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Date: October 8, 2021

To: Statewide Training and Education Advisory Committee
State Board of Fire Services

From: Mark Bisbee, SFT Battalion Chief

SUBJECT/AGENDA ACTION ITEM:

California Fire and Emergency Services Higher Education (FESHE) Subcommittee Update

Recommended Actions:

That STEAC accept this informational report on FESHE subcommittee progress.

Background Information:

The Pathway to Higher Education program approved by STEAC consists of several phases: *Phase I* was completed in 2019; *Phase II* consists of submitting two professional career tracks (Executive Chief Fire Officer and Fire Marshal) to the American Council on Education (ACE) for credit recommendations to articulate into existing CSU degree programs; and *Phase III* consists of forming a Center of Excellence in collaboration with Community Colleges and the CSU system. The FESHE Consortium is focused on the following areas:

- A. Model standardized curriculum for higher education to adopt
- B. Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) and Prior Learning Assessments (PLA)
- C. Center(s) of Excellence for the CA fire service
- D. Funding and advocacy

Overall, the end-users of a CA FESHE program fall into three broad categories: 1) Professional and Continuing Education (PaCE) and degree completion for working in-service professionals and practitioners in all fire service areas of specialty; 2) Pre-service, traditional, four-year college programs focused on the fire service; and 3) Fire scientists, researchers, and other “non-sworn” but fire-related fields.

In April 2021, the STEAC FESHE subcommittee was formed to determine:

- Current workforce needs and degree completion options
- Forecast future workforce challenges and capabilities
- Provide input to develop a broad-based “future-cast” vision for our emerging workforce needs
- Determine model FESHE curriculum that meets our statewide needs

- Provide guidance and direction for SFT staff moving forward

The STEAC FESHE subcommittee members are:

1. Richard Beckman, California Fire Technology Directors Association
2. Taral Brideau, California Firefighter Joint Apprenticeship Committee
3. Cat Frazer CAL FIRE -Training Center
4. Gareth Harris, Fire Districts Association of California
5. Gaudenz Panholzer, CalChiefs

In addition, the subcommittee was joined by several ad-hoc members of partnering agencies and organizations: Jeff Crandall, USFS; Richard Emberey, Cal Poly SLO; Ben Fell, Sac State; and Jenni Murphy, Sac State. The meetings were facilitated by Chris Fowler and Mark Bisbee of SFT, with Dan Turner of Cal Poly SLO, and Jeff Meston of CSFA.

The subcommittee held several meetings: a June 29,2021 virtual kick-off, an in-person Vision 2030 meeting held July 28th and 29th at SFT HQ, and a follow-up virtual meeting on August 9th.

The topics included:

- The first Afternoon of Vision 2030 consisted of establishing framework and context, and included a brief history of SFT, Blueprint 2020, the national FESHE model, the CA FESHE Consortium through the CSU system, and emerging issues.
- This was followed by an evening no-host dinner/mixer so the group could get to know each other.
- The following morning on July 29th was kicked off with a FutureCast exercise, followed by a discussion on what the “perfect system” would look like with no funding or staffing constraints. Then next steps were outlined before the meeting was adjourned at noon.

A short follow-up meeting was held on August 9th, and two workgroups were formed: One to address the gathering of actionable data, and another group to focus on state-centric curriculum to meet emerging trends and needs.

Analysis/Summary of Issue:

Input provided by the STEAC FESHE Sub-committee is being used to formulate a California version of the national FESHE curriculum model in collaboration with higher education institutions to meet emerging fire and emergency service industry needs. Additionally, the lack of industry data is hampering our current and future planning efforts. For example, how many company and chief officers are there statewide? What is the current user base compared to what it could be with a fully articulated pathway to higher education? The STEAC FESHE subcommittee will be working on both items in the coming months.

SFT staff will also working on the development of a strategic vision within a foundational document (white paper) to guide SFT in creating model FESHE programs for the next decade. This document could then be rolled into a SFT Strategic Plan if desired.

Given the rapidly changing environment and conditions the fire and emergency services in California are currently facing, its not just a good idea to position ourselves for this new reality; it's crucial.