

Emergency Management/ Homeland Security Education Regional Academic Collaborative Region VI

After Action Review/Improvement Plan
February 23, 2018

The After-Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP) aligns the collaborative engagement objectives with preparedness doctrine to include the National Preparedness Goal and related frameworks and guidance.

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ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

Exercise Name	Emergency Management/Homeland Security Higher Education Regional Academic Collaborative Region VI
Exercise Dates	Friday, February 23, 2018
Scope	The collaborative engagement was a one-day, four-hour long event for academics and practitioners from FEMA Region VI held at the University of North Texas in Denton, Texas. The engagement consisted of presentations sharing examples of successful and forthcoming efforts to move academic and research outputs to emergency management practice followed by a short, open discussion engaging all participants.
Engagement Theme	Practices of collaboration among faculty, researchers, students, and emergency management practitioners within Region VI.
Purpose	To identify untapped opportunities, build awareness, and capture successful regional practices of collaboration with faculty, students, and researchers working with emergency management practitioners.
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To bring together emergency management and homeland security academics and practitioners to share efforts and discuss opportunities. 2. To capture the proceedings of the workshop in a shareable document to promote on-going collaboration.
Sponsor	FEMA Emergency Management Higher Education Program
Participating Organizations	31 participants attended, both in-person and virtually, representing a variety of academic institutions, organizations, and governmental agencies. A comprehensive list of participants is available in Appendix A.
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On Friday, February 23rd a group of practitioners and academics from FEMA Region VI gathered at the University of North Texas in Denton, Texas, to discuss collaborations among emergency management organizations and colleges and universities within the region. The engagement created an opportunity for members of the regional emergency management community to form new relationships, engage in discussion, and share ongoing and planned best practices for successful collaboration. This event was sponsored by FEMA's Emergency Management Higher Education Program, and it was the latest in a series of workshops intended to foster collaboration and promote networking within the FEMA regions. Prior to this event, similar workshops had been held in Regions I and IX.

Following self-introductions by all of those attending the meeting, both in person and virtually, the workshop began with an overview of the Higher Education Program. This was followed by a series of presentations and a large group discussion. The presentations provided examples of successful collaborations that are currently underway, identified challenges, and suggested future opportunities. Those delivering presentations represented a variety of organizations, including the Naval Postgraduate School's University and Agency Partnership Initiative, the FEMA Higher Education Program, the University of North Texas, Oklahoma State University, Denton Independent School District, FEMA Region VI, Arkansas Tech University, Arkansas State University, the National Domestic Preparedness Consortium, Louisiana State University, and the University of New Mexico. Topics covered by the presentations included fostering collaborations among academic and professional organizations, building and maintaining strong alumni relations, incorporating training and practical experience into university programs, enhancing student learning and professional development, and using technologies to promote community resilience.

At the conclusion of the presentations, all attendees, both in person and virtual, participated in a large group engagement discussion. The discussion revolved around five broad topics. First, participants discussed the need to engage all relevant stakeholders, including local emergency management officials, in future collaboration efforts. Second, participants discussed the challenges faced by academic emergency management programs in colleges and universities, including limited resources. Third, the importance of bridging the gap between research and practice and integrating experiential learning into the academic curriculum was discussed, including internships, field trips, and other hands-on activities. Fourth, the importance of diversity and including members of underrepresented groups in future collaboration efforts was discussed. Finally, the issue of balancing homeland security concerns and emergency management principles in college and university curriculum was discussed.

ENGAGEMENT PRESENTATIONS

The collaborative started with opening remarks from the facilitator. After self-introductions by all participants, including in person and virtual, presentations on collaborative practices were delivered. These included six in person presentations and four virtual presentations. Key areas addressed included creating a strong network of academic collaboration and support for current students, building and maintaining strong alumni relations, incorporating training and experiential learning, strengthening the profession, and using technology to promote community resilience.

Richard Suttie: University and Agency Partnership Initiative

Richard Suttie, from the Naval Postgraduate School Center for Homeland Defense and Security (CHDS), presented virtually about the [University and Agency Partnership Initiative \(UAPI\)](https://www.chds.us/c/academic-programs/uapi) (<https://www.chds.us/c/academic-programs/uapi>). The UAPI is a university homeland security support program placed under the Center for Homeland Security and Defense in Monterey, California. The goal is to “increase the number and diversity of students receiving homeland security education, accelerate the establishment of high-quality academic programs, and provide opportunities for collaboration that create an intellectual multiplier effect that furthers the study of homeland security.”

This partnership initiative opens up the CHDS’s “curriculum, distance learning technology, Homeland Security Digital Library, and all other resources. In return, partners share their curriculum and specialized expertise with the UAPI partners. This provides a cost-effective way to educate thousands of students beyond the NPS campus by reducing the time and resources required of universities and agencies having to build their own curricula and programs from scratch. It also brings synergy to addressing critical research issues, accelerates the development of the homeland security academic discipline, and more rapidly serves knowledge to support the nation’s security efforts.” Visit CHDS [UAPI](http://www.uapi.us) (www.uapi.us) for additional resources.

Kay Goss: FEMA Higher Education Program History and Now



Kay Goss, former Associate Director of FEMA, delivered an in person presentation on the history of the [FEMA Higher Education Program](https://training.fema.gov/hiedu/) (<https://training.fema.gov/hiedu/>). The presentation provided an overview of the program, including the rationale for its creation, the important role played by Region VI in its early development, and the value of the Higher Education Program in advancing the profession.

When it was launched in 1994, the goal of the program was to have a college-level degree program in Emergency Management and/or Homeland Security in every state by 2009. Since that time, numerous undergraduate degree programs have been established, and a growing

number of graduate programs are being developed. The Higher Education Program has provided valuable support to college and university faculty through the development of textbooks, course materials, and other resources.

In addition to curriculum support, the Higher Education Program has also facilitated important networking opportunities to strengthen the higher education community, most notably by organizing and hosting the Higher Education Symposium. The symposium, which was first held in 1997, provides opportunities for individuals from various colleges and universities to network with each other, share best practices, and identify challenges and opportunities for the emergency management and homeland security higher education community. The next symposium will be in June 2018.

Gary Webb: Building Student-Alumni Relations



Gary Webb, from the University of North Texas Department of Emergency Management and Disaster Science, presented in person about the importance of alumni relations, strategies in creating strong alumni relations, and challenges to maintaining alumni relations. Alumni are valuable because they can provide information on emerging technologies, new policies, and challenges facing the field, which helps ensure the relevance and timeliness of the program's curriculum. Alumni can also provide valuable internship, networking, and mentoring opportunities for current students in the program. Additionally, throughout their careers and as they advance professionally, alumni can play an important role in terms of maintaining and bolstering the program's reputation.

Strategies for building alumni relations include publishing an annual newsletter, remaining active on social media, hosting social events, including an annual departmental picnic, and recognizing outstanding alumni with an annual award. Alumni advisory groups can also serve as a vehicle to strengthen ties with alumni of the program. While connecting with program alumni is important, there are also significant challenges to maintaining strong alumni relations. These challenges include shrinking university budgets, limited personnel and resources at the program or departmental level, and competing demands and changing priorities of university leaders. In addition to these kinds of bureaucratic challenges, there are also logistical challenges that sometimes make it difficult to maintain contact with alumni. In particular, the personal and professional mobility of alumni can make it difficult to maintain current and accurate contact information.

Ronald Timmons: Student Internships and Field Experiences

Ronald Timmons, from the University of North Texas Department of Emergency Management and Disaster Science, presented in person about student internships and field experiences. Among these experiences are attending conventions, participating in mock interviews, working in disaster exercises as actors, and going on field trips. At the University of North Texas, students take classes in Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Design and Operations and Disaster Exercise Design in which they design, facilitate, and evaluate exercises. These classes are valuable because they provide students experiential learning opportunities.

In addition, there are two semesters tied to internships in the program. The first semester is the preparation course, and it involves working with mock interviews, cover letters, and resumes, and explaining workplace realities. The second semester is the practicum, where a student works in an internship and the host supervisor provides performance reviews at the halfway mark (120 hours) and at the end of the internship (240 hours). There are a variety of internship venues, and they include local government, such as cities and counties, FEMA, non-governmental agencies, hospitals, educational settings, the private sector, and international organizations.

Hsien-Ho (Ray) Chang and Steven Melton: Leveraging Professional Associations to Strengthen the EM Student Experience

Hsien-Ho (Ray) Chang and Steven Melton, from Oklahoma State University Department of Political Science, presented in person about leveraging professional associations to strengthen the emergency management student experience. They noted that it is often difficult to effectively integrate students into the program and for students to gain practical experience, particularly those enrolled primarily online, because they may not be able to participate in on-campus opportunities to attend events, meetings, and activities. In order to gain experience and create

opportunities, students were encouraged to get involved outside of classrooms and be members in the International Association of Emergency Managers – Student Chapter (IAEM-SC).

To better integrate all students into the program and maximize opportunities for engagement and to gain experience, distance students are required to attend at least 9 semester credit hours on-campus to fulfill a residency requirement. Other successful initiatives include providing financial support for students to attend the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM) conference at Las Vegas, Nevada in 2015. Students have also had the opportunity to work with the Earthquake Engineering Research Institute (EERI) in California to conduct a preliminary damage assessment following a local earthquake; volunteer with various local agencies, including the Stillwater police and fire departments, OSU Police Department, Stillwater

Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), and others; conduct virtual tabletop exercises; and attend classes at the Emergency Management Institute (EMI) in Emmitsburg, Maryland.

Robert Garcia and Charla Marchuk: K-12 STEM Collaboration



Robert Garcia, from Denton Independent School District (ISD), and Charla Marchuk, from FEMA Region 6, presented in person about a K-12 Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) Collaboration, along with two of Mr. Garcia's

students. Their interest lies in further integrating STEM and Geographical Information Systems (GIS) into the practice of emergency management. Mr. Garcia's students were initially involved in a project partnership with Samsung to create the Critical Adaptable Shelter for Assistance (CASA) de Samsung, a short-term shelter to be used in disaster relief. To create such shelter, they reached out to local meteorologists, the American Red Cross, FEMA, and an architect. Importantly, the students designed the shelter to fit the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards for the elderly and disabled, who are often the most vulnerable after disasters.

The presentation emphasized the opportunities that exist to further integrate emergency management principles and GIS into K-12 STEM education. In particular, the presentation highlighted the potential to raise awareness and generate interest in these topics through local news organizations, social media, schools, professional educator associations, school boards, Parent Teacher Associations (PTA), and neighbors.

Ekong Peters: Emergency Management Annual Conference



Ekong Peters, from Arkansas Tech University Department of Emergency Management, presented in person about the Emergency Management Annual Conference, now in its 7th year, organized and hosted by the department. Each year the conference features well-known speakers and national figures in emergency management and homeland security. For example, the conference this year is themed "Celebrating 20 years of Emergency Management Graduates" and will feature Kay Goss and James Lee Witt. Last year, there were speakers from the Naval Postgraduate School. The conference is intended to facilitate dialogue between practitioners and academics.

The presentation also highlighted Arkansas Tech University's involvement in the community through an annual disaster preparedness expo and other activities. These have included advising local schools on taking shelter and exercises involving a mock car crash. Efforts are placed at involving not only the community but the students, as well. In both the annual conference and

yearly community disaster preparedness expos, students in the Arkansas Tech Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security are involved in organizing them.

Deborah Persell: A-State Disaster Training Facilities



Deborah Persell, from Arkansas State University Regional Center for Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management, presented virtually about two disaster training facilities aimed at bridging practice and academia. The planned Disaster Training Facility will be funded through grants and philanthropic means. There are currently two site proposals: the first is approximately 100 acres at Walnut Ridge, Arkansas, and the second is approximately 200 acres at Imboden, Arkansas.

The Walnut Ridge site is located within undeveloped land in the Walnut Ridge Regional Airport, and will be able to support facilities that will facilitate training for incidents such as tornadoes, earthquakes, floods, agricultural emergencies, and community/urban emergencies. The Imboden site is located close to a highway and a railroad, and will specialize in training for water rescue, wilderness search and rescue, utility emergencies, and tactical training. An education/research center is expected to be built at both sites once there is enough funding. In addition, a search and rescue dog, Scout, was donated to the University from Crowley's Ridge German Shepherds in Paragould, Arkansas to incorporate in and advance training. Once the facilities are operational, they will be open and available to others outside of Arkansas State University.

Garret Zollinger: National Domestic Preparedness Consortium

Garret Zollinger, from Louisiana State University (LSU) National Center for Biomedical Research and Training, presented virtually about the [National Domestic Preparedness Consortium](https://www.ndpc.us/) (<https://www.ndpc.us/>). The Program was established in 1998. It is one hundred percent federally funded, meaning that there is no cost to state, local, and tribal agencies in the US that request the training. There are seven consortium members, including Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service (TEEX), New Mexico Tech Energetic Materials Research and Testing Center, LSU National Center for Biomedical Research and Training (NCBRT), FEMA Center for Domestic Preparedness, Transportation Technology Center, Inc. (TTCI), National Disaster Preparedness Training Center at the University of Hawaii's (NDPTC), and the Center for Radiological Nuclear Training at the Nevada National Security Site (CTOS). Training is intended to be at the awareness, performance, and management level, and all courses are Department of Homeland Security (DHS) certified, although they will have to be recertified every three years.

In order to request a training, the receiving organization must meet certain minimum requirements. This program takes a jurisdiction's THIRA and Emergency Management Plans and creates customized lessons. The program identifies training gaps and tries to bridge them, with the end goal of building more resilient communities.

Shirley Baros: Geo-Spatial Emergency Management Collaboration

Shirley Baros, from the [University of New Mexico Earth Data Analysis Center \(EDAC\)](https://edac.unm.edu/) (<https://edac.unm.edu/>), presented virtually about the Geo-Spatial Emergency Management Collaboration. EDAC is a not-for-profit research facility funded through contracts and grants that specializes in geospatial technology and project management. It encourages stakeholder and community engagement through the hazard mitigation planning process, collaboration, and community input to enhance community resilience.

The presentation highlighted the Cooperating Technical Partners (CTP) Program, which is a collaborative between FEMA, EDAC, and the State of New Mexico. In managing risk in New Mexico, there are three main challenges: rural engagement, economy, and multi-hazard risk. In rural engagement, technologies like LiDAR and base level elevation (BLE) mapping are challenging when helping locals understand the benefits and participate in the mitigation process. With economy, there is a lack of local funding, compounded by the fact that New Mexico is a large, rural state with the bulk of the population near two major rivers. Strategies for overcoming these challenges include: (1) education of communities; (2) BLE projects to update New Mexico's mapping and provide resources and tools for locals; (3) use of LiDAR equipment to create accurate mapping; (4) having resources ready for mitigation planning projects; (5) empowering rural and under-funded communities; and (6) supporting the New Mexico Hazard Mitigation Plan. Overall, the program defines success through education, collaboration, and products like LiDAR and BLE.

ENGAGEMENT DISCUSSION

After the presentations, there was a large group, open engagement discussion. The original agenda called for small group breakout discussions to be followed by a re-convening of the entire group, but due to time constraints there were no breakout discussions. Instead, all participants in the meeting, including both in person and virtual, engaged in a larger group discussion to identify critical issues, challenges, and opportunities for future collaborations. From this discussion, five key themes emerged: (1) maximizing stakeholder engagement, (2) confronting challenges facing academic programs, (3) incorporating practical experience and experiential learning into college and university curriculum, (4) promoting diversity in the profession, and (5) balancing homeland security issues and emergency management principles in college and university programs.

The first theme that emerged from the discussion was *maximizing stakeholder engagement*. During the engagement discussion, the question was posed, who are the critical stakeholders? In the ensuing discussion, it was noted that there were no representatives from state or local emergency management agencies among the workshop participants. Universities throughout the region were well-represented, including at least one university from each of the five states in the region, and the federal level was well-represented, including several participants from Region VI, but the absence of state and local representatives was notable. Consensus emerged among the workshop participants that future collaborative efforts should include a wider range of stakeholders beyond universities and FEMA regional personnel. Examples of additional stakeholders include representatives from local emergency management agencies, regional agencies, such as the North Central Texas Council of Governments and others like it, and relevant state agencies. Additionally, it was pointed out that other stakeholders may come from the private and non-profit sectors, including businesses, trade associations, non-government organizations, voluntary associations, and others. Engaging in dialogue among all these stakeholders strengthens partnerships, fosters collaborations, and contributes to a more effective and efficient system when disaster strikes.

A second theme that emerged from the group discussion was the importance of *confronting the challenges facing academic programs*. Several participants noted a lack of resources, personnel shortages, administrative demands, and in some cases a lack of understanding on the part of administrators and others in the university in terms of what emergency management is and why it is important. It was suggested that in those instances where programs are not receiving adequate support from within their own universities, perhaps they could find additional support from other academic programs within the region. The notion of a regional community of educators was mentioned, in which faculty from various colleges and universities within the region might organize workshops and symposia to share ideas and address common challenges.

A third theme that emerged from the discussion was the importance of *incorporating practical experience and experiential learning into the academic curriculum*. In particular, this was discussed as a primary means of bridging the gap between theory and practice. Participants reiterated the value of internships, field trips, participating in drills and exercises, and other activities in terms of enhancing the value of educational programs and preparing the next

generation of emergency management professionals. Participants in the discussion also agreed that while practical experience is important for students, advancing theory and research is also essential to the future growth of the profession.

A fourth theme that emerged from the discussion was the importance of *promoting diversity in the profession*. In both university and professional settings, there is a need to increase the representation of members of underrepresented groups. As communities become more diverse and as social vulnerability continues to impact people's experiences with hazards and disasters, it is important that the profession of emergency management adequately and appropriately reflect the communities it serves.

Finally, the fifth theme that emerged from the discussion was the importance of *balancing homeland security issues and emergency management principles in college and university programs*. The manner in which the two are balanced may vary from program to program, but it is essential in terms of maintaining and promoting the all-hazards approach upon which the profession is built. As disasters continue to increase in frequency, severity, and complexity, the profession must remain equipped to manage the widest range of hazards possible, including natural, technological, and human-induced.

MOVING FORWARD

From the individual presentations and the group discussion that ensued, three broad themes emerged in terms of moving forward: (1) sustaining collaborations, (2) strengthening the profession, and (3) harnessing technology.

In terms of *sustaining collaborations*, participants in the meeting agreed that there was value in coming together, engaging in meaningful dialogue, and sharing best practices, and that it would be useful to do so on a more regular basis. As the meeting concluded, there was a preliminary discussion to plan and organize another collaborative meeting in the region within the next six months. The motivation for that discussion was to capitalize on the momentum built by this meeting, which was organized by the FEMA Higher Education Program, promote self-organizing among participants, and cultivate a culture of collaboration within the region.

In terms of *strengthening the profession*, participants agreed that higher education must play an essential role moving forward. As the profession evolves, there are several key areas in which it can be strengthened and improved. These include bridging the gap between theory and practice, incorporating experiential learning into the academic curriculum, and promoting greater diversity in the profession.

Finally, in terms of *harnessing technology*, participants agreed that there are multiple advanced tools now available to improve the way in which emergency management is taught in the classroom and practiced in the field. These technologies, some of which were illustrated in the individual presentations, include social media, risk-based smartphone applications, GIS, LiDar, and many others. Harnessing these tools both in the classroom and in our communities is essential to building a more resilient society in the future.

SUCSESSES AND AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Planning, Logistics, and Technology

Strengths: The event was attended and represented by all states in Region VI (Texas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Louisiana). Invitations to the event were sent electronically and collected through EventBrite, including the participant's name, institution, if they are attending in person or virtually, and their email. Of the 31 participants, 22 attended in person and remaining 9 attended virtually. UNT provided the academic collaboration with ample space for the in-person attendants, and virtual participation was facilitated via Skype for Business. The UNT IT staff conducted a test run three days before the event to identify and resolve issues.

Area for Improvement I: Reducing time delays associated with virtual presentations.

Action: Prior to the event, practice with all the virtual presenters on presenting their materials through Skype for Business so they may become more acquainted with the program and know what to do to in case of any issues that may arise.

Area for Improvement II: Provide parking information and permits ahead of time.

Action: In planning and organizing future meetings, allow enough time for the host organization to mail necessary parking information and other information related to event logistics in advance. This will ensure a timely start to the meeting and reduce confusion on the day of the event.

Meeting Content

Strengths: The presentations addressed a number of important issues, including improving the student experience, building alumni relations, fostering collaborations, and using technology to promote resilience. These are all vital in improving the profession now and in the future. Following the individual presentations delivered in person and virtually, the entire group participated in an engagement discussion to raise questions, identify challenges, and suggest future directions.

Area for Improvement III: Allow more time for group discussion.

Action: Limit the amount of time allotted for individual presentations and strictly enforce time limits on each presenter. Related to this, reduce delays associated with the virtual presentations. Otherwise, consider lengthening the meeting.

Area for Improvement IV: Include a broader range of stakeholders.

Action: Invite more practitioners from local, county, regional, and state agencies. Aside from university representatives and FEMA personnel, there few participants from these other important and relevant stakeholder groups. Their experience may provide more insights about the profession, and it may help to bridge the gap between academic and practice.

APPENDIX A: ENGAGEMENT PARTICIPANTS

Last Name	First Name	Email	Affiliation
<i>Attended in Person</i>			
Alexander	Randal	randall.alexander@tccd.edu	Tarrant County College
Bischof	Bill	bill.bischof@fema.dhs.gov	FEMA Region VI
Brownell	Ari		Denton Independent School District
Chang	Ray	ray.chang@okstate.edu	Oklahoma State University
Clement	Kevin	kclement@uh.edu	University of Houston
Curtiss	Jennifer	jennifer.curtiss@fema.dhs.gov	Richland College
Garcia	BJ	rgarcia@dentonisd.org	Denton Independent School District
Garibay	Jasmine	jasminegaribay@my.unt.edu	University of North Texas
Goss	Kay	kaycgoss@icloud.com	The International EM Society
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Webb	Gary	gary.webb@unt.edu	University of North Texas
<i>Attended Virtually</i>			
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Wang	Wen-Jiun	wjwang@shsu.edu	Sam Houston State University

<i>Did Not Attend</i>			
Beck	Randi	beck.randikay@gmail.com	Sam Houston State University
Denham	Magdalena	magdalena@shsu.edu	Sam Houston State University
Khemaka	Ashish	akk012@shsu.edu	Sam Houston State University

APPENDIX B: ENGAGEMENT BROCHURE

Emergency Management/Homeland Security Higher Education Regional Academic Collaborative Region VI

Friday, February 23, 2018

10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.

University of North Texas – 912 W. Chestnut St.

East Classroom Building – EOC Lab, Room 120 Denton, TX 76201

Virtual Participant Information will be provided prior to the event

Purpose: *To build awareness, capture successful regional practices of collaboration with faculty, students and researchers working with emergency management practitioners as well as to identify untapped opportunities.*

Desired outcome: *To support regional community connection and collaboration as well as create a dynamic regional specific guidebook to identify academic and broader community resources, capabilities and expertise to support on-going regional academic and practitioner partnership.*

Agenda:

10:00–10:30 - Welcome & Introductions

1:30–2:30 - Quick overview of FEMA Higher Education & UAPI programs & successful regional practices to be briefed in 5–7 minutes with a couple minutes for questions:

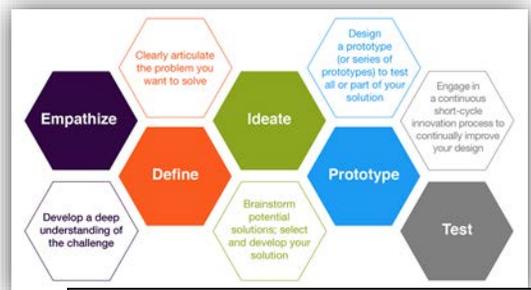
- FEMA Higher Education Program (Region VI) & UAPI Program
- University of North Texas- Building Student Alumni Relations
- University of North Texas- Student Internship Experience
- Oklahoma State- Leveraging Professional Associations to Strengthen the EM Student Experience
- K-12/ STEM Collaboration- FEMA Region VI
- Arkansas Tech- Emergency Management Annual Conference
- LSU- Working with the National Domestic Preparedness Consortium
- Arkansas State- Disaster training Facilities
- University of New Mexico- Geo-spatial emergency management collaboration

12:00–1:00 - Working lunch: Small group dialogues to develop idea pathways to practice

- Discuss presentations & other successful practices that could be shared and expanded?
- Who are the missing critical stakeholders in the region?
- Who cares about academic and practitioner collaboration?
- Are there challenges that these group face?
- What is possible in this collaboration?

1:00–1:45 - Small group sharing with the whole group

1:45–2:00 - Next steps, wrap up & gratitude



<http://citl.illinois.edu/paradigms/design-thinking>