

# HBCU EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT WORKFORCE CONSORTIUM NEWSLETTER

## “Whole of HBCUs”

### Vol. 4



May 2025

<https://www.huttc.org/hbcu-emc/>

## Welcome From the Chair

As we navigate new policies that either directly or indirectly impact our campuses and strive to work with the new mandates, we are reminded that not only this generation of resilient students, but the next one, is looking to us for guidance and support. One major emphasis of relevance to our effort from the Executive Order is that state and local governments, rather than the federal government, should take the lead in national resilience efforts. This directive provides a tangible role for our campus leaders. It also allows us to, “envision a future practice of emergency management”. The increasing frequency and severity of disasters, whether natural, intentional, or accidental, demands our communities to be prepared with our comprehensive all-hazards approach centered around the four fundamental disaster life cycle phases, namely mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. As emergency management professionals, we recognize that a key component of our preparedness programs must include cultural and linguistic competence in order to maximize the impact of our effort. This effort that is made stronger by the students we educate and mentor to combat the evolving threat landscape, including that posed by climate change.

Reckoning with this reality, we must continue to focus our collective effort on education, engagement, and community partnerships with renewed energy for our vulnerable populations. With this in mind, let us continue to incorporate lessons learned from recent local, regional, and national events to address known gaps. We can leverage our resources with constant assessing, planning, training, exercising, and revising where needed, to not only expose vulnerabilities but build and maintain more robust preparedness plans as we support our communities to remain vigilant and prepared.

In this edition, enjoy the breath of activities that our consortium members lead as they continue to direct and implement resilience efforts on their respective campuses. These efforts ultimately strengthen our communities, our country and our world. We also bid farewell to Ms. Dataya Resenois our intern for the past 4 years.

-Goulda Downer, PhD, FAND, RD, LN, CNS

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## ECSU Named as Part of the NCDOT Center of Excellence for Air Mobility

NCDOT recently reported the creation of a Center of Excellence for Air Mobility with the inclusion of three UNC universities including Elizabeth City State University (ECSU) who will take the lead in the field of drones in public safety. This will allow the ECSU Department of Aviation and Emergency Management (AEM) and their student led Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) continue the unique research that they have already been doing to use technology to save lives.

ECSU AEM has a history of researching drones including a past DHS project that examined the potential for the use of drone technologies in public safety. While the project found huge potential for the technologies it also identified multiple challenges to the applications. Being a part of this new Center of Excellence will allow university researchers to continue their work looking to overcome as well as help bring new products to market.

This opportunity will also provide for the continuation of unique opportunities for student researchers. This past semester a group of student researchers presented some of their findings at the International Association of Emergency Mangers (IAEM) conference in Colorado Springs and another group who presented their work and findings in Wilmington at the Southeast and Caribbean Disaster Resiliency Partnership (SCDHP).

If you would like to know more about how you can integrate drone technologies into your public safety education program feel free to contact the ECSU Department of Aviation and Emergency Management.

-Kevin Kupietz, PhD, EFO



ECSU EM/CERT students preparing to present their work on drone technology in public safety at the IAEM conference 2025



ECSU researchers flying drones at the coastal city of Beaufort NC mapping waterfront for base data to help with flooding mitigation.

## FAMU Emergency Management: Advancing Preparedness

Hurricanes and severe storms are within the usual weather patterns for Florida A&M University (FAMU). However, FAMU faced an unusual challenge in January of 2025 when an unexpected ice storm hit North Florida, requiring additional measures from the university. The FAMU Department of Emergency Management activated the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to ensure that operations on campus ran smoothly and that the students, faculty, and staff remained safe during the rare winter event. This case marked one of the rare activations for ice hazard events in Florida and proved FAMU's adaptability.

The department continues to expand its training and outreach efforts in response to lessons learned from this storm and prior activations. We organized crisis management training for our senior leadership to enhance decision-making when needed. Knowing that emergency alerting and communication are essential to any emergency, the department hosted Everbridge/FAMU ALERT webinars tailored to university students, staff, and faculty, guiding them on effectively utilizing the emergency notification system. In addition, the department conducted Lunch & Learn interactive webinars covering the topics of severe weather and hurricane preparedness to reintroduce key safety protocols.

In April, the department activated our EOC in response to the tragic active shooter incident at neighboring Florida State University (FSU). After initial safety concerns were subdued, our department and the interim Director from Student Health Services supported FSU's EOC and Student Reception Center. This ability to help further shows the importance of interagency collaboration between universities and other local partners in times of crisis.

The department will host a Hurricane Tabletop Exercise in collaboration with the FEMA Exercise Division. This scenario-based discussion will allow FAMU departments to evaluate storm impacts and test readiness for the 2025 hurricane season. The exercise reflects a growing emphasis on whole-community preparedness and operational coordination.

The FAMU Department of Emergency Management has strengthened resilience through proactive planning and effective communication, our experience responding to winter weather, providing active threat support, and preparing for hurricanes. – *Ashley Davis MS, CEM, FPEM*



Eugene, T. (@treyvisuals). (2025, January 31). Snowed in: How FAMU students made the most of a week-long campus shutdown. The Famuan. <https://bit.ly/3GvHvIb>



FAMU Department of Emergency  
Management

## Talladega College Awarded \$345,000 State Grant to Strengthen Community Safety and Mental Health Initiatives

Talladega College has been awarded a \$345,000 State Crisis Intervention Program grant from the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) to enhance public safety and promote community well-being. This initiative, led by Talladega College Campus Police Department chief Christopher Anderson, will focus on critical issues, including gun violence prevention, community safety, mental health support, and suicide prevention.

As project director, Anderson will oversee efforts to implement targeted community engagement events, expand police presence, and foster collaborative partnerships with local organizations to address pressing safety concerns. This initiative will be a collaborative effort to unify the campus community and the greater Talladega community, ensuring a comprehensive approach to safety, crisis prevention, and mental health support.

“As chief of police at Talladega College, I am honored to lead this vital initiative aimed at enhancing public safety and well-being in our community,” said Anderson. “By increasing police presence, fostering stronger community partnerships, and establishing the Talladega Community Safety Collaborative, we are taking a proactive approach to creating a safer environment for our students, faculty, and surrounding community.” The initiative will also enhance law enforcement visibility, expand mental health resources, and establish the Talladega Community Safety Collaborative—a partnership-driven approach to improving crisis response and violence prevention. Through strategic outreach, Talladega College aims to create a safer, more resilient community by addressing the root causes of violence and mental health challenges while strengthening the relationship between the college and the local community.



Talladega College Chief of Police  
Christopher Anderson

## UVI Leads the Way in Hazard Mitigation Planning and Emergency Response Education in the U.S. Virgin Islands

The University of the Virgin Islands (UVI) is at the forefront of emergency management and climate resilience in the Caribbean, serving as a key leader in developing the 2024 Hazard Mitigation and Resilience Plan for the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Situated in a region prone to severe hurricanes, the U.S. Virgin Islands is no stranger to the urgent need for robust emergency management planning. UVI has stepped forward as a strategic partner in driving the development of a comprehensive, research-informed mitigation plan that prioritizes community engagement, science-based decision-making, and sustainable solutions.

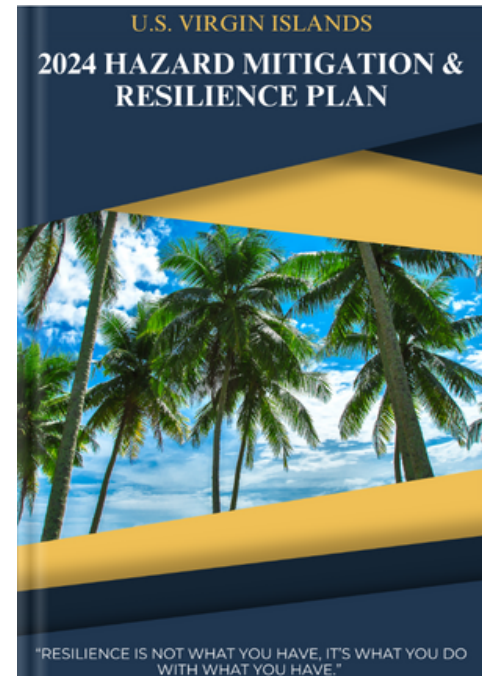
"UVI is playing a vital role in shaping the Territory's strategy to reduce disaster risk and strengthen community resilience in the face of increasing environmental threats," said UVI President Dr. Safiya George. "Our participation in the 2024 Hazard Mitigation and Resilience Plan demonstrates UVI's deep commitment to protecting the Virgin Islands and preparing future leaders to do the same. Through education, innovation, and collaboration, we are laying the foundation for long-term resilience."

One of the university's recent contributions to emergency response is the opening of the state-of-the-art Medical Simulation Center (MSC) on the Albert A. Sheen Campus on St. Croix. Officially recognized as an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) Training Center by the Virgin Islands Department of Health—Office of Emergency Medical Services, the MSC delivers immersive, hands-on training with high-fidelity manikins, virtual reality technology, and surgical skill labs. It is also positioned to expand into K-12 education and workforce development initiatives across the Territory.

UVI's work in resilience and emergency preparedness is further inspired by its alumni. At the 2025 Commencement Ceremony, honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degrees will be awarded to Retired Brigadier General Deborah Y. Francis Howell and Brigadier General Sally F. Petty, two distinguished UVI alumnae whose leadership in military service and disaster response continues to shape the Virgin Islands' future.

As the Territory builds forward from past storms and prepares for those yet to come, UVI remains a central force in advancing the knowledge, leadership, and innovation needed for a safer, stronger Caribbean.

For more information, visit [The Plan — USVI HMRP](#), and [www.uvi.edu](http://www.uvi.edu).



## Congratulations!



Ms. Dataya Resenois graduates from Howard University with a Bachelors of Health Science degree and is headed to pharmacy school in the upcoming year.

Congratulations, Dataya; enjoy this special time because you have earned it! We wish you a bright future that awaits as you embark on this new journey. We're incredibly proud of you and all you've accomplished. Here's to new adventures and endless possibilities!

# Congratulations!

## Dr. Jessica Murphy Receives Distinguished Technology Educator Award from ITEEA

Jessica Murphy, Professor of Emergency Management and Technology made presentation in April 2025 during the International Technology and Engineering Educators Association Conference on the use of AI in Disaster Preparedness and Management Simulation with co presenter, Dr. Karen W. Birch. At the conference, Dr. Murphy was also the recipient of the Distinguished Technology Educator award from ITEEA and the Professional Practice award from Epsilon Pi Tau International Technology Honor Society.

## Dr. Goulda Downer Receives Prestigious Howard University Award

During Howard University's inaugural Excellence in Innovation and Academic Achievement Awards Ceremony, on April 29<sup>th</sup> Dr. Goulda Downer received the Community Engagement Award. This award is conferred to a member of the Howard University faculty who engages in excellent sponsored research, creative works and service that is consistent with the University's community mission.



Dr. Jessica L. Murphy.



Dr. Goulda Downer and Howard University President Dr. Ben Vinson III

## Newsletter Committee

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