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Emergency Preparedness A High Priority for Colleges and Universities

Newly Released Report Indicates Campuswide Preparedness at Majority of Institutions

Washington, D.C. July 16, 2009 – Are our nation’s colleges and universities prepared to respond to a campuswide emergency? The results of the newly released National Campus Safety and Security Project survey, spearheaded by the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO), indicate that the majority of higher education institutions have instituted campuswide emergency preparedness plans that cover a wide spectrum of possible emergencies. What’s more, in a demonstration of necessary interdepartmental cooperation, campus leadership on emergency preparedness is widely shared across many college and university departments.

Highlights include the following: 85% of all survey respondents have an emergency preparedness plan that at least meets the standards set by the National Fire Protection Association; two-thirds of public and private four-year colleges and universities have a plan in place for communicating with students, faculty, and staff during and after an emergency; and 77% of respondents have adopted an on-campus emergency preparedness committee that includes membership from a wide variety of departments.

Jim Hyatt, the project director for the National Campus Safety and Security Project, and senior vice president for business and finance and chief financial officer, University of South Florida, notes, “It was gratifying to see the number of respondents that had an emergency management plan in place and that had a comprehensive emergency management committee.”

Adds John Palmucci, vice president, finance and treasurer, Loyola College in Maryland, “The sharing of information, solutions and possible tactics for prevention contained in the report are unprecedented. It will become the focus of conversations among all of our campus constituents.”

The report is based on responses to the National Campus Safety and Security Survey. It was distributed by NACUBO to the chief business officers at 2,203 institutions in August 2008, as part of the National Campus Safety and Security Project, which was launched by a NACUBO-led consortium of leading professional organizations committed to campus safety and security to learn more about specific plans and procedures colleges have implemented to address today’s all-hazards state of campus safety and security.

The survey report can be downloaded from the NACUBO website, and NACUBO will publish a book by Jim Hyatt in early 2010 that analyzes the campus safety study results, presents six case studies, and looks at how to build effective prevention and response programs.

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About NACUBO

NACUBO, founded in 1962, is a nonprofit professional organization representing chief administrative and financial officers at more than 2,100 colleges and universities across the country. NACUBO's mission is to promote sound management and financial practices at colleges and universities.

Partnering Associations

- National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO)
- APPA, *Leadership in Educational Facilities*
- American College Personnel Association (ACPA)
- Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB)
- Campus Safety Health and Environmental Management Association (CSHEMA)
- EDUCAUSE, *Transforming Education Through Information Technologies*
- International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators (IACLEA)
- National Association of College and University Attorneys (NACUA)
- University Risk Management and Insurance Association (URMIA)

Reactions to the report from members of the Campus Safety and Security Project Steering Committee:

“It is clear from the survey results that institutions of higher education take seriously their responsibility to foster safe and secure environments for their students, employees, and guests. It is very encouraging that nearly all institutions address natural disasters, acts of violence, and other man-made events in their emergency preparedness plans. However, only 3 in 4 institutions (75.6 percent) have addressed pandemic planning and even fewer (51.9 percent) are prepared for cyber disruptions. Similarly, only 25.7 percent of institutions have conducted exercises or tests for a pandemic emergency and only 14 percent for a cyber disruption. Accordingly, survey results indicate that there is still room for improvement because the Campus Safety and Security Project encourages an all-hazards approach to emergency preparedness.”

Rodney J. Petersen, J.D.

*Government Relations Officer & Director of EDUCAUSE Cybersecurity Initiative
EDUCAUSE*

“It was good to see that considerable progress has been made in the area of communications, specifically, the need for multiple means (i.e. redundant) of mass communication including both high and low-technology methods.”

William M. Elvey, P.E.

*Director for Facilities Management
University of Texas at Dallas*

“The survey will allow institutions to benchmark their own efforts and see how they compare to the rest of higher education but also, it should help folks prioritize their safety and security planning efforts.”

Allen J. Bova

*Director of Risk Management and Insurance
Cornell University*

“The CSSP report offers college and university administrators the information they need to reinvest in their safety and security program. Finally, information has been collected to guide future efforts in safety, and emergency management.”

Dennis K. Sullivan, CHMM, CEM

*Asst Director/Emergency Manager
Department of Environmental Health and Safety
University of Louisville*

“The initial results from the survey should serve as a roadmap for the higher education community as we work to enhance our readiness to respond to emergency situations. It is clear that in spite of significant progress in some areas, there remains considerable work to undertake, including recognizing the important role of an emergency manager and dedicating appropriate resources to this critical function.”

Steven J. Healy

Margolis, Healy and Associates