

Emergency Management in the Heart of Florida: Meeting the Needs of the University of Central Florida Students, Staff and Faculty

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The Center for Public and Nonprofit Management in the College of Health and Public Affairs was recently awarded the U.S. Department of Education's Emergency Management for Higher Education Grant. The grant will fund the revision and improvement of the current UCF emergency management (EM) plan. Dr. Naim Kapucu, Associate Professor of the Department of Public Administration and coordinator of the Emergency Management and Homeland Security graduate certificate program, will direct the project, which will be performed with the UCF Office of Environmental Health and Safety. Over the next 18 months, the grant team will develop an emergency management plan that will incorporate a fully integrated, campus-based all-hazards approach, and plan, coordinate, and collaborate with campus and community partners to prevent campus violence. At the first grant team meeting, Dr. Kapucu told team members "this grant is very timely support from the Federal Department of Education in developing a culture of preparedness at UCF and revising the comprehensive EM plan."

The project will work to develop protocols to prepare for multiple hazards in close coordination with partners from local government, law enforcement, public safety, public health, and mental health entities. Some of the local officials that coordinate with the project will serve on the emergency management advisory council which will meet quarterly to guide and evaluate the progress of the project. Dr. Kapucu said "The team will do its best to make sure we exceed the expectation of the funding agency and develop a model project that can be replicated in other parts of the country."

The September 1st start of this grant coincides with the Department of Homeland Security's National Preparedness Month. There will be opportunities for UCF students, staff, and faculty to attend training workshops to further their knowledge about the UCF EM plan. "This grant will allow us to use technology to share emergency management information to educate students, faculty and staff. Student education and participation is a key component," said Patricia MacKown, Assistant Vice President of Campus Life.

The Emergency Management for Higher Education grant has given UCF the opportunity to revise its emergency management plan and adopt new ideas that will better prepare the campus community. The project will provide UCF with resources to plan and prepare for a variety of threats that could impact the campus and to promote campus and community prevention and recovery efforts. According to Project Manager Jeffery Morgan, "The grant will allow UCF's emergency management program to take the next step in preparedness. This will allow us to train and exercise together as a team to ensure that we are prepared to respond to any emergency or crisis that UCF may face." More information about emergency management at UCF is available at <http://www.emergency.ucf.edu/index.html> .