

# HBCUs Stepping Up to the Plate

## FLORIDA A&M UNIVERSITY



### About FAMU

Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University is a public historically Black university offering state of the art programs in nursing, journalism, agriculture, and more. FAMU is a member of the State University System of Florida. It is also accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission of Colleges . Founded in 1887, FAMU has been a pillar of culture for the Tallahassee community.

## Spotlight on Leadership & Innovation

### FAMU Advances Emergency Management Excellence

In recent months, Florida A&M University has emerged as a model for HBCU emergency preparedness thanks to the leadership of **Dr. Ashley Davis**, who serves as the Assistant Vice President of Emergency Management, **Ms. Ivy Baker**, who serves as the Deputy Director of the Emergency Management Department, and **Mr. Pedro Rebolledo**, who serves as the Emergency Management Coordinator. Their efforts have transformed the university's approach to communication, hazard preparedness, and training.

### Key Innovations Introduced

#### *FAMU ALERT Mass Notification System*

FAMU has continued to upgrade its FAMU ALERT emergency mass notification system, adding new technology integration and redundancies to ensure the university community receives timely information across multiple communication channels.

#### *Pre-Event Contractor Agreements*

**Preparedness** now includes pre-arranged contracts with local vendors, featuring extended renewal cycles for faster response and resource mobilization.

#### *Expanded Training Initiatives*

**Staff** and partners are participating in enhanced response and preparedness training sessions, including those focused on sporting events and large-scale gatherings.

#### *Building a Culture of Readiness*

As FAMU prepares for the year ahead, the Emergency Management department is placing a strong emphasis on education and community engagement.



## Lessons From the Field

### From Dr. Davis

*Strengthening partnerships is essential—especially those that can directly support emergency response. He also emphasized that hands-on experience is an effective way to support early professional training. "Our progress at FAMU is rooted in the partnerships we cultivate—on campus, across the state, and within the wider emergency management community. No response effort succeeds in isolation. By strengthening relationships and building a culture of preparedness, we equip our university to respond decisively when it matters most. For those entering the field, seek hands-on experience early; it's the foundation of effective emergency leadership." — Dr. Ashley H. Davis, Assistant Vice President of Emergency Management*



### From Ms. Baker

*Stay calm, trust your training, and communicate clearly during crisis situations. She also highlights resilience, adaptability, and willingness to embrace an intense schedule, and desire to serve others as key traits for aspiring emergency managers. "Emergency management requires a balance of preparation, composure, and adaptability. Every day presents new challenges, but our commitment to protecting the FAMU community keeps us grounded. I always remind our team that staying calm and trusting your training is just as important as the procedures we follow. When we work together with clarity and purpose, even the most chaotic situations become manageable." — Ms. Ivy A. Baker, Deputy Director of the Emergency Management Department*



### From Mr. Rebolledo

*An understanding of the community you serve will facilitate effective responses. He also notes planning, mindfulness, and situational awareness as the foundation of success during critical situations. "Learn about the people you serve, the environment you work in, and the culture that shapes it. This will ensure you stay on top of the small details before they escalate into big issues and have a clear understanding of the resources available to help mitigate an incident. Our team understands that preparedness is an everyday mindset and a shared responsibility. We aim to instill this philosophy in our FAMU community, placing their input and safety at the forefront of all our initiatives." — Mr. Pedro Rebolledo, Emergency Management Coordinator*



## FAMU's Model Practices for HBCUs Nationwide

### Sharing Our Resources

FAMU's Emergency Management program has implemented several practices that other academic institutions can replicate seamlessly:

**Year-long** leadership training to prepare senior administrators for high-stakes decision-making.

**Strong** relationships with local and state emergency management agencies, enhancing coordination and response times while supporting planning, training, and exercise.

**Sharing** best practices with HBCUs nationwide to strengthen collective preparedness.

### Upcoming Initiatives

#### *Sporting & Large-Scale Event Management Training – May 2026*

**Senior** leaders and emergency personnel will undergo targeted training to prepare for complex event scenarios.

#### *Emergency Management State University System Annual Meeting – July 2026*

**Florida** state university emergency management leaders will convene for two days of extensive training and a space to share valuable information between institutions.

#### *New Student Orientation – Summer 2026*

**Incoming** students and their families will receive emergency awareness information as part of their orientation experience.

### Reflection & Next Steps: Why FAMU's Approach Matters

FAMU is demonstrating what is possible when an HBCU invests in sustainable preparedness infrastructure, leadership development, and campus-wide communication systems.

### Looking Ahead

**The** FAMU Emergency Management department will continue to expand hands-on training opportunities, foster inter-HBCU collaboration, and strengthen campus resilience initiatives.

**FAMU's** efforts illustrate that a truly safe campus is built through the alignment of strong leadership, data-driven planning, and a shared culture of readiness. For, when leaders champion preparedness, when strategic frameworks guide decisions, and when the entire campus community embraces safety as a shared responsibility, institutions are better equipped to prevent risks, respond effectively to emergencies, and sustain long-term resilience.



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