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Preparation for the Storm: Evacuating Students Prior to a Hurricane

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PREPARATION FOR THE STORM

Evacuating Students Prior to a Hurricane

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Definition of a Crisis

“A crisis is an event, which is often sudden or unexpected, that disrupts normal operations of the institution or its educational mission and threatens the well-being of personnel, property, financial resources, and/or reputation of the Institution.”

(Zdziarski, 2006, p.5).

How Institutions Define Crisis

- How an institution defines crisis has a significant impact on the crisis management system it develops.
- It affects how will determine when and how a crisis management plan is activated, who will be part of the crisis management team, and what the specific protocols and procedures for responding to a crisis will be.

Crisis Matrix

- The Crisis Matrix is a conceptual model developed to provide a basic framework for assessing crisis, determine its impact on the campus community, and identifying considerations in responding to the crisis.
- Matrix is comprised of three dimensions
 - level of crisis
 - type of crisis
 - intentionality of crisis

Crisis Matrix: Level of Crisis

Critical Incidents – affects a segment or portion of the campus in very significant ways but does not disrupt normal operations of the institution overall.

example – suicide attempt, death or serious injury of a faculty/staff member, a facility fire, etc.

Campus Emergencies – an event that disrupts the orderly operations of the institution or its educational mission. Shutting down for a period of time.

example – large scale demonstrations, riots, tornadoes, approaching hurricanes, etc.

Crisis Matrix: Level of Crisis

- **Disasters** – major impact well beyond the borders of the campus. Disrupts institutional operations and functions as well as the surrounding community.
example: Hurricane Katrina

Crisis Matrix: Type of Crisis

Type of crisis refers to the different kinds of crises an organization prepares for or could experience.

Environmental Crisis – any event or situation that originates with the environment or nature.

Example: hurricanes, earthquakes, floods

Facility Crisis – any event or situation that originates in a facility or structure.

Example: structural weakness, fire, chemical spill

Crisis Matrix: Type of Crisis

Human Crisis – any event or situation that originates with or is initiated by human beings, whether through human error or conscious act.

example – criminal acts, traffic accidents, mental health issues

Intentionality of Crisis

Unintentional Crisis – occurs by accident

example – workplace injuries, sports injuries, falls

Intentional Crisis – occurs as a result of a deliberate act.

example – workplace violence, sexual assault, vandalism, arson, etc

Using the Matrix

- Unintentional critical incident affecting an individual may be the basis on which the institution builds its entire portfolio of services and resources.
- Lightning strike (Unintentional, environmental) that destroys electronics in a lab (facility) and destroys data of a graduate student (human) = critical incident.
- Hurricane (unintentional, environmental) that damages the residence hall (facility) and causes injury or death (Human) = campus emergency

Crisis Management Cycle

- Planning
- Prevention
- Response
- Recovery
- Learning

Evacuating the Students

- Process of finding a site
- Negotiating the terms of the agreement
 - term
 - facilities, operations, expenses and meals
 - campus authority and jurisdiction
 - insurance requirements

UNO / Millsaps Hurricane Agreement

- Drafted July 2012
- Signed by Millsaps August 23
- Received Millsaps Insurance August 27 – Office of Risk Management had to quickly get that to the state
- UNO President Signed August 27
- Evacuated August 27

Hurricane Isaac / UNO

Storm approaching

- 2 pm, Friday, August 24 – Hurricane Emergency Implementation Team met to look at the updates of Tropical Storm Isaac.
- Buses on hold
- Sunday, August 26 – I was in contact with Millsaps to put them on warning that UNO might be coming

Hurricane Isaac / UNO Evacuation

Monday, August 27

- 9 am,– Hurricane Emergency Implementation Team Meeting
- Decision made to close the University. UNO cancelled classes at noon Monday. Closed Tuesday and Wednesday.
- Buses called in for pick up
- making arrangements with Athletics
- 12 pm Residence Hall meeting
 - what to bring, what to expect

Hurricane Isaac / UNO Evacuation

- 3 pm, Monday, August 27
 - Buses arrived and boarding the bus began
 - More students signed up for evacuation than arrived
 - 121 students, staff, and police
 - 3 Housing Area Coordinators
 - 3 Campus Police
 - 5 Athletic staff
- 5pm - Buses pulled out with Campus police escort
- 6 pm – Housing staff checked all rooms to make sure the building was clear
- 8 pm – Students arrived at Millsaps College

Hurricane Isaac / UNO Evacuation

Tuesday, August 28

Hurricane Isaac became a Category 1
and bearing down hard on NOLA

Hurricane Isaac / UNO Evacuation

Wednesday, August 29

- UNO announced additional closure – Thursday, August 30 and Friday, August 31
- water leak in Millsaps resident hall
- Lost power at my house

Hurricane Isaac / UNO Evacuation

Thursday, August 30 –

Tornado watch in the Millsaps area

- Flooding and down trees, power outages
- Millsaps announces there closure
- Only emergency personnel, dining services, campus safety, maintenance and housing reps on campus
- Millsaps had to show the UNO students the Campus Tornado and Storm Shelters and educate the UNO about the sirens that would wail when the tornado identified as close

Hurricane Isaac / UNO Evacuation

Friday, August 31

- power came back on campus at UNO
- Met with Chief of Police, Housing, and Safety Coordinator
- Campus assessment
- Residence Hall Building assessment
- Food Services assessment – make sure campus dining is up and running when the students arrive from Millsaps

Hurricane Isaac / UNO Evacuation

Arrival Home

- Saturday, September 1st – students head back to UNO
- Had to coordinate with Campus Police the best way to get the students home because of the aftermath of the storm to Mississippi
- Did not anticipate to bring the students home until Sunday, Sept 2 or Monday, September 3 due to the uncertainty

Lessons Learned

- Student response to communication / evacuation
- Delay in payment because we forgot to request a w-9
- Better and faster way to get the students on the buses – looking into a swipe card
- Non-UNO students wanting to evacuate
- Better coordination between Housing and Student Affairs
(Housing at UNO falls under Auxiliary Services)