

Strategic and Collaborative Crisis Management

A Partnership Approach to Large-Scale Crisis

How committed is your institution to emergency planning functions? Have you considered working with other organizations in a consortium?

by Timothy Mann

A Time for Reflection and Evaluation

In the week following Hurricane Katrina, considerable criticism emerged regarding initial rescue and recovery efforts. “Who is in charge?” was the recurring question. Federal, state, and local authorities were all thought to be late in responding to the needs of the region. Organizations such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), U.S. Department of Homeland Security, National Guard, military assets, local emergency response personnel, and the American Red Cross were all contributing to the biggest relief effort of its kind in the history of the United States; however, coordinating these resources was problematic.

Serious questions still remain regarding the preparations made in advance of the hurricane. Why did proposals submitted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to improve the infrastructure and protect New Orleans against the known threat of hurricanes go unfunded? Who was in charge of the communication strategy? When the storm subsided, who was in charge of prioritizing needs and resources?

College officials closely followed the impact of Katrina as campuses across the nation worked to accommodate displaced students from the devastated Gulf Coast schools. Media provided real-time reporting on the evolving institutional challenges facing these schools, including the time frame for bringing campus facilities back online; the successful recruitment of next year’s classes; the evaluation of the financial impact of the losses; the assessment of the strength of insurance coverage; and the ability to restore

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the campus infrastructure including sanitation, clean water, and the power supply.

More recently, the mass shooting tragedy at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech) demonstrated how a campus-specific incident can devastate a college and its surrounding community. As this tragedy continues to be examined, a series of broader emergency planning themes have emerged. These themes include the capability of institutional communication systems to provide immediate and effective notification to community members, the incident evaluation and execution capabilities relative to shutting down a campus, and the institutional and current public policy environment for effectively managing students with serious mental health concerns; specifically, how that information can and cannot be shared and the impact from a risk-assessment perspective for the student and community.

It has become evident that colleges and universities must develop a more strategic approach to emergency management and continuity planning efforts to help manage the incomprehensible impact of large-scale disasters. These disasters can affect not only the “home” campus but also community members pursuing their education at institutionally-sponsored programs around the world.

Emergency planning and preparedness is an expensive investment, one that many campuses cannot afford on their own.

At the heart of every campus mission is the safety and well-being of its community members—students, staff, faculty, alumni, and institutional partners. Yet, very few operating budgets demonstrate a significant or sustainable commitment to emergency planning functions. Existing resource commitments such as public safety officers, environmental health and safety staff, fire safety personnel, residence life staff, and risk managers all play a key role in managing routine compliance and isolated incidents that arise during the course of the academic year. Because of time constraints and perhaps training limitations, these personnel and resources do not have the capacity to plan, coordinate, and test comprehensive protocols that reflect a response to a large-scale disaster. Further compounding the situation is the reality that emergency planning and preparedness is an expensive investment, one that many campuses cannot afford on their own.

Traditionally, colleges and universities have focused the development of their emergency preparedness plans on incidents that occur within or near the boundaries of the physical campus. However, since 9/11 more campuses have focused on better coordinating and communicating with local agencies, and local or city emergency planning task forces have been assembled that include representatives from colleges and universities.

Memos of understanding and mutual aid agreements are being created that outline what resources (facilities, personnel, transportation, and equipment) can be shared in a given set of circumstances. Training drills are being executed to test certain parts of the municipal, city, and regional emergency response plans, which often include participation by a college or university.

However, the impact of recent events such as Hurricane Katrina and the tragedy at Virginia Tech make it clear that senior campus officials must engage in an ongoing evaluation of institutional assessment and preparedness and consider a more comprehensive and collaborative approach to emergency planning.

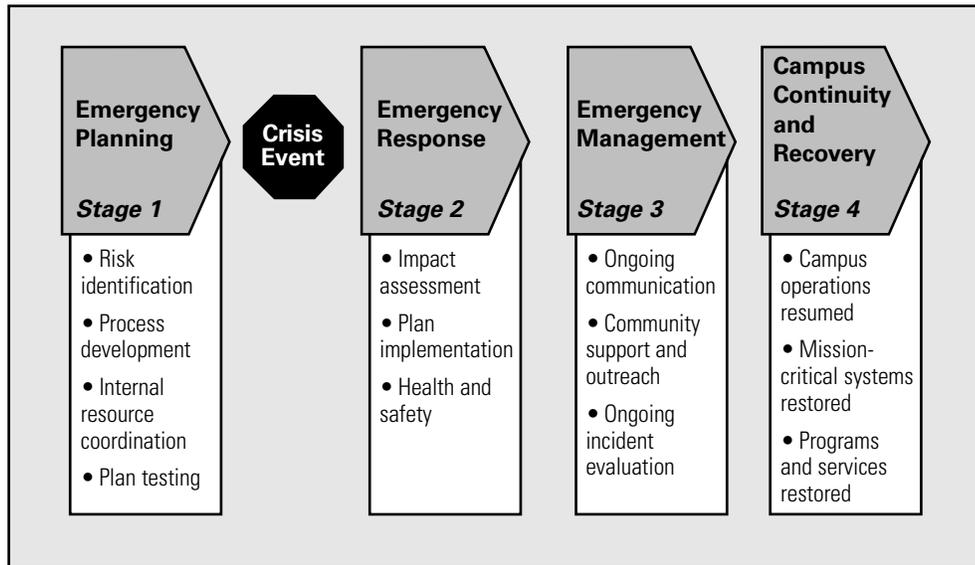
A Framework for Emergency Management and Campus Continuity Planning

A straightforward way to conceive of developing an emergency management and campus continuity plan is to focus on the four primary stages of institutional actions as illustrated in figure 1: (1) emergency planning, (2) emergency response, (3) emergency management, and (4) campus continuity and recovery.

Emergency planning. This first stage involves identifying risks or threats and crafting procedures that map out an institutional response using a broad-based, team approach. Rigorous training activities, equipment and supply assessments, and coordination with internal and external stakeholders are all core elements of this stage. Procedures and protocols are intended to be maps that highlight likely events and the resources and responses available to help address them.

Emergency response. This stage refers to the period of time immediately following the crisis event. It is during this brief phase (the initial 24 hours) that the first priority is the health and safety of the community. Once that has been addressed, the ongoing process of incident assessment

Figure 1 **Emergency Management Framework**



will lead to damage control, a full evaluation of incident impact, and the identification of next steps.

Emergency management. At this stage in the immediacy of the post-event era, the focus is on clarification of key facts including health and safety reports, facility damage reports, and remaining risk assessments. This information is central to informing the communication plan. Clear and timely communications to all constituent groups must be coordinated. It is important to recognize that there will be incomplete information. Messaging should highlight these areas but also provide some overview of what activities the college is engaged in to acquire complete information and in what approximate time frame. Messaging should also ensure that the outreach and support work conducted by staff and external agencies is appropriately documented.

Campus continuity and recovery. In this final stage, the focus is on coordinating the development of both short-term and long-term plans to get mission-critical operations back up and running. The goal is to get back to operational and program normalcy in as short a time as possible. Restoring key information systems, communication channels, and program offerings are all healthy signs for a community that has experienced a large-scale incident that has shut down or severely impaired day-to-day operations.

Roadblocks in Campus Emergency Management and Continuity Planning

With the proliferation of video, digital cameras, picture phones, and extensive media coverage, the public has become very aware of the impact of catastrophic incidents, including massive destruction and loss of life. This was evident during the media coverage of the Virginia Tech tragedy, as 24-7 national coverage, replay of 911 calls, cell phone pictures, and amateur videos all played a role in informing the nation about the incident itself and the grief on campus that followed. This should prompt college officials to rethink and restructure their emergency management and continuity programs.

In a report from the Boston Consortium for Higher Education (2002), a number of college and university officials shared their views about roadblocks that have a detrimental impact on emergency preparedness planning efforts in a college setting. They identified a common set of issues that included

- limitations of internal and external resources
- need for more training and education
- failure to maintain a plan over time
- importance of moving planning from an “important” to “urgent” category

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Figure 2 **Campus Emergency Planning Continuum**

Program Characteristics	Localized and Internal	Regionalized and Program-Oriented	Consortium-Style
<i>Incident Focus</i>	Campus-specific	Program-specific	Broad and global
<i>Relationship Coordination</i>	Very limited	Regionally-based	Broad and comprehensive
<i>Human Resources</i>	Embedded in existing roles	Embedded in existing roles	Full-time team; shared resources
<i>Financial Resources</i>	No budget support	Limited budget support	Annual budget allocation; shared resources
<i>Senior Leadership Commitment</i>	Limited focus	Compartmentalized to specific risks or programs	Institutional; broad mandate to invest, plan, and prepare
<i>Assessment and Auditing</i>	Very limited and unorganized	Ongoing but decentralized	Highly centralized across multiple campuses
<i>Testing and Training</i>	Limited and selective	Regular but not comprehensive	Regular and comprehensive

- understanding of the perspectives; the plan is always evolving
- placing disaster planning on the same level of importance as budget planning

These roadblocks appear to be commonplace in the higher education community. The scope and scale of these issues are compounded and more problematic on a larger campus (defined by the size of the physical campus, number of students, and the number and types of facilities) located in an urban or high-risk geographic area (e.g., hurricane location, tornado alley).

A Continuum for Program Evaluation

As institutions evaluate their emergency management functions, they can assess their organizational efforts along an emergency planning continuum. Generally speaking, there are three conceptual approaches that colleges and universities can consider in organizing and evaluating their

emergency management efforts. These three approaches, outlined in figure 2, can be categorized as localized and internal, regionalized and program-oriented, and consortium-style.

Localized and internal. The localized and internal approach represents the “reactionary” model. The focus of this approach remains on the traditional definition of the college campus, usually defined by geographic boundaries. There is little planning or program development; emergency management is a reactive response occurring almost organically by college officials forced to respond to isolated campus incidents. Such incidents may include a facility emergency, student death, or public-relations issue. There is no strategic support for emergency management functions, no budget support, no senior leadership directive, and, consequently, unclear organizational responsibility.

Regionalized and program-oriented. The regionalized and program-oriented approach represents an active planning model for emergency management activities. This approach

views the emergency management responsibility as extending beyond the physical boundaries of the campus and considers the impact of regional events, relationships with local emergency management staff, and implications for specific programs that require some planning consideration (e.g., local internship sites, guidelines for overnight trips). Senior leadership recognizes the importance of emergency management planning and provides some directive for select staff to lead those efforts; these planning responsibilities are embedded in or added to existing job responsibilities with limited financial support. There are organized structures in place to facilitate the discussion and planning process. The charge can be broad, such as an incident management committee or a crisis response team, or specific, such as a study-abroad risk assessment or an emergency housing planning task force. These efforts result in the development of relationships with local agencies (e.g., police, fire, public health); sometimes they lead to the development of joint planning partnerships such as mutual aid agreements. Such agreements outline plans to share specific resources during certain types of emergencies (e.g., facilities used for a mass dispensing site, alternative licensed health care site, parking lots to facilitate shuttle needs of local residents).

Consortium-style. The consortium-style model is the most comprehensive approach; it examines emergency management planning on a broad and global level. This approach is highly collaborative, centralized, and resource-based. It includes a number of diverse stakeholders who assist in all areas of the emergency management program. Experienced personnel are recruited and charged with addressing the collective needs of the consortium schools. With a considerable commitment from senior leadership, colleges forge a partnership (i.e., consortium) with one or more schools to assist in creating meaningful redundancy in systems, protocol development, and training. This consortium also establishes a “brain trust” that moves emergency management planning to a more sophisticated level. Participating colleges agree on regular financial support to ensure that these efforts can be sustained over time. Because of the intensive and full-time focus on emergency planning, the progress of specific initiatives is consistently monitored and assessed, and planning activities extend beyond the campus to include regional relationships and global characteristics. Global characteristics refer to specific academic programs that exist in other states or countries (e.g., study abroad), international internship placements, travel of athletic teams, social justice programs

(e.g., Habitat for Humanity), and faculty travel and research abroad.

For all three approaches, there are seven common program characteristics: incident focus, relationship coordination, human resources, financial resources, senior leadership commitment, assessment and auditing, and testing and training. These program characteristics are summarized as follows:

- *Incident focus* describes the types of scenarios for which the institution plans (e.g., student suicide, study-abroad incident, natural disaster).
- *Relationship coordination* refers to the level of preincident coordination and outreach by the institution with key external agencies such as police, firefighters, hospitals, government groups, or the American Red Cross.
- *Human resources* describe the institution’s current commitment as defined by staffing assignments.
- *Financial resources* describe the institution’s current commitment as defined by operating budget allocations.
- *Senior leadership commitment* refers to the level of importance that the senior leadership team places on this function and is driven in part by institutional geographic and program characteristics.
- *Assessment and auditing* refers to how integrated and systemic the institution’s efforts are to evaluate and respond to risks and threats.
- *Testing and training* refers to the commitment, quality, and regularity in training key stakeholders and includes testing protocols and procedures and modifying institutional responses based on changes in the emergency planning environment.

Of course, where an institution identifies itself along this continuum for each program characteristic can and should vary. Colleges and universities have unique programs in varying locations around the world. It is possible to have elements of all three approaches in one institutional plan. However, the senior leadership team must be active in ensuring that its program is appropriate to the unique challenges of its campus.

Paradigm Shift to a Consortium-Style Approach

The consortium-style approach (identified in figure 2) represents a more sophisticated model that can organize

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the collective rethinking of emergency management responsibilities for large-scale crises. In broad terms, this model focuses on creating emergency planning organizations that have a shared mission to support and develop emergency management and campus continuity planning for a cohort of institutions. This approach is intended to prompt a more strategic discussion of the importance and challenges facing college and university communities.

The consortium model of emergency planning leverages the collective strength of one common and comprehensive set of resources.

In this approach, institutions form a cohort based, in part, on their regional locations and shared risks (e.g., tornado alley, Gulf Coast, high probability earthquake area, nuclear power plant location). This approach leverages the collective strength of one common and comprehensive set

of resources as opposed to the current state, a constellation of small campus communities with limited preplanned coordination and minimal capacity for managing the most serious of emergency scenarios. It is important to clarify that this model is intended to address large-scale crises including terrorist attacks; natural disasters (tornadoes, hurricanes, tsunami, and earthquakes); accidents and incidents (campus violence, airplane crashes, environmental incidents, power grid failures); and nuclear explosions/reactor meltdowns. The more traditional campus emergencies related to building fires, student injury, and the like would still be handled by the existing systems and protocols of each individual campus.

Because large-scale disasters can affect a wide geographic area, partnering with institutions from beyond the municipal or urban region is an important element in this approach. Partnering with institutions outside the disaster area helps ensure that affected schools have needed resources prepared and accessible. Figure 3 provides a model for the consortium-style organization.

Figure 3 **Model for the Consortium-Style Organization**



The Role of the Consortium Organization

The rationale for considering this new approach to emergency planning is based on two primary observations. First, more than ever, large-scale disasters are better understood in terms of their impact on campus operations and the challenges that follow. A college campus is highly dependent on the infrastructure of the city, region, and state in which it is located (e.g., electrical power, natural gas supply, waste management, storm water systems, water supply). The emergency resources of a region and state are limited and responses must be prioritized. For state and local emergency response agencies, the top priorities are, understandably, young children, the elderly, and the sick, as well as the overall needs of the community, which in urban areas can include millions of people. Therefore, colleges must do more planning to help offset their reliance on those resources and commit to more rigorous campus emergency planning efforts.

Colleges must offset their reliance on state and local resources and commit to more rigorous campus emergency planning efforts.

Second, the delivery of higher education has changed and the boundaries of the academic learning community have been redefined. The education of college students is no longer limited to the confines of the college campus. College and university programs continue to develop agreements with academic institutions and companies in different parts of the world. Study-abroad relationships, immersion programs, internships, hybrid short-course opportunities, and semester-at-sea programs are all examples of the new global approach to higher education. The consortium-style model provides real value in coordinating global support systems for multiple schools. The consortium could assist proactively in evaluating locations where a college might choose to send students, staff, or faculty. It could partner with organizations that can assess existing levels of security, medical support, access, and relationships with local emergency agencies; comprehensiveness of campus emergency planning; and overall risk factors associated with the current regional and political climate. With a growing number of students educated away from

their home campuses, an institution's role, resources, and capacity to support students in crisis when abroad must be seriously considered. Institutions are leveraging organizations such as International SOS to provide some mechanism by which to reach out to students (or faculty or staff) and deliver an effective response in either accessing medical resources or making arrangements to relocate community members to a safer location.

Characteristics of the Consortium-Style Model

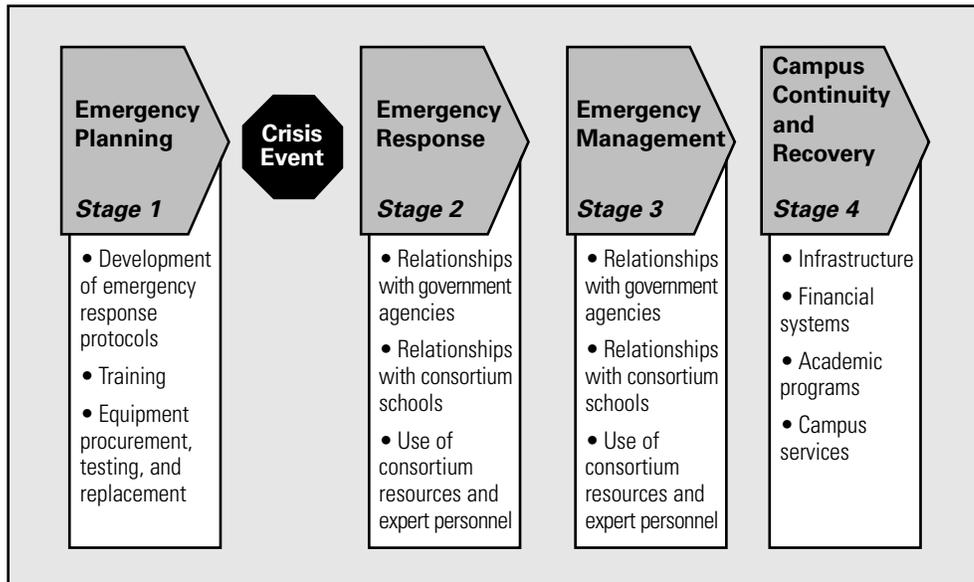
There are several core characteristics of a consortium-style model for emergency management planning:

Consortium leadership team. To ensure that coordination and contingency planning is truly integrated across multiple campuses (and potentially between different regions and states), a leadership team is established that represents the collective emergency planning needs of member institutions. This team, which is comprised of staff members who work for the consortium, reports directly to the executive council, a group of senior officials from each consortium-member campus. It is important that members of the leadership team have limited prior affiliations with any one of the partner schools. This helps reduce the likelihood that allegiances to any one campus within the determined consortium will develop. Such allegiances quickly minimize the effectiveness of the leadership team, which must work to ensure that the plan does not differentially focus on one campus over another.

Cost and resource sharing. From a program development and management perspective, there must remain a constant infusion of human and financial resources to ensure that the plan is at its maximum possible state of readiness. While member institutions contribute as part of the cost-sharing benefit (i.e., member dues), undoubtedly there will be additional needs and opportunities that go beyond the reach of committed resources. The leadership team must be active in scanning for grant and foundation opportunities that provide resources to allow for the pursuit of new initiatives within the scope of the emergency planning program.

Coordination and leadership. Effective coordination and leadership are critical to the overall success of this model. Institutional leaders must commit to identifying strategic planning priorities and providing oversight, and ongoing and active participation by key stakeholders on

Figure 4 **Benefits of the Consortium-Style Model**



each campus is required. Campus police, health services, environmental health and safety staff, and student affairs personnel all play an active role in responding on behalf of their respective campus. To coordinate and access these resources across multiple campuses requires effective coordination and regular communication. The consortium leadership team must also reconcile issues related to the geography of its members and programs, recruitment of expert personnel, and establishment of an effective organizational culture.

Talent acquisition. Effectively planning for and responding to large-scale emergency events requires competent and experienced staff. Recruiting personnel with rich backgrounds in the emergency management industry (e.g., the American Red Cross, emergency management agencies) is an important responsibility in this model. Skill sets and experience in emergency planning and response are generally not found in higher education and must be recruited from the outside.

Training strategy. Substantial benefits will result from investing in and implementing training drills and exercises. The consortium organization involves a number of different stakeholders: campus leaders, facilities managers, emergency response personnel, external domestic agencies, and global resources. This presents a coordination and execution challenge to ensure that appropriate levels of training are organized and delivered to meet the needs of the entire

consortium. Linkages among these diverse groups must be clearly identified and reinforced through ongoing training activities. A training strategy ensures that staff members clearly understand the lines of communication and authority and are competent with regard to response protocols and the use of available equipment and supplies.

Contingency resource management. The consortium leadership team determines what equipment and contingency resources must be in place and where they should be stored. These resources include those required for communication efforts (e.g., Web hosting, satellite phones), along with those focused on basic human needs, including thermal blankets, beds and pillows, nonperishable food and water for a minimum period of time, sanitation supplies, and basic first-aid supplies. Supplies needed to establish a full-capacity, in-place shelter should also be considered in planning efforts.

Benefits of the Consortium-Style Model

The consortium model has the potential to provide member institutions with multiple benefits, which provide important support at each stage within the emergency planning framework (figure 4):

Development of emergency response protocols. Given the dynamic nature of our regional, national, and international environments, the consortium leadership team

engages in the regular development, refinement, and assessment of appropriate protocols crafted to address incidents that have a significant impact on the health, safety, and operations of the consortium colleges. It is practical for colleges to choose consortium partners with similar characteristics; for example, large research-based campuses should collaborate with other institutions with significant research programs. A similarity between campuses has the advantage of allowing personnel to develop a quick consensus on what primary risks may exist. Likewise, it is important for campuses to consider the external risks based on their geographic locations as they plan institutional partnerships. If, for example, a campus is located in an area subject to earthquakes, it would be worth considering at least one partner that resides outside of the earthquake zone that could be leveraged as a key resource in the response or recovery stage (e.g., to provide Web hosting, as a satellite shelter site).

Continuity planning functions. These functions are focused on moving from a state of emergency to a state of normalcy. As issues of health and safety are managed and risk assessments are completed, it is important that the consortium leadership team begins the process of resuming campus operations. With effective preplanning, the team is able to bring mission-critical operations and applications back online. Mission-critical operations include all key utilities services, safety security services, and communication applications. Parallel to this process, the team forecasts when academic programs can resume and what accommodations should be made given current assessments and conditions from policy, facilities, instructional, and financial perspectives.

Communication strategy. In the midst of a large-scale emergency, the effectiveness of communication often becomes a key determining factor in coordinating a successful response. The consortium leadership team is responsible for the development and testing of a broad-based communication strategy that builds in substantial redundancy to help ensure effective communication. From the most highly technical to the most basic paper advisory, the communication strategy must be a primary focus of the consortium leadership team. In *Lessons from the Front*, Rinella (2007, p. 2) states that it is important for senior leaders to “insist on answers to questions such as ‘How will we communicate with key people if all of the usual forms of communication—e-mail, Internet, and cell phones—do not work?’”

Training. A significant challenge in developing an emergency management program is finding meaningful

and regular testing methods to assist in both elevating overall readiness as well as in identifying areas within a response that are problematic. Mock drills and elaborate tabletop training exercises are critical to any effective plan. The consortium leadership team has primary responsibility for ensuring that institutions are engaged in training activities on an ongoing basis. The leadership team coordinates processes and programs that, among other things, ensure that all protocols receive appropriate levels of feedback and testing and that staff members have the requisite skill sets and backgrounds to be effective in instituting their respective areas of the response plan. The leadership team is also responsible for testing communication and response protocols both internal and external to the consortium organization. Training and collaborating with external agencies (e.g., local emergency management agencies, police, firefighters, public health) is critical. Developing a clear understanding of the roles, authority, and priorities of these agencies plays a major role in the coordination of an effective response.

Equipment procurement, testing, and replacement.

The creation of an adequate inventory of supplies and equipment is an important task. While individual campuses may choose to create their own inventory of basic supplies (e.g., emergency generators), there are resources that can be shared effectively through the consortium that will, in effect, create a shared asset for member organizations. Resources may include basic supplies like thermal blankets, pillows, portable beds, nonperishable food and water, emergency lighting, Web hosting agreements, transportation agreements, support personnel, and communication equipment. It is equally important that this equipment be updated and tested on a regular basis to ensure that it is functional when needed.

Challenges of the Consortium Model

Despite its benefits, there are a number of challenges involved in the successful implementation of the consortium model:

Communication. Even the best-laid emergency management plan will be ineffective if it does not include a well-thought out communication strategy. Communication is often a challenge on any college campus or within any emergency response effort, a challenge that is compounded in the consortium model given the task of coordinating the schedules of interinstitutional staff, the geography of campus

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partners, differences in technology platforms, and the effects of natural turnover and attrition of campus officials. This is not an insurmountable challenge; however, there must be constant planning and attention focused on a well-coordinated and tested consortium communication strategy. The consortium leadership team should inventory the existing practices of its institutional members, explore the broad-based use of rapid communication technologies such as those provided by Send Word Now or Connect-ED, identify appropriate levels of redundancy within the plan, and be vigilant in testing and training.

Reaching consensus. Organizations that share common issues help forge the creation of a consortium. In a higher education context, the challenge of emergency management on a college campus is the common issue that brings institutions together. The common benefits that accrue by joining a consortium include access to broader expertise, infrastructure, and resources. Despite the fact that colleges agree to participate in a consortium, it is potentially difficult to reach consensus on the execution of the strategic priorities that the consortium was created to address. Challenges to consensus may exist around developing financial calculations for proportionate contributions by members, prioritizing initiatives, and recruiting consortium leadership personnel. Strong and clear leadership from each participating member is essential to ensure that these challenges are effectively managed.

Effective consortium working culture. The establishment of a consortium organization should be predicated on the understanding that each member believes it is a “good fit” in the consortium relative to other members and sees the benefits of joining this particular group of colleges. However, it is important to recognize that each member also has an established organizational identity that guides decision making, problem solving and communication. These differences, as slight or significant as they may be, must be acknowledged since they may be an unnecessary distraction to the formation of an effective consortium organizational culture.

Technology and data. A thoughtful evaluation of shared technology capacity must be built into any consortium start-up process. Most campuses have not been successful in adequately maintaining or integrating emergency management data (e.g., emergency contact information of students, parents, staff, and faculty; emergency protocols and evacuation plans; and communication options) into their technology infrastructure. Consequently,

during a campus emergency, gaps in information, absent resources, and lack of planning become readily apparent. This issue may be magnified at the consortium level. While not all emergency management resources must be shared, it is important to consider technology compatibility issues within the consortium (and therefore between the colleges). The ability to provide Web hosting services or simply ensure effective communication between members through broadcast e-mail, text messaging, cell phone, or other means is an important planning consideration.

The Challenge Ahead

This article is intended to prompt a more strategic discussion of the important challenges that face college and university communities. Investing in emergency management is similar to investing in life insurance: you buy the insurance and pray that you never have to use it. In the meantime it creates some peace of mind and, should something tragic occur, provides those you care about with some comfort and support despite the tragedy.

The collective leadership of the academy agrees that emergency management and contingency planning must be a priority. However, all campuses face the harsh reality of competing priorities for limited resources. Public institutions are fighting for larger slices of state budgets and private institutions are being highly scrutinized for their expensive tuitions. These marketplace realities explain in part why emergency management and continuity planning often do not receive adequate strategic and financial commitment in higher education.

Emergency planning must be on the list of initiatives that receive institutional commitment—the consequences are too grave to leave to fate.

However, there is no denying that the impact of any number of possible large-scale emergencies is devastating to a campus community. As Rinella (2007, p. 1) notes, “A major disaster is one of the most significant events in the life of the institution.” The majority of these events cannot be prevented, but an effective emergency management plan can certainly assist in mitigating the effect on and disruption to the campus. It is difficult in this day and age

to conceive that all colleges would not be actively engaged in emergency management planning given the visible impacts of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Hurricane Katrina, SARS, the threat of avian influenza, and, most recently, the Virginia Tech shootings.

College leaders must ensure that emergency planning, in the broadest sense, is on the strategic list of initiatives that receive institutional commitment, planning, funding, and leadership. The consequences are too great and too grave to leave to fate. In evaluating institutional readiness to respond to a large-scale crisis, leaders must consider the following questions:

- Does the institution have a clear understanding of the role that local, state, and federal agencies will have on campus during a large-scale crisis?
- Does the institution understand its existing capacity (finances, technology, personnel, security, and communication) to manage a large-scale crisis?
- Does the institution possess personnel who are trained to develop, implement, and test emergency planning systems and protocols for a large-scale crisis?
- Does the institution have a financial contingency plan to protect the campus from significant changes in revenues or expenses resulting from a large-scale crisis?

- Does the institution have an effective communication system in place that allows campus leaders to quickly communicate with all constituent groups during a large-scale crisis?

Emergency management is a complicated planning issue that for some institutions requires the full-time focus of qualified personnel. If it does not receive this level of focus, it will remain a small portion of some campus staff member's role description. Despite good intentions, without a comprehensive, well-thought out plan institutions may not be able to develop the quality of program required to meet the needs of large-scale events that can devastate campus communities. ❗

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