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UC San Diego Team Earns Award for Excellence in Emergency Management

University of California San Diego's emergency planners have been recognized for their work in preparing for crises and instituting best practices in trying to prevent them.

Led by Assistant Vice Chancellor and Controller Don Larson, the team earned the Award for Excellence in Emergency Management from the University of California Office of the President. The award notes that UC San Diego has successfully leveraged continuity and emergency planning to enhance campus operations, and has been recognized for establishing best practices in the area of behavioral threat assessment and management.

Continuity and Emergency Services (CES) Director Phillip Van Saun and Continuity Manager Neal Atkinson accepted the award on behalf of the campus during UC's 2011 California Risk Summit in Los Angeles.

The award was issued by UC's Chief Risk Officer, Grace Crickette, and acknowledges UC San Diego as standing out among its peer UC campuses in planning and preparation. UC San Diego was cited for:

The best-practice of integrating continuity and emergency planning into a single functional area

Establishing a behavioral threat assessment and management program which combines staff, student and faculty into one multi-disciplinary approach

Engaging faculty and students through undergraduate and graduate-level seminars on crisis decision-making.

"Phillip and his team have done a great job providing leadership and services to further campus readiness to respond to and recover from a major disaster, but this award is also for the people in departments like Police, Environment, Health & Safety, Facilities Management, and Housing, Dining & Hospitality, without which CES would not be successful," said Larson.

"The award is also a testament to the leadership of Chancellor Fox and all of the vice chancellors in mitigating major risks to UC San Diego and our mission."

Van Saun has presented lectures on crisis decision-making at the Rady School of Management, in the Urban Studies and Planning program, and in the Biomedical Ethics program. He was the keynote speaker at the annual meeting of the Utah Emergency Management Association, and presented at the annual meetings of the International Association of Emergency Management and the Department of Energy emergency management special interests group.

“UC San Diego has advanced the process of emergency management and continuity planning through collaboration with the academic community,” he said, “and the efforts of our staff have been validated by this award.”

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