After Katrina: Assessing the UNO DRU Initiative

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Wednesday, February 16, 2011

Workshop Session III

Time of Session: 3:30-5:00pm

Session Title: Mitigation Program Assessment

Speakers: **Edmund Merem**, Jackson State University (presented on his behalf and colleagues):

**Yaw Twumasi**, Alcorn State University (not present)

**Joan Wesley**, Jackson State University (not present)

**Benetta Robinson**, Jackson State University (not present)

**Timothy De Palma**, Florida Atlantic University

**Amanda Green**, The University of New Orleans

Room: 204

Head Count: 13

Note Takers: Carrie Beth Lasley and K. Brad Ott

Notes:

[Presented via Powerpoint] –

Edmund Merem gave self introduction and posed the question … Why study this –

Pacific Northwest is along the “Ring of Fire” –

- Research objectives
- background and issues
- Plan evaluation criteria

Methodology ...

Objectives of the research –

- analyze current issues in tsunami hazard management planning
- assess risks posed in the Pacific Northwest … half of America's population travels to these areas – in addition to residents
  - To evaluate local plans
  - Identify mitigation measures
- Design a decision support tool for policy makers

**Background information issues –**

- (see powerpoint)
  - limitations of local planning – trying to actualize face challenges of funding and awareness
- questions of why? – importance of threat

Indian Ocean before/after – 2004 Tsunami

loss of life could have been avoided had global alert systems been synchronized

Earthquake causes tsunami –

Table of largest earthquakes in the U.S. History

**Summary of Plan Evaluation Criteria –**

- Factual basis – based on facts, public education and compliance
- Goals and Objectives – clear; shaped by local realities
  - Policies, tools and strategies – i.e., zoning, mapping of utilities, hazardous waste sites, critical infrastructure, vulnerable populations etc...
  - Intergovernmental coordination – very important, know which relationships interlock, not just political leadership (though knowing the leadership struggles can address problems in advance)
- Plan implementation – breakdown of specific tasks to actualize plans of action

**Study area and justifications –**

- 460 cities from Alaska to California – major populations (include Hawaii)
- potential disruptiveness on the economy and life, broke down by populations

Relative Tsunami risk (Gulf Coast low) …

**Cascadia Subduction Zone**

Computer simulation of aftermath – Pacific Ocean into the Columbia River (like storm surge) …

examples of impacts – 1964 Alaska earthquake; …

**Generic Plan Assessment – Factual basis**

Goals and Objectives – an example of Portland, Oregon; example of Hilo, Hawaii

Intergovernmental collaboration examples – challenge of moving beyond localities – a major weakness … Only Oregon and California have truly begun widespread education and mitigation measures – but both still long way to go …

**Recommendations – key one: promote a regional approach**
Questions of Edmund –
Unidentified male /citing the example of Indian Ocean photo – was this permanent damage?
Edmund Merem =yes …

Carrie Beth – the plans that incorporated tsunamis – did they address bay impacts?
Edmund Merem =it is still a work in progress; San Francisco Bay for example – challenges

“Pre-Disaster Planning at Florida Community Colleges: A Comparison of FEMA Guidelines to Processes and Practices”

**Timothy De Palma,** Florida Atlantic University

[Presentation with PowerPoint]

Intro – his dissertation research (successfully defended) …

Background event – March 2000 Homeland Security planning began – then accelerated with the 9-11 attacks – pre-disaster evaluation planning

Hurricanes

University violence

Statement of the problem –

State of Florida community colleges key to workforce training … 28 community colleges business officers surveyed … mixed-method research design …

Conceptual lens – DRU model offers a comprehensive 4-phased approach to pre-disaster planning:

1. organization of resources
2. 3. 4.

2. Research questions

Phases of DRU development and implementation

Limitations of study – findings might vary on timing of surveys

Study Significance –
response to Presidents' Commission on Campus safety and FEMA

Analysis of research questions – including actual implementation
“Alpha” and “Beta” localities – confidentiality preserved

involvement of stakeholders – on campus and in the larger community … example of Sheriff’s office having advance building plans to know where to go during crisis

Mitigation planning – back up of data, back-up generators …

Make-up of advisory teams – challenge of becoming pro-active versus reactive

Identification of hazards, limitations in responses and planning

Summary of findings – goals and objectives / involvement of internal and external stakeholders … no formula was to fund mitigation actions (i.e. no cost-benefit analysis)

Adoption of Mitigation Plan

Measuring effectiveness of mitigation actions – lack of follow-up

Communicating mitigation planning (was internal but not external – lacking public awareness)

Conclusions –

- Conduct stakeholder inventory
- appoint project managers
- limitation of plan implementation even if plans are in place

University mitigation plan adoption varied – lack of a project manager often the difference between whether a plan is adopted or left on the shelf

follow-up recommendations

recommendations for future research – assessment:

1. Private institutions
2.

Questions of Timothy De Palma –

Unidentified female / what differences might be between a four-year institution and community college level?

Timothy De Palma = not part of study

Unidentified male / what is the difference between implementation? Do they see it as a financial issue-loss of revenue?
Timothy De Palma = having a designated manager is key; …

Unidentified male / in your research – was there institutional memory utilized?

Timothy De Palma = only antidotal – varying experience

Unidentified male / (comment) sometimes doing this kind of planning is like selling life insurance – “I feel pretty good today – so I won't be dying soon; motivation for mitigation is not organic – just have to because of funding or responsibility/requirements – reinforcing “planning fatigue”

Timothy De Palma = agreed

“After Katrina: Assessing the UNO DRU Initiative”

Amanda Green, The University of New Orleans

[PowerPoint presentation]

Introduction and her background – Business manager for the College of Sciences; Masters Student in MPA; long-time civil servant; Katrina survivor … Hazards track unfolded – introduction in abstract

DRU implementation at UNO history – funding from FEMA … rather than contracting with an outside entity – use in-house expertise … research team (CHART and others) and Advisory Committee – various campus stakeholders … focus groups and stakeholder interviews provided content and areas of research …

15 hazards were identified … cut straight over to goals and strategies –

1.protect lives of student and faculty, staff at UNO
2.safeguard infrastructure
3.restoration of operations
Strategy response – in parts (list) …

UNO Hazard Mitigation Plan was adopted by FEMA in 2006

recounting experience of Katrina – UNO becoming site of reception for evacuees from more flooded areas – impacts on campus

Action items –

1. Have a permanent DRU advisory committee
2. Drainage system evaluation of environs – impact of drainage/pumping out … reliance on city for drainage, with campus monitored … parts of campus safeguarded (raising parking lots, etc)
3
4. Safe floor area set aside – second floors … safeguarded shelter
Prioritization of campus buildings through evaluations
Future development and construction for DRU compliance (limitation – items must be put through the state of Louisiana Office of Facility Planning and Control … much stronger guidelines must be strengthened beyond state guidelines
Data must be reformatted to make available for public safety agencies use
Revision of university operating procedures
Emergency Warning System instituted / implemented (in progress)
Business continuity plan implementation (documents reside in Sharepoint) … mandatory direct deposit for employee payroll
DRU education – course development in progress … student orientation and location of emergency plans / brochures – an educated student body is a safer student body.
DRU hazard mitigation projects – in conjunction with DRU course … observance of National Preparedness Month – in September …
Increased use of online learning – web-based learning tools (Blackboard/Sharepoint) – the only university to have a fall 2005 semester
Mental health and violence prevention – just added as a DRU action item … re-establish the UNO workplace violence committee …

Plan and prepare – review and recover …

Questions of Amanda Green –

Unidentified male / How was UNO able to get back as the only university open for fall 2005 discussion amongst group (other UNO participants lead)

(Ken D’Aquin, University Computing Center, UNO) Comment: “A huge part of what you are exists in social media and computers …”

challenges of Katrina aftermath and recovery …

Unidentified male /question about Blackboard – were most faculty able to adapt?

Response: yes

Unidentified male /(question-comment) challenge of disaster recovery – emotional level needs to be dealt with