

SEATTLE PACIFIC UNIVERSITY EMERGENCY AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLAN

ADOPTED PLAN

Update – October 2009

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PURPOSE AND OVERVIEW

A university campus is a small city with a variety of activities scheduled almost all the time. Members of the University community arrive and depart continuously and engage in activities largely on an open and flexible basis. The campus is also the home of resident students and some staff. In order to provide a safe environment for people in the community, during an emergency, disaster or crisis we have developed a plan to guide our response and procedures in the wake of such event.

Business interruption planning has become a focus of companies and organizations in the 1990s. The topic covers many potential interruptions ranging from natural disasters to violent attacks on specific individuals. It includes planned responses to fire, earthquake, criminal activity, national crisis, and a variety of the other events. Consultants tells us that employee sabotage is the business interruption that is statistically the most likely to occur. We believe that while SPU is not immune to this, our risk factors are lower because of the nature of our community. We nonetheless have to take precautions and make plans for this risk as well.

In the 1970s and 1980s institutions of higher education focused on safety and security of the community while in operation. In the 1990s earthquake preparedness became a priority concern for campus, especially those in the west. Currently, we are realizing that we must be prepared to respond to a number of other crises apart from emergencies that pose an immediate threat to people and property on the campus. These include isolated violence on or off-campus to a member of the community. A national crisis, such as a terrorist attack is another example.

In developing a plan for preparedness and response to such events SPU has decided to keep it “draft” form in order to convey the idea that it needs to be continually reviewed and updated as circumstances change and as we learn from new experiences. For instance, prior plans assumed that cellular telephones would be the main back-up in the event of disruption to our traditional hardwired telecommunications systems. We have now learned this is not always a reliable back-up, so other communication plans need to be identified. In addition, we need to review the plan at least annually to ensure attention by the community and relevance of the procedures. It is the intent of the leadership of the institution to adopt the updated draft plan annually. Further, because this is an emerging plan, we have called this an *Emergency and Crisis Management Plan*. Over the years it is our intent to expand the plan to cover a variety of business interruptions, such as data loss due electrical storm, banking failures, etc. It has become clear from our work so far in developing the plan that it is a daunting task to cover so many possible events and so many possible outcomes. However, it is good to go through this planning as it sensitizes the community to think through the issues and be more attentive to risks that are there.

The essential generic elements of a good emergency and crisis management plan are communications, responsibilities, and preparedness, including provisions for response, as described below.

Communications: The Plan must be communicated in advance of an emergency so the community is cognizant its contents. Both during and after an emergency, communication vehicles and protocols need to be established so a timely and effective response can be implemented and managed; calls for assistance and help can be delivered; and decisions disseminated to appropriate parties. For instance, since students come from all over the world, the plan needs to identify how communication will be delivered to family and friends in the event of a disaster or other emergency, especially if normal channels are disrupted.

Responsibilities: The Plan needs to cover who is to develop and implement procedures for responding to emergencies and crises, who is to make decisions, and where decision-makers need to be after an event. Responsibilities for actions and responses need to be identified very clearly in advance.

Preparedness and Provisions for Response: The Plan needs to identify what should be done to prepare for emergencies. This includes minimizing hazards in buildings, establishing building evacuation routes and assembly areas, and conducting emergency drills. The Plan also needs to identify available equipment, supplies, and outside agencies that can respond to emergencies or assist the institution in resuming normal operations. It is important that providers and provisions be identified and secured prior to an emergency event.

This is a community effort in that it requires the cooperation of administrators, staff, faculty and students to have an effective emergency and crisis management plan. The cooperation starts with everyone taking responsibility for reviewing the provisions of the entire plan and to be knowledgeable about the provisions that are specifically applicable to them. We invite readers of this document to ask questions and make recommendations so it can become more effective with each update.

Donald W. Mortenson,
Vice President for Business and Planning

PREFACE

Seattle Pacific University is concerned with the welfare of faculty, staff and students at all times. Since emergency situations are a potential threat to the safety of those at the University, it is essential that a thorough Emergency and Crisis Management Plan be developed and implemented.

Faculty, staff and students must be aware of the emergency procedures that will be utilized in a time of crisis. This manual provides the framework for this task

It is hoped that we will be spared the need to implement these emergency procedures. However, a thorough understanding of this plan offers the greatest hope for providing maximum safety if a serious emergency does occur.

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INTRODUCTION

It is the intent of this Emergency and Crisis Management Plan to provide for the safety and welfare of Seattle Pacific University's faculty, staff and students in the event of a severe earthquake or other emergency. The Plan is divided into two volumes: Volume I – Preparing for Emergencies and Crises, and Volume II – Responding to Emergencies and Crises. Supporting information is provided in a series of appendices.

Need to Plan for Emergencies and Disasters

The likelihood of a disaster occurring in the Puget Sound region and impacting Seattle Pacific University is growing. The University community expects effective leadership during an emergency, should one occur. This is particularly true because students are involved. Decisions made early in the event may have far reaching consequences.

A serious emergency or disaster is a stern test of the University's leadership. Without planning, no organization can be prepared for sudden and potentially destructive events. Seattle Pacific University, like all educational institutions in this region, is vulnerable when disasters hit because large numbers of people are collected in a relatively small location. Emergencies and disasters can have devastating effects on faculty, staff, students, and their parents. This Emergency and Crisis Management Plan is designed to prepare for an emergency and provide guidance and initial direction for the University's faculty, staff and students in the event of one.

SPU Emergency and Disaster Preparedness Committees

As a result of a growing awareness of the need for emergency preparedness, a University steering committee was formed in 1999 to develop a comprehensive Emergency and Crisis Management Plan. A consultant was hired by the University to provide assistance to the committee in developing a draft plan.

As described in Volume I, a standing Emergency and Crisis Leadership Team has been established to periodically review the Emergency and Crisis Management Plan and to provide leadership during its implementation. As described in Volume II, most members of this team will also play an active role during an emergency.

Objectives and Procedures of the Emergency and Crisis Management Plan

The following are the major objectives of the Emergency and Crisis Management Plan:

1. To help ensure the safety and wellbeing of students, faculty and staff
2. Provide initial medical assistance (first aid)
3. Protect University property, assess damage and prevent further damage
4. Restore and repair physical systems and utility services
5. Coordinate activities with local authorities
6. Communicate with constituents of the University (internal and external), media and other entities supporting and interacting with the institution during and after the crisis
7. Restore the University to normal operations and services as soon as it is practicable

The University's role in an emergency is one of both intervention and management. The University's response during an emergency will require actions by many faculty and staff. The active involvement of University personnel in appropriate actions will assure everyone that students' safety is a primary consideration. As University officials take over the management of an emergency, faculty and staff can turn their attention to the specific needs of students, each other and any visitors on campus.