Director’s Corner

“Membership has its privileges”… or so they say. With each New Year, I tend to reflect on the past 12-months’ challenges and successes. One of my 2015 highlights was an opportunity to attend and speak at the International Association of Emergency Managers’ (IAEM) conference in November in Clark County, Nevada. As a member and current Secretary of IAEM, the largest association of emergency and crisis professionals, I look forward to reconnecting with nearly 2,000 of my peers from all over the world. As a result of my IAEM membership, I always am able to bring back valuable lessons to the UW and share them with staff and other interested partners. However, what hit me the most at the 2015 conference was a message that was delivered on the second day by one of the keynote speakers.

The Deputy Administrator from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Mr. Joseph Nimmich, was asked to identify what one thing keeps him up at night. Without hesitation, he stated that he fears getting that wake-up call informing him of a rupture of the Cascadia Subduction (earthquake) Zone. Even with all the current turmoil in the world that can potentially impact the US (from terrorism to Ebola to global warming), even FEMA has now recognized that a massive earthquake in the Pacific Northwest would be the mother of all disasters to hit this nation. Not only would a Cascadia earthquake tax the willpower, resources and capabilities of Washington, Oregon, Alaska, & Northern California, but the nation as a whole. FEMA estimates that the impact on the national economy could be 6 to 8 times larger than Superstorm /Hurricane Sandy that crippled New York and New Jersey in 2013.

A lot has been written about our ever-present earthquake threat. The UW has experienced dozens of disasters, including a number of small and moderate-sized earthquakes since we were founded in 1861 -- yet we have yet to truly experience our “Big One”. Do you know what you would do if cut off from normal services, utilities, food, water and transportation for up to a month? Does the prospect of dealing with a major earthquake scare you? Well, rest assured, starting this year, the UW has re-committed itself to address the earthquake threat with the establishment of a new Seismic Resilience Program. Want to know more? Then read the feature story on page 2. As the old emergency manager saying goes, we head into 2016 “hoping for the best, but planning for the worst”. Thanks to each of you for taking steps this year in preparing yourself, your family, your work unit and the UW to not only survive but to thrive after the next crisis! We look forward to a happy and safe new year.

Steve Charvat, UWEM Director
Coming Soon to Classroom, Office, Laboratory or Workspace Near You!

UWEM is happy to announce the arrival of a brand new staff member to our ranks. On September 30, 2015, Ms. Stacie Smith joined UWEM as our very-first UW Seismic Resilience Program Manager. In this new role at the UW, Stacie will be responsible for guiding and assisting the entire UW to become better prepared for the ever-present seismic (earthquake) threat. Over the past few years, warnings and predictions of a major earthquake striking Western Washington have gotten louder and more frequent. From geologists and earth scientists, to emergency managers and the media, and now coming from many of our campus partners and stakeholders …the UW has been put “on-notice” that we need to do more to get ready for the next catastrophic shaker.

For many years, the UW has performed what some of our stakeholders have labeled as a “hodge-podge” and inconsistent pattern of earthquake activities and programs. They may have included training classes, resources to prepare and respond to earthquakes and some very limited ad-hoc mitigation funding. In response to this ongoing need, in 2013, the Provost appointed a UW Seismic Resilient Work Group. Over the course of 15-months, the Seismic Work Group conducted a series of 4 daylong workshops involving the expertise of 60 UW, City, utilities and regional experts. The draft study and final report was completed in 2015. Over 120 specific recommendations for campus seismic resilience were recommended ranging from major capital improvements for buildings and structures, to other earthquake mitigation projects to protect critical utility and communications systems, and a wide variety of policy and training improvements. However, unlike past ad-hoc earthquake students, the Work Group report also strongly recommended the establishment of a single, one-stop-shop to coordinate all of these diverse activities.

So, after a nationwide search, the UW selected Ms. Stacie Smith, who recently graduated from the UW with a Master’s Degree in Critical Infrastructure Protection. I would like to think of Stacie’s new position as our UW Earthquake Concierge. Once she completes her initial assessment of the various earthquake resources, vulnerabilities and programs, Stacie will begin to develop short- and long-term recommended strategies to increase our resilience to withstand the next “Big One! So stay tuned for all the exciting resources that her program is expected to roll-out!

Steve Charvat, Siri McLean, Stacie Smith & Scott Preston
UWEM is now 4-FTE strong! Just call us the “S” team!
Partner of the Quarter: Sean Ferris

The final 2015 UWEM Partner of the Quarter award came as a total surprise to the person who was unanimously selected by a panel of campus emergency managers last November. The awardee was selected not only because of his…

- …dedication to his regular job (CHECK ✓)
- … nor due to his superior ability to lead others through a complex series of activities designed to improve their department’s overall readiness posture during/after a major incident or crisis (CHECK ✓)
- …nor even due to his willingness to volunteer and take on additional responsibilities much different than those printed in his official UW job work title of “Student Affairs Specialist” (CHECK ✓)

No, it was much more than that! The September – December 2015 UWEM Partner of the Quarter award was presented to Mr. Sean Ferris from the UW Office of Student Affairs due to the variety of critical support functions he recently was tasked to lead on behalf of his organization. Surrounded by his supervisor, nearly 20 peers and Vice President for Student Life, Dr. Denzil Suite, Sean was presented his award on December 2nd during a ceremony at the HUB. Sean was praised for his service to nearly a dozen Student Life departments and units over the past year. He was recognized for his work on the development and testing of nearly 10 business continuity plans as well as the establishment of a new Student Life Unit Response Center (URC) that could be activated to support the unique needs and resources for those critical university functions. Congratulations Sean and thanks for everything you do for the UW!

RSVP Now for UW Safety Expo in February

Please join us for the UW Safety, Sustainability, and Preparedness Expo on Wednesday, February 10, 2016. We will be in the HUB Ballroom from 10am to 2pm, offering fun and interesting activities to UW faculty, staff, and students:

- Enjoy light refreshments
- Enter a drawing for door prizes
- Start your own personal, portable emergency kit
- Learn more about being safe, sustainable, and prepared

Pick up free items from UW departments and safety supply vendors

Your RSVP will help us plan for refreshments and send you further information about the event as it gets closer. See the event website to learn more about the event to RSVP.

This event is a collaborative effort of UW Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S), Finance and Facilities (F2), UW Sustainability, and Emergency Management.
As the budding profession of emergency management continues to develop, emergency managers are frequently challenged to apply the principles of emergency preparedness, planning, mitigation, response and recovery against new or emergent paradigms that have re-surfaced in the collective popular interest of the community. One such focus that has come to the forefront is the relationship between emergency management and social equality or social justice.

Generally speaking, differences in socio-economic status, gender, ethnicity, age and other characteristics of diversity in our communities have a negative impact on the quality and available options of a specific community’s opportunity to manage disasters. Under-served populations who do not have strong political support, economic capabilities or popular public support experience a disproportionately high impact from potential risks and active hazards. The causes for this are varied and complex and the solutions remain elusive, since emergency management agencies themselves are often under-served in the political fiscal arenas of our government.

Progressive program efforts in emergency planning within some agencies have resulted in improved awareness of the needs of these under-served communities. One example is the increased use of emergency shelters during storms to serve the homeless populations of a community. Another example is developing Public Service Announcements (PSA’s) on a particular emergency topic for a specific community in their own language to better educate that community of safe practices such as not using charcoal in doors.

There is still a long way to go, however. We need to find ways to ensure the underserved communities are properly educated and engaged in emergency management efforts so that they enjoy the same opportunities to prepare and plan for disasters as the more affluent areas of the community. Often times, the most successful effort will come through a partnership between the emergency management agency and the community itself in a whole-community emergency planning effort. When an underserved community becomes a fully engaged active partner with emergency management, that community begins to enjoy the persistent resilience and sustainability that emergency management can bring.

It’s likely that issues of inequality in emergency planning and response for the underserved populations in our community will never fully be resolved, but emergency managers as a profession are committed to helping as many as we can, doing the greatest good for the greatest number of people, despite our own challenges in political obscurity and fiscal austerity.
Seismic Resilience at the UW

If you have recently walked past Denny Hall, then you can see proof that the University takes earthquake safety seriously. Check out this recent article in the Seattle Post-Intelligencer on the building makeover. Another example of the UW’s commitment to earthquake safety is the new Seismic Resilience Program, of which I am honored to be the first Program Manager.

Most people understand that the word “seismic” refers to earthquakes, but “resilience” is a tougher pill to swallow. To me, increasing seismic resilience at the university means:

- Increasing earthquake awareness and preparedness among faculty, staff, and students, and
- Strengthening critical UW infrastructure against seismic threats

Consider the following quote:

“A resilient state is one that maintains services and livelihoods after an earthquake. In the event services and livelihoods are disrupted—recovery occurs rapidly with minimal social disruption, and results in a new and better condition.”


As you can imagine, the University of Washington—like any other jurisdiction—has a lot to consider when trying to improve seismic resilience, and determining vulnerabilities is only half the battle.

Stacie Smith

UWEM Offers FREE Mitigation Walkthroughs

Have you ever considered how your workspace, classroom, lab or office would fare in an earthquake?

Contrary to common assumptions, earthquake safety goes far beyond the type of building you could find yourself in when the ground starts shaking. A mitigation walkthrough will focus on easy fixes to common workplace hazards based on real-world experiences. Let us come give location-specific advice to increase earthquake safety in your space! To schedule a walkthrough for your department or unit, contact our team at disaster@uw.edu.

To find out more about preparedness for earthquakes and other hazards, visit our website!
How Slime Saved the Day for UWEM

The UWEM staff members were planning to work the Apple Cup last Fall. We even had a colleague from the City of Renton’s Office of Emergency Management along to help out. The weather was beautiful and the game was sure to be exciting.

The UWEM Duty Officer and Renton Emergency Manager went down to the UWEM vehicle to drive to the UWPD for a pre-game briefing and then disaster was discovered: a flat tire!

Not just any flat tire, a really flat tire and just before we were due at the briefing. Now, the UWEM does have a temporary tire, but that wouldn’t due for the amount of driving that the UWEM vehicle would be engaged in while supporting the Apple Cup. The UW has emergency road-side assistance for University vehicles, but it’s not fast and wouldn’t get the vehicle operational in time to work the Apple Cup.

Fortunately, emergency managers are in a chronic habit of being prepared and one of the UWEM staff had a Slime Safety Spair Kit in a personal vehicle.

That kit was able to inflate the tire for the UWEM and it stayed inflated for the entire Apple Cup and beyond. The lesson: it never hurts to be a little extra-prepared.

**Disclaimer: UWEM doesn’t officially endorse this or any other product. It just worked REALLY well for us in a pinch**

“You Have Such a Tranquil & Quiet Campus. No Disasters Ever Happen at the UW...Right?!”

Well, for a vast majority of our transitional campus population of students who tend to only hang around for 4-6 years, that is often their perspective. But memories are short and our attention spans are easily distracted by our 24/7 global news cycle and digital information overload. UWEM staff are often asked this question by parents, visitors and current/prospective students, faculty and staff. In the past, we had to consult some of the “old-timers” on staff or dig through file cabinets of reports. But not anymore. Now available 24/7 to both the curious and the disaster-deniers, a new UW Disaster Timeline is available on the UWEM website. Take a walk down memory lane to casually browse through the online chronological listing of disaster events dating back to 1949, when a 7.1 magnitude earthquake struck near Olympia. You might be amazed how the UW and local area has been rocked by the impact of dozens of crises and disasters over the decades. Other impactful events have included ice storms, earthquakes, winter storms, massive power outages, pandemics, arsons, eco-terrorism and conventional bombings, violent protests, building collapses, major fires, shootings and snipers, and even a volcanic eruption (Mt. Saint Helens). Not exactly the kind of information that our recruitment, promotions and development staff would like us to highlight – but they are part of our rich history.
What Can Dr. Seuss Teach us About Emergency Planning

Resilience and sustainability are key concepts in emergency management and are topics of keen interest and discussion right now for the University. Generally speaking, they mean being able to do tomorrow what we did yesterday, no matter what happens to day.

The concept might remind someone of Dr. Suess’ book “Green Eggs and Ham”. In the book, a character is asked by another character whether he would eat green eggs and ham in a number of locations. After spending most of the book refusing, the main character agrees that he does like green eggs and ham and would eat them in a number of unlikely scenarios and situations. It’s in that affirmation, that we find an emergency planning gem: the continuity of the “function” of eating green eggs and ham.

“…Say!
I like green eggs and ham!
I do! I like them, Sam-I-am!
And I would eat them in a boat!
And I would eat them with a goat...
And I will eat them in the rain.
And in the dark. And on a train.
And in a car. And in a tree.
They are so good so good you see!

So I will eat them in a box.
And I will eat them with a fox.
And I will eat them in a house.
And I will eat them with a mouse.
And I will eat them here and there.
Say! I will eat them ANYWHERE! ….”

If we look at the important capabilities we need for our families or for the organizations we support, and adopt a “Green Eggs and Ham” attitude, so that we can do those capabilities anywhere, no matter the situation, then we’ll become more resilient and sustainable. Can you eat dinner in the rain, on a train, in a boat, in a flood, during a storm, after an earthquake….etc.?

If you plan you can, then perhaps you can be as well-prepared as Sam-I-Am.

Online Training Now Available

Have you always wanted to take our Earthquake Awareness & Personal Preparedness class, but didn’t have time to attend in person? Well fret no longer! UWEM has just released it’s first online training video just for you. Check it out and let us know what you think.

If you are interested in bringing the in-person training option to your next department meeting please contact sirim@uw.edu and schedule a class.
Emergency Management Comes in Phases

We get it. Emergency Management is kind of confusing…

While a brief article in a quarterly newsletter could never explain *everything* there is to know about Emergency Management, maybe it will be helpful to consider the “phases” that drive it. The first two can be thought of as our day-to-day actions,

1) **Mitigation**: Put simply, is there a way to avoid the threat/hazard, or keep it from happening?
2) **Preparedness**: What can I myself, my family, and my community do to be prepared for the impacts of those potential threats and/or hazards?

…while the second set of phases are incident-specific.

3) **Response**: There has been an incident that disrupted typical everyday life. The role of Emergency Management is to coordinate with all responding agencies and develop objectives intended to save lives, stabilize the incident, and then protect property and the environment.
4) **Recovery**: The immediate threat is over, but there is much to be done in order to recover. This phase is for restoring the old normal, or finding a new and improved one.

Again, this is a very broad representation of the work we do, but hopefully it is helpful in understanding what we are up to!

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Seattle Natural Hazards Explorer

As Emergency Managers we are taught to know your hazards and then measure your risk. Our brains in general work a little different as we look at the world from a slightly different perspective. Majority of people don’t think twice about hazards or risks when relocating or purchasing property. Now there is a great new tool to help you. The Seattle Office of Emergency Management has created a fun interactive map known as the [Seattle Natural Hazard Explorer](#) that gives users insight into several of the hazards that Seattle faces: earthquakes, tsunamis/seiches, liquefaction, landslides and flooding. Each tab provides some information on how that hazard might impact Seattle. A search function allows the user to find a particular address and examine how each hazard might impact a particular location. Take a moment and check out what hazards are the greatest threat to your home or work.
FEMA App: Interactive Emergency Kit List

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has developed an interactive emergency application that allows you to become more informed. From severe weather alerts to reporting disaster-related information you can choose how involved you want to be.

- Prepare
- Weather Alerts
- Disaster Resources
- Disaster Reporter

Available for Android, Apple iOS, and Blackberry, the FEMA App contains disaster safety tips, an interactive emergency kit list, emergency meeting location information, and a map with open shelters and open FEMA Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs). Android and Apple iOS users can also use the Disaster Reporter feature - which allows them to take and submit GPS photo reports of disasters so they can be displayed on a public map for others to view.

Check out the FEMA app for more information.

Weather-Ready Nation Makes a Weather Ready UW

On average, weather-related vehicle crashes kill 6,253 people and injure more than 480,000 each year, according to the Department of Transportation. Most of these accidents occur when the roadways are wet, snowy or icy. When the weather takes a turn for the worse this winter, take precautions if you have to be out on the roadways. Whether there is a coating of snow or ice on the roadways, or the asphalt just looks wet, SLOW DOWN! If the temperature is near freezing, drive like you’re on ice - you may be!

Know your risk...Take action...Be a force of nature! Go to NWS NOAA for more information.
January: Action Plans

An earthquake is a sudden release of pent-up energy along a fault line in the earth’s crust. Without warning, the ground under your feet will begin to shake and roll. A timely response is critical. Gas leaks may have occurred, which could lead to fire and explosion. People may be injured. What you do in the first hour following an earthquake can save lives, reduce the severity of injuries, and save property.

February: Out of Area Contact

If you are separated from your loved ones when disasters strike, you immediately will wonder how and where they are. The stress of the event may make it difficult to remember even routine information, like phone numbers. Consequently, we recommend that every household member have an out-of-area contact card in a wallet, purse, or backpack at all times.

March: Storing Water

Water is essential for survival. The ground trembling and shaking caused by earthquakes can crack or break the lines that bring fresh water to your house. You may have to rely, for three days or more, on the water you have stored.

For more preparedness information please download your own copy of Washington State Emergency Management’s Emergency Preparedness Guide.