EVOLUTION OF EMERGENCY OPERATIONS STRATEGIES:

STRUCTURE AND PROCESS OF CRISIS RESPONSE IN COLLEGE STUDENT AFFAIRS

by

CHRISTOPHER RYAN AKERS

(Under the Direction of Diane L. Cooper)

ABSTRACT

Crisis response is a function of university administration that is often overlooked within student affairs divisions across the country. However, due to recent events on campuses and the post-9/11 world in which we live, university officials are constantly reviewing and placing a strong emphasis on developing and implementing their crisis response procedures. In today's college environment, university administrators must understand the importance of all elements of a crisis response plan, including the structure and the process. A single occurrence of trauma on a campus can have a lasting impact on students, faculty, and university staff members. However, crisis is often overlooked as the complex range of issues that our institutions face increases.

Campus crises affect many constituents in a variety of ways, many of which can be debilitating to academic progress and the well-being of individuals. Divisions of student affairs as well as the overall institutions attempt to counteract the negative effects of crisis by developing and implementing efficient crisis response plans. Student affairs staff are the likely first responders to many crises on campus due their daily proximity and inclusion in the lives of

students. In fact, student affairs staff have been indoctrinated into student safety issues since the beginning of the field through student discipline issues linked to deans of men and women. The purpose of this mixed methods study was to analyze the crisis response policies, strategies, and programs of different types of institutions as well as to explore which elements of critical incident management structure and process are and are not being implemented across these different types of institutions.

Fifty-one participating institutions completed a quantitative crisis response survey and qualitative phone interview. Findings indicated that institutions and student affairs divisions held different perspectives on crises and prepared for crises in various ways. Crisis response team membership was consistent across the sample. However, training methods and protocol evaluation incorporated a number of different styles. Student affairs involvement in constituents' needs and response partnerships varied across the sample. Institutional type, student enrollment size, and geographic location both positively and negatively influenced crisis response plans on campus.

INDEX WORDS: Crisis Management, Crisis Response, Critical Incident Management, Higher Education Crises, Student Affairs Crises, Crisis Protocols, Crisis Response Plan, Traumatic Stress, Stress

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DEDICATION

At the risk of sounding like a clichéd country music song, I'd like to dedicate this body of work to my dog, my wife, and the rest of my immediate family, who have all in various forms helped me tremendously along this journey.

Numerous stories have been written regarding the relationship between a dog and his owner. While many of those stories do create an accurate picture of loyalty, companionship, and love, I am sad to say that there is nothing that I can write to adequately express how much my Oscar meant to me. He was a best friend and loyal confidant…always willing to lend an ear. He'd stand by my side when I was right and when I was wrong…happy or sad. He held steadfast by my side throughout the majority of my doctoral program and this dissertation. About a year before he passed, I picked up *Marley and Me* in a vain attempt to understand how it would affect me. But sadly, despite vivid depictions of feelings and emotions, it did not prepare me enough. I really wish that I could have that entire Friday back. I hope that I was as good a friend to you as you were to me. You're never far from my thoughts each day. Thanks for being one of the best parts of my life. Life lessons learned…enjoy every single day and take nothing for granted.

I would also like to dedicate this dissertation to my wife and best friend Brandy. You've heard me mention a countless array of thanks and words of appreciation to the many people who have helped me along the way. You'd have to mix all that together and multiply it infinitely to gain an appreciation for how much your love, understanding, energy and support have meant to me. I thank God for you, our marriage, and our lives together. You restored my faith in true love…you've profoundly influenced the purpose and meaning of my life. I hope that you not

only read this, I hope you understand it. You have a spirit like none other, a warm heart, a charming laugh, an overwhelming sense of care for others, and a true understanding of me. You radiate class and beauty. I love you dearly and wish to say thank you for standing by my side and sharing your life with me.

This dissertation is also dedicated to my family. To my parents, who made it possible for me to exist in the world and to make a life for myself. To my Dad and Mom and to Cindy and Sonny, I sincerely hope that now that the dissertation process is complete that we may rediscover connections and experience the unique moments of life together again in whatever ways that we can. I love you all. To my sister Fran…believe me, I realize that for you as a new college student, it can be quite difficult to have an older brother by 13 years who has dedicated a career to working with college students. There have been times when I've stayed out of your business when I should have jumped in and times when I've gotten in your business when I should have stayed out. I guess that's what you get for having a protective brother who knows everything. And yes, I do know everything. I hope that you learn to love MSU as much as I did and relish your opportunities in college. I'm enjoying being here to see it. Next, to three of my grandparents, Bill, June, and Betty…thank you for helping raise me in my formative years. I still have vivid memories of times shared. I hope to lead by your example one day and provide the care, love, guidance, and support to my grandchildren as you have to yours. Nanny…I know that you're watching out for me up there. Thank you for that as well as your guidance and spirit.

Additionally, without the constant support of my grandparents, Tommy and Frances, I would never had made it to this point, or even attempted it. I have often laughed that growing up as a campus brat and reading a vast array of books in the middle of the library aisles, really left me no choice but to be where I am today. While this probably did help to some degree, it was

what you've done for me outside of my career that probably did the trick. You both have always been there for more through thick and thin, teaching me life lessons along the way. You've given me the freedom to be my own person, while inspiring me to be the absolute best at anything that I do in life. You both have taught me how to be a good person and how to carry myself throughout my life. Ge, when I walked across the floor during graduation at MSU, I was surprised to see you come down and hand me my diploma. That moment will live with me forever. Yet, it was the words that you said to me after I said "All I can do is say thank you" with an outstretched hand. It was with open arms that you replied, "No, thank YOU." Very few people have been able to get through my thick head that my presence in their life is important. Whether it's difficult for people to say or whether I just don't give myself enough credit, for some reason this is complex. Yet, in those simple words…you showed me that my presence does matter. And for that…all I can say is that I love and thank you both for every single moment. Despite finishing this process and being a little older…Tommy, I'm still "hat rack" and Ge, I still like strawberry shortcake and you.

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Those that know me well will not be surprised to see me list my "children" in this section. They are indeed a part of my family…each with a special place. Oscar…I miss you. Thanks for sticking around as long as you could. Thanks also to Daisey, a big part of my life as well…initially brought into the fold as a companion for Oscar, and wow…did that ever work! You two were constant companions…never leaving each other's side or mine. We hurt for you maybe more than we hurt for us when we lost him. To Pete…you gave Brandy and I and all of the rest of the family a shoulder to lean on when we lost Oscar. I wonder if you can even know how your mere presence in our lives brightens things up. You're not a filler or a replacement, you're unique in your own right, but indeed you did help heal some sad hearts. Thanks to Athena and Token…our Athens rescue cats and to Sophie…our Starkville rescue. Thanks for the comic relief that you always provide in my life. You've always give me a glimpse of how ridiculously serious I take myself sometimes.

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the last several years undoubtedly made an impression on me to last a lifetime. You help keep me grounded and in good spirits. Good friends are hard to come by and you all know that I treasure good friendships. To Amy Diepenbrock…thanks for staying on my case with this dissertation and answering my many arduous questions throughout the process. You've been a great friend and confidant through the years and I look forward to the sharing more memories in the years ahead. You and RJ have an open invite anytime we make it to WDW. To Grady Dixon…thanks not only for being a great friend, but also for making yourself available to help me work through the statistical portion of the dissertation. I'm glad that we were both able to make it back and I'm looking forward to the times ahead for you and Melissa. I'm glad that I just happened upon that MSU message board one day and had the chance to meet both of you. A certain Sears salesperson will never be the same. Lastly, to my good friend, John Cox...thanks for being the closest thing to a brother that I've ever had. Other than my family, I guess you are the longest lasting friend that I've had in my life. I'm glad that I was able to make it a little closer to you, Deborah, John Christopher, and now, Walker. Thanks for providing the irreverent sense of humor that at times seems like it's only matched by…well, me. Thanks also to Eric Bishop…a constant friend for years…and the years to come. Eric, you're about as good of a friend as one could ask for and I look forward to more memories over the years.

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Of course, I have to acknowledge the necessary presence of a higher power, not only in the dissertation process but in guiding me through my life every day. It seems easy at times to push aside spiritual responsibilities when so much is on your plate at any given time. Now that this process has come to a conclusion, I relish the opportunity to understand this side of me more. I thank God often for the blessings in my life, of which there are many, just as I do in this section, yet I have a strong need to do more than give thanks. I look forward to a spiritual reawakening and to somehow give back for all of the blessings that I have received.

Last but not least, I would like to thank each of my study participants for without your involvement, I would have never been able to complete this study. Thank you for taking the time to complete all the requirements for participation and thank you for all of your unique perspectives on crisis management. I hope that you will find various themes and ideas from this dissertation and apply them to your campuses where appropriate. Your daily tasks are not simple, and that is without the added responsibility of managing crises. I send you each heartfelt appreciation and gratitude and I hope to be able to work with many of you in the future on collaborative projects.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Statement of the Problem

Crisis response, sometimes referred to as critical incident management, is a function of university administration that is often overlooked within student affairs divisions across the country. However, due to several recent events on campuses and the post-9/11 world in which we live, university officials are constantly reviewing and placing a strong emphasis on how to develop and implement their crisis response procedures and protocols. Incidents such as the sniper fire at the University of Texas in the 1966, the Vietnam war protests on the campus of Kent State University in 1970, the tragedy of the Marshall University football team in 1970, the 1990 student murders at the University of Florida, the Texas A&M bonfire collapse in November of 1999, the public suicide of a highly visible campus protester at the University of Pennsylvania in 1996, the 1999 floods at East Carolina University, the residence hall fire at Seton Hall University in January of 2000, the 1996 fraternity house fire at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, the 2004 fire at the Alpha Tau Omega fraternity house at the University of Mississippi, student suicides at Harvard University in 1997, 1998, and 2001, and the recent shootings at Virginia Tech are just a few examples of campus tragedies of national acclaim that provide the context for this study.

Further instances of traumatic events on campus and in the adjacent community are the 2002 shooting at Clark Atlanta University in Atlanta, Georgia, or the two separate instances of student deaths in 2002 at small Catawba College in Salisbury, North Carolina where three

students were killed prior to another student death in a residence hall fire. From the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina to the 1998 Mathew Sheppard case in the University of Wyoming community to the faculty/student murder suicide at the University of Arkansas in August of 2000, and from the 2001 faculty murders at Dartmouth College to institutions of higher education in the shadows of the terrorist attacks on New York City and Washington, DC as well as lingering potential for intimidation and actual violence against Muslim students, the effects of traumatic events can manifest themselves in even the strongest students and practitioners, possibly rendering them helpless to continue their education or career in a formidable manner. Due to the rising number of campus crises today, it is easy to assume that during the course of a lengthy career in higher education, student affairs practitioners and other administrators will be faced with not just a single crisis, but many crises, whether they relate to student death, violence, or natural disasters (Duncan & Misner, 2000). University administrators should concern themselves with the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of their entire university population as they progress through times of crisis related to student death and assault, weather-related emergencies, terrorism and other threats to safety. Institutions should consider the structure and the process of their crisis response plans and should evaluate and strive for improvement in these areas.

Significance of the Study

In today's college environment, university administrators must understand the importance of all elements of a crisis response plan. A single occurrence of trauma on a campus can have a lasting impact on students, faculty, and university staff members. However, crisis is often overlooked as the complex range of issues that our institutions face increases. Zdziarski (2006) stated, "Administrators in higher education face many demands on their time and resources. Often, the time for crisis management planning or consideration of proactive and preventive

measures is severely limited" (p. 3). Within the past two decades, enrollments at colleges and universities have reached new levels and student populations are becoming much more diverse. Both academicians and practitioners are being forced to place more emphasis on their initiatives and to provide evidence that their concepts are benefiting the academic missions of the institution. Rising college costs, poor retention rates, crowded classrooms, reduced faculty teaching loads, and diminished student learning and satisfaction are adding fuel to the fire as the call for undergraduate educational reform has reached alarming levels. Poor retention rates and student dissatisfaction with the college experience are also good indicators that reform is necessary (Bliming & Whitt, 1999). Based on these negative reviews, accountability practices are leading administrators and practitioners in other directions.

According to Barr and Desler (2000), " Crisis situations occur far too often on college campuses and student affairs staff members are often the first responders when a crisis occurs. The death of a student, a serious injury, fire, flood, or tornado all require sensitive responses on behalf of the institution and for those affected by the tragedy" (p. 637). Instances of trauma can take a toll on the residential areas on campus where the majority of the institution's students live and a high percentage of student affairs professionals are employed. These inclusive communities provide the framework for personal development and co-curricular educational development that practitioners strive to provide. When the residence hall environment is disrupted, the academic and student development missions of the institutions are compromised. Additionally, when traumatic events occur in residence halls, the emotional livelihood of the residents and professionals is also threatened.

Student affairs practitioners are responsible for tying together programs and initiatives that support the academic mission of the institution, but they are also responsible for the physical

health and emotional well-being of the student population (Fried, 2003). In fact, student affairs staff have been indoctrinated into student safety issues and concerns since the beginning of the field, albeit through discipline issues processed by deans of men and women and continuing with the rise and fall and apparent rise again of the *in loco parentis* philosophy. Continuing with the current debate regarding student safety, Rund (2002) argued

> In fulfilling this role, student affairs administrators should also be well-informed about the safety of the campus and the extent to which it meets students' needs. Routine monitoring, periodic assessment, and informed administrative practice are fundamental to the role of managing the campus environment. More specifically, student affairs staff should routinely engage in the following:
>
> - Regular and effective communication with campus and community safety officers (police, risk management, public health, environmental safety)
> - Periodic evaluation and assessment of campus safety through data collection and analysis
> - Effective work relationships with legal counsel and periodic review of relevant case law concerning campus safety
> - Participation in campus environment task forces charged with monitoring the campus climate and addressing areas of concern
> - Routine communication with administrators in student affairs and others across the campus who share responsibility for the general welfare of the student body
> - Development of educational programs that inform and prepare students about personal safety on campus and beyond it

- Regular review of policies and procedures with impact on campus safety and security
- Education and training for staff to maintain an informed and contemporary understanding of safety issues and concerns (p. 8).

Additionally, student affairs professionals are also encouraged to develop strong relationships with surrounding community agencies that may provide assistance in times of crisis (Jackson & Cherrey, 2002). These additional job responsibilities are often implied and in combination with actual position descriptions and calls for program assessment, may create hindrances to successful program development and student learning.

Numerous other hindrances and obstacles to student learning and social development have been identified and addressed by professionals; however, there are still many of these detractors that are overlooked, such as personality disorders, mood disorders, and anxiety disorders, the symptoms of which can manifest after bearing witness to a traumatic event. Kadison and DiGeronimo (2004) suggested, "Ever since Princeton University opened the first campus mental health service in 1910, there has been a growing awareness that in order to meet the educational goals of their students, colleges must also tend to their emotional needs. Over the past century, however, movement toward doing something about that realization has been slow and uneven" (p. 155). The very environment that the world of collegiate academia is steadfastly trying to produce could be eliminated by the single instance of an unexpected traumatic event that occurs on a college campus. Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) stated that a strong social environment and relationships with peers and mentors are key factors promoting university retention efforts. Incidents of trauma can be obstacles for the development of strong social environments and positive peer relationships.

University administrators strive for a learning environment that promotes positive self-esteem. However, according to Bunce and Larsen (1995), one of the characteristics of those who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, a disabling disorder caused by witnessing or experiencing trauma, is low self-esteem. Traumatic events and crises affect those who experience it in various ways, many of which are not conducive to the creation of student learning, social development environments, and development of life purpose. Ramist (1981) stated that two reasons for college student attrition lie within personal considerations and dissatisfaction with the university. Personal considerations include emotional problems and adjustment issues. Dissatisfaction with the university can develop for a number of reasons, including a perceived abysmal social environment that can be related to social withdrawal due to post-traumatic stress disorder that can result from witnessing traumatic events.

Just as it is important to address the physical and mental well-being of the student population in times of crises, university officials should address the faculty and staff population whose relationships with students are the foundation of a successful university. For example, in many cases, residence life staff members are the first individuals to learn of the traumatic event. Many times, because of relationships developed with the residents as part of the job, the staff members become key players in the institution's immediate response to a traumatic event and the most visible target for resident's questions. These professionals are often the first responders in dealing with trauma associated with crisis (Kruger, 2001). Upper-level administrators ask residence staff to make sure that everyone remains calm and to identify students in need of professional counseling services. It is also the duty of the residence life staff to make sure that accurate information is being given in a time of chaos where rumor runs wild and definitive answers are not always known. In these situations, student affairs practitioners have to

concentrate on the lives of the student residents by acting in a procedural manner that ensures their emotional well being and safety in this time of crisis, all while putting aside their own personal issues and emotional processing for a later time. Duncan and Miser (2000) stated, "During a crisis, student affairs staff will also have personal and professional needs. Student affairs staff will work extremely hard for very long hours to help students with their emotional, financial, and personal needs. At the same time, these staff members likely will have some of the same needs, fears, and concerns as students" (p. 469).

According to Lerner, Volpe, and Lindell (2004), not all institutions have developed comprehensive crisis response strategies that address the needs of the entire campus population and even fewer are practiced with regularity for precision purposes. Crisis response plans must address the physical, mental, and emotional needs of all populations on campus, not just the student body, and must be actualized in a campus setting in order to insure efficiency. Likewise, crisis response plans need to clearly identify what is considered a crisis and how the institution will involve itself. Regardless of the type of institution, crisis and threats to the university environment must be defined and must address a number of different categories, including individual student deaths and assaults, weather-related emergencies and natural disasters, and terrorism, both local and global (Lerner, Volpe, & Lindell, 2004).

Institutions respond to traumatic situations and perceived threats on their campuses with various approaches, depending on the situation or the threat. These responses are termed crisis response and can range from immediate responses that promote physical safety and health to long-term responses designed to prevent crisis from occurring through education and other initiatives. Frequently, institutions form task forces, sometimes referred to as critical incident response teams, which delineate critical roles and responsibilities of key members of the

university. The charge of this task force is to create and implement the university's crisis response plan and to restore the normal functioning of activities on the campus (Lerner, Volpe, & Lindell, 2004). These roles and tasks may seem easily understood on paper, but in the face of crisis, responsibilities can often become blurred.

The development and effective implementation of crisis response protocol can assist in maintaining a campus in crisis on a number of levels. For example, a university-wide response can insure all stakeholders that the institution is fully aware of the crisis at hand and that it is working steadfastly to present corresponding actions and programs that return the environment to a state of normalcy and that will benefit the entire campus population and other stakeholders, including parents, alumni, and the surrounding community. A division-wide response to a crisis situation not only incorporates the university action plan, but it is able to identify and react to situations that the university might not necessarily term a crisis. For example, a student suicide, while tragic and able to induce feelings of grief, confusion, and fear, may not be recognized as a campus crisis, for the mere fact that the suicide did not stop the everyday way of life and business on the campus.

It is possible that the size of the campus student population or the nature of a student death may influence the response strategy of an institution. At an institution such as Catawba College in Salisbury, North Carolina, the campus population is small in number and the students are very visible and intricately connected with each other and with the rest of the campus population and surrounding community. A student death or deaths in this community may impact the Catawba College community as a whole, more than a larger campus community like the University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill, based on the inclusiveness of the campus. Likewise, it is easy to assume that while the feelings of loss and grief that accompany death may

be the same for some, a student murder is much more difficult to accept and begin the recovery process for a university, than a student suicide or a death by natural causes, due to safety concerns, heightened fear, and perceived vulnerability. Also, university administrators must consider the large range of indirect victims of crisis on campus. For example, in the case of a murder on campus, individuals who were related to or were in a relationship with a victim must also bear the brunt of grief and all other emotions associated with loss. Likewise, students who have had previous traumatic experiences, such as sexual or other physical violence, must also be considered (Archer & Cooper, 1998).

Institutions across the country employ many different approaches to crisis response. Some have very detailed manuals that analyze each step in the response strategy, while others maintain quick reference guides with current contact information of a crisis response team. Many of these response strategies are available to the public, including the student populations. Divisions and departments within the university may have supplemental strategies in dealing with certain crises (Zdziarski, 2006). These strategies may be utilized in the event of a student suicide or deaths resulting from car wrecks, or deaths as the result of seizures, heart attacks, or diseases, such as cancer. Institutional crisis response strategies may be used in times of weather-related emergencies and threats to the campus and its population. These emergencies may include tornados, hurricanes, and heavy flooding. Other types of natural disasters that may be highlighted in a university crisis response plan are fires and earthquakes. A relatively recent category found within university crisis response plans is terrorism or threats of terrorism. While campus crime, such as assault, rape, and battery, continue to occur, the post-9/11 world in which we live also is forced to accept the possibility of sniper fire, bomb threat, biological and chemical disasters, as well as deliberate food poisoning.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this mixed methods study is to analyze the crisis response policies, strategies, and programs of different types of institutions as well as to explore which elements of critical incident management structure and process are and are not being implemented across these different types of institutions. Specifically, this research will address the following questions across different types of institutions (i.e. public/private; two-year/four-year; HBCU/PWI; commuter/residential; liberal arts/non-liberal arts meaning comprehensive institutions with a strong research focus; land grant/non-land grant; religiously affiliated/non-religiously affiliated; rural/suburban/urban; very small and small/medium/large/very large):

1. What constitutes a crisis from the perspective of the institution and from the division of student affairs, according to institutional policy?
2. Who is involved in the development and process of crisis response protocols and how do institutions prepare themselves for crisis?
3. Whose needs are being met in times of crisis and what are these needs? How are these needs being addressed?
4. How are crisis response protocols evaluated and improved?
5. Does type of institution have any influence on crisis response on campus?
6. Does the size of the institution based on student enrollment have any influence on crisis response on campus?
7. Does the geographic location of the institution have any influence on crisis response on campus?

Definition of Terms

The subject of this study, institutional crisis response, can also be referred to as critical incident management as well as crisis response protocol, with the each term being used to describe the actual series of steps taken by an institution during a time of campus crisis and the overall process of responding to campus trauma. According to Lerner et al. (2004), "a crisis is a traumatic event that seriously disrupts our coping and problem-solving abilities. It is typically unpredicted, volatile in nature and may even threaten our survival. A crisis can present a drastic and tragic change in our environment. This change is generally unwanted and frightening, and may leave us with a sense of vulnerability and helplessness" (p. 9). Zdziarski (2006) defined crisis as "an event, often sudden or unexpected, that disrupts the normal operations of the institution or its educational mission and threatens the well-being of personnel, property, financial resources, and/or reputation of the institution" (p. 5). Mascari (2005) stated for an incident to be considered a crisis, the incident must

1. Affect and distress many people (as opposed to an individual in crisis)
2. Be unexpected (has the element of surprise)
3. Be a "disaster" (of varying magnitudes from a single family to large numbers of people)
4. Involve some type of loss (death, serious property loss, destruction of a community symbol)
5. Disrupt normal routines
6. Make people feel "out of control" or uncertain about the future (fear, loss of structure and predictability)

7. Not go away overnight (people will not feel better about this in the morning) (p. 65).

For the purpose of this study, only responses to campus crises in which the lives and well-being of students, faculty, and staff were affected will be analyzed. For example, incidents of death, assaults, fire and other weather related emergencies, among others will all be taken into account.

Within this study, institutions will be categorized according to nine dichotomies and will be placed into several groups: public, private, two-year, four-year, HBCU, PWI, commuter, residential, liberal arts, non-liberal arts, land grant, non-land grant, religiously affiliated, non-religiously affiliated, rural, suburban, urban, very small and small, medium, large, and finally, very large. Public institutions are those colleges and universities that are funded by their respective states, whereas private institutions are those that receive the majority of their annual funds through private donors and tuition. Urban institutions are defined as those institutions in the heart of a metropolitan area. By contrast, even though they may be located in the same city, rural institutions are those found outside of the confines of a largely populated area dominated by businesses and industry. For the purposes of this classifying institutions according to enrollment size, the National Center for Educational Statistics enrollment classifications were utilized in conjunction with the enrollment numbers provided by the institution to the College Board. Very small and small institutions are grouped together and have between 1 and 4,999 total students, which includes only degree seeking undergraduates and graduate students. Medium-sized institutions have between 5,000 and 9,999 degree-seeking undergraduates and graduate students. Large institutions are those institutions that have between 10,000 and 19,999 degree-seeking undergraduates and graduate students. Very large institutions are those colleges and universities

with 20,000 or more degree-seeking undergraduates and graduate students. (http://www.nced.ed.gov/ipeds.cool/, 2007; http://www.collegeboard.com, 2007).

Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations to this study. There is a general lack of available literature on the development and process of crisis response protocol on college and university campuses. This study presents an opportunity fill that gap. While many institutions have crisis response protocol, some are more specific and more readily available than others. Also, from the experience of the primary researcher, there are different types of informal crisis response protocol that exist at the department level that are not identified in a more formal institutional response. For example, housing and residence life departments may have their own emergency protocols to follow during times of emergency. While the division protocol would supercede department protocols in most cases, there is the possibility of protocols that develop informally among department staff in some cases. It is this more formal response that will be analyzed.

Another limitation is the availability and willingness of university officials to contribute quantitative and qualitative data to this study. This study has the potential to highlight weaknesses in an institutional response to crisis. Some university officials might not want to subject their respective institutions and crisis response teams to review for fear of shedding light on an inadequate crisis response plan. However, I believe that the advantages to the identification of both superb protocol and less than satisfactory protocol far outweigh the disadvantages and should be seen as an educational opportunity that will benefit the entire campus community in times of need.

Finally, this study does not attempt, nor is it a primary goal of the researcher, to address other types of student crises, such as eating disorders, financial management, personal data

security, and other risk management issues. The researcher is primarily interested in direct threats to the physical and emotional safety of all members of the campus population through an analysis of the structure and process of a crisis response plan. It was possible that institutional data collected during this study referenced these other types of crises and the researcher noted when this occurs. This type of data could possibly be used for future research interests.

Personal Statement Regarding Limitations

As a researcher, I have found myself in a precarious position with this topic because of personal experiences and beliefs about witnessing traumatic events while in college and the influence that it can have on a college population. However, it is these personal experiences that have sparked an interest in producing a study that may prove beneficial to both students and university administrators alike. There have been several instances in which emotional stressors from trauma could have manifested not only within me, but also a vast majority of the student population of my undergraduate institution. My personal experiences with traumatic events in college began with the attempted murder of my roommate in our off-campus apartment and with a plane crash resulting in the death of a high school friend and classmate.

Soon thereafter, and within a span of six months, the campus of Delta State University with approximately 3,400 students in the small town of Cleveland, Mississippi, was rocked with not one, but seven campus tragedies. Of the seven clustered events, two students (one being a fellow fraternity brother of mine as well as a childhood friend) were murdered in off-campus settings and the remaining five students were killed in car accidents (one being another close friend and the brother of my roommate who was shot in the domestic dispute). The last horrific incident was the hit-and-run death of a young university employee. Within a few months after this event, my campus and surrounding community were once again engulfed with grief with the

news of the death of a student from a nearby university. This individual and his family had close ties with my university and deep roots in the community. As a researcher, I have had the opportunity to adequately educate myself that my experiences can indeed prove beneficial to this study as long as the data is not influenced or compromised. Throughout my academic program, I placed much emphasis on qualitative inquiry in many projects and successfully completed numerous doctoral level qualitative research courses. This qualitative experience and academic training proved to be a tremendous resource throughout this dissertation study by educating me and enabling the minimization of bias based on my personal experiences with crises. Through the use of subjectivities journals, member checks, and peer reviews, I have been successful in remaining unbiased in this research.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Institutional Crisis Defined

Given the current state of global affairs and the various characteristics and previous experiences that each individual student brings to campus, it would seem that the realm of possible incidents that could trigger panic and crisis on campus could be quite endless. Lerner, Volpe, & Lindell (2004) formally defined crisis as "a traumatic event that seriously disrupts our coping and problem-solving abilities. It is typically unpredicted, volatile in nature and may even threaten our survival" (p. 9). This universal definition of crisis applies to all settings, not just the college campus. Seymour and Moore (2000) defined a crisis as a "disruption of normal patterns of corporate activity by a sudden or overpowering and initially uncontrollable event" (p. 10). Zdziarski (2006) expanded the definition of crisis further as "an event, often sudden and unexpected, that disrupts the normal operations of the institution or its educational mission and threatens the well-being of personnel, property, financial resources, and/or reputation of the institution" (p. 5). While an assault or suicide of a roommate could be considered a crisis to many college students in that it is unpredicted, volatile and that it disrupts coping and problem-solving abilities, some institutions may not consider that an institutional crisis. In fact, most institutions would not see this as a crisis, merely a random, tragic event for which psychological services would need to be provided. For the purposes of institutional administrators and this research, the university definition of a crisis becomes the larger issue. A university crisis is

informally defined as an event or series of events that disrupts the normal daily functioning of an institution.

Individuals react to crisis and recover from them in a variety of ways depending on a number of factors including whether they directly witnessed a traumatic event or just heard about it. The level of severity of the trauma and the type of trauma as well as its proximity to the individual can also attribute to divergent responses. A series of sexual assaults on campus is far more likely to result in a higher degree of crisis than a simple accident of a university community member resulting in minor injury. The higher level of severity can lead to increased emotional stress and heightened feelings of insecurity and instability. If an individual has a relationship of any kind with a victim on campus, there is a strong likelihood that that individual will have a stronger reaction to the event than if the victim was not known. Also, individuals who have a history of traumatic experiences in their lives may exhibit different reactions to an event than someone who has never experienced a traumatic event directly or indirectly.

Lerner, Volpe, and Lindell (2004) suggested that crisis induces traumatic stress, which leads to four categorical responses from members of the university community: emotional; cognitive; behavioral; and physiological. Not everyone will respond to crisis in the same manner or at the same time, as there can also be delayed effects to witnessing and experiencing a traumatic event. Emotional responses to trauma can include but are not limited to shock, feelings of fear and panic, as well as anger, hostility, depression, and guilt. Cognitive responses can include difficulty concentrating, increased confusion, feelings of vulnerability, and self-blame. Withdrawal, impulsivity, pacing, non-communication, and other anti-social behaviors are examples of behavioral responses to trauma. Lastly, trauma victims can experience physiological responses such as rapid heart beat, fatigue, headaches, elevated blood pressure, and

chest discomfort. Despite a wide range of reactions to traumatic events, the administration attempts to provide effective services to those affected by crisis. This is accomplished through a crisis response plan that utilizes both immediate means and follow-up services.

Types of Crises

Zdziarski (2001) classified campus crises into four major categories: natural crises (those crises generated by abnormal weather and climate patterns); facility crises (those crises involving threats of damage, actual damage, and other debilitating conditions to campus buildings and other structures); criminal crises (violent and abusive acts or threats inflicted on an individual or property by another individual or group of individuals); and human crises (accidental injuries and deaths, substance abuse, simple campus protests, racially motivated incidents, communicable disease, natural deaths, and disappearances). Perhaps one of the most notable campus crises in recent years in the United States was the bonfire disaster at Texas A&M University in which thirteen students were killed in the early hours of a fall morning preparing for the traditional bonfire on the eve of the football game with rival University of Texas. The chaos and confusion created by the bonfire incident signaled to administrators that it was time to begin looking at many different types of crises that could occur on the college campus.

Yet Texas A&M is certainly not the only campus to be affected in recent years by traumatic stress in the university community. Both natural disasters and disasters created by campus community members and others have crippled a wide range of campuses. Campus administrators and crisis response team members are now preparing themselves for a variety of events that could potentially threaten their campuses. Natural disasters such as hurricanes and subsequent flooding have rocked campuses in southern Florida, North Carolina, and certainly in the ravaged areas of New Orleans and Mississippi in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and

Rita in 2005. Tornados and earthquakes have struck campuses across the country and have caused considerable damage in California. Given the instability of weather patterns over the course of the last few years, it appears safe to assume that campuses will continue to be forced to prepare for natural disasters on campus.

Crises caused by members of the campus community and others can also create a crisis on campus and can impose varying levels of traumatic stress as they are often seen as more avoidable and preventable than natural disasters. Incidents resulting in deaths such as suicides and homicides create a heightened sense of vulnerability, anger, and grief on campus. Deaths resulting from residence hall fires and Greek house fires such as those at Seton Hall University, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and the University of Mississippi, are additional examples of incidents that can produce traumatic stress on the university community. Given the current political climate in our country and around the world, crisis response team members should prepare themselves with specific strategies to address sniper attacks, hostage situations, and terrorist threats, especially on campuses in close proximity to major metropolitan areas considered vulnerable to terrorist strikes.

It is important to note that an actual death does not necessarily constitute a crisis. Likewise, a death does not have to occur for a crisis to develop. Oftentimes, the threat of harm and security is enough to trigger traumatic stress on campus. For example, a prevalence of hate crimes, physical and/or mental intimidation, simple assault of a member of the university community, and sexual assaults do not necessarily result in death, but can produce symptoms of traumatic stress nonetheless. A bus or car accident near a crowded area of campus may leave an "imprint of horror" for witnesses. Practitioners must also prepare themselves for a variety of situations that are not as common but can also trigger crisis on campus, including bomb scares,

high rates of alcohol and substance abuse, food poisoning outbreaks, eating disorders, hazing, or a visible accident involving a student or staff member (Lerner, Volpe, & Lindell, 2004).

Introduction to Crisis Response and Traumatic Stress

It is important to understand why an analysis into institutional crisis response is crucial. In order to comprehend the significance of the impact of crisis, one must accept how traumatic stress can affect the campus. "Traumatic stress is the emotional, cognitive, behavioral and physiological experience of individuals who are exposed to, or who witness, events that overwhelm their coping and problem solving abilities" (Lerner, Volpe, & Lindell, 2004, p. 12). When a crisis occurs, the entire university community can be impacted, not just the students. Complicating the response plan, administrators must also meet the physical and emotional safety needs of all members of the university community, including faculty and staff. Emotions that result from witnessing or processing a traumatic event such as a death or an assault of a student or of an employee can be quite overwhelming and can negatively impact the working environment for a number of employees. Likewise, understanding how unpredictable crisis and traumatic events affect different campus populations is essential to reestablishing an optimal learning environment.

Traumatic stress can have a negative impact on both the student and the staff population by disrupting the educational and administrative processes of the campus. Students can exhibit social withdrawal, fear, feelings of helplessness, increased absenteeism, decreased grade point average and satisfaction with the overall college experience, as well as increased propensity towards psychological disorders such as post traumatic stress disorder, which can have disabling effects on the abilities of students to concentrate and fully engage in the learning environment. As a result, student attrition rates could increase. When an individual's sense of security and

safety are compromised, feelings of fear and anxiety coupled with a loss of concentration and depression can prohibit the success of a college student, making it sometimes impossible to engage in class and to persist towards educational goals. Traumatic stress can also lead to emotional disorders and to substance abuse concerns. Similarly, the same negative impact can develop within the staff population as there could be a decrease in staff morale and in staff communication. There could also be an increase in tension as well as insubordination. Traumatic stress may also lead to increased legal concerns including more disability claims. Other symptoms related to traumatic stress can lead to difficulty sleeping and to behaviors and actions that can deter the promotion of healthy relationships both at work and at home (Lerner, Volpe, & Lindell, 2004).

Institutional Approaches to Crisis

Institutions of higher learning attempt to prepare themselves for various crises in a variety of ways with their respective crisis response plans. The crisis response plan and the response team membership will vary across institutions depending on several factors, including but not limited to size, location, funding, and staff resources. Previous exposure to traumatic stress on campus can also lead to more detailed crisis response plans and teams. Some institutions have a specific plan of action for specific types of crises. The level of severity of a campus crisis may force changes to an existing crisis response team and plan. Many larger institutions have global and national alerts statuses that indicate current terror threats levels (http://www.uosp.uga.edu; http://www.tamu.edu). Several institutions actually have versions of their crisis response plans available on-line (Zdziarski, 2006; http://stuaff.clemson.edu/content/crisismgt.php; http://www.gvsu.edu/index.cfm?fuseaction=standards.crisissummary).

In addition to the crisis protocol procedures, chains of command and contact information can also be found on-line (http://www.hrs.cmich.edu/avp/crisis-response.htm; http://stuaff.clemson.edu/emergency_info; http://www.ups.edu/x6209.xml; http://www.tamu.edu/press/conflict/index.html; http://www.ncsu.edu/policies/campus_environ/REG04.00.1.php). However, consistent with the available literature, much of the information that can be found on these websites deals strictly with the structure of managing a crisis, not the process of managing the crisis. Most campuses continue to offer a multitude of safety and educational programs to reduce the risk of crisis on campus. Some campuses are beginning to form Offices of Security Preparedness that work in conjunction with University Police and with the crisis response team (http://www.uosp.uga.edu; http://www.usc.edu/emergencyprep; http://www.washington.edu/admin/business/oem; http://oep.berkeley.edu). Emergency deans and on-call systems can also be found within the mid-and upper level student affairs administration.

Evolution of a Crisis Response Plan

Unfortunately there is no policy that could force individuals within the university community to react to traumatic events in the same manner each time. In addition, it is just as unfortunate that administrators cannot implement a policy to stop traumatic events from occurring on their campuses. Invariably at institutions across the country, crises are increasingly becoming a part of the lives of practitioners, who are the first line responders and those most directly responsible for initial response to crises. Institutions are beginning to act accordingly in preparation for such situations and to better ensure the safety and recovery of the campus community by developing comprehensive crisis response plans. Zdziarski (2006) stated, “The foundation of any crisis management system is a written plan that provides a clear basis from

which everyone in the institution can operate in the event of a crisis. The plan includes instructions for when and how it should be implemented, who will be in charge, and what actions will be taken" (p. 18). Detailed crisis response plans and protocol are being updated and revised to meet the needs of the entire campus with attention being given to different types of crises. A comprehensive crisis response plan ensures that the physical safety and emotional safety of the campus becomes the highest priority.

Zdziarski's Five Stage Model of Crisis Management

Zdziarski (2006) advocated a five stage response to university crisis. Zdziarski's model incorporates aspects of crisis response models found within the corporate arena, federal emergency management, and also within psychology (Zdziarski, 2006; Federal Emergency Management Association, 1996; Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992; Fink, 1986). Zdziarski's initial stage begins with mitigation practices and development of institutional policies that reduce the risk for potential crises, perhaps through the use of a crisis audit. Only after a careful analysis of potential risks and population needs has been conducted, can members of the crisis response team begin reducing immediate threats. Training of university personnel is also a component of this stage (Zdziarski, 2006).

In the second stage of this five stage model, based on the results from the crisis audit and campus assessment, response team members begin to plan for the most likely crises and begin to address and design protocols in the likely event that a crisis does occur. Once the central components of response and recovery have been installed, the team can continue to prepare, train, and become more efficient through education. The third stage, or the response, begins when the crisis occurs. Based on the work during the previous planning stage, team members should be aware of their specific duties and responsibilities in the face of crisis. Unanticipated

issues that arise in the early crucial moments and thereafter during a crisis can be resolved by an experienced team member and then returned to at a later state during assessment practices (Zdziarski, 2006).

The fourth stage of Zdziarski's model is the recovery stage and can vary in time and process depending on the severity of the crisis, the preparedness of the responders, and the available resources. The final stage is termed the learning phase. During this phase, crisis team members can analyze the actions taken to prevent the crisis from occurring, and they can also assess the actions taken to resolve the crisis and to return the campus to a normal state (Zdziarski, 2006). Each of the stages of this model and of all models of crisis response is crucial. However, Zdziarski (2001) stated that the mitigation stage and the recovery stage are often given the least emphasis by crisis response teams.

All-Hazards Approach to Crisis Management

Some institutions are beginning to develop crisis management strategies that provide consistent protocol for a variety of crises. These approaches are typically labeled All-Hazards approaches to crisis management and they are supported by the Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA). This All-Hazards approach can eliminate confusion by utilizing concise protocol in a consistent manner regardless of the type of crisis. The All-Hazards approach is a four step process that begins with mitigation, an assessment and elimination of pre-existing risks to campus safety and security. The second stage of this approach is known as the preparation phase in which the crisis response team is developed, an emergency operations command center is located and equipped, specific roles and duties for the crisis management team members are delineated, and all members of the crisis response team, in addition to other key members of the

campus population are properly educated and trained to efficiently respond to campus crises (Lerner, Volpe, & Lindell, 2004; Federal Emergency Management Association, 1996).

The response process is the third stage and it can be divided into two categories based on an initial immediate response and then a follow-up response. During this stage, practitioners work to meet the physical and emotional needs of the university community. Communication within the crisis response team and with the university community and external community is essential for effective response and recovery to take place. Strong collaboration and cooperation with key administrators and potentially with external agencies are also necessary for an efficient and timely return to pre-crisis conditions. The final stage of the All-Hazards approach is known as the recovery stage. This stage is marked by repairs to physical structures on campus and by repairs to the psyche of the campus population. Continued follow-up responses will ensure the proper attention is given to affected individuals who still suffer from traumatic stress. This final stage includes a debriefing process that provides opportunities to assess the facts and realities of the crisis, the overall response effort, the pulse of the community, and to gauge the effectiveness of the staff. Finally, a detailed assessment of the crisis response should be conducted and proper revisions should be made to the plan. The cycle then starts over with the crisis response team utilizing educational and training opportunities that will enable them to respond to the physical and emotional needs at a higher level in the event of another crisis (Lerner, Volpe, & Lindell, 2004, Federal Emergency Management Association, 1996).

Despite FEMA's support of an All-Hazards Approach to campus crisis, there are detractors of this strategy. Siegel (1994) stated "Each crisis is unique, and although many institutions have established crisis management processes, administrators adjust and respond differently to each situation. The same situation may be a crisis at one time but not another" (p.

250). Crises come in all different forms and levels of severity and also occur on campuses that differ in terms of size, location, and available resources. Therefore, it is not realistic to develop or promote a crisis response plan that responds in the same manner for every type of crisis (Mitroff, Pearson, & Harrington, 1996; Phelps, 1986). Likewise, it is nearly impossible for an institution to prepare itself for every single crisis in an overwhelming pool of potential crises that can develop on campus (Zdziarski, 2006). Zdziarski (2006) stated, "Each institution must review its own circumstances, potential threats, and risks, and establish a crisis management system that meets its unique needs" (p. 6).

Regardless of the type of crisis or the specificity of the response plan, institutions need to find creative ways to train the campus community regarding issues of safety and security before, during, and after a campus crisis. For example, providing a hotline number for reliable and updated information will be beneficial for the university community and other communities affected by a campus crisis. Crisis response teams must be educated and trained in effective on-scene management and emotional support by providing opportunities for discussion and utilizing effective counseling skills and other strategies for reducing traumatic stress. Key department administrators and members of the crisis response team can be proactive and not reactive by identifying high risk students and meeting the needs of those in this population. Networks to outside mental health and counseling agencies will be beneficial when referrals for members of the university community are necessary. Much like those found on-campus, services and resources external to the campus community also vary greatly depending on the location and the relationship within the community. Collaborative efforts between the external agencies and the institution prove beneficial in some cases, but not all (Kadison and DiGeronimo, 2004).

Proactive measures that will be beneficial during the crisis can also include making available a contact list with phone numbers and email addresses for staff and emergency response agencies. Members of the crisis response team can also work with physical plant employees to have floor plans and evacuation routes readily accessible in the event of a crisis. Emergency kits can be assembled and strategically placed within all buildings on campus. These kits should include typical first aid items along with alternate means of communication, food, water, flashlights, and batteries. The physical plant may also be helpful in located and mapping emergency utility protocol in the event that the gas, water, or power becomes an affected resource on campus and appropriately equipping an emergency command center and a physical location for news media to gather. A campus warning system could be developed to alert the community of danger. Members of the crisis response team must establish protocol to identify safe and injured students in a time of crisis. This team must also review and update emergency plans on a regular basis (Lerner, Volpe, & Lindell, 2004).

Common Components of a Comprehensive Crisis Response Plan

Based on consistent elements found within the literature, one could assume that an institution regardless of type, size, or location could be best served by a crisis management model that encompasses the following stages: a mitigation and assessment stage conducted prior to a crisis occurring to reduce the potential for campus crisis; a developmental stage in which carefully selected members of the university administration come together to address the needs of the campus, to reduce the risk of potential threats, and to develop specific duties, responsibilities, and other protocol for the those crises that are most probable; and a training stage in which the campus is prepared for the occurrence of crisis through exercises, simulations, and other education.

Once an actual crisis occurs, predetermined communication links activate the crisis response plan and the team members are set in motion. The next two stages of this comprehensive model are both termed institutional responses, one being immediate in which the institution moves immediately to resolve the crisis, restore physical safety, and return the campus to a state of normalcy as quickly as possible. The next response by the institution is a deliberate series of follow-up responses in which the members of the crisis response team continuously gauge the emotional climate of the campus, including the student, faculty/staff, and responder populations. A series of recovery tasks are included in this stage and strong collaboration and communication is needed from all members of the campus population. This follow-up stage can last for an undetermined amount of time, depending on several factors, among them, the availability of resources and the severity of the crisis. The next stage, the recovery process, is interconnected with the follow-up response stage. Recovery and follow-up response are occurring at the same time and influence each other. Once the campus has been deemed to have recovered to an appropriate level, a thorough assessment of all actions involved both before and during the crisis can be conducted. As a result of this assessment stage, major and minor changes can be made to the crisis response plan in order to ensure better efficiency when the next crisis occurs. Once this change initiation has been made, the cycle can then repeat itself.

The Crisis Response Plan: Structure vs. Process

The majority of the available literature on crisis response plans and critical incident protocol addresses the structure of managing a crisis, not the process of managing a crisis. There is a distinct difference in these two concepts, one no less important than the other. Likewise, formal elements of a crisis response plan seem to concentrate on the structural elements of a plan and not the emotional effects of crisis on those who experience it on campus (Paterson, 2006).

The structure of managing a crisis should be considered the framework of the plan itself. Tasks designated within the structure of preparing and managing a crisis would include designating who will comprise the crisis response team and assigning the specific roles and responsibilities of each team member. The structure of the crisis response plan also contemplates the gathering of facts surrounding the crisis itself and the sharing of information with all necessary parties. All training and all assessments of the actions and the plan itself fall within this category. The structure of a plan shapes the behaviors of the crisis response team and readies them for action in the event of a crisis (Lerner, Volpe, & Lindell, 2004). The structure provides the foundation for a return to safety and security on campus, much like the walls of a house provide security for its inhabitants.

In contrast to the structure of a crisis response, the process of managing a crisis response specifically deals with addressing the psychological needs of individuals during times of crisis. For example, according to Lerner et al. (2004), "Once students are isolated in a specific location, what is being done to help them? What is the goal of early intervention? Who is truly prepared to address the emergent psychological needs of groups of people who are exhibiting emotional distress" (p. 11)? These are issues that affect the foundation of a house and can directly impact stability and security. Using the previous house example, there are many obstacles, including people, utilities, and climate/weather-related issues that can rapidly influence the stability of the foundation of a house. This metaphor can be used to explain the difference between the structure and the process of crisis response.

Structure of a Crisis Response Plan: Crisis Response Team Organization

When an institution finds itself in a crisis, the community can become characterized by times of chaos and confusion. Key members of the campus community come together to plan

and initiate an effective response to a crisis that will return the campus to a state of normalcy over time. These professionals and in some cases, students, are members of a committee often referred to as the crisis response team and are intricately engaged in various facets of the university administration and beyond. Zdziarski (2006) asserted that a crisis response team "performs three primary functions: (1) developing and maintaining a crisis management plan; (2) implementing the plan; and (3) dealing with contingencies that may arise that are not addressed by the plan" (p. 12). The development of an efficient and productive crisis response team might often prevent a critical situation from spiraling out of control. The crisis response team highlights the co-worker relationship and utilizes strong, collegial communication and collaboration between team members. Crisis response team members prepare for different crisis scenarios through education and training. The team members work to develop and activate emergency protocol as well as to educate and provide services to the entire community about the crisis and its impact. Team members must also revise and update crisis response protocol and services if necessary. Other duties of the crisis response team include conducting crisis audits in order to decrease existing risks on campus and to assess the overall crisis response plan after a crisis has occurred (Lerner, Volpe, & Lindell, 2004). In fact, Littleton (1983) suggested that performing a crisis audit on campus should be the initial task of developing the overall crisis management plan.

The crisis response team must also select a chairperson for the team. This experienced professional is usually highly regarded and recognized as an organized and composed leader and communicator on campus. The chair of the committee is usually integrated into many aspects of administrative management including student affairs. The chair essentially becomes the leader of the team in times of institutional crisis and coordinates all decision making related to crisis

management on campus. All personnel in the college setting should be educated and empowered to effectively respond to crises and it is the responsibility of the crisis response team to ensure that this preparation occurs (Lerner, Volpe, & Lindell, 2004). The activation of the crisis response team is not always necessary. For example, the death of a student in an off campus setting is indeed tragic, yet would probably not be considered an institutional crisis at a large institution like The Ohio State University. However, a similar situation at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College in rural Tifton, Georgia may consider this student death to have a much broader impact on the university and surrounding communities due to the fact that it is much more inclusive community where student deaths are few and far between.

Crisis response team membership will vary across different types of institutions depending on funding and staff power; however, it is imperative to have a wide range of professionals from all areas of the university (Siegel, 1994). Executive level administrators such as institutional presidents, vice presidents, and directors often serve on these committees, including the vice president for student affairs and director of student services. Among the other crucial members of the response team, one would most likely find the campus police chief, the director of housing and residence life, the director of the counseling center, the dean of students, the director of health services, the director of media relations, and occasionally various faculty members considered to be effective communicators with students. Other professionals that may be found on the response teams would be the director of human resources and the director of employee assistance programs, who would both be beneficial in identifying issues related to staff and providing services for affected staff members and administrators. An experienced representative from campus ministries would be beneficial in providing spiritual guidance for the university population, especially the students (Lerner, Volpe, & Lindell, 2004).

The director of the physical plant could identify areas of campus that are in need of attention and could direct efforts to evacuate specific locations or locate emergency power. Representatives from the university legal counsel could be beneficial to the team when dealing with media communication by verifying legal limitations on the sharing of information and services provided. Student affairs practitioners and other university administrators are often trained in general case law that affects the student relationship with the institution and its employees, via their graduate preparation programs or possibly continuing education seminars and other professional development. Yet, this basic knowledge may not reach the complex areas of liability and litigation. Crisis response teams are encouraged to pursue partnerships and strong communication links with the university legal counsel, prior to a crisis (Duncan & Misner, 2000). However, Siegel (1994) reported that campus legal representatives have been more involved in the matters immediately following a crisis.

The director of the disability resource center could provide critical insight in communicating with disabled students and provided necessary information that would ensure safety for physically challenged students. The director of food services would be able to generate information ranging from feeding the community to providing snacks at counseling sessions. Crisis response teams may also consist of various responsible members of the student body, for example, a highly visible student government representative. Students on the committee can perhaps lend insight into the student response to a specific crisis and help communicate factual information about the crisis and existing services available to the university community. Finally, members of external agencies may prove beneficial in the response efforts and recovery process, including members of law enforcement, medical facilities, mental health agencies, and shelter groups (Lerner, Volpe, & Lindell, 2004; Siegel, 1994).

The creation and preparation of an emergency operations command center is another key piece to effectively managing a crisis. This is an actual physical location for all members of the crisis response team to converge and direct all responses to a critical situation on campus. This emergency command center is usually a large, centrally located meeting space and is the location in which all information related to the crisis is gathered and shared internally and externally. The command center should be properly equipped with a sufficient amount of communication devices including phone lines and advanced computer technology (Bornstein & Wilson, 2004; Allen, 2001). Sources of emergency power and emergency supplies should also be made readily available within the command center. In some cases the severity of the specific crisis may create an insecure environment. In this case, crisis response teams may want to consider the development of a mobile component of the command center in order to effectively manage the crisis from a more secure area.

The next step in the development of the crisis response plan is the assignment of specific duties for members of the team during times of crisis. Many of these duties will most likely be framed around the respective functional areas of the team members, but members could also be asked to work with certain duties of which they are not as familiar. In either case, there should always be ample opportunities for continuous training exercises and educational opportunities for these professionals to increase their efficiency in the event of an actual crisis. These educational programs and exercises should not only be made available to the crisis response team members but also deans, directors, department heads, and those individuals working directly with students. Part of this educational process should include educational sessions about possible crises and university response. Documents should be created and strategically located in offices across the campus that address the specific chain of command in an emergency

situation and list emergency contact information with alternate phone numbers. This information should also find a home in various external agencies such as law enforcement offices, fire departments, and mental health agencies (Allen, 2001; Duncan & Misner, 2000).

Structure of a Crisis Response Plan: Crisis Response Team Communication

Perhaps the most crucial structural element of a crisis response plan is communication. "The importance of timely and accurate communication with various entities cannot be emphasized enough in responding to a crisis" (Zdziarski, 2006, p. 32). The flow of communication within the crisis response team and external agencies will help deter chaos, confusion, and the influx of rumors. After careful consideration the crisis response team should elect a member of the team to direct communication efforts within the team and also a member to handle communication with all external outlets. In the case that this elected member is unable to perform the assigned duties, a qualified alternate should also be selected. Often times, institutions already have a professional in charge of media relations. That person would be the most qualified and readily accessible administrator to deal with external communication (Lerner, Volpe, & Lindell, 2004).

Effective communication with a multitude of individuals is essential during times of crisis on campus. Internally, strong communication links between each member of the crisis response team will increase the productivity of fact gathering and it will also be necessary in providing the university community with factual updates and fast information regarding services, safety, and security on campus. Strong communication can help prevent the spread of rumors which contribute to the chaos and confusion that defines the early periods of a campus crisis. Efficient communication within the campus community can also help in determining if and when

the use of external agencies would be necessary in the response and recovery process (Lerner, Volpe, & Lindell, 2004).

Media communication will become a crucial component in relaying the available facts of the situation and establishing the response of the institution to the crisis. Duncan and Misner (2000) stated, "Interaction with the media takes many forms, from formal press conferences and interviews for the print or broadcast media to responses to individual inquiries and the preparation of a press release. At the time of the crisis, such interactions are often complicated by the fact that the institution is communicating bad news" (p. 459). Crises are certainly news worthy stories and will generate much attention from the local and even national media. News media can be both beneficial and detrimental in times of crisis. Sensationalizing events and communicating rumors can heighten an already precarious situation. However, a working relationship between the university and the media based on integrity and a willful exchange of factual information can lead to reduced fear and efficiency in the crisis management strategy (Siegel, 1994).

There must be a clear and consistent plan of action in dealing with the media in times of crisis. It is helpful to have an experienced media relations professional as part of the crisis management team. Siegel (1994) suggested that this "information officer needs to be fully informed about everything as quickly as possible and on a continuing basis no matter who is giving out the messages. An effective rumor control program can begin immediately when the institution speaks in a unified voice" (p. 246). Special considerations must be given to confidentiality, respect for the families involved, liability concerns, and potential mass confusion. The members of the crisis response team are encouraged to develop strong relationships with members of the media, but also with members of the public information staff,

so that when crisis erupts, the communication links will be healthy and responsible (Duncan & Misner, 2000).

One of the current hot button issues on our college campuses is communication with parents. This communication link is just as significant in times of crisis on campus, as this population will be demanding updates on the status of the campus and their children, as well as what action the institution is taking to remedy the situation. Issues of confidentiality and knowledge of legal mandates should be addressed within the crisis response team prior to an actual crisis. Confidentiality is a necessary priority for the crisis response team and becomes even more crucial in the event of a crisis that results in the death of a student. All members of the response team should be well versed in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act and they should understand the benefits and limitations of these mandates (FERPA, 1974; HIPAA, 1996). One benefit to having a member of university counsel on the crisis response team is being able to have easy access to a seasoned professional that can answer any questions regarding proper and legal disclosure of information during a time of crisis. However, just as a memorial service for fallen students may help communicate to parents that the institution has a feeling of care and empathy for the student's family and friends, careful and continuous communication with parents regarding health updates, for example in the case of a student who was assaulted, can help lead to a more favorable image of the institution in the eyes of those loved ones (Paterson, 2006).

The sequence of events leading to the activation of the crisis management plan can often be characterized as a chaotic time with the safety and security of the campus community being unknown. All department heads, directors, deans, and other mid-level and senior level administrators should be made aware of how to activate the crisis response plan. Often times, it

would be as simple as alerting a member of the crisis response team. The elected chair of the crisis response team should always be available and able to be reached, or have made arrangements with another member of the crisis response team if unavailable. Once the chair of the crisis response team is notified of the developing situation, the president of the institution or the president's designee should immediately be contacted. Another responsibility of the chair is to continue to gather as much information as possible about the situation. A carefully designed crisis response team will be beneficial in this process and can probably begin to assist in the fact gathering mission. Once enough pertinent information has been collected and processed, the chair must then determine if the situation should actually be termed a crisis and should warrant convening all members of the crisis response team to the emergency operations command center (Lerner, Volpe, & Lindell, 2004; Duncan & Misner, 2000).

Once the members of the crisis response team have been notified to convene, the team must use its communication links to evaluate the institutional response to the crisis and to measure the impact of the crisis on the community. Members of the response team will contact deans, directors, and department heads all across campus to get an initial assessment of impact. After the initial communication has been gathered, a series of events are set in motion including the determination of the need for external resources and the subsequent activation of external resources, if necessary, in addition to available institutional resources and services. Crisis team members must quickly notify the campus community regarding the facts of the situation, the purpose and location of support personnel, and the external resources available to the campus community. This information can be delineated via assemblies, email communication, or radio and television media. The key task during this time is to communicate to all parties that the institution is in control of the situation and is working to maintain the physical and emotional

safety and security of the campus population (Lerner, Volpe, & Lindell, 2004; Duncan & Misner, 2000).

Crisis Response Plan Fusion: The Blend of Structure and Process

While it could still be considered part of the framework of the crisis response plan and thus the structure of the plan, once the members of the crisis response team begin to move around campus to assess the impact and response to the crisis, the plan begins to shift toward attending to the immediate emotional needs of those individuals affected. There are usually two types of responses to a crisis on campus, an immediate response, and a follow-up response once the campus has returned to pre-crisis conditions. Immediate issues at hand during this response are providing and promoting safety and security through specific actions and resources.

Establishing facts and diminishing rumors are key tasks in the immediate response as this deters the chaos and the confusion from spreading (Coombs, 1999). Once the crisis subsides and the campus begins the recovery process, the crisis response team continues with a campaign of follow-up tasks in which there is continuous assessment of the impact of the crisis and the services offered. During these responses, many administrators and practitioners will come in direct contact with individuals in the community who have been affected by the crisis. Paterson (2006) suggested that the grieving process is complex and "may take as long as a year, so crisis team members should make an effort to maintain regular contact with students who were especially affected by the incident" (p. 36). In some cases, the administrators are not properly trained and educated in handling a crisis. Improper responses and processing of this situation can be quite harmful emotionally and physically and can be problematic as the crisis continues to develop and the road to recovery begins.

A process known as debriefing is a critical component of any crisis response plan, regardless of the type of crisis (Sandoval & Brock, 1996). Debriefing provides the crisis response team with a thorough review of the circumstances that led to the crisis and how the actions of the crisis response team have influenced the response and recovery efforts of the institution. Immediate and follow-up actions are discussed in depth as are any new developments, roles, and responsibilities. As the process can occur while the impact of the crisis is still being felt around the campus, debriefing gives crisis response team members an opportunity to gauge the stress and fatigue levels of not only the student population but also the campus staff population and to make changes in staff rotations if necessary. While the recovery process for specific individuals can last years, the recovery process for the institution as a whole can initially begin with the immediate response of the crisis response team and continue through follow-up responses until the campus has returned to a state of pre-crisis conditions (Lerner, Volpe, & Lindell, 2004; Duncan & Misner, 2000; Waugh, 2000).

As part of the recovery process, the institutional crisis response strategy reverts back to the structure of the plan, though aspects of the process can be seen throughout. Crisis response team members concern themselves with the planning and staging of memorial services in order to facilitate grieving and to provide closure. The services range from a formally arranged ceremony, to planting a tree, to observing a moment of silence. Siegel (1994) suggested, “In addition to ministry services, ritual plays an important role in bringing the community together and healing. Ceremonies, flags at half-mast, shared moments of silence, or music bring communities together with a resolve to heal” (p. 250). Regardless of the symbolic action taken, crisis response team members should provide the necessary resources and services for attendees that may become grief stricken during these events. Follow up counseling services can be

promoted as a continued beneficial resource for these individuals. In addition, crisis response team members must not overlook the needs and wishes of family members. It is customary for family to be consulted and invited to the institutionally sponsored ceremony (Lerner, Volpe, & Lindell, 2004; Duncan & Misner, 2000).

Structure of a Crisis Response Plan: Training and Assessment

Continuous training and professional development opportunities as they pertain to crisis management on campus have tremendous potential to further prepare a campus for an impending crisis (Bornstein & Wilson, 2004). According to the available literature, the large majority of training and assessments that are related to crisis response do so from the perspective of the structure, not the process. In fact, there is little available information on the training of university administrators with reference to the campus emotional trauma, other than that of mental health professionals that are charged with the immediate handling of emotional needs of individuals in times of campus crisis. However, there are several viable options that institutions utilize in order to better prepare the campus community and coordinating teams for crises. The more common training opportunities that occur on campus are table top exercises that highlight a specific crisis and the crisis response team members and other coordinating teams discuss the different steps that they would take to return the campus to a state of normalcy (Zdziarski, 2006; Lerner, Volpe, & Lindell, 2004). Zdziarski (2006) suggested "In a table top exercise, team members are presented with a crisis scenario and asked to describe how they would respond. This approach allows team members to process situations collectively, considering multiple perspectives and in various roles" (p. 20).

Crisis simulations are campus coordinated drills and are much more in depth and take place over the course of a day. These training opportunities are pre-planned and the university

community is alerted prior to the training so as to not alarm anyone. These drills or "dress rehearsals" utilize the majority of campus administration and are quite visible to the rest of the campus community. "Much like a role-play, it involves the use of volunteers as 'victims' and the activation of all agencies and resources that would respond to such an event. Simulation exercises require extensive coordination and planning, but they provide the most realistic exposure to what a crisis situation will be like and the best test of whether the plans and protocols will be effective" (Zdziarski, 2006, p. 20-21). Campus coordinated drills are often as close as the community gets to a real incident without it being an actual crisis. As with an actual crisis, teamwork and collaborative efforts of all coordinating teams are essential in these practice exercises. Another important component of the table top exercises and the campus coordinated drills are the assessments of actions that day. These analyses allow for the improvement of emergency protocol and revisions to the crisis response plan. Institutions also offer educational programs and seminars of varying lengths and depths to administrators who are interested in understanding how to handle the emotional needs of others in times of crises. These programs and seminars can be led by qualified individuals in the administration or through qualified outside consultants. These professional development and training opportunities also exist in other off-campus settings such as at professional conferences or via on-line courses (Lerner, Volpe, & Lindell, 2004).

Continuous assessments of pre-existing factors that could lead to increased vulnerability of the campus population are strongly suggested. Crisis audits and other mitigation exercises should be seen as a way to not only deter crisis from erupting and to prepare for the inevitable, but also to engage the campus in the promotion of safety features and feelings of inclusion for the entire campus population (Strange & Banning, 2001). For example, in order to improve the

conditions of safety at night, administrators may choose to strategically place emergency call boxes or to increase lighting in a dimly lit but often traveled area of campus. Also, campus greenery, such as trees, shrubs, and bushes can be trimmed down to improve visibility of the campus community at night. These actions take place after a careful examination known as the crisis audit. While certainly not an overall assessment of a crisis response plan, crisis audits are good tools to measure the existing risks to campus safety and security. However, these audits can become a component of a more formalized approach to assessment of crisis response plans. Crisis audits take place in the early stages of a crisis response plan and are used by institutions in their strategies to eliminate or reduce risk of crises (Littleton, 1983; Mitroff, Harrington, & Gai, 1996).

Crisis response team members must always review their actions and the responses to a crisis by the university community in order to evaluate their efficiency and improve protocol. The more formalized assessment approach of a crisis response plan can only occur after the plan has been activated in a time of actual crisis. After the immediate response to the crisis and the initial follow-up response, the crisis response team members should begin to gather their thoughts and analyze what went right and what could have been better. The crisis response team must evaluate and assess both the positive and negative actions in order for policy decisions to be made, education and training to be enhanced, and safety and security on campus to be increased. Another aspect that must be addressed is staff morale during the crisis. One aspect of analyzing the good with the bad is that in a time of chaos and confusion, staff members can be recognized as making positive steps towards returning the campus to a state of normalcy and improving conditions for the campus community. Once these careful determinations have been made,

revisions to the plan can be conducted and administrators can begin more efficient training and preparation based on the recommendations for improvements (Lerner, Volpe, & Lindell, 2004).

Several aspects of the crisis response plan, both structure and process, must be assessed, including the efficiency and the delegation of specific roles and responsibilities of key staff members. A determination must be made if specific roles and responsibilities are being held by the most qualified individuals. An assessment of the flow of communication, so critically essential in the immediate crisis response, should be conducted with respect to communication with all involved parties, including the team, the campus community, the media, and with the external community, including the parents. The delivery of services and the recovery process of the entire campus population should both be assessed and included in any subsequent revisions to the crisis response plan if necessary (Lerner, Volpe, & Lindell, 2004).

Once an assessment of services and protocol is complete, institutional administrators can utilize a benchmarking process in order to compare and contrast with similar types of institutions. Zdziarski (2006) supported the benchmarking process in crisis management assessment:

> You might also contact your colleagues at comparable institutions and ask them to share their crisis management plan. If you are creating a new plan, reviewing plans for other institutions can give you a good sense of what a plan looks like and how others have approached some of the issues and challenges you may be facing. If you are revising your plan, reviewing plans from other institutions may help you identify ideas or approaches (p. 19).

During this process, crisis response teams can analyze and improve the strengths and eliminate weaknesses of their crisis response plans by analyzing policies of similar institutions

(Spendolini, 1992). Campuses that are similar in size, funding, staff power, and have similar crises on campus can attempt to mirror the efforts of other institutions or improve their services and protocol based on the results from the benchmarking process (Upcraft & Schuh, 1996). Prepared check lists are available to assist crisis response team members when developing and improving their crisis protocol structure and process (Lerner, Volpe, & Lindell, 2004; Zdziarski, 2006, Zdziarski, 2001, FEMA, 1996).

Process of a Crisis Response Plan: The Plan in Action

The process of managing a crisis response is quite different from the structure of managing a plan, but just as essential for an effective return to pre-crisis conditions. The process of managing a crisis response provides immediate and continued assistance to the emotional needs of individuals in the crisis. Again, traumatic stress manifests itself in a variety of ways within individuals in a time of crisis. Special consideration must be given to what assistance is provided to those individuals in their time of need as well as if individuals addressing these needs are truly the most qualified and competent to handle these responsibilities. The benefits of immediate intervention would seem to be plentiful and could drastically improve the recovery process. Post crisis interventions, such as the promotion of education, exercise, individual and group counseling, and more specialized therapy, have been hailed for years. However, little research has been done on interventions during a crisis. Feelings of shock, detachment, irritability, as well as emotional fatigue, anxiety, and depression do not just disappear without some assistance from a therapeutic technique or professional. However, if left untreated, the symptoms can become quite difficult to deny and can produce larger psychological issues with dire consequences.

Models of Acute Traumatic Stress Management

Lerner et al. (2004) advocated the Acute Traumatic Stress Management (ATSM) model in addressing the immediate and emerging psychological needs of individuals during times of crisis. This approach allows initial respondents the necessary counseling techniques to manage the responses of trauma on a college campus. It is crucial to understand that the ATSM model should not be mistaken for a crisis response plan. It is merely a strategy that responding administrators and practitioners can utilize in times of crisis to effectively manage a situation, ensure the immediate physical and emotional safety of affected individuals, and to prevent further psychological and emotional damage to the campus population (Lerner, Volpe, & Lindell, 2004).

The first step in the ATSM model is assessing the scene for danger and ensuring the safety of not only the responder but the affected person. If a situation is becoming more unstable by the moment, it may be necessary to request more assistance from colleagues or individuals that are more qualified to assist in the situation. Next, a responder must consider the actual situation and what ultimately led to the situation at hand. For example, if a member of the university community is found unconscious and bleeding, it will be beneficial to try to determine what happened. If an individual is not moving at all or there has been some kind of head or neck trauma, the responder may do more harm than good if the victim is moved. Understanding the physical events that led to a situation and the perceived experiences of those involved in the crisis are two important tasks in this second stage. Perceived experiences of those involved in a crisis could include all visual and auditory recollections of an event (Lerner, Volpe, & Lindell, 2004).

The third component of the ATSM model is evaluating the level of responsiveness of the affected person(s). Some individuals in crisis will begin to exhibit a variety of emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and physiological symptoms of traumatic stress almost immediately, while it may take longer to manifest in others. Shock, fear, anger, and anxiety, among others, are all symptoms that can hamper the ability of the responder to determine the alertness and responsiveness of affected community members. Once a level of responsiveness is determined, responders can then begin to address the medical needs of the victims. Simple first aid procedures and CPR can be administered by trained practitioners. However, it is important for all responders to recognize the immediate need for contacting trained medical personnel for advanced medical care (Lerner, Volpe, & Lindell, 2004).

Once immediate medical concerns are addressed, practitioners can then begin to address the emotional needs of those individuals affected. These practitioners should begin to survey the scene again to determine who is experiencing symptoms of traumatic stress. Identifying those who were directly and indirectly impacted will certainly be an advantage to the crisis response team and other assisting members of the community in offering the necessary mental health and counseling services. Again, this process may prove difficult because not all individuals respond to trauma in the same way at the same time. Still, attempting to identify those students who merely witnessed the event can be useful in the recovery process. Once affected students or staff members are identified, practitioners must then begin the process of connecting with those individuals. This is not always an easy task in what may still be a situation marked by chaos and confusion. Practicing basic counseling skills is appropriate in this setting. Introducing oneself to an individual in need and detailing responsibilities during the crisis is an effective way to establish a connection. Establishing rapport with continuous efforts to understand the situation

and the feelings of the affected will facilitate the stress management process. The use of non-verbal communication will also benefit responders in connecting with affected individuals (Lerner, Volpe, & Lindell, 2004).

The next step in the ATSM model is grounding the affected individual. Encapsulated in this process is the need to address the facts and the reality of the situation with the individual. It is still necessary to facilitate communication by focusing on what exactly happened to create the crisis. Establishing reality for an individual may prove difficult if the crisis has indeed brought about severe symptoms of traumatic stress. Once the facts of the situation have been addressed and communication is continuous, providing support through counseling methods is the next step. It is important for individuals to begin to express their emotions. Under-qualified responders may find themselves uncomfortable with processing the wave of emotions that result from witnessing a crisis. However, their participation in this process is necessary. Highly trained professionals can assist in the recovery process at a later time, but immediate support is still necessary. Communicating empathic responses and an understanding of expressed feelings and emotions is essential to the management of traumatic stress (Lerner, Volpe, & Lindell, 2004).

While providing immediate support to those members of the campus community that have been affected, the responders may find that those individuals are not able to understand their complex realm of emotions. The process of normalizing the response to trauma is critical at this stage in traumatic stress management. Individuals in crisis need to understand that their responses to trauma are normal reactions. This acknowledgement will be beneficial in that it will continue to provide support and to not overwhelm them. Increased panic will subside as responders attempt to communicate how others have responded in similar situations. Lastly,

practitioners will need to prepare the affected individual(s) for the likely future events surrounding the crisis. A recap of what occurred and the services that are going to be made available for the university community is necessary (Lerner, Volpe, & Lindell, 2004).

As stated previously, there is no policy that can prevent all individuals in crisis to respond in the same manner. Likewise, there is no one specific approach to assisting someone in crisis. Members of the crisis response team should be educated in the use of effective counseling techniques. However, this is sometimes not the case for these administrators, nor the front-line employees that reach affected students first. When addressing someone in crisis and only after ensuring physical safety of themselves and the affected individual, practitioners should remain attentive and to engage in the stages of the ATSM. Promoting the expression and discussion of feelings and listening to their stories are basic steps to help an individual in the immediate moments of a crisis before a more developed and formalized approach can be utilized. The more formalized approaches to treating stress resulting from trauma exposure can be found in educational pamphlets, brochures, articles, and other literature outlining the symptoms of the stress and recovery process. A steady physical exercise regimen has been seen as an effective technique in coping with traumatic stress, and assists with bouts of depression. Other formalized approaches to treating traumatic stress include individual and group counseling sessions as well as more specialized means of therapy and medication (Lerner, Volpe, & Lindell, 2004).

Lerner et al. (2004) suggested that responding administrators and practitioners must remember to take care of themselves as well, just as they take care of others. The emotional needs of the respondent can increase during a crisis, as everyone is affected. If an administrator finds themselves overwhelmed by the chaos and the confusion that defines the moment, one must observe the need to take a step back and let another professional facilitate. The easiest step

in the journey to recovery for administrators is to acknowledge the situation and the lasting effect that it can have. Kapalka (2005) suggested the seriousness of this matter when detailing how responders to campus trauma may be at risk of developing acute problems simply from responding and do not realize the consequences that can result from not seeking assistance. The response and recovery process, if not properly treated, can negatively affect the family of the responder as well. Avoiding media exposure to the event, engaging in physical exercise, and spending time with family and friends are all therapeutic outlets for administrators. Exploitation of the collegial relationship may also be beneficial as one seeks advice and encouragement from friends and colleagues. The use of professional counseling and spiritual guidance, as well as an added emphasis on proper nutrition, exercise, and sleep is also encouraged (Lerner, Volpe, & Lindell, 2004; Duncan & Misner, 2000).

Another specific model of stress management, termed the Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) model, offers students and staff members a formalized approach to recovery from the stress associated with being directly and indirectly involved in a crisis. CISM has a seven tiered approach to stress management that occurs throughout specific points in a crisis. The goal of the CISM model is to "maintain health and productivity, prevent or mitigate traumatic stress effects, restore personnel to normal functions, speed recovery from stress, and enhance the overall environment in which the person works or lives" (Mitchell & Everly, 1998, p. 11). Specific subtasks are components of each of the seven tiered stages of the CISM model and are incorporated before a crisis occurs, immediately following a crisis, the week after a crisis, and at any point during the crisis and/or recovery. These tasks include but are not limited to setting goals and expectations for crisis preparation and improving coping skills and stress management techniques through education; mitigating symptoms of stress and treating a variety

of stress at one given moment; debriefing; intervention for an individual or a group of individuals if necessary; and finally referrals (Paterson, 2006).

Chapter Summary

Incidences of crisis are often defined differently depending on the type and level of a crisis. Variations in the definition of crisis can also be the result of the type of institution. Regardless, it is clear that there are several types of crisis which can hinder the ability of institutions to function. Zdziarski (2001) classified these crises as natural crisis, facility crisis, criminal crisis, and human crisis. Institutions and their divisions enact crisis response plans to ensure safety and security and to counteract the effects of crisis and traumatic stress for the campus community and beyond. Many factors are taken into consideration when developing a crisis response plan and institutions must formulate plans that are unique to their campuses. However, there are several models for crisis response available for institutions to reference and some are highlighted in this chapter. Despite a need for each institution to focus on its prevalent needs, there are common components and themes that can be found in all comprehensive plans. Crisis response protocols can be categorized according to those that apply to the structure of a plan and those that apply to the process of a plan, with each category holding significant tasks, responsibilities, and components of the overall institutional response (Learner, Volpe, & Lindell, 2004). Organization, delegation, communication, collaboration, activation, the immediate response, and the follow-up response are but a few of these tasks and are discussed in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3

EXPLANATION OF STUDY METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to analyze the crisis response policies, strategies, and programs of different types of institutions (i.e. public/private, two-year/four-year, HBCU/PWI, commuter/residential; liberal arts/non-liberal arts, land grant/non-land grant, religiously affiliated/non-religiously affiliated, rural/suburban/urban, very small and small/medium/large/very large) as well as to explore which elements are and are not being addressed across these different types of institutions. Through a quantitative survey, qualitative interviews, and archival data, the researcher examined the components of various institutional crisis response plans across different types of institutions and evaluated their effectiveness in times of crisis. Differences in the crisis response protocols at different types of institutions were analyzed as were the institutional responses to different types of crisis.

Throughout the research, several questions were addressed across the sample of participating institutions including: what constitutes a crisis from the perspective of the university and from the division of student affairs and how are they addressed; how are response strategies evaluated; are the needs of the entire campus population being met, including student affairs practitioners; how are these needs being addressed; how do institutions prepare themselves for crisis response; and how do divisions of student affairs mobilize themselves in the development and implementation of crisis response protocol. This chapter lists the study participants as well as the criteria for sample selection. The chapter also summarizes the

research design, the data collection methods, and the conceptual frame of the study and includes the quantitative survey and qualitative interview guide that will be used to generate data.

Discussion of Participants

There were 51 participating colleges and universities in this study and they were carefully assigned to a number of different institutional classifications. A thorough cross-section of demographically diverse institutions was chosen to highlight the various types of crisis response protocol across the nation. In order to be selected for the study, each institution must have been located near imminent threats to public safety due to close proximities to coastal areas, large metropolitan areas, and areas at threat of earthquakes or if they had recent occurrences of campus crisis, which resulted in threats to public safety or deaths.

A quantitative survey was conducted and responses were solicited from the chief student affairs officer (CSAO) on each campus. However, in the case that an institution had another professional whose direct responsibilities included coordinating institutional crisis response, the CSAO could defer to that individual. Additionally, follow-up qualitative interviews were conducted with the CSAO or the institutional representative via telephone to allow for more detailed information about an institution's crisis response protocol.

Sample Selection Rationale

In an effort to create a viable cross section of various types of colleges and universities across the country that either have had a crisis in the past or have the potential for campus crisis in the future, the researcher selected a wide range of institutions from all areas of the nation. For example, several institutions that are susceptible to earthquakes and hurricanes were invited to participate in the study. Yet, each of these institutions differs in the size of the student populations and regions of the country, as well as the type of institution, i.e. public vs. private,

rural vs. suburban vs. urban, two-year vs. four-year, predominately white institutions vs. historically black colleges and universities, etc.

Institutions that have been subjected to crisis in the recent years including those that have been affected by floods, fires, suicides, and homicides, were invited to participate. Additionally, institutions that could be affected by terrorist activities due to close proximity to large metropolitan areas and national security interests, including, Los Angeles, Miami, Dallas, New York, and Atlanta were invited to participate. Data collection comes on the heels of the devastation of Hurricane Katrina in the Gulf region of our country. Due to the massive destruction and displacement of students at institutions in the New Orleans and Mississippi Gulf coast region, the researcher decided to include several institutions from this region in the study, as it directly relates to the research topic.

Methods of Data Collection

Quantitative data from participating institutions was solicited through a researcher-developed survey instrument and survey data was gathered beginning on March 15, 2007 and ending on June 10, 2007. The paper based survey was mailed to the institutional representative of each participating institution. As referenced previously in this chapter, if the institution had another representative who was in charge of crisis response protocol within the division, then the chief student affairs officer could delegate the responsibility of data solicitation to that individual. Additional qualitative data was collected from the survey though three specific questions. Also, responses to various sections on the survey, designed to elicit additional qualitative feedback where appropriate, were recorded and analyzed. This data can be found in Chapter 4. Qualitative interviews were conducted beginning on May 10, 2007 and ending on June 15, 2007. All data collection was completed by June 15, 2007.

Prior to March 15, 2007, the researcher contacted, via email, each of the chief student affairs officers of potential participating institutions. This communication, in the form of an initial interest indicator, summarized the purpose of the study as well as the significance of the study to the field of student affairs administration across the country. A copy of the Initial Interest Indicator is provided in Appendix A. Additionally, the email also described the criteria for participation in this study as well as the benefits of participating. If the institutional representative agreed to participate, they were sent a research packet. Each packet included a letter of introduction, a letter of informed consent explaining the rights of the participants and the researcher during the study, and a copy of the *Crisis Response Survey*. A copy of the letter of introduction and letter of informed consent can be found in Appendix B and C respectively. The researcher asked that each institution that chose to proceed further, sign the letter of informed consent and send it back to the researcher with the completed survey.

In order to attain a high response rate from the participants, the survey return rate was monitored by the researcher. At the conclusion of seven weeks of data collection, an email reminder was sent out to participating institutions. A second email reminder was sent at the conclusion of fourteen weeks of data collection. No incentives was be used to promote participation in this study. However, each participating institution will be granted access to the results of the study in the form of an executive summary, which will provide them with opportunities to compare and improve their institutional crisis response protocol. Additionally, many participates indicated that they learned a considerable amount about crisis response and their plans as a result of participating in the data collection process.

Conceptual Framework of the Study

This dissertation is a mixed methods study that utilizes both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis procedures. In order to grasp the fundamental ideas of qualitative and quantitative research, one must understand theoretical orientations of constructivism and positivism, both philosophical terms used to describe the nature of reality. Constructivism holds that reality is relative and influenced by personal experiences of individuals within their social world. This reality is subject to change, is socially constructed, and varies within different contexts and times. Constructivism is fundamental in the understanding of qualitative research. In contrast, positivism forms the basis for quantitative research (Merriam, 2002). Positivism advocates that there is a concrete, objective reality that is context and time-free. Positivist researchers believe that all external variables that could influence data and subsequent findings can be controlled by the researcher (Gay & Airasian, 2000). A mixed methods approach to research is one that will combine the data collection methods of both schools of research and allow for the hard numbers that administrators need to make effective decisions about programs and finances, in addition to the human element of emotion and social interpretation that qualitative research provides (Merriam, 2002; Patton, 2002) .

Merriam (2002) stated that to comprehend qualitative research one must understand that meaning for an individual is socially constructed within that individual and that individual's interactions with the world. That world, or reality, does not contain an absolute, measurable phenomenon that is present in positivist, quantitative research. In fact, individual interpretations of reality change over a given period of time and in certain contexts. Qualitative researchers are interested in how individuals interpret their reality at a certain point in time and how they make sense of a phenomenon in a certain context.

Qualitative research is based on four fundamental characteristics that differentiate it from quantitative research (Merriam, 2002). The first characteristic is that qualitative inquiry is interested in discovering and understanding how individuals make sense out of their reality. This reality is subjective and is open to interpretation, based on the fact that it is socially constructed. The second basic characteristic is that in qualitative research, the researcher is the principle instrument in data collection methods and data analysis. Reichardt and Rallis (1994) affirmed that critics of qualitative research will argue that this simple fact alone advocates for external influence of the data collection and the representation and explanation of the research findings. Pre-conceived notions, attitudes, and beliefs about a phenomenon are referred to as subjectivities, and can certainly influence a qualitative research study (Moran, 2000). However, at times, it can be impossible to completely eliminate subjectivities, nor should they be completely eliminated. Subjectivities can be a very powerful motivator that allows the researcher to complete a study and to seek a deeper understanding. Subjectivities simply must be recognized, monitored, and controlled by the researcher to make sure that study findings are being represented in the manner in which they were intended by participants. Utilizing a personal subjectivities journal throughout the process of the research is quite useful in monitoring existing attitudes and beliefs.

Subjectivities are not a curse brought about by the researcher being the primary instrument of data collection and analysis. In fact, it is quite useful to be in that setting. One advantage of being the primary instrument is that doing so allows for immediate interpretation of data, more meaningful exploration of data by more questioning, and accurate representations of meaning. Quantitative surveys and questionnaires do not allow for the immediacy that qualitative research allows. A third characteristic of qualitative research is that it is an inductive

process. Qualitative researchers gather data and use this data to induce themes, hypothesis, and later to build theory. Quantitative research is a deductive process. Lastly, the end product of qualitative research is a richly, descriptive account of the entire research process including the research design components, data collection methods, data analysis, and the explanation of the findings (Merriam, 2002). Quantitative research is able to provide useful data, but data without the rich description, and "voice" of the findings. In terms of qualitative research, this dissertation adopted basic qualitative inquiry and required the use of detailed data collection methods, including qualitative interviews and document analysis. The resulting data was then analyzed for consistent themes and the findings documented in a format appropriate for the intended audience.

Quantitative research studies are founded in positivism (Merriam, 2002; Gay & Airasian, 2000). Positivism explains that reality is objective, not subjective as in qualitative research, and that the objective reality is context-free and time-free. Positivist thought incorporates the idea that external factors that could influence a study can be controlled by the researcher (Merriam, 2002; Gay & Airasian, 2000). "Underlying quantitative research methods is the belief or assumption that we inhabit a relatively stable, uniform, and coherent world that can be measured, understood, and generalized about" (Gay & Airasian, 2000, p. 9). Upcraft and Schuh (1996) listed eleven steps in accurately developing a quantitative study: defining the problem, developing the purpose(s) of the research study, determining the appropriate assessment approach, defining the population to be studied, determining the type of instrument to be utilized in the study, determining which statistical analyses are appropriate for the study, developing a concise data collection plan, recording the data in usable form, conducting the statistical analyses, evaluation of the findings for the purpose of policy implementation or programmatic

intervention, and finally, developing a strategy for use of the results. Each of these steps is critically important in developing and implementing a credible quantitative research study.

A mixed methods study is a combination of both methods of research, qualitative and quantitative. Traditional statisticians will always argue that the "bottom-line" evidence that quantitative research can produce in numbers will benefit financial decision makers and administrators. However, numbers are not always enough. Studies of student learning, development, and satisfaction are all beneficial to these decision makers as well, especially when the studies are conducted in an appropriate manner and the findings are expressed in a descriptive fashion. In some cases, voices have more "power" than numbers. For example, Akers (2004) performed a qualitative study on the impact of campus crisis on the professional and personal lives of mid-level housing professionals and paraprofessionals. This was a qualitative phenomenological study that sought to discover the true essence of the social realities of their lives as they interpreted their personal world and their professional world after two suicides in the residence halls. The researcher was able to obtain rich data from qualitative interviews and participant observation. Qualitative interviews provide a direct interpretation of the experiences of research participants and produce the voice and affective data that supports quantitative work (Kvale, 1996). Surveys with Likert scales and other quantitative methods alone would not allow for an understanding of the true meaning of the experiences for the study participants. The two methods of research can certainly compliment each other though (Gay & Airasian, 2000). A mixed methods approach allows for the rich, subjective qualitative data that lends a voice to the research findings. This qualitative data can be supplemented and complimented with quantitative data that would lend more credibility to the study (Merriam, 2002).

Research Questions

Specifically, this research will address the following questions across different types of institutions (i.e. public/private, two-year/four-year, HBCU/PWI, commuter/residential; liberal arts/non-liberal arts, land grant/non-land grant, religiously affiliated/non-religiously affiliated, rural/suburban/urban, very small and small/medium/large/very large):

1. What constitutes a crisis from the perspective of the institution and from the division of student affairs, according to institutional policy?
2. Who is involved in the development and process of crisis response protocols and how do institutions prepare themselves for crisis?
3. Whose needs are being met in times of crisis and what are these needs? How are these needs being addressed?
4. How are crisis response protocols evaluated and improved?
5. Does type of institution have any influence on crisis response on campus?
6. Does the size of the institution based on student enrollment have any influence on crisis response on campus?
7. Does the geographic location of the institution have any influence on crisis response on campus?

The paper-based survey for this study contains specific questions about the structure and process of the crisis response plan at each of the participating institutions. A copy of the *Crisis Response Survey* can be found in Appendix D. The survey questions are designed to provide appropriate feedback which will answer all of the overarching research questions that provide the impetus for this study. Each of the 114 survey questions was assigned to one of seven categories that were designed to address each of the research questions. The seven sections are as follows:

Definition and Incidence(s); Structure: Organization; Structure: Education, Preparation, and Training; Structure and Process: Communication and Collaboration; Process: Response; Structure: Assessment; and Structure: Memorials. T-tests of independent means and one-way ANOVAs were utilized in data analyses, each dependent on the number of categories with respect to each institutional type. For example, if a two category dichotomy was explored, the use of a t-test of independent means was necessary and ANOVAs were used in the event of an analysis containing three or more categories (Moore, 2000; Huck, 2000). Items of statistical significance were matched with their corresponding survey sections. These findings and other relevant statistical data can be found in Chapter 4.

During the survey data collection process, a qualitative interview guide was also used to address each of the seven research questions. This interview guide allowed for a more in-depth analysis of institutional data and contrasting and comparable services and practices with the other participating institutions. The open-ended interviews were conducted and recorded via telephone and allowed for more probing questions to be asked, however a standard base of questions is listed in the interview guide and can be found in Appendix E.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

This chapter documents the quantitative and qualitative results of the data analyses for this study. A total of 51 paper-based surveys and 51 qualitative interviews were completed by the participants. Corresponding documentation related to crisis management protocols at the institutional and/or the division level were also provided by many of the participants. The quantitative survey data were collected and stored by the primary researcher in a Microsoft Excel file. These data were then transferred into an SPSS 14.0 program (a statistical software package) for analysis. T-tests of Independent Means and one-way analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were the two types of statistical analyses used to generate results. When t-tests of independent means were performed, Levene's test for equality of variance was also conducted. All statistical tests were evaluated at an alpha level of .05.

The qualitative items on the survey and the qualitative data from the interviews were also collected and stored by the primary researcher in a Microsoft Word file. The interview data were later transcribed and coded for consistent and contrasting themes that would address each research question of this study. All significant findings and relevant themes are presented in this chapter. Additionally, supplemental data collected from the survey can be found in Table 4.06 of this chapter. This supplemental data includes responses to three qualitative survey questions and also additional feedback and responses listed by each participant of the study. A copy of the complete *Crisis Response Survey* can be found in Appendix D. Also, a copy of the qualitative interview guide with example questions that were asked in each interview can be found in

Appendix E. This research addresses the following questions across different types of institutions (i.e. public/private, commuter/residential, rural/suburban/urban, very small and small/medium/large/very large, etc.):

1. What constitutes a crisis from the perspective of the university and from the division of student affairs?
2. Who is involved in the development and process of crisis response protocols and how do institutions prepare themselves for crisis?
3. Whose needs are being met in times of crisis and what are these needs? How are these needs being addressed?
4. How are crisis response strategies evaluated and improved?
5. Does type of institution influence crisis response on campus?
6. Does the size of the institution based on student enrollment influence crisis response on campus?
7. Does the geographic location of the institution influence crisis response on campus?

Participant Demographics

Table 4.01 lists the participating institutions while Table 4.02 summarizes the enrollment data used within the parameters of the study. In summary, 51 participants were categorized according to their place within nine dichotomies of institutional type and location. The dichotomies and corresponding percentages of participants in each representative category are as follows: 1.) public institutions (62.75%) vs. private institutions (37.25%); 2.) rural location (11.76%) vs. suburban location (35.29%) vs. urban location (52.94%); 3.) 4-year institutions (94.12%) vs. 2-year institutions (5.88%); 4.) very small/small student enrollments (17.65%) vs. medium student enrollments (13.73%) vs. large student enrollments (27.45%) vs. very large

student enrollments (41.18%); 5.) historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) (7.84%) vs. predominately white institutions (PWIs) (92.16%); 6.) commuter institutions (35.29%) vs. residential institutions (64.71%); 7.) liberal arts institutions (7.84%) vs. non-liberal arts institutions (92.16%); 8.) land grant institutions (29.41%) vs. non-land grant institutions (70.59%); and finally, 9.) religiously affiliated institutions (21.57%) vs. non-religiously affiliated institutions (78.43%).

Table 4.01

Alphabetical Listing of Study Participants (n=51)

Participant	Location
Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College	Tifton, GA
Agnes Scott College	Decatur, GA
American University	Washington, DC
Barry University	Miami Shores, FL
California State University – Northridge	Northridge, CA
Clark Atlanta University	Atlanta, GA
Cornell University	Ithaca, NY
Creighton University	Omaha, NE
East Carolina University	Greenville, NC
Emory University	Atlanta, GA
Florida A&M University	Tallahassee, FL
Florida Atlantic University	Boca Raton, FL
Florida International University	Miami, FL
Furman University	Greenville, SC
Georgia Institute of Technology	Atlanta, GA

Harvard University - Harvard College	Cambridge, MA
Kansas State University	Manhattan, KS
Louisiana State University	Baton Rouge, LA
Mercer University	Macon, GA
Miami Dade College - Kendall Campus	Miami, FL
Millsaps College	Jackson, MS
Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College - Jefferson Davis Campus	Gulfport, MS
Mississippi State University	Starkville, MS
Morehouse College	Atlanta, GA
New York University	New York, NY
Ohio State University	Columbus, OH
Oklahoma State University	Stillwater, OK
Princeton University	Princeton, NJ
Seton Hall University	South Orange, NJ
Texas A&M University	College Station, TX
Tulane University	New Orleans, LA
University of Arizona	Tucson, AZ
University of Arkansas	Fayetteville, AR
University of California – Berkeley	Berkeley, CA
University of California - Los Angeles	Los Angeles, CA
University of Florida	Gainesville, FL
University of Georgia	Athens, GA
University of Iowa	Iowa City, IA

University of Miami	Coral Gables, FL
University of Mississippi	Oxford, MS
University of New Orleans	New Orleans, LA
University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill	Chapel Hill, NC
University of North Carolina – Wilmington	Wilmington, NC
University of North Florida	Jacksonville, FL
University of Southern California	Los Angeles, CA
University of Southern Mississippi	Hattiesburg, MS
University of Texas	Austin, TX
University of West Florida	Pensacola, FL
University of Wyoming	Laramie, WY
Washington State University	Pullman, WA
Xavier University of Louisiana	New Orleans, LA

Table 4.02

Participant Enrollment Data (http://www.collegeboard.com, retrieved online February 1, 2007)

Participant	Degree Seeking Undergraduates	Graduate Students	Total
Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College	3,423	0	3,423
Agnes Scott College	815	16	831
American University	5,871	3,740	9,611
Barry University	5,274	2,729	8,003
California State University – Northridge	26,854	4,515	31,369
Clark Atlanta University	3,253	802	4,055

Cornell University	13,474	5,028	18,502
Creighton University	4,052	555	4,607
East Carolina University	17,593	5,150	22,743
Emory University	6,378	3,980	10,358
Florida A&M University	10,372	Not Reported	10,372
Florida Atlantic University	19,838	4,246	24,084
Florida International University	29,744	5,902	35,646
Furman University	2,739	251	2,990
Georgia Institute of Technology	12,103	5,575	17,678
Harvard University - Harvard College	6,613	9,960	16,573
Kansas State University	18,591	3,947	22,538
Louisiana State University	25,301	4,507	29,808
Mercer University	2,293	1,313	3,606
Miami Dade College - Kendall Campus	20,806	0	20,806
Millsaps College	1,065	69	1,134
Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College - Jefferson Davis Campus	8,738	0	8,738
Mississippi State University	11,321	3,312	14,633
Morehouse College	2,933	0	2,933
New York University	20,150	16,047	36,197
Ohio State University	36,029	9,824	45,853
Oklahoma State University	18,600	4,262	22,862
Princeton University	4,760	2,010	6,770
Seton Hall University	5,093	3,063	8,156

Texas A&M University	36,473	8,291	44,764
Tulane University	6,512	2,305	8,817
University of Arizona	13,654	3,097	16,751
University of Arkansas – Fayetteville	28,013	7,105	35,118
University of California – Berkeley	23,447	Not Reported	23,447
University of California - Los Angeles	24,811	10,492	35,303
University of Florida	34,534	11,439	45,973
University of Georgia	25,055	6,918	31,976
University of Iowa	19,915	6,051	25,966
University of Miami	10,190	3,175	13,365
University of Mississippi	12,594	1,893	14,487
University of New Orleans	13,225	0	13,225
University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill	16,706	8,254	24,960
University of North Carolina – Wilmington	10,249	1,072	11,321
University of North Florida	13,821	1,830	15,651
University of Southern California	16,428	13,238	29,666
University of Southern Mississippi	12,122	2,655	14,777
University of Texas	35,734	11,232	46,966
University of West Florida	7,887	1,565	9,452
University of Wyoming	9,111	3,284	12,395
Washington State University	18,995	3,320	22,315
Xavier University of Louisiana	3,224	0	3,224

Key

Very Small/Small (VS/S) = 1 – 4,999 total
Medium (M) = 5,000 – 9,999 total
Large (L) = 10,000 – 19,999 total
Very Large (VL) = 20,000 or greater total

A total of 20 states from all sections of the country, and the District of Columbia were represented in the study. Of the 51 participating institutions, the state with the most participants was Florida with nine. In contrast, Arkansas, Arizona, Iowa, Kansas, Massachusetts, Nebraska, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Washington, Washington DC, and Wyoming all had one participating institution. Thirty of the 51 (58.82%) participating institutions were located in the Southeastern United States.

The Quantitative Survey Process and Return Rate

In total, 58 institutions who met the participant parameters were contacted via email or telephone communication about this research study. If there was a return reply of interest by the institution, they were officially invited to participate and sent an information packet via U.S. Mail or facsimile. The packet contained a letter of introduction to the study, a letter of informed consent signed by the primary researcher, and a copy of the Crisis Response Survey. 54 institutions were invited to participate in this mixed methods study and were sent this information packet. Of the original 54 invitations, 51 opted to continue participation. While two institutions opted not to participate due to lack of time to engage in the data collection process, one institution originally agreed and then later declined due to a participation veto by the president of the institution, who cited that institution's lack of having any of the crisis response elements referenced in the survey. 51 surveys of the original 54 sent to participants were returned, producing a survey return rate of 94.44%. Possible reasons for decline of study participation are discussed in Chapter 5.

The Qualitative Interview Process

Fifty-one qualitative interviews were conducted via telephone as a method of qualitative data collection. The initial point of entry into each institution was the chief student affairs officer. Once participation was confirmed, the chief student affairs officer either became that institution's representative in the study or they delegated that position and subsequent study responsibilities to someone else in that position. The goal was to have a qualified institutional representative with significant experience at the participating institution complete the survey and participate in the interview. Table 4.03 summarizes the titles of the participating institutions' representatives.

Table 4.03

Respondent Titles

Respondent Grouping	N
Vice President for Student Affairs/Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs	18
Dean of Students	8
Associate Vice President for Student Affairs/Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs	6
Associate Dean of Students	6
Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs/Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs	4
Special Assistant to the Vice President for Student Affairs	2
Assistant Dean of Students	2
Executive Administrator/Chief Administrative Officer	2

Assistant Provost	1
Chief of Police	1
Director of Student Life	1
Student Affairs Coordinator	1

Only the participating institution respondents' level of administrative hierarchy is provided to protect data confidentiality and respondent anonymity. In the case that a participant has two significant titles, i.e. Associate Vice President and Dean of Students, I have documented the higher level, Associate Vice President. All respondents worked in Student Affairs, Student Services, Student Life, Dean of Students, or a closely related area that deals directly with students. Two respondents held an Interim title that was removed by the primary investigator. Respondents' experience at their current institution ranged from less than a year (8 months) to two respondents with 39 years of experience at their respective institutions. Mean level of experience of all reporting respondents was 13.63 years.

In total, the 51 interviews were conducted over the course of 18 days, beginning May 10, 2007 and ending June 15, 2007. Actual recording time varied with the availability of the respondent. The longest interview was completed at the 86 minute mark, while the shortest interview was 16 minutes. Admittedly, the short interview was completed sooner than either the participant or the primary researcher would have liked, but was unavoidable due to a consistently strenuous time schedule for the participant. Average interview time for all participants was ~37 minutes. Interview data were recorded via microcassette recorder and later converted to .WAV files for storage on a password protected computer terminal in the School of Human Sciences at Mississippi State University, the employer of the primary researcher. Interview data were transcribed, coded, and analyzed for consistent and contrasting findings based on a basic

qualitative inquiry as they related to the research questions of the study. Member checks and peer reviews (with institutional identification omitted) were instituted as a means of minimizing researcher bias.

Research Question 1

What constitutes a crisis from the perspective of the university and from the division of student affairs?

There is no clear, consistent differentiation between what constitutes a crisis from the perspective of institutions and divisions of student affairs among participants. However, it is clear that responses to such situations can best be illustrated by categorical levels. The first level and the most minor of note are student emergencies followed by the next level of greater degree, student crises. These two categories require and individualized, localized response through a variety of means and response rarely reaches the university level. Incidents that occur within these two levels generally affect only one or at most a few individuals and are defined by either the person affected or by the division. The third level can be termed campus crises and the fourth, and highest level, is a campus disaster. Divisions of student affairs continue to play a role in these two levels though they do so within certain roles and in conjunction with other areas of the university and possibly external agencies. Responses at these levels require a more systemic and far-reaching response and the incidents involved affect a greater number of individuals and the property and image of the institution. Concerns of business continuity begin to surface in some campus crises and are much greater in campus disaster. These incidents are defined by the institutions and external agencies. Figure 4.01 illustrates the differential levels of crises that can occur on campus with a look at how divisions of student affairs and institutions as a whole define crises.

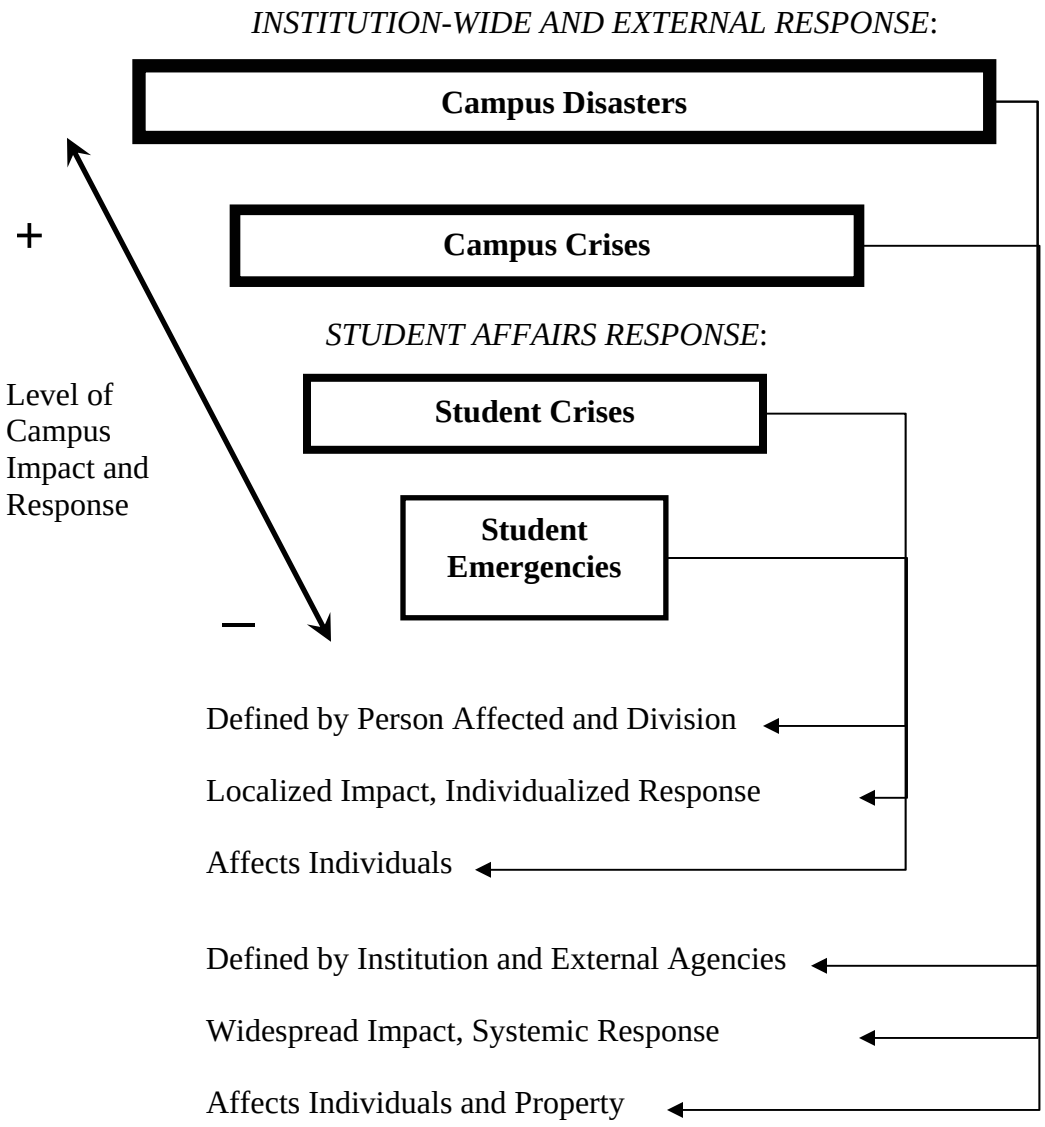


Figure 4.01. Differential levels of crises and defining characteristics.

Differential levels of crises

The data clearly indicate examples of categorical levels of crises on campus as well as those situations that require a response by the division of student affairs versus those that require a more comprehensive institutional response. Participant 32 explains categorical levels of crisis in the following way:

> We have actually three levels of campus crisis. And the first being um any type of minor, what we've considered minor crisis being uh facility issues, burst water pipe, and any of those measures. The second being something that actually poses a major threat to students or some students. Um being if there was an incident where an assault had taken place, an incident where a sexual assault had been reported. Um the third level is something that is gonna affect the entire campus and also we would consider posing the most danger for our students. Um natural disaster, fire um anything in a large scale. Anything such as, if there was somebody on campus that we felt could be a danger to, anybody that were to cross their path. I don't think, our response obviously for a level one crisis, the university is not gonna have any response for that so they are gonna let it be handled by our division. Um, but I think they would consider it a crisis if we notify our public relations people. So I think they would recognize it as such but their response would be limited to what we decided to do.

Participant 15 also indicated categorical levels of crises occurring on campus and the respective responses to those crises:

> I think crises come in, there are different levels of crisis okay. You have a critical incident, you have a campus emergency, and you have a disaster. And so there are critical incidents that take place. And I would say that student affairs in particular are the experts in dealing with those critical incidents. They deal with them on an ongoing regular basis. And so those are going to be part of, uh I think those are in many ways the places that the division of student affairs um crisis response plan really is designed to deal with are those critical incidents as well as to understand in a larger campus

emergencies what their role or what their piece of the puzzle in broader campus emergencies or crises that take place.

Definition of crises

One participant, when addressing who defines a crisis, suggested that the person experiencing the situation dictates the crisis, not the division or institution, by stating, "I define a crisis as whatever, whoever is contacting me, there the one's who are defining it. So if a parent or student contacts me, it could be a crisis that might in our minds not think that its crisis." Still another participant suggested a lack of clear definitions of crises by stating, "I don't think that we have a firm policy on what is considered crisis. I think that it's debatable. We don't necessarily define crisis for the, when we get it, when we see it, we know what it is."

Research Question 2

Who is involved in the development and process of crisis response protocols and how do institutions prepare themselves for crisis?

Obviously, the number and administrative level of individuals involved the development of crisis response protocols varies across institutions. However, there does seem to be consistent themes found in this regard based on the data from the 51 participants of the study, who varied in size and type, as well as other factors. Each institution had three primary levels of membership that included representatives at the executive level, the division level, and the department level. Larger institutions, though not exclusively, had membership from the academic level and also from the external community. It is important to note that student affairs had representation within all three primary levels and were fully integrated into the membership groups of crisis response teams. Figure 4.02 diagrams membership levels of crisis response teams.

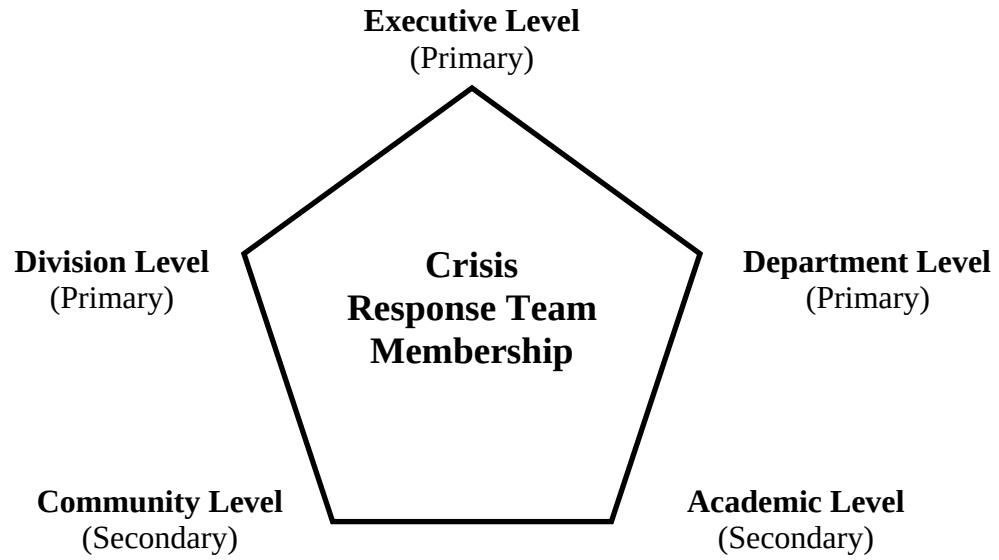


Figure 4.02. Membership levels of crisis response teams

Survey Item #10 asked participants to list members of the crisis response team. The following examples of participant responses indicate clear patterns of primary membership with sporadic secondary membership from community and academic areas.

- VPSA, Dean of Students, Chief of Police, Director of Res. Life, Medical Director, Director of Counseling Center, Director of Public Relations, University attorney, Director of Physical Plant.
- Vice Provost – Student Affairs, Asst. VP for Student Affairs, Assoc. Dean of Students, Parent and Family Director, Coordinator of Communication, reps from each department, police, counseling, employee relations.
- VPSA and Dean of Students, Assoc. Dean of Students, Director of Housing, Director of Counseling and Psychological Services, Assoc. Director of Housing, 2 Residence Life Coordinators.
- VC Student Affairs, 2 Assoc. VC Student Affairs, 2 Asst. VC Student Affairs, Director of Housing…but our team is part of a greater university response team that also includes

Univ. Counsel, Facilities Director, Campus Police Chief, Public Relations, and others as needed.

- VP for Student Affairs and Enrollment Services, VP for Public Safety, Public Relations and Marketing Rep, VP and Assoc. VP Finance, Dean of Students, Provost's Office, Information Technology, Facilities Engineering, General Counsel, Priest Community…others as appropriate.
- President, VPSA, VPAA, VP Business and Finance, Director of Public Safety, Director of Student Health, Director of Facilities, Director of Counseling, Director of Institutional Technology, Director of Communication, Director of Religious Life, Director of Residence Life.
- VC for Student Life, Dean of Students, Counseling Center Rep., UPD Rep., Student Health Rep., Student Housing Rep., other departmental reps called in as needed when situation dictates.
- Assoc. Director of Student Life, Asst Dean of Student Life, Director of Student Life, IT/Comm. Specialist, Dir. Disability Services, Asst. Dir. of Disability Services, Coordinator of Judicial Services, Coordinator of Student Welfare Services.
- Director of Counseling, Director of Campus Safety, Chaplain, Director of Housing, Director of Communications, Student Body Association President; Director of Food Services; Director of Physical Plant; VP of Campus Services.

Similar to membership of the crisis response team, preparation for crises on campus also varies across institutions. However, consistent themes can be found within categorized preparation across participants in this study, whom varied based on size, type, and other factors. Institutions prepare themselves through training, education, collaboration and communication,

resource application, and early preparation and organization. Each of these categories has corresponding elements that enable efficient crisis response to the various constituents. Figure 4.03 summarizes the consistent categories of crisis preparation found in institutions of higher education.

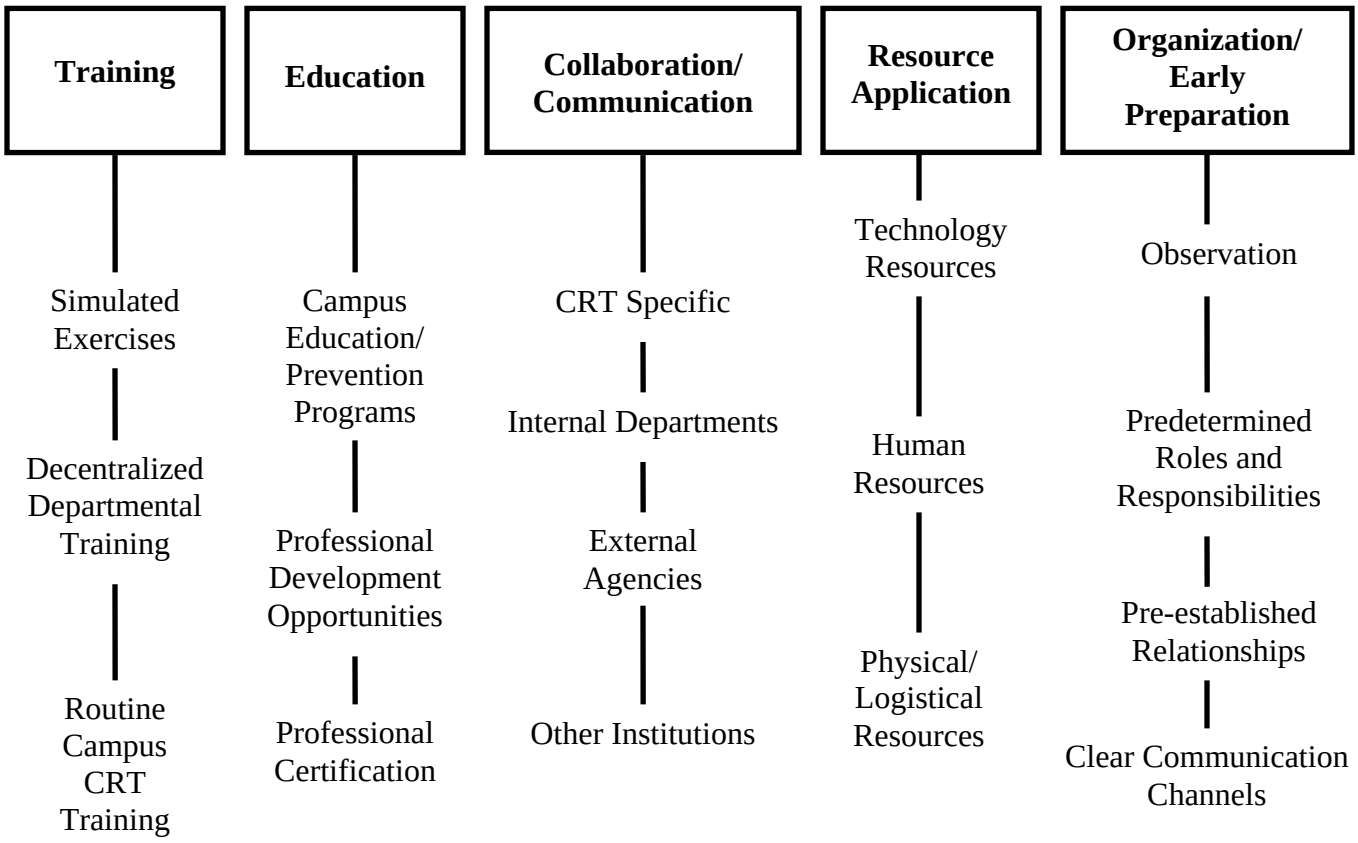


Figure 4.03. Consistent categorical themes for crisis preparation.

Interview data provided evidence of five major categories of crisis preparation: training, education, communication and collaboration, resource application, and early preparedness and organization.

Training

Institutions utilized a variety of training methods in their preparation for crises on campus, including simulated exercises, decentralized departmental training, and routine campus

crisis response team training. Participant 7 emphasized their preparation methods in the following statement:

> We have our tabletop exercises. So you know we talk about a variety of scenarios, we've probably had about, within the two years maybe seven or eight tabletop exercises. So and we have, future plans calls for more exercises. We're going to work our way up to a full-scale exercise. Well we've done tornados, uh uh residence hall fires, we've done uh water, water outage, uh food poisoning break, um … … rape … … um, what else we doing um … … … … … … trying to think of some of the others. We're planning a pandemic exercise. That's you know, we were actually working on the plan and I think we're going to have the exercises as early as this fall.

Participant 43 provided evidence of their decentralized training in the following way:

> Um, they do a lot a training um I think you know now in student health man every fall we have to go through this scenario where you know like this whole thing like you know there might have been a bomb and students you know students have been injured and all of us play different roles. I'm in student health, my office is in student health and student health reports to me. So student health does a lot of that, they even have all the equipment in case there's like some kind of chemical, I don't know what you call it, like those white suits. The counseling center they have many different um you know well they go to a lot of training obviously on critical incident that stuff we've dealt with a lot, gone to a lot of things dealing with trauma. Now that's all departmental. Um, housing has their drills. But you know again I don't think as a whole division do we do, and I think that's where we're not quite where we need to be. But there's units that do it, it's just not division wide.

Participant 27 indicated their routine campus crisis response team training by stating, "We've conducted on a number of occasions tabletop exercises in which members of the cabinet and other members of the university community who are representatives on the emergency response team have gone through different scenarios."

Education

Participants indicated that crisis preparation also includes campus education and prevention programs, professional development opportunities, and professional certification. One participant responded in the following way:

> It's all the directors and then one of the things that I'm doing this summer is from the directors is that we're gonna go to each office, we haven't done it yet we're gonna go to each office and talk to them about what their needs and concerns are. But for example I just gave a whole presentation to the 300 and something people in the division the other day, an overall um what, I want them to start thinking about what some of their questions are and needs or concerns, so I gave them an overall idea of the plan, just are reminder after Virginia Tech.

Similarly, some professionals show initiative by taking advantage of professional development opportunities, as the following participant indicated:

> And um I've sort taken it my mission to go to really about cutting edge conferences and places where lots of different interdisciplinary research is coming through and various methods and then coming back and training the group um as we go. So a lot of it has been me going out learning some stuff and trying to bring it back in. And there have been times when we have brought in people who are experts to give us some training as well. So it's really thorough and um continuous and um and it feels like there is so much

> new stuff coming out in the field right now that we can't just get a enough of it. But it's really helping, really helping.

Participant 2 explained, "We also just so you know all of the senior officers at our campus did the NIMS training. National Incident Management System, through the Homeland Security and FEMA. We are all certified in NIMS."

Communication/Collaboration

Participants indicated an interest in communication and collaboration efforts specific to the crisis response team, internal departments, external agencies, and other institutions. Participant 12 provided evidence of communication and collaboration specific to the crisis response team:

> I have a crisis team that I put together since I've been here which is made up of the Dean of Students, the Director of the Student Health Center, the Dean of the, uh Director of uh the counseling center, Director of Housing, and our and I'll bring other people in based on the incident but that's my critical team right there. Who'll respond to issues and concerns when it comes to student's life. For example, the death of the young lady in the residence hall. Uh the Counseling Center director brought his staff in within fifteen minutes, setup temporary counseling and grieving advice for students who live in the residence hall. The housing staff was they're working with parents who would come, parents that had been impacted and working with students who lived in the building. And uh with had the uh the uh director of the student health center with two physicians there in case students went into shock or trauma.

Similarly, preparation is enhanced through communication and collaboration of other internal departments on campus, as one participant noted in the following statement:

> I think that the entire staff needs to have a basic awareness of processes, then it depends on the crisis sort of who gets more training. One of the places that you really want focus obviously is in residence life, residence halls. So we've got the entire staff training there, but then you have student paraprofessionals as well. RA's, Head residences, graduate students, etc. At [name withheld], the University Police Department is part of the Division of Student Affairs so that is obviously you know a key and very central ingredient to post crisis. One might think that the recreational and intramural sports area, would be an area, what do they have to do with the crisis. Well, one it could be crisis at one of their events, two we might need facilities that they have for some kind of response to crisis. So there is a very few areas that go untouched, uh two other big ones of course, I think you could put right up there with University Police and Residence Life would be health services and counseling services.

Participant 17 suggested the important use of external agencies, "We've been included on, this past year with the Department of Homeland Security, and from FBI, to the coroner's office, city police department, city fire department, our media relations and public safety we did a table top of a bombing." Additionally, Participant 3 incorporated preparation efforts through communication and collaboration with other institutions:

> One of the things that we've been talking about, developing a mutual aid agreement with the [name withheld] for example, as far as developing that (counseling support and assistance). We've got a tabletop exercise scheduled for September 11 that's going to

> involve students from both [name withheld] and [name withheld] in how we work and communicate with each other about these students who are dual enrolled.

Resource Application

Participants indicated the need for resource application in preparing for campus crises, specifically, technology, human, and physical/logistical resources. In regards to the use of technology, one participant stated:

> So I think we're moving in the direction that and have listened to many recommendations, that we had already entered into a number of those you know, text messaging and stuff. We're in the process of purchasing that type of technology, we're upgrading our fire alarm systems and the you know all the facilities so that you know if we need to we can make announcements over that, whether it be a gunman or a tornado warning and a tornado bearing down on the campus. Just this last year I bought the Greeks needed new, they wanted walkie talkies and I spent $1,300 for walkie talkies for these things because in an emergency these walkie talkies are going to be used by our crisis team. I'll have one that communicates with the police and we've got one other one, I'm not sure who will pick that up, it's probably who ever the associate dean is that's on duty. So we'll have live information going forward and that we have been able to switch channels over and communicate that back out. But it's all linked into the county and the regions emergency operations systems as well.

Participant 48 advocated the use of human resources in the following statement:

> I'll give you the names to go in the three boxes that are new roles since 9/11. Uh one the first role is risk management coordinator. The middle box is emergency planning coordinator. And the third box in business continuity planning coordinator. Okay, you

> have the classic assess it and figure it out person. You have the classic react and respond immediately person. And you have having it back in business afterwards person. Those institutional roles weren't here prior to 9/11. Part of those um we've had risk management before but not at this level. Uh we've had emergency coordination people before that have come and gone including our department of public safety, which has the risk the emergency management assignment. We've had risk management in residence hall stuff or in the student affairs stuff for years. And in fact called the person the safety officer because risk management was seen as a financial activity.

Participant 6 indicated the important use of physical resources, "We have over in our emergency center, I mean it's got everything from a storage room, a helicopter, lights up at night, 25 different big screens, plasma, so that people can figure where the weather is, what's going on." Likewise, Participant 49 recognized their application of logistical resources in the following way, "We have responded from fairly strong standpoint in terms of increasing patrols, putting video monitors on the front gates, blocking our gates at certain times of the night and funneling everything through one gate."

Organization/Early Preparation

Interview data indicated consistent findings suggesting participants prepare for crisis by organizing and preparing early. One participant illustrated this theme by stating, "Go back to the idea that in the pre-crisis phase is prevention, mitigation, we've been integrally involved in those processes. The reason we haven't had problems is because of preparation that has been done on the front end."

Participant 7 illustrated their early observation strategies in the following response:

> And we've got that group now, [name withheld], the campus advisory team that I shared with you, um helps uh, they meet every Wednesday morning, rain, shine, incident, no incident to talk about and update on where students are, whether it be, well this is where track the students, like we would have tracked Cho. You know if we've got a concern, what's going on with that student, what have they done. Um you know we would pull in, like in that situation, we've over the course of this year three times, where we've had some concerns with some particular students and we had the faculty come in and join us. And talk about those strategies, you know, with the membership and team that's there.

Suggesting the need for predetermined roles and responsibilities in preparation for crises on campus, Participant 31 responded:

> So our campus emergency response team is chair by our Vice Provost for Student Affairs. And um so its um … we have a planning coordinator, we have an operations coordinator, we have a risk management person, we have logistics coordinator, we have a budget coordinator. And so everyone has a real specific role in terms of responding, particularly if it is at a higher level kind of emergency or crisis so um you know, planning will take a look at, if it is a larger scale kind of event, do classes need to be canceled? Do faculty need relief? Do people need to come to campus? Do um … and budget will look at the resources that we are expending, to make sure that we can meet those needs and can get whatever we need to meet additional needs. And so I mean it is a fairly on going um fluid thing. And you got to constantly make sure everybody who has those respective roles as a part of the response are communicating.

Many participants recognized established relationships as a critical component of crisis preparation. One participant stated, "We have designated contact people in every single college and every office around the whole campus as well as some of the services that we would connect with off campus, the emergency services, the Red Cross." Additionally, one participant suggested, "Now part of that (efficiency) is because you've done the training on the front end and people are familiar plus hopefully through implementing on those smaller incidents you got the relationships built to deal with some of the bigger situations."

Finally, participants indicated the need for clear communication channels in preparation for crisis. Participant 24 responded in the following way:

> I think that that probably the most critical piece of that immediate response is getting the right personnel in place to start to assisting to uh resolve the crisis. I think that's critical who should be there and call, we have a phone tree that we use. And we start the phone tree, I will call, if I'm called uh I call all my senior staff, they call staff members, they make the, I call, if, say a suicide attempt in the residence hall. Someone will call the Dean of Students, if I get the call first, police department, dean of students, or from housing uh with the young lady who passed away in the residence hall. I called the President, I called the uh Dean of Students, Dean of Students called the Director of uh the Counseling Center, and there was one other person he called.

Research Question 3

Whose needs are being met in times of crisis and what are these needs? How are these needs being addressed?

A variety of constituents' and their subsequent needs are addressed in times of crisis on campus regardless of the crisis type, including students, parents, faculty/staff, the surrounding

community, alumni, and media. Needs of groups will vary depending on the nature and timing of a crisis. The ways in which divisions of student affairs address those needs depends on the type and size of the institution. Divisions of student affairs tend to focus their efforts on students and parents, while they tend to partner with other institutional offices when working with constituents other than those subgroups. The level of involvement by student affairs as well as the level of partnerships fluctuates depending on constituent groups involved. Figure 4.04 summarizes the constituents who are assisted by the divisions of student affairs, while Figure 4.05 illustrates consistent needs of constituents and student affairs' efforts to meet those needs.

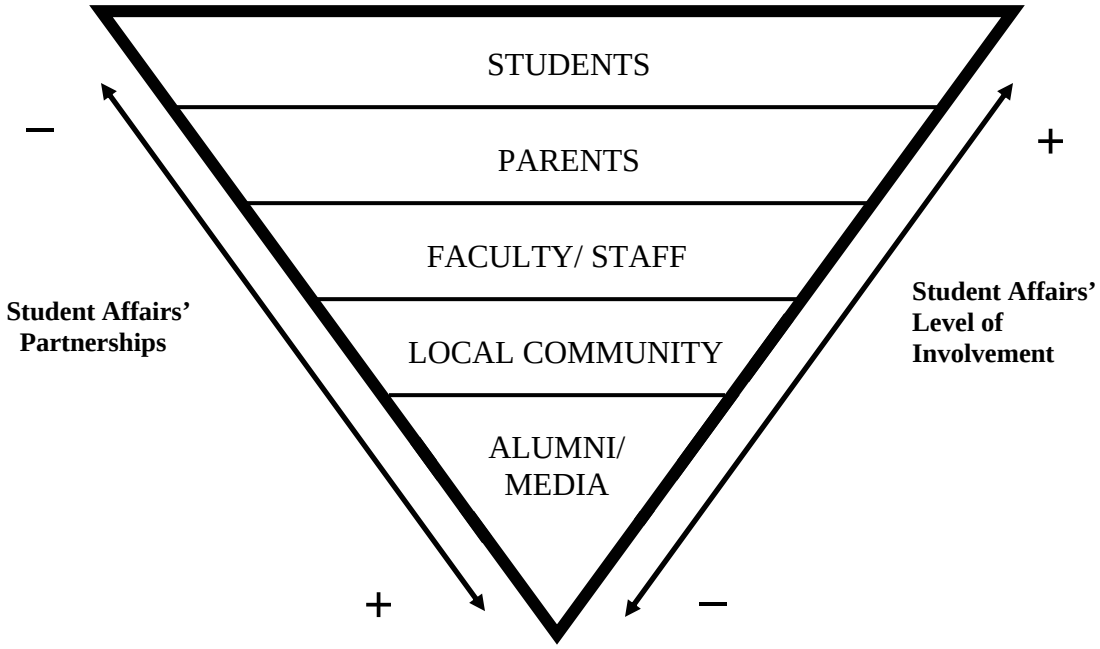
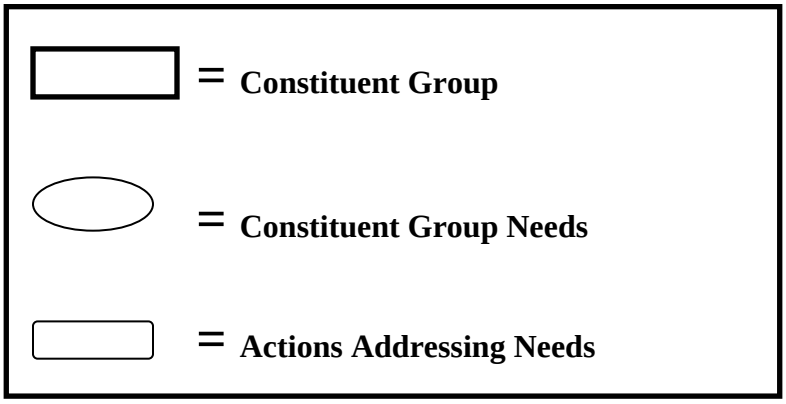
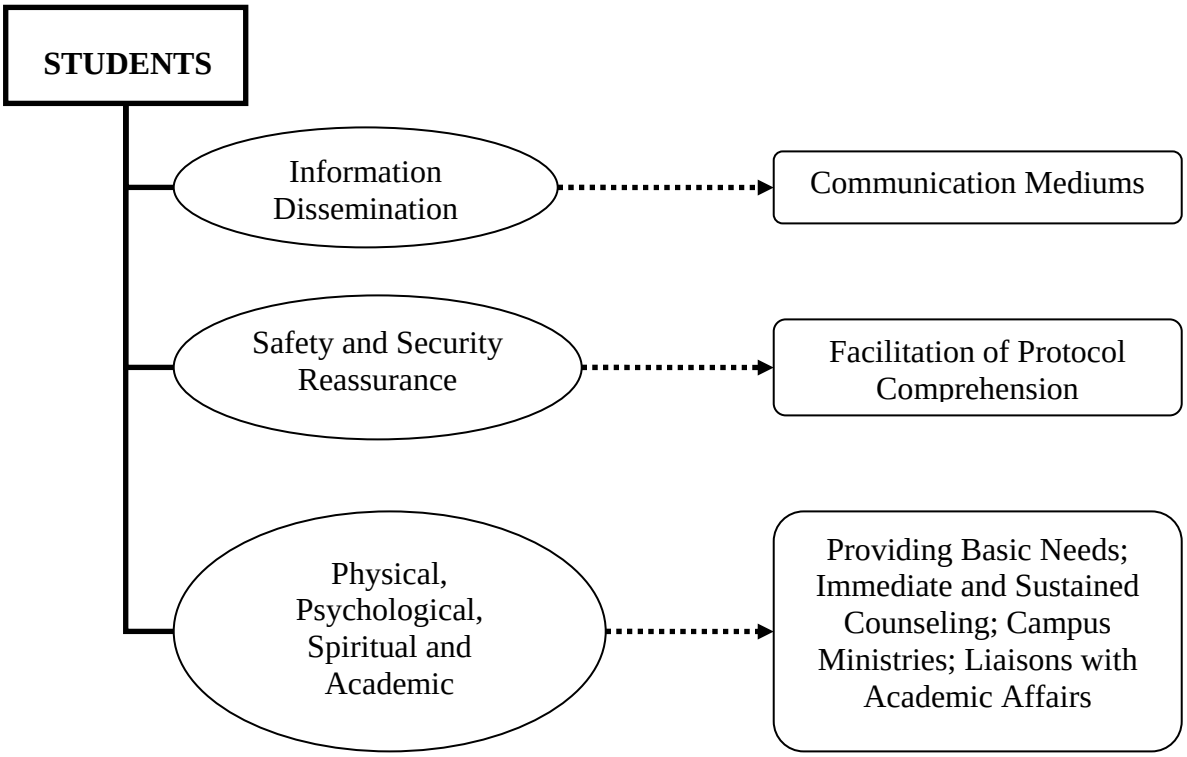
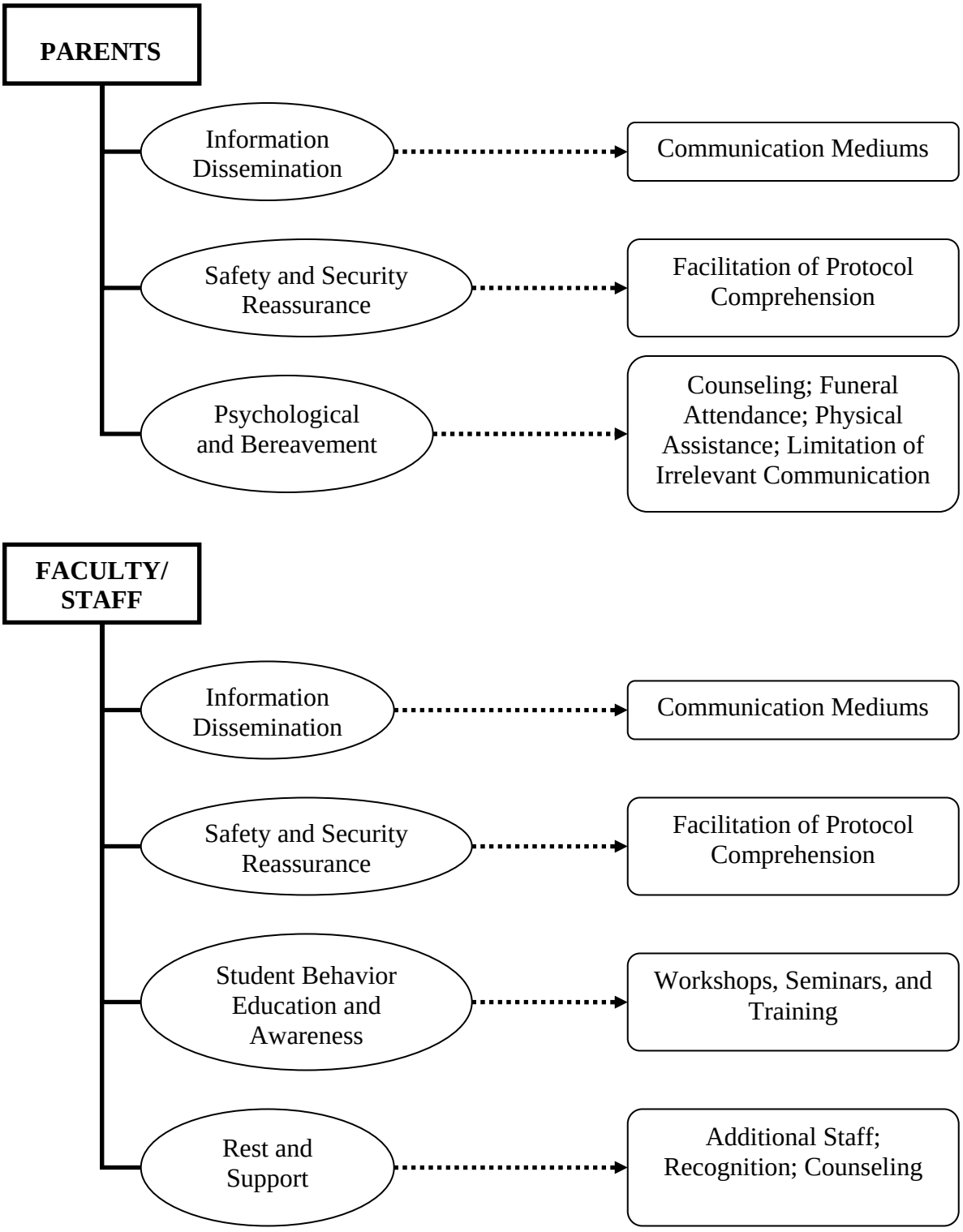


Figure 4.04. Constituents in crisis and student affairs practice.

Figure Key:


= Constituent Group
= Constituent Group Needs
= Actions Addressing Needs


STUDENTS
Information Dissemination
Communication Mediums
Safety and Security Reassurance
Facilitation of Protocol Comprehension
Physical, Psychological, Spiritual and Academic
Providing Basic Needs; Immediate and Sustained Counseling; Campus Ministries; Liaisons with Academic Affairs


PARENTS
Information Dissemination
Communication Mediums
Safety and Security Reassurance
Facilitation of Protocol Comprehension
Psychological and Bereavement
Counseling; Funeral Attendance; Physical Assistance; Limitation of Irrelevant Communication
FACULTY/ STAFF
Information Dissemination
Communication Mediums
Safety and Security Reassurance
Facilitation of Protocol Comprehension
Student Behavior Education and Awareness
Workshops, Seminars, and Training
Rest and Support
Additional Staff; Recognition; Counseling

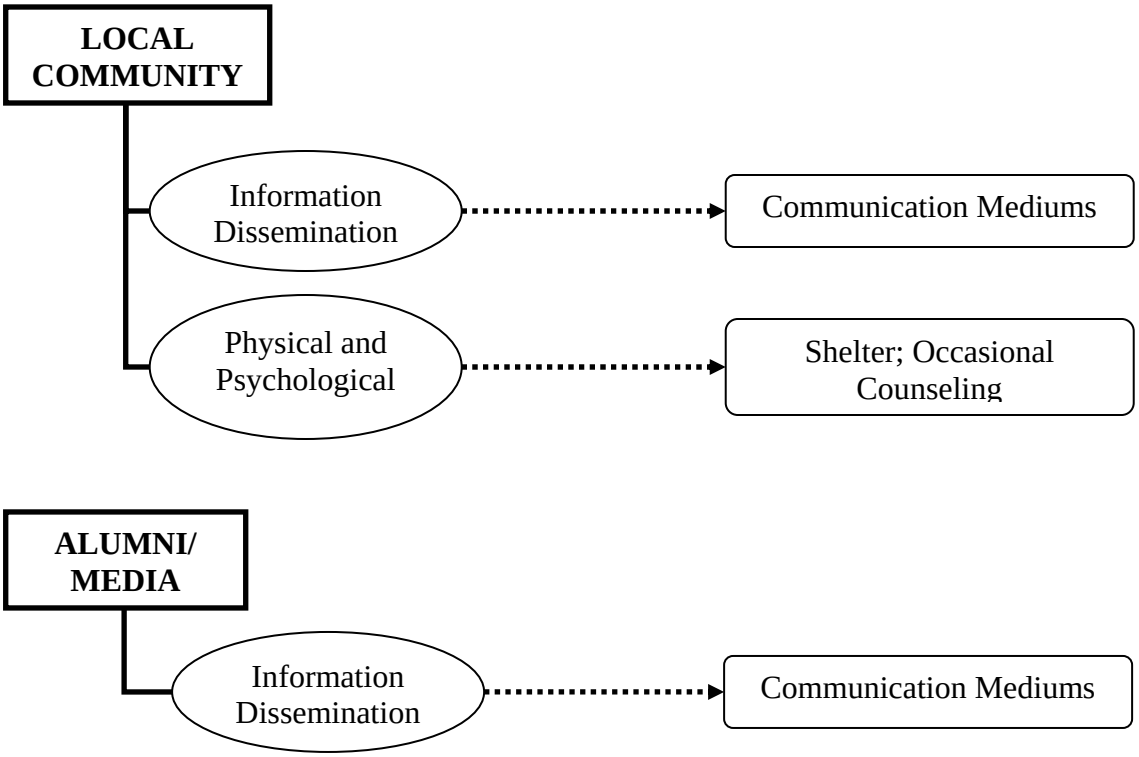


Figure 4.05. Needs of constituents in crisis and student affairs practice.

Survey data suggests that divisions of student affairs meet the needs of a variety of constituents when responding to crises, including students, parents, faculty/staff, the local community, and the alumni and media outlets. Certain constituent groups take priority over others and many times divisions of student affairs partner with other offices across campus to meet all needs. One participant noted, "Our main focus is students and then impacted parties associated with students. That could be faculty, staff, parents, community, depending on the nature of the situation. We're focused on parents and that community back home as well." Similarly, Participant 46 replied:

> Um students come first. Faculty and staff are tended to but they are tended with collaboration with the employee assistance program or the human resource department. Um which is we do it, we don't ignore it, we know we need to but we do it with a guarded sense of roles. Um parents we almost unabashedly attend to it, I think we we, that's part of our role and responsibility of attending to them. Um without hesitation we we we're there. Um, yeah and I think we do a pretty good job of that."

Echoing sentiments regarding parents, one participant responded, "The big one is parents. We get continuing calls from parents so we work very closely with our parent program office, they have email listings of parents, we try to either inform parents through that or through our website." When replying about the needs of parents, another participant remarked, "In terms of parents just notification. When we had the death on campus we responded to the parents, the alumni in terms of what was going on. And the president does an excellent of communicating with the board members."

In addressing parental and local community needs, Participant 20 replied:

> We also are expected, although we've not been called upon because we haven't had these kinds of emergencies um but the expectation is out there that we're going to help serve the needs of the community and parents. Well in fact that's a major one and that is during the during any crisis and the ones that I've mentioned before and um and others, one of the roles of student affairs is to help make sure that parents particularly phone calls and communication lines are established."

Participant 7 noted parental needs in the following way:

> Uh, but what I'll tell you is for example when parents come to clean up the belongings from a student room and um that has just died, we're gonna have counseling staff there. Try to talk with them, because that's a very difficult, very hard thing for them to go through. So that's one example. Um, every student that dies, I call their family and offer support and assistance from the standpoint of the university now generally that means from an administrative standpoint but I try to serve as that primary contact for the family so they don't feel like they have to go through you know figure out who to call to get information or whatever.

Finally, one study participant agreed with the collaborative partnerships in addressing various constituent needs, by responding, "The dean of students' office deals with students and outside community. We collaborate in dealing with media, that would fall under communications. The dean of the college who's over academic affairs, deals with the faculty side and human resources."

Research Question 4

How are crisis response protocols evaluated and improved?

Institutions of higher education and divisions of student affairs evaluate their crisis response strategies through a number of different approaches, including using simulated exercises to find areas of concern, learning and revising from experiences, internal discourse, and finally, external consulting. Evaluation of a response plan and response itself at the institutional level focuses on the overall mechanics of a response. Included in the overall mechanics of a plan are the protocols and the responses at the division level which involve students, parents, and other constituents. Figure 4.06 illustrates the consistent themes found when analyzing the evaluation of crisis response and crisis protocols.

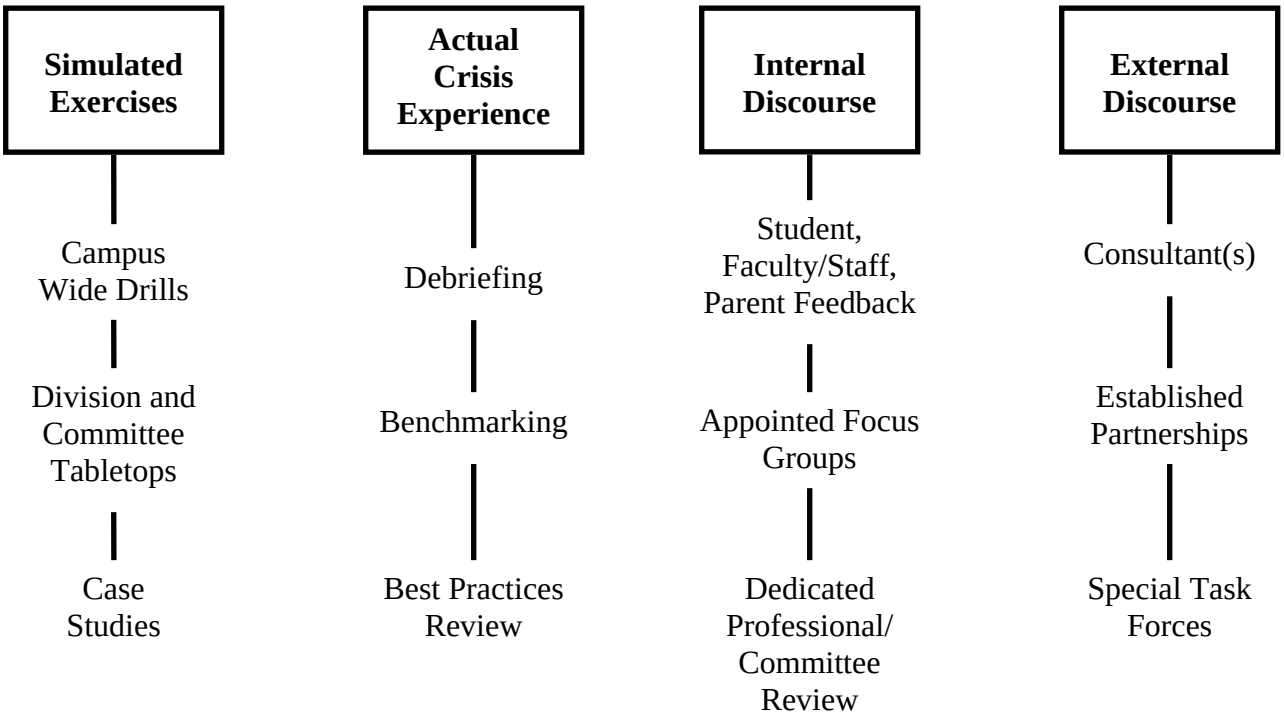


Figure 4.06. Consistent categorical themes for crisis response plan evaluations.

Interview data provides evidence of four consistent themes in relation to the process of evaluation and improvement of crisis response protocols, including the use of simulated exercises, the importance of learning from actual crisis experience, and finally, internal and external discourse.

Simulated Exercises

Participants utilized simulated exercises such as campus-wide drills, tabletops, and case studies as a means of evaluating their plans. One participant in discussing their evaluation practices replied:

> We will do an annual update of our um emergency plan and we're going to do some table top exercises and you know just really go through and maybe some actual, exercises. And so um yeah, we are definitely looking for or at trying to be sure that the plan works and you know it is a workable plan and that we can carry it out in finding out where the weaknesses may be.

Similarly, Participant 9 stated, "We conduct a um … emergency response drill and usually table top um simulation once a year. Our assessment has been based on how we go through our training." Also, specific case studies are used to evaluate current protocols, as Participant 11 added:

> I was at a meeting this morning where we're looking at formulating an institute wide crisis response that was really based on what happened with Virginia Tech. Because Virginia Tech didn't happen that long ago and we're still trying to put pieces in place. And even if you felt you had a plan that was stellar prior to Virginia Tech I think in light of what happened there and what we all learned, most of us are reviewing these things and thinking about them in a more informed and sophisticated way than we did before.

Actual Crisis Experience

Study participants also recognized the benefit of learning from actual crisis experience and applying lessons learned from those experiences to the evaluation and improvement practices of crisis response protocols. This is exercised through extensive debriefing, benchmarking, and reviews of best practices. In terms of debriefing, one participant stated the following:

> We try to debrief in that terms of the assessment evaluative piece what happened, how we might have done it better, what can we learn from this situation. And that's a very formal process that is consistent uh the evaluation team consists of a number of people. When you have a larger campus crisis like a fire in the residence hall or something like that again we in we involve a larger group of people to go through a formal evaluation process about again the same things what happened, what could we have done better, what can we learn from this and how can we do better in the future.

In terms of benchmarking practices that involve comparing the strategies of similar institutions, Participant 17 replied:

> I think we outside of the crisis environment we are looking at and we look at almost on an annual basis some of our policies uh and benchmark then against what we can can find to be best practices and what are other institutions, that sort of have similar uh environments to us doing. And you know, is there something that other folks are doing that we might want to look at, so on and so forth, and I think that happens on a periodic basis.

Participants also conduct research on best practices that have been implemented at other institutions. These practices can then be built into response plans if they are deemed appropriate

by the administration. Highlighting best practices review, Participant 37 added, "We work closely with colleagues across the state developing best practices. When my Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs debriefed with the Vice Chancellor from [name withheld], we had this sort of system wide debrief about best practices."

Internal Discourse

The solicitation of student, faculty/staff, and parent feedback is one example of internal discourse utilized by institutions in evaluating and improving their crisis response protocols. Institutions also review the feedback of institutionally appointed focus groups as well as the advice of those professionals primarily dedicated to work in crisis response at the institution. Participant 43 provided evidence of using feedback from a variety of campus constituents in the following statement:

> In addition we would be um surveying our students, anonymously online to determine what else we might do regarding the current emergency situation that might help them better work their way through the challenges that were accompanying that emergency. And then we are also then of course are gonna be consulting with faculty advisors, academic advisors, asking them at [name withheld] if they send us back anecdotal information involving what students are telling them in the classroom or in academic advisement sessions, that would help us do our work more effectively in response to the emergency. I also send out a survey to the members of my own division, which was, made that divisional. I asked people how did you feel we responded and what in your best professional uh estimation should we have done differently. We also gave students a chance to tell us you know in a survey monkey, anonymous survey at the end of the year.

Likewise, one participant indicated the importance of appointed focus groups studying the study the response plans by stating, “Um we definitely have the former which is the safety and security counsel that I mentioned. That is responsible for evaluation of policies and protocols relative to safety and security. And that would include emergency operations.” Finally, another participant stated, “We pull together at the institution level that emergency response team which is representative of all the divisions across campus. These folks annually come together to review our plan to make adjustments and articulate those adjustments to the campus.”

External Discourse

Additionally, participants benefited from the use of external consultants specializing in crisis response protocols, established external partnerships for review purposes, and specially designated task forces from external groups. Participant 34 stated:

> Well we actually hired a consultant to look at our emergency response plan. And to provide us feedback on the uh effectiveness or lack thereof of the plan. Um, it’s helped because we create these internal responses and because of our proximity to creating the documents uh there may be holes or blind spots so we felt it critical to have someone who is a professional and an expert in this area to um … … … view what we created.

Participant 29 provided evidence of the solicitation of external agencies for assistance in the review process by replying, “I had directed my Assistant VPs and public safety, I asked them to please send our plan to the state police in [name withheld] and to send it to the county emergency management group for them to critique it.” Finally, one participant provided evidence of special task force feedback in stating, “Actually we just completed a survey that was

produced by our by the governor's task force here in [name withheld]. And based on our collective responses to those questions we felt like we've met or exceeded them (expectations)."

Research Question 5

Does type of institution influence crisis response on campus?

Institutional type does have an influence on crisis response on campus although some type dichotomies have a greater influence than others and some have no relevance unless combined with other contributing factors. The primary influences associated with institutional type on crisis response are whether or not an institution is public or private and/or commuter or residential. Secondary and tertiary influences of institutional type also influence crisis response on campus. Figure 4.07 examines illustrates how institutional type influences crisis response protocols on campus, with particular emphasis on primary influencing factors, secondary influencing factors, and tertiary influencing factors. Also shown as the consistent themes found within the primary influencing factors and those institutional types that show no influence.

The following interview excerpts provide evidence of institutional type influences on campus crisis response plans, particularly commuter/residential, public/private, liberal arts/non-liberal arts, land grant/non-land grant, and faith based/non-faith based. The interview data also lends credibility to the fact that decentralized institutions, flagship institutions, and institutions with large numbers of out of state and international students are influenced by these factors. From a qualitative lens, the fact that an institution was either an HBCU or PWI, or a Two-Year or Four-Year institution, had no recognized influence on crisis response plans and strategies.

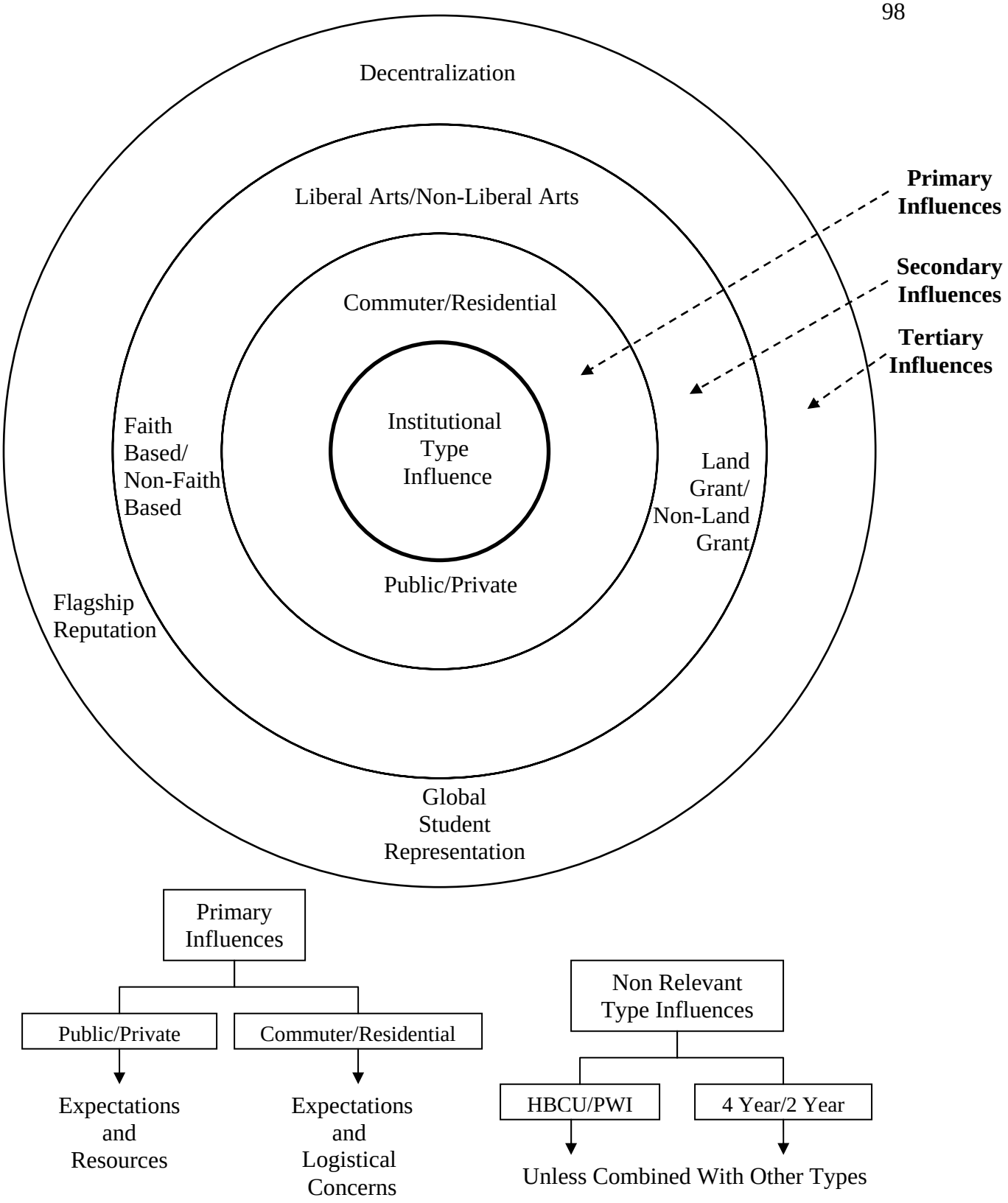


Figure 4.07. Consistent categorical influences of institutional type on crisis response.

Primary Influences

Primary influences on crisis response strategies based on institutional type were whether an institution was classified as a commuter or residential institution and whether it was public or private. With respect to the commuter/residential dichotomy, one participant responded;

> Well, I think, I guess the impact would be in terms of the communication factor, if you population is largely commuter and again going back to the Virginia Tech incident, how do you notify all those students that are off campus. Many of our students do live on campus um and are all just about undergrads. So communication is a little better in terms of reaching those students.

A residential participant added:

> Um I think it has a significant impact because I think that um … that that some I don't think any institution really is just shut down anymore, we're pretty much all on 24/7 but a significant portion of our student population call their university their home. Um for anywhere from two years because all undergraduates are required to live on for two years to four or more years. Um and so when crisis hits and people say well we'll just send people home um we are the home.

Additionally, one participant replied:

> Um so we I think … the nature of who we are, um we're really kind of comprehensive and that does affect us because uh we have a substantial commuter population, both in our graduate and undergraduate populations. Um which you know there's some different issues that attach to them. Certainly our residential community I would say likens us to the expectations that you might find at a small liberal arts college. Um you know that we

> would really take of if you would in a residential community. Um … … … and the fact that we're in a metropolitan area and people could be absolutely anywhere at anytime.

In explaining the commuter influence, one participant explained, "It may be because we're 95% commuter campus. Maybe and and we are not a very large, we only house 3,000 students. So, without a large residential population, maybe our, we have fewer crisis." Finally, Participant 37 reflected on the commuter/residential influence in the following way:

> Well I think different types of institutions have different cultures and their organizations are partly reflective and partly in response to those cultures. So on a very small campus in a rural areas that is predominantly residential, there is going to be a different um focus uh probably in a crisis in terms of the community students, the um community of the faculty and staff is going to be much more localized and concern is probably going to be more for, um the human element. Where as a large urban public campus like mine, there, because people are more dispersed, um the impact, the visible impact on the humans is less, many fewer students on campus, people don't live in the same area, our faculty, administrative staff, and other staff are dispersed over many many many miles, um and the focus I think becomes more property. Um more concern initially about buildings and access and uh um and those types of issues and those are two extremes.

Public/Private

The public/private dichotomy also plays a primary role in crisis response strategies. One participant suggested, "Publics may respond differently than privates. There is more disclosure at publics than at privates. Facts, what happens, who was involved, who has access to whatever happens. There are different issues that you're more or less concerned about." Additionally, a private participant replied, "Being private we don't really have to, I would imagine that there is

some sort of state guidelines and red tape. Being private we can sit down and address our own needs and come up with our own plan."

When asked about the pubic/private influence, Participant 21 responded in the following manner:

> Well I think it does. I mean, you know public institutions have certain expectations from state legislature, the governor, and how you coordinate these matters, and how you communicate these matters and who gets communicated to in a crisis and I would imagine private institutions you know have certain expectations and certain limitations that um and actually certain opportunities that public institutions don't have because of our regulations and um constitutions and those kinds of things.

Participant 4 narrowed the focus to the availability of resources when replying:

> I think uh public schools certainly have more resources when it comes to crisis management. Because they are tied in with the state government and there's a lot of things that they can depend on that a private school, I don't feel like they can. Like the basic things, the fire department I'm sure is going to be about the same, just reporting to board of regents at a state level can be offered more opportunities, where a private school we sometimes feel like we're on our own when it comes to developing a plan.

Several private participants stressed increased expectations including one participant who stated:

> My perception is because students go to this type of institution and um they come from the type of group that they come from especially in today's society and the way students are being raised, I think there's a very high expectation placed upon us as a private institution from the type of students we draw from and the type of families we draw from

> to have an immediate response that involves parents. I think parents put a very high expectation on [name withheld] to get them involved almost immediately. That we see all the time. But I think that is an expectation because of the type of school we are.

Similarly, another private institution replied, "We try to go a little bit above and beyond. So I think that it is expected more from the private university. I think there may not be as much pressure than at private universities."

Secondary Influences

Interview data indicated a pattern of secondary influences of institutional type on crisis response including the whether or not the participant was a liberal arts institution, land grant institution, or religiously-affiliated institution. In reference to the liberal arts debate, one institution noted, "You are going to have a different situation on a liberal arts campus. You've got research facilities, animal quarters, nuclear materials, biohazardous materials, and so forth. A research university brings more concern about public safety and homeland security." Similarly, research institution faculty may be called upon for expertise as another participant suggested, "The doctoral, probably because of the doctoral, probably be called upon for expertise in faculty to help with whatever, if it were something fairly complex in terms of the response and the clean up."

Participant 13 added:

> It is also very different than sort of, say [name withheld] that has public thorough fares running all through its sprawled out in a way that you can't just fence in and the number of ways that people, that we have a major public research hospital sitting on campus, which means that there's all kinds of public in and out, that make the issues of how do you secure campus, how do you protect campus, what's the scope of services you need.

In relation to land grant status, Participant 47 indicated:

> Uh well one the land grant sort of culture um means that I think we would consider ourselves very much servants of the state, of the citizens of the state of [name withheld]. So you know I think it would be unthinkable for us in terms of our culture to sort of put a perimeter around the campus and say none of you can come in. We're gonna take care of our own. Uh it it also since we are spread around the state, I think we would be looked to as having the infrastructure, let's say something happened in, you know one of our northern counties next to [name withheld] and very remote and rural and isolated, I think we would be looked to help those counties should they have some sort of um some sort of emergency. So I think we're very much a public um we have public responsibility as a land grant institution.

Finally, religious affiliation seems to play a minor role in crisis response on campus. Participant 35 added how it responds to crisis:

> It really depends on the nature of the incident because we are a faith based institution, a lot of our students are drawn in times of crisis towards more spiritual focus. And so a lot of times in crisis we come together as a community and we pray and students of all faith traditions are more than welcome.

Tertiary Influences

In highlighting tertiary influences on crisis response, one institution suggested decentralization does influence response strategies:

> I think the decentralization has to be an extra challenge. You know and also we have uh … different colleges throughout the country and world at [name withheld] and actually there have been times there was uh um, when the crisis has happened at one of the um

> you know off, out of the country sites, where we have been able to fly in a crisis management team to help them with that. So I think uh so the part of, I guess, knowing having to, being able to develop a system in a decentralized place enabled us to know what to do when it happened really off campus.

Similarly, institutional image also influences how institutions respond to crises. Participant 46 indicated the flagship label influences their protocols by stating, "We set the standard and the highest level of excellence is expected, because we're in the state capital, because we have legislators, because we are the flagship. There's an extraordinarily high level of performance, that's just expected of us."

Finally, a global student population also influences how institutions prepare and respond to crises. Participant 31 stated, "We have a huge international population on campus. When we're talking about locking the campus down or sending students home. You can't just send students home to China and India. We have to really keep that in mind."

A t-test of independent means was utilized in analyzing each of seven different dichotomies of type (Public/Private; Two-Year/Four-Year; HBCU/PWI; Commuter/Residential; Liberal Arts/Non-Liberal Arts; Land Grant/Non-Land Grant; and Religiously Affiliated/Non-Religiously Affiliated). Only the significant values for each dichotomy are listed in the tables below. The table in each dichotomy references the survey items of significance with an alpha level of .05. With regard to the Public/Private institutional dichotomy, survey items of statistical significance are reported in Table 4.04. Of 111 total quantitative survey items, only eight items were found to be significant in this dichotomy with Item #032: *In terms of crisis management training, my student affairs division encourages professional certification in the area of crisis management* being the most significant value, $t(36.350) = 2.854$, $p = .007$.

Table 4.04

Independent t-test Results for Type: Public/Private

Survey Item	Type	n	M	SD	t	df	p
Definition and Incidences							
My student affairs division is prepared to respond and resolve any **human crisis** (student death, faculty/staff death, injury, suicide, emotional/psychological crisis, missing person, overdose, infectious disease, campus disturbance/demonstration, etc.).	Public	32	3.50	.672	-2.034	49	.047
	Private	19	3.84	.375			
Structure: Education, Preparation, and Training							
In terms of crisis management training, my student affairs division encourages professional certification in the area of crisis management.	Public	26	2.73	.827	2.854	36.350	.007
	Private	18	2.00	.840			
Structure and Process: Communication and Collaboration							
My student affairs division has an easily accessible document that highlights the current chain of command for the institution in the event of an emergency.	Public	30	2.77	.935	-2.082	38.863	.044
	Private	17	3.29	.772			
Process: Response							
I am familiar with the symptoms and the 10 stages of acute traumatic stress.	Public	28	2.21	.917	2.326	38.662	.025
	Private	15	1.67	.617			
My CRT is familiar with the symptoms and the 10 stages of acute traumatic stress.	Public	23	2.74	.810	2.085	27.4	.046
	Private	15	2.13	.915			
My student affairs division's response strategy incorporates an initial immediate response to a crisis.	Public	29	3.28	.841	-2.063	45	.045
	Private	18	3.72	.461			
Structure: Memorials							
In terms of memorials, my institution engages in moments of silence.	Public	30	3.80	.407	2.422	45	.020
	Private	17	3.47	.515			

With regards to memorials, my student affairs division solicits the wishes of family members.	Public Private	29 18	3.31 3.83	.967 .383	-2.182	45	.034

With regard to the Two-Year/Four-Year institutional dichotomy, survey items are statistical significance are reported in Table 4.05. 22 of the 111 quantitative survey items produced significant results in this dichotomy with 14 items having p-values of .000, more than any other dichotomy. It should be noted that there was great differentiation between the number of two-year and four-year institutions that participated in the study. This discrepancy should be taken into consideration when analyzing the data from this dichotomy.

Table 4.05

Independent t-test Results for Type: Two-Year/Four-Year

Survey Item	Type	N	M	SD	t	df	p
Definition and Incidences							
My student affairs division is prepared to respond and resolve any **facility crisis** (fire, explosion, chemical leak, building or campus evacuation, etc.).	2-Year 4-Year	2 45	3.00 3.22	.000 .670	-2.223	44	.031
My student affairs division is prepared to respond and resolve any **criminal crisis** (homicide, assault, rape, harassment, abuse, burglary/robbery, kidnapping, hate crime, terrorist threat, vandalism, etc.).	2-Year 4-Year	2 47	3.00 3.23	.000 .698	-2.298	46	.026
Structure: Organization							
My CRT chairperson delegates specific duties/responsibilities for the remaining CRT members.	2-Year 4-Year	2 42	2.00 3.40	1.414 .627	-2.955	42	.005
My institution has a readily accessible, mobile emergency command center in the event that the stationary command center becomes damaged or is unreachable.	2-Year 4-Year	2 42	1.00 2.64	.000 1.008	-2.280	42	.028

Structure: Education, Preparation, and Training							
My student affairs division prepares/trains the crisis response team for crisis.	2-Year	2	2.00	.000	-6.401	42	.000
	4-Year	43	2.88	.905			
My student affairs division prepares/trains the CRT how to assess and execute the plan pre-crisis.	2-Year	2	2.00	.000	-6.518	42	.000
	4-Year	43	2.93	.936			
My student affairs division prepares/trains the CRT how to assess and execute the plan during crisis.	2-Year	2	2.00	.000	-6.762	42	.000
	4-Year	43	2.95	.925			
My student affairs division prepares/trains the CRT how to assess and execute the plan post-crisis.	2-Year	2	2.00	.000	-7.512	42	.000
	4-Year	43	3.00	.873			
My student affairs division prepares/trains CRT members how to respond to trauma and acute stress.	2-Year	2	2.00	.000	-5.888	42	.000
	4-Year	43	2.81	.906			
In terms of crisis management training, my student affairs division engages in table top exercises (small simulations, role playing, etc.).	2-Year	2	2.00	.000	-7.396	47	.000
	4-Year	48	3.02	.956			
In terms of crisis management training, my student affairs division encourages conference participation and continued professional development in the area of crisis management.	2-Year	3	4.00	.000	8.314	47	.000
	4-Year	48	3.17	.694			
My student affairs division educates its first responders to assist victims of natural crisis.	2-Year	2	2.00	.000	-2.552	43	.014
	4-Year	43	3.28	.701			
My student affairs division educates its first responders to assist victims of facility crisis.	2-Year	2	2.00	.000	-9.362	42	.000
	4-Year	43	3.16	.814			
My student affairs division educates its first responders to assist victims of criminal crisis.	2-Year	2	2.00	.000	-2.121	44	.000
	4-Year	44	3.20	.795			

My student affairs division educates its first responders to assist victims of human crisis.	2-Year 4-Year	2 43	2.00 3.53	.000 .550	-3.905	43	.000
Structure and Process: Communication and Collaboration							
My student affairs division has detailed relocation plans for students if it becomes necessary.	2-Year 4-Year	2 46	2.00 2.76	.000 .923	-5.589	45	.000
Process: Response							
My CRT is familiar with the symptoms and the 10 stages of acute traumatic stress.	2-Year 4-Year	2 46	2.00 3.50	.000 .810	-12.565	45	.000
Structure: Assessment							
My student affairs division engages in periodic campus pre-assessments of possible risks to safety.	2-Year 4-Year	2 46	2.00 3.00	.000 .760	-8.923	45	.000
Structure: Memorials							
In terms of memorials, my institution incorporates a commemorative plaque.	2-Year 4-Year	2 35	4.00 3.14	.000 .912	5.560	34	.000
In terms of memorials, my institution leads a campus memorial service.	2-Year 4-Year	3 44	4.00 3.77	.000 .565	2.668	43	.011
In terms of memorials, my institution attends a funeral service.	2-Year 4-Year	2 44	4.00 3.61	.000 .813	3.152	43	.003
In terms of memorials, my institution lowers university flags to half-mast.	2-Year 4-Year	2 36	4.00 3.50	.000 .910	3.296	35	.002

With regard to the HBCU/PWI institutional dichotomy, survey items of statistical significance are reported in Table 4.06. Seven items of statistical significance were identified as a result of the t-tests, with the most significant value being Item #102: *In terms of memorials, my institution leads a campus memorial service*, $t(42) = 2.673$, $p = .011$. There were more items of significance found within the structure and process section associated with communication and collaboration than any other type dichotomy.

Table 4.06

Independent t-test Results for Type: HBCU/PWI

Survey Item	Type	N	M	SD	t	df	p
Structure and Process: Communication and Collaboration							
My institution has a website specifically designed to give national terrorism warnings.	HBCU	4	1.25	.500	-2.752	6.335	.031
	PWI	36	2.08	1.025			
My institution has easily accessible campus maps across campus grounds.	HBCU	4	1.75	.500	-3.712	5.383	.012
	PWI	36	2.83	.996			
My student affairs division collaborates with internal units in response to crisis (departments, etc.)	HBCU	4	2.75	.500	-3.105	3.646	.041
	PWI	36	3.57	.544			
Process: Response							
I am trained to respond and resolve Symptoms of acute traumatic stress.	HBCU	4	1.50	.577	-2.730	4.859	.043
	PWI	41	2.39	.972			
I am familiar with the five stage process of crisis management (prevention/mitigation, planning, response, recovery, learning).	HBCU	4	2.25	.500	-2.821	5.282	.035
	PWI	47	3.06	.987			
Structure: Memorials							
In terms of memorials, my institution leads a campus memorial service.	HBCU	4	4.00	.000	2.673	42	.011
	PWI	43	3.77	.571			
My institution supports free counseling services to students in times of crisis.	HBCU	4	3.50	.577	-2.226	48	.031
	PWI	46	3.89	.315			

With regard to the Commuter/Residential institutional dichotomy, survey items of statistical significance are listed in Table 4.07. Once again, though varying from other dichotomies, seven of the 111 quantitative items on the survey produced significant results, with the most significant item being Item #005: *My student affairs division is prepared to respond and resolve any **human crisis** (student death, faculty/staff death, injury, suicide, emotional/psychological crisis, missing person, overdose, infectious disease, campus*

disturbance/demonstration, etc.), t(49) = -2.757, p = .008. Additionally, more items of significance developed from the survey section that addressed the process of the crisis response plan.

Table 4.07

Independent t-test Results for Type: Commuter/Residential

Survey Item	Type	N	M	SD	t	Df	p
Definition and Incidences							
My student affairs division is prepared to respond and resolve any **human crisis** (student death, faculty/staff death, injury, suicide, emotional/psychological crisis, missing person, overdose, infectious disease, campus disturbance/demonstration, etc.).	Commuter	18	3.33	.767	-2.757	49	.008
	Residential	33	3.79	.415			
Structure: Organization							
My student affairs division has a highly organized and qualified crisis response team (CRT).	Commuter	17	2.82	1.015	-2.625	46	.012
	Residential	31	3.42	.564			
Structure: Education, Preparation, and Training							
My student affairs division prepares/trains CRT members how to respond to trauma and acute stress.	Commuter	15	2.40	.828	-2.110	30.007	.043
	Residential	30	2.97	.890			
Process: Response							
My student affairs division has qualified professionals/paraprofessionals that act as first responders.	Commuter	17	3.06	.966	-2.198	25.659	.037
	Residential	31	3.65	.709			
My student affairs division's response strategy incorporates an initial immediate response to a crisis.	Commuter	16	3.00	.894	-2.779	20.824	.011
	Residential	31	3.68	.541			
My student affairs division follows no specific model of crisis management.	Commuter	15	2.40	1.056	-2.591	25.931	.016
	Residential	29	3.24	.951			

Structure: Memorials							
My institution supports free counseling for students in times of crisis.	Commuter	17	3.71	.470	-2.330	48	.024
	Residential	33	3.94	.242			

With regard to the Liberal Arts/Non-Liberal Arts institutional dichotomy, survey items of statistical significance are reported in Table 4.08. Only four survey items yielded significance within this dichotomy with the most significant item being Item #104: *In terms of memorials, my institution has a dedication*, $t(38) = -3.991$, $p = .000$, that addressed a specific aspect of the structure of a crisis response plan. This dichotomy also yielded the fewest statistically significant survey items in the study.

Table 4.08

Independent t-test Results for Type: Liberal Arts/Non-Liberal Arts

Survey Item	Type	N	M	SD	t	df	p
Definition and Incidences							
My student affairs division has a comprehensive crisis response plan focused on the **entire** campus community.	Liberal Arts	4	3.75	.500	3.066	5.396	.025
	Non-Liberal Arts	43	2.86	.966			
Process: Response							
During initial response, my student affairs division addresses the entire campus populace needs.	Liberal Arts	4	3.75	.500	3.625	4.536	.018
	Non-Liberal Arts	47	2.74	.790			
Structure: Memorials							
In terms of memorials, my institution leads a campus memorial service.	Liberal Arts	4	4.00	.000	2.673	42	.011
	Non-Liberal Arts	43	3.77	.571			
In terms of memorials, my institution has a dedication.	Liberal Arts	2	4.00	.000	3.991	38	.000
	Non-Liberal Arts	39	3.38	.963			

With regard to the Land Grant/Non-Land Grant institutional dichotomy, items of statistical significance are listed in Table 4.09. Interestingly, all items of significance in this dichotomy deal with the structural components of a crisis response plan, more specifically education, preparation, and training of the crisis response team during each phase of the crisis response plan. The survey item with the highest p-value was Item #021: *My student affairs division prepares/trains the CRT how to assess and execute the plan during crisis,* t(31.318) = 2.483, p = .019.

Table 4.09

Independent t-test Results for Type: Land Grant/Non-Land Grant

Survey Item Structure: Education, Preparation, and Training	Type	N	M	SD	t	df	p
My student affairs division prepares/trains the CRT how to assess and execute the plan pre-crisis.	Land Grant Non-Land Grant	14 31	3.29 2.71	.825 .938	2.075	28.395	.047
My student affairs division prepares/trains the CRT how to assess and execute the plan during crisis.	Land Grant Non-Land Grant	14 31	3.36 2.71	.745 .938	2.483	31.318	.019
My student affairs division prepares/trains the CRT how to assess and execute the plan post-crisis.	Land Grant Non-Land Grant	14 31	3.36 2.77	.745 .884	2.290	29.589	.029
My student affairs division prepares/trains CRT members how to respond to trauma and acute stress.	Land Grant Non-Land Grant	15 30	3.20 2.57	.775 .898	2.449	32.121	.020
In terms of crisis management training, my student affairs division engages in in-house seminars and education sessions.	Land Grant Non-Land Grant	15 36	3.40 2.94	.632 .791	2.171	32.641	.037

In terms of crisis management training, my student affairs division engages in external seminars and education sessions.	Land Grant Non-Land Grant	15 35	3.33 2.80	.617 .933	2.379	39.322	.022

With regard to the Religiously Affiliated/Non-Religiously Affiliated institutional dichotomy, survey items of statistical significance are reported in Table 4.10. This dichotomy had a considerable number of significant items, primarily dealing with the structure of a crisis response plan, specifically the preparation and training levels. However, the two most significant items, Item #039: *My student affairs first responders are trained to assist victims of sexual assault,* t(45) = -2.340, p = .024 and Item #080: *During initial response, my student affairs division addresses the entire campus populace needs,* t(20.854) = 2.427, p = .024, were associated with structure and process, different components of the crisis response plan.

Table 4.10

Independent t-test Results for Type: Religiously Affiliated/Non-Religiously Affiliated

Survey Item	Type	N	M	SD	T	df	p
Structure: Education, Preparation, and Training							
My student affairs division prepares/trains the crisis response team for crisis.	Religiously Affiliated Non-Religiously Affiliated	9 36	2.22 3.00	.833 .862	-2.487	12.644	.028
My student affairs division prepares/trains the CRT how to assess and execute the plan pre-crisis.	Religiously Affiliated Non-Religiously Affiliated	9 36	2.33 3.03	.707 .941	-2.453	15.933	.026
In terms of crisis management training, my student affairs division engages in table top exercises (small simulations, role playing, etc.)	Religiously Affiliated Non-Religiously Affiliated	11 39	2.45 3.13	1.214 .833	-2.133	48	.038

In terms of crisis management training, my student affairs division encourages professional certification in the area of crisis management.	Religiously Affiliated Non-Religiously Affiliated	11 33	1.91 2.61	.831 .864	-2.385	17.776	.028
My student affairs first responders are trained to assist victims of sexual assault.	Religiously Affiliated Non-Religiously Affiliated	10 37	3.10 3.62	.876 .545	-2.340	45	.024
<u>Structure and Process: Communication and Collaboration</u> My student affairs division utilizes a crisis hotline during times of crisis.	Religiously Affiliated Non-Religiously Affiliated	10 35	2.20 3.03	.919 .954	-2.493	15.025	.025
<u>Process: Response</u> My CRT is familiar with the symptoms and the 10 stages of acute traumatic stress.	Religiously Affiliated Non-Religiously Affiliated	10 28	2.00 2.68	.817 .863	-2.222	16.726	.040
During initial response, my student affairs division addresses the entire campus populace needs.	Religiously Affiliated Non-Religiously Affiliated	11 36	3.27 2.69	.647 .822	2.427	20.854	.024

Research Question 6

Does the size of the institution based on student enrollment influence crisis response on campus?

Enrollment size of an institution has both positive and negative influences on crisis response for small institutions to larger institutions, including resource availability and communication issues, among others. Figure 4.08 summarizes these influences on crisis response protocols at smaller and larger institutions.

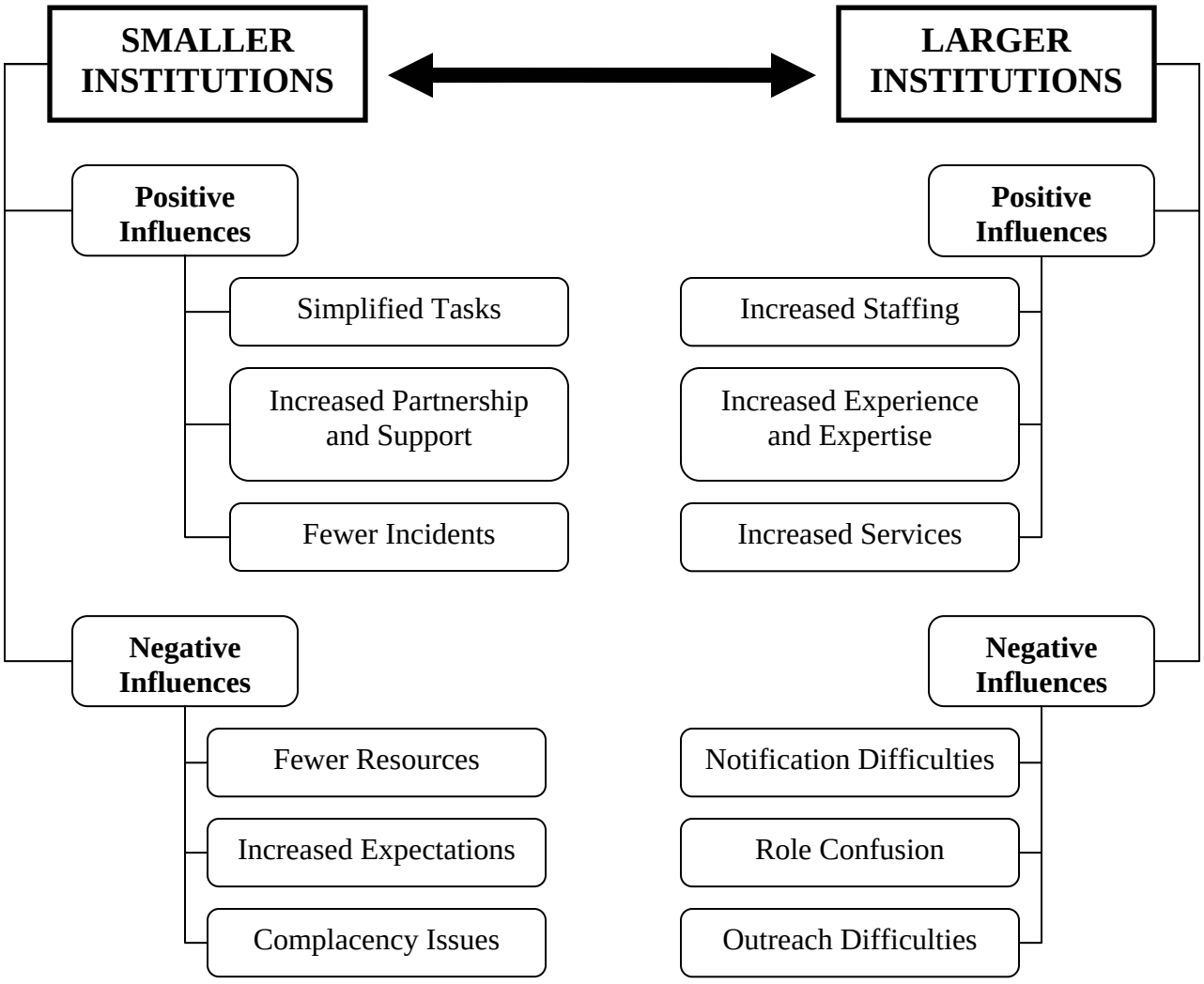


Figure 4.08. Consistent categorical influences of student enrollment on crisis response.

Participants indicated a series both positive themes associated with crisis response protocols based on institutional size, according to student enrollment classification. Smaller institutions recognized simplified tasks, increased partnership and support, and fewer incidents, while larger institutions recognized an increase in staffing, experience and expertise, and services. Similarly, participants indicated a series of negative themes associated with crisis response protocols based on institutional size, according to student enrollment classification.

Smaller institutions suggested fewer resources, increased expectations, and complacency, while larger institutions cited difficulties in notification, confusion of roles, and outreach difficulties.

Positive Influences of Smaller Institutions

Participant 43 indicated that tasks related to crisis response and recovery are simplified for smaller institutions:

> Well we're much smaller and that's the first defining measurement, the parameters for serving 1200 students can be very different and distinct from those serving 30,000. While we might indicate that obviously to respond to a suicidally-ideated student is going to require fewer personnel than a campus wide emergency, we still have one team of administrators who are involved in campus wide emergency response and we would just approach addressing a suicide attempt differently as an emergency, you'd call upon different individuals but we don't have a greatly different … … response because of the minute size of our campus. And while we will employ different people for different purposes on a campus with finite parameters, it does simplify my tasks. We see students' emotional issues coming because they're fewer students. I mean like, we have 1,200 of them not 25,000 like at Virginia Tech. It's harder for students to slip through the cracks here. Faculty and staff see it coming and we notify each other. We think that's going to be a little easier, because its uh just easier to canvas the territory.

Participant 50 also noted increased partnerships and support as a positive influence by stating, "We have the enormous advantage of being a small campus and having a residential college system, having an ethos of students telling staff members when their concerned about somebody. Its like all hands on deck when there's a crisis." Similarly another smaller institution noted, "Our first responders are very well aware of who to contact and when to contact people

outside their own division. In a smaller school, you try to intermesh with everybody, public safety, health services, counseling, faculty." Finally, larger institutions cited less frequent incidents based on the smaller size of the institution, as Participant 42 claimed:

> And size definitely, the larger the population, then I believe the greater the possibility for crisis. And you've got more people who could be dealing with mental health problems or issues versus you know a smaller campus of 5,000, you know, we've got 38,000 students, 7,000 employees, and so you know we've got close 50,000 people here on a weekly basis. It's a small city and naturally when you look at cities, the larger the cities are, the more crisis, the more crime, and smaller the cities the stats go down.

Being a smaller institution also had drawbacks as one participant cited fewer resources, "In the small institutions, the really small ones it was two or three people that ran the show because that's all the resources they had. So, I think all of those things have a dramatic impact on crisis response."

Smaller institutions also seemed to have increased societal expectations in terms of crisis response. One participant noted, "More is expected of us, despite the fact that we probably have fewer resources. But more is expected of us because, they just assume that uh a small school that you'll take the place of the parents rather than if you were at a large research one institution."

Feelings of complacency also proved to be an issue for smaller institutions who fear inefficient preparedness based on the fact that smaller institutions do not experience frequent crises. Participant 12 supported this notion in the following statement, "I think that at a school like [name withheld] you do … you know get complacent, and uh you think oh well it won't happen here, um we're just a little school in [name withheld]."

Larger institutions also presented positive themes associated with crisis response protocols based on the institutional size, according to student enrollment classification. One participant responded to an increase in staffing, "I was at a small private and I went to a large public. Um … … interesting, that's interesting. Some of it (influence) may be the depth of staffing."

Similarly, another larger participant highlighted a positive influence in increased experience and expertise, in the following statement, "Larger institutions probably have more resources and more personnel and they have a greater breadth of experience. And so they can probably direct more energies toward emergency preparedness and response." Finally, increased services was another positive theme associated with larger institutions, as Participant 34 stated, "Well I think certainly size of the institution. If we were 1,000 students, instead of 4,500. I think that makes a difference in terms of types, types of response, the number of players involved in the response team."

Negative influences on crisis response strategy are also evident in the interview data. For example, Participant 13 warned of difficulties in campus notification during crises in the following response:

> You know for example, the question that that has arisen in the wake of the Virginia Tech thing about how do you communicate to your entire campus population is a difficult one. It is very difficult for us when we're talking about a grand total of 40,000 people, when you include the student population and the population of the employees as well. Talking about trying to communicate to 40,000 people and that across a sprawling campus that's got close to 400 buildings and that is sort of crisscrossed by public thorough fares. You know, so this whole question of can you, can you shut down a campus. Can you restrict

> uh egress and regress from a campus and how quickly can you communicate information to students, continues to be a question that we struggle with and that we are continuing to work on.

Larger institutions report role confusion during times of crisis. Participant 45 replied, "The idea of size, clearly has an effect on institutions. Because the larger the organization, the institution is so complex that getting the right hand to know what the left hand is doing is sometimes very difficult and challenging." A smaller participant responded similarly in the following reply:

> I think that at the larger schools where a division is a couple of hundred people and its tough to know, make sure that everybody knows what's going on and what they're supposed to do. But here with only having about 45 staff members and uh 15 of those actually off campus, located off campus, so we're really dealing with about 30 people. That are on campus that are gonna to be responding to a crisis.

Finally, larger institutions who represent more constituents on a campus and even beyond reported difficulties in outreach similar to Participant 46 who stated, "We respond to staff and faculty but in coordination with the employee assistance program or HR unit. Our resources are stretched too thin to tend to 50,000 students, much less add another fifteen, eighteen thousand staff and faculty."

In regards to institutional enrollment influencing crisis management on campus, a one-way ANOVA (post-hoc; Tukey) was utilized in analyzing each of survey items and their respective enrollment categories (very small/small, medium, large, very large). Only the statistically significant values for are listed in the tables below. The table in each dichotomy references the survey items of significance with an alpha level of .05. Relevant corresponding

means of those groups associated with the Tukey analyses are also listed. With regard to institutional enrollment, survey items of statistical significance are listed in Table 4.11. 16 survey items yielded significant results with the most highest p-value being Item #040: *My student affairs first responders are trained to assist secondary victims (friends, observers, etc.),* $F(3, 44) = 5.092$, $p = .004$. Adequate preparation, training, and education for the crisis response team were again areas of note. 14 of the 16 survey items in this analysis were associated with the structure, or framework of the crisis response plan.

Table 4.11

ANOVA Results for Institutional Student Enrollment: Very Small, Small/Medium/Large/Very Large (VS,S/M/L/VL)

Survey Item	F	df	P	Type (n)	M	Type (n)	M	Tukey
Structure: Education, Preparation, and Training								
My student affairs division prepares/trains the crisis response team for crisis.	3.468	44	.025	VL (18)	3.28	M (5)	2.20	4>2
My student affairs division prepares/trains the CRT how to assess and execute the plan pre-crisis.	3.608	44	.021	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
My student affairs division prepares/trains the CRT how to assess and execute the plan during crisis.	3.871	44	.016	VL (18)	3.39	VS/S (8)	2.25	4>1
My student affairs division prepares/trains the CRT how to assess and execute the plan post-crisis.	2.983	44	.042	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
My student affairs division prepares/trains CRT members how to respond to trauma and acute stress.	2.981	44	.042	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

My institution has a duty to address the needs of faculty/staff in times of crisis.	n/a	n/a	n/a	VS/S (9)	3.78	M (7)	2.86	1>2
My institution has a duty to address the needs of the neighboring community.	n/a	n/a	n/a	VS/S (9)	3.22	M (7)	2.14	1>2
My student affairs division educates its first responders to assist persons in emotional crisis.	4.265	46	.010	VS/S (9) VL (19)	3.44 3.68	M (6) M (6)	2.67 2.67	1>2 4>2
My student affairs division educates its first responders to assist victims of natural crisis.	4.758	44	.006	VL (19)	3.58	M (5)	2.40	4>2
My student affairs division educates its first responders to assist victims of facility crisis.	3.441	44	.025	VL (19)	3.42	M (5)	2.20	4>2
My student affairs first responders are trained to assist victims of sexual assault.	4.198	46	.011	VL (18) L (14)	3.78 3.57	M (7) M (7)	2.86 2.86	4>2 3>2
My student affairs first responders are trained to assist secondary victims (friends, observers, etc.).	5.092	44	.004	VL (17)	3.71	M (7)	2.71	4>2
My student affairs first responders are trained to assist victims of drug and/or alcohol overdose.	3.195	46	.033	VL (18)	3.72	M (7)	2.86	4>2
<u>Process: Response</u> I am familiar with the symptoms and the 10 stages of acute traumatic stress.	3.126	42	.037	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

My CRT is familiar with the symptoms and the 10 stages of acute traumatic stress.	3.592	37	.023	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Structure: Memorials								
In terms of memorials, my institution lowers university flags to half-mast.	2.913	37	.048	VS/S (8)	4.00	L (10)	2.90	1>3

Research Question 7

Does the geographic location of the institution influence crisis response on campus?

The geographic location of an institution influences crisis response on campus both in terms of being located in areas with high potential for natural disasters and in terms of proximity to metropolitan areas. For example, institutions in coastal areas and major metropolitan areas must concern themselves with climate related concerns or natural crises, such as hurricanes, and threats of terrorism respectively. Figure 4.09 summarizes the contributing factors of geographic location influence on crisis response. Figure 4.10 lists consistent themes of rural, suburban, and urban institutions in relations to geographic location influence on crisis response.

Being geographically located in areas that have a high potential for natural crisis, or climate related crises, and geographic proximity to major metropolitan areas both influence crisis response strategies in a variety of ways. In terms of how potential for natural crises influences crisis response on campus, one participant responded:

> But I would certainly think that would have to do with the focus of the planning for coastal regions or regions in a flood plain or different things like that. Obviously schools up north pay much more attention to snow, ice sorts of things, tornados in the Midwest, or earthquakes on the west coast. So I think that geography has a lot to do with that.

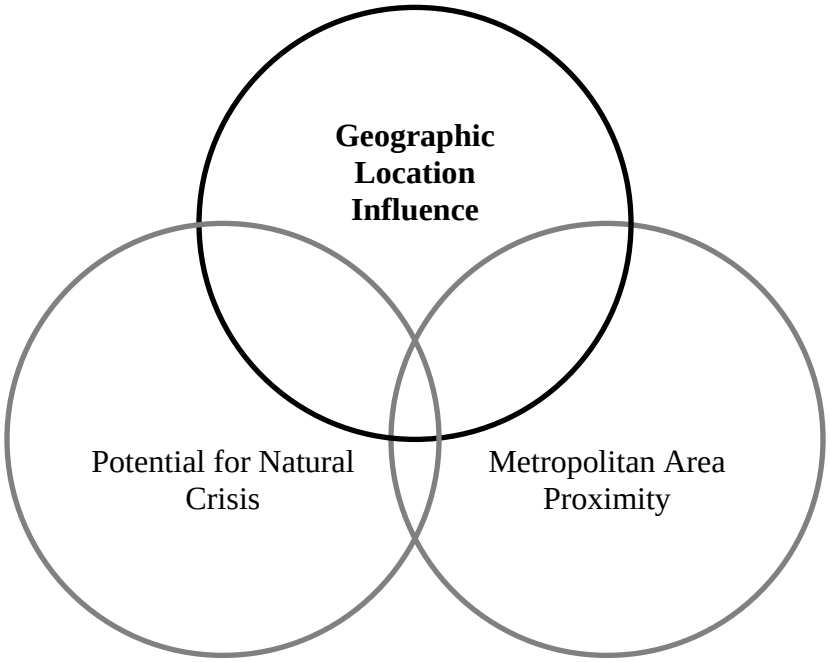


Figure 4.09. Influences of geographic location on crisis response.

Rural Suburban **Urban**

Containment Ability	**Resources and Partnerships**
Community Expectations	**Range and Frequency of Crises**
Total Campus Involvement	**Media Engagement Immediacy**
	Hyperawareness

* Movement toward ends of continuum increases specific themes.

Figure 4.10. Consistent categorical themes of rural, suburban, and urban institutions.

Similarly, Participant 36 added:

> I think that it makes it much better because we know uh living in [name withheld] on the water, we're like two miles from the beach. We know we have to have a great crisis response team for inclement weather. We do have a very good plan and we're ready but we're practicing because in two weeks we'll be in hurricane season. We've had a lot of forest fires, we had to close down one of our campuses on Monday because uh one of the fires had got close to the campus.

Several consistent themes arose in reference to rurally-located institutions. For example, one urban institution explained that containment is an issue with urban campuses with the following statement:

> We also know that we're an open campus, we're not the secluded campus, we don't have formal gates that one walks through or has to swipe a card to get through. This is an open campus, any individual can drive through this campus, walk through this campus, you know and so its a very different environment. So it's an open environment. Um you know it is a um city that has its own issues in terms of crime and stuff so you know it could be crime from the outside could come in and we have to be aware of that.

One suburban participant illustrated their advantages with the following response:

> We're not in an urban, but we're sort adjacent to uh one of our urban centers. We're sort of a sleepy college town but we're a sleepy college town that is connected to an urban area so we have elements of both that. We have an occasional weather incident, so we sort of have to have a fairly broad sort of set of policies that covers things that aren't gonna happen that often but we want to be prepared for them when they do. You know if you're sort of sitting in the middle of Chicago, or the Middle of New York City, or the

> middle of LA, you're gonna have different issues. You're going to have a lot more concerns about crime, you're gonna have a lot more concerns about sort of how people get on and off campus. You're much less likely to have this sort sprawling open sort of geography that we have. So I think all of those have to have an effect on your crisis thinking and your crisis planning.

The expectation to respond to crises that reach beyond the borders of the campus is a consistent theme for rurally located institutions. One participant supported this notion by responding, "We would be looked to provide some of the site and resources for the community in that case. So being very intimate with our local communities, we're looked to as being a resource available in times of crisis." Similarly, Participant 47 stated:

> I think we would be looked to as having the infrastructure, let's say something happened in, you know one of our northern counties next to [name withheld] and very remote and rural and isolated, I think we would be looked to help those counties should they have some sort of um some sort of emergency, in terms of response. So I think we're very much a public um we have a public responsibility.

Rurally-located institutions also exhibited a higher degree of involvement in crisis response efforts by all critical practitioners. Participant 12 responded to this total campus involvement by stating, "Pretty much everybody gets involved. We're fortunate for our size, we have two counselors who are full time and are available for follow up, we work very closely with public relations, with campus security."

Institutions located in urban areas reported consistent themes as well, including utilizing more resources and available partnerships, more crises, the immediacy of media engagement,

and a hyperawareness of crisis potential. In reference to more resources and available partnerships, Participant 42 expressed:

> Where we are, where we are located, we have access to all the major arteries in the city, police, the highway patrol is actually a state institution, the [name withheld] has sub jurisdiction in our area. We have a great relationship, working relationship with the [name withheld] so law enforcement and sheriff's department, with [name withheld], sheriff's department and highway patrol with our own system uh I would say that we have, that would be a primary advantage. If we were in a rural area we would probably be self contained less like we are now.

Likewise, Participant 32 suggested:

> So I would say getting your services would be a little more difficult you think because your, you know I think that position of a university wherever you are at in a city or region does a play a major part in your crisis response. I think that if you are of course in an urban metropolitan city where you have access to city police, more officers, police officers that are right there. We have a great relationship with [name withheld]. Um and whenever we need help, we tap into [name withheld] and they come. So yeah I think that it does make a huge difference if you are in a rural area pretty desolate, you know, or if you are like a campus in a desert or pretty far away, that is going to impact I think some of your quick response. So yeah I think that is critical.

Participant 34 indicated that range and frequency of crises is greater with urban institutions in the following manner:

> Also being located in a place like [name withheld] is ranked in I think in the top ten in crime in the country, maybe the top five. Um well I think urban to me has uh potential

> of, and again I don't know the data here. But just again because of location being exposed to the potential for more crime and because of the easy access to reach campus versus going out in a rural area and uh like you know Athens, Georgia, you know is not the same as being in downtown Atlanta. Yeah, you know that's way we are here you know is that we're you know right here in the heart of [name withheld] and so exposure for an urban institution I think creates the possibility of greater crises.

The immediacy of media engagement escalates the closer an institution is to an urban area. Institution 29 remarked, "We're in the media center of the universe. So managing the media has always been a part of what we've had to do. Being in the [name withheld] metropolitan area affects us tremendously, in terms of risk and media." Responding to the same theme, Participant 40 suggested the following:

> Yeah in my experience, you know we'd rather be in a rural location because you have a few hours before a TV camera show up. Um, and that works in our favor because we do have that moment to breath and figure out what we want to do and how we want to portray things. Uh it seems like every university that's in a state capital, is literary a block away from the building and uh I always pity the poor people in that situation. Uh so the rural location does allow us a little margin of preparation time that might not be the case in a major metropolitan area.

Urban centered institutions also exhibit hyperawareness of potential crises, meaning that due to institutional location they are constantly aware of various potential risks. Participant 31 replied, "We're always thinking about big crises, we're an urban environment. So we're always thinking about things that will impact the big city. We have dealt with riots. We have dealt with fires through [name withheld]." Similarly, another urban institution noted, "Being in the state

capital, we take this pretty darn serious. When we have a death due to hazing, I get calls from state legislators about the death and seriousness of the issue." Finally, an urban institution responded, "We know bioterrorism and we're aware of the railway systems being nearby us and [name withheld] being nearby we look at the potential for crisis in the form of terrorism maybe a little bit more than some institutions do."

In regards to institutional location or proximity to major cities influencing crisis management on campus, a one-way ANOVA (post-hoc, Tukey) was utilized in analyzing each of survey item and their respective proximities (rural, suburban, urban). Only the statistically significant values for are listed in the tables below. The table in each dichotomy references the survey items of significance with an alpha level of .05. Relevant corresponding means of those groups associated with the Tukey analyses are also listed. With regard to location or institutional proximity to major cities, survey items of statistical significance are reported in Table 4.12. Survey items with the highest values of statistical significance deal primarily with the structure, or the framework of a crisis response plan, with the item yielding the most significance, Item #036: *My student affairs division educates its first responders to assist victims of facility crisis*, $F(2, 44) = 4.237$, $p = .021$, dealing with adequate education, preparation, and training.

Table 4.12

ANOVA Results for Participant Geographic Location: Rural, Suburban, Urban

Survey Item	F	df	p	Type (n)	M	Type (n)	M	Tukey
Structure: Organization								
My CRT includes a professional knowledgeable in the area of media relations and communication.	3.898	44	.028	Urban (24)	3.63	Rural (6)	2.83	3>1

My CRT includes a professional knowledgeable in the area of campus facilities management.	n/a	n/a	n/a	Urban (25)	3.60	Rural (6)	2.83	3>1
My institution has a readily accessible, centrally-located emergency command center, complete with full communication and technological capabilities, from which to base response efforts.	3.943	49	.026	Urban (27)	3.41	Rural (6)	2.50	3>1
Structure: Education, Preparation, and Training								
My student affairs division educates its first responders to assist victims of facility crisis.	4.237	44	.021	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Process: Response								
My student affairs division follows another type of approach to crisis management.	n/a	n/a	n/a	Rural (5)	3.20	Urban (21)	2.14	1>3

Summary of the Chapter

Quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews were utilized as data collection methods. The quantitative responses from 51 completed surveys were analyzed by the use of t-tests of independent means and one-way ANOVAs depending on the dichotomy of institutional type. Significant results were found and described briefly in this chapter. A discussion of these results can be found in Chapter 5. Additionally, the qualitative responses from three questions on the survey and the responses from 51 qualitative interviews were also analyzed for consistent and contrasting themes as they related to the research questions. These findings can also be found in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS AND STUDY IMPLICATIONS

Overview of Chapter

This chapter includes a summary of this dissertation study as well as a summary and discussion of consistent themes extracted for the qualitative data and significant findings resulting from the survey data. The chapter also addresses the implications that crisis response has on our campus environments from the perspective of student affairs professionals. This information will prove beneficial to all student affairs professionals and graduate students who aspire to management positions. These implications can prove beneficial to other institutional administrators and practitioners, faculty members, and external agencies such as local and state law enforcement, as well as hospitals and emergency management teams. These implications will prove useful in assisting administrators as they strive for the development of successful crisis response protocols, training, assessment, and response. Student affairs administrators will gain a better understanding of the how crises affect the university community, in particular, students and their academic success. They will also gain an understanding of roles and responsibilities of university administrators as well as how divisions of student affairs respond to crises and how their response plans and protocols fits into the overall institutional response plans. Additionally, further limitations of the study and confounding variables are discussed, as well as areas of future research.

Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study was to analyze the crisis response policies, strategies, and programs of different types of institutions (i.e. public/private, two-year/four-year, HBCU/PWI, commuter/residential; liberal arts/non-liberal arts, land grant/non-land grant, religiously affiliated/non-religiously affiliated, rural/suburban/urban, very small and small/medium/large/very large) as well as to explore which elements were and were not being addressed across these different types of institutions. An additional purpose of the research was to provide more data from which scholars and administrators could study and revise their institutional and division crisis response plans. This study was also designed to contribute additional perspectives and themes from institutions across the country and to enhance the literature and knowledge base of an area of increasing importance yet often overlooked function within the profession. Through a quantitative survey, qualitative interviews, and archival data, the researcher examined the components of various institutional crisis response plans across different types of institutions and evaluated their effectiveness in times of crisis. Differences in the crisis response protocols at different types of institutions were analyzed as were the institutional responses to different types of crisis.

Throughout the research, several questions were addressed across the sample of participating institutions including: what constitutes a crisis from the perspective of the university and from the division of student affairs and how are they addressed; how are response strategies evaluated; are the needs of the entire campus population being met, including student affairs practitioners; how are these needs being addressed; how do institutions prepare themselves for crisis response; and how do divisions of student affairs mobilize themselves in the development and implementation of crisis response protocol.

The researcher developed the *Crisis Response Survey* that was utilized in this study. The paper-based instrument was designed to provide answers to whether or not aspects of institutional type, student enrollment size, and geographic location influence crisis response protocols on campus. Institutional type categories were as follows: public/private; two-year/four-year; HBCU/PWI; commuter/residential; liberal arts/non-liberal arts; land grant/non-land grant; and religiously affiliated/non-religiously affiliated. For the student enrollment analyses, institutions were classified as very small/small, medium, large, or very large. For the geographic location analyses, institutions were classified as rural, suburban, or urban. The survey examined areas of critical importance to a crisis response plan that were identified in the review of literature found in Chapter 2 of this dissertation. Specifically a wide variety of questions were developed that addressed the definition and incidences of crises as well as the various components that comprise the structure and process of crisis response. Data collection began on March 15, 2007 and ended with 51 interviews were completed on June 10, 2007. The complete 114-item survey can found in Appendix D of this dissertation.

The researcher also developed a qualitative interview guide that consisted of 26 questions to be utilized via telephone interviews. These interview questions were designed to provide insight into the institutional/divisional definition of crises on campus; the membership of the crisis response team and its preparation for crises; whose needs are being met in times of crises, what are those needs, and how are those needs being addressed; how crisis response plans are evaluated and improved; and how components of institutional type, student enrollment size, and geographic location influences crisis response on campus. The interview questions were examined the definition and incidences of crisis, as well as the various components of structure and process of crisis response discussed in Chapter 2. Fifty-one interviews were conducted

between May 10, 2007 and June 15, 2007. The complete interview guide can be found in Appendix E of this dissertation.

Quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques were utilized to examine the data. Values for n, mean, and standard deviation are presented. Additionally, the analyses of institutional type influence required the use of t-tests of independent means, providing respective t-scores and p values. The analyses of institutional location and student enrollment size required a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) due to having multiple comparison groups and the associated calculations and findings are presented. An additional Tukey post-hoc test was utilized on significant findings in order to provide more insight into the differences between the groups. These findings are presented in Chapter 4 of this dissertation. All qualitative interviews were recorded and transcribed. These transcriptions allowed for theme extraction and were coded for consistent findings. Consistent categorical themes and findings for each research question were illustrated along with the quantitative data in Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

Summary and Discussion of Findings

RQ 1:

What constitutes a crisis from the perspective of the institution and from the division of student affairs, according to institutional policy?

It is important when analyzing what constitutes a crisis from the perspective of the university and from the divisions of student affairs to recognize that even small incidents that would seemingly be resolved easily can quickly escalate into higher level crises based upon the degree, nature, visibility, and number of people affected, and would necessitate many resources. A student may exhibit self-destructive behaviors which are certainly correctable through educational programs and counseling. However, when that same student begins to exhibit

threatening and aberrant behavior towards other population groups on campus, then there is a larger issue at hand. Another example would be the case of a student death. An accidental student death that occurs far from the campus when school is not in session will adversely affect other students in the social network. However, this response to a death would be much more complex if it were a murder that took place on campus while school was in session and the perpetrator was loose on campus. The degree and nature of an incident influences other types of "crises" as well including, suicides, identify theft, eating disorders, student arrests, car accidents, and even plane crashes, among others. The data from the study suggest categorical levels of crises that occur across a continuum. These categorical levels explain the defining measures of minor crises at the division level and major crises at the institutional level and are closely correlated with previous research (Rollo & Zdziarski, 2007).

The lowest categorical level on the incident continuum is the student emergency. In most cases, student present with a need or they are identified by behaviors or actions. These emergencies never affect property of an institution, are usually defined by the person that is affected, and are normally handled at the department level. Because they generally only affect one person, student emergencies rarely reach a university level response unless there are escalations. Departments take an individualized, localized approach to response. Study participants respond to student emergencies through short and long term advisement and educational programs. Student emergencies include hospitalizations, drug and alcohol addictions, illnesses, minor fights, roommate disputes, financial issues, risky and self-destructive behaviors, accidents, demonstrations and protests, theft, and minor emotional crises.

The next categorical level on the continuum can be referred to as student crises and requires more attention. Like student emergencies, they are still only affecting one or a few

individuals and require individualized, localized responses. These crises are again defined by the person affected and also now by the division of student affairs. Student crises rarely require an institutional response unless it escalates into a larger issue. However, there are cases in which smaller institutions provide an institutionalized approach in the response efforts. Incidents at this level take a more concerted effort to resolve, but can be resolved without the resource network of the institution as a whole. Incidents at this level occur when there is a threat of harm or actual harm to a student that may negatively impact the safety and security of the individual and/or undermine academic progress at the institution. Student crises include date rapes and other sexual assaults, drug and alcohol overdoses, major absences from school, alcohol-related incidents, threats of violence and intimidation, major mental health and psychological issues, deaths of family members, physical assaults, aberrant behavior, and suicides/suicidal ideation/suicide attempts.

The third categorical level on the continuum can be referred to as campus crises. The role of student affairs in these instances begins to shift as they are no longer the primary responders, but are joined in response efforts by other university community members. Campus crises affect a broader range of individuals and have a more widespread impact. A systemic response is coordinated and reaches all areas of the institution. Once incidents reach this level, the institution itself is defining the crisis. While threats to safety and security of students are still a concern, other areas of concern begin to appear such as threats to safety and security of property, other campus populations, and the reputation of the institution. Common examples of camps crises are evacuations, riots, gas line breaks, hostage situations, chemical spills, infectious disease outbreaks, food poisoning, technology breakdown and theft, severe weather, fires, crime, active shooters on campus, power outages and blackouts, series of assaults, missing students,

international incidents, mass alcohol poisonings, terrorism, serial killers or rapists on campus or in proximity of campus, bomb threats, pandemics, anthrax and other biochemical scares, etc. Responses to campus crises are coordinated by the institutional crisis response team, sometimes in conjunction with external agencies. In some cases, institutions will close as the result of a campus crisis.

The final categorical level on the continuum is campus disasters. Divisions of student affairs also play a significant role in response to campus disasters, but they do so in conjunction with other institutional professionals as well as external agencies. These disasters require a systemic response, affect a broad range of individuals, and also have a widespread and often lasting impact on the institution. These incidents are defined by the institution and external agencies and affect individuals, property, and the public image of the institution. Campus disasters are subject to severely limit or completely shut down the daily functioning of the institution for long periods bringing about a business continuity concern that is not present in the first two levels and only occasionally in the third level. Campus disasters normally occur after the direct hit of a tornado, hurricane, flood, or earthquake. Fires and detonated bombs can also be cause for institutional closure.

Interestingly, some smaller institutions rarely differentiate between a student crisis and a campus crisis. In fact, in some cases, the division plan and the institution plan are one in the same or only one plan is recognized and student affairs plays a role in that plan. For example, one participant from a smaller institution considered suicides to be a campus crisis due to the smaller, inclusive nature of the campus and the social networks that are affected. Smaller institutions occasionally have more ambiguous definitions of crisis and are more inclined to report that a crisis is “a situation in which something is at risk.” By and large, however, most

participants report that there is a student affairs crisis response plan that is designed to handle student emergencies and student crises, but they must also recognize their role in the larger institutional plan. The goal is a seamless response plan in which, according to one study participant, "the division plan fits into the larger institutional plan." From a consulting perspective, in order to respond effectively, practitioners and administrators must closely analyze how their divisions of student affairs and the larger institutions observe crises and its many effects on the various stakeholder populations, including primary and secondary victims. This recognition is critical with assessing and developing successful crisis response protocols. Finally, divisions of student affairs must understand how their individual response plans fit into the larger institutional plan. Failing to do so will result in role confusion and ineffective communication and collaborative efforts.

RQ 2:

Who is involved in the development and process of crisis response protocol and how do institutions prepare themselves for crisis response?

Crisis response protocols were found to have been developed by dedicated committees known as crisis response teams. The study participants varied in actual committee membership but all had certain similar themes including three primary categories of membership and some participants had two additional categories of membership. These results are consistent with similar research (Lerner, Volpe, & Lindell, 2004). The executive level membership included professionals such as the president, the vice-presidents of student affairs, administration and finance, and academic affairs. The dean of students, the police chief, and the university attorney were also included at this level. The division level membership included administrators such as the associate/assistant vice presidents of student affairs, and associate/assistant deans of students.

The department level membership that developed crisis response protocols were various directors and associate/assistant directors of the following offices: food services, counseling and psychological services, health services, public affairs, housing and residence life, parent and family affairs, student life, purchasing, Greek life, disabled student services, environmental health and safety, human resources, physical plant, judicial services, student advocacy, information technology, multicultural affairs, international student affairs, admissions, and campus outreach. Representation from the academic community included various faculty members, academic deans, and academic advisors. Community level membership included external partners and representatives from the local police and sheriff's departments, local fire departments, emergency management groups, and social workers.

Regardless of type or size of institution, institutions have some degree of training for crises on campus, though many participants overwhelmingly suggested that it needs to be improved in many areas. Training occurs through simulated exercises like case studies, campus and statewide drills, tabletop exercises with and without external partnerships. This simulated exercises range in topic and frequency depending on the institution and its location. Institutions located in coastal areas are more likely to conduct hurricane drills and exercises, whereas institutions in earthquake prone areas are going to emphasize earthquake preparation in their simulations. As reported in a large majority of participants, training is largely decentralized and varies from department to department. However, crisis response team training is more advanced and more routine with the same types of training methods mentioned previously.

Institutions, divisions of student affairs, and the student populations are better prepared for crises through educational programs. These educational training opportunities present themselves in campus education and prevention programs on safety and security. Student affairs

practitioners offer their educational programs throughout the year and not just for students. Faculty members are trained by student affairs professionals in recognizing aberrant behavior in students and the various protocols that are associated with this behavior. Participants noted a sharp increase in programs and developing programs to help faculty members and other members of the academic arena in this regard. This increase was due to rising numbers of incidents in classrooms and on campuses across the country. The increase was also due to the mass casualties that occurred at Virginia Tech. Student affairs administrators and other practitioners also have the ability to attend and lead professional development opportunities on campus with staff meetings, seminars, and workshops, designed to better prepare the campus for crisis. These education and professional development opportunities are sometimes help in conjunction with local, state and federal health officials.

Lastly, professional certification in crisis response is also an option for certain practitioners on campus. External agencies offer continuing education workshops and certifications that address managing university crises. The United States Department of Homeland Security certifies higher education administrators through NIMS (National Incident Management System) training. The Federal Emergency Management Association and the American Red Cross have similar programs in crisis and disaster management.

Administrators better prepare themselves for crises through effective collaboration and communication structures. Effective response to crises requires a number of individuals. Good collaborative structures and effective communication between crisis response team members is one way that institutions prepare themselves for crises. Continuous updates of critical information regarding the crisis response plan and also mitigation debriefing among crisis response team members is essential and is practiced. However, collaborative relationships and

good communication must exist between many constituents, not just the crisis response team, including other institutional departments and offices, external agencies, and also other institutions. Participants prepared themselves for crises by collaborating and communicating with local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies, emergency management groups, and neighborhood coalitions. Many participants also developed partnerships with neighboring institutions in preparing and training for crises, while others utilized collegial relationships with colleagues across the country for training practices.

Another way that campuses prepare themselves for crises is by taking advantage of the numerous technological, human, and physical/logistical resources that are available to them. In responding to constituents needs for prompt notification of campus crises, institutions are responding by adapting technological resources and sophisticated notification systems that consist of computer pop-up alerts, text messaging and email notification, dedicated web pages for updated information regarding campus events and emergency information, dedicated national terrorism warning links on institutional web pages, emergency hotlines, reverse 911 systems, parent websites, warning sirens, and two and three way radios. Institutions also institute public address systems, update fire alarm and sprinkler systems, increase security and video monitors and call boxes, and create out of state backup computer systems for information storage that is vital to institutional continuity. As institutions prepare for crises, they test these innovative resources for proper response and activity.

Additional human resources are also utilized as a way of preparing for crises. Police and other departments and organizations increase patrols and escorts to increase safety and security. Additional staff members are hired and offices are created with the sole purpose of increasing institutional and divisional preparation for crises and development of crisis response protocol.

Building marshals are identified and trained in efforts to increase notification efforts and building evacuation efficiency. Graduate students and interns in counseling are trained to respond to crises and are integrated into the response plans. Many participants have developed on-call systems that provide immediate responses to crises and facilitate plan activation. Staff members provide awareness programs that are developed and prepared to educate the community to the symptoms and treatments of stress caused by crises.

Lastly, institutions utilize physical and logistical resources in preparing for crises by developing shelters for their constituents in the event an evacuation is needed. Evacuation routes and transportation plans for students and other constituents are planned ahead of time. Physical emergency operations centers are created as headquarters from which to respond to crises on campus. Some participants created backup command centers in case the primary location was unreachable or destroyed. Many institutions can claim advanced medical facilities as a means of preparing for the fallout of a campus crisis or disaster. Access card systems are used to enhance safety and security in residential areas of campus while increased lighting and call boxes are strategically located in areas of campus that could be seen as unsafe. Additional supplies and emergency backpacks are funded and supplied to key players in institutional response from crisis response team members to counselors to residence hall assistants. Many student affairs administrators also facilitate alternative housing and class arrangements for students affected by crisis.

The last category in which institutional administrators prepare the campus for crises is through early preparation and organization. Consistent themes found within this category include observation efforts, predetermined roles and responsibilities, pre-established relationships and partnerships, and clear communication channels. Crisis response teams and

other dedicated committees engage in observational processes that include observing and identifying at risk students and students exhibiting aberrant and otherwise destructive behaviors. These committees are also actively engaged in mitigation exercises and environmental scans in efforts to prevent crime and potential crises from occurring. Effective early preparation for crisis is completed by delegating and understanding specific roles and responsibilities by all key players in the response plan. Backup personnel are identified and everyone knows their role in crisis response from the perspective of student affairs and within the larger institutional plan if one exists. Relationships and collaborative partnerships with internal and external units are developed and early and contacts are made in critical departments on campus and units off campus. Referral agencies are identified early in response protocol preparation and relationships between the institution and these agencies are maintained. Clear communication channels are also developed early in efforts to prepare for crises. Phone trees and call lists are developed, updated, and distributed across campus and to external agencies like local and state law enforcement.

An outside consultant should recognize that crisis response team members constantly prepare their campuses for a variety of crises. In addition to the crisis response team, various departments receive varying levels of training and certification depending on the type of departments and the available resources. The training addresses preparation, the plan itself, notification, immediate response and follow-up protocols to a variety of crises. An overwhelming number of the 51 participants indicated that their training programs associated with crisis response needed to be improved on many levels. The tragic incidents at Virginia Tech should provide some degree of evidence that a crisis of any type can occur at any time and campuses must be as prepared as possible for the “unimaginable”. Institutions and divisions of

student affairs must place strong emphasis on who is involved in the development process so that the leadership can address all aspects of safety and security as well as response and recovery. Without considerable attention in this area, communication and collaboration, two components of successful crisis response, will be hindered. Subsequent efficient preparation for crises, not to mention the future safety and security of the campus, will also jeopardized. For success in the area of protocol development and crisis preparation, institutions must identify the key decision-makers that represent the institution and protect its integrity and its primary stakeholders. These individuals must communicate and collaborate efficiently in efforts to develop security and response protocols for a variety of crises. Preparation must incorporate frequent training exercises, rewards and recognition for work, opportunities for continuing education and enhanced communication and collaboration, additional innovative technological advances related to safety and security, and early preparation and organization.

RQ 3:

Whose needs are being met in times of crisis and what are these needs? How are these needs being addressed?

Divisions of student affairs tend to focus their efforts on students and parents, while they tend to partner with other institutional offices when working with constituents other than those subgroups. The level of involvement by student affairs as well as the level of partnerships fluctuates depending on constituent groups involved. Divisions of student affairs also address the needs of other groups including faculty/staff, the surrounding community, alumni, and the media. Work with these groups is often volunteered and not conducted on extended basis by student affairs alone, unless under special circumstances.

All constituent groups have a need to be notified of campus crisis. This need for notification becomes much greater in the event of a higher level crisis, such as an active shooter. Continuous updates of the situation are often areas of concern for these groups. This notification is provided by student affairs in partnership with other offices across campus including public affairs, campus police, and the president's office. Together, they utilize various technological mediums, including television, telephones, websites, sirens, email, and text messaging. Students, parents, and faculty/staff in the midst of crisis also have a need to feel safe and secure. This reassurance is provided by the institution and the division by frequently communication response efforts and facilitating protocol comprehension. This can be performed at the beginning of the school year at new student orientation and continue through communication and training exercises throughout the year.

The physical needs of constituent groups consist of shelter, food, clothing, and medication during times of need. There are psychological and emotional needs that are addressed through immediate and sustained counseling efforts and referrals. Additionally, spiritual needs are addressed through the efforts of campus ministries and chaplains. Students often need time away from their studies to recover from crisis and student affairs can act as a liaison with academic affairs in these situations. Bereavement needs of parents and students are met with counseling services. Also, members of the student affairs staff conduct memorial services and attend funerals as well as provide a physical presence and assistance to parents who may be retrieving the personal belongings of their student. Student affairs also partners with other offices across campus to cease unnecessary communication flow with families, particularly with correspondence from student accounts, alumni affairs, etc.

Additionally, faculty/staff have a need to better understand the warning signs of at-risk

students and aberrant behavior. Divisions of student affairs meet that need by providing workshops, seminars, and other educational training. Front-line staff members who respond immediately to a crisis need rest and support, particularly when a higher level crisis sustained over a period of time occurs. Divisions of student affairs meet those needs by preparing a second team of staff or rotating staff members that provide relief. Divisions of student affairs also offer counseling to these staff and provide recognition for their efforts.

Effective preparation for crises requires that first responders and the crisis response team be comprised of individuals who are going to understand those that are affected. In most cases on college campuses, the group most often affected is going to be the student population and in these cases, the involvement of student affairs practitioners is of critical importance. Yet, for effective crisis response, the needs of other stakeholder groups must also be addressed by the institution. Protocol development within institutional crisis response must address the various needs of the parents, faculty/staff, local community, as well as alumni and media, among others, and have plans in plans to respond to them in times of crises. The critical issues that must be addressed by administrators are how institutions of specific types, sizes, and locations generate the funds and resources needed to effectively reach all relevant constituents and their needs.

RQ 4:

How are crisis response protocols evaluated and improved?

Both institutions as a whole and divisions of student affairs develop and implement simulated exercises of various shapes and sizes. These exercises can come in the form of campus-wide drills with individuals from all areas of campus or they can be tabletop exercises or case studies that are usually found within the division. The crisis management team is more apt to assess these protocols on a regular basis and do so by the simulations mentioned previously.

For assessment purposes, the length of an exercise, as well as the frequency of which they are used and the topic used all vary from institution to institution. Institutions in close proximity to major cities or seaboards may assess hurricane protocols or emergency evacuation protocols more regularly than those institutions that are rarely affected by these situations.

An overwhelming majority of participants indicated that most of the assessment that is completed at the institutional level and at the division level in regards to crisis response protocols is completed in a more informal manner, rather than a pencil and paper type document. This assessment comes in the form of a debriefing among a variety of administrators, whether the crisis response team or additional key administrators relevant to a particular response. These debriefings are performed quite regularly during a crisis, immediately after a crisis, and again once the crisis has been resolved. Debriefings are ways in which responders can discuss what happened, what steps were taken that were performed correctly and incorrectly in the response effort, and lastly what changes needed to be implemented to make the response more efficient in the future. Debriefings are also known as after-action reports.

Institutions also assess their response protocols through benchmarking procedures in which crisis response teams or other relevant committees compare the practices and protocols of similar institutions who have dealt with similar crises. For example, institutions similar to Virginia Tech may look at how that institution responded to the active shooter on campus and compare their policies and protocols with their own. These committee members may also engage in research for best practices in crisis response and begin to implement new protocols into their response plan as a result of this research. Institutions similar to those colleges and universities in coastal areas may review the evacuation procedures of those institutions in order to identify best practices for evacuation during severe weather. While each crisis at each

institution may be unique, there are common factors that enable institutions to use comparative means such as benchmarking and implement best practices found through research.

Many participants solicit the feedback of their constituents when assessing their response to crisis. This internal discourse and feedback may enable committee members to see divergent perspectives and perceptions of crisis response. Whether through surveys, questionnaires, or interviews, the feedback of students, parents, and faculty is utilized in the assessment of response protocols. Institutions also appoint a dedicated committee or focus group outside of the crisis response team to assess and provide feedback on crisis response protocols or hire a dedicated professional whose lone responsibility is to address the crisis response elements of the institution and to provide feedback on areas of efficiency and needed improvement.

External discourse is another consistent category when identifying ways in which crisis response strategies are evaluated and improved. Some institutions hire outside consultants to evaluate all aspects of the crisis response plan including the protocols, roles, communication structures, and the actual response in action. These individuals look at all forms of preparation of crises as well in efforts to streamline the process. Additionally, some institutions and divisions of student affairs will form partnerships with external groups such as local law enforcement, fire departments, and emergency management groups. These groups are asked to evaluate the crisis response plan and make recommendations for change as a means of additional feedback from other constituents. Lastly, task forces are developed with the specific purpose of reviewing all aspects of the crisis response plan and to make suggestions for the future. These task forces can be instituted by executive administrators or in the case of public institutions, the state governments may mandate the development of a task force who will be responsible for evaluation.

No crisis response plan is complete without an evaluation plan that clearly addresses strengths and weaknesses of preparation, response, and recovery. A surprising number of participants indicated that they needed much work in the area of evaluation of crisis response plans and protocols. The potential dire consequences of a poorly planned response or an out of date response are unacceptable in the eyes of the general public and the stakeholders. Just as evaluation and assessment has become more of a priority in all other aspects of higher education, it should also be a priority in crisis response and addressed continuously in a variety formal and informal ways, from immediate informal debriefings among staff members to more formal extensive reviews by qualified and non-biased external agencies. Now that the data from this study supports the need, evaluation and assessment professionals can better educate crisis response teams and other responders on effective evaluation techniques. Formal evaluation instruments can be developed based on institutional type, size, and location. Additionally, concerns over liability matters associated with external evaluations can now be addressed in a beneficial manner.

RQ 5:

Does type of institution influence crisis response on campus?

According to two study participants, institutional type "defines your philosophy on how you respond to crises," and "can certainly affect both ability and planning needs." Institutional type does influence crisis response on campus due to a number of factors. The primary influences associated with institutional type on crisis response are whether or not an institution is public or private and/or commuter or residential. The public/private dichotomy is driven by increased expectations and accountability. While public institutions are generally provided state funds and more resources than their private counterparts, they face increased expectations and

accountability from a large range of stakeholders, including state legislators who demand more disclosure. Existing partnerships with external agencies add to those expectations and accountability. With greater resources, there is a societal belief that public institutions should have a "watertight" plan and should be well-prepared for any type of crisis.

Private institutions, by contrast, do not face the same state guidelines and bureaucratic issues. However, these institutions do not receive the benefits of state funding, which in essence requires them to form internal and external partnerships to respond to crises. This funding issue is an even bigger disparity for smaller private institutions as it is possible for some larger privates to have more financial resources than some publics. The expectation and accountability debate also rings true for private institutions. While state legislators are not a burden, the ever-present eyes of parents and donors loom large for private institutions, as there are greater expectations despite fewer resources for the majority of them. Private institutions' acknowledgement and reputation of paying more attention to the issues of students and parents can hurt them in this regard.

While the public/private dichotomy deals with expectations and accountability, the commuter/residential dichotomy deals with logistical concerns. Obviously, commuter institutions have fewer students living on campus which from the perspective of crisis response can be both positive and negative. With fewer students living on campus, there is less potential for frequent crises and evacuation and shelter concerns are simplified. However, notification and communication procedures are much more complex when dealing with a larger commuter population. While safety and security of the human element is certainly still critical, because students are more dispersed, safety and security of institutional property is an extreme focus as well for commuter institutions.

Logistical concerns are ever-present in residential campuses as well. Like commuter institutions, there are both positive and negative factors associated with being residential within the context of crisis response, namely having to respond to a wider variety of crises and student populations, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Notification issues are simplified as information can be disseminated on a continuous and rapid basis. While expectations are much higher for residential institutions, ease of notification, increased opportunities for programming and training for students, as well as the ease of interfacing with students in largely populated, central locations for counseling lends itself to an efficient response.

Three dichotomies of institutional type comprise the secondary influences on crisis response. Non-liberal arts institutions, which include Carnegie-classified Research I institutions, may house controversial research facilities containing nuclear materials and other biohazards. These facilities and also animal testing facilities on campus create an exposure risk and a potential site of terrorist activities. Many of these institutions also have a large research hospital on campus that provides services to the local community or city. This increases the number of people on the campus who enter from a variety of public thoroughfares creating additional security concerns for the campus populations. Crisis response plans will be more advanced and resources will be greater at these types of institutions. Additionally, non-liberal arts institutions are more likely to employ a large number of research faculty, who will be called upon by the institution and the community for relevant expertise and assessment.

Land grant institutions were founded to provide service to the citizens of their respective states. Each of these institutions has an extension arm that spans every county in the state. There is an expectation from the public and a realization from the institutions that the land grant status designates those institutions as a provider of services and resources during crises in any

way possible. For example, during Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005, there was an expectation that Mississippi State University and Louisiana State University reach out to the citizens of their states who were victims of the catastrophic damage caused by these storms. These institutions, realizing their public responsibility, quickly mobilized to offer their services and assistance during these critical times. Lastly, faith-based institutions rely heavily on their campus ministries and chaplains in their responses to crises. These institutions incorporate ministries and their services into their response plans and often have representatives from these groups sit on crisis response teams.

There are also tertiary influences on institutional type on crisis response. These factors are not official dichotomies of type, just characteristics of certain institutions. The "flagship" institutions of each state are often seen as the standard of excellence in many factors, including crisis response. Administrators from other institutions in the state often look to them for leadership in crisis situations, creating added responsibilities for the flagships in developing sound plans as well as consulting. Institutions with large populations of international and out of state students must address the additional logistical concerns of communication and evacuation with these students in times of crisis. Logistically speaking, it can become quite difficult to send students home, when these students live on the other side of the country or the other side of the planet. Communication with international students can also become serious when observing and resolving their mental health issues. Lastly, institutions that are largely decentralized often have many different plans that exist across the campus, making communication and decision-making quite complex in higher level crises, especially in institutions that lack appropriate resources, training, and experience in responding to crisis.

Interestingly, two dichotomies of type showed no relevant influence on crisis response strategies. The HBCU/PWI dichotomy and the Two-Year/Four-Year dichotomy do not influence a plan unless combined with other contributing factors. For example, a specific HBCU may indeed have a considerably advanced crisis response plan, but not due the single fact that this institution is an HBCU. It is more likely that an HBCU has an advanced plan because it is an urban institution that can draw on many partnerships and resources, especially if it is public. Similarly, a two-year institution may have significant gaps in its crisis response protocols, but not due to the single fact that the institution is a two-year institution. Other institutional factors might contribute to those gaps in response, such as being located in a rural area, without the luxury of expanded resources and partnerships.

Significant Findings of RQ 5

Public/Private

The survey instrument used in this study produced numerous significant findings based on institutional type influence. T-tests of independent means were utilized in all instances when two-category analyses were necessary. Item #032: *In terms of crisis management training, my student affairs division encourages professional certification in the area of crisis management* was the most statistically significant value, $t(36.350) = 2.854$, $p = .007$. The second most statistically significant value was Item #098: *In terms of memorials, my institution engages in moments of silence*, $t(45) = 2.422$, $p = .020$. The third most statistically significant value was Item #076: *I am familiar with the symptoms and the 10 stages of acute traumatic stress*, $t(38.662) = 2.326$, $p = .025$. Interestingly, there were more statistically significant items in the survey section that addressed the process of crisis response, or the plan in action, than in any other section, suggesting that among the areas of extreme importance regarding the overall crisis

response strategy deals mainly with the actual plan in action and what the institution is doing to provide immediate and follow-up assessments, services, and other programs to stakeholders. This is not to say that the structure or framework of the plan is not important, as it clearly is, only that the plan in action is of particular concern as it relates to acute traumatic stress. Private institution participants scored lower on average than their public counterparts in being familiar with the symptoms and stages of acute traumatic stress. Public institutions can take notice that their private counterparts scored higher on average when addressing the concerns of the students and the families.

Two-Year/Four-Year

The t-test analyses that differentiated between two-year and four-year institutions produced the most statistically significant survey items in regards to all other type dichotomies. The numerous survey items with p values of .000 can likely be attributed to the small number of two-year institutions in the sample. Item #018: *My student affairs division prepares/trains the crisis response team for crisis*, t(42) = -6.401; Item #020: *My student affairs division prepares/trains the CRT how to assess and execute the plan pre-crisis*, t(42) = -6.518; Item #021: *My student affairs division prepares/trains the CRT how to assess and execute the plan during crisis*, t(42) = -6.762; Item #022: *My student affairs division prepares/trains the CRT how to assess and execute the plan post-crisis*, t(42) = -7.512; Item #023: *My student affairs division prepares/trains CRT members how to respond to trauma and acute stress*, t(42) = -5.888; Item #027: *In terms of crisis management training, my student affairs division engages in table top exercises (small simulations, role playing, etc.)*, t(47) = -7.396; Item #031: *In terms of crisis management training, my student affairs division encourages conference participation and continued professional development in the area of crisis management*, t(47) = 8.314; Item #036:

My student affairs division educates its first responders to assist victims of facility crisis, t(42) = -9.362; Item #038: *My student affairs division educates its first responders to assist victims of human crisis*, t(43) = -3.905; Item #066: *My student affairs division has detailed relocation plans for students if it becomes necessary*, t(45) = -5.589; Item #078: *My CRT is familiar with the symptoms and the 10 stages of acute traumatic stress*, t(45) = -12.565; Item #093: *My student affairs division engages in periodic campus pre-assessments of possible risks to safety*, t(45) = -8.923; and Item #099: *In terms of memorials, my institution incorporates a commemorative plaque*, t(34) = 5.560, were the most statistically significant survey items and all had p values = .000. Additionally, there were more statistically significant items in the survey section that addressed the structure of a crisis response plan specific to education, preparation, and training, than in any other section. These findings are interesting due to the fact that the qualitative findings suggested the two-year/four-year dichotomy did not influence crisis response protocols.

Two-year institutions must pay more attention to the structure of the crisis response plans, particularly in the areas of education, preparation, and training. More opportunities for training and education consistent with the findings of this dissertation must be provided to administrators and stakeholders in order for efficient policies and protocols to be developed. A lack of emphasis in the structure of a plan is an invitation for disaster or at least an elevated crisis that could have been managed more effectively through proper preparation, including the use of campus drills and tabletops, professional development, enhanced communication and collaboration, the use of advanced security and safety technologies, and early preparation and organization. Two-year institutions must educate their first responders in attending to the immediate and follow-up needs of constituent groups, regardless of the type of crisis. Many of the discrepancies in the crisis response plans of two-year institutions can be attributed to a lack

of resources and partnerships due to funding and also potentially being located in more rural areas.

HBCU/PWI

The t-tests of independent means indicated that Item #102: *In terms of memorials, my institution leads a campus memorial service* was the most statistically significant value, $t(42) = 2.673$, $p = .011$. The second most statistically significant value was Item #069: *My institution has easily accessible campus maps across campus grounds*, $t(5.383) = -3.712$, $p = .012$. The third most statistically significant values were Item #058: *My institution has a website specifically designed to give national terrorism warnings*, $t(6.335) = -2.752$, $p = .031$, and Item #111: *My institution supports free counseling services to students in times of crisis*, $t(48) = -2.226$, $p = .031$. Also, there were more statistically significant items in the survey section that addressed the structure and process of a crisis response plan specific to communication and collaboration, than in any other section. HBCUs will want to address communication issues with stakeholders by offering maps of their respective campus that highlight safe zones. Additionally, institutional websites that update or link to awareness of campus crime issues and global terrorism alerts will benefit these institutions. Additionally, HBCUs responded less favorably to collaborative efforts with internal units. Developing collaborative efforts among internal departments is critical in the prevention, response, and recovery efforts.

Commuter/Residential

Item #005: *My student affairs division is prepared to respond and resolve any* ***human crisis*** *(student death, faculty/staff death, injury, suicide, emotional/psychological crisis, missing person, overdose, infectious disease, campus disturbance/demonstration, etc.)*, $t(49) = -2.757$, $p = .008$, was the most statistically significant value. The second most statistically significant

value was Item #079: *My student affairs division's response strategy incorporates an initial immediate response to a crisis*, t(20.824) = -2.779, p = .011. The third most statistically significant value was Item #009: *My student affairs division has a highly organized and qualified crisis response team (CRT)*, t(46) = -2.625, p = .012. Also, there were more statistically significant items in the survey section that addressed the process of crisis response, or the plan in action, than in any other section. On all items of significance in this dichotomy, commuter institutions scored lower than their residential counterparts. Commuter institutions will want to spend more time addressing their plan in action, including having qualified first responders to utilize in a time of crisis and developing an approach that follows a specific model of crisis management. More research and reflection on what strategy to implement would be necessary for each of the commuter institutions as each is unique in their own right and must respond accordingly. T-tests of independent means were conducted on survey items in the housing dichotomy.

Liberal Arts/Non-Liberal Arts

Item #104: *In terms of memorials, my institution has a dedication*, t(38) = -3.991, p = .000, was the most statistically significant value. The second most statistically significant value was Item #102: *In terms of memorials, my institution leads a campus memorial service*, t(42) = 2.673, p = .011. The third most statistically significant value was Item #080: *During initial response, my student affairs division addresses the entire campus populace needs*, t(4.536) = 3.625, p = .018. Additionally, there were more statistically significant items in the survey section that addressed the structure of a crisis response plan specific to memorials, than in any other section. Liberal arts institutions have a societal stereotype as being small in terms of student enrollment and as a result are able to focus on their student body and provide more

attention and service. It seems understandable that at small liberal arts institutions, administrators may find themselves more in touch with the daily lives of their students. This explains the difference in means of the significant items in this dichotomy. Of the four survey items of significance, all deal with that inclusiveness often found on a small liberal arts campus. Liberal arts institutions have a crisis response plan that focuses on and addresses the entire campus community. The survey data indicated that they were also more likely than their non-liberal arts counterparts to lead campus-wide memorial services and to utilize dedications in the recovery process. With an increase in the student body and expanded responsibilities, the larger non-liberal arts institutions may find it difficult at times to provide that added level of concern and additional response to such a large campus community. Despite the differences, non-liberal arts institutions will want to evaluate their efforts in the providing a variety of memorial opportunities which can be helpful in the grieving and recovery process. The T-tests of independent means were conducted to generate findings based on institutional type influence according to education.

Land Grant/Non-Land Grant

Item #021: *My student affairs division prepares/trains the CRT how to assess and execute the plan during crisis*, $t(31.318) = 2.483$, $p = .019$, was the most statistically significant value. The second most statistically significant value was Item #023: *My student affairs division prepares/trains CRT members how to respond to trauma and acute stress*, $t(32.121) = 2.449$, $p = .020$. The third most statistically significant value was Item #029: *In terms of crisis management training, my student affairs division engages in external seminars and education sessions*, $t(39.322) = 2.379$, $p = .022$. Additionally, there were more statistically significant items in the survey section that addressed the structure of a crisis response plan specific to education,

preparation, and training, than in any other section. In fact, this was the only survey section that included statistically significant survey items. Land grant institutions scored consistently higher in each of the survey items, often times by large measures. Non-Land Grant institutions will want to place considerable focus on improving the evaluation and execution of the crisis response plan pre-crisis, during crisis, and post crisis. Also, non-land grant institutions should place more emphasis on preparing the crisis response team members for response to trauma and acute stress. This preparation component can be and is often improved through professional development and certification seminars offered on campus and at off-campus locations and conferences. T-tests of independent means were utilized in this dichotomy of institutional type.

Religious Affiliation/Non-Religious Affiliation

The three most significant values were Item #039: *My student affairs first responders are trained to assist victims of sexual assault*, $t(45) = -2.340$, $p = .024$; Item #080: *During initial response, my student affairs division addresses the entire campus populace needs*, $t(20.854) = 2.427$, $p = .024$; and Item #057: *My student affairs division utilizes a crisis hotline during times of crisis*, $t(15.025) = -2.493$, $p = .025$. Additionally, there were more statistically significant items in the survey section that addressed the structure of a crisis response plan specific to organization, than in any other section. Religiously-affiliated institutions scored consistently lower on each of the significant survey items. These institutions, despite often incorporating campus ministries into their response plans, must work to improve the framework or structure of their plans, particularly in the areas of education, preparation, and training of the crisis response team and first responders, and the evaluation and execution of the plan. Religiously-affiliated institutions must also address the education of their crisis response teams particularly as it relates

to knowledge of acute traumatic stress and its effects on stakeholder groups. T-tests of independent means were utilized in the analyses of this dichotomy.

Regardless of the type of institution, executive administrators and crisis response team members must reflect on how to effectively manage the increasing and often unreasonable expectations of various constituent groups. The results of this study provide more insight into these needs and how institutions can address them. Additionally, the data identifies hindrances to effective crisis response based on institutional type. For example, commuter institutions and institutions with large global student populations generally report that there respective institutional profile characteristics do influence their response strategies in positive and negative manners. The key concept is that these institutions now have data to support the need to recognize how institutional type influences crisis response plans and accentuate the positive influences, while limiting the negative influences.

RQ 6:

Does the size of the institution based on student enrollment influence crisis response on campus?

Institutional size clearly has an influence on crisis response plans and one study participant claimed that "size is a defining measure in how we respond to crises." There are both positive and negative factors associated with the enrollment size of an institution that influence crisis management on campus for small institutions to larger institutions, including resource availability, communication issues, and role clarification among others. Positive influences associated with smaller institutions are that tasks are simplified, including notification, organization, communication, and mobilization. Evacuation is an easier process and smaller institutions are less bureaucratic when compared to large institutions. Increased partnerships are another advantage for smaller institutions. With a small number of staff, everyone across the

university has to partner together to manage a crisis. In fact, many small institutions are practically forced to develop strong relationship with partners internal and external to the institution. Lastly, the smaller institutions by virtue of fewer students will see a limited range of crisis when compared to larger institutions.

There are also factors that negatively influence crisis management on smaller campuses. Smaller institutions are often hampered by fewer financial, physical, and human resources, which can negatively impact services, training, and any second wave of staff. Also, society, in particular, parents have higher expectations of smaller institutions and have a tendency to believe that smaller institutions can cast a larger watchful eye over the campus due to the smaller number of students. "Families choose to send their children to smaller institutions with the belief that they will receive more personalized attention there" (Zdziarski, p. 5, 2007). Zdziarski (2007) added, "the irony is that, in times of crisis, especially large-scale events, larger institutions are more likely to have the resources to respond to the situation whereas the small, 'caring' institutions can easily be overwhelmed by the scope and complexity of the tragedy" (p. 5). Lastly, smaller institutions can become victims of complacency. Due to less frequent occurrences of crisis, staff and students may find themselves believing that crises normally occur on larger campuses and that nothing will happen to them on their small campus.

Larger institutions' crisis management plans are positively influenced by increased staffing across key areas and on the front lines. Additionally, larger institutions are more likely to be able to mobilize a second wave of practitioners to relieve the first responders. Increased staffing creates more potential for increased experience and expertise in handling a variety of crises. Larger institutions have a great capacity to manage quite complex situations due to

experience and expertise of the staff. Lastly, larger institutions are able to provide a greater breadth and depth of services to those individuals impacted by crises.

These larger institutions are not without fault in certain areas due to enrollment classification. Notification is a critical issue for larger institutions whose students are more widely dispersed on larger campuses. A larger student population means a greater likelihood of more commuter students, which poses additional logistical concerns for notification. At larger institutions, there may be many plans across the campus, generating role confusion and paralyzing professionals around decision making due to various hierarchical structures. Role clarification can become more complex and responsibilities can be misunderstood on larger campuses. And finally, larger institutions have a larger stakeholder base and with that a resulting responsibility to address their needs. Despite the fact that larger institutions often have more resources, they too can overextend their resources, particularly human resources, when addressing the needs and expectations of providing outreach to the community.

Significant Findings of RQ 6

Institutional Student Enrollment

Because this analyses necessitated analyses of more than two categories, a one-way ANOVA (post-hoc, Tukey), was utilized. The three most statistically significant values were Item #040: *My student affairs first responders are trained to assist secondary victims (friends, observers, etc.)*, $F(3, 44) = 5.092$, $p = .004$; Item #035: *My student affairs division educates its first responders to assist victims of natural crisis*, $F(3, 44) = 4.758$, $p = .006$; and Item #034: *My student affairs division educates its first responders to assist persons in emotional crisis*, $F(3, 46) = 4.198$, $p = .010$. Additionally, there were far more statistically significant items in the survey section that addressed the structure of a crisis response plan specific to education, preparation,

and training, than in any other section. Of the 14 statistically significant items, the portion of the survey that covered education, preparation, and training included 11 of these items.

The Tukey HSD analyses indicated individual differences in means based on enrollment sizes of the institutions. The largest difference in means was found on Item #036: *My student affairs division educates its first responders to assist victims of facility crisis*. With respect to this item, Very Large institutions (n = 19, M = 3.4211) responded much more positively than Medium institutions (n = 5, M = 2.2000). Likewise, the next largest difference in means was associated with Item #035: *My student affairs division educates its first responders to assist victims of natural crisis.* With respect to this item, Very Large institutions (n = 19, M = 3.5789) responded much more positively than Medium institutions (n = 5, M = 2.4000). The third largest difference in means was associated with Item #021: *My student affairs division prepares/trains the CRT how to assess and execute the plan during crisis*. With respect to this item, Very Large institutions (n = 18, M = 3.3889) responded much more positively than Very Small/Small institutions (n = 8, M = 2.2500). Larger numbers of mean disparities were found when Very Large Institutions were compared to Medium institutions. Additionally, all but one of these disparities was found in the section of the survey that addressed the structure of a crisis response plan with respect to education, preparation, and training. Based on the survey data, medium-sized institutions and those classified as very small/small must primarily address their education, preparation, and training efforts, particularly in preparing the crisis response team for response and recovery efforts pre-crisis, during crisis, and post-crisis. Medium-sized institutions have a number of areas of concern. Very large institutions consistently scored higher than their medium-sized counterparts in the areas of educating first responders to assist in emotional, natural, and facility crisis, as well as, in assisting victims of sexual assault, drug/alcohol

overdose, and secondary victims of crisis. When evaluating and revising crisis response plans, medium-sized institutions must place more emphasis in each of these areas. Similarly, very small/small institutions scored higher than the medium-sized institutions in addressing the needs of the faculty/staff and the neighboring community during times of crises, again highlighting a more inclusive, supportive environment on the smaller campuses.

The data from this study suggests that the size of an institution does play a role in influencing crisis response protocols thus providing another opportunity for crisis response consultants to work effectively with crisis response teams. It is important for administrators, practitioners, and other stakeholders to understand that it is not necessarily good or bad to be an institution of a certain size. Being a large institution has its advantages and its disadvantages just as being a smaller institution has the same. Again, just as institutional type cannot be changed within reason, neither can institutional size. Consultants and other administrators can take heed of the data from this study when examining positive and negative influences based on size. It is critically important to first recognize size as an influential factor and then to accentuate the positive aspects of institutional size by promoting total campus involvement in response protocols and safety education. Additionally, institutions must take advantage of any down time to address education and training. When recognizing size as an influential factor, institutions must also limit negative aspects. For example, large and very large institutions must take advantage of the increased resources of advanced technologies to alert relevant populations in an appropriate manner. They must also utilize these resources to assist in protecting the welfare of all university communities. Larger institutions and those institutions classified as decentralized must be more direct about specific roles in times of crisis to eliminate role confusion among those called to respond.

RQ 7:

Does the geographic location of the institution influence crisis response on campus?

The geographic location of an institution has a strong influence on crisis response on campus both in terms of being located in areas of high potential for natural disasters and in terms of proximity to major metropolitan areas. Institutions in coastal areas have to concern themselves with climate related concerns or natural crises, such as hurricanes. However, coastal area institutions are not the only ones affected. Institutions in the Midwest have to prepare for likely flooding and tornados. Northern institutions must prepare for winter related issues such as snow and ice. Earthquakes are a natural crisis for those institutions on the west coast. Additionally, a large majority of major landmarks, buildings, and other properties of national significance can be found near major metropolitan areas. Federal buildings and physical structures such as major dams and bridges in close proximity to institutions influence crisis protocols on campus.

Additionally, geographic location also influences a crisis response plan based on whether an institution is a rural, suburban, or urban institution. Containment ability, campus involvement in response and community expectations increase as institutions move from urban areas to rural areas. Rurally located institutions when compared with urban institutions have greater containment ability in that they are located in areas that can be easily controlled and accessed in times of crisis, usually due to the fact that they are in less populated and less congested areas. Rurally located institutions are more likely to have responses to crises that involve the entire campus community, due to the fact that rural institutions have fewer external resources than urban institutions. Additionally, there are certain expectations that rural institutions face from their respective communities. Due to the limited external resources and support systems in the

area, these institutions are often depended on by the community to provide resources in times of crises. As a result, when planning for crises, administrators at these institutions must plan for crises that extend beyond the boundaries of the institution. Institutions found in urban areas and in areas affected by potential natural crises are doubly influenced by their location.

Similarly, urban institutions have increased resources and external partnerships, immediate media engagement, an increased hyperawareness of crisis, and a greater range and frequency of crises. Each of these categories increases as institutions move from rural areas to urban areas. Urban institutions, particularly those in areas of high crime, have greater potential for external resources and partnerships with local, state and federal law enforcement, fire departments, and emergency services. These resources and partnerships factor greatly in an institutional response to crisis, particularly in time of response. Unfortunately, institutions in urban settings have little opportunity to prepare for media inquires as most media outlets will be in close proximity. Conversely, rural institutions are located far from the watchful eyes of the media giving these institutions more time to assess a crisis and its effects on the campus and campus constituents. While this additional preparation for media inquiries is advantageous for rural institutions, these opportunities dissipate quite rapidly, especially when dealing with higher level crises. It is quite possible in these cases for the media to report erroneous information and do more harm in a critical time for the institution and the campus community members. However, members of the media may prove beneficial to institutions in urban areas. As social outlets in large cities increase, students disperse across these areas at all times of the day. Notification of campus crises can often be hindered due to students being away from campus. Increased media and other external agencies can counteract this limitation with prompt and efficient notification protocols. Due to being located in areas of high crime and potential for

frequent crisis, the campus community is hyperaware of potential crisis, which can have an added benefit on efficient protocols and responses but may hinder the educational and emotional status of students and may negative impact their academic endeavors. Due to higher crime rates and potential for terrorist activities, urban institutions see a greater range of crises and observe more crises than their rural counterparts.

Interestingly, suburban institutions fall in the middle ground and contain aspects of both rural and urban institutions. For example, community expectations may be of a high degree for suburban institutions, similar to rural institutions. However, these suburban institutions may have the external resources and partnerships to meet these expectations. Suburban institutions may have a lesser degree of containment ability and time to react before the media engages than rural institutions, but more containment ability and more time than urban institutions.

Similar to institutional type and size, an established institution cannot simply move to a more beneficial location. However, administrators can place significant emphasis on the advantages of their specific locations. Recognizing threats in the areas surrounding an institution is crucial to anticipation of crises and improved preparation for crises. The data from this study can assist crisis response teams in developing ways to utilize untapped resources and to develop partnerships with media and parents as well as external agencies. Recognizing positive and negative influences on crisis response protocols based on geographic locations can enable rurally located institutions to begin the process of strengthening their resources and protocols to reach not only the university community but the surrounding communities as well. For example, from the data, it is clear that organization within the crisis response team was a significant issue based on geographic location. It was also evident that immediate media engagement was a factor for urban institutions. Administrators now have the necessary data to place more emphasis and

financial resources in the critical areas of training, early preparation, and crisis communication. Additionally, institutions now have the necessary data enabling them to consider reframing their relationships with the media in times of crisis and promoting a mutually beneficial relationship with responsible media outlets in times of crisis.

Significant Findings of RQ 7

Geographic Location

A one-way ANOVA (post-hoc, Tukey), was utilized in these analyses due to the three categories of institutional location that were being addressed. Only three statistically significant values were found, with the most statistically significant value being associated with Item #036: *My student affairs division educates its first responders to assist victims of facility crisis*, $F(2, 44) = 4.237$, $p = .021$. Additionally, of the three statistically significant items, all three were related to the structure of a crisis response plan. Two of these three items were related to structure, but specific to organization, while the other was related to structure, but specific to education, preparation, and training. Rural institutions will want to provide added efforts in establishing and educating a member of the crisis response team that can maintain the primary responsibility of addressing the media and handling external communications during times of crises. Collaborating with these professionals and including them as functioning members of the crisis response team will be advantageous in the event of campus emergencies as rumors run rampant. The crisis response team at these institutions should also include a top ranking member of campus facilities management. These individuals can address all concerns about buildings and other facilities on campus during times of crisis. Finally, rural institutions must continue to improve their response efforts by developing a technologically sound emergency command center from which to base response efforts in times of crisis.

The Tukey HSD analyses indicated individual differences in means based on institutional location or proximity to major metropolitan areas. The largest difference in means was found on Item #085: *My student affairs division follows another type of approach to crisis management*. With respect to this item, Rural institutions (n = 5, M = 3.2000) responded much more positively than Urban institutions (n = 21, M = 2.1429). Likewise, the next largest difference in means was associated with Item #016: *My institution has a readily accessible, centrally-located emergency command center, complete with full communication and technological capabilities, from which to base response efforts*. With respect to this item, Urban institutions (n = 27, M = 3.4074) responded much more positively than Rural institutions (n = 6, M = 2.5000). The third largest difference in means was associated with Item #014: *My CRT includes a professional knowledgeable in the area of media relations and communication*. With respect to this item, Urban institutions (n = 24, M = 3.6250) responded much more positively than Rural institutions (n = 6, M = 2.8333). Large mean disparities were found only between urban and rural institutions. Additionally, all but one of these disparities was found in the section of the survey that addressed the structure of a crisis response plan with respect to organization.

Implications for Practice

This study has dramatic implications for all higher education stakeholders, specifically student affairs practitioners, higher education administrators, students, parents, faculty/staff, emergency response teams, city officials, and alumni. These implications are heightened by a constant state of terrorist threats, inclement weather, and a fear of events similar to those that occurred at Virginia Tech. This study provides current empirical data and relevant statistical analyses at a time of extreme scrutiny of campus crisis response strategies. Current data was collected and analyzed and now enables practitioners to take an empirical approach to the

structure and process of crisis response as opposed to anecdotal information. This study data also allows practitioners to take one step further than previous ground-breaking empirical studies on campus crisis response by using specific data to link theory and practice (Zdziarski, 2001; Hartzog, 1981). Utilizing the practice-to-theory-to-practice (PTP) model, practitioners can begin by examining their current practices and identifying needs and goals related to crisis response. They can then identify areas of challenge and support and apply theoretical perspectives from this study, thus linking practice to theory. Practitioners can then apply those theoretical perspectives in revising their response plans and in reevaluating goals related to crisis response (Knefelkamp, Golec, & Wells, 1985). Regardless of the types of crises, divisions of student affairs play a significant role in the response effort. Zdziarski (2007) stated "the impact of crises on the facilities and the institutions' ability to accomplish their educational mission must be addressed, but it is the human side of the equation that begs our attention as educators committed to serving our communities" (p. 3). The response efforts may address an individual student emergency with a very small number of stakeholders or a much large campus disaster with thousands of stakeholders. Previous research efforts as it relates to crisis response within student affairs have been limited. The study aims to contribute to the knowledge base and to begin filling gaps in the literature.

The results of this study show that there are indeed differences in perspective as to what is a crisis according to the institution and the division. Communication and collaboration lapses within the institution channels can severely limit an efficient response. Student emergencies can quickly escalate into full-blown campus disasters if not properly handled in an efficient manner. Results also show that crisis response teams remain fairly consistent across the country despite differences in institutional type, enrollment size, and geographic location. Regardless of the

makeup, institutions must learn to prepare themselves for crises through a variety of different ways including training, education, early organization, increased communication and collaborative efforts, and technological advances. Student affairs practitioners and other administrators and faculty must recognize that they all have some degree of responsibility to address the needs of the entire campus community and even beyond if the situation warrants such a response. While students are the central focus for divisions of student affairs, the wide variety of needs of parents, faculty/staff, the surrounding community, and the media and alumni must not be overlooked in critical times. In the development and implementation of crisis response protocols, administrators should take notice of the general campus needs as well as the needs of specific individual populations on campus in times of need. Problems begin to arise when the physical safety needs may be met during times of crisis, but the emotional well-being, and mental health of the campus population are not being met during these times. "While many universities have formal plans that address the physical aspects of a crisis on campus, these plans may not address the effects of the crisis on people" (Paterson, 2006, p. 38).

Many crisis response strategies are not all encompassing and do not reach all aspects of the campus population. For example, students are the lifelines of the institution. However, it is unfair to assume that faculty and staff members do not suffer from the same feelings of grief, confusion, and fear in times of crisis. Likewise, when university responses and division level responses are inconsistent in times of critical need, the campus environment can become easily disillusioned and develop extreme feelings of anger, helplessness, despair, and depression. Crisis response strategies should incorporate an extensive examination of the physical, mental, and emotional needs of all its stakeholders. Also, there should be a clear definition of what constitutes a crisis and how it will be handled. Ambiguity has no place in the context of

university response. All university responses should be definitive and handled with extreme care and concern, with respect to all involved. Single deaths, not considered a university crisis, should be recognized and addressed by the university, and every available aspect of care and concern should be afforded to all stakeholders, regardless of campus size, or the nature of the death.

An efficient and continuous evaluation of all crisis response protocols is an absolute necessity in order for campuses to continue to provide the assistance that is expected and required of them. Results show that certain categories of institutional type do influence crisis response on campus. Findings also show differences in the structure and process of crisis response at various types of institutions. Crisis response teams and other administrators must acknowledge these differences and revise when appropriate. Similarly, enrollment size and geographic locations also influence crisis response protocols. Administrators must recognize and accentuate the positive influences while working to limit the negative influences.

Confounding Variables and Limitations of the Study

On April 16, 2007, the deadliest school shooting in the history of our country occurred on the campus of Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia. Seung-hui Cho, a Virginia Tech student, killed 32 people, wounded 25 others, and then committed suicide in two separate attacks. In the early morning, Cho shot and killed two Virginia Tech students in West Ambler Johnston residence hall. Some two hours later, Cho entered Norris Hall, an academic building, and opened fire in the hallways and classrooms, killing and wounding students, faculty, and staff.

In terms of data collection, all surveys had been delivered prior to the tragedy at Virginia Tech and many had been returned prior to the incident. However, this unpredictable tragedy did occur in the middle of data collection. All interviews were conducted after these shootings.

While not directed to respond to the shootings, many participants made reference to the event on their own accord. Interestingly, many participants made reference to the importance of this study post-tragedy as opposed to being hesitant to participate. Yet, it is possible that the event negative influenced the survey return rate. One must also take into account that several of the participants in the study were still recovering from the massive damage left in the wake of Hurricane Katrina in the Gulf Coast area. Despite data collection occurring almost two years after Katrina made landfall causing tremendous devastation, it is important to note that the Gulf coast region and the institutions in that area are still on the mend. More analyses would need to be conducted to determine the influence that these tragedies had on the responses of the participants.

Recognized limitations prior to data collection were discussed in Chapter 1 of this dissertation and included such aspects of lack of available literature, potential unwillingness to participate due to liability issues, and that this study was not focusing on all types of student crises. While there were gaps in the literature, this study attempts to fill those gaps and contribute to the knowledge base of crisis response on college campuses. The issues concerning liability and the potential lack of participation proved to be minimal. Of the 54 invitations to participate, 51 invitations were accepted and those participants fulfilled all study requirements. The return rate for the study was more than satisfactory at 94.44%. Finally, while the initial focus of the study was to emphasize crisis as the direct threats to physical and emotional safety of the student population, it became apparent in the data collection process that the definition would have to be expanded as the majority of the participants indicated additional aspects in their definitions of crises, including by not limited to eating disorders, identity theft, financial concerns, etc.

Sample size and power are also important factors to consider when examining the results of the study. Power is an important factor because it "reflects the degree to which we can detect the treatment differences we expect and the chances that others will be able to duplicate our findings when they attempt to repeat our experiments" (Keppel, 1991, p. 68). Yet, while replication of results is crucial in quantitative work. it is not always the major goal of qualitative research, which emphasizes rich descriptions of a specific experience or phenomenon. Qualitative results are subject to change over time, because that is the nature of qualitative inquiry. Reality is socially constructed and may change over time and context, whereas, in quantitative studies, reality is objective and context free, making results generally easier to replicate (Merriam, 2002).

Increasing the sample size in this study would lead to higher power, increasing the chances for significant results (Moore, 2000). While a larger sample of 200 institutions, for example, would have increased the power of this study, it would have made the management and facilitation of 200 subsequent interviews quite complex. Therefore, the sample size remained low in part to manage all the data and in part to generate a higher return rate. The sample size should also be considered when interpreting institutional type influence. This is an important issue in certain institutional type influence analyses, such as the two-year/four-year dichotomy and the HBCU/PWI dichotomy. In these dichotomies, participants who were classified as two-year institutions and HBCUs were small in number when compared to their counterparts. While their proportions in society and in the study may be similar, it is still interesting to note that qualitatively, the two-year/four-year dichotomy and the HBCU/PWI dichotomy indicated no real influences on crisis response.

Finally, the potential for Type I Error is another factor that must be considered when referencing the findings from this study. Additionally, there were a multitude of t-tests that were conducted within the study. Increased potential for Type I Error, or rejecting the null hypothesis when it is true, is a limitation in studies that utilize multiple t-tests (Keppel, 1991). No additional adjustments for error were implemented in the statistical analyses and the alpha level remained at .05. Significant results for all findings should be interpreted with an understanding that multiple t-tests occurred.

Areas of Future Research

Due to a lack of an expansive literature base and studies within crisis response in higher education and student affairs as well as recent heightened media awareness and societal expectations, this is an area ripe with potential research opportunities. These concepts of heightened societal expectations, particularly from parents and media, are an area of future exploration when comparing expectations to logistical realities. Additionally, participants in the study often reported lacking a sufficient formalized training process. Similarly, a more formalized evaluation of the crisis response plan and of the actual responses were areas of much needed improvement as reported by the participants. An interesting study would be to locate those institutions and divisions of student affairs who do employ a formal process in training and in evaluation and compare all aspects of the response effort with those of other institutions who implement an informal process for both components. An analysis of the effectiveness of certification programs like the National Incident Management System and other external agencies offering certification in crisis and disaster management would prove worthwhile. A more specific analysis of communication and collaboration channels as well as the use of new

technological advances, particularly notification systems and other physical safety features, at different types of institutions would be beneficial for institutions around the country.

Additionally, there are many specific areas related to the overall crisis response that are primed for future exploration. The development and feasibility of campus evacuation, lockdown, and sheltering plans need research consideration. Campuses could benefit from more in-depth studies relating to crisis communication and how it relates to the college and university setting. Analyses of the use of shared resources and developed partnerships with internal departments and external communities would also prove advantageous. Another useful study would examine the intricacies of developing emergency response teams and their specific roles as well as other safety teams that monitor at-risk students and, most importantly, are empowered to act. As more information related to the tragedies at Virginia Tech is made public, administrators, practitioners, and researchers alike should begin to inquire about changes in gun ownership laws and policies and for associated information disclosure. Analyses of prominent faculty education seminars regarding work with at-risk students are also critically important. Similarly, a study regarding the practicality of more detailed scrutiny of college admissions applications may be useful in paving the way for a more secure campus.

More in-depth work with the significant findings of this study would add considerable depth to the research base in this field. Specifically analyzing the process of crisis response, or the plan in action, within the commuter/residential and the public/private dichotomies, would be an excellent area of future study. Additionally, the two-year/four-year dichotomy and the land grant/non-land grant dichotomy has potential areas for future study in the structure of a crisis response plan specific to education, preparation, and training. Student enrollment size and geographic location have tremendous impact on the structure of crisis response protocols,

particularly in the area of education, preparation, and training. More research in this area could be of critical importance to administrators and scholars alike. Finally, land grant institutions have the added responsibility of serving the citizens of their states in times of crisis. A needs assessment of all constituents and extensive evaluation of training, communication and collaboration channels, and immediate and follow-up responses would be beneficial for other land grant institutions and those institutions who volunteer their services in times of need.

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APPENDIX A

Initial Interest Indicator

"Evolution of Emergency Operations Strategies: Structure and Process of Crisis Management in Higher Education"

- A Dissertation Study -

Purpose

This mixed methods dissertation study seeks to analyze crisis response policies, strategies, and programs of different types of institutions as well as to explore which elements of critical incident management structure and process are and are not being implemented across these different types of institutions.

Participants will benefit from the research by providing data for a study that can impact the entire university population and surrounding community with reference to saftey and security before, during, and after a campus crisis. The data may lead to more efficient services and initiatives with respect to the crisis response plan or the necessary support required for beneficial changes to be made.

Numerous university administrators and student affairs practitioners may benefit from this study based on the data and results by adopting new ideas and initiatives about crisis response plans. Students, parents, faculty/staff, and other stakeholders may also benefit from changes. The data could lead to enhanced safety and security measures on many campuses across the country, resulting in possible prevention of crisis, limited negative impacts of crisis, and/or efficient returns to productive environments after crisis.

You have recently been identified as a potential participant who meets the criteria for this study that is currently being conducted by C. Ryan Akers, a doctoral student at The University of Georgia. Data collection is a two step approach with the completion of a quantitative survey and short interview via telephone, if deemed necessary by the researcher. Topics of the discussions that occur within the confines of the interview setting between the researcher and yourself will be confidential, except if it becomes necessary to protect the rights and welfare of the researcher and the participant, or if required by law.

This is an Interest Indicator and in no way obligates you to be a part of this study. By signing the form below and returning it in the enclosed stamped and addressed envelope, the researcher will contact you promptly. You may also simply contact the researcher via phone or email at the information listed below.

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

I am interested in volunteering to be a participant in this project and would like to be contacted for further information.

Researcher's Contact Information:
Name: C. Ryan Akers
Phone: (706) 248-6527
Email Address: cakers@uga.edu

APPENDIX B

Letter of Introduction

Dear Study Participant:

My name is Ryan Akers and I am a doctoral candidate in Student Affairs Administration at the University of Georgia. Thank you for agreeing to participate in my dissertation study entitled "Evolution of Emergency Operations Strategies: Structure and Process of Crisis Management in Higher Education". Your institution is **one of only 50 institutions** selected to participate.

The purpose of this study is to analyze crisis response policies, strategies, and programs of different types of institutions as well as to explore which elements of critical incident management structure and process are and are not being implemented across these different types of institutions.

The following materials included in this packet will satisfy the quantitative component of the study:

- **(1) Letter of Introduction**
- **(2) Copies of Informed Consent**
- **(1) Crisis Response Survey**
- **(1) Pre-paid Postage Mailer**

Two Copies of Informed Consent
The letter of Informed Consent briefly describes the study and lists its purpose, your rights as a participant, the benefits and risks of participation, study procedures, and my contact information. Please read over this document carefully and sign both copies. Keep one for your records and return the other signed copy to me in the enclosed mailer.

Crisis Response Survey
Next, please read the survey instructions carefully. Upon completion, review to make sure that you have answered all questions and provided additional feedback when appropriate. Place the completed survey in the enclosed mailer with one signed copy of Informed Consent.

Pre-paid Postage Mailer
Place the following information in the enclosed mailer, seal the mailer, and simply return it via US Postal Service. **PLEASE RETURN ALL DOCUMENTATION TO ME ON OR BEFORE JUNE 15, 2007.** Again, please make sure that the following items are included in the return mailer before sealing.

- **(1) Signed Copy of Informed Consent**
- **(1) Completed Crisis Response Survey**
- **(1) Copy of your division's crisis response protocol, if available**

Thank you again for participating in this dissertation study. The research will provide beneficial data and results regarding crisis response protocol to all participating institutions and beyond.

Thank you for your time!

Sincerely,

C. Ryan Akers

Enclosures (4): 2 Copies of Informed Consent; 1 Crisis Response Survey; 1 Return Mailer

APPENDIX C

INFORMED CONSENT

I agree to take part in a research study entitled "Evolution of Emergency Operations Strategies: Structure and Process of Crisis Management in Higher Education," which is being conducted by C. Ryan Akers, a doctoral candidate in the Department of Counseling and Human Development Services at The University of Georgia. C. Ryan Akers can be reached for questions at 706-248-6527 or via email at cakers@uga.edu. The research is being conducted under the direction of Dr. Diane Cooper, Professor, Counseling and Human Development Services, The University of Georgia. Dr. Cooper may be reached at 706-542-1812 or via email at dlcooper@uga.edu.

I understand that I do not have to participate in this study. I can stop taking part at any time without giving reasons, and without penalty. I can ask to have all information related to me returned or destroyed.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this dissertation study is to analyze crisis response policies, strategies, and programs of different types of institutions as well as to explore which elements of critical incident management structure and process are and are not being implemented across these different types of institutions.

BENEFITS

I may benefit from this research by gaining perspectives on crisis response strategies at institutions similar to my employer. This may allow me to develop more efficient services and may provide the necessary support for the advancement of safety and security of my campus and surrounding community.

PROCEDURES

If I volunteer to take part in this study, I will be asked to do the following things:

1. I will read and sign this consent form. (Be sure to ask questions if you have any.)
2. I will take complete one survey and make myself available for a follow-up interview if deemed necessary by the researcher. The interview will last approximately 30-45 minutes.
3. I understand that I may elect not to answer any question without having to explain why.

DISCOMFORTS/STRESSES/RISKS/CONFIDENTIALITY

There are no foreseen physical discomforts, stressors, or risks involved with this research study.

The interviews between the researcher and I will be audio-taped, transcribed, and held confidential. No information about me, or provided by me during the research, will be shared with others without my written permission except if it becomes necessary to protect the rights or welfare of the researcher or myself, or if required by law. The tapes and their transcriptions will be kept by the researcher for research purposes only. Twelve months after the conclusion of the study the tapes will be destroyed.

FINAL AGREEMENT & CONSENT FORM COPY

My signature below indicates that the researcher has answered all of my questions to my satisfaction and that I consent to volunteer for this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

_____ _____

Signature of Researcher Date Signature of Participant Date

Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher in the envelope provided.

For questions or issues about your rights as a research participant, please call or write: The Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, The University of Georgia, 612 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-3199; Email Address: IRB@uga.edu.

APPENDIX D

Crisis Response Survey

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this mixed methods study is to analyze the crisis response policies, strategies, and programs of different types of institutions as well as to explore which elements of crisis response structure and process are and are not being implemented across these different types of institutions.

Important!!! Please make sure to follow the directions and answer the questions below:
A.) Name of Institution: _____
B.) Number of Years Experience at Your Current Institution: _____
C.) Contact Information for Possible Additional Questions:
Name - _____
Phone Number - _____
D.) Please complete the survey below and return WITH a copy of your student affairs division's crisis response policy.

Survey Instructions:

In terms of **your beliefs regarding your division of student affairs and your institution**, please answer the following survey questions by circling the appropriate response after each statement and providing feedback where necessary in the comments box at the conclusion of each section.
(1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Agree; 4 = Strongly Agree; N/A = Not Applicable or "Unable to Answer")

Definition and Incidence(s)

	Strongly Disagree ---------- Strongly Agree				
1. My student affairs division's crisis response policy clearly defines and classifies crisis accordingly.	1	2	3	4	N/A
2. My student affairs division is prepared to respond and resolve any **<u>natural crisis</u>** (tornado, hurricane, earthquake, flood, severe weather, etc.).	1	2	3	4	N/A

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
3. My student affairs division is prepared to respond and resolve any **facility crisis** (fire, explosion, chemical leak, building or campus evacuation, etc.).	1	2	3	4	N/A
4. My student affairs division is prepared to respond and resolve any **criminal crisis** (homicide, assault, rape, harassment, abuse, burglary/robbery, kidnapping, hate crime terrorist threat, vandalism, etc.).	1	2	3	4	N/A
5. My student affairs division is prepared to respond and resolve any **human crisis** (student death, faculty/staff death, injury, suicide, emotional/psychological crisis, missing person, overdose, infectious disease, campus disturbance/demonstration, etc.).	1	2	3	4	N/A
6. My student affairs division is prepared to respond and resolve **any** type of campus crisis	1	2	3	4	N/A
7. My student affairs division has a comprehensive crisis response plan focused on the **entire** campus community.	1	2	3	4	N/A
8. My student affairs division has deficiencies in its crisis response strategy.	1	2	3	4	N/A

Additional or Clarifying Comments Regarding this Section:
_____
_____
_____
_____

Structure - Organization

9. My student affairs division has a highly organized and qualified crisis response team (CRT).	1	2	3	4	N/A

10. Please list the membership of your crisis response team (titles only).
_____
_____
_____
_____

11. My CRT has a qualified, knowledgeable professional as a chairperson.	1	2	3	4	N/A
12. The CRT chairperson delegates specific duties/responsibilities for the remaining CRT members	1	2	3	4	N/A

	Strongly Disagree			Strongly Agree	
13. My CRT includes a professional knowledgeable in the area of higher education law and liability.	1	2	3	4	N/A
14. My CRT includes a professional knowledgeable in the area of media relations and communication.	1	2	3	4	N/A
15. My CRT includes a professional knowledgeable in the area of campus facilities management.	1	2	3	4	N/A
16. My institution has a readily accessible, centrally-located emergency command center, complete complete with full communication and technological capabilities, from which to base response efforts.	1	2	3	4	N/A
17. My institution has a readily accessible, mobile emergency command center in the event that the stationary command center becomes damaged or is unreachable.	1	2	3	4	N/A

Additional or Clarifying Comments Regarding this Section:
_____
_____
_____
_____

Structure – Education, Preparation and Training

18. My student affairs division prepares/trains the crisis response team for crisis.	1	2	3	4	N/A
19. My student affairs division prepares/trains the entire campus community for crisis.	1	2	3	4	N/A
20. My student affairs division prepares/trains the CRT how to assess and execute the plan pre-crisis.	1	2	3	4	N/A
21. My student affairs division prepares/trains the CRT how to assess and execute the plan during crisis.	1	2	3	4	N/A
22. My student affairs division prepares/trains the CRT how to assess and execute the plan post-crisis.	1	2	3	4	N/A
23. My student affairs division prepares/trains CRT members how to respond to trauma and acute stress.	1	2	3	4	N/A
24. My student affairs division has a duty to address the needs of students in times of crisis.	1	2	3	4	N/A
25. My institution has a duty to address the needs of faculty/staff in times of crisis.	1	2	3	4	N/A
26. My institution has a duty to address the needs of the neighboring community.	1	2	3	4	N/A

	Strongly Disagree ----------				Strongly Agree
In terms of crisis management training, my student affairs division:					
27. Engages in table top exercises (small simulations, role playing, etc.)	1	2	3	4	N/A
28. Engages in in-house seminars and education sessions.	1	2	3	4	N/A
29. Engages in external seminars and education sessions.	1	2	3	4	N/A
30. Engages in entire campus simulations.	1	2	3	4	N/A
31. Encourages conference participation and continued professional development in the area of crisis management.	1	2	3	4	N/A
32. Encourages professional certification in the area of crisis management.	1	2	3	4	N/A
33. Engages in other: _____					
34. My student affairs division educates its first responders to assist persons in emotional crisis.	1	2	3	4	N/A
35. My student affairs division educates its first responders to assist victims of natural crisis.	1	2	3	4	N/A
36. My student affairs division educates its first responders to assist victims of facility crisis.	1	2	3	4	N/A
37. My student affairs division educates its first responders to assist victims of criminal crisis.	1	2	3	4	N/A
38. My student affairs division educates its first responders to assist victims of human crisis.	1	2	3	4	N/A
39. My student affairs first responders are trained to assist victims of sexual assault.	1	2	3	4	N/A
40. My student affairs first responders are trained to assist secondary victims (friends, observers, etc.).	1	2	3	4	N/A
41. My student affairs first responders are trained to assist victims of drug and/or alcohol overdose.	1	2	3	4	N/A
42. My student affairs first responders are trained/educated about minority and sensitivity issues	1	2	3	4	N/A
43. My student affairs division provides continuous training for CRT members and essential personnel.	1	2	3	4	N/A

Additional or Clarifying Comments Regarding this Section:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Structure and Process - Communication and Collaboration

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
44. Communication **within the CRT** is the most critical element in responding to campus crisis.	1	2	3	4	N/A
45. Communication **with the entire campus community** is the most critical element in responding to campus crisis.	1	2	3	4	N/A
46. Communication **with the neighboring community** is the most critical element in responding to campus crisis.	1	2	3	4	N/A
47. Communication **with the parents** is the most critical element in responding to campus crisis.	1	2	3	4	N/A
48. Communication **with the media** is the most critical element in responding to campus crisis.	1	2	3	4	N/A
49. During the most recent campus crisis, my CRT communicated with each other efficiently.	1	2	3	4	N/A
50. During the most recent campus crisis, my CRT communicated efficiently with the entire campus.	1	2	3	4	N/A
51. During the most recent campus crisis, my CRT communicated efficiently with faculty/staff members.	1	2	3	4	N/A
52. During the most recent campus crisis, my CRT communicated efficiently with the neighboring community.	1	2	3	4	N/A
53. During the most recent campus crisis, my CRT communicated efficiently with parents.	1	2	3	4	N/A
54. During the most recent campus crisis, my CRT communicates efficiently with media.	1	2	3	4	N/A
55. My student affairs division has an efficient strategy for reporting facts and controlling rumors.	1	2	3	4	N/A
56. My student affairs division has a comprehensive system of notification procedures which alert the campus and all constituents to an impending or actual crisis.	1	2	3	4	N/A
57. My student affairs division utilizes a crisis hotline during times of crisis.	1	2	3	4	N/A
58. My institution has a website specifically designed to give national terrorism warnings.	1	2	3	4	N/A
59. My institution makes accessible the contact information of CRT members and essential personnel.	1	2	3	4	N/A

	Strongly Disagree			Strongly Agree	
60. My institution has an accessible copy of response protocol through the institution and/or Internet.	1	2	3	4	N/A
61. Included in my student affairs division's response plan is a rotation of on-call emergency deans.	1	2	3	4	N/A
62. Included in my student affairs division's response plan are contact hierarchies (i.e. phone pyramids).	1	2	3	4	N/A
63. My student affairs division has a easily accessible document that highlights the current chain of command for the institution in the event of an emergency.	1	2	3	4	N/A
64. My student affairs division has backup personnel that can assume CRT duties in the event of an absence or incapacitation of a permanent crisis response team member.	1	2	3	4	N/A
65. My institution provides emergency supply kits to all campus facilities (academic, residential, etc.).	1	2	3	4	N/A
66. My student affairs division has detailed relocation plans for students if it becomes necessary.	1	2	3	4	N/A
67. My institution has publicized evacuation plans for the individual buildings on campus.	1	2	3	4	N/A
68. My institution has developed and publicized evacuation plans for the entire campus.	1	2	3	4	N/A
69. My institution has easily accessible campus maps across campus grounds.	1	2	3	4	N/A
70. My student affairs division has written policies and protocol for each type of institutional crisis.	1	2	3	4	N/A
71. My student affairs division collaborates with internal units in response to crisis (departments, etc.)	1	2	3	4	N/A
72. My student affairs division collaborates with external units in response to crisis (police, fire, mental health practitioners, etc.)	1	2	3	4	N/A
73. My student affairs division has detailed plans for additional external police, fire, and mental health personnel.	1	2	3	4	N/A

Additional or Clarifying Comments Regarding this Section:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Process - Response

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
74. I am trained to respond and resolve symptoms of acute traumatic stress.	1	2	3	4	N/A
75. My CRT is trained to respond and resolve symptoms of acute traumatic stress.	1	2	3	4	N/A
76. I am familiar with the symptoms and the 10 stages of acute traumatic stress.	1	2	3	4	N/A
77. My CRT is familiar with the symptoms and the 10 stages of acute traumatic stress.	1	2	3	4	N/A
78. My student affairs division has qualified professionals/paraprofessionals that act as first responders.	1	2	3	4	N/A
79. My student affairs division's response strategy incorporates an initial immediate response to a crisis.	1	2	3	4	N/A
80. During initial response, my student affairs division addresses the entire campus populace needs.	1	2	3	4	N/A
81. My student affairs division's response strategy incorporates a comprehensive follow up response.	1	2	3	4	N/A
82. During the follow up response, my student affairs division addresses the needs of the entire campus.	1	2	3	4	N/A
83. I am familiar with the five stage process of crisis management (prevention/mitigation, planning, response, recovery, learning).	1	2	3	4	N/A
84. I am familiar with the all-hazards approach to crisis management in which the general response is the same regardless of the type of crisis.	1	2	3	4	N/A
85. My student affairs division follows another type of approach to crisis management.	1	2	3	4	N/A
86. My student affairs division follows no specific model of crisis management.	1	2	3	4	N/A

Additional or Clarifying Comments Regarding this Section:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Structure - Assessment

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
87. My student affairs division has an in-depth assessment strategy for its crisis response protocol.	1	2	3	4	N/A
88. My student affairs division continuously assesses its crisis response protocol.	1	2	3	4	N/A
89. My student affairs division continuously follows protocols that assess threats to campus safety.	1	2	3	4	N/A
90. My institution requires individual departments assess its own crisis response individually.	1	2	3	4	N/A
91. My student affairs division compares its response strategy with similar institutions for assessment.	1	2	3	4	N/A
92. My student affairs division continuously reviews emergency and notification procedures	1	2	3	4	N/A
93. My student affairs division engages in periodic campus pre-assessments of possible risks to safety.	1	2	3	4	N/A
94. My student affairs division has an established strategy for the identification of high-risk students.	1	2	3	4	N/A
95. My student affairs division assesses its response and campus community while still in crisis.	1	2	3	4	N/A
96. My student affairs division participates in systematic assessments of the full response plan post crisis.	1	2	3	4	N/A
97. My student affairs division utilizes assessment data to make necessary changes in the response plan.	1	2	3	4	N/A

Additional or Clarifying Comments Regarding this Section:
_____
_____
_____
_____

Structure - Memorials

In terms of memorials, my institution:

98. Engages in moments of silence.	1	2	3	4	N/A
99. Incorporates a commemorative plaque.	1	2	3	4	N/A
100. Plants a tree as a memorial.	1	2	3	4	N/A
101. Incorporates a mural.	1	2	3	4	N/A
102. Leads a campus memorial service.	1	2	3	4	N/A

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
103. Attends a funeral service.	1	2	3	4	N/A
104. Has a dedication.	1	2	3	4	N/A
105. Lowers university flags to half-mast.	1	2	3	4	N/A
106. Engages in other: _____					
107. With regards to memorials, my student affairs division solicits the wishes of family members.	1	2	3	4	N/A
108. With regards to memorials, my student affairs division solicits the wishes of the student body.	1	2	3	4	N/A
109. With regards to memorials, my student affairs division solicits the wishes of faculty and staff.	1	2	3	4	N/A
110. My institution provides campus support services (counseling) personnel at memorial services.	1	2	3	4	N/A
111. My institution supports free counseling services to students in times of crisis.	1	2	3	4	N/A
112. My institution supports free counseling services to faculty/staff in times of crisis.	1	2	3	4	N/A
113. My institution supports free counseling services to the neighboring community in times of crisis.	1	2	3	4	N/A
114. My institution provides sufficient memorial services for the campus community affected by crisis.	1	2	3	4	N/A

Additional or Clarifying Comments Regarding this Section:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Additional comments about your institutional crisis response plan are welcome:

Thank you for your participation and your contributions to my research study!

– C. Ryan Akers, Ph.D Candidate, Student Affairs Admin.
Email: cakers@uga.edu; Phone: 662-325-5914

Portions of this survey were adapted from checklists and themes found throughout three resources: Harper, Paterson, and Zdziarski's *Crisis Management: Responding from the Heart*, 2005; Lerner, Volpe, and Lindell's *A Practical Guide for University Crisis Response*, 2004; and Siegel's *Campuses Respond to Violent Tragedy*, 1994.

APPENDIX E

Data Collection Interview Guide

Institutional Policy and Crisis:

- According to your institution's policies, please explain what would be considered a campus crisis, including all categories. What is not considered a crisis?

- What types of crises has your institution responded to in recent years (in the last 10-15 years)? Please briefly describe the incident(s).

- Do you feel that institutions meet or exceed expectations in terms of a comprehensive crisis management plan?

- Do you feel that your institution exceeds expectations in terms of a comprehensive crisis management plan? If not, what needs to happen for this to be accomplished?

Structure:

- Referencing the definition of structure of a crisis response plan, what special considerations are given to crucial elements, such as formation of team, mitigation, communication, collaboration, training, memorials, etc.?

- What is the most critical element of structure? Explain.

Immediate Process:

- Referencing the definition of process of a crisis response plan, what special considerations are given to crucial elements of immediate process, such as training, communication, collaboration, debriefing, assessment, supervision, programs and services?

- What is the most critical component of immediate process? Explain.

Long Term Process:

- Referencing the definition of process of a crisis response plan, what special considerations are given to crucial elements of immediate process, such as training, communication, collaboration, debriefing, assessment, supervision, programs and services?

- What is the most critical component of long-term process? Explain.

Assessment:

- Does your institution have a formal or informal strategy to assess the **structure** of the crisis response plan? If yes, please describe its components. If no, please share your opinions of why and what they can do better.

- Does your institution have a formal or informal strategy to assess the **process** of the crisis response plan? If yes, please describe its components. If no, please share your opinions of why and what they can do better?

Training:

- Does your institution have a formal or informal strategy to train the campus community for an efficient crisis response? How are they trained? Who is trained? What types of crises are they trained to respond?

- Does your institution have a formal or informal strategy to train the campus community with regards to the **structure** of the crisis response?

- Does your institution have a formal or informal strategy to train the campus community with regards to the **process** of the crisis response?

Campus Constituents and Other Parties:

- Does your institution's crisis response plan address the needs of all campus community members or does it primarily address student needs? Please explain.

- What programs and services (if any) are available for students, faculty/staff, parents, bordering community, etc.?

Institutional Type/Crisis Type:

- Do you believe that the location of your institution has any bearing on the crisis response strategy at your campus? Explain.

- Does institutional type have any bearing on the response to crisis on your campus as compared to other campuses? Explain.

- Does the type of crisis have any bearing on the response to crisis on your campus? Explain.

Closing:

- In your opinion, what is the most important aspect of a crisis response plan? What is the least critical aspect of a crisis response plan?

- What is the most often overlooked component of a crisis response plan at your institution? Nationwide?

- In your opinion, what is/are the high point(s) of your institution's response to crises on campus? Provide examples if possible.

- In your opinion, what is/are the low point(s) of your institution's response to crises on campus? Provide examples if possible. What do you feel needs the most attention regarding the institutional crisis response plan?