

Online degrees at Fayetteville State

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Introduction

Choice is a good thing! Fire, Rescue and Emergency Medical Service providers recognize the importance of diversification in their workforce. Not simply a diverse workforce in terms of ethnicity, gender, culture and religious beliefs but also diversity in the higher education of those who so bravely serve. Emergency response personnel, serving in the southeast region of our country now have another choice regarding the completion of their bachelor's degree. UNC-Fayetteville State University now offers a fully online Bachelor's of Science in Fire Science with concentrations in Fire Service Management or Fire Investigations. In addition to the programs rigorous academic goals, two other major goals included; a relevant degree program that was both accessible and affordable. Those goals have been met through the fully online offering and the fact that each 3 semester credit hour class is only \$204.00 dollars.

The relevancy of the degree was seriously considered during the UNC evaluation process. According to UNC policy the program could not duplicate any other upper-division degree programs at any other UNC system school. This did not present a problem as the market indicators demonstrated a desire for bachelor's level fire industry related programs emphasizing people skills, leadership skills and managerial skills rather than technical and engineering skills. Further analysis of the market indicated that the technical skills requirements are being more than adequately met at the community college level.

Vision

In the late 1990s, the Human Relations Commission of Fayetteville-Cumberland County began hosting Study Circles seminars, during which city and county officials, residents, and community leaders could meet to discuss ways to improve the quality of life for all residents.

During one particular seminar, Fayetteville Fire Chief Benny Nichols was serving as a facilitator when participants began discussing the need for a career-mentoring program for minority students through the school system. Chief Nichols took that suggestion and developed a proposal whereby FSU would develop a fire science curriculum and the city would build a fire station on the university's land.

Perseverance

Fire Chief Nichols proposed to City Manager, Roger Stancil that the City of Fayetteville would form a partnership with Fayetteville State University in order to achieve the identified needs. In 2003, after considerable work and perseverance by Mr. Stancil, FSU Chancellor T. J. Bryan and Fire Chief Nichols, the pieces of the puzzle began to fall in place.

The final components of this comprehensive community goal were developed when the City of Fayetteville and FSU joined forces with Fayetteville Technical Community College (FTCC) and E. E. Smith High school (Cumberland County Schools). These synergistic partnerships have yielded a significant opportunity for the community to assist minorities, and all those interested in the fire service, in career development, mentoring and college level educational opportunities. Through a collaborative effort these institutions implemented the Academy of Fire Science, through the Huskins program, that provides students enrolling at E.E. Smith High School the opportunity to complete twenty-seven semester credit hours of their fire protection technology degree at FTCC during their high school years. As the student matriculates with FTCC they also have the option of seeking dual-enrollment with FSU enabling them to transfer up to seventy-two semester credit hours to FSU, and take upper-division fire science courses at FSU during their tenure at FTCC; all in pursuit of their bachelor's of science degree in fire science with concentrations in either fire service management or fire investigations.

Service

The City of Fayetteville has built that fire station, in an area which really needed one, and it is unlike any other station in North Carolina. The \$3.4 million dollar, 18,000 square foot fire station is the result of a collaborative effort between the city and Fayetteville State University. It is located on FSU property and fulfills several of the city's emergency response needs. Fire Station No. 14 now serves the area's population, including FSU, and also serves as the residence for the fire science program interns who, during a 12 week internship, will attend online fire science classes and receive hands-on training as firefighters. Fire Station 14 was also constructed with a state of the art 'smart' classroom and dormitory style rooms to support programs developed through each partner.

University History

University of North Carolina-Fayetteville State University is the second oldest of the 16 campuses of the University of North Carolina System and one of the most diverse. In 1867, just two years after the Civil War, seven African American men collectively contributed \$136 dollars and purchased two lots on which to build the Howard School to provide the opportunity of education to ex-slaves.

In 1972, FSU became a constituent institution of the University of North Carolina System. Today, FSU has just over 6,000 students and offers 40 baccalaureate degrees, 21 master's degrees and one doctoral degree in Educational Leadership. The University also works in coordination with the North Carolina Community Colleges and offers online

degree completion programs in Fire Science, Criminal Justice, Psychology, Sociology, and an RN to BSN in Nursing.

City of Fayetteville

The City of Fayetteville has a population of 174,000 and ranks as the fourth largest municipality in North Carolina. Because of its large, diversified population, the city faces many unique challenges, especially within its fire department. One crucial challenge for the fire department is building enough fire stations to adequately provide service to the consistently growing city. Another fire department challenge has been the recruitment and retention of minority firefighters. The goal has long been to have the responding firefighters reflect the population that they serve. Minorities and women make up about 11 percent of the city's firefighters. Yet, according to the 2000 U.S. Census, the most current census information available, about 51 percent of the City of Fayetteville population is nonwhite.

Multi-Disciplinary Approach

Fayetteville State University is an institution that takes pride in being a student focused, learning university. It was important to design a program that met the needs of the fire service and provided the skills and knowledge paramount to the growth of the fire science student.

Though technical in many aspects, the fire service is primarily an industry that deals with people, those that help those being helped. It was determined in the early development that a multi-disciplinary approach would provide the best foundation for those currently serving or wishing to serve in the fire service.

In addition to the fire service specific courses, the design team focused on a multi-disciplinary approach including 6 credit hours in psychology encompassing the individual and the organization. These courses examine how the individual functions in the work place and the how's and why's of organizational behavior. A course in managerial economics was also incorporated; designed to offer the student a broad understanding of economics from a management perspective.

One course, in particular, will be of great value to program participants and their organizations. Though still in the design phase, "Technologically Enhanced Fire & EMS Services" will explore and theorize just how technology can be better utilized to enhance service delivery and responding personnel safety.

With the assistance of an outstanding advisory board the following courses have been determined to be the most pertinent for each concentration:

Fire Service Management Concentration 36-39 credits

These courses are offered only through FSU

- PSYC 300 Psychology of Personal Adjustment (3)
- PSYC 350 Industrial and Organization Psychology (3)
- SOCI 412 Race & Ethnic Relations (3)
- FSCN 377 Fire Related Human Behavior (3)
- FSCN 400 Political and Legal Foundations of Fire Protection (3)
- FSCN 406 Technologically Enhanced Fire & EMS Services (3)
- FSCN 412 Advanced Fire Administration (3)
- FSCN 422 Applications of Fire Research (3)
- FSCN 430 Fire Service Personnel Administration (3)
- FSCN 441 Topics in Fire Department Management (3-6)
- FSCN 490 Fire Service Internship (3-6)

Fire Investigations Concentration 36-39 credits

These courses are offered only through FSU:

- FORS 300 Forensic Professional Practice (3)
- FORS 410 Technical Writing in Forensic Science (3)
- FSCN 322 Advanced Fire Investigations (3)
- FSCN 377 Fire-Related Human Behavior (3)
- PHYS 390 Fire Dynamics (3)
- FSCN 400 Political and Legal Foundations of Fire Protection (3)
- FSCN 412 Advanced Fire Administration (3)
- FSCN 421 Incendiary Fire Analysis and Investigation (3)
- FSCN 422 Applications of Fire Research (3)
- FSCN 430 Fire Service Personnel Administration (3)
- FSCN 441 Topics in Fire Department Management (3)
- FSCN 490 Fire Service Internship (3-6)

Fayetteville State University has also added a program in Forensic Science. With this program in place the Fire Investigations Concentration was a perfect fit. This concentration will be beneficial to both the current fire investigator seeking a degree and the aspiring firefighter that has an interest in becoming a fire investigator.

Professor and Director

Fayetteville State University and the Fayetteville Fire Department selected Dr. S. Joseph Woodall to head the program. Dr. Woodall comes to FSU/FFD via the Fire Safety Engineering Technology program at UNC Charlotte where he served as an Assistant Visiting Professor. Dr. Woodall retired in 2003 from the Peoria Fire Department, Peoria Arizona after 20 years of progressive service and experience. He left the department holding the rank of captain and holds a Ph.D. in Human and Organizational Systems. He

has previous university experience, having served at the rank of Assistant Professor and Associate Dean of Grand Canyon University's Public Safety Administration program.

Dr. Woodall also has extensive teaching and course development experience in the online environment, developing courses and teaching online for UNC Charlotte, University of Maryland and Charter Oak State College.

Interested Students

Fayetteville State University is seeking dual-enrollment agreements with most North Carolina Community Colleges and welcomes any and all fire science and criminal justice students interested in fire service management or fire investigations concentrations to initiate contact. The program expects to offer 2 classes during the summer of 2006 semester and have the entire program up and running by fall 2006.

Interested students should initiate contact with Dr. Woodall by phoning him at 910.391.2683 or by email at jwoodall@uncfsu.edu .