

# HBCU EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT WORKFORCE CONSORTIUM NEWSLETTER

## “Whole of HBCUs”

### Vol. 5



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

## Welcome From the Chair

In 1862, the Morrill Land-Grant Act allocated federal land to states to establish public universities focused on agriculture and the mechanical arts. Yet, due to segregation laws, African Americans were largely excluded from these institutions. To address this inequity, Congress enacted the Second Morrill Act in 1890, requiring states practicing segregation to either admit Black students to existing land-grant universities or create separate institutions for them. This landmark legislation, aimed at addressing access and equity, led to the establishment of Historically Black Land-Grant Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). These HBCUs received direct federal funding rather than land. Today, there are approximately 107 recognized HBCUs, with nearly 90% located in the southern United States. Many of these institutions sit in regions historically prone to natural disasters. Coastal HBCUs in Florida, Louisiana, and Texas face hurricanes, flooding, and sea-level rise, while those in Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, and South Carolina contend with tornadoes and inland flooding. Research by our Consortium Emergency Management experts reveals that numerous HBCUs are situated in under-resourced communities with high housing density, often near railway tracks, municipal sewer systems, and power plants—factors that amplify environmental and health risks during disasters.

These vulnerabilities highlight the urgent need for HBCUs and their surrounding communities to strengthen their leadership role in resilience planning and disaster preparedness. Developing a pipeline into the field of emergency management is a critical step toward achieving this goal.

In this edition, we feature trusted voices from our consortium who are taking bold steps to expand emergency management education and workforce pipelines. Their efforts are vital as communities prepare for disasters and build resilience in geographically vulnerable areas. These leaders are equipping the next generation with the skills needed—through community engagement, cultural competence, and cultural humility—to safeguard their communities.

The work of our consortium is more urgent than ever. The accelerating pace of climate change and its inequities demand focused research on disaster resilience, public health, and social equity. Together, we aim to influence policies that address disparities in emergency preparedness and recovery for vulnerable communities.

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

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## ECSU: Teaching Self and Family Disaster Preparedness as a College General Education

Observation and statistics show that a large proportion of the population is not well enough prepared for them to survive unassisted, during an extreme emergency or disaster. Self-reporting shows that only about 52% of families are ready to be without power for two weeks or longer and only 46% report having home emergency kits. While 44% of the population say they are more concerned about being affected by a disaster this coming year than they were last year, only 26% of Americans responded that they feel “very” or “extremely” confident that they know what to do in a disaster (Gabriele, 2025). FEMA recommends that every family be prepared to survive for at least 72 hours post a disaster without help. In major disasters we have seen this go for days and even weeks. If this self-resiliency is so important should these skills and knowledge be taught and emphasized to every student in school to help themselves, their families and neighbors? One university, Elizabeth City State University (ECSU), believe so and is making important changes to offer these skills.

University General Education programs tend to focus their attention on traditional classes such as math, psychology, sociology, etc. as core courses that all students have to take to give them a solid general educational background to help them be successful in life. ECSU has recently stepped out of this traditional mold with a few new gen-ed classes, one being from the Emergency Management (EM) program, EM 202 Movies in Disaster: Facts and Fiction has recently been approved for gen-ed credit as a “Social and Behavioral Science” gen-ed choice.

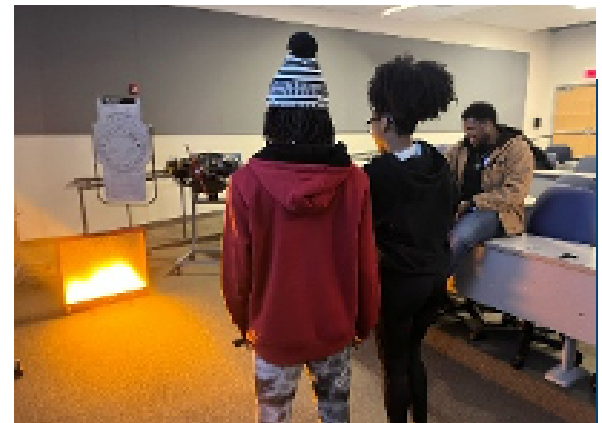
This popular course allows students to examine popular disaster movies and decide what actions the actors in the movie(s) take are fact or fiction for survival. Through the course the students learn about different disasters and appropriate actions using movie examples, but they also work their way through the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program earning their CERT certification as part of the course. CERT is a national program teaching ordinary people skills and knowledge to be prepared for disasters in a neighbors helping neighbors philosophy, building more resilient individuals which results in more resilient organizations and communities. One of the greatest things about this program is it encourages students to teach what they learn to others. This is an important concept since many HBCU students are first generation students coming from families that have vulnerabilities that make them especially susceptible to poor outcomes from emergencies and disasters.

If you would like more information on how you can be part of a CERT program in your area or how you can create general education program towards resiliency contact the ECSU EM and/or CERT programs

-Kevin Kupietz, PhD, EFO



Students attending ECSU CERT training as part of the EM 202 course learning how to move injured people in a disaster with materials they may have around the house such as a blanket or a sheet.



ECSU students teaching other students how to use a fire extinguisher for small home fires.

## Florida A&M University Emergency Management

Over the past year, Florida A&M University (FAMU) and the Department of Emergency Management have continued to strengthen regional and statewide partnerships, enhance campus preparedness, and integrate modern technologies to support their mission of safeguarding students, faculty, and staff. This commitment was most visibly demonstrated on April 17, 2025, when FAMU DEM personnel were deployed to assist Florida State University (FSU) during an active shooter incident on its campus. Our team supported FSU's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and Family Reunification Center by providing logistical coordination, communication support, and assistance to students and families affected by the event. The deployment underscored the importance of inter-university collaboration and demonstrated how Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and institutions across higher education can collaborate to enhance regional resilience.

This year also marked an important milestone for the department, as Dr. Ashley Harrison Davis, our Assistant Vice President of Emergency Management, earned his PhD in Educational Leadership from FAMU, graduating in August 2025. His dissertation, *Navigating Post-Disaster Recovery: A Comparative Analysis of K-12 School Resilience and Rebuilding Efforts in the Wake of Hurricane Michael and Hurricane Ian*, examines post-disaster recovery and resilience across Florida's K-12 schools. This study provides a detailed comparative analysis of recovery timelines, logistical barriers, community engagement, and federal funding frameworks that shaped the outcomes following Hurricanes Michael and Ian. This body of work, grounded in an extensive analysis of federal and state documentation, strengthens FAMU's leadership in emergency management and contributes valuable insights to the broader field of educational resilience and post-disaster policy implementation.

Looking ahead, FAMU Emergency Management is preparing to participate in two major exercises: a full-scale exercise at Tallahassee International Airport in February and the Florida State Emergency Response Team's annual statewide exercise at the State EOC in April 2026. These high-visibility events will bring together local, state, and federal, and higher education partners to test complex response operations and multi-agency coordination. FAMU's involvement underscores its commitment to readiness and its growing role as a national leader in emergency management.

As the year comes to a close, FAMU Emergency Management remains committed to advancing resilience in higher education—within Florida, across the nation, and throughout the HBCU community. Our progress reflects the power of innovation, collaboration, and shared responsibility in protecting our institution. Together, the HBCU Emergency Management Consortium continues to build stronger and more unified systems of preparedness for the communities we serve.

– Ashley Davis MS, CEM, FPEM

## Congratulations, Dr. Ashley Davis, CEM, FPEM



The HBCU Emergency Management Workforce Consortium (EMWC) congratulates Ashley H. Davis, CEM, FPEM, who earned his Ph.D. this year. Well-credentialed and deeply committed to serving his community, Dr. Davis serves as Emergency Management Director in the Office of the Chief Operating Officer at Florida A&M University.

# COMMUNITY AND COLLEGE PARTNERS

## PROGRAM – CURRENT EFFORTS

- The impacts of environmental change are multifaceted and complex. The southern coast of Louisiana has seen an increase in the number of hurricanes in recent years, jumping from four hurricanes between 2010 – 2019 to seven hurricanes between 2020 – 2024. (First Street, 2025) Since 2000, Dulac, LA has been hit hard by several storms, including Hurricane Katrina (2005), Hurricane Gustav (2008), Hurricane Ida (2021), and Hurricane Francine (2024). Each storm resulted in storm surge flooding, infrastructure damage, and interruption of essential services such as electricity, water, and transportation. After Hurricane Ida, several important community entities disappeared, including schools in nearby Chauvin and several places of worship. Things such as roads, bridges, and utilities have been repeatedly damaged, affecting access to essential services. Increased flooding has led to public health risks, including mold-related illnesses. Emergency services have been stretched thin during peak storm periods. Many residents face financial hardship due to property damage and lack of insurance coverage. The Community and College Partners Program (C2P2) has spent two years working with Dulac and developing three plans; a community resilience plan, a community adaptation plan to learn to live with a changing environment, and a strategic relocation plan so they are as prepared as possible in advance if they one day must move.
- C2P2 is supporting the design of an alternative energy system by Stanford for a newly acquired building for EJCAN, a small nonprofit in Clinton, North Carolina to offset their energy costs in their acquired center.
- C2P2 is also supporting the design of a solar powered watering system for small farmers on Andros Island in the Bahamas. The system will eliminate the need to purchase gas for their current water pumps, and in conjunction with a soil sensing system, increase their yield by 50%.

–Michael Burns, Co-Founder, HBCU EMWC

### Sidebar: Quick Facts About HBCUs

- Ø Number of HBCUs: ~107 nationwide
- Ø Founded: Post-1890 Morrill Act
- Ø Location: Nearly 90% in the southern U.S.
- Ø Disaster Risks: Hurricanes, flooding, tornadoes, sea-level rise
- Ø Role in Resilience: Anchors for community preparedness and emergency management education

*Our students are the future of emergency management. By equipping them with knowledge and cultural competence, we ensure that vulnerable communities are not left behind.”*

— HBCU Emergency Management Consortium Statement [[huttcc.org](http://huttcc.org)].

## ECSU Hires Multi-Disciplinary Students for Emergency Management Research Projects

Emergency Management (EM) is a field of many different disciplines working together to save lives and properties from emergencies and disasters. Elizabeth City State University (ECSU) takes pride in their EM program bringing in students from programs all over campus to not only teach the resiliency skills and knowledge but also to help them participate in research that intertwines their career discipline with EM concepts and in the past years have been able to employ many students, EM and others as paid researchers in valuable research that gave students valuable experiences.

Currently the ECSU EM program, housed in the Department of Aviation and Emergency Management, is working on several different research projects. In these projects students work closely with ECSU EM faculty in areas of interest to the student(s). One of these projects is supported by DHS and has paid ECSU student researchers from the Psychology, Graphic Arts, and Emergency Management programs. These students are collaborating with subject matter experts (SMEs) and students from other HBCUs across the country looking at mitigating recruitment efforts by terrorist groups on academic campuses. Another example is a project supported by NASA that has Aviation and Emergency Management students working with SMEs and students from other universities on airport disruptions and what can be done to mitigate these disruptions as well as decrease recovery times from the disruption events. The EM program also has been fortunate to work on private grants and projects such as a recent industry that supported the hiring of EM and Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) degree students to work together in examining drone sensor needs in public safety applications.

These are a few of the projects that the ECSU EM program has worked on with other campus programs. There are plans to work with these and other programs in the near future to continue to build on past successes. The use of multi-disciplinary tactics are an important part of building resilient communities and organizations. If you are interested in ideas on how your university program(s) can integrate with EM concepts and tasks for more resilient communities, please contact us on how we might be able to help you with ideas.

-Kevin Kupietz, PhD, EFO



Aviation and EM students work together on this Navy and Airforce sponsored JROTC flight and leadership program. EM students conducting this and other confidence/team building and emergency response training as part of the camp.



ECSU EM, Aviation, Computer, and UAS students working together on a DHS project examining the best practices and issues in the use of drones in public safety.

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