

Crisis and Disaster Preparedness on University and College Campuses:
An Open Session Discussion

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This special session is offered for conference participants to share their experiences regarding campus preparedness for dealing with an unforeseen campus event. Numerous types of crises can occur on campuses. Examples include:

- Natural disaster (flood, tornado, earthquake, forest fire, hurricane, blizzard, etc.)
- Accidental disaster (long-term power outage, building fire, chemical spill, radioactive leak, etc.)
- Major terrorist attack (bombs, destruction of buildings, biological attack, etc.)
- Secondary terrorist attack (anthrax in mail, attack on transportation infrastructure, cyber/information attack, attack on utilities, etc.)
- Workplace violence (active shooter on campus, other violent individual attacks, hostile or threatening behavior, etc.)

Prior research on this topic tends to indicate that most employees in organizations are not very well prepared for dealing with a crisis or disaster. An additional area emerging in the literature concerns the relationship between the feelings of safety versus fear. For example, some authors have suggested that exposing students or teachers to increased security measures, such as metal detectors, can result in a decrease in feeling safe while at school. The rationale is the more visible the security measures the conclusion is that the school is unsafe.

Certainly the recent campus shootings are a tragedy that seems to be becoming more frequent. Bomb threats have been reported to have increased as well. Conference attendees are invited to join this special session to discuss campus preparedness at their respective institutions. For example, some institutions require active participation training in certain aspects of preparedness while others do not. Some campuses have centralized security departments and reverse 911 alerts. The special session moderators hope colleagues will join the session to discuss their experiences, successes and challenges regarding this critically important issue.