

Appendix E: Questionnaire Comments

Question 5 (Problems):

Never experienced question 2 [referring to “Instructional team disagreement”] but it could be a concern.

Some newcomers try sometimes to show off! [referring to “Instructional team disagreement”].

I have not personally been involved in a disagreement with my co-instructor, but I am aware of problems of this nature.

Instructional team member’s lack of professionalism.

The good old boy concept is in place.

These have not been a problem for me.

Credentialing trainers in T-t-T [Train-the-Trainer] deliveries.

Lack of knowledge of profession by some faculty not associated with Fire/EMS service (hard to relate).

No problems yet encountered.

I have not encountered this [referring to “Instructional team disagreement”].

Rarely happens, but when it does -- disaster [referring to “Instructional team disagreement”].

I’ve always gotten along with the “other” instructor.

It happens. However, shouldn’t happen in front of class [referring to “Instructional team disagreement”].

Lack of contact with other instructors.

Sometimes the instructors both want to assume the “lead”, and this is reflected in the classroom [referring to “Outdated program content”].

Treatment by full time staff.

Too many rules from on high (red tape).

Members of instructional team who have been out of field (5-10 years).

Low bid Bob and Phil take most of the classes I enjoyed teaching at Emmitsburg.

Instructors who shoot the bull for a major part of session, _____(illegible) and get great student reviews because of joke telling.

Revision cycle could be sped up by using contract personnel expertise during teaching contract.

ADFR [course] slides are badly outdated.

Not in all cases [referring to “outdated program content”].

Expand/evolve course development teams.

Some of the materials are more academic than operational [referring to “Outdated program content”].

Entry level Fire Investigations taught at NFA is duplicate of programs taught at state level. NFA should provide “advanced” programs.

Inconsistency of same material between courses.

Primarily teaching in SMOC [Strategic Management of Change] and EL [Executive Leadership].

Or at least components of course [referring to “Outdated program content”].

Much of the material is outdated [referring to “Outdated program content”].

Poor slide quality.

Poor quality of visual aids/slides.

I can live with it [referring to “Outdated program content”].

Not so much “out of date” content as occasional “peculiar choice” of content.

Conflict with APA (4th Ed.) and student instructions.

Course material needs continual audit for timeliness and appropriateness.

Please update at least every 2 years.

Instructor manual not matching up with student manuals.

Outdated Code Management class has been identified for a rewrite.

PEPEP and CEL [courses] are all relatively new and current.

Design of instructional material hard to figure out sometimes.

Excellent programs.

Outdated content in parts of courses.

More adult learning is required for most courses. Often courses are lecture oriented.

More student participation is necessary. We still are suffering 100 deaths [and] 100,000 injuries yearly to firefighters. More emphasis on operational concepts is needed.

If material cannot be updated regularly it should be dropped.

Handouts can get outdated very quickly.

Too much time between revisions. Some slides with problems never were corrected [referring to “Outdated program content”].

Some areas [content] need restructuring.

Some material needs to be updated. However, most is applicable to the Fire Service [referring to “Outdated program content”].

Visual aids are state of the art. However, the content of the subject matter is outdated (example: “motor vehicle arson” shows an old vehicle).

Slides in arson programs - many are outdated or poor.

Audio visual support.

Lack of support for materials copying - missing visual aids.

Equipment logistics.

Classroom size (# of students -- too many at times).

Instructor pay scales should be established that would allow better instructors (high fees) to compete equally against poorer instructors (teach cheap) -- based upon a formula that considers: 1. Student evaluation, 2. Peer evaluation, and 3. Learning transferred (testing and objective evaluation).

Awarding of contracts.

Other instructor low bid, but retired more than 10 years; not current with today's operations.

Instructors are taken for low bid not quality of experience.

Questionable quality of some programs (sometimes low bid shows up).

Better system for weeding out marginal instructors. The bid system, at times, tends to mediocrity.

Qualified instructors - not low bid.

Allow team bidding and teaching.

I question the qualification of instructors - if college credit is to be given i.e., a B.A. (only) teaching a college accredited course?

Mismatch between student expectations/preparation and course content.

Never had a problem with my students [referring to "Student violation of rules"].

Some, but not significant [referring to "Student violation of rules"].

Students not meeting the course prerequisites.

Not a concern [referring to "Student violation of rules"].

Wearing proper attire [referring to “Student violation of rules”].

Student dress code needs to be reviewed.

Some conduct (parties) out of control [referring to “Student violation of rules”].

Students seem to be very conscientious in obeying the rules [referring to “Student violation of the rules”].

Question 6 (Orientation):

Not usually a problem with a knowledgeable “lead”. Wouldn’t be a problem if we had fewer instructors in some areas.

The [program] Chair should get out of the way unless needed.

Meeting with NFA staff and Superintendent at some time other than Friday a.m. - some evening may be more appropriate.

Weak in concern but understandable with cuts and limited staff.

Class evaluations are often ignored by some program chairs.

General attitude of staff towards contractors.

Program Chairperson talks a good game but not all of them are that helpful.

Some Chairs (Hisley, Dyar, Covington) are there whenever you need them. Others expect adjuncts to do their job for them.

Staff to take action when problems are identified with materials, such as missing, incomplete or corrections needed.

This is now the practice for “Command and Control” courses [referring to “Required on-site meeting with Program Chairperson”].

Periodic feedback from Program Chair.

Some instructors never feel they understand the overall strategy and emphasis that the Program Chairman wants.

Direct delivery programs should entail one initial meeting.

New instructors are sort of “thrown to the wolves”.

Some of the new instructors are great, but could also learn from experienced pro. with extensive background.

Better monitoring of performance by Program Chair.

The ones I’ve attended have been helpful and inspirational [referring to “Formal on-site orientation program”].

Sometimes hard to see big picture or where the little parts are heading [referring to “Instructor handbook mailed prior to first class”].

With up-to-date information [referring to “Instructor handbook mailed prior to first class session”].]

All instructors should receive revised materials. Not just those that are most active (with low bids).

Regular updates/information.

For a first time instructor it is very intimidating. Perhaps some sort of 1st day welcome, etc.

Break down of daily instructional requirements.

Formal on-site orientation and welcome needed.

I see nothing wrong with a “Seasoned” instructor teaching a “new” instructor.

Orientation to campus and resources

I like to have a fresh copy of Instr and Stu manual sections for my modules.

IG on disk, so instructor can be current with any changes/additions made to course material.

Inability of NFA to arrange early lodging (Saturday night) impairs instructor preparation.

No real problems -- good support.

Lack of consistent method to learn of new policy, procedures, personnel, facility and support changes.

Parking and housing (random assignment).

Express rules for handling politically touchy issues -- i.e., race, foreign students.

Everything is too hurried on 1st day. It would be better to start classes at 1 p.m. on 1st day and use a.m. for admin.

If possible, student roster should be sent to instructor prior to first class session along with updated course IG. Each instructor should have an updated NFA handbook.

If getting on the adjunct list [is] good old boy club, it is an area of concern of mine.

Selection criteria should be clear, consistent and (especially) objective.

A bid system written in English!

Submitting bid packages.

Question 7 (Support):

Current support system at the NFA is satisfactory for ques. 1 & 2 (referring to “Classroom and set-up (i.e., tables, chairs, etc.)” and “Classroom supplies (i.e., manuals, pens, chart paper, etc.)”).

And copying [referring to “Secretarial typing support”].

They’re great now [referring to “Classroom set-up”].

Major need [for] improvement in this area.

I feel comfortable with the present support.

Usually I set up the room to suit me [referring to “Classroom set-up”].

With availability of computers staff typing support would not be required [referring to “Secretarial typing support”].

The support staff is very helpful regarding an efficient academic environment.

I think services are superior to what I am used to.

I get support based on friendship not need.

Disk with audiovisuals mailed prior to class (where applicable).

Course content materials are organized and in good shape.

I have never needed this service; however, it would probably be beneficial to have the service available in case it was needed by an instructor [referring to “Secretarial typing support”].

All of the above have been provided as needed. However, assistance in duplicating student papers, exec. summaries for class is scarce.

All equipment including computers, etc. is state of the art.

Generally, classrooms have been fine.

The classroom setup is critical to the learning environment.

Excellent.

All necessary materials should be inventoried 2 weeks prior to class starting date.

Support equipment needed that works (copy machine).

Lack of computer availability.

Access to computers and printers for instructors.

Printed materials required for classes and setup prior to class by permanent support staff incomplete and inaccurate.

Occasionally break-out rooms not coordinated.

Haven't taught in new classroom building yet.

A computer designated for instructor use in classroom building. A copier for student use.

Supplies are difficult to come by.

Familiarization with A/V equipment.

Proper maintenance of visual machines.

The support has not been the same the past few years.

Projectors, spare bulbs and other support equipment.

Computer printers/modem/Internet access.

Instructors must have building/classroom keys.

Pool support is terrible! Never heard of a 'spell checker'.

Support services have always been good.

Provide instructors with loaner laptops with Powerpoint.

Current set-up (room and supplies) usually very good.

Reliable/efficient copy machine; longer library hours, more comprehensive computer lab capabilities.

MIS-computer support - PCs, laser printers, etc.

Question 8 (Evaluation):

Very poor area.

OK for some classes.

If an instructor gets a bad evaluation nothing happens so it is a paper tiger.

All should be provided within a timely period.

Tests written to meet applicable NFPA [National Fire Protection Association] Professional Qualification objectives/where applicable.

I have never received evaluation results unless I ask for them.

Feedback is limited to on-site time.

Follow-up by program chairs of instructors' effectiveness.

Maybe I'm missing something after 14 years, but I never see evaluations other than from field courses.

Seldom, if ever, are evaluations forwarded to instructor.

Would like to see instructor evals sooner so possible improvements can be made sooner.

Send evaluations to instructors.

Bank testing could prove extremely beneficial.

Availability of program results important.

Program results take “forever” to get.

Too much is made of instructor “popularity” rather than teaching (education) results.

Unusual situation: students grade the instructors and the instructors grade no one.

Program Chairs need to share eval. results!

Development of valid evaluation instruments.

I do not believe that with the number of instructors teaching at the NFA that the integrity of tests/questions would remain untainted.

Perhaps some self-test progress questions in computers for classes?

Student evals. Are horrible. It is just pandering.

Feedback to the instructors on evaluations.

Even in the university-level classes faculty agree that student evaluations tend to be biased and non-effective -- more popularity contests.

Chair and instructors should review evaluations together.

Evaluations must be disclosed to instructors -- Learning process for better future performance in presentation and interaction with students.

With the exception of new course pilots and regional deliveries I've not received course evaluations or reports.

Instructors must have computers accessible to Internet (provided by NFA).

“Instructors' Computer Lab” - A few computers for instructors' use only.

Clerical support for assistance with administration of exercises in classes that have extensive use of exercises, handouts, etc.

Unqualified students admitted to classes.

Question 9 (Development):

This is an especially valuable idea [referring to “Periodic on-site instructor conferences”].

Instructors can call with questions and concerns now [referring to “Periodic on-site instructor conferences”].

All of the above are areas of concern, #s 2 and 3 would be great [referring to “Periodic on-site instructor conferences” and “Newsletter with explanation of new policies, courses, etc.”].

These proposals would certainly help instructor development.

I think NFA does a poor job of keeping instructors informed.

Wayne Powell takes care of his instructors (a first?)

We have very little communication with the Academy.

Annual workshops would be very effective for instructor support.

Currently available second Friday morning [referring to “Periodic on-site instructor conferences”].

Really like the idea of an NFA Instructor conference for professional development _____ (illegible) planning, explanation of new policies, procedures, etc.

A program that would allow instructors no longer on the job to spend time with a paid department to stay current on fire service needs/problems.

Routine instructor evaluation or performance evaluation from full time faculty.

On-line information services through Internet.

NFA must ensure instructors remain on the top of the continuing evolution of their field. Conferences are a good way to do that. Also, instructors should be involved in course development and updating.

Course updates and deletions before you arrive on campus

No support was ever offered or provided. Fend for yourself seemed to be the rule.

Preferred admission to off-site conferences, preferred/reduced cost of distance learning opportunities from NFA, major universities, etc.

Would like to see preferred admission. Also, instructor conferences.

I question why this question [referring to “Preferred admission to NFA classes”] is part of the survey. I don’t think it is necessary...only if a new instructor is preparing to become a qualified instructor should preference be given.

Question 10 (Other Comments):

Two first time instructors [should] never be allowed together.

Instructors should be treated as part of the organization rather than intruders.

Overall I am OK with the ways things are. A little rough water, but I can get by.

If “Executive Planning” Chair was still there I’d HAVE to say something about preferential treatment and unreasonable influence of “favorites”.

Although the atmosphere is better than it has been, there is still a great need to treat instructors as professionals and not inmates.

As one of the old-timers [I] have seen deputies, resident instructors/staff come and go -- a wonderful learning institution -- most dedicated to excellence--great memories.

Establish processes to promote better communication with program chair and other staff with contract instructors. Also, do more to minimize favoritism and promote fair, objective decisions of program chairs concerning contract instructors.

My sense is that the Program Chairs and support staff exist for their own purposes and view needs of contract instructors as an unpleasant intrusion into their time and space. Also [I] question why we must be “contract instructors” instead of the “adjuncts” we were. “Adjuncts” seems to work for EMI (Emergency Management Institute).

I had persistent personality problems with the program chairman who was regarded as a war-horse.

Overall I have had a very positive experience as an instructor at the NFA.

Now that a career Superintendent is at NFA I anticipate more consistency in the administration of the programs -- long overdue.

Chairperson being out of the real world for so long or never being in it.

Treat contract instructors as customers, not as referred to -- "scum" -- 'E' Building [Administration building] attitude, i.e., dorm rooms, in between sessions, dorm phone numbers, etc.

The NFA needs to stop treating their instructors like second class citizens.

As a new adjunct I was always well-received, well treated and fully supported.

Many adjuncts carry a lot of the load for program chairs making their jobs easier or freeing them up for other duties.

I've always had great rapport with program chairs. Instruction at NFA has always been a positive experience for me.

Instructors should be respected by all NETC employees as professionals, rather than "hired hands" who are at the bottom of the pecking order.

Instructors tend to be pariahs. They are the last concern of the permanent staff.

Being able to be involved as a contract instructor has helped me in both my personal and professional development

NFA fails to roll out the "welcome mat" for adjunct instructors. If you are a first-timer you feel lost.

I thoroughly enjoy coming back to the NFA each time.

Instructors should play more of a part as "team members", rather than looked at as "contractors". They have insights into current problems in the fire service, i.e., management/operations.

NFA does not value Instructors -- we are just low bid, and a number. The treatment is different.

Set minimum acceptable evals. for instructors. If inst. falls below this standard more than 2 times in 5 presentations cut from list.

In addition to student evaluations instructors should evaluate one another.

Failure of NFA administration to take any corrective action regarding instructors who continually receive negative student evaluations.

More formalized evaluation process by program chairs on instructors -- not just a scannable student response [form] that really cannot capture an instructor's presentation and interaction within the classroom.

Need to change so that instructors teach shorter periods (2/3 days), rather than two weeks.

Need more chiefs teaching at the Academy.

Tell me what you want, give me the tools, get the hell out of my way, tell me how I did.

Although I enjoy teaching at the NFA, the total lack of feedback, especially from the program chair, makes it hard to prepare for next time. I only know what the students tell me now.

There is an unwillingness to remove marginal instructors from the availability pool.

The course that I have been teaching (Chemistry of Hazardous Materials) is no longer being offered at NFA. I would like to have the opportunity to be certified for other courses.

Periodic reevaluation and recertification of instructors.

I feel that the perception of the NFA as a quality learning institution for the Fire Service has been seriously eroded in just the last 2 years. Ensure a quality instructor base by initiating immediate feedback from the customer to the instructor via the Program Chair based upon rigid criteria that must be met.

Include content "experts" in delivery/development of technical programs, i.e., industry representatives.

The rear projection OHTs [overhead transparencies] and computer images are too dim.

Programs should be periodically reviewed by instructors who have primary responsibilities in the field in which they instruct -- as opposed to those who have no such responsibilities.

The NFA has its own political agenda. The faculty is great, the content needs an educational boost in many areas!!!

More periodic review of course materials to insure timeliness and up-to-date.

The Academy is a great place to teach but it could be a lot better. It has never reached its potential.

The NFA continues to provide a leadership role in fire service instructional delivery.

Housing support: instructors (team) should, at least, be in same building, class integrity should be maintained (all in same building) to facilitate after class team assignments.

With continued cuts it becomes more and more difficult to operate.

NFA's "new" policy of random housing selection sucks! Instructors should be housed in adjacent areas, apart from students. Students must be housed on the same floor to facilitate team projects, homework interaction, and the overall NFA experience.

Preferred room selection with in-room access to VCR and other course material review capabilities.

Parking spaces for instructors near 'J' Building. Many instructors bring course materials, etc. It is becoming more and more difficult to get a parking place close -- creating a logistics problem.

Housing, as always, is a concern. There is no consideration of the instructor's needs in assigning housing.

Preference in housing.

Some consideration should be granted to contract instructors, such as preferred housing and parking.

The support has always been adequate from a logistical standpoint.

After hours support. Classrooms open late for study sessions. Classrooms available for early set-up (state weekend programs).

Adjunct faculty are lumped together with students for housing. We are "part of the Academy" and should be treated as such.

I think instructors should be given a choice of the room they would like to stay in while on campus.

NFA needs more modern exercise facilities.

Housing considerations for instructors need to be established. We have specific needs that students may not be concerned with (e.g., having a desk in the room, and quiet to be able to adequately prepare for the next day's class!!

We should treat the NFA as a university: focus to develop talent of both students and instructional staff.

I would also prefer to see increased enrollment standards and graduation expectations. Graduation from the National Fire Academy should reflect the highest standards of excellence.

More resources need to be redirected to major goal of education at the facility. Peripheral support could be trimmed such as full student reimbursement, etc.

The contract instructors are the NFA to the students. The NFA should try harder to keep the instructors advised on important Academy issues, trends, future plans in course development, etc., so we can appropriately represent the NFA.

Keep pushing for more deliveries, good content = good courses. Need more exposure in the field. Many can't fit in an NFA on campus delivery.

Conflicting information provided with bid packets and budget office bid awards have the potential to delay payment. Transportation schedule from airport to NFA is not the same as the information sent to instructors. Appears to be a lack of communication in the command system.

Bid process does not allow for the "best" or most qualified instructor; allows for the instructor with the most time.

New courses such as "Target Hazards" not open to bid but for a chosen few.

NFA should be creative in leveling the playing field on bids. They should strive for the best, most qualified instructors -- not just the cheapest.

An objective method that could ensure every instructor has the opportunity to teach at least every two years.

Pay a set rate for daily instructor fees. Maintain a list of adjunct instructors and rotate the assignments in order to broaden the exposure of different instructors. This will keep all adjuncts current with NFA course content and fields of instruction.

The perception of adjunct instructors as "low bid" is somewhat demeaning and the

acceptance of low bid keeps some excellent instructors from applying.

More flexible bid process, i.e., allowing two instructors to bid together and work together -- minimizes apprehension and personality conflicts.

Very hard to get to instruct classes. Almost seems like a preferred bid system for some.

Let instructors bid as a team -- the bidding process is a joke.

Very little communication from the Academy to contractors other than the favorite subject -- procurement!

I don't know a fix but the bid process still seems unfair -- favoring those who live closer or within driving distance to NFA.

Seems to me that there should be a better way of letting instructors know that teaching a pilot does not necessarily mean you are going to be able to instruct that class in the future.

Standardized bidding would be nice -- changes too often. Not sure if travel costs favor local versus distance bidders.

Students admitted to classes that clearly do not meet admission criteria.