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Date: May 19, 2023

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

From: Mark Bisbee, SFT Battalion Chief (RA)

SUBJECT/AGENDA ACTION ITEM:

Fire and Emergency Service Higher Education (FESHE) Focus Groups

Recommended Actions:

Information Only

Background Information:

The FESHE Curriculum Focus Groups are comprised of fire service stakeholders and are convened to provide clarity and expand our fire and emergency professional and educational pathways in alignment with prosed Blueprint 2030 Goals 2 and 3. Specifically, to address fire service industry higher education needs. The first focus group was focused on two main deliverables:

- To gather data from our industry to better inform potential FESHE goals.
- To develop model curriculum that can be adopted by educational institutions to better meet fire service educational needs.

Surveys: Two surveys were launched in August 2022: One for individual fire service personnel, and one for fire service agencies. The data sought centered on:

- Fire service demographics in terms of career span, rank, certification and educational goals, and type of degree preferences.
- Various agency certification and education promotional requirements
- Pre-employment requirements and relationships with higher education
- Responses were very low, but the analytics provided by Sac State were robust.

Curriculum: Using the national FESHE model curriculum as the foundation, Focus Group 1 stakeholders have created a crosswalk that identifies SFT professional certification track courses that may serve as equivalencies to the national model curriculum. Focus Group 1 vetted national model curriculum for the associate's level virtually and met in person in Sacramento September of 2022 to consider bachelor's and master's degree model curriculum. Here are the significant findings:

- Because SFT CFSTES courses are centered around National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Job Performance Requirements (JPR's), it is only a one-way crosswalk: SFT certification courses may count as academic equivalencies for foundational knowledge and didactic concepts, but *national model FESHE courses are not equivalent to SFT Professional Development track courses* because include both didactic information and certification JPR's within task books.

- Two new CA-Specific electives were identified at the BA/BS level:
 1. *Fundamentals of Organizational Leadership* focusing on critical thinking, problem solving, conflict resolution, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI).
 2. *Applications in Wildland Fire Management* focusing on community risk reduction, building community resilience, and pre-incident preparation and planning.

FESHE Focus Group 2: The second FESHE Focus Group met in Sacramento on May 2-3, 2023, to continue the work of identifying and vetting statewide model curriculum, and accomplished three additional deliverables:

- Validation, vetting, and recommending the FESHE National model EMS bachelors' curriculum for appropriateness and use in California.
- Conducting an industrywide survey of the Fire and Emergency Services *community of practice*. The *community of practice* considers the entire sphere of occupations and positions within the California Fire and Emergency Services scope of practice, (e.g., lifeguards, fire district finance managers, emergency managers, wildland fuel treatment specialists, scientific researchers, etc.)
- Identification of existing national FESHE curriculum that could be used as general core curricula across all sectors of FESHE community of practice.

Analysis/Summary of Issue:

While much has been done in terms of identifying and clarifying existing FESHE model curriculum, much more needs to be done to fully flesh out model recommended coursework, certificate programs, majors, and minors for the FESHE community of practice. By comparison, Criminal Justice programs throughout the state are much more widespread and serve the entire law enforcement community of practice.

Recommended next steps: 1) Re-launching the survey to gather needed data and 2) gathering SME's for validation and vetting of general core coursework and the identification and development of specific courses to meet the all hazards FESHE needs of our entire community of practice. These steps will help further professionalize our industry and implement key components of the Blueprint 2030 strategic plan.