

Best Practices in Crisis Intervention:  
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CSA 583: Counseling Issues and Practices  
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I believe that Texas A & M University in College Station, Texas represents a best practice in crisis intervention and prevention in the field of college student affairs. This institution has many constituents including graduate students,

hospitals and large buildings in a campus setting described as rural: fringe. The student population, both graduate and undergraduate, is roughly 50,000.

Some of their best practices include clear documentation of their practice and public access to the information. For example, at the bottom of their university homepage they have listed a link to their “emergency preparedness” plan. In comparison, the practice at Azusa Pacific University presents information briefly and includes little contact information or reporting protocol. Texas A & M also include instructional training videos for faculty, staff, and students. These are unavailable to the public on the general website. In addition they implement “code maroon”. It is a public awareness of crisis and emergency through email, twitter, text, online and office phone lines. It is a rather simple process to add your information as a part of the “code maroon” emergency notification service. You do not have to be a student, faculty or staff member to be a part of “code maroon”.

The Emergency Preparedness website is organized into four categories: resources, communication, procedures and contact. The home page includes a description of what constitutes an emergency and what to do in immediate crisis. They also include emergency contact numbers as well as allow you to continue on the web site with your identified status as faculty, staff or student. Under the *Procedures* link you find information regarding personal safety, weather, fire, and medical safety. “Tell Somebody” is a procedure found under personal safety. It allows a space for staff, faculty and/ or student to report suspicious behavior by an individual. It can remain anonymous with a detailed description of place, location and event that indicted the suspicion.

The *Contact* link directs you to the university department titled *Environmental Health and Safety Department, Office of Safety and Security*. As well as being the primary contact for the Emergency Procedure plans, this office serves as a resource to the general university in regards to such things as waste disposal, building regulations and safety policy. They are also responsible for such things as fire safety training, occupational safety, and even reviewing underwater diving protocols to make sure they are compliant with university and national policy. Included in their contact and staff directory is the university Police department as well as legal representation. The Assistant Vice President of the office, Christopher Meyer, sits on the crisis response team as well.

Under the *Resources* link you can find the “planning documents” where any individual can find the preparation plan for emergencies. They are again divided into categories such as: crisis management, hurricane and shelter response, H1N1 flu epidemic, emergency protocol and then a program titled LEAD. This is where you would find response to such things as a bomb threat, fire, campus shooter, or hazardous material spill. A last resource included is the Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) housed in the Office of Student Life. This resource is geared for undergraduate students when they are affected by an emergency, which even includes protocol during hospitalization. They include travel information and resources for counseling and academics. There are definitions of what is considered a critical incident as well as what CIRT will do in response. Parents and students can locate campus maps and links to other resources such as the health, counseling and ministry centers. The team consists of the VP of student affairs, representatives

from the health center, counseling center, residence life, multicultural office and facility management. CIRT has clear goals for the team including providing resources for student, responding in an organized way and using crisis as “teaching moments” for the undergraduate students. These individuals rotate an on-call duty that is connected with the University Police Department. So in reality when an event were to occur involving a student, though the Police Department would receive the call first, they will then notify the on-call member from CIRT. Secondly it provides a structure for follow up after an incident. This information is well displayed and accessible on the web site. Important and significant factors in an emergency or critical incident are for students and parents to have pertinent information available to them and are aware of what is being done on some level.

After speaking with Monica Weintraub, a Safety Specialist with Emergency Preparedness team, an important factor in a successful response team at a university is continuous communication between each office. Roles of individuals need to be clearly defined and there is an apparent accountability and trust between all. For example, her direct supervisor is Christopher Meyer, Assistant Vice President in the Office of Safety and Security is one of the primary individuals who will activate the plan. According to the web site he is responsible for coordinating emergency operations to effect orderly evacuation, rescue, cleanup, or other operations as required. From there, others will follow and know exactly what to do. She commented that she feels the overall organization of the each office is well structured, partly for liability purposes. Two strengths of the emergency

preparedness plan is that the University Police is heavily involved with emergency response and keeps clear communication with the staff.

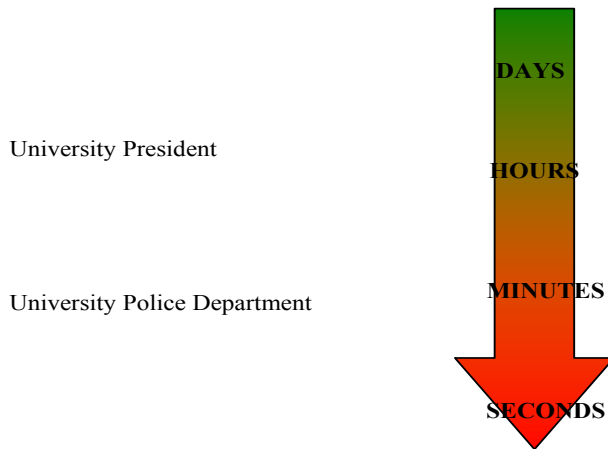
The Crisis Management plan was signed and approved by the Associate Vice President for University Risk, Vice President for Facilities, Chief of Staff, Office of the President and the President. The plan clearly defines the manager and director of emergency operations and stations/locations used for emergency responders such as National Guard and ambulances. In each location there is a “coordinator” responsible for clear documentation of all requests, messages. Communication system to use in an emergency is clearly defined with various forms and resources to use in the process. A table is provided to suggest appropriate measures of communication.

One of their strengths is that there exist one office designated for response and management. This allows other departments including Student Life to have someone not only hold them accountable but also provide them with resources and a plan to follow. I think this allows Student Life and at Texas A & M, CIRT, to focus their attention on students and uphold their overall mission and goals to support the development of their students. They have confidence in the structure and format at their institution for answers to be provided.

I have included tables and charts from the web site that provide communication processes and checklist for emergency operation coordinators to use.

V. Suggested Approval Hierarchy

**Approval Hierarchy**



h. Emergency Response Notification Process

Initial Notification →	Next Notification →	Next Notification →	Next Notification →	
911 Call ↓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UPD Dispatch</li> </ul>	Asst. VP Safety & Security; AVP Risk and Compliance	Chief of Staff; Assoc. Provost; Provost;	President Assoc. Provost; Provost
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Radio Room</li> </ul>	AVP Facilities; Utilities	VP Facilities;	Chief of Staff; President
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TAMU EMS</li> </ul>	AVP Student Affairs	VP Student Affairs; Assoc. Provost; Provost	President
EHS	Asst. VP Safety & Security; AVP Risk and Compliance	Chief of Staff; Assoc. Provost; Provost;	President	
CIRT	AVP Student Affairs	VP Student Affairs	Chief of Staff; President	
Physical Plant	AVP Facilities; Utilities	VP Facilities	Chief of Staff; President	
Marketing & Comm.	AVP Communications	VP Marketing & Comm	Chief of Staff; President; Assoc. Provost; Provost	
Employee Assistance	AVP Employee Services	Sr. VP Finance; Chief of Staff	President	

↑ Who else needs to know?    ↑ Who else needs to know?    ↑ Who else needs to know?

***Emergency Operations Center  
Activation Checklist***

	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
1. Has Brazos County 911 District been notified?	_____	_____
2. Has Physical Plant Communications Center been notified?	_____	_____
3. Have all key staff members been notified?	_____	_____
4. Has the President and VP for Facilities been notified?	_____	_____
5. Have the Bryan, College Station, and Brazos County EMCs been notified? (Phone: Bryan 821-1030; CS 821-1020; Brazos Co. 821-1010)	_____	_____
6. Has the Department of Public Safety in Bryan been notified? (Phone: 776-3100 or 3101; FAX 776-3169)	_____	_____
7. Has the Regional Liaison Officer (RLO) been notified? (Cell Phone: (979) 412-0003)	_____	_____
8. Has the Initial Disaster Report been submitted via FAX? (DPS Bryan 776-3170; RLO (979) 412-0003; DEM 512/424-2444 or 7160)	_____	_____
9. Are radios operational?	_____	_____
10. Are the phones operational?	_____	_____
11. Has a project number been assigned and announced?	_____	_____
12. Has a planning team been appointed and begun operations?	_____	_____
13. Has an EOC duty log been started and organizational chart displayed?	_____	_____
14. Has the electronic record-keeping system been activated and do all EOC participants have access.	_____	_____
15. Does an emergency declaration need to be made?	_____	_____
16. Is an evacuation required and has an order been issued?	_____	_____
17. Has the Red Cross been notified? The Salvation Army?	_____	_____
18. Do any shelters need to be opened? Status of shelters.	_____	_____

IV. Suggested Use of Systems

Geographic Extent	Time Available for Notification					
	Urgent, Immediate (<10 min)		Moderate Time (<2 hr)		Non-Urgent (>2 hr)	
	Event Type	Suggested Systems	Event Type	Suggested Systems	Event Type	Suggested Systems
<b>Campus-wide</b>	Tornado, Active Shooter, HazMat	Code Maroon, EAS	Clery Timely Warning, Other	Code Maroon, Neo, TV/Radio, EAS, Webpage	Hurricane Sheltering, Other	Neo, Webpage
<b>Several to many Locations</b>	Fire, Hostage, Active Shooter, HazMat	GeoCast Web, Code Maroon, EAS	Bomb Threat, Other	GeoCast Web, Fire Alarms	Flood, Other	TV/Radio, Neo, Webpage
<b>Few to limited locations</b>	Active Shooter, Medical, HazMat	GeoCast Web, Code Maroon, EAS, Fire Alarms	Utility Outage, Other	GeoCast Web, Neo, Phone Trees	Anticipated Civil Unrest, Special Sporting Event, Other	TV/Radio, Neo, Webpage