



COVID-19 RAPID RESPONSE CALL

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PANELISTS

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One Agency's Approach

- Montana State University (MSU) had a strong foundation that included a public safety strategic plan, enhanced threat assessment capabilities, a continuity of operations plan, succession planning, and a reconstitution plan.
- Establish a relationship with the campus president before the crisis, even if you do not directly report to the president. In an emergency, that relationship is essential.
- The challenge is that there was no real “incident;” it was just a sudden close of the campus and a “new normal” that was not foreseen.
- Public safety, epidemiologist, president.

Potential Conflicts

- Shared governance model prevalent on campuses and the Incident Command System (ICS) can conflict
- Conducted exercises before the pandemic that demonstrated the value of ICS, but during the emergency many preferred the familiarity of the shared governance model creates challenges. Some administrators felt that the ICS model was excluding them.
- Lack of authority and lack of tactical control can lead to confusion.
- MSU modified the ICS approach from one incident commander to a co-commander approach, while ensuring unity of command.

Effective Emergency Plans

- Effective crisis plans have three features—the ability to:
 - Improvise
 - Adapt
 - Overcome



- Questions campus public safety administrators should be asking before an emergency:
 - What is my leader missing?
 - Can we guide our leaders to see the horizon?
 - Is there an opportunity to engage in scenario planning with leaders?
- Make a business case for why these questions should be asked and answered. Continually move information up the chain of command.
- Regarding COVID-19, plan for worst-case scenarios, and think about second and third tier scenarios and plan for them:
 - If there is no vaccine or herd immunity: What will we do when we have an outbreak on our campus?
 - Develop a plan for safeguarding essential employees: But what is the plan when staff are lost to budget cuts or the virus?

Take Stock and Focus on Recovery

- What did we learn from closing?
- How do we recover and re-open?
- How do we respond when it reoccurs?
- Plans for reinstating mitigation—what will be easy, what will be hard?
- What are the triggers for overcoming obstacles?

Key Takeaways

- Move your intelligence/information up the chain of command.
- Work the scenarios you have prepared for, but be ready to improvise and adapt
- Ask command staff, “what are we missing?”

For further information on these topics, please view:

https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/sites/default/files/public/downloads/cidrap-covid19-viewpoint-part1_0.pdf