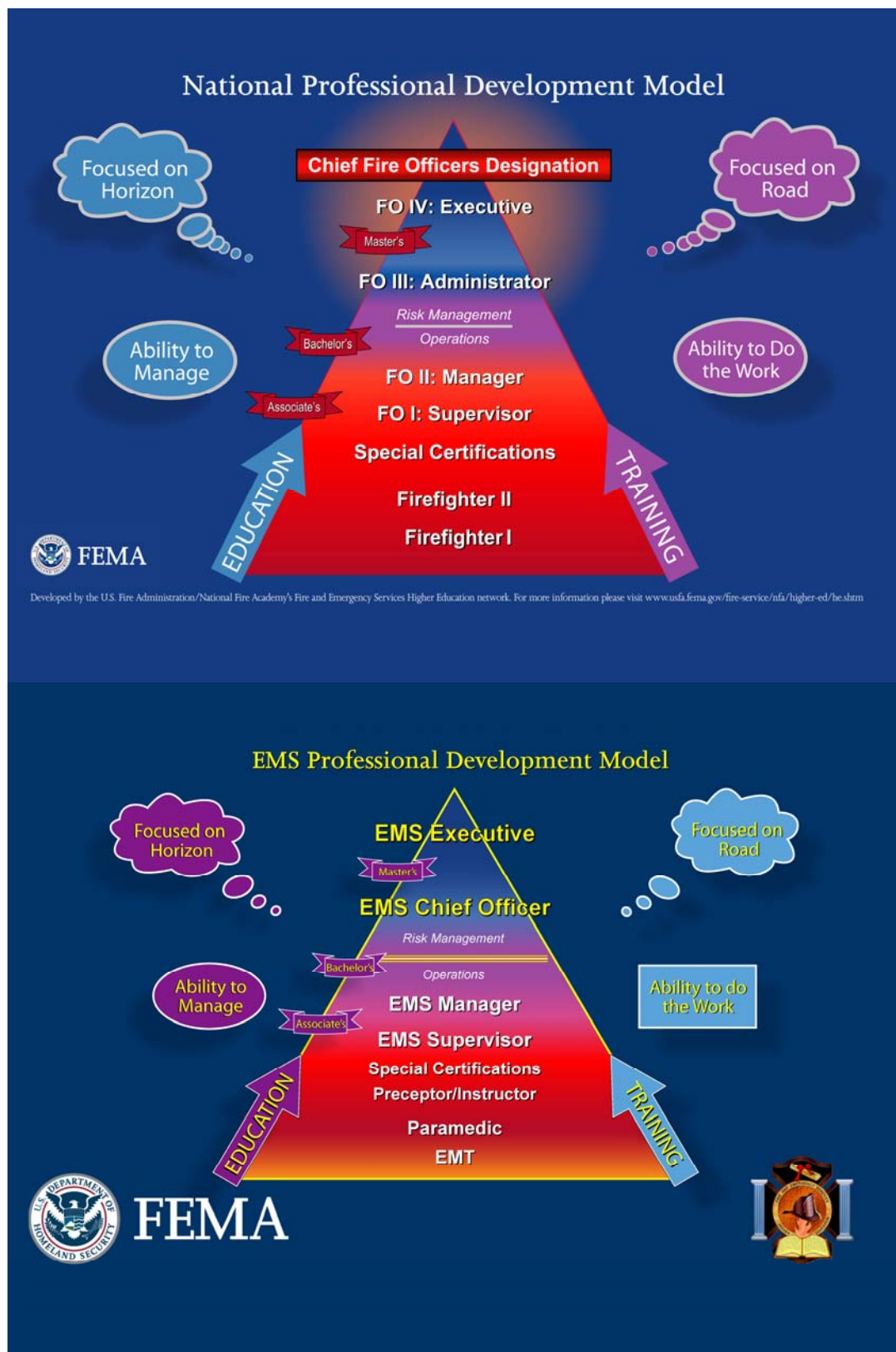
Appendix D IAFC Education and training model
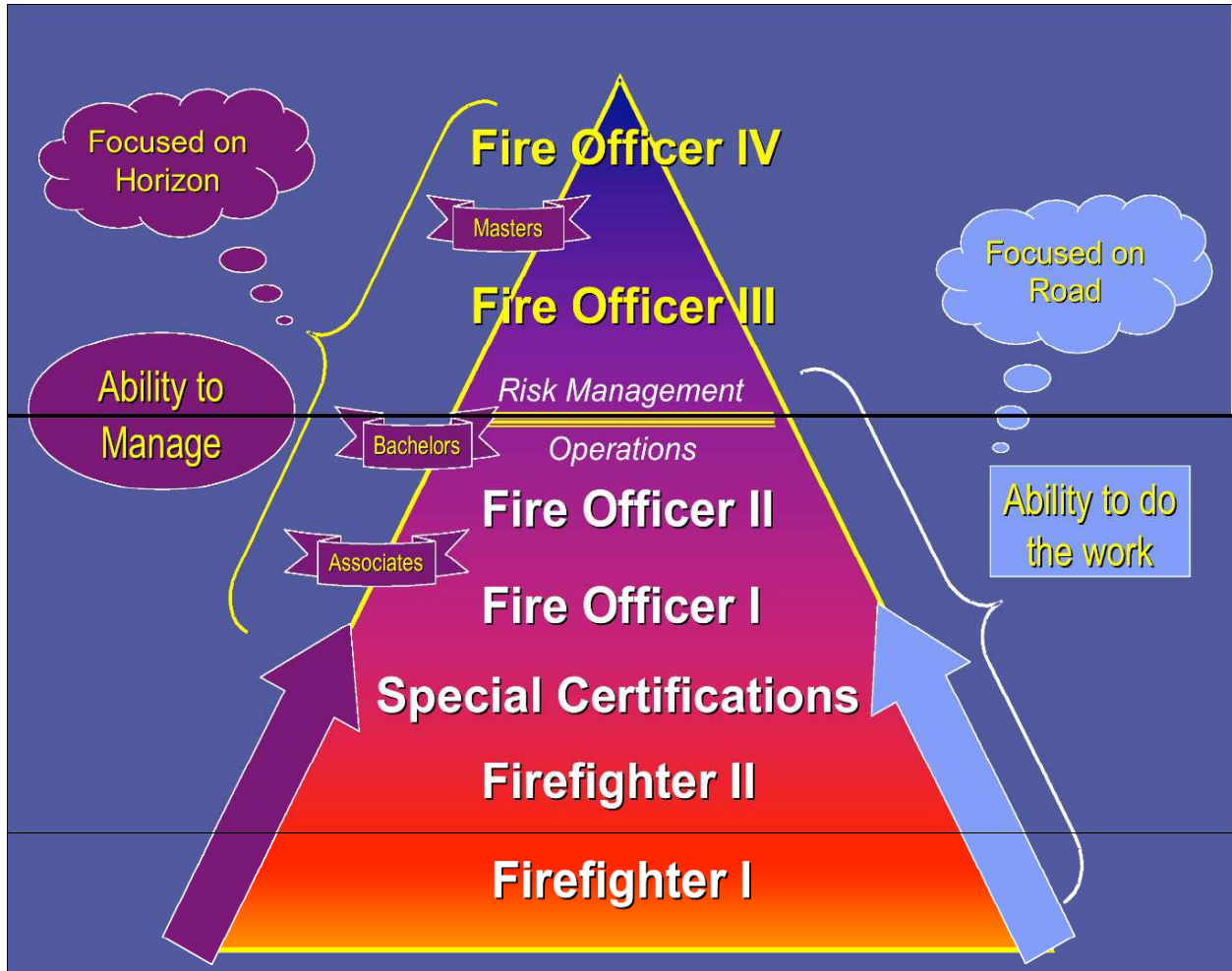
Appendix E Advantages and Disadvantages of Assessment Strategies

	Structured Response	Constructed Response	Performance Assessments
Major advantages	▫ Can administer several questions at each test administration (↑Reliability) ▫ Easy to score – not subjective, answers are correct or not correct (↑Reliability) ▫ Efficient and inexpensive to administer and score	▫ Provides opportunity to test thinking skills and applications of knowledge (↑Validity) ▫ Easy to test in-depth understanding of a concept (↑Validity) ▫ Less time-consuming to construct and revise	▫ Can create situations and/or settings that more closely resemble the real problems experienced in the profession (↑Validity) ▫ Provides opportunity to assess decision-making skills required for professional practice (↑Validity)
Potential problems to avoid	▫ Poorly written questions – e.g., confusing questions, trick questions, more than one correct answer possible (↓Reliability, ↓Validity) ▫ Failure to sample performance domains representatively (↓Validity) ▫ Emphasis on recall and memorization rather than thinking skills or applications of knowledge (↓Validity) ▫ Time-consuming and expensive to develop	▫ Poorly written questions – e.g., multiple interpretations of the same question by test takers (↓Reliability, ↓Validity) ▫ Possibility of measuring writing ability rather than knowledge (↓Validity) ▫ Poor scoring criteria – rubrics without clear guidelines (↓Reliability) ▫ Inconsistency among raters in scoring responses – raters might not judge the same response as correct (↓Reliability) ▫ Too few questions to adequately assess competency (↓Reliability) ▫ Time-consuming and expensive to score	▫ Poor scoring criteria – rubrics without clear guidelines (↓Reliability) ▫ Inconsistency among raters in scoring responses – raters might not give the same score (↓Reliability) ▫ Too few exercises to adequately assess competency (↓Reliability) ▫ Variation in administration of prompts and test settings (↓Reliability) ▫ Time-consuming and expensive to administer and score

vital **research** llc

Appendix F Fire Service Feedback Instrument

1.   Department Name: _____

2.   Department strength: _____ Population served: _____ 2007 Total Incidents: _____

3.   Does your department offer a formalized officer training program targeted toward current/future leaders?

Yes   ☐   If yes, please move to #4   No   ☐   If no, your survey is complete.

4.   Who is required to attend?

Everyone   ☐   Firefighters ☐   Drivers ☐   Officers ☐   Chief Officers ☐

No one is required to attend   ☐

5.   What, if any, curriculum is used to provide this training?

Department developed ☐   State developed ☐   IFSTA ☐

Other ☐ Explain_____

6.   Does your program perform an effectiveness evaluation?   Yes ☐   No ☐

7.   How does your department evaluate effectiveness? Please list:

Scenario Evaluation   ☐   Written Evaluation ☐   Observation by Mentor ☐

Field observation   ☐   Observation by FTO ☐   Annual Evaluation ☐

Other ☐ please specify: _____

8.   Does your training program tie in with your promotional process?   Yes ☐   No ☐

If yes, how? _____

9.   What do you consider to be some key components in your training program? Please list.

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

10.   Thanks for your time, effort and quick response! If you would like a copy of my completed research project, I would be happy to provide you with one by e-mail ONLY. Please provide me with your e-mail address in the space provided below.

Appendix G Organizational Feedback Instrument

1.   Years on the job_____ Rank _____ Years in rank _____ Age _____

2.   How long has it been since you have completed your Fire Officer training?

        Emergency Operations_____ Fire Officer I _____ Fire Officer II _____

3.   Where the objectives for these programs clearly stated?   Yes ☐   No ☐

4.   When thinking about the structure of these programs, what part did you consider to be of most benefit to you?

        Distance Learning ☐   Classroom ☐   Project Assignments ☐   Practical Scenarios ☐

        Text Assignments ☐   Rank/Caliber of Instructors ☐

        Exposure to Officer rank (during scenarios) ☐

5.   When looking back at the areas taught, what one specific area did you feel provided you with the most added knowledge?

        Communication ☐ Command Presence ☐ Critical Decision Making ☐

        Department policy ☐   Department History ☐   Practical Application Scenarios ☐

6.   As delivered, do you feel these officer development program(s) met your needs?

        Yes ☐   No ☐   Time will tell ☐   Undecided ☐

7.   Do you feel you were given adequate opportunity to provide feedback about the program(s)?

        Yes ☐   No ☐

8.   Do you feel like the Command Staff supported these programs and their outcome?

        Yes ☐   No ☐

9.   If you could change anything about any of these three programs, what would it be?

        Yes ☐   No ☐

10.   What would have made these programs a better learning experience for you?

        Different instructors ☐   Different Curriculum ☐   Different Classmates ☐

        Different frame of mind ☐   More class time ☐   More time with scenarios ☐

Appendix H Organizational Feedback Responses

Question 9

"As we seem to have corrected. Never have distance learning be the format for Officer Development classes. The interaction with other Officers is the most valued learning experience in these courses."

"I feel that practical application at the training tower of lessons learned in the class room was the absolute best way of gaining fire ground experience. I would like to see new Emergency Ops classes return to TCC Fire Academy burn facilities. No matter how well AFD training division utilizes the AFD training tower, it does not match the realism that TCC affords. I know it's a starin for the organization to go to TCC, but I learned the most from these classes about how to be an officer on the fire ground at the TCC scenarios."

"I would teach the programs the way were made to be delivered."

"More class room time, with better goals."

"When I went through FO1 there was too much distance leering. But I feel that this has been changed."

"I would combine Emergency Ops & FO1 to meet state requirements; but most importantly be tailored to AFD's needs on training competent leaders to the foundation of BECOMING an effective officer. Likewise, I would develop an advanced course similar to Emergency Ops and combine it with FO2 to build on the foundation and experience gained as a graduate of FO1/Emergency Ops. Additionally, I would not allow a member of the department not in close proximity in promoting to a position of authority access to this class."

"I think the programs ran pretty smoothly. I was in on one of the first Fire Officer 1 programs and it appeared a little disorganized, as may be expected with any new course. I believe it evolved over the course of time and improved"

"More on goal setting for fire fighters at the station level. How to improve and motivate FF that has retired in place."

"Emergency Opps was a great class due to extensive ""hands on"" portion both in Arlington and TCC. FO2 was a good class due to some hands on and class discussion time. FO1 was a bust which was the general consensus of participants after the class. Almost all was done self-paced. In defense of the class it was a pilot program with the adjustments made for FO2. As mentioned in your questions I too am unsure as to the Departments rating system as to the successfulness of the programs other then just a general ""feeling"" that our officers are better trained because they took part in the programs."

"Wouldn't matter no one will listen and no one in admin really cares about what we on the line think."

"The Emergency Operations course is great and should continue, but only as extra days added to the end of Fire Officer I and II. Due to the lack of interest by those in the AO and above position, as well as adding firefighters to the emergency ops class that have not even attended 2nd driver school be cause they have only been here a year, the emergency ops class is no longer attracting it's target audience. Fire Officer I and II are required for promotions and tough on a lot of what is already being taught in emergency ops. What Fire Officer I and II don't have is hands on. By eliminating the separate emergency ops class and adding 2 extra ""hands on days"" at the end of Fire Officer I and II, the target audience will be reached, the activity schedule will be less clogged, and a better class will result. I understand that there is ownership in the emergency ops class and rightly so, therefore it would be wise to include those effective instructors in the Fire Officer I and II programs."

"The majority of the programs were focused on company level operations and command processes with a focus on decision making. These are a core responsibility of any officer but they are not the only area that should be taught. A large part of this job (the officers) is about running the day to day operations of a fire station/battalion and managing people. The programs all had a very limited amount of personnel management information which helped but was not nearly enough. Almost no information was provided about all the other stuff a officer is responsible for, i.e. reports, evaluations, policies, discipline, payroll processes and the list goes on and on (this job doesn't come with an instruction book). Most of the officers still learn most of these items through watching those that came before them or trial and error."

"Invite other Fire Departments to class for varied procedures and practices. A mentoring program would help the apprentice Officer during an out of class opportunity putting what was learned to practice. Utilizing virtual reality video graphics to simulate fire ground scenarios."

"Change the primary goal and objectives of the classes. Getting a state certification should not have been the primary goal. To lean primary task of a company officer should be our primary goal."

"Comprehensive review of all curriculum to develop common thread throughout, all tied to AFD Policy and practice."

"Fire Officer I, more role-play and scenarios"

"Expand emergency ops class. on duty participation instead of days off. Fire officer 1 class was of little value to me."

"More practical application (Scenarios)."

"Provide this training on duty."

"These programs are formed from an industry standard. In my opinion, these standards are far below the job knowledge and skills that I have learned on the job at the AFD. I went into these classes understanding that these were for certification purposes only and if I picked up any extra useful information that it was just another tool that I could put in my toolbox. My mindset with these classes is that they were ways to be certified so that the AFD meets the industry standard."

"I would like to see tactics added to these programs. We perform tactics with no real evaluation of the tactics used. (in my opinion) Would the tactics I used ""work"""

"More explanation to the department in what we were seeking in the programs."

"We need more instruction and direction on our coaching, counseling and discipline. Our dealings with people are the most often encountered difficulty we have. Our employees are the most important aspect and component in our system. We need to navigate towards an appropriate handling of our peer and subordinate issues."

"Textbook in FO1 is very outdated."

"Too much time has transpired for an accurate recommendation."

"More hands on practical scenarios. I learn better by doing than reading."

"I was in the first emergency operations class. There was not enough scenario training."

"Worry less about the clock. What I mean is if there is a good dialog happening, don't stop it just to rush into the next subject."

"More tactical type decision making in Fire Officer classes"

"I would not allow firefighters to attend these courses. I believe that we water down the importance of these classes when we allow firefighters, some still on probation to attend these courses. I also believe that we have some veteran fire officers with a great amount of ""fire common sense and skills"" that we need to somehow pull their expertise in and get them involved in these courses."

"The fire officer 1 class needs to be more about being a leaded in the fire station not on the fire ground. We need to learn how to deal with our crew better and deal with issues in the station."

"More practical scenarios"

"One Direction....."

"I can't remember that much about the Fire Officer classes, except I didn't like the distance learning."

"Fire Officer One and Two are designed to gather paper. I think those classes have changed somewhat recently but they are still a mandated State class that is so irrelevant too much of what we do. Emergency Op's is better but has become such an ""inbred"" class with the same people teaching ""their views"" only and using the class to promote changes that haven't been adopted by out department yet. More people need to have some control in this class, not just 2 or 3."

"These programs are too vital to be a Distance Learning Format. This was done in our department because the activity schedule would not allow members to be in a actual classroom each shift.   You learn by experience in the officer position.   So you need as many of the scenarios as possible before going out on the line. Many of our older officers new this. The problem is these older officers are retiring in record numbers now. What we are left with is officers that like every sort of training to be Distance Learning."

"No more distance learning. For anything. COA and AFD must apply what they teach to daily operations and programs."

"Completely restructure the delivery of FO 1."

"Use the instructors from emergency ops for fo1 and 2"

"Computers at station were inadequate at times"

"Bridge the gap between book work and real world. Book smarts are a great foundation. Apply that to our organizations policies, geographical location, call volume, call type and managerial duties at the station level."

"Format change for FO1 to class room rather than distance."

"Emergency op. was a good balance between class and field scenarios. Fire Officer I not so much."

"More practical scenarios."

"FO1 was conducted online. Didn't work. Also, FO1 classes should be AO's and Officers only."

"Pay overtime when attending off shift as this benefits the dept just as much as the individual"

"FO 1 & 2 are from the same book. Does not make sense. State needs to change and combine"

"Most changes have already occurred. We attempted distant learning on FO1 but I feel we missed the objective. Corrections were made and now perform these classes in a classroom setting with classroom feedback and ideas. FO2 was much better. As far as our Emergency Ops class goes, it is top notch and

each member leaves with a much better understanding and comfort instead of being just ""cast to the wolves"" ."

"Emerg. Ops Course was GREAT!!!!
Fire Officer I was a complete waste of time. When I took the course it was all distance learning. There was no follow up on the course or feedback taken. I learned absolutely nothing about being a fire officer. Very disappointed. I know the course has changed formats so I hope it is better now."

Question 10

"The instructors just would teaching for the overtime and not trying to develop leaders for the future."

"No non-AFD members"

"The hands on portion and classroom setting for the emergency operations course was outstanding. It was definitely some of the best training I have had in my 17 years of service."

"A larger commitment (financially) to more hands-on will always reap benefits. The rating for these benefits? I'm unsure."

"Keeping a balance of what TCFP and NFPA require and teaching how Arlington does it. Instructors should pull no punches and ""keep it real"".

,"Focus as much on the ""NON-FIRE"" items as we do on the ""FIRE"" items."

"Using AFD's post fire incidents for practical learning"

"Change the primary goal and objectives of the classes. Getting a state certification should not have been the primary goal. To lean primary task of a company officer should be our primary goal."

"projects for FO I waste of time."

"instructors from outside of our organization would offer different perspective"

"I learn best by doing. The instructors need to be more helpful, and less critical"

"Some of the instructors were excellent...some, not so much.   Keep the kids out of these classes until they have some time on the job. Hard to take a class seriously when a 20 year officer is in the class with a just off probation FF. Stop rotating officers out of Training every two years and provide some real incentives to stay longer. There is no consistency when you get a good officer in there, they can't wait to get out because the workload sucks and there are no real incentives to stay!"

"Emergency Ops was great. FO 1 and 2 needs some help."

"No suggestions"

"More scenarios"

Appendix I Department Feedback Responses

Question 9

Tactics and strategy

Fire Service instructor certification

Academic examination components

Fire Officer I, II & III

Safety

Emergency scene operations

Operations and safety

Administrative responsibilities

Actual hand on experience

State curriculum based

Training meets the functions of the position

Allows for individuals to start the coursework required for promotion

Organizational alignment – values based

Incident management

Company tests are certified

Effective command management

Fire inspector certification

Scenario components

Personal development

Tactical decision making

Officers have a good bas to work from

Department developed

NIMS 100, 200, 300, 400, 700 & 800

Performance management

Daily operations

Communications

Field evaluation

Disciplinary process

Fire ground survival and RIC

Incident safety officer

Leadership

Fire ground management

Ride along

Performance evaluations

Written communications

Mentoring

Reading smoke

Peer evaluation

Certification pay

IAFC Officer Development handbook