

*Snap Shot of the Results from a Survey Gauging Emergency Management
Higher Education Community Consensus on Key Points related to
Emergency Management's Disciplinary Identity*

INTRODUCTION AND METHODS

The FEMA Higher Education Program convened two working groups in the last two years to support the higher education community's efforts to define what emergency management is and does as a discipline and how that relates to higher education in emergency management. Documents were produced that report the discussion of these groups and their points of consensus (available at: <https://training.fema.gov/emiweb/edu/emTheoryResearch.asp>).

Too few individuals representing few institutions were able to participate in the working groups. Yet, there was a commitment to expanding the conversation on these topics to include a broader array of individuals and institutions and explore whether, and to what extent, consensus exists around the ideas emerging from the working groups.

While it was believed that the points of consensus from the groups could potentially help shape the continuing development of emergency management higher education, their significance is understood to be contingent on whether the wider higher education community agrees with and finds useful the ideas the groups have put forth.

A simple internet survey was developed as an initial means of gauging community support. Most of the points of consensus from the two working group reports were copied and pasted into a survey and a 5 point Likert scale was provided for each respondent to indicate the extent to which their faculty agree with each point. An opportunity for open-ended feedback was also provided. Ratings of 4 or 5 would indicate consensus regarding the statement made among emergency management faculty at an institution. During data analysis, it would be concluded that there was significant consensus across the faculty associated with responding institutions around the idea represented in any statements with a mean value at or above 4, standard deviation below 1, and negative, high skew.

The survey was done with the understanding that further efforts would have to be made to fundamentally revise, expand, or otherwise revisit the work done to date, and consensus be sought again before moving forward should a lack of consensus be found. Alternatively, it was believed that if significant consensus were found, the work product of these groups could be used, with, perhaps, some minor reworking, to inform future working group agendas, textbook development and development of supporting learning materials, exploration of degree program learning outcomes, accreditation planning, and more.

A master list of institutions was compiled from the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Higher Education Program website College List links for doctoral level; masters level; masters certificate, specialization, concentration or track; bachelor degrees; bachelor-level concentrations or minors; associate level; standalone certificate programs; and, emergency/disaster management programs in other countries lists. Compilation resulted in a population of 166 institutions. Contact information for the person responsible for the institution's emergency management program(s) could be found for 161 of the identified institutions. The initial invitation was sent on March 28, 2014 with personal reminder emails sent on April 10, April 23, and May 12 of 2014.

When the survey closed on May 16, 2014, representatives of 67 institution's emergency management program(s), or 42% of those contacted had participated. Sixty of the institutions were in the United States and 7 were outside of the United States. Twenty-six of the responding institution's department name had emergency management or some variation (e.g., disaster management, humanitarian) in the name while forty-one did not. Twenty of the responding institutions offered less than a 4 year degree, i.e., an associate's degree, minor, certificate, or specialization; and, forty-seven of the institutions offer one or more degrees above the associate's level. Thirty-four of the responding institutions serve undergraduate students only; fifteen serve both undergraduates and graduate students; and, eighteen only serve graduate students. Twenty-nine of the institutions responding offer most of the emergency management curriculum online, nineteen primarily face-to-face, fourteen blended, and 5 other. See Appendix A for a list of participating institutions.

FINDINGS

- Significant consensus across faculty/institutions represented in the survey.
 - Means consistently above 4 on a 5 point Likert scale; standard deviations typically below 1; kurtosis typically high; and, skew typically high and negative.
- Significant consensus around the identity of emergency management as an academic discipline. Lowest mean was related to the suggested definition of emergency management as a discipline at 3.87 on a 5 point Likert scale but the standard deviation was below 1 and the skew high and negative. See Appendix B for the disciplinary identity points of consensus and distribution of responses to them.
- Significant consensus around the where the discipline of emergency management ought to contribute. Lowest mean was not low at all, i.e., 4.19 on a 5 point Likert scale but here again the standard deviation was below 1 and the skew was low but negative. See Appendix C for the disciplinary contributions points of consensus and distribution of responses to them.
- Significant consensus around the role of emergency management *vis a vis* professional development of students. Lowest mean was not low at all, i.e., 4.14 on a 5 point Likert scale. And, while there was significant distribution of ratings of this statement across the values of 3, 4, and 5, the skew was negative and high. See Appendix D for the distribution of responses related these points of consensus.
- Significant consensus concerning the skills emergency management higher education programs ought to help students build. The lowest mean was actually high, i.e., 4.64 on a 5 point Likert scale. See Appendix E for the skill-related points of consensus and distribution of responses to them.
- Crosstab analysis was conducted using Eta as a measure of association ($p < .05$) revealed there was little or no difference of opinion between
 - Institutions serving only undergraduate students, only graduate students, or a mixed student body;
 - Institutions offering only certificates/specializations versus those offering degrees
 - Institutions offering face-to-face, online, blended, or other programs;
 - Institutions in the United States or outside of the United States; and,
 - The status of the person who completed the survey on behalf of the faculty (i.e., faculty, program coordinator/director, department head/chair, other).
- Crosstab analysis did, however, reveal a pattern of differing opinion based on whether some variation of emergency management (e.g., disaster, humanitarian) was in the title of the department versus not (using Eta as a measure of association, $p < .05$).
- Very few comments provided in the open-ended space provided.
- While there were a couple of comments offering critique or constructive feedback, there were no themes across the comments that were provided other than one of positive/encouraging remarks related to undertaking this kind of work.

APPENDIX A. PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS

This report reflects the participation of the person responsible for the institutions' emergency management higher education program(s), or a designated alternative, at the following 67 institutions.

Adler School	Missouri State University
Arkansas Tech University	Montgomery College
Auckland University of Technology	Montgomery County Community College
Australian Emergency Management Institute	North Dakota State University
Barry University	Northern Alberta Institute of Technology
Bellevue University	Northwest Missouri State University
Brandon University	Oklahoma State University
California State University Long Beach	Onondaga Community College
Centennial College, Toronto, Canada	Philadelphia University
Central Georgia Technical College	Portland Community College
Clackamas Community College	Pikes Peak Community College
Coastline Community College	Royal Roads University
Columbia College	Saint Louis University
Columbia Southern University	San Antonio College
Community College of Vermont	St Petersburg College
Concordia University	SUNY Canton
Durham Technical Community College	University of Maryland Baltimore County
Eastern New Mexico University	University of North Carolina Charlotte
Edmonds Community College	University of Akron
Erie Community College	University of Central Missouri
Fairleigh Dickinson University	University of Delaware
Florida State University	University of Florida
George Mason University	University of Hawaii-West Oahu
Georgia Perimeter College	University of Maryland University College
Georgia State University	University of North Carolina - Pembroke
Guilford Technical Community College	University of North Texas
Hesston College	University of South Florida
Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis	University of Southern Mississippi
Jackson State University	University of Washington
Jacksonville State University	Utah Valley University
Justice Institute of British Columbia	Voorhees College
Louisiana State University	Wayne Community College
Meridian Community College	Western Illinois University
Millersville University	

APPENDIX B. DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSES REGARDING DISCIPLINARY IDENTITY

	Mean	SD	Skew	Kurtosis
<i>Extent to which agree with definition of the academic discipline of emergency management.</i>				
"The scientific study of how humans and their institutions interact and cope with hazards and vulnerabilities and resulting events and consequences".	3.87	.856	-7.57	.978
<i>Extent to which believe that emergency management has the following disciplinary responsibilities.</i>				
Educate future emergency management professionals in a manner that will benefit them wherever they enter the broad profession	4.77	.425	-1.299	-.323
Educate those throughout society who perform tasks and activities related to emergency management outside of the profession	4.20	.797	-.744	.028
Educate students based on the integration and synthesis of hazards and disaster scholarship and research	4.49	.658	-.917	-.242
Collect, analyze, integrate, synthesize literature related to hazards, vulnerabilities, and resulting events	4.61	.574	-1.161	.409
Generate new knowledge through original research and critical assessment of existing hazards and disaster literature	4.57	.739	-1.630	1.757

Promote the dissemination, application, and utilization of the results of original research	4.46	.833	-1.377	.848
Seek to foster the utilization of research findings and to the extent possible foster practical application of research findings	4.55	.697	-1.526	1.938
Make the results of our research available and accessible in form, format, and forum to multiple audiences	4.46	.815	-1.559	1.885
Collaborate with those working in the profession so that theory shapes practice and practice shapes theory	4.74	.560	-2.082	3.381
Seek to influence policy	4.28	.906	-1.071	.232
Advocate for a culture of shared responsibility	4.49	.656	-.939	-.202
Foster the legitimacy and development of the academic discipline and profession of emergency management	4.80	.472	-2.330	4.941

APPENDIX C. HOW EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OUGHT TO CONTRIBUTE AS AN ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE: DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSES

	Mean	SD	Skew	Kurtosis
<i>Extent to which believe it important that emergency management contributes to the following issues.</i>				
Safer, less vulnerable world with increased capacity to cope with hazards and disasters	4.74	.560	-2.082	3.381
Reduction in the frequency and impacts or events	4.19	.791	-.536	-.633
Increased engagement in hazards and disaster research area across all academic disciplines	4.49	.656	-.939	-.202
Improved quality of the hazards and disaster research being done by other disciplines	4.29	.754	-.766	-.071
Introduction of a discipline that is perceived as both legitimate and credible across academic disciplines and academic Institutions of higher education	4.57	.696	-1.586	2.107
Emergency management policy based on empirical research findings	4.41	.792	-1.053	.051
Improved emergency management practice and programs through bridging the theory to practice divide	4.61	.599	-1.278	.654
Shape a new generation of professional emergency managers	4.75	.529	-2.064	3.495
Clearer communication of our identity and needs within our departments, colleges, and individual institutions	4.39	.826	-1.171	.481
Clearer communication of the education we have to offer students at various degree levels and how such an education relates to various possible career paths	4.58	.579	-1.022	.092
Appeal to a broader base of students. Some students will go on to seek employment as a professional emergency manager but most will seek careers outside of the emergency management profession. This broader base Increases program visibility and sustainability within higher education generally, and our Individual institutions specifically, (e.g., increased numbers of students In EM classes) without further Increasing the pressure on programs to have their students employed as EM professionals upon graduation	4.49	.611	-.753	-.373
Increased quality of EMHIED curriculums by grounding our coursework in the body of knowledge available	4.49	.740	-1.319	1.000

APPENDIX D. HIGHER EDUCATION AND ITS ROLE VIS A VIS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSES

	Mean	SD	Skew	Kurtosis
There are four major areas where an emergency management career can be pursued including government, humanitarian assistance, domestic nonprofits, and businesses	4.14	1.108	-1.468	1.524
Students must pursue professional development opportunities (e.g., training, certification) and opportunities to gain direct, hands-on management experience to be competitive in attaining emergency management jobs	4.52	.662	-1.042	-.047

The professional development and experience students would ideally pursue to complement their emergency management education varies depending on whether the student desires a career in a domestic nonprofit, business, government, or international humanitarian assistance	4.26	.973	-1.606	2.677
Emergency management programs would be wise to sensitize their students who desire an emergency management career to the importance of professional development and the opportunities for different career areas	4.67	.539	-1.349	.925
Higher education programs are not alone responsible for the professional development of their emergency management students	4.55	.775	-2.377	7.254
Programs ought to inform students of the responsibility they bear for their professional development	4.74	.575	-2.119	3.451
Emergency management programs should not conceive of themselves solely as professional preparatory programs	4.37	.867	-1.255	.759
It would not be possible for degree programs to address each of the professional development needs related to the range of emergency management careers within the auspices of a single higher education program at any level	4.22	1.099	-1.363	1.041
Professional development may be part of higher education program curricula to varying degrees and manifest in different ways, related to different career areas	4.40	.730	-1.039	.643
There is an opportunity and need for increased partnerships between higher education programs in emergency management and organizations offering emergency management training	4.72	.507	-1.895	2.903
Higher education programs owe students the opportunity to learn about the significant, substantive, and topically varied body of scholarship and research that would benefit them In all emergency management career paths	4.55	.665	-1.180	.209

APPENDIX E. SKILLS THAT ARE OBLIGATORY FOR HIGH ED PROGRAMS TO BUILD IN STUDENTS: DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSES

	Mean	SD	Skew	Kurtosis
<i>Extent to which agree that assisting students in building the following skills should be viewed as obligatory on the part of emergency management higher education programs.</i>				
Verbal communications	4.75	.560	-2.150	3.651
Written communications	4.85	.469	-3.225	9.677
Interpersonal communication	4.70	.551	-1.708	2.071
Group communication	4.66	.565	-1.430	1.145
Network building and stakeholder engagement	4.69	.556	-1.610	1.727
Analytical thinking	4.88	.370	-3.277	11.109
Application of research in practice	4.64	.620	-1.545	1.282
Problem solving	4.85	.399	-2.722	7.302
Decision making	4.87	.385	-2.977	8.972
Leadership	4.80	.437	-2.112	3.870

This snapshot of the results report and the survey leading to it were done by Jessica Jensen. Please direct comments or inquiries related to the focus group/report to her at ja.jensen@ndsu.edu or 701-219-4293.