Developing a Career Development Guideline for the Executive Staff of the City of Durham (NC)

Fire Department

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Certification Statement

I hereby certify that this paper constitutes my own product, that where the language of others is set forth, quotation marks so indicate, and that proper credit is given where I have used the language, ideas, expressions, or writings of others.

Signed: _________________________________
Abstract

The problem is that the City of Durham Fire Department does not currently have an established career development program for members of the executive staff. The purpose of this applied research project was to develop a career development guideline for use by members of the executive staff. The author used the action research method to answer the following research questions:

1. What career development training curricula exist that can be adopted by the City of Durham Fire Department to enhance executive staff career development?

2. What do similar departments require of their executive staff for career development, both for training and education?

3. What national competencies exist for inclusion in the career development guideline?

A review of current literature was conducted. A questionnaire was developed and distributed to past Executive Fire Officer Program classmates; further research was conducted by personal interviews with fire department and police department personnel from the surrounding geographical area.

Results of the research show that a number of departments, 36.8% of respondents, engage in career development of some form but only 10.5% of the respondents have an established career development guideline. Acceptable programs range from local college courses to state association conferences to the NFPA 1021 *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications*.

Recommendations were made to encourage adoption of the draft career development guideline as well as tailoring existing components of the employee performance appraisal system. This would streamline career development efforts resulting in the department being in compliance with Goal Four of the City of Durham’s Strategic Plan.
Introduction

The City of Durham, North Carolina released its updated Strategic Plan in 2013 identifying five goals, or focus areas. Each department was tasked with developing their own strategic plans that reflect the five goals of the City’s plan. Goal four of the City’s plan is to have a well-managed city (City of Durham, 2013). The City of Durham Fire Department is attempting to meet Goal Four by setting the objective to ensure appropriate training for staff to further the department’s mission by measuring compliance with the goal by reporting, as a workload indicator, the number of chief officers that are engaged in professional development programs (City of Durham Fire Department, 2012).

The problem is the City of Durham Fire Department does not currently have an established career development guideline for members of the executive staff. The assumption is that without having an established career development guideline, members of the executive staff may or may not participate in career development.

The purpose of this applied research project is to develop a career development guideline for the City of Durham Fire Department. The author used the action research method to answer the following research questions:

1. What career development training curricula exist that can be adopted by the City of Durham Fire Department to enhance executive staff career development?

2. What do similar departments require of their executive staff for career development, both for training and education?

3. What national competencies exist for inclusion in the career development guideline?
Background and Significance

The City of Durham Fire Department provides services to over 226,000 citizens within a 100 square mile service area. The Department operates on an annual budget in excess of $20.1 million. The Department provides fire, emergency medical services (EMS), and rescue services with 300 personnel working within four divisions – Suppression, Training, Fire Prevention, and Administration Services.

Fire Protection for the City of Durham is provided by sixteen engine companies, four ladder companies, three squad companies, a mobile support unit, and three battalion chiefs housed within sixteen stations. In addition to fire protection, the Department provides EMS at the Emergency Medical Technician – Intermediate (EMT-I) level, which in North Carolina is one level below the Paramedic Level. The Department also operates various specialty teams, including two hazardous materials units, one technical rescue unit, one water response unit, and one urban search and rescue (USAR) unit (water capable). The Department is a partner agency with two other local municipal departments which respond together as a regional USAR task force.

This applied research project was completed as a requirement of the Executive Fire Officers Program (EFOP). This research project supports the objectives and course goal of the Executive Leadership (EL) course to “develop the ability to conceptualize and employ the key processes used by effective executive-level managers” (Department of Homeland Security [DHS], 2012, p. SM ix), specifically the Unit 2 enabling objective of developing a personal development plan, identifying necessary time frames and actions (DHS, 2012, p. SM 2-1). This research project also relates to and supports the following United States Fire Administration operational objectives: an understanding of the need to transform fire and emergency services
organizations from being reactive to proactive, with an emphasis on leadership development and the value of lifelong learning (DHS, 2013, p. ii).

Literature Review

Why is participating in an executive development (continuous learning) program important? In his book, *Preparing for Success in Fire and Emergency Services Administration*, Fleming (2010) writes that executive development is important for “administrators and other personnel who manage and lead contemporary fire and emergency services organizations facing the unprecedented challenges of a dynamic environment” (Fleming, 2010). Fleming goes on to write that administrators and managers must engage in continuous development to maintain the knowledge and skills required for their current positions as well as for development for future positions (Fleming, 2010). The International City and County Managers Association [ICMA] book *Managing Fire and Rescue Services*, states that fire and emergency response managers continually point to the lack of high quality staff-type development programs as a significant problem in their organizations (ICMA, 2002). In his article Creating and Inspiring Exceptional Fire Department Leaders, Dennis Compton wrote that “competent fire officers are critical to the success of a fire department and that leadership development is the greatest gift we can give to the future of a fire department (Compton, 2013). Kastros (2013) states that “most fire departments do not have the level of leadership training necessary to navigate today’s workplace”.

The literature review was based on the three previously stated research questions. The first research question asked: “What career development training curricula exist that can be adopted by the City of Durham Fire Department to enhance executive staff career development?”
Professional service career development involves much more than the technical skills training and development that is the focus of much of today’s fire service training.

Since their transition to a council-manager form of government in 2004, the City of El Paso, Texas has fostered a culture of education and leadership development. In an effort to expand the programs that were presently offered, the city partnered with the University of Texas at El Paso [UTEP] to develop customized leadership programs (City of El Paso, 2006). The High Performing Organization Professional Development Program is offered to mid-level managers and covers topics such as communications, organizational development, and negotiation and conflict. The program is administered utilizing tenured UTEP professors. The program is organized in a similar manner to college courses and attendees are awarded college credits (City of El Paso, 2006).

Partnering with the University of Kansas Public Management Center [KU PMC], the City of Olathe, Kansas developed the Supervisory Leadership Training program (City of Olathe, 2010). The program was designed to integrate its vision, values, mission, and organizational performance objectives into the leadership roles of all levels of the organization. KU PMC customized the curriculum to reflect organizational priorities and to provide an evaluation of the program (City of Olathe, 2010). According to the report *Creating a Successful Supervisory Leadership Program*, as a result of the program there was an improvement in the developmental areas of: teamwork, collaboration, communication, leadership, and organizational performance (City of Olathe, 2010).

The Officer Development Handbook (International Association of Fire Chiefs [IAFC], 2010) is not a curriculum however it does provide members of the fire service information that
develops “individuals to plan a systematic program of development for their professional service
career”, streamlining the process for individual professional development (IAFC, 2010).

The United States Fire Administrations program Fire and Emergency Services Higher
Education [FESHE] model is a network of emergency services-related education and training
providers whose 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 a
profession to reduce loss of life and property from fire and other hazards” (DHS, 2008). During
an annual FESHE conference, representatives created the National Professional Development
Matrix [NPDM] that brings the National Professional Development Model from concept to
reality (DHS, 2008).

The Blueprint for Leadership Pipeline (City of Durham, 2007) is a resource available to
City of Durham employees that consolidates available training opportunities to prepare the
employee to move into leadership responsibilities within the organization. Former City of
Durham Deputy City Manager Ted Voorhees wrote in PM Magazine that the blueprint shows
employees how they can take charge of their own careers and professional development
(Voorhees, 2007). The blueprint document contains seven sections, each containing descriptions
and other information about specific programs to include the target audience and the typical time
frame for the specific program (City of Durham, 2007). Programs are offered periodically
throughout the year with notifications and application deadline information delivered via e-mail
to all city employees.

The University of North Carolina at Charlotte [UNCC] offers a professional development
certificate program designed for company officers, chief officers, and those who aspire to
leadership positions. The Fire and Rescue Management Institute was developed to address
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leadership and management issues related to workforce retention, diversity, impact of sociological events, and strategic planning (UNCC, 2009).

The Fire and Rescue Management Institute uses a modular approach to address the following four areas of management and leadership development: Leadership and Team Building, Management Skills and Personnel Management, Strategic Planning, and Communications Skills. The opportunity to network with other fire service personnel from around the Southeast region is mentioned as an additional benefit to the certificate program (UNCC, 2009).

Research question two asked: “What do similar departments require of their executive staff for career development, both training and education?”

According to the Chapel Hill Fire Department Career Development Requirements, the rank of Battalion Chief requires training that includes 36 hours of incident command training, IFSAC Level III Fire Officer, North Carolina Level II Fire Instructor and Level II Fire Inspector. The educational requirements for the rank of Battalion Chief are either 32 hours of college credits (15 of which must be in fire or emergency sciences) or possess an Associates or Bachelor’s degree (Town of Chapel Hill, 2011). During a phone interview, Deputy Chief Robert Bosworth indicated that the department is discussing the potential of adding additional requirements for the remainder of the executive staff as well as adding requirements for continuous learning and training that will build on current requirements (R. Bosworth, personal communication, 14 May 2013).

The City of Raleigh Fire Department requires an associate’s degree or higher for the rank of Battalion Chief and higher. Beginning in July of 2017, the rank of Division Chief will require a bachelor’s degree (City of Raleigh Fire Department, 2010). Battalion Chief Frank McLaurin,
assigned to the Training Division, stated during a phone interview that there are no current requirements regarding continuous training or development once a member has been promoted to Battalion Chief (F. McLaurin, personal communication, 14 May 2013).

Members of the Prince Georges County Volunteer Fire Department desiring a Chief Officer position are required to submit a request for Officer Certification including photocopies of certificates for: Fire Officer II, National Incident Management courses I-800 and I-300 as well as proof of a minimum of 12 hours of continuing education (Prince George’s County Fire Commission, 2010).

The City of Charlotte Fire Department, the largest department in North Carolina, does not require members of the executive staff to participate in professional/career development (M. Clumpner, personal communication, 15 June 2013). Captain Clumpner went on to say that there is ongoing discussion within the command staff about the importance of professional and career development and that the department is in the beginning phases of implementing a development program.

A phone interview with Sergeant Nick Snyder of the City of Durham Police Department Training Division was conducted to provide a perspective from outside the fire service. Snyder stated that the police department does indeed require members of the executive staff to complete the departments’ leadership academy. The course work is police-centric yet provides attendees with the knowledge and skills to effectively lead and manage personnel within their scope of authority (N. Snyder, personal communication, 15 June 2013). In addition to the required leadership academy, executive staff members are encouraged to participate in professional career development on their own utilizing the City of Durham Leadership Pipeline as well as other
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The third and final research question asked: “What national competencies exist for inclusion in a career development guideline?” Fleming (2010), the ICMA (2002), and Bruegmann (2009) wrote that the training and education requirements for the fire service have increased and there is an increased emphasis on certification, credentialing, and professional designations. Certification, credentialing, and professional designation should rely on standardized technical competencies. The National Fire Protection Association [NFPA] and the Center for Public Safety Excellence [CPSE] are two sources for information related to standardized national competencies.

Section 1.1 of NFPA 1021, Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications states that “the standard shall identify the minimum job performance requirements necessary to perform the duties of a fire officer and specifically identify four levels of progression, Fire Officer I-IV” (NFPA, 2008a). Each level of fire officer addressed within the standard covers the required knowledge, skills, and abilities in areas including human resource management, community and government relations, administration, inspections and investigations, emergency service delivery, and health and safety (NFPA, 2008a).

NFPA 1026, Standard for Incident Management Personnel Professional Qualifications section 1.1 states that the “standard shall identify the minimum job performance requirements for personnel performing roles within an all-hazard incident management system” (NFPA, 2008b). The standard covers the required knowledge, skills, and abilities for fire service personnel to be certified and ultimately credentialed to operate in specific functional positions within an incident
management system during an incident or event that is consistent and compatible with the National Incident Management System [NIMS] (NFPA, 2008b).

Professional designation is an area of career development that is not necessarily based on technical competencies rather it is based on validation of efforts to include education, technical competence, independent research, and credentials. Two of the most recognizable fire service professional designations are Executive Fire Officer (EFO) and Chief Fire Officer (CFO). The EFO program is offered by the United States Fire Administration on the campus of the National Fire Academy. According to their brochure, the Center for Public Safety Excellence [CPSE] created the Chief Fire Officer designation to recognize chief fire officers who have demonstrated excellence and outstanding achievement throughout their careers (CPSE, No Date). CPSE states that the CFO is the industry’s leading credentialing system, establishing the industry-wide benchmark for measuring job performance. The CPSE brochure includes limited information for the Commission on Professional Credentialing whose mission is to assist in the professional development of emergency services personnel by providing guidance for career planning (CPSE, No Date).

Findings from the literature review influenced the researcher by validating his concerns about the lack of an existing program within the department. The researcher also found that there were indeed resources available that the City of Durham Fire Department could use as guides to establish their own career development guideline for use by members of the executive staff for career development.

Procedures

The purpose of this research was to develop a guideline for the City of Durham Fire Department to be utilized by members of the executive staff to aid in planning career and
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professional development. The literature review began on the campus of the National Fire Academy by utilizing the Learning Resource Center (LRC) as well as a preliminary internet search using the Bing search engine. Further literature review was conducted at the Durham Technical Community College Northern Durham Campus Library and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Government Knapp Library. Further web based searches were conducted using both Bing and Google search engines.

The author developed a questionnaire (Appendix A) using the web-based tool Survey Monkey. The questionnaire was sent via email to fellow EFO students using class rosters from previous EFO courses.

In addition to the questionnaire, this author also directly contacted members of local and regional fire departments as well as the training staff for the City of Durham Police Department directly and conducted phone interviews. The phone interviews were conducted to obtain information that is not readily available via the internet. The phone interview questions are located in Appendix B.

This author identified one potential limitation for this research project. While there was an abundance of literature proclaiming the importance of participating in career and professional development programs, very little information was readily available on the content of specific programs, usually due to the proprietary nature of the program.

Results

The Survey Monkey web link to the questionnaire was sent via email to previous EFO course classmates for a total of 86 possible respondents. The questionnaire link was available May 1st - 31st, 2013 with a reminder message sent on the 24th of May asking those who had not participated in the questionnaire to please do so by the 31st of May. A total of 38 responses were
collected resulting in a 44% response rate. Question one asked the respondent to select one of
the following that best described their department or agency: volunteer/paid-on-call,
combination, or paid/career. Twenty-four (63.2%) of the respondents indicated they were
members of a paid/career department, and fourteen (36.8%) were from a combination
department. None of the respondents indicated that they were members of a volunteer agency.

Question two asked: “What is the size of your department?” Twenty-one (55.3%)
respondents indicated that their department was smaller than 100 members, eight (21.1%)
indicated that they were members of a department that had between 100 and 200 members and
another eight (21.1%) were members of departments that exceed 400 members. One (2.6%)
respondent indicated that they were a member of a department that has between 201 and 400
members.

When asked “does your department or agency have an established career development
plan for the executive staff (chief officers or equivalent)?”, four (10.5%) respondents answered
yes indicating that they had an established career development plan for the executive staff. The
remaining thirty-four (89.5%) respondents answered no indicating that they do not have an
established career development plan for members of the executive staff.

Question four was a follow-up to the previous question. It asked the respondents who
indicated that they had an established career development plan for the executive staff if their plan
followed an established curriculum such as Fire Officer I utilizing NFPA 1021, *Standard for
Fire Officer Professional Qualifications*. Three of the respondents indicated that their agencies
plan follows the NFPA 1021 standard. One of the four respondents indicated that even though
they had an established plan, the plan did not follow a particular curriculum.
Question five asked: “Does your department require formal education to be considered for promotion to a chief officer rank?” Twenty-one (55.3%) respondents indicated that their department requires formal education while seventeen (44.7%) respondents indicated that their departments do not require formal education to be considered for promotion to a chief officer’s rank.

Question six was a follow-up to question five and asked those respondents who require formal education to be considered for promotion to indicate what level of formal education was required for each of the chief officer positions. Ten (45%) respondents indicated that for the rank of battalion chief or equivalent, a bachelor degree was required while seven (32%) respondents indicated that an associate degree was required. Two (9%) respondents indicated that some combination of experience and education was required. Three (13%) respondents indicated that no formal requirement existed for the rank of battalion chief but did have requirements for bachelor degrees for higher ranks. Three (13%) respondents indicated that in addition to the requirement for battalion chief, ranks above battalion chief required graduate level degrees. One (4%) respondent indicated that their department had preferred educational criteria based on the opinion of their labor attorneys indicating that “required” educational levels may lead to discrimination issues.

Question seven of the questionnaire asked: “Does your department or agency require leadership and management training for chief officers?” Twenty-four (63.2%) respondents answered no, while fourteen (36.8%) indicated that their agency requires leadership and management training of some variety for chief officers.
Question eight was a follow-up to question seven and asked the respondents to indicate the type of leadership and management training that was required for chief officers. The fourteen responses have been condensed into the following:

- National Fire Academy Leadership Courses
- Position Credentialing (L-380, L-480)
- State Fire Chiefs Association Conferences/Seminars
- Leadership and Management training offered at Universities

The respondents indicated that in addition to the Executive Fire Officer program, other National Fire Academy leadership training courses were desirable. Respondents also indicated that their departments require position specific training such as L-380: Fire Line Leadership and L-480: Organizational Leadership for Command and General Staff for chief officers. Two respondents indicated leadership programs offered through local universities were required for their departments. Thirteen of the respondents indicated that attending conferences and seminars hosted by Fire Chiefs Associations provided all or part of the required leadership and management training.

Discussion

The problem addressed in this research project is that the City of Durham Fire Department does not have an established career development plan for the members of the executive staff. Research question one asked “What career development training curricula exist that can be adopted by the City of Durham Fire Department to enhance executive staff career development?” Both the literature review and the research identified the importance of having an established career development guideline/program. The literature review provided general information on topics that a career development plan should include, such as the IAFCs National
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Professional Development Matrix as well as utilizing the Officer Development Handbook (IAFC, 2010).

Partnering with a local university or college to develop a career development guideline is an option for the City of Durham Fire Department. The City of El Paso (2006) and City of Olathe, Kansas (2010) are two examples of partnering with a local university to assist with developing programs to provide career development training to their employees. El Paso partnered with the University of Texas at El Paso to establish the High Performing Organization Program (City of El Paso, 2006). The High Performing Organization Program appears to be similar in design and content to the City of Durham’s Blueprint for Leadership Pipeline.

The City of Olathe, Kansas partnered with the University of Kansas Public Management Center to design, deliver, and evaluate their Supervisory Leadership Training program (City of Olathe, 2010). The contents of the program appear to be similar to other leadership programs, but what set this particular program apart was the fact that an evaluation on the effectiveness of the program was conducted. All categories surveyed (teamwork, collaboration, communication, leadership, and organizational performance) showed a minimum of 43% improvement for all attendees (City of Olathe, 2010). Including an evaluation mechanism would provide data supporting a career development guideline.

The Fire and Rescue Management Institute offered by the University of North Carolina at Charlotte is a university sponsored professional development certificate program that should be considered for inclusion in the City of Durham Fire Department career development guideline. Designed for company officers, chief officers, and future leaders of the fire service, the program addresses the four areas of leadership and managerial skills development for: leadership and team building, management skills and personnel management, strategic planning, and
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communication skills (UNCC, 2006). The program consists of four four day sessions over a period of four months and currently (school year 13-14) costs $1,330. The time commitment and program costs would be a limiting factor for members of the fire department during the current economical situation.

Two elements of the City of Durham’s Blueprint for Leadership Pipeline (City of Durham, 2007) should be considered for inclusion in the fire departments career development guideline. The two elements that should be considered are the Leadership Academy and the Genuine (Frontline) Leadership program. The Leadership Academy focuses on the knowledge and skills required to lead in higher level positions within the organization. Specific topics covered include: Multi-rater feedback, individualized development plans, interdepartmental relationships and team building, and business coaching (City of Durham, 2007). Genuine (Frontline) Leadership is designed to provide core knowledge and skills for supervisors and combines general skills and principles of supervision with specific information about issues in the City of Durham (City of Durham, 2007). Both programs are targeted towards supervisors, managers, and administrators. The leadership Academy requires two days a month for eight months while the Genuine (Frontline) Leadership course requires eleven half-day sessions. Other than the time required, these courses are offered at no cost to the employee and minimal impact to the department.

Three of the fourteen research questionnaire respondents who indicted requiring career and professional development indicated that they utilize state fire association conferences and seminars as the bulk of their career development. ICMA (2002) and Fleming (2010) discuss the availability of development opportunities at national conferences, such as FRI, that host development courses such as the Chief Officers Leadership Symposium. National and state
conferences can be a good choice for short term development goals; however, the cost of attending the conference can be a deterrent in the current economic situation faced by many departments and personnel.

Questions three, four, and seven of the questionnaire were designed to address research question two: “What do similar departments require of their executive staff for career development, both training and education?” Of the 38 respondents, only one is comparable to the City of Durham Fire Department when compared by number of personnel. Eight departments (21%) were larger and twenty-nine (76%) were smaller. Fourteen (36.8%) of the respondents indicated that their agency requires some type of leadership and management training for chief officers. Four (10.5%) of the respondents indicated that their department has an established program. Of the departments that have an established program, one is larger than the City of Durham Fire Department, and the other three are smaller. The larger department does not follow a specific curriculum for career development while the other three indicated that they follow the Fire Officer Level I-IV as set by NFPA 1021 *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications*. The remaining ten departments indicated that their required career development is obtained through one of the four following categories: National Fire Academy leadership courses, position specific credentialing, state association conferences and seminars, or leadership and management training courses offered through universities or colleges.

In comparison, none of the fire departments contacted by the researcher during phone interviews have an established career development program. All of the agencies indicated that it was important to have an established career development program and that they hoped to adopt something at some point in the future. The only agency that was contacted during the research phase that had an established program was the City of Durham Police Department. According
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to Snyder, the police departments Leadership Academy was developed to address very specific issues faced by the police command staff that were not addressed by the City of Durham’s Blueprint for Leadership Pipeline (N. Snyder, personal communication, 15 June 2013).

The results of research question two surprised the researcher in that there are so few departments that require career development beyond initial requirements for promotion. The literature indicated that there is a need for professional development and was first identified at least as far back as 1966 during the first Wingspread Conference (Bruegman, 2009; IAFC, 2010).

The ICMA book *Managing Fire and Rescue Services* (ICMA, 2002) states that the content of career development plans is very important and requires careful planning. Research question three asked “What national competencies exist for inclusion in the career development plan?” Bruegman (2009), Fleming (2010), and the IAFC (2010) all recognize NFPA 1021 *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications* as the nationally recognized standard for fire officer career development. The standard identifies the minimum job performance requirements necessary to perform the duties expected of a fire officer and specifically identifies four levels of progression, Fire Officer I-IV (NFPA, 2008a). Three of the four research respondents that indicated having an established career development program indicated that their agency utilizes the NFPA 1021 standard and that the chief officers were expected to obtain the Fire Officer III certification and would prefer Fire Officer IV. Bosworth and McLaurin both stated that if and when their respective departments adopt a career development program, the programs would be based on the competencies within NFPA 1021 (R. Bosworth, personal communication, 14 May 2013; F. McLaurin, personal communication, 14 May 2013).
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Today’s fire service has shifted from a traditional service delivery model of responding to fires and emergency medical emergencies to that of an all-hazard response agency. Neither the referenced literature nor the research questionnaire respondents identified NFPA 1026, *Standard for Incident Management Personnel Professional Qualifications* as a source of competencies to be included in a career development plan. The standard identifies the minimum job performance requirements for personnel performing roles within an all-hazard incident management system (NFPA, 2008b).

Bruegman (2009), Fleming (2010), the IAFC (2010), and the ICMA (2002) all mention the National Fire Academy/Emergency Management Institute as an excellent source of career and professional development courses. Seven of the research respondents indicated that their agency utilizes courses offered through the National Fire Academy for career and professional development. The courses that these respondents identified include all of the leadership courses as well as the Executive Fire Officer (EFO) program. Fleming touts the EFO program as the flagship National Fire Academy program designed to prepare the next generation of fire officers (Fleming, 2010). The Chief of the Durham Fire Department is an alumnus of the EFO program and the department has three other chief officers enrolled.

Although the Center for Public Safety Excellences Chief Fire Officer designation program is not considered a training or educational competency standard, a chief fire officer awarded the CFO designation has demonstrated that their career and professional development plan has validated that the chief fire officer possess the educational and technical competencies required of today’s fire service leaders (CPSE, No Date). The cost associated with the CFO designation is potentially a limiting factor during these current economic times for individuals as well as departments.
The results of the original research and information obtained during the literature review clearly demonstrate the importance of career and professional development for the individual member of the command staff. More importantly, the results also clearly demonstrate the importance of career and professional development to ensure qualified personnel are in line to assume positions of leadership and management within the department as well as the fire service.

Recommendation

The problem, as previously stated, is that the City of Durham Fire Department does not have an established career development plan for members of the executive staff. The assumption is that this lack of a career development plan will result in members of the executive staff either not participating in career development or not being aware of appropriate career development resources, ultimately resulting in the departments reportable work-load indicators percentages being lower than expected or not accurately representing the number of members of the executive staff participating in some form of career development. Based on information obtained during the literature review and the results of the original research, the following recommendations are suggested to the City of Durham Fire Department for consideration:

1. Adopt the draft career development guideline (Appendix C). As part of the guideline adoption process, perhaps during a staff meeting, members of the executive staff will review the guideline and offer suggestions so that the final adopted guideline is comprehensive and includes any development programs the researcher failed to identify and include. The guideline adoption would be phased in over a period of one year to correspond with the employee’s annual performance evaluation.
2. Training shall be conducted on the changes to the existing process of completing the Individual Development Plan so that members of the executive staff become familiar with the recommended format of the three tiers and what is to be included in each tier.

In conclusion, this research project supports the premise that utilizing a career development guideline is an important component of a fire officer’s career and professional development by providing a path for the career development journey. This research project also verified that the stated research problem was valid and that the stated purpose of developing a career development guideline can be accomplished by implementing the noted recommendations.
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Appendix A: Survey Monkey Questionnaire

EFO Executive Leadership ARP

Q1. Select one of the following that best describes your department or agency:

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Q2. What is the size of your department/agency?

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Q3. Does your department/agency have an established career development plan for the executive staff (chief officers or equivalent)?

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Q4. If you answered "Yes" for question 3, does the development plan follow an established curriculum such as Fire officer I utilizing NFPA 1021 Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications? Please indicate what curriculum you follow.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>skipped question</td>
<td>34</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Q5. Does your department require formal education to be considered for promotion to a chief officer rank?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>55.3%</td>
<td>21</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>44.7%</td>
<td>17</td>
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</table>

Q6. If you answered "Yes" for question 5, please indicate the level of education that is required for each chief officer position (example: Bachelor’s degree for Battalion Chief etc.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>skipped question</td>
<td>14</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Q7. Does your department/agency require leadership and management training for the chief officers?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>36.8%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>63.2%</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q8. If you answered "Yes" for question 7, please describe the required training. An example would be Frontline Leadership.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>answered question</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skipped question</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B: Phone Interview Questions and Contacts

1. Does your department have an established career development program or guideline for use by the members of the executive staff? (executive staff, for this project's purpose is considered Battalion Chief, or equivalent, or higher) If “no” go to question 3.

2. Is your department’s career development program or guideline based on any standard? (such as NFPA 1021).

3. Since your department does not have an established career development program or guideline, what is required of members of the executive staff, if anything?

4. Are you aware of any initiatives being discussed to move towards a formalized career development program or guideline?

Robert Bosworth
Deputy Chief, Emergency Management Coordinator
Town of Chapel Hill Fire Department

Mike Clumpner
Captain, Rescue and Special Operations
City of Charlotte Fire Department

Frank McLaurin
Battalion Chief, Training Center Coordinator
City of Raleigh Fire Department

Nick Snyder
Sergeant, Training Division
City of Durham Police Department
Appendix C: Draft Career Development Guideline for the Executive Staff

I. Purpose

To establish a career development guideline for members of the City of Durham Fire Department serving within the executive staff.

II. Discussion

Career and professional development is a shared responsibility by the organization and personnel within the organization. The organization’s responsibility lies in ensuring that personnel within the executive staff are aware of available programs and supporting the employee in any way feasible (financial support, time off to attend etc.). The employee’s responsibility is to utilize this guideline and to plan for their career and professional development. Utilizing the guideline enables the employee to plan for career and professional development for the short term, mid-range, and long term goal periods efficiently and effectively. The guideline enables the organization to report the number of chief officers engaged in career and professional development as established in the City of Durham Fire Department Strategic Plan.

III. Definitions

Executive Staff – Members of the City of Durham Fire Department serving in the ranks of Battalion Chief, Assistant Chief, Deputy Chief, and Chief of Department.

Individual Development Plan (IDP) – Form currently utilized during the annual performance evaluation to indicate a member’s current and future career plans by establishing goals and identifying the resources and barriers to successfully complete the goal.
IV. Responsibility

**Fire Chief** – Shall be responsible for the consistent application and implementation of this policy.

**Deputy Chief** – Shall be responsible for the consistent application and implementation of this policy.

**Assistant Chief(s)** – Shall be responsible for the consistent application and implementation of this policy.

**Operations Division Battalion Chiefs** – Shall be responsible for the consistent application and implementation of this policy.

V. Procedure

A. Each member will produce an Individual Development Plan [IDP] prior to the members’ annual performance evaluation. The IDP will contain a minimum of three developmental goals. Each of the developmental goals represents a separate tier (section VI) of the career development guideline. Additional developmental goals are encouraged.

B. The member and their supervisor will discuss the IDP during the annual performance evaluation meeting to ensure compliance with this guideline. Once the IDP is approved, one copy will be returned to the member and one copy will be included with the annual evaluation.

VI. IDP Tiers

A. Tier I - Long-term planning goal (10 year goal). One of the following must be included on the IDP (or approved alternative):

- Executive Fire Officer Program (EFO)
- Designation as a Chief Fire Officer (CFO)
- Master’s Degree (MA, MS, MPA, MBA etc.)
- Doctoral Degree (PhD in any field of study, preferred related to fire service)

B. Tier II – Mid-term planning goal (2-5 year goal). One of the following must be included on the IDP (or approved alternative):
• Chief Officer Leadership Symposium – Offered through the IAFC during the FRI Conference.
• General Staff Position Credential – examples include: Operations Section Chief, Planning Section Chief, and Logistics Section Chief.
• Fire and Rescue Management Institute.
• City of Durham Leadership Academy
• Fire Officer II, III, or IV.

C. Tier III – Short-term planning goal (completed during the upcoming evaluation period). One of the following must be included on the IDP:

• City Managers Leadership Symposium
• Program from the Blueprint for Leadership Pipeline
• NIMS position specific credentialing – examples include Task Force/Strike Team Leader, Division/Group Supervisor, Resource Unit Leader, or Medical Unit Leader.
Developing a career development guideline

Appendix D: Individual Development Plan (Blank Form)

**Individual Development Plan (IDP)**
Additional Information: [IDP Guidelines](#)

Employees are responsible for their own career development, with support from supervisors and department management. Employees should use the IDP to map out career goals with the City and to plan action steps for achieving those goals. Supervisors should support employees in seeking professional advancement.

It is important for both employees and management to look for alternative means for employee development that include continuous skills mastery, special projects and assignments, leadership opportunities, and formal education and/or specialized training.

**Background Information**
Use this section to capture your current status and future goals. This will form the foundation for setting your development goals.

**Employee Information:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employee ID:</th>
<th>First Name:</th>
<th>Last Name:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department:</th>
<th>Division:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Career Goals:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current</th>
<th>Future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Strengths and Development:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of Strength</th>
<th>Areas of Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Would you like to list your Peoplemap Type:  
* Yes  ○ No

(Optional)

**People Map Type:**

○ People-Task ○ Leader-Task ○ Leader - People

○ Leader - Free Spirit ○ People - Free Spirit ○ Task - Free Spirit
When planning action steps, think broadly - most development comes from challenging assignments, feedback, mentors, role-models, and informal learning. Consider volunteering for task teams or stretch assignments. Ask for feedback from your supervisor or co-workers. Classes may also be helpful. Ask yourself "What do I need to learn to improve and advance?" Then you can decide the best way to learn the knowledge or skills. You may wish to consult the Blueprint for the Leadership Pipeline and the City of Durham's Training Catalog for ideas.

**Development Goals**

Use this section to identify your development goal(s), action steps to achieve your goals, anticipated obstacles and solutions, resources, or assistance you will need, target date of completion and the actual date of completion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development Goal:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Action Steps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anticipated Obstacles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
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</table>

<table>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anticipated Obstacles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Plan Approvals

Review your IDP at your coaching session and annual performance review. Update your IDP each year when you update your performance standards.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employee Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Supervisor Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>