



How-To Guide

Leadership Support in Higher Education Business Continuity Planning

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About Kuali Ready

1. Annual Exercises

These exercises are vital to emergency preparedness. It is important that your institution's leaders understand the purpose of annual exercises, and the importance of their attendance.

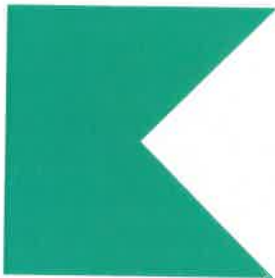
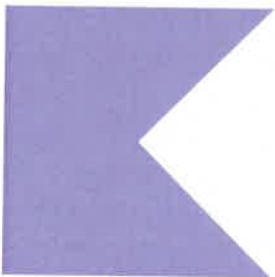
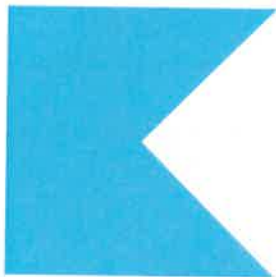


Table Top Exercises: Small-group discussions that walk through a scenario and the courses of action an IHE will need to take before, during, and after an emergency to lessen the impact on the IHE community. This activity helps assess the plan and resources, and facilitates an understanding of emergency management and planning concepts.



Drills: During drills, community partners such as first responders, local emergency managers and relevant IHE personnel use the actual campus buildings, facilities, and grounds to practice responding to a scenario.



Functional Exercises: Functional exercises are similar to drills but involve multiple partners. Participants react to realistic simulated events (e.g., a bomb threat or an armed intruder), and implement planned procedures.



Full-Scale Exercises: The most time-consuming activities in the exercise continuum. This includes multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional efforts in which all resources are deployed. This type of exercise tests collaboration among the agencies and participants, public information systems, communications systems, and equipment. An Emergency Operations Center is established by either law enforcement or fire services, and the ICS is activated.

How Can I Get Leadership Support?



As previously mentioned, the NCCPS report includes a number of ways that leadership can provide support: 1) Annual exercises, 2) Executive committees, 3) Letters of support.

What Does Leadership Support Look Like?

“Institutional commitment can come in a variety of ways. Certainly there’s financial support. But that’s not the be all end all. Policies that reinforce the importance of emergency planning [and] continuity planning [...] are also important.”

NCCPS Report

When emergency planners hear “leadership support,” they often think of financial resources. While this is a major form of leadership support, there are other forms of leadership support that can potentially have an even more significant effect on an emergency planning program.

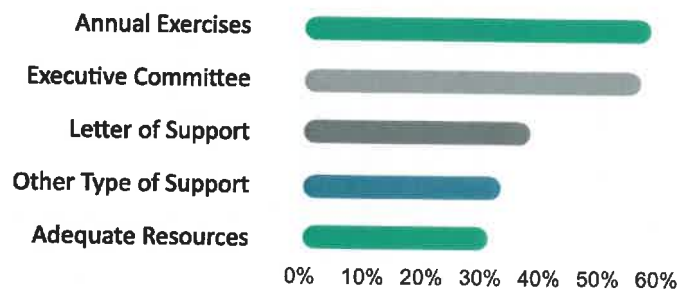
Leaders can offer their support in a number of ways: attending events, releasing statements, adding BCP to responsibilities listed in job descriptions, participating in planning meetings, and issuing requirement policies to contribute to emergency plans. Such acts of support are more public than a simple budget approval arranged over email. These methods help faculty, staff and students understand that emergency planning is part of their institution’s culture.

One of the most common forms of leadership support that emergency managers see is annual exercises. This means that leaders attend annual exercises and encourage or even require faculty and staff to attend.

An executive committee is another common form of leadership support. Leaders can approve the creation of an executive committee that supports emergency management or creates continuity plans. Both of these forms of support are a public display to faculty and staff of a leader’s engagement.

The third most common form of leadership support is a letter of support from the president. These letters can be a powerful call to action.

Form of Institutional Commitment



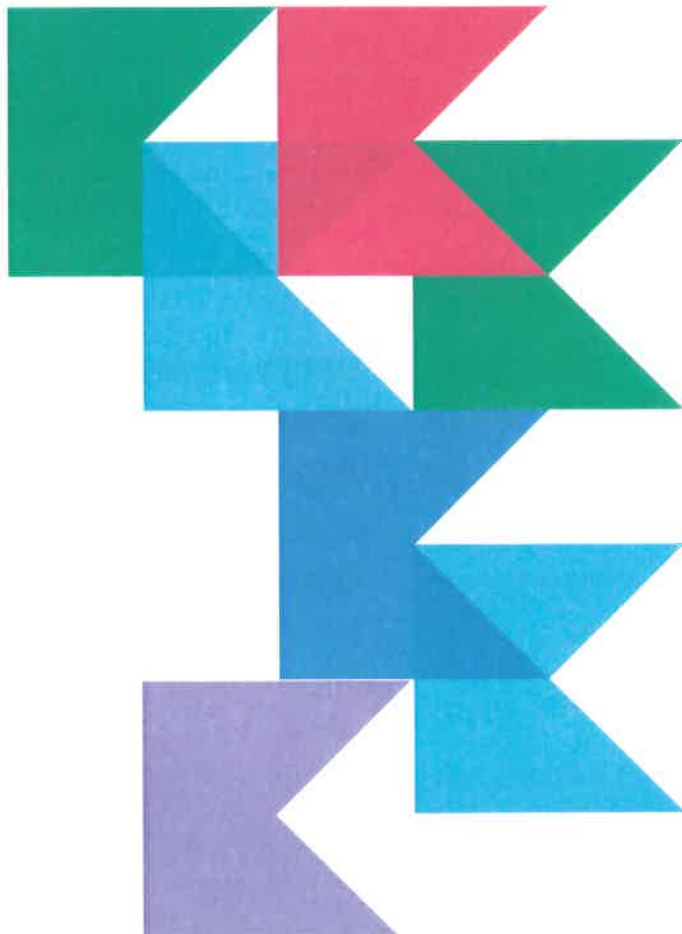
Source: NCCPS



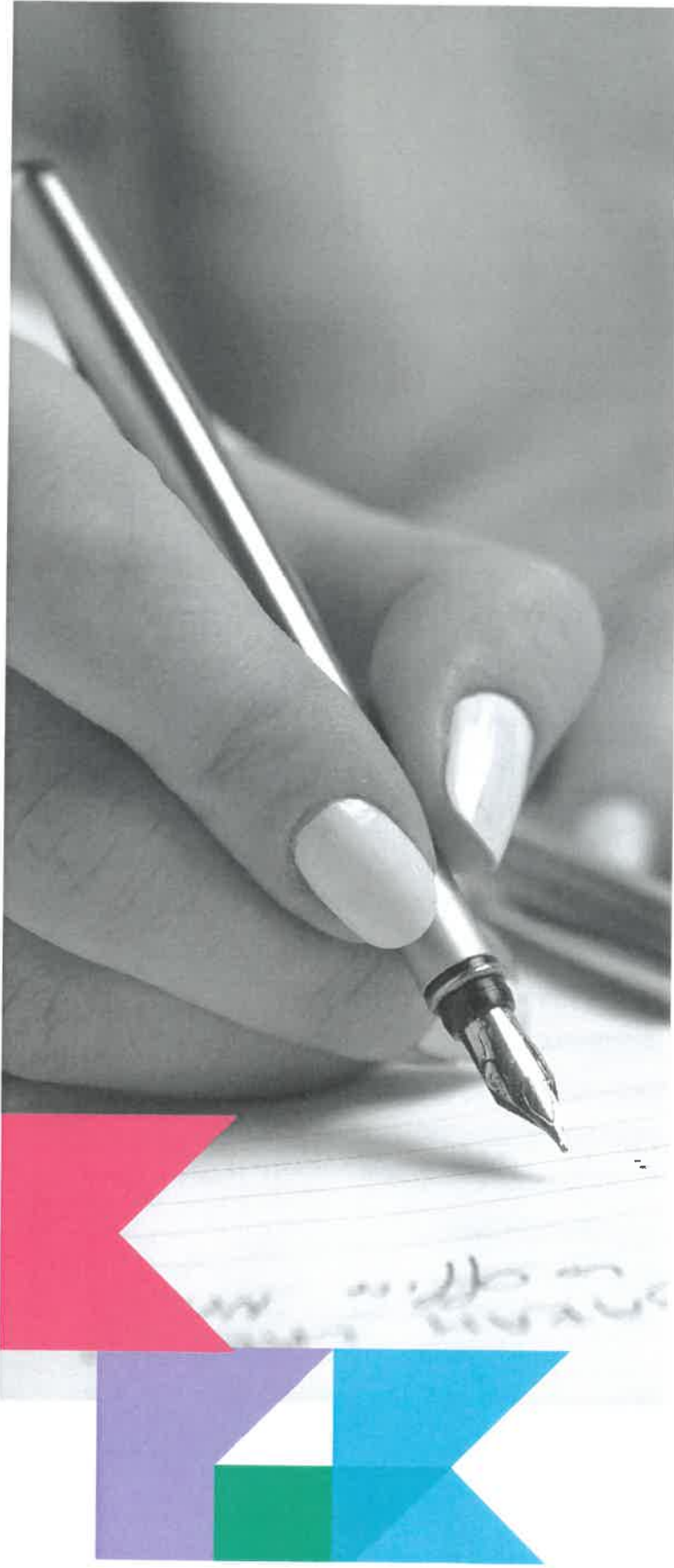
The NCCPS report shows that 15% of emergency planners agree that leadership commitment is one of the top three most challenging factors that an emergency planning program faces. The report also shows that over two thirds of emergency planners agree that leaders at their institution are committed to emergency management.

If 65% of emergency planners agree that their leaders are committed to emergency planning, why did 15% cite leadership commitment as one of their biggest challenges?

The data suggests that leadership commitment is nuanced; leaders may be committed, but developing and maintaining that commitment is challenging. Leaders care about their institutions. They have their mission, goals and strategies in place to build up their institution. It is those very priorities that keep them busy and draw their attention away from emergency planning. One respondent from our own research had a valuable insight:



“Initially, I saw a ton of support and interest but as time passes, so does the interest and backing. I think I may have to seek this buy-in every 2 or 3 years to continue making progress.”
Kuali Survey Respondent



The Real Problems You're Facing

If you've lobbied for leadership support in the past, you understand how difficult it can be to obtain. If you haven't, leadership support is hard to get because leaders are busy—very, very busy.

"I think the job of the president has changed a lot, and just to give you a little feel of how we do things here, we're in the middle of a capital campaign. [...] I have to raise about \$405,000 a day, seven days a week for the next 4.5 years."
Steven Leath, Iowa State President

"To do this job you have to be physically ready. It is exhausting and near-impossible to find a moment to exercise or relax, to have a balanced diet (meals are almost always used for meetings with donors and volunteers), or a personal life. [...] It is a 24/7 job like no other. A president is constantly "on" and many people want a piece of her time."
K. Johnson Bowles

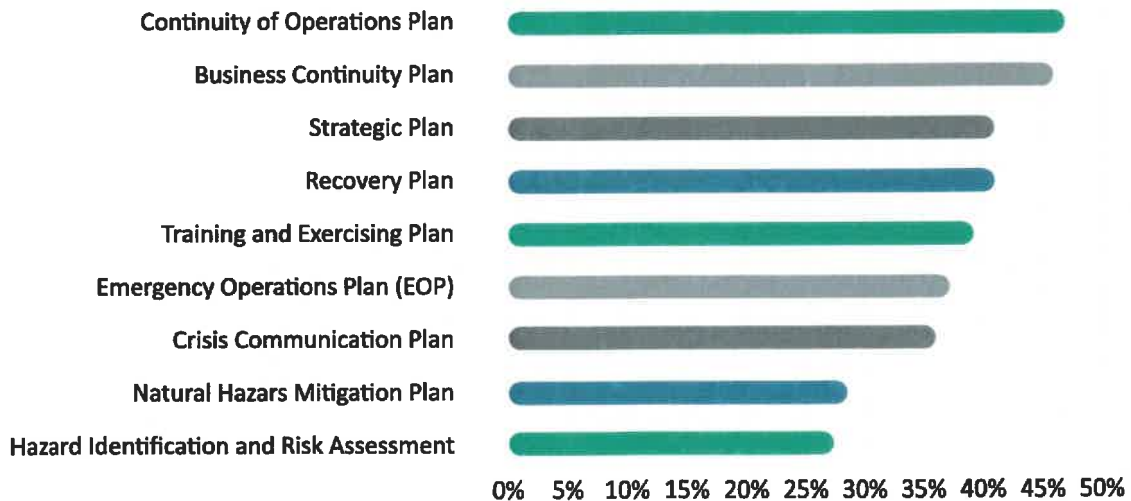
Is Leadership Support Really That Important?

Campus leaders, namely presidents, provosts, and deans, have a powerful platform. They can encourage, but also enforce, engagement from the rest of an institution in the emergency planning process. According to the NCCPS report, about half of the participants believe that a connection to leadership leads to improvement of recovery and continuity plans.

“The only thing harder than planning for an emergency is explaining why you didn’t.”

Anonymous

Percent of respondents who identified the connection to leadership as a need for improving specific plans



Source: NCCPS

Survey Respondent Facts



Use hard copy binders to manage their continuity plans



Reported that the President and Vice President are the most influential leaders



Agree that leadership support increases engagement in continuity plans

100% of respondents agree that having support from campus leadership is necessary for successful, campus wide rollout of BCP.

"Our plan was state mandated, reviewed and approved by the state. Executive leadership supported the effort and the continuing requirements of the plan."

Steve Shields, Sam Houston State University



"We are still struggling with this. Part of the issue is we haven't had the resources to support BCP efforts."

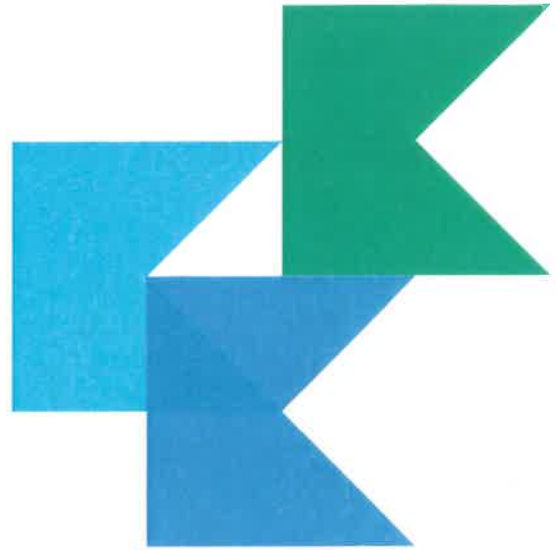
Anonymous

"Initially, I saw a ton of support and interest and as time passes, so does the interest and backing. I think I may have to seek this buy-in every 2 or 3 years to continue making progress."

Anonymous

"You need both a 'carrot and a stick.' Leadership can support the development and enforcement of business continuity regulations and requirements for compliance."

Anonymous



Most Common Difficulties Faced



Leadership support is difficult to obtain due to lack of incentives

Obtaining leadership support seems to require ongoing effort

Institutions without state mandates have difficulty obtaining leadership support



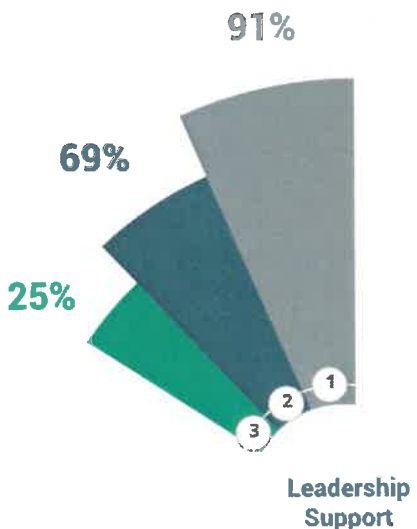
kuali READY

User Research

At Kuali, we wanted to know just how important leadership support is to continuity planning. We turned to our network of users to find answers from continuity and emergency planners. Their responses directly coincided with the NCCPS survey.

Adopting a Business Continuity Program: How Important is Leadership Support?

Kuali surveyed higher-ed Business Continuity Planners and this is what they had to say



ConEnuity Planners and Emergency Managers see the value of leadership support

- 1 91% recognize leadership support is important to forming a conEnuity plan
- 2 69% said leadership support will improve the quality of campus conEnuity plans
- 3 Only 25% have full leadership support



When plans are in place and near disasters are avoided, it is easy to see how continuity planning could take a backseat to other matters. However, with thousands of students, staff, and faculty, valuable real estate, private documents and billing information, the stakes are simply too high for an institution to forgo planning ahead.

Throughout this guide, we hope to provide information and ideas that will aid you in improving the attitude for emergency planning at your institution and help you to gain the leadership commitment that you need. Our goal is to help you in building and managing a more robust BCP.

**“We want to be able to do tomorrow what we were doing yesterday –
no matter what happens today.”**

Paul Diamond, creator of Kualu Ready



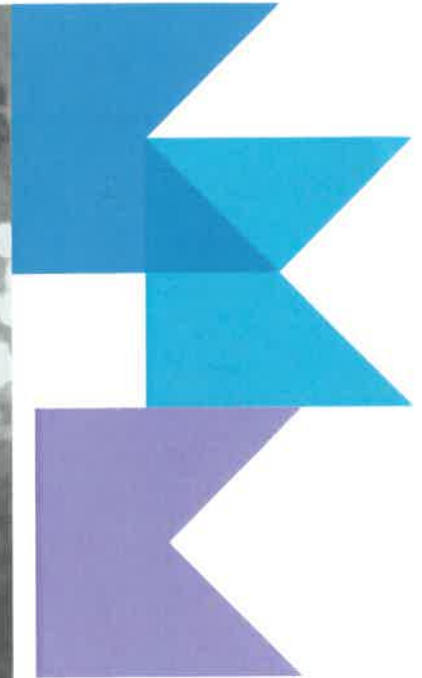
Background

The National Center for Campus Public Safety (NCCPS) was founded in 2013 and exists to provide information and resources to college campuses regarding campus safety. Their goal is to create safer campus communities across the United States. In 2016, the NCCPS sponsored a research report, "National Higher Education Emergency Management Program Needs Assessment," to assess the needs of emergency managers at IHEs across the United States. They wanted to know what was needed to improve emergency management plans, where the gaps in resources and information laid, and how to fill those gaps.

The research revealed an interesting finding: Emergency managers need more institutional engagement to complete their plans.

According to the NCCPS, the best way to obtain more institutional engagement, and therefore improve emergency management programs, is to have commitment from campus leadership.

Institutional engagement means interaction and/or support from all levels of the institution, the newest students to the President.



Commitment from leaders on your campus can significantly improve your emergency plans. Leaders have a powerful voice; they can get more of the institution engaged in emergency management than anyone else. Leaders can also help reverse any negative attitudes toward emergency management in higher education.

The current tendency in higher education emergency planning is to be reactive rather than proactive. Faculty, staff and leaders at an institution are much more likely to be engaged in emergency planning after adverse events have occurred than before an emergency happens. In the NCCPS report, multiple interviewees stated a "that will never

happen here" mentality was present among leaders at their institution. Interviewees also said that when an emergency planner does their job well, "they often go unnoticed."

Participants talked about the unfortunate reality that incidents typically must first occur before an institution becomes engaged in improving its emergency management program.

NCCPS Report

Overview

We all hope that bad things never happen—that we'll never see supply chain issues, teaching strikes, or cyber attacks at our university. We read about events like that happening at other institutions and wonder when it will be our turn. What will happen to us? Will we be adequately prepared?

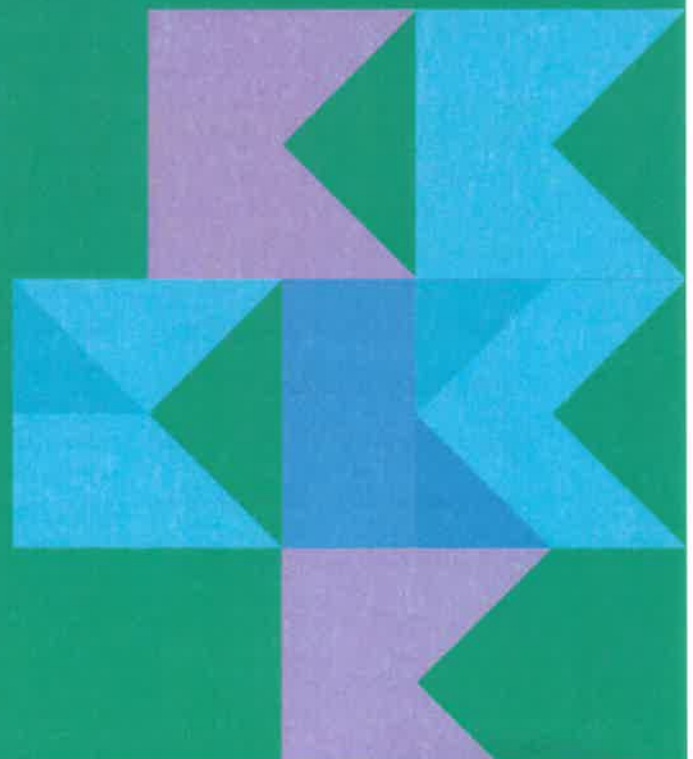
In the late summer of 2016, East Carolina University (ECU) was hit by Hurricane Matthew, which shut down the institution for over 2 weeks. Because ECU was prepared, with business continuity plans in place, the recovery went smoothly. Business continuity prepares your institution to get back up and running as quickly as possible after a disruption. An all-hazards business continuity plan (BCP) allows an institution to effectively respond to any event. Its scope covers the day-to-day emergencies, like a downed tree, as well as extended potential disasters like a pandemic.

A business continuity plan is essential for an institution of higher education (IHE). It allows one to be resilient in the face of any emergency.

Emergency Management Cycle

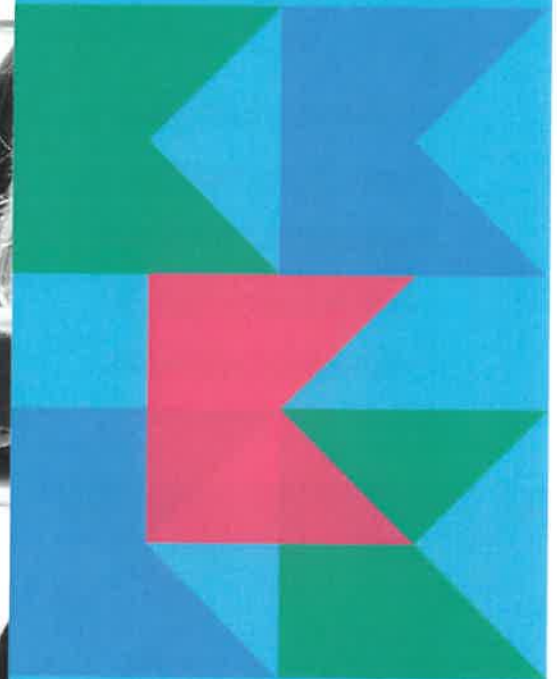
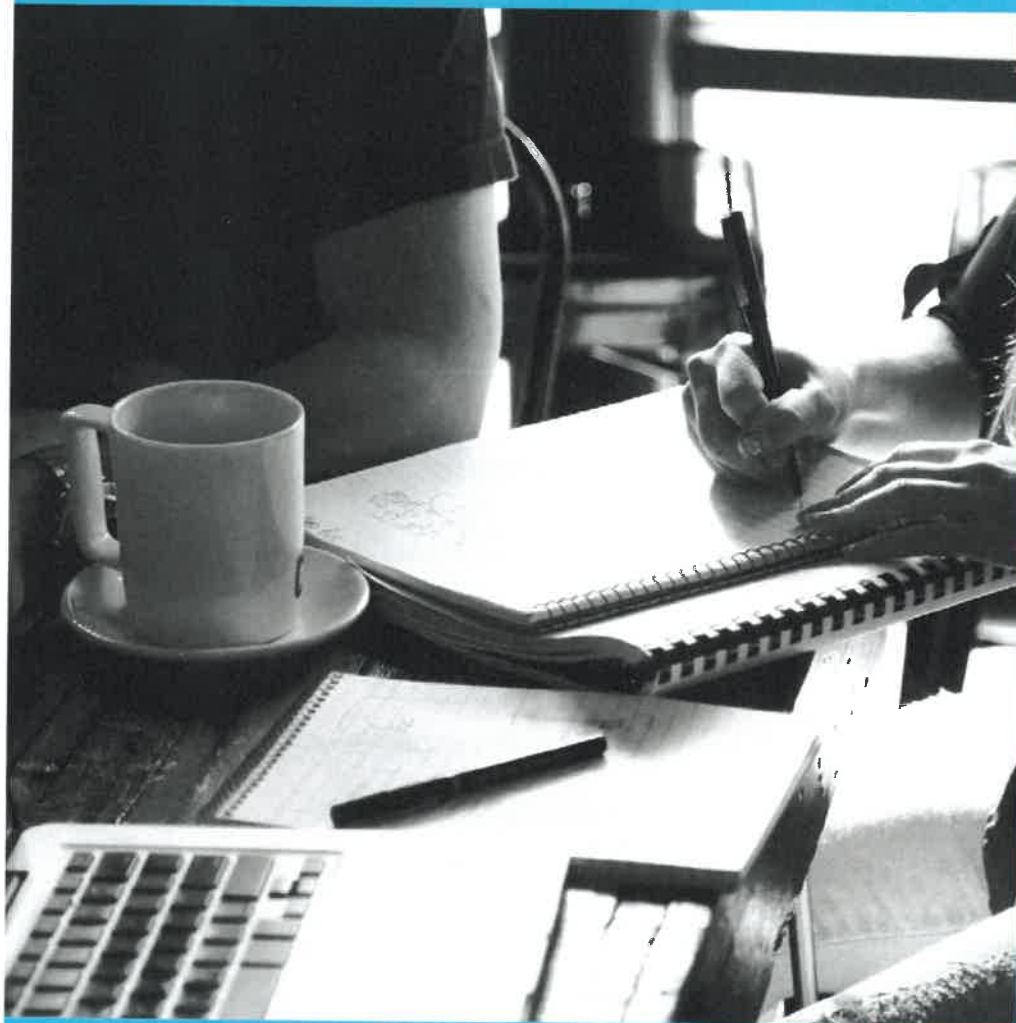



Continuity: Actions taken to protect the campus mission from disruption. Continuity influences all four planning phases of Emergency Management.



2. Executive Committees

Committees are important to the on-going quality of a BCP. Committees can evaluate and assess continuity plans. With the support of senior leadership, committees can require departments or units to edit or complete their BCPs. A committee could be established to manage the major tasks of a BCP; when given specific responsibilities, faculty or staff are more likely to be engaged in continuity planning. Committees can also be organized to help a continuity planner when hiring additional needed staff is not a possibility.





“The more a plan is practiced and stakeholders are trained on the plan, the more effectively they will be able to act before, during, and after an emergency to lessen the impact on life and property.”

NCCPS Emergency Operations Guide

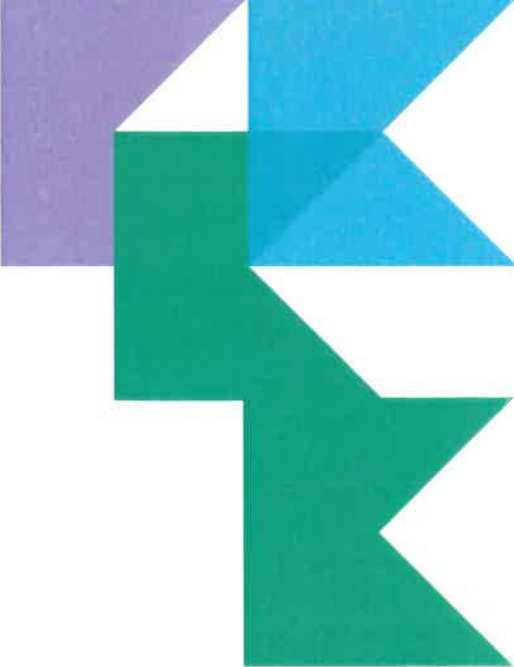
You can help your leaders understand why drills, tabletop exercises and full-scale exercises are important by reviewing materials from the NCCPS, including a recent guide they released explaining the importance of emergency exercises.

The NCCPS used an interviewee's comment to make a valuable point about a leader's support for BCP exercises:

“(You) can develop a program, but without senior administration buy-in, it is an academic exercise without commitment.”



Without that support, you are less likely to get commitment and engagement from your entire institution. In fact, a Quali Ready user lobbied for a new policy that required more BCP engagement. After leadership approved the policy, engagement increased.



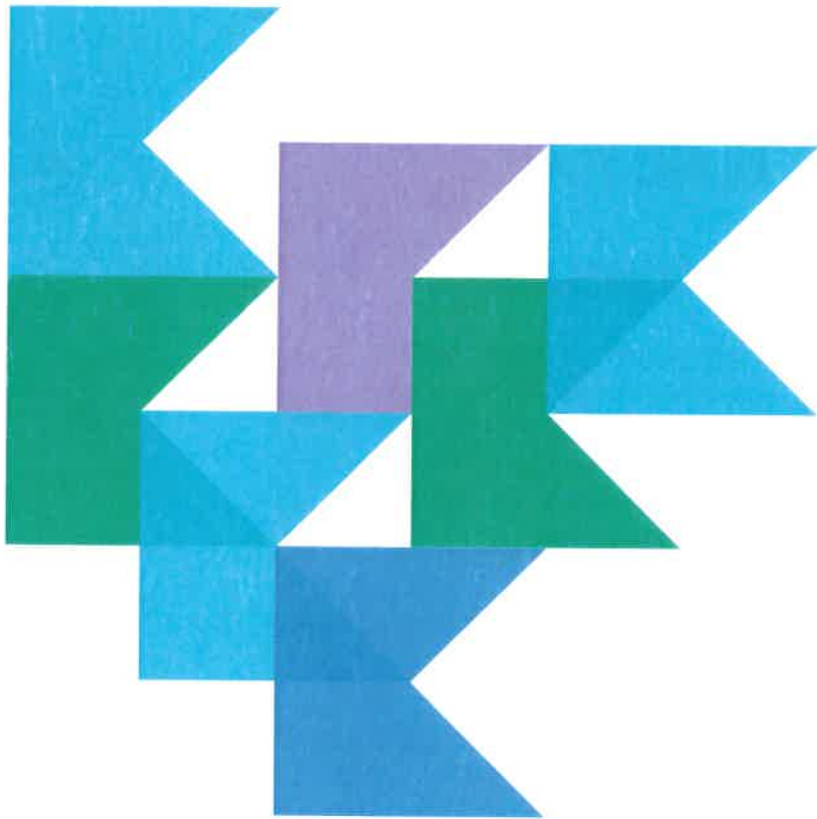
“We have a continuity planning policy approved at [our] University through our emergency management planning committee. It was approved by the academic council. It requires all the departments identified in the emergency operations plan [...] to develop a continuity plan.”

At this particular institution, the number of continuity plans increased through a policy approved by senior leadership. Senior leadership also agreed to attend tabletop exercises to test the initial continuity plans from each department. When asked if the user had seen significant increases in willingness to develop continuity plans since the policy was implemented, the answer was, **“Yes! Absolutely.”**

3. Letter of Support

These letters of support and encouragement can be written to a variety of audiences: the entire institution, only faculty and staff, only department heads and senior administration, or even to the institution and surrounding community.

From our network, we obtained letters of encouragement from institution presidents, vice presidents and provosts regarding continuity plans. Other institutions have distributed similar letters among their faculty to communicate the importance of an emergency plan and BCP. We created these templates with the intent that BCP managers will download and customize them according to specific needs. We hope these templates can be a valuable resource in obtaining a president's support and increasing institutional engagement.



Sample Letters from the President

The [first](#) sample letter encourages faculty to complete their BCP. It includes the gratitude from the president for supporting the BCP initiative.

The [second](#) sample letter prompts faculty to take business continuity planning, specifically drills, seriously. It includes consequences of ignoring drills.

To access these letters, click the corresponding hyperlink above or copy and paste these addresses into your web

“Just because the river is quiet does not mean the crocodiles have left.”

Malay Proverb

Letter 1:

www.kuali.co/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Letter-from-the-President-1.pdf

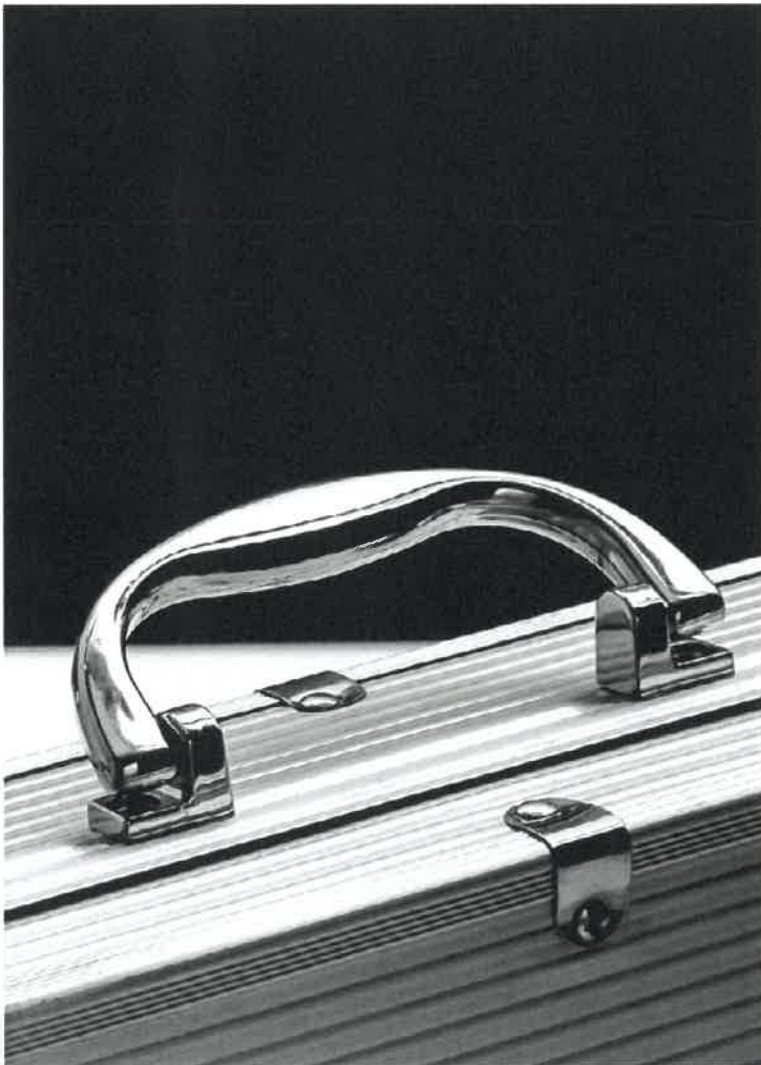
Letter 2:

www.kuali.co/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Letter-from-the-President-2.pdf



Conclusion

Business continuity plans are a key part of any organization and we know how difficult it can be to get everyone on board. But we, like you, see the need for quality business continuity plans in the higher education space. We hope this guide gives you some ideas and resources to help you obtain the leadership support that you need to make your continuity plan more robust and successful.



Build Your Community

Our efforts to improve BCP in higher education are ongoing. We want to hear your feedback, insights and experiences in creating a culture of support for continuity planning. Share your thoughts by tweeting @KualiReady.





June 16, 2014

RE: Business Continuity Planning

Dear Colleagues:

The University of Texas at Arlington is dedicated to guaranteeing our readiness for emergencies, as well as ensuring our ability to continue to provide services in the aftermath of such an event. Business continuity planning is an essential element of emergency preparedness, and each department or unit of the University is required to develop a Business Continuity Plan (BCP) to address the challenges they would encounter in continuing their business operations during or after an emergency. Business operations are applicable to all facets of our operations to include academic, research, and business support functions. Although we hope to never experience an emergency situation, some of our campus community recently faced a variety of challenges after a building fire, when a building flooded, and during a communications outage. If your unit or department experienced a natural, technological, or man-made emergency, are you prepared to or could you continue your business operations both during and after the event? Our University is engaged in continual business continuity planning initiatives to ensure we are all prepared and able to answer this question affirmatively.

Many units and departments throughout the University have worked diligently in preparing and developing their BCPs, and we are grateful for your efforts. In the coming months, members of the Business Continuity Planning team will be contacting the units and departments who have not yet completed their BCPs to assist them with plan requirements, and to answer any questions or assist in any way they can. Your support of and dedication to this initiative is essential to ensure UTA's ability to serve our campus community given any situation or challenge we encounter.

Please feel free to contact Provost Elsenbaumer, Vice Provost Silva, Police Chief Kim Lemaux, Emergency Management Coordinator Cindy Mohat, or Emergency Management Specialist Peggy Morales with any questions. Thanks to each of you and your departments for your assistance with and continued support of this important program.

Sincerely,

Ron Elsenbaumer
Provost

Vistasp Karbhari
President

