The New EOC is Open for Business!

Our VISION:
A Disaster Resistant University as a global model for other institutions of higher learning.

Our MISSION:
To administer a campus-based comprehensive emergency management program in partnership with UW academic departments, operating units, staff, administration and neighboring jurisdictions in order to save lives, protect property and safeguard the environment.

www.huskyem.org
From the Director

The UW is world-rounded for many things … too many to count! That’s what attracted me to this wonderful institution in 2003 when I was recruited from the “other Washington” (DC) to establish its first UW Office of Emergency Management. I fondly remember the three days of on-site interviews, tours, and meetings. A global leader in education, research and public service was what attracted me to this place. Right on the heels of the Nisqually Earthquake, 9/11 and the Urban Horticulture Fire, the UW finally decided to invest in a strong emergency management program that would rival other major public research institutions. That initial investment has paid off over the years. Senior leadership, including my supervisor at the time, AVP for Business Services Sandra Lier and EVP Weldon Ihrig, provided strong support and guidance as together we slowly built the office from earlier ad-hoc activities. I should have known, however, when I asked to see the UW’s EOC (or “disaster coordination center” in layman’s terms), that the subject quickly changed and avoided. I soon learned that our campus EOC was in a 100+ year old boat repair facility—the Bryant Building—and was clearly sub-standard to meet its intended purpose: To support the university’s integrated and effective response to any crisis or disaster and to protect our people and assets from further harm.

Well, I am happy to announce that after 8 years of planning, hard work and support from many of our internal and external stakeholders, we finally have a new EOC and a state-of-the-art facility and one that the UW can be proud of. The rest of the April Digest provides highlights of this wonderful new tool.

Funded almost exclusively via federal and other external grants, the UW’s brand-new EOC is now officially “OPEN FOR BUSINESS!” The recent tragic earthquake events around the Pacific Rim (Chile, New Zealand and Japan) are all constant reminders that we live at the mercy of Mother Nature. It is only a matter of time before our next “BIG ONE” directly impacts the UW system. And we now have a tool at our disposal that will allow us to rapidly and effectively respond to save our campus residents (students, faculty, staff and visitors), protect our valuable resources, safeguard the environment of the institution and quickly restore the critical mission of our great university. Over the next few months, the UWEM Team will be developing additional capabilities, training sessions, orientation seminars and plans to integrate the EOC into the fabric of the UW’s other emergency response plans and procedures. We welcome anyone to stop by for a tour as this is YOUR EOC.

Finally, I cannot begin to thank all of our internal and external supporters and friends who have supported this effort. This is a dream realized after years of blood-sweat-and-tears, but one that will pay dividends in the years to come. Our Seattle campus and the entire UW system can sleep a little more soundly knowing that with this new facility, your emergency response team (over 150 of your fellow UW community members) is now able to more effectively respond and recovery from any scare of emergency, disaster or crisis!

Stay Safe!
Feng Shui is an ancient Chinese practice of organizing a living space in such a way as to promote positive energy. UWEM has practiced a similar design concept for the new UW Emergency Operations Center (UWEOC), based on principles of the Incident Command System (ICS) for the purpose of improving coordination and information flow among the major sections of the EOC:

**Command**- EOC Manager (Incident Commander) and EOC support staff. Helps manages the overall response, determine strategic goals and objectives and provides direction to the EOC sections.

**Operations**- The ‘Doers’, perform tactical on-scene assignments.

**Planning**- The ‘Thinkers’, looking at the next operational period and are determining what will need to be done and how to do it.

**Logistics**- The ‘Finders’, locate personnel and other resources that needed by the Operations and other sections.

**Finance/Administration** - The ‘Buyers’, arrange for the payment for resources, supplies and any claims related to the incident.

**Media/PIO**- Coordinate the information flow between the UW and the media and monitor what the media is reporting about the UW and the incident.

Some key concepts of how the UW EOC is organized:

- The main door to the EOC enters directly to the EOC’s Command Area where the EOC Manager’s staff can check visitors and responding EOC personnel into the EOC log.
- There is no “front” to the room. Instead, the EOC Manager sits in the middle of the room, similar to a hub and is more easily accessible to all sections of the EOC.
- Planning, Operations and Logistics sections chiefs sit nearer to each other for quick conferral at need.
- The flow of the room provides the greatest amount of space for the largest sections (Operations and Planning).

Having the EOC organized in this ways means that the coordination of information and the University’s response from the EOC will be more efficient than ever.
Old

• Approx. 3 hrs to set up
• Folding tables & chairs
• Large wooden map rack
• Limited office supplies
• Limited technology
• Structurally unsafe in an earthquake
• Unable to regulate temperature

New

• Instant activation—Ready 24/7
• Permanent tables and comfortable chairs
• Metal compact map rack
• Fully stocked supply cabinets for each department
• Full technology capabilities
• Building has been retrofitted for an earthquake
• Climate controlled, fully HVAC system
New & Improved Functions of the EOC

Overview
• 5000 square feet
• 50 phone lines
• 40 new desktops & laptop computers
• Wireless internet
• 6 - 42” TVs with satellite cable
• 3 large projection screens
• 2 Smart Whiteboards
• 4 Ceiling mounted projectors
• 1 color plotter
• 1 multi-function photocopier
• 3 Fax machines
• 2 Satellite phones
• 4’ tall white boards covering 85% of the EOC walls
• Mini kitchenette with sink, coffee maker, fridge and MREs

Facility Includes
• Main Operations
• Policy Room
• Media & Communications Room
• EOC Breakout Room
• UWEM Director’s Office
• UWEM Staff cubicles
• Storage Room
Demolition to Opening
EOC Radio/Media Room

A new feature in our new EOC is a dedicated room for the Media/PIO group and radio communications. The intent of the room is to provide a secluded area where the media group can monitor and manage the media reports regarding the University and where radio traffic from various University Departments can be proactively monitored. A future goal is to have redundant dispatching capabilities in the room for the police department and facilities operations.

Communications are critical to incident response. Without effective communications, the coordination efforts for the response will not be effective. Being able to provide a dedicated space for this important capability is just one more our new EOC will help the University prepare for, respond to and recover from the next major incident.
So many records, so little time! Since the inception of the Emergency Office in 2003, we have accumulated a lot of paperwork. Documents ranged from financial to training to personnel records and a lot in between. It was finally time to clean house! We spent several months documenting all our files to decide what could be stored, archived, destroyed or simply kept in our new office. It was quite a daunting task but one that needed to be done. We wanted to move into our new digs with as little clutter as possible. The Records Management Office was a great assist in this endeavor. They helped us decide what went were and for how long. They supplied us boxes, forms and answered all our questions. We are in excellent shape in regards to our records and it feels good to be organized and ready to go for the future.
While our total UWEM authorized staff size is small (just 2.5 permanent FTEs), our mission is huge: To protect the UW system from catastrophes, emergencies and disasters – both large and small. With an annual operating budget of less than $200K a year to meet this mission, our day-to-day operations are already what many consider to be “lean-and-mean”. That, however, has not stopped us from identifying additional ways to operate our disaster preparedness, response, mitigation and recovery programs in a more effective and efficient manner. The UWEM Team has already begun to embrace the UW’s LEAN efforts by participating in a number of workshops, training session and scoping studies. While not officially not a full-LEAN effort, we used many of the 5-S concepts (Sort, Straighten, Shines, Standardize, and Sustain) to guide our January move from Gerberding Hall and the Bryant Building to our new location in the UW Tower. We reduced our overall footprint for our operations by nearly 15% and at the same time, became more efficient in how we operate. From the many recycle bins of unneeded manuals, reports and paper that were removed to the combining of shared resources, UWEM staff has identified and implemented over a dozen new efficiency activities that we now use here in our new space in the UW Tower. By simply integrating our office space into the new UW EOC in the UW Tower, we instantly became more effective and efficient by reducing travel-time and set-up time for our operations. As the next few months go on, we will be working with our primary partners and stakeholders – most from outside our small department – in helping us identify and implement a full LEAN project! We look forward to everyone’s frank and honest input as we tackle the toughest project to date: identifying an tackling ways to improve the UW’s effective response to a major catastrophe. We will need everyone’s help to assist us in making the UW a global leader in disaster resilience.
Partnerships Form the Basic for Success in New EOC

From the very early days of planning until today, UWEM has formed and maintained valuable partnerships to ensure the successful long-term completion of the campus’ new Emergency Operations Center (EOC). A key partner has been garnered on an ongoing basis with the UW’s internal 45-member Emergency Management Planning Committee (click here for more information about the EMPC). The EMPC has provided guidance, support and technical expertise in the design and development of the new facility. Other key stakeholders who provided support have included the many (over 104 currently) members of the EOC’s responder cadre. This group of dedicated individuals are the ones who actually would be called into the EOC 24/7 to respond to a major disaster or emergency and coordinate the UW’s effective and timely response to any catastrophe. Finally, we cannot forget to thank our partners at the State of Washington Emergency Management Division, King County Emergency Management, and especially our neighbors at the City of Seattle Emergency Management. Together, they supported our federal grant applications which helped pay for many of the new EOC’s equipment, supplies and communications capabilities. Our new EOC will act as a back-up to the City of Seattle’s EOC located in the Pioneer Square section of downtown. As part of our ongoing partnership with the City, the UW has offered to make our EOC available to the City in the event that their main EOC is damaged or inaccessible. By forging these stronger bonds between the UW and our neighbors, the UW will continue to benefit from ongoing information sharing, collaborative planning, training and exercise efforts and benefit from each others’ unique perspectives and experiences in disaster and crisis management.

The UW Information Technology Unit Response Center (URC) is gearing up for the big campus disaster drill scheduled for September 2011. With the help of UW Emergency Management staff, Technology Business Continuity (TBC) is working closely with each URC section to help them learn more about the Incident Command System, improve their understanding of their role in an emergency, and develop ways to enhance their ability to respond.

Several of the URC sections and teams are already initiating changes to their response procedures. The People Tracking team in the Logistics Section tested and adopted a process improvement plan that cuts their people tracking time by 50%. Considering that life safety is the number one priority in emergency response, this improvement is significant!

The URC Planning section recently participated in a training exercise where they responded to a flood scenario in the UW Tower C-3 and O-3. In addition to gaining a better understanding of their roles and responsibilities in the URC, they discovered the importance of understanding what the other URC sections are responsible for. The Planning Section also decided to meet once a month to continue learning more about their role and find ways to improve what they do.
April: 72-Hour Comfort Kit
Chances are you will have to rely upon supplies you have available in your home for at least the first three days following any major disaster. Store these items in something that is portable and easily carried, like a plastic tub with a tight-fitting lid. In the event of fire or rapid evacuation, you’ll appreciate having more than just the clothes on your back.

May: Important Documents
After a major disaster, you may need financial assistance and will want to document any property loss for insurance and income tax purposes. Having ready access to the documents necessary for completing application forms, as well as those which could be difficult to replace, will help reduce delay and frustration.

June: Extended Events
Choosing comfort over inconvenience. Coping with the impact of a disaster is never fun. However, much of the inconvenience and discomfort the disaster causes can be reduced by planning alternative ways to take care of your needs.