



# Inside the Center for Campus Fire Safety

by Paul D. Martin

**T**he Center for Campus Fire Safety (CCFS) is the only national, nonprofit organization devoted to fire and life safety on the more than twenty-five thousand institutes of higher learning in the U.S. As a nonprofit corporation, its operations are underwritten by the generosity of companies and organizations that share a commitment to ensuring that America's eighteen million college and university students are afforded fire-safe environments in which to live and learn. The CCFS also receives funding for its public education training program, Firewise Campus, from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) through its Fire Prevention and Safety Grant Program.

The CCFS has enjoyed great success since opening its doors in October of 2003 by focusing exclusively on campus fire safety and providing support services to institutions, organizations and individuals across the country. This has been accomplished through extensive outreach, education and information dissemination. It is also participating on a national level as the fire service representative in the areas of campus safety, security and emergency planning.

The CCFS has four main goals:

- to make students more aware of the personal responsibility that they have in fire safety,
- to educate and inform parents about fire safety in order to make educated decisions about where to send their children,
- to provide support to professionals working to ensure colleges and universities are safe from fire, and
- to encourage schools to elevate their levels of fire safety.

It is governed by a dedicated Board of Directors who provide the driving force behind operations and represent the center at events and meetings across the country. Its Advisory Council, comprised of industry representatives along with individuals who have experienced the loss of a family member in a campus-related fire, provides guidance for programs and assists in forming the organization's strategic plan.

In September of 2007, the CCFS was re-energized by the hiring of Amy Hamel as its new Executive Director. Hamel brought with her a skill set that combines education and practical experience in fire and life safety with the fundraising and event management expertise that an education-minded nonprofit organization requires. The center also established a National Headquarters last year in the historic seaport of Newburyport, Massachusetts, providing it the physical infrastructure for the continued success of its projects and initiatives.

## Firewise Campus Project

In 2007 the CCFS was awarded a grant of \$386,000 by the DHS for its Firewise Campus Project. Conducted in partnership with UL University, the training division of Underwriters Laboratories Inc., the project succeeded in delivering standardized curriculum to campus fire safety officers along with a toolkit for use in their respective fire safety programs.

The DHS's 2008 grant for the Firewise Campus project totals nearly \$500,000 and will serve to support the continuation of training seminars in each of the ten Federal Emergency Management Agency Regions as well as the beta testing of a data-collection component designed to compile accurate statistics of campus fire problems directly from institutions. To learn more about the CCFS Firewise Campus project, visit [www.firewisecampus.org](http://www.firewisecampus.org).

## Campus Firezone Newsletter

The CCFS also launched a free monthly newsletter last year: *Campus FireZone*. Directly distributed electronically to more than fifteen thousand professionals dedicated to preserving life and property from fire, each issue covers a variety of topics from code enforcement to professional development and includes reproducible fire safety education materials. This year, *Campus FireZone* took on a bold new look thanks to the generous support of the International Code Council.

Back issues and subscriptions to *Campus Firezone* are available free of charge on the CCFS website, which is located at [www.campusfiresafety.org](http://www.campusfiresafety.org).

## UL Safety Tour

One of the regular features of the *Campus Firezone* newsletter is "FireFacts," a series of educational fire safety topic tips produced jointly with Underwriters Laboratories, and CCFS is also actively involved in the UL Safety Tour. A mobile exhibit of high-tech demonstrations and challenges designed to help consumers live safer lives by increasing awareness of hidden household dangers, this educational exhibit includes several interactive elements such as safety test simulations, safety-themed video games, a family fire escape plan and an obstacle course.

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### Campus Fire Forum

Each year the CCFS holds the Campus Fire Forum, which is recognized as the only national conference focused exclusively on campus fire safety issues. Last year's event—which had as its theme “Extending Beyond the Residence Hall”—was a tremendous success with more than one hundred people from sixty colleges and universities and the local police and fire departments that protect them in attendance. In addition, thirty-five partner corporations sent more than sixty representatives to participate in an exhibition of technology and resources and presentations.

As in previous years, the event provided the opportunity to interact with and learn from campus fire safety professionals from around the U.S. and Canada. The agenda included public education as well as emergency planning and technology components. Sessions included “Having an Exit Strategy,” “Mass Notification,” “Lab Safety,” “Studies of Smoke Characterization,” “Media Strategies,” “The International Codes,” “Fire Safety Awareness Campaigns,” “Campus Emergency Preparedness for Large-Scale Events,” “Off-Campus Housing,” “Risk Management,” “Student Firefighters” and more.

This year's Campus Fire Forum will be held in Providence, Rhode Island, October 28–30. For the latest information and to register, direct your web browser to [www.campusfiresafety.org/forum-next.html](http://www.campusfiresafety.org/forum-next.html).

### Campus Fire Safety Month

First proclaimed by the CCFS in 2005, Campus Fire Safety Month gained national recognition in 2007 when both the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate passed resolutions recognizing September as Campus Fire Safety Month. With additional support demonstrated through numerous gubernatorial proclamations,

the CCFS is now organizing a Campus Fire Safety Month Network with various members and sponsors. Accessible through the center's website at [www.campusfiresafety.org/CFSM](http://www.campusfiresafety.org/CFSM), the network is intended to serve as a focal point to unite fire and university officials nationwide as they work to improve fire and life safety on campuses.

A cornerstone of Campus Fire Safety Month is the launch of a back-to-school campaign in partnership with the Kidde Corporation. Past campaigns have included development of the Safe on Campus website, located at [www.campusfiresafety.org/SafeOnCampus](http://www.campusfiresafety.org/SafeOnCampus), which provides a wealth of information including an interactive virtual dormitory highlighting the most common fire safety issues found in student housing, press kits, statistics and photos. For more about this year's activities, see the news item on page 54.

### Legislative Activities

The CCFS has a very active legislative agenda, advocating for the College Fire Prevention Act, the Campus Fire Safety Right-to-Know Act and the Fire Sprinkler Incentive Act, and letters of support for fire prevention and suppression employing both passive and active technologies are frequently sent from CCFS in order to show solidarity with its partners and peers.

Due to evidence indicating that a vast number of student-related fires involve smoking, cigarette fire safety is an area of particular concern. As a member of the Coalition for Fire-Safe Cigarettes, the CCFS is working to decrease the number of fires and casualties caused by the careless disposal of smoking materials and incidents when sleep or alcohol or drug impairment causes smokers to leave cigarettes burning unattended. The center applauds the efforts undertaken by New York State to become the first to implement a cigarette fire



safety standard and encourages colleges and universities to share information about this critical safety issue with their student health services departments.

The CCFS is also pleased to support the U.S. Fire Administration in its campaign against residential fires caused by the careless use and disposal of smoking materials. The center enthusiastically joins in getting out the message to “Put it out. All the way. Every time.”

### Emerging Opportunities

The CCFS is extremely proud to have been recently accepted onto the Congressional Fire Services Institute National Advisory Council and looks forward to working with its distinguished member organizations. Also, thanks to its reputation and network, the center has begun to participate in national campus safety and security initiatives and on task forces for comprehensive emergency planning for schools and campuses. Through its participation and representation as the fire voice in these “think tank” exercises, the all-hazards approach to safety and security will be sure to include viewpoints from the fire service.

Always actively seeking additional sponsors, the center is working hard to expand the services that it offers and continue development of yet more tools and resources for campus fire safety professionals. ♦

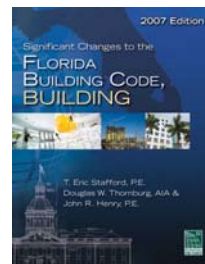
**PAUL D. MARTIN** is the Vice President of the Center for Campus Fire Safety and Acting Chief of the Bureau of Fire Prevention with the New York State Office of Fire Prevention and Control. Charged with enforcing the fire safety laws and regulations of the state, one of the bureau's many responsibilities is conducting fire and life safety inspections for more than fifteen thousand buildings across the state of New York, including all colleges and universities.



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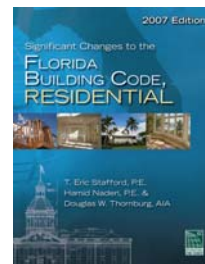
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