



IAFC Candidate Questions– 2018 Election

Chief Nathan Trauernicht, UC Davis (California) Fire Department

1. What should be done to increase/encourage collaboration between career, combination and volunteer fire departments?

I believe that the most important thing that we can do to address collaboration between all fire and emergency service agencies is to shift our primary focus and discussions to the areas that bring us together, issues that are common, and use those as a platform to build stronger relationships.

We must also underscore, and be regularly reminded, of the fact that all communities face different realities. The fire service has a responsibility to understand risk, recommend deployment and staffing that matches the risk, but ultimately it is our communities that make the decision on how much they are willing to spend - and thus how much risk they are willing to accept. As leaders in the fire service we cannot, and should not, base the perceived “value” of an organization on a community’s ability to fund its fire department. Instead, let’s support them by offering resources and encouragement that will help them maximize their effectiveness, keep their firefighters and citizens as safe as possible, within their own situation.

The IAFC can continue to add focus to this topic. We can support marketing and programs that reinforce the need for our industry to recognize, understand, and respect the role that each of us play. By my estimate the VCOS Section of the IAFC proves on a very regular basis that department type you represent doesn’t degrade work product or ability to make great things happen. They have produced, and continue to produce, some of the most exceptional work product that has come out of the Association.

Making sure that committees and taskforces established by the IAFC have a good mix of department types can only further help to develop and foster positive relationships and understanding.

Again, The IAFC’s role in encouraging collaboration is by modeling the way through our own partnerships, initiatives, and programs in reaffirming our commitment to serve chief officers of today and tomorrow working toward shared goals. Ultimately what makes us different makes us better, and adds value and diversity of thought to our conversations and decisions. It’s proof that together we can accomplish more!

2. What are your thoughts on the growing behavioral health issues in the fire service and how do you propose to deal with it?

I would submit that there isn’t a growing behavioral health issue in the fire service. It has been there for a very long time!!! What has changed is our nation’s (society’s) perception around the stigma that has come with mental health issues, treatment, and on-going support. With that

change in perception has come an important level of problem recognition. PTSD, depression, anxiety, substance abuse can affect anyone, but when it's a first responder there are circumstances that make it unique.

Critical to making a difference in mental health issues for firefighters is:

- 1) Accessibility to support and services. From the perspective of availability, it should be EASY for firefighters to access help from a resource with as few barriers as possible.
- 2) Peer training and support tools that include: self-assessments, confidentiality, and that highlight the unique needs that can be associated with responders in crisis.
- 3) Education and outreach including: prevention, awareness, intervention strategies, and follow-up support services through after-care programs.
- 4) Continual reinforcement that the fire service culture, and stance, on behavioral health is that IT'S OK TO ASK FOR HELP! It's not a sign of weakness nor is it an indication of your skill at the job. It is real for millions of people and our firefighters are NEVER ALONE. It's our job to make sure they never feel that way, and that they understand it's not "all in your head". It's real, and there are real ways we can make a difference for them.
- 5) Referral to professional treatment by people who understand our job and what we face every day that no other profession does.

We are fortunate that a number of fire service groups are making big strides in support of this issue. In coming years, the IAFC should seek to increase its efforts and partnerships to play a leading role in the long-term solution.

3. How would you at a national level, educate the media and public that the fire service is now the "all-risk" response to any emergency?

At the National level there are a few important targets we should focus on:

- 1) National news media: The IAFC should initiate a campaign to proactively introduce the Association as a resource for subject matter experts to national news outlets. We should build relationships with news directors at those same outlets and feed them information on a regular basis about the facts surrounding the fire service and our value/service to communities. We should also be sure to reach-out to investigative reporting shows offering our members as subject matter experts when doing stories on safety related products and services.
- 2) Congressional representatives: The IAFC needs to review the addition of resources for more in-person opportunities to tell our story to top elected officials. CFSI cannot be the only time each year we (a giant group of Chiefs) work to foster congressional relationships. This effort should include templates distributed monthly describing a contemporary issue in our industry that any Chief can use and send to their representatives. This both strengthens relationships, creates an on-going dialogue, and establishes IAFC members as the go-to experts to discuss all-risk issues.
- 3) Mass market entertainment media: This is the area that probably works against us most. We need to proactively engage with movie and TV program producers on fire service related programming and to provide options/ideas to them that better represent the breadth,

scope, and nature of what we offer our communities. Our all-risk nature is just as compelling and interesting as the flashy fire stuff.

- 4) Building coalitions: with allied groups using a unified message describing what it means to be an “all-risk” fire and emergency services agency. We shouldn’t undertake these efforts alone, many of our existing partners also stand to benefit from elevating the all-risk discussion. Together we accomplish more!
- 5) Create and market tool-kits: for departments to use that allow them to reinforce our national messaging at the state and local level with media and elected officials. Things like building our own press packages using existing IAFC resources that currently support conferences and events. Providing press releases, a library of B-roll video, fully produced stories on relevant topics, talking points for use with local elected officials, templates for community outreach campaigns. There are so many ways the IAFC could play a more significant role!

4. What would you do to foster a more diverse and inclusive IAFC?

The IAFC has been working to establish the priority of promoting/fostering diversity and inclusion in for a long time, but the focus has certainly sharpened in recent years. The proof: the diversity breakfast has become a must attend event for Association leadership, the Human Relations Committee and VCOS are both pushing out fantastic materials to help Chiefs create and foster inclusiveness in their organizations, the SHS Section has taken the lead on anti-bullying, and under the leadership of President Sinclair myself and Chief John Butler from Howard County Maryland were tasked with the creation and implementation the IAFC Diversity Executive Leadership Program (iDELP) the boldest and most ambitious representation of the Association’s commitment to the cause thus far.

But there is more we can do. African Americans make up 7.2 percent of the fire service's 295,600 uniformed members, while 9.4 percent are Hispanic and women account for only 3.8 percent, according to statistics compiled by the National Fire Protection Association between 2008 and 2012.

How do we make the change? We know that at its most fundamental level that our job needs to be seen as an attainable opportunity for underrepresented groups in our communities to make a real difference. For fire departments that want to diversify their ranks, one critical component of the solution is to focus on efforts that develop future firefighters when they are young and who are local.

Crews regularly having lunch at elementary schools, fire explorer or cadet programs for junior high, and internships for high school students offer examples of opportunities to interact with fire personnel in a more person-to-person environment and learn about the jobs of firefighters. It sets the stage for recognizing our career as a real opportunity; it’s at this point we need to be prepared to support individuals with resources to help make sure they can afford to achieve any pre-employment requirements that may be in place. (You probably need to make sure that you look at your current requirements to see if they are part of the problem of limiting potential candidates who can’t afford those certifications on their own.)

For years I have been a believer that fire stations should be made a community destination, not simply a fixture. The UC Davis Fire Department has made that a reality by offering a community fitness class called Fit for Fire at our station, we teach CPR several times a month out of our station, we have and are creating spaces around our station to eat, relax, or study, and we have partnered with our local community college district for our firefighters to teach EMT certification classes to community members. These examples support our mission of providing services that promote well-being, our goal of creating a community of everyday heroes, and our aspiration of being a place where the community gathers, feels welcome, and is able to establish personal relationships and first-hand experiences with our employees.

Thanks to our student firefighter program and student EMT program, that pull candidates from the diverse enrollment of the university, we have become an employment pipeline not only for our own organization but those across the state of California looking to be more reflective of the communities they serve.

We need to stop making excuses about why diverse groups of underrepresented applicants don't show up, and instead get out into the community and engage them as fellow community members. Let's teach them about the job that we love, and create inclusive/welcoming fire station environments to work in.

5. What role does the IAFC play in incorporating technology into the fire service?

The internet of things, autonomous transportation, augmented reality, FirstNet, smart "stuff". Technologies are emerging faster than our industry, and others, can keep pace with. The IAFC plays an important role in bringing technology into the fire service by providing guidance during product development, working with the tech industry to find opportunities for application to our daily work, and in helping to create the standards by which technology is used safely within our communities. Integrating emerging technologies into the fire service will require a major cultural shift in every aspect of our work. Firefighters are just starting to feel and grasp the potential of the impact real-time data will provide about incidents.

The IAFC should assemble a group of fire service leaders with tech leaders to build a standing committee that monitors innovations that are under development and also on the near horizon. A group that contemplates the impact of technology on the fire service, debates policy of how it is used, amasses education for implementation, and communicates the logistical impact of use. They should also be looking for barriers to using some advanced technology including those that are cultural, economic, and organizational as they provide recommendations for us to deploy the latest and great gadgets. The group work to understand and create a framework for collecting, analyzing, and using the massive amount of data that will be gathered by our immersive technology world.

It is not unimaginable that one day your IT division will be as large as your prevention, logistics, special ops, or administrative support divisions. The IAFC must not only be at the ready to help Fire Chiefs navigate these changes, but must be on the front-end helping to guide development,

6. How have you incorporated community risk reduction into the planning, structure and operations of your department? How would you advocate for community risk reduction as an IAFC officer?

As we work to become an accredited fire and emergency services agency through CPSE/CFAI, the UC Davis Fire Department has adopted the CRR framework developed by Vision 20/20. Below are some examples of what we are doing in each of the key areas:

1) Advocacy

On a college campus with over 50,000 students staff and faculty, and billions of dollars in research underway, we are constantly developing tools and information materials that can be used when advocating for more resources to devote to fire and injury prevention. This includes on-going community risk assessment, standards of cover, strategic planning, and delivering services that minimize risk as much as possible. We use data as the core of our advocacy initiatives.

2) Outreach and Education

Our department understands our community/demographic base is college students. Thus, we focus our efforts, activities, and materials on those that meet their preferred engagement criteria. Examples of our unique engagement are: entertaining video and animated safety messages, giving away t-shirts instead of stickers and plastic helmets to extend our brand/messaging over their time at the university and beyond, and integrating students as employees in the day-to-day operations of our organization.

3) Culture

Our department, perhaps more so than others, has a primarily prehospital-care call volume. Recognizing that, and that a great deal of our value relies on preventing emergencies, we have adopted a mission that charters us to provide services that “support community well-being”. This steps far beyond the traditional stated mission of many fire departments and establishes our role as a key component to promoting a healthy community. Additional factors that influence our culture of outreach and education involves both serving a major academic institution and recognizing that our over 36,000 students have parents who count on us to not only help their kids if they need us, but also to give them as many resources as possible to keep them from needing our emergency services.

4) Technology

From a CRR perspective we use technology to:

- a. Spread our safety messages: social media, our website, and fun/engaging videos created by the department keep our community informed of our activities, risks, and our services.
- b. Enhanced dispatch call taking: starting July first we will be migrating to a risk-based dispatch program to make sure we send the right resources to the right call based on situational awareness and potential impact.
- c. Engage our community: electronic surveys help us recognize gaps in our outreach programs, assess our quality of service, and identify community priorities for our organization.

- d. Increase situational awareness: of risk in our jurisdiction using electronic pre-fire plans and other mobile platforms that help our crews assemble as much information as possible when working to assess the complexities of their response area.
- 5) Codes and Standards
As an institution of higher education we uphold rigorous enforcement of codes to make every effort to ensure a safe experience while in our jurisdiction. Our climate, and the community's expectations, around safety are demanding but we rise to the occasion in a number of ways. Examples: Over the last several years our campus has ensured that not only new structures are sprinkled, but that high-risk structures are retrofitted to ensure the best possible outcomes. Our campus works closely with the State Fire Marshal's office and advocates with the ICC to help shape future codes. A number of our department members have served/are serving on NFPA technical committees as we recognize the need to be part of contributing to the bigger picture of our industry. We know that our involvement in the greater fire service improves our own organization.

7. Describe your current department and explain how your role helps you serve the IAFC.

A Tradition of Excellence & Service to Safeguarding Innovation

The University of California – Davis (UC Davis) is the home of the Aggies: go-getters, change makers and problem solvers who make their mark at one of the top public universities in the United States.

Our now expansive campus came from humble beginnings that took shape in the year 1868 with the passing of an Act of the California Legislature chartering the University of California, and work began on the system's first campus, the University of California - Berkeley.

On March 18, 1905 California Governor George C. Pardee signed legislation introduced by Senator Marshall Diggs, of Woodland, and Assemblyman W. A. Johnstone of San Dimas which created the University Farm (also known as the Berkley Farm) and in doing so authorized "the purchase of a University Farm for the use of the College of Agriculture of the University of California," and "providing for a School of Agriculture and system of instruction on said farm and appropriating money therefore". Passage of the act prompted a group of citizens in the Davisville area (now known as the City of Davis) to secure a local site for the proposed "farm school". The final decision of the State Farm Commission favoring the Davisville location was announced at 11:45 am on April 5th 1906.

Since opening as a full-fledged campus of the UC System in 1908, UC Davis has been known for standout academics, sustainability and Aggie Pride as well as valuing the Northern California lifestyle. These themes are woven into our institution's 100-plus-year history and our reputation for solving problems related to food, health, the environment and society.

Today our 5,300-acre campus is adjacent the city of Davis, a vibrant college town of about 68,000 located in Yolo County. From our place in the fertile Sacramento Valley, the state capital is 20 minutes away, and world-class destinations such as the San Francisco Bay Area, Lake Tahoe and the Napa Valley are within a two-hour drive. The campus hosts more than 23,300 academic

and administrative staff who support a student population exceeding 36,000; distinguishing UC Davis as having the third-largest enrollment in the UC System after UCLA and UC Berkeley. Additionally, being the largest geographical campus of the 10 in the UC System means tremendous growth opportunities for the institution's academic and research missions.

The need for fire protection on the UC Davis campus was first recognized by Dean Van Norman in February of 1916 following a series of costly fires. A month later, upon the request of the newly formed faculty committee on fire protection, Dean Norman directed that a formal organization for fire protection at the University Farm was to be established. Professor H.S. Beckett was chosen as the first Fire Chief and by 1917 had systematically organized squads consisting of both faculty and students.

Today the University of California, Davis is one of the nation's premier public research and land-grant universities as well as one of the 10 campuses that comprise the University of California (UC) system with its headquarters in Oakland at the Office of the President. The department now protects 8.3 square miles with 59 full-time, part-time, and student personnel responding from one station to nearly 1000 annual calls for service. The department provides the community with a comprehensive all-risk mix of services including emergency medical services, fire suppression, basic and technical rescue, hazardous materials mitigation, public fire and EMS safety education, and domestic preparedness response.

My role at the UC Davis Fire Department helps me serve the IAFC through the incredible depth and breadth of challenges, risks, and hazards that we deploy resources for. I have had tremendous support from university leadership for myself, and many others in the organization, to participate and be a part of local, state, and regional groups. For me personally, doing so has expanded my network, knowledge of issues facing the industry, and provided access to best practices for me to implement to better our department and our offerings to the community. Our fire department is recognized for its innovation and collaborative relationships; two important skills that I believe I can bring to the IAFC.