WAITING FOR A CRISIS: CASE STUDIES OF CRISIS

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WAITING FOR A CRISIS: CASE STUDIES OF CRISIS LEADERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the system of crisis leadership in higher education. Using case study methods, five crisis leadership participants were interviewed to develop a deep understanding of how they perceive their university crisis leadership system. Two participants were from a private institution, and three were from a public institution. Higher education factors that contribute to and detract from effective crisis leadership were found, as well as training aspects that contribute to and detract from effective crisis leadership processes. The case studies were analyzed using a cross-comparison method, and also according to a framework drawn from the research literature related to leadership, training, and crisis. The findings suggest a new practical model for use in higher education crisis leadership.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Problem and Its Context

Historically, it has been suggested that leaders are responsible for ensuring that the business of the organization was protected from disruption. Even now, most well-respected examinations of organizational leadership focus on what happens on the inside of any business, school, or government agency (Burns, 1978; Cacioppe, 1997; Conger, 1999; Horner, 1997; Judge, Piccolo, & Ilies, 2004). Measures of successful leadership commonly include turning a profit, creating a positive image, increasing organizational efficiency, or ensuring smooth operations in times of uncertainty or organizational strife.

Yet when preparing an organization to handle crisis situations, most organizations look outside the organization for guidance. By looking externally for crisis expertise through education and training, leaders assume they are accessing the best practices for handling an organizational crisis. It is commonly thought that obtaining this expertise would assist the leader in being prepared for an organizational crisis and help the organization, as well as the leader, emerge relatively unscathed. After all, organizational leaders are expected to handle crisis situations when (or if) they emerge. In times of organizational hardship, disaster, and emergency, people look to their leadership to take action and “do something” to remedy the situation. How the organizational leadership reacts to certain situations and organizational crises could make or break their
professional careers and the future of the entire organization. There is little doubt that crisis leadership is a high stakes situation.

However, little is actually known about the efficacy of external training on actual leadership in crisis situations. Unfortunately, the efficacy of the crisis leadership skills acquired often remains in question until they are tested by an actual crisis situation. No organization is immune to the threat. Crisis can happen at any organization – no matter how “safe” the organization may seem. The perceived “safe haven” of the American educational system has been taught this very lesson too many times. An Amish schoolhouse, a suburban high school, and a public university – the location does not seem to matter much. Regardless of the location, people count on organizational leaders to respond with haste and urgency and move the organization forward. The question remains, however, whether or not they have the ability to lead in times of crisis.

This chapter provided a general introduction to the study of crisis leadership by focusing on three main components found in the literature: leadership, training, and crisis. Historical information was provided on the literature that underscored this study. The problem, context, and application of crisis leadership to higher education are discussed. A description of the research questions was provided in this chapter along with a summary of the data collection and analysis scheme.

Literature Background

Over the years, leadership has been researched extensively and defined differently across theoretical contexts and decades (Horner, 1997). While much insight has been gained about leadership and the leadership process from almost a century of research,
there are still many unanswered questions. In some ways, the discipline of leadership
seems in its infancy rather than an established discipline. Leadership research continues
to be fragmented across different disciplines and databases. To obtain leadership
knowledge, one must pull from multiple sources, multiple disciplines, and multiple
databases. It is clear from the literature that there is a disciplinary divide in which each
discipline seems to only read and build upon their area specific leadership studies.
Arguably, integrating research across disciplines could fuel leadership theory and
research more consistently.

However, despite this fragmentation, an evolution of theory has evolved
beginning with the 1940s and extending through the 21st century. Leadership theory has
shifted from defining leaders according to early trait-based theories, then according to
behavioral theories, and finally according to more current theories including
collaborative, shared, and servant leadership (Horner, 1997). Each of these evolutionary
shifts furthered the understanding of leadership (Vroom & Jago, 2007).

As discussed in chapter 2, leadership theories continue to evolve. At this juncture
in the research, researchers are still seeking to understand differences in how leaders
work with others and how they complete their work. While theories that posit a “great
man” or the idea that a single gifted person can change anything have been largely
discredited, little is understood about how some people are able to create organizational
success and others fail. By employing collaborative, shared, and distributed models of
leadership, organizations can further involve others in leadership roles. As leadership
theory evolves, one theme is clear – leadership rests on the expertise and knowledge of
members of the organization.
Training

Training could be defined as an organized intervention that is designed to enhance an individual’s job performance (Chiaburu & Tekleab, 2005). With this intent, organizations spend billions of dollars each year on formalized leadership training and development programs (Saks & Belcourt, 2006). When an employee returns from training, the organization expects a return on investment with increased job performance. However, the process of training does not always go according to the definition. There are many factors that influence whether the training will be transferred back into the organizational structure (Hughey & Mussnug, 1997; Saks & Belcourt, 2006; Yukl, 2006). The perception of organizational politics (POP) was specifically examined in relationship to training transfer.

Crisis Leadership

Most literature found specifically on the topic of crisis leadership emphasized working under magnified organizational issues that are normally not found in day-to-day leadership (Boin & t’ Hart, 2003; Borodzicz & van Haperen, 2002; French & Niculue, 2005; Heath, 1998). Historically, traditional leadership theories ignored environmental and situational conditions. The assumption was that good leadership centered on the leader alone and thus transcended context. However, Sternberg and Vroom (2002) note that all styles of leadership might not successfully transcend to different situations and contexts. Therefore, what is considered successful leadership under normal operating conditions may not automatically transfer to successful crisis leadership.
Crisis situations differ from normal times of organizational operation in several ways. Unlike normal conditions of organizational leadership, researchers have suggested that crisis events threaten the viability of the organization (Pearson & Clair, 1998), are rare in nature (Cornell & Sheras, 1998), have the potential to dismantle an organization (King, 2002), and fall under close media scrutiny (Fink, 1986). These types of situations place added stress and strain on organizations, their people, and a leader’s ability to consult with others in determining well conceived, thoughtful decisions (Yukl, 2006). Given the disruption crisis situations cause to an organization, the concern for capable leadership is well justified. In times of crisis, leadership becomes an integral cog of successful organizational crisis outcomes.

Statement of the Problem

The literature cohesively posits that effective leadership in times of organizational crisis is imperative to organizational survival (Boin & t’ Hart 2003; t’ Hart, Rosenthal, & Kouzmin, 1993). However, organizational leaders adept at handling day-to-day issues may not necessarily prove to be as qualified and prepared to manage crisis situations. One cannot just assume that good leadership blankets every organizational situation. When an organization is in a crisis environment and expected to perform difficult tasks, the role and expectations of the leader are likely to change (Yukl, 2006). Often, leaders have specific roles to execute in times of crisis, but due to the rarity of a crisis occasion may not be familiar or prepared to handle those specialized tasks. For example, the president of a higher education institution may not realize the federal resources at his or her disposal during a disaster. The federal government can provide crisis counseling, low
interest loans and other beneficial assistance to organizational and individuals impacted by disaster. The caveat is that the organizational leader must know what is available and how to request these resources from the government.

Despite the critical importance of leading organizations through crisis events, many leaders have never formally studied how their roles and leadership styles may change between leading under normal conditions and leading during times of crisis. This lack of role awareness can have exponential results for the corporation down the road and leaders need to be aware of these differences. Leadership is not a stagnant environment that bases itself in repetition. Leadership or the process of leadership is dynamic. Organizations grow, merge, shrink, and sometimes get shot up. Products are contaminated and recalled. Employees get angry and get Swine Flu. The environment is always moving, especially in times of organizational crisis. The contextual differences working under crisis are clear; however, despite the heavy implications of poor crisis leadership, most theorists and practitioners paid passing reference to the process of crisis leadership and management (Heath, 1998). The preparation and readiness of organizational leaders to handle crisis situations remains in question and many do not seem to worry much about it until the crisis hits and it is too late.

Main Research Questions

This dissertation examined the following research questions:

1. How do leaders in higher education describe their preparation and training for addressing crisis situations?
a. What higher education factors do leaders attribute to supporting
effective crisis leadership?

b. What higher education factors do leaders attribute to detracting from
effective crisis leadership?

c. What specific aspects of training do higher education leaders attribute
to supporting effective crisis leadership?

d. What specific aspects of training do higher education leaders attribute
to detracting from effective crisis leadership?

The purpose of this research was to examine the issues related to crisis leadership,
and crisis leadership training in higher education. The case study approach was used to
gather key information from higher education administrators and campus emergency
mangers related to crisis leadership and training on campus. Qualitative methodology was
used.

Methodology

This dissertation utilized qualitative research methodology for several reasons.
While numerous crisis and training related studies have been published to date, these
research studies have been limited to empirical studies organized around pre- and post-
test models (Bartley, Fisher, & Stella, 2007; Matthieu, Ross, & Knox 2006; Perry, 2004;
Peterson & Perry, 1999; Ray, Bishop, & Wang, 1997). Commonly, the participant would
take a pre-test, attend training or view a video, and then take a post-test. While the
participant’s awareness and skill levels went up after training, these research designs did
not tell the research community much about the system of developing crisis leaders and how it can be improved.

Secondly, the process of using quasi-experimental design in quantitative data analysis is limiting on the natural inquiry approach. The researcher that employs quasi-experimental designs attempts to control the study as much as possible by focusing the research attention to a narrow band of behavior. A countervailing argument is to sidestep these experimental studies while providing researchers with a more flexible approach to capturing phenomena (Rudestam & Newton, 1992). A deeper, more in-depth understanding of the phenomena is necessary than can be provided strictly by the quasi-experimental designs that have dominated crisis leadership research. Current leadership scholars also believe the flexibility and holistic manner of qualitative research play a critical role in the future of leadership studies (Conger, 1999). Conger (1999) suggests that an increased use of descriptive, qualitative research needs to be conducted to dig deeper into the contextual leadership issue. This methodology assisted in developing a dialogue explaining how to change the crisis leadership development system to better prepare our organizational leaders to manage crisis events.

This dissertation utilized a case study approach, which is common in qualitative research and provides additional context and description of phenomenon far beyond the single pre-post-test snapshot. Five interviews were conducted with higher education crisis practitioners (emergency managers) and administrators resulting in five cases for analysis. Two interviews were conducted at a private Midwestern university involving the campus emergency manager and a vice president. Three other interviews were
conducted at a public Midwestern University involving the campus emergency manager, an assistant vice president, and one vice president.

According to Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007), “Case study research allows an in-depth study of instances of a phenomenon in real-life settings and from the perspective of the participants involved in the phenomenon” (p. 634). Case studies are a preferred strategy for qualitative researchers to study “how” and “why” phenomena questions. This is particularly instrumental in answering questions related to this study of crisis leadership development. Descriptive case studies were constructed using the interview technique.

Focused semi-structured interviews were conducted. In semi-structured interviews, the goal is to explore a topic more openly and to allow interviewees to express their opinions and ideas in their own words (Chase, 1995). Using the interview technique, case studies produced detailed descriptions of the phenomenon, developed possible explanations, or assisted in evaluating the phenomenon. Thick descriptions utilized in the data collection process were analyzed for deeper understanding and meaning. Thick descriptions seek to recreate a situation and context accompanied by meaningful interpretations (Gall et al., 2007). These thick descriptions were coded and themed into categories for further analysis.

The primary issue with qualitative data is to make sense of it in ways that will facilitate the continued unfolding of the inquiry and lead to maximum understanding of the phenomenon studied (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this process, the researcher will generally find constructs that bring order to the data collected and related these data to the findings in the literature base. The researcher then will search for themes within the
descriptive data that were salient, characteristic features of a case study using constant
comparison and interpretational analysis. Constant comparison requires continual
revision, amendment, and modification of the data as it is coded into category sets. This
process continues until the inclusion of additional units into a category provides no new
information (Rudestam & Newton, 1992). Following the explanation of each construct
category, case data were presented using relevant quotes that illustrate their meaning.

Definition of Terms

Accountability: According to Trow (1996), accountability is the obligation to report to others or to explain, answer questions, or justify one’s actions about how resources have been utilized and to what effect.

Collaboration: Schrage (1990) defines collaboration as a process of creation when two or more individuals interact to form a shared and understood objective. Collaboration is built upon a main system of fundamental blocks that include a trust, a skill set or expertise, and communication structures (Rawlings, 2000, Rosenthal, 1998, Schrage, 1990).

Crisis: Empirically, the term crisis is used to represent a spectrum of issues that negatively impacts an organization (Yusko & Goldstein, 1997). Rosenthal, Charles, and t’Hart (1989) define crisis as a serious threat to the basic or fundamental structures, values, and/or norms of a social system, which under time pressure and uncertain circumstances necessitates critical decision-making.

Leadership: Vroom (2007) notes that leadership is a process of motivating people to accomplish great things collaboratively. He further defines leadership using five
points: 1) While people usually think of a single “leader”, leadership will be defined as a process; 2) the process of leadership includes motivation; 3) the nature of incentives is not part of the definition; 4) the consequence of the influence is collaboration toward a common goal; and 5) the great ideas are in the minds of the leader and the followers and are not necessarily viewed as desirable by other people or parties.

**Organization:** An organization is generally defined as a place where people work and conduct business. More specifically, Mintzberg (1980) identifies five basic parts of an organization: 1) the operating core which includes the employees that directly produce the basic products and services of the organization or those that support their production; 2) the strategic apex which consists of the top general managers and their personal staff; 3) the middle line made up from managers who sit in a line of formal authority between the operating core and strategic apex; 4) the technostructure composed of analysts who are out of the formal line structure performing design and maintenance of the structure (such as accounting, planners, and schedulers); and 5) the support staff that provides indirect support to the rest of the structure such as payroll, public relations, and legal services.

**Organizational Politics:** According to Pfeffer (1981), organizational politics can be described as “the study of power in action” (p. 7). However, other authors such as Ferris and Kacmar (1992) add that organizational politics are an unsanctioned influence attempt to promote self-interest at the expense of organizational goals.

**Training:** Campbell and Kuncel (2001) define training as a planned intervention designed to develop and enhance the determinants of individual job performance.
Bedingham (1997) adds that the purpose is to increase organizational efficiency, not to develop a better individual.

**Training Transfer:** The overall goal of a training program. The expectation is that training will be transferred back into the organization in predictable and uniform ways (Hughey & Mussnug, 1997).

**Trust:** A key component of collaborative processes (Schrage, 1990). According to Nyhan & Marlowe (1997), trust is the level of confidence that one individual has in another’s competence and his or her willingness to act in predictable, fair, and ethical ways.

**Chapter Summary**

The focus of the research was to assess current crisis leadership and training practices in order to provide more detailed information on how to improve these systems for the future. The methodology introduced is qualitative, from a narrative perspective that captures the participants’ experiences as crisis leaders. This study has the potential to expand the dialogue concerning crisis-training practices by bringing crisis leadership and training transfer factors to light in practical and educational contexts. The following chapter presents a more in-depth explanation and review of the relevant literature that informs the foundation for the current research.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of the literature review was to establish a theoretical framework. In educational research, theoretical frameworks served two purposes. The first established the prior research in related and salient areas of study. Research studies were examined to establish the history of research in relevant literatures, elucidate the similarities and gaps in the literature base and serve to demonstrate the conceptual foundations on which this study rests. The second served to establish a theoretical framework to be employed during the analytic phase of this research. To create the analytic framework attention was paid to synthesizing prior research into a coherent whole that can be used to examine findings.

The chapter included three main themes that emerged from the literature readings: leadership, training, and crisis. The leadership section covered historical theory beginning with the “great man” theory. The section then evolved to include the more current theories of collaborative leadership. The training section covered types of training, specifically coaching, mentoring, and computer-based. The section then focused on training application and transfer back into the organizational structure. The effects of politics, specifically perceptions of politics (POP) were also discussed. The specific area of crisis were defined and examined. The section teased out the difference between everyday leadership and crisis leadership. Lastly, the unique context of higher education
was discussed. While many other topics emerged from these readings, these three were specifically chosen for their stability and consistency across the readings.

Leadership

Leadership is a subject that has enthralled researchers and societies for centuries. People imagine powerful individuals that have singlehandedly led vast armies to victory and built corporate empires (Yukl, 2006). Part of the fascination for researchers is to develop and explain the processes behind these successes so others can share in the victory. The evolution of leadership theory from the early trait-based leadership studies, through transactional and transformational leadership to more current theories including collaborative, shared, and servant leadership were explored.

Trait-based Leadership Studies

The 1940s was a period of importance to leadership research (Judge et al., 2004). One of the earliest attempts to empirically measure indicators that successful leaders shared was conducted by the Ohio State leadership program. At this time, researchers were seeking to identify the traits (e.g., height, education, hair color, dress and the like) leaders shared. Since current research focused on the relationship between leaders and followers, it was no surprise that study into traits of leaders did not prove helpful in understanding the phenomenon of leadership. Disappointed after investigating and discrediting trait-based theories of leadership, behavioral factors became a new focus (Cacioppe, 1997; Horner, 1997). Specifically, in the new studies of leadership, researchers wanted to uncover how leaders worked with others and in what ways they addressed and completed their work tasks.
By considering the ways leaders worked with others it was hoped that a window into effective leader behaviors might be developed. Taking into account the ways leaders worked within an organization, more might be learned about what leaders did with their time and knowledge to attain success. Dividing the research into two areas –behaviors and work tasks – the field might better understand the complexities of practice.

Starting in the late 1940s, the OSU team sought to uncover effective leadership behaviors by focusing on those associated with consideration and initiating structure (Judge et al., 2004). Consideration sought to measure the degree to which a leader shows concern and respect for the followers and their welfare, establishes mutual trust, two-way communication, and rapport. Initiating structure sought to measure the degree to which the leader defines the role and the follower’s role, is oriented to goals, and establishes well-defined patterns of communication (Judge et al., 2004).

While this research marked a shift in leadership perspective, the studies suffered from testing, validity, and reliability issues. Eventually the Ohio State studies fell out of favor with the leadership research community. However, this research was historically significant in assisting with cultural change away from trait-based research. The Ohio State studies laid a theoretical underpinning for the arrival of more salient and venerable styles related to organizational leadership including contingency, transactional, transformational, collaborative, shared, distributed, and servant leadership theories which are further discussed.
Contingency Theories

Following trait and behavioral approaches, a third wave of theories grouped as contingency theories emerged. Contingency theories posited that the best way to lead dealt with the interaction between the leader’s traits, the leader’s behaviors, and the situation in which the leader exists (Horner, 1997). Turning the focus to the situation versus the leader themselves became the antithesis of the heroic or great man theory (Vroom & Jago, 2007). Contingency theories include intervening variables to explain why the outcome behavior varies across situational contexts (Yukl, 2006).

Several theories were examined including the Fiedler’s contingency model, situational leadership, and cognitive resource theory.

Fiedler (1967) was the first psychologist to put forth an articulated model blending leader traits and situational variables using a trait measure called the least preferred coworker (LPC) score. He divided leaders into relationship-motivated and task-motivated groups based on their favorable or unfavorable description of their least preferred coworker (Vroom & Jago, 2007). A leader who was critical in rating the least preferred coworker obtained a low LPC score. A leader who was more compassionate obtained a higher score (Yukl, 2006). Fiedler (1967) found that the relationship-motivated leader, determined by a high LPC score, outperformed the task-motivated leader. Despite Fiedler’s findings, the LPC contingency model received major criticism and the debate over the validity of the model continues. However, the LPC model was the earliest contingency theory and laid the ground for better leadership theory development with its contribution to encourage greater interest in situational factors (Yukl, 2006).
Hersey and Blanchard (1977) proposed a situational theory to leadership. A situational theory attempts to match a leadership style to a specific external situation or circumstance (Sims, Faraj, & Yun, 2009). According to Hersey and Blanchard (1977), the leadership behavior would be determined by subordinate maturity in relation to the work (Yukl, 2006). When the worker was very immature in relationship to the task, the leader would use task-oriented behavior and be very directive. In turn, when the worker exhibited a high maturity level in relationship to work, the leader would digress in the use of task-oriented behavior and become more relationship and praise-oriented (Yukl, 2006).

Even though the theory has been used in many management development programs, the theory has never been directly evaluated. Years of longitudinal studies examining organizational effectiveness during periods of changes in top leadership have shown that very little of the variance in organizational outcomes could be explained by the changes in leadership specifically (Pfeffer, 1977). Similar to Pfeffer’s (1977) study, Cohen and March (1974) studied 46 college and university presidents with similar findings concluding that organizational success and failure were largely outside of their control. Looking for a different approach, Fiedler and Garcia (1986) developed a more recent model dealing with the cognitive ability of leaders.

The cognitive resources theory (CRT) examined the issues of intelligence and experience in relationship to group performance (Yukl, 2006). The theory attempts to identify the conditions under which such cognitive resources such as technical knowledge, intellectual ability, and expertise contribute to group performance; measured both within the leader and member (Fiedler, Murphy, & Gibson, 1992). The idea of CRT assumes that more intelligent leaders develop better plans, decisions, and actions than
their less intelligent counterparts, and that these decisions and actions are communicated more effectively through structured and detailed communication strategies (Fiedler et al., 1992). Fiedler and Garcia (1986) posited that while many researchers acknowledge the importance of leader cognition and experience, many models fail to relate these variables into group performance.

While the proposition that intellectual ability is related to better performance in directive versus non directive leaders has been supported in several studies, it is too soon to reach any conclusions about the usefulness of the theory (Yukl, 2006). Vecchio (1990) published an examination of CRT in response to Fiedler and Garcia’s (1986) work. Among other issues, Vecchio (1990) noted problems of the theory associated with the definition of intelligence, the undervalued importance of a combination of tasks, or specific task demands, and the role of stress. Results of the CRT have been inconsistent across studies, and methodological problems have made the results difficult to interpret (Yukl, 2006). However, despite the weaknesses identified in these contingency theories, they have provided insights about effective leadership in different situations. These theories have assisted in moving the research toward other theories such as transactional and transformational leadership.

**Transactional and Transformational**

One of the earliest distinctions drawn between leading and managing in organizations was published by Zaleznik and Kets de Vries (1975). Zaleznick and Kets de Vries are responsible for stating that leadership is considered to be the things people do with others in the organization, and management comprises the tasks that allow for
personal interactions to be completed. The distinction was considered important and by the 1980s entire schools of leadership researchers had accepted these notions and built theories around them.

Building upon this foundational research, Burns (1978) proposed typologies of transactional and transformational leaders (Conger, 1999). Burns further distinguished the functions of leadership and management by associating the term “transactional” with the management function of making transactions or exchanges for reward (such as money, promotion, or job security). The term transformational was associated with the leadership role of transforming the existing order into something extraordinary by empowering followers (Conger, 1999).

Transactional leadership is most apparent in typical organizations and organizational settings. This type of leadership is a basic exchange mechanism which becomes possible when there is no existing sense of urgency for change or organizational threat (Popper & Zakkai, 1994). Bass (1985) argued that transactional leadership builds upon existing relationships between leaders and followers by clarifying expectations, contracts, responsibilities and providing recognition and rewards. The follower agrees with, accepts, or complies with the leader (Bass, Avolio, Jung, & Berson, 2003) in exchange for rewards such as money or prestige. Followers also comply with the leader to avoid punishments such as demotion. Transactional reward leadership sets follower expectations and offers recognition when goals are achieved (Bass et al., 2003). Prior to the theory of transformational leadership, transactional leadership was thought to be a core component of effective organizational leadership behavior.
Transformational leaders are thought to engage and emphasize emotions and values within their followers. Instead of reward being the motivating factor for employees, the underlying influence of the leader is at the core of the motivational process (Yukl, 1999). These leaders speak to organizational change and empowerment (Bass, 1995), are more likely to reflect social values, be adaptive, (Yukl, 1999) emerge under duress (Bass et al., 2003), and be concerned about transforming the existing order. They address follower needs for meaning and personal development (Conger, 1999) and have the ability to internally motivate people into purposeful action (Price, 2003). These theories assist in understanding how a leader can influence followers to make sacrifices, commit to challenging objectives, and achieve more than expected (Yukl, 1999).

Building upon this further, Sendjaya’s (2005) research expressed the need for morality studies in transformational leadership behavior. The idea of morality in leadership is what some argue to be a missing link in defining true transformational leadership behavior and distinguishing it from charismatic leadership where a leader might employ personal magnetism for less than noble ends. Morality may differentiate between leaders such as Adolf Hitler and Mother Teresa. The positive nature of transformational leadership for moral ends is where a leader’s appeal is for organizational/societal goals with the common good as an outcome. Yet, transformational moral leadership could be a part of any formal definition for empirical distinction. We would expect effective leaders to be both moral and able to engender change. As leadership studies evolved, attention shifted from the impact of a single individual to a more holistic view of leadership. These are further explored in later sections.
Collaborative, shared, and distributed forms of leadership move the research focus from more hierarchical forms of leadership to those that are more multidirectional and inclusive. As we have seen, earlier identified forms of leadership placed the focus on the leader themselves, their behaviors, and traits (Bass et al., 2003; Bass & Stedlmeyer, 1999; Boin & t’ Hart, 2003; Vroom & Jago, 2007). In the “post-heroic” era of leadership, organizations are placing a greater focus on shared power, decision making, and resources. These ideas are hardly new in the organizational world (Linden, 2003); however, they are becoming more important as organizational structures evolve and problems become more diverse and complex. Foundational to understanding other leadership theories, such as distributed and shared leadership, are the constructs related to collaboration.

Collaborative Leadership

Schrage (1990) defined collaboration as a process of creation when two or more individuals interact to form a shared and understood objective. The true component of collaboration is other people. Unlike transactional, transformational and other popular leadership theories, collaborative leaders seek to minimize formal authority over their peers (Linden, 2003). Without the transactional rewards and punishments of more formal authoritarian relationships, it has been suggested that collaborative leaders must utilize more linguistic and psychological variables to motivate and persuade others (Rawlings, 2000). While the term collaboration is commonplace in organizations, achieving collaboration in the authentic sense can be difficult for organizations. Collaboration is
built upon a main system of foundational blocks that include trust, a skill set or expertise, and communication structures (Rawlings, 2000; Rosenthal, 1998; Schrage, 1990).

Rosenthal (1998) explained that collaborative relationships have the potential to be shallow and inefficient without the development of trust. Trust enables participants to act together more effectively and pursue shared objectives. This fosters norms of coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit. Rawlings (2000) built upon this by emphasizing the role of a specialized skill set or expertise in developing trust among organizational members. The collaborative members have to acquire a trust in an individual’s competencies to allow that individual to contribute and add a specialized dimension to the shared objectives and goals. Lastly, the tool of clear communication ties these pieces together.

True collaboration emphasizes sharing information and knowledge to establish cross-functional synergy and create a culture of contextually rich, trusting dialogue (Rawlings, 2000). These deep, “below the waterline” discussions allow the team to develop integrated joint solutions that lead to reciprocity and mutual accountability in the shared decisions and outcomes (Rawlings, 2000; Schrage, 1990). Both shared and distributed leadership use the collaborative foundation and add the dimensions of structure and organizational context to the leadership mix.

*Shared and Distributive Leadership*

The terms shared and distributed leadership are often used interchangeably in research. Some researchers suspect that these terms are just relabeling of the same ideas (Storey, 2004). Originating in the mid-1950s distributed leadership is currently
experiencing a resurgence in popularity. Similarly, shared leadership is enjoying its moment in the sun. Like collaborative leadership, shared and distributed leadership models disperse leadership responsibilities among organizational members rather than having one central authority or leader. In an effort to make the theoretical distinctions between these two very similar leadership ideas clear, we will first explore how they are the same and then discuss the differences.

According to Bligh, Pearce, and Kohles (2006), influence not only flows vertically, but also horizontally across organizations that employ shared or distributed leadership orientations. Fletcher and Kaufer (2003) described this leadership process as dynamic, multi-directional and collective activity that is mutually enacted. Influence is fluid and often reciprocal as team members take on the tasks for which they are most suited or motivated to accomplish (Bligh et al., 2006).

As shown in Figure 1, collaborative leadership research is the foundation that supports shared and distributed leadership theories. Research concerning distributed and shared leadership orientations has at its core a central operating structure. This common structural feature may be the reason why these ideas are often blended and confused. The operating structure in both forms of leadership is commonly materialized as teams, workgroups, committees, or any other project interface design.

Differences can be found in the orientation of leaders and to the practice of leadership within the organization. The environment of shared leadership differs from distributed leadership in that it is considered more organic in nature, derived from long term organizational goals and commitments institutionalized in the organizational culture (Ensley, Hmieleski, & Pearce, 2006). The work within a shared leadership environment is
central to organizational goals and outcomes and most often engages a large number of people. While distributed leadership also functions from a similar teemed or work group organizational structure, it often occurs in a more controlled environment that is enacted to fulfill short-term organizational goals or tasks. The projects are usually smaller in focus and use a hierarchy of expertise. In this orientation, leaders distribute or delegate tasks to be completed to others within the organization retaining decision-making power within a central core.

As Figure 1 demonstrates, both shared and distributed leadership theory rest on a foundation of collaborative expertise as well as organizational knowledge and skills sets and trust. In shared or distributed leadership models if expertise, trust, and access to the knowledge and skills of organizational members is absent, tasks will not be completed any more smoothly or expertly than in other organizational forms. In this way, it is important to note that although the study of shared and distributed leadership has helped us to understand subtle differences in how organizations function, neither fully explains why some leaders are more effective than others (Kruse & Louis, 2009). Shared leadership focuses on a more organic or natural environment, whereas distributed leadership is a controlled or structured environment. Figure 1 illustrates these models by highlighting their difference and commonalities.
Figure 1. The structural/environmental model of shared and distributed leadership.

**Servant Leadership**

In an effort to explore leadership theory that attempts to address issues of effective collaboration, servant leadership is briefly discussed. One of the most contemporary leadership theories, servant leadership, empowers the leadership in others.
The concept of servant leadership emerged in the early 1970s (Greenleaf, 1977) and has slowly gained popularity.

Since the time of the Industrial Revolution, leaders have tended to view people as tools, while organizations have viewed them more as cogs in a machine (Spears, 2004). Servant leadership posits that the goal of a leader should be to serve others who can include workers, customers, and community. The concept of servant leadership has been adopted by educators as well as corporate businesses. The motto of servant leadership is “first to serve, then to lead” (Crippen, 2004). The development of people to share power, develop trust, and promote a sense of community is held above any egotistical self-interests of the leader. This differs from other forms of leadership such as transformational leadership where the focus is on organizational goals, instead of on the people who work within the organization (Stone, Russell, & Patterson, 2004).

Servant leaders are thought to put the people before the organization. Spears (2004) identified 10 characteristics of servant leadership from Greenleaf’s work which include: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community. As theories of heroic leadership continue to fail to produce empirical results, these alternative theories are gaining popularity within the research base as a new avenue to explore leadership development (Kruse & Louis, 2009). The current trend in leadership responsibility is for organizations to develop other leaders (Hurt & Homan, 2005).

Leadership theory continues to evolve. At this juncture in the literature, researchers are still seeking to understand differences in how leaders work with others and how they complete their work. While theories that posit a “great man” have been
largely discredited, little is understood about how some people are able to create organizational success and others fail. Transactional leadership helps researchers to see that some leadership behaviors include the provision of reward and punishment for members of the organization when they complete their work. The most obvious reward is a paycheck, although working in successful organizations provides other rewards. Among them are a sense of pride in the work one does and a sense of connection to something meaningful in the world.

Transformational leadership helps researchers to understand how leaders can capitalize on workers’ sense of connection to the task and the organization. Transformational leadership suggests that by focusing on organizational goals, leaders can harness the energies of others in pursuit of shared goals. By employing collaborative, shared, and distributed models of leadership, organizations can further involve others in leadership roles. Finally, servant leadership offers insight into how leaders might be most effective when they view their role as broader than simple organizational goal setting and evaluation of results. As leadership theory evolves, one theme is clear -- leadership rests on the expertise and knowledge of members of the organization. The next section of this literature review explores how expertise can be created in organizations.

Introduction to Training Literature

Many public and private organizations spend exorbitant amounts of money each year on employee training programs with the expectation that their employees will emerge from the training with improved leadership skills that increase organizational performance (Saks & Belcourt, 2006). While these various training systems have their
strengths, there are also many weaknesses and misconceptions concerning the use and effectiveness of training that will be the focus of the coming discussion. Nonetheless, however effective or ineffective the chosen system of training may actually be to leadership in an organization, there is no doubt that training popularity is expanding and shows no signs of slowing down. In the coming sections, several systems of training were explored, including training transfer, experiential, coaching, mentoring, and computer-based simulation.

*Training*

Many types of training strategies are used by organizations to improve leadership skills. These include training in decision making, situation awareness, leadership, and organizational coordination. Yukl (2006) notes that it is commonly best practice to emerge personnel in real world tasks and issues. However, this cannot always be done for a variety of reasons including lack of time or instructive teaching opportunities. Therefore, many organizations turn to specialized types of training according to their needs. For example, the Industrial Service Organization (ISO) offers training to assist in credentialing requirements. When employees engage in trainings such as those offered by the ISO, knowledge can be gathered that, in turn, will foster growth within the organization.

Training has been defined as a planned intervention designed to develop and enhance the determinants of individual job performance (Campbell & Kuncel, 2001). However, the overall purpose of training is not to develop a better individual (while that may be a side effect in some cases), but to increase organizational efficiency.
(Bedingham, 1997). After all, if an organization is investing funds in employee training, bottom line organizational benefit is expected. In this way, organizations expect that the investment they make will be returned to them in increased performance and skill from the employee who attended the training. Moreover, it is expected that training will be transferred to organizational performance in predictable and uniform ways. This expectation has been the focus of much research concerning training effectiveness and transfer of training back into the organization (Hughey & Mussnug, 1997).

Components of Effective Training Transfer

Given that the overarching purpose of training is to improve the organization, it is surprising that few organizations track the effectiveness of the training after it has been conducted (Bedingham, 1997) and explore organizational factors that can augment the transfer of training back into the organization (Hughey & Mussnug, 1997). Too often, organizations sometimes blindly accept that people emerge “better” from training without testing or inquiring into the new skill set. For example, if individuals attend a training seminar on leadership, do they automatically return to the organization as better leaders? Not necessarily. This section discussed the components that contribute more effective training and discuss some of the key training models used by organizations specifically to enhance leadership development. Figure 2 illustrates these factors.
Figure 2. The training transfer continuum.

Research has asserted that organizational commitment and motivational factors contribute significantly to the amount of training transferred back into the organization (Chiaburu & Tekleab, 2005; Hughey & Mussnug, 1997; Saks & Belcourt, 2006; Yukl, 2006). This is demonstrated in several ways. As illustrated in Figure 2, some of the factors are under the control of the organization and others the individual. Whether we consider organizational or individual successes, foundational to the success of any training program is a commitment to and attendance at training events. Furthermore, mere seat time alone cannot produce improvement performance. As Hughey and Mussnug (1997) found, the organization needs to be committed to training goals, rather than training employees just to “check off the box” or satisfy rules and regulations. Unfortunately, as discussed earlier, with many overarching industrial and organizational
rules and regulations to follow, training can often be reduced to focusing on meeting requirements rather than actually improving organizational performance.

Research suggests that supervisor support for training positively affects employee training motivation and transfer (Chiaburu & Tekleab, 2005; Hughey & Mussnug, 1997; Saks & Belcourt, 2006). There are several areas of supervisor support shown to increase training transfer according to Saks and Belcourt (2006). Meeting with the trainee to choose the training program allows the trainee to have investment in his or her own training program. If a trainee can have a voice in selecting the training program, he or she is more likely to feel a personal connection to the process rather than carrying out a training mandate.

Setting training goals with the trainee can assist him/ her in focusing on specific areas of responsibility. Additionally, encouraging attendance and participation at the training emphasizes the importance of personal responsibility and accountability to the organization. Lastly, supervisors should have the trainee prepare a post-training report outlining learned skills. The trainee should be facilitated and encouraged to apply and implement those learned skills back into the organization to emphasize the transfer of training. Further, supervisor support has been shown to have a stronger impact on the transfer of training back into the organization than the overarching organizational belief in life long learning (Chiaburu & Tekleab, 2005). This demonstrates that those closest to the employee have the greatest impact on their transfer of training.

Yukl (2006) builds upon this concept by emphasizing the importance of post-training application in attaining training transfer. Trainees should actively apply the skills learned during and shortly after the training session to reinforce skill practice and
adaption (Yukl, 2006). The skills must be further enhanced through active organizational involvement (Hughey & Mussnug, 1997). For example, if an employee attends leadership training and upon returning to the organization does not have opportunities to use this knowledge, it will be forgotten and contribute little to changing organizational behavior. Aside from the issue of opportunity, organizational politics can also negatively impact the training transfer model. Even the mere perception of organizational politics can impact this process. Perception of organizational politics, referred to as POP in the literature are discussed further.

**Perception of Organizational Politics**

While the study of politics can be traced back to such works as Aristotle’s *The Politics* in 360 B.C., theorists still continue to study the effects of politics in organizational environments (Shafritz & Ott, 2001). An emerging field of interest that relates to organizational behavior, commitment, and job performance is the employee’s perception of organizational politics (POP). Ferris, Russ, and Fandt (1989) proposed in their initial work that organizational politics is limited to behavior that is designed to maximize short-term or long-term self-interest and often seen as something dysfunctional. Pfeffer (1981) further stated that organizational politics involves activities to acquire, develop, and use power and other resources to obtain one’s preferred outcome when there is a disagreement. With the focus being on individual gains, less attention is given to collaboration on organizational goals. The workplace becomes an egocentric atmosphere. This atmosphere breeds other types of negative behaviors detrimental to collaborative efforts and organizational success.
High levels of POP are related to low levels of organizational commitment (Vigoda, 2000). The higher the level of POP, the lower the levels of perceived fairness, justice, and equity (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992). Employees are more likely to engage in job neglect and have exit or turnover intentions (Vigoda, 2000). Other studies have taken the negative effects of POP even further. Research has found that perceived politics and support are correlated with a variety of work attitudes, job satisfaction ratings, levels of organizational commitment, and levels of job involvement (Cropanzano, Howes, Grandey, & Toth, 1997; Ferris & Judge, 1991; Ferris & Kacmar, 1992). In essence, high levels of POP deteriorate the organization in many ways. Employees are more likely to seek other jobs, sabotage the efforts of others, or engage in job neglect where they are “just going through the motions” of work (Vigoda, 2000). If the company were to have a crisis situation, the results could be detrimental. Without collaboration, the foundations of leadership theories cease to exist. Voyer (1994) examined other detrimental behaviors related to politics in the workplace.

Voyer’s (1994) study suggested that participants “interpreted organizational politics as suppressing their willingness or ability to pursue success” (p. 82). Further, studies link less POP to better overall organizational performance and customer satisfaction. In short, happy employees are more productive for the organization (Gregory, Harris, Armenakis & Shook, 2009). Therefore, the opposite is also true. The more energy put into managing POP, the less energy is spent focusing on the organization. The relationship POP effects have on the training transfer model are examined further.
Looking back at the training transfer model, some key elements in the process are: commitment to attendance and participation in the training topic, voice in topic selection, individual and organizational goal setting, and realistic post training application. For the training process to truly begin, the participant must first possess the will to engage fully in the training experience and also have a voice in the topic selection. When these elements are examined under POP literature, one could notice a disassociation between the two concepts. Examining this concept in the light of Cropanzano et al. (1997), holding a job is analogous to making an investment. Workers provide their talents in hopes of getting a return on investment. Like any investment, the decision to work entails certain risks (Randall, Cropanzano, Bormann, & Birjulin, 1999).

In essence, people are careful to watch and gauge their investment efforts, often only putting into the organization what they feel they will get in return. As mentioned, high levels of POP are often associated with intent to exit, job neglect, turnover, and other self interested behaviors (Vigoda, 2000). These behaviors emotionally disconnect the employee from investing back into the organization. This element is arguably the most important aspect of the training transfer model. Looking back at the previous discussion involving the crisis and crisis leadership literature, this is the opposite behavior critical to leading in times of crisis.

However, research has found one primary tool in combating POP effects, supervisor support. In contrast to a political environment, some organizations are viewed as being concerned with the welfare of their employees (Randall et al., 1999). Supportive organizations are seen as “taking pride in their employees, compensating them fairly, and looking after their needs” (Randall et al., 1999, p. 162). Studies have linked
organizational support to more positive work attitudes, job satisfaction, low turnover intentions, and low absenteeism (Nye & Witt, 1993; Randall et al., 1999). More specifically, a study by Shore and Wayne (1993) demonstrated that an employee’s perceived organizational support was positively related to supervisor performance ratings. Additional work by Thomas and Ganster (1995) further found that organizational supportive practices, namely flexible scheduling and supportive supervisors, increased employee perceptions of control over their own lives, thus lowering their perceptions of organizational politics. In addition to the impacts of POP and influence of organizational and supervisor support, there are other methods to increase training transfer efficiency using realistic training models.

Key Models of Training

In addition to organizational climate and organizational opportunities for skill application, realism plays a key role in developing employee ability. Conditions for practice should be as realistic and diverse as possible to augment the training transfer to a more applied context (Hughey & Mussen, 1997; Yukl, 2006). Additional research by Yukl (2006) emphasized the importance of introducing challenge, adversity, and failure early in careers to develop and enhance employee development to a higher level. Allowing the trainee to apply the skills learned in challenging ways is hypothesized to make them more successful at handling turbulent organizational environments and situations later on in their careers (Yukl, 2006). Only through experiencing various environmental contexts can skills be grown and adapted to a wide variety of contexts and
issues in the organizational future. Various training methods which provide diverse organizational contexts and experiences are discussed further.

**Experiential Learning**

One of the most popular forms of leadership development is to learn through authentic experience. Experiential learning has a long history of research (Kolb, 1984; Larsen, 2004; Maslow, 1943). Experiential learning can be defined as learning achieved through experience or learning by doing (Valkanos & Fragoulis, 2007). For example, an employee may be immersed in a wide variety of organizational issues that, over time, serve to develop their decision making and leadership skills by having and being part of those experiences. Traditionally, experiential learning takes place on the job in an authentic learning environment. As in the old apprenticeship model, this setting is more economical for the employer since the employee is already present at the organization and training can be tailored to the learning needs and capabilities of each trainee (Larsen, 2004).

Given that an experiential learning environment is authentic rather than artificially created, the training is more likely to become transferred into the workplace and an integrated part of the organization (Jones, Rafferty, & Griffin, 2006). Some educational techniques that allow for application of experiential learning include case studies, role play, working in teams, and educational exercises (such as simulation and computer simulation games) (Valkanos & Fragoulis, 2007). Each of these forms of experiential learning for leadership development will be further examined. Figure 3 illustrates these models.
Figure 3. Leadership training models.

**Coaching**

It has been argued that there is a great risk of failure in executive positions (Hogan, Curphy, & Hogan, 1994). One explanation for failure is that executives report a lack of desire to change. Research suggested that many leaders believe that the ways they
have worked in the past have resulted in their promotion to a leadership role. Thus, they are reluctant to change attributing their success to past behavior. Furthermore, as senior executives, they often think they are above professional development and fail to acquire necessary new skills (Jones et al., 2006). In short, a leader’s ego or positional authority can interfere with the reality that everyone requires new skill development.

In an effort to balance ego with the need to learn employers turned to executive coaching. Executive coaching emphasizes ongoing executive development and creates a safe place to foster and encourage executives to take risk, develop, and ultimately change their organizational behaviors (Bluckert, 2005; Jones et al., 2006). Although executive coaching has been defined in a variety of ways, it typically involves a short- to medium-term relationship between an executive and an outside consultant for the purpose of improving an executive’s work effectiveness (Feldman & Lankau, 2005).

Executive coaching has several practical functions that include correcting deficiencies, facilitating learning, and improving peak performance (Feldman & Lankau, 2005). These are all conducted under the partnered relationship between the executive and the coach and incorporate three key elements according to Feldman (2001). Relationships consist of one-on-one counseling about work-related issues. While a type of closeness or friendship may develop, the coach’s involvement is restricted to work issues. The relationship should involve the use of comprehensive feedback concerning the executive’s strengths and weaknesses and has a primary objective to improve the effectiveness of executives in their current positions.

Feedback is a vital part of the coaching relationship. The coach’s primary task is to improve the executive’s skill development. Coaching is done almost entirely in real
business time and focuses on specific, real issues. This means that a transition from training to the authentic environment is minimized with a higher likelihood of timely training application (Jones et al., 2006). As discussed, this feature is thought to assist with the transfer of training back into the organization for organizational benefit.

A coach has no formal authority over the executive; therefore, the coaching relationship is a critical factor in its success (Bluckert, 2005). There needs to be a sense of trust between the coach and executive to enable them to feel safe enough to discuss what is needed and openly reflect on mistakes or deficiencies. The executive needs to have trust in both the integrity and competence of the coach (Bluckert, 2005). Without this trust and relationship development, the coaching process will be rendered inefficient.

An additional positive coaching outcome can be stress reduction. Executives may benefit from having an objective third party present to discuss decisions (Jones et al., 2006). An executive may have legitimate issues they would like to discuss concerning the organization and rationale for their decisions; however, politics and bureaucracy can impede this honest flow of information. Having an impartial coach present can assist in fully understanding the organizational actions and behaviors exhibited by the executive.

In addition, another positive outcome is the development of flexibility. Coaching can help managers change and adapt more rapidly and explore a wide variety of approaches to a problem when confronted with changing circumstances (Jones et al., 2006). Having a coach present with whom to inquire and discuss alternative approaches and solutions can educate and open the mind of the executive to other avenues of problem solving.
Mentoring

Executive coaches traditionally are outside consultants who have no formal authority over the executive. This factor is what allows for the open and honest relationship between the executive and coach. This relationship differs from the use of formal mentoring programs. Formal and informal mentoring programs are utilized within organizations to facilitate and develop management (Yukl, 2006). This process involves the use of a more seasoned employee or mentor to help a less experienced employee or protégé become more proficient at their job. The protégé can learn several things from this relationship.

The mentor usually teaches the protégé the organizational ropes and socializes the new employee into the organization (Gibson, Tesone, & Buchalski, 2000). For example, if a new Assistant Professor is hired at a university, it may be common for the lead faculty member to mentor the new employee since he/she knows the most concerning the program area. The mentor is usually at a higher organizational level than the protégé, however, not an immediate boss (Yukl, 2006). Mentors may be motivated to assist the protégé by community values to develop new leaders or a desire to teach (Gibson et al., 2000). It can often be a beneficial relationship to mentor new employees since they will be able to take on more responsibilities the sooner they learn organizational tasks and contexts, thus lightening his or her load.

Most mentoring happens organically; however, it can be formalized. Great care should be taken in matching a mentor to a protégé. Formalized relationships are less likely to be successful (Yukl, 2006) since these people are not necessarily drawn to each other’s personalities. Personality conflicts and lack of mentor commitment are common
reasons for failure. Positive outcomes for either party are far less likely without a relationship being developed (Friday & Friday, 2002).

When a mentoring relationship is successful, both people benefit from the relationship. In addition to positive outcomes for the protégé, the mentor also benefits from increased job satisfaction and possible career advancement (Yukl, 2006). The protégé can also assist in taking on responsibilities the mentor was previously doing and becoming a work partner. Mentoring, like coaching, is reliant on organizational context. Mentors and coaches can only work with new employees on organizational issues as they arise. In this way, they may learn the day-to-day job requirements but be poorly prepared for less frequent events. To prepare employees for less frequent events such as crises or emergencies many organizations have turned to computer-based training and simulations.

Computer-based Training/Simulations and Exercises

Computer-based training and simulations have been designed to support learning in an economically friendly environment while introducing complex problems for analysis (Hasebrook, 1999). Crichton and Flin (2001) suggest computer-based and simulation training may be used to improve teamwork skills such as decision making, situation awareness, leadership, and coordination. Many managers possess necessary technical knowledge; however, they need to develop the finer skills of situation assessment, information assessment, and public relations. This method of training allows participants to fine tune these skills and make decisions in a non-threatening learning environment.
Computer-based training and simulations can be used to assess training needs, success of prior training, or the usefulness of a manager’s model for decision making in a particular situation (Yukl, 2006). These methods can act as a substitute for actual experience by using a set of scenarios ranging in complexity and technicalities (Crichton & Flin, 2001). They are also resourceful as a job performance predictor by benchmarking the trainee against predetermined decisions and critical job tasks (Yusko & Goldstein, 1997). For example, if an organization was hiring for a certain position they could have the interviewee complete a competency-based computer simulation to evaluate how his or her organizational decisions align with company goals and strategies.

French and Niculae (2005) provided research insights into more complex computer-based training programs using computer modeling and Decision Support Systems (DSS). During the last quarter century there have been many scientific developments in models and computer codes to help predict consequences of various event types with quantitative outputs used to make decisions. Advanced graphic modeling systems are becoming more popular but are more costly. With graphic advancements and increased market competition, these systems will become less expensive to purchase and more popular in training delivery.

While the benefits of computer-based training and simulation are evident in cost effectiveness, convenience, and practice, one of the most useful features is feedback. Trainees usually receive immediate feedback on the consequences of their decisions (Yukl, 2006). With constant and timely feedback, trainees can assess the immediate consequences of their decisions and adapt immediately to change the impact of their decisions.
Another tool that utilizes a simulated or scenario-driven training component is training exercises. These exercises combine many training features found in other methods (such as complex issues and scenarios) and include interpersonal communication skills, as well as cognitive and decision-making skills (Yukl, 2006). Some organizations use exercise-based training to identify company deficiencies in policy and procedure.

The use of these scripted, or scenario-based exercises, is commonly used for complex issues that involve specific departmental functions or the entire organization itself. A logical scenario is written specifically to test certain areas or competencies of the organization for the organization to “play out.” For example, an exercise training scenario at a higher education institution may involve an active shooter on campus, spread of infectious disease, or other event that impacts their ability to deliver education. Participants are assigned to different tasks and responsibilities based on the theoretical underpinning of distributed leadership. Personnel coordinate and execute tasks as the situation becomes more complex and unfolds (Haddow, Bullock, & Coppola, 2008). This process should push decision-making abilities and also assist in exposing deficiencies in training, capability, policy, or procedure. Depending on the sophistication of the media used, depth of the training, and parties involved, large scale exercise trainings can extend from hours to days and even weeks (Smith, 2004). Long-term trainings are necessary to more realistically mimic severe crisis events that take days or weeks to manage.

Feedback and corrective action for learning and process betterment are traditionally an important part of using large scale exercises (Yukl, 2006). Learning from and correcting mistakes made in training situations can ideally assist in a more seamless
decision-making process during a real situation (Haddow et al., 2008). Both computer-based trainings/simulations and training exercises are popular for addressing complex issues and fostering decision-making capabilities within the organization without having to go to off-site training.

Despite the usefulness of these training methods, there are some drawbacks as well. When training to a scenario or a computerized simulation model; damage statistics, costs, and other simulated information can be severely underestimated. This can lead to a more closed decision-making process than is needed in real world situations and can give a false interpretation of how severe a situation can become. It is important to remember these scenarios and simulations are decision-making tools and cannot provide the same experiences that will happen during authentic events (French & Niculae, 2005). Since these methods involve complex issues in a non-threatening environment and foster decision making, they are the preferred method for organizational crisis training. The concept and uniqueness of organizational leadership in crisis are further explored.

Introduction to Crisis

The word crisis appears straightforward when we use it in our daily vocabulary, but is more complex to empirically define and analyze. Empirically, the term is widely used to represent a spectrum of issues that negatively impact an organization (Pearson, Clair, Misra, & Mitroff, 1997; Rosenthal et al., 1999; t’ Hart et al., 1993; Yusko & Goldstein, 1997). For example, a crisis could be a workplace violence situation or a major disaster. Since a shared definition of crisis has yet to be solidified in the literature base, it is prudent to rely on a long-standing and well-cited definition.
Crisis is a serious threat to the basic structures or the fundamental values and norms of a social system, which - under time pressure and highly uncertain circumstances necessitates making critical decisions. (Rosenthal et al., 1999, p. 10)

### Crisis Leadership

Given the disruption crisis situations cause to an organization, the concern for capable leadership is well justified. In times of crisis, leadership becomes an integral cog of successful organizational crisis outcome. The literature cohesively posits that leadership in times of organizational crisis is imperative to organizational survival (Boin & t’ Hart, 2003; Borodzicz & van Haperen, 2002; French & Niculae, 2005; Heath, 1998; t’ Hart et al., 1993). However, organizational leaders adept at handling day-to-day issues may not necessarily prove to be as qualified and prepared to manage crisis situations. Figure 4 illustrates these differences.

![Figure 4. The crisis leadership continuum.](image)

- **Normal Situations**
  - Routine decision making
  - Familiar (non threatening) environment

- **Crisis Situations**
  - Decisions made under close scrutiny
  - Increased levels of stress
  - Protocols not established
  - Severe threat to organizational viability
  - Complex decision environment
  - Non routine decisions

Flexibility in decision making

Understood consequence and action (follow established protocols)
As depicted, crisis situations differ from normal times of organizational operation in several ways. Unlike normal conditions of organizational leadership, researchers have suggested that crisis events threaten the viability of the organization (Pearson & Clair, 1998), are rare in nature (Cornell & Sheras, 1998), have the potential to dismantle an organization (King, 2002), and fall under close media scrutiny (Fink, 1986). These types of situations place added stress and strain on organizations, their people, and a leader’s ability to consult with others in determining well conceived, thoughtful decisions (Yukl, 2006).

When an organization is in a crisis environment and expected to perform difficult tasks, the role and expectations of the leader are likely to change (Yukl, 2006). Often, leaders have specific roles to execute in times of crisis but due to the rarity of a crisis occasion may not be familiar with those specialized tasks. For example, the President of a university may not realize the federal resources at his or her disposal during a disaster. The federal government can provide crisis counseling, low interest loans, and other beneficial assistance to universities impacted by disaster. The caveat is that the organizational leader must know what is available and how to request these resources from the government. Despite the critical importance of leading organizations through crisis events, many leaders have never formally studied how their roles and leadership styles may change between leading under normal conditions and leading during times of crisis.

Historically, as was discussed in an earlier section of this chapter, older more traditional leadership theories ignored environmental and situational conditions. The assumption was that good leadership transcended context. However, Sternberg and
Vroom (2002) noted that all forms of leadership styles may not successfully transcend to
different situations and contexts. Therefore, it follows that leadership styles that work
during normal organizational conditions and situations may not necessarily transcend
successfully to organizational crisis situations.

The ability of a leader to adapt to a changing and complex environment is a key
foundation of crisis leadership. All too common are crisis leaders that foreclose on
options and suffer from suppressed resourcefulness (Rosenthal &‘t Hart, 1991). This is
undesirable, especially since crisis decision making requires an ability to think fast,
rationally and to act (Weisaeth, Knudsen, & Tonnessen, 2002). Leaders need to be
flexible, adaptive, and prepared for “tough” decision-making challenges, despite the
cause. As Table 1 demonstrates, there is a paucity of research.

Context of Higher Education

Higher education institutions experience crisis events just like any organization.
Campus disruption can be caused by a variety of events: hurricanes, flooding, pandemic
outbreaks, utility disruption, fires, bomb threats, shootings, crime, chemical spills, civil
disturbance, and other unforeseen causes. In addition, higher education institutions have
their own unique contextual differences that can complicate crisis events further. This
disruption and complication has already been witnessed within many higher education
institutions: The University of Texas at Austin in 1966, Kent State University in 1970,
Leigh University in 1986, The University of Florida in 1990, and Tulane University in
2005, just to name a select few (Zdziarski II, Dunkel, & Rollo, 2007). More recently in
2007, the deadliest campus shooting on record occurred on April 16, 2007 at Virginia
Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech) when a single student killed 32 people (Zdziarski II et al., 2007). This incident has higher education institutions looking at their own preparedness actions once again. Many educational institutions have hired university emergency managers who have a job dedicated solely to campus protection through plan development, training, and other preparedness activities (Haddow, Bullock, & Coppola, 2008). This process of crisis preparedness in higher education is complex in design and structure from other types of business or even K-12 learning environments. Crisis management in higher education presents its own set of unique challenges.

In a post-Virginia Tech study conducted by The Secret Service, Department of Education, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Drysdale, Modzeleski, and Simmons (2010) provided rationale for the higher education distinction. Many higher education institutions are composed of many buildings, often have large classrooms, separate faculty by department, have more uncontrolled access and egress, and have more irregular scheduling. These issues separate students from faculty and also faculty from each other throughout the day. Therefore, unlike other environments, communication becomes fragmented. Tracking behavioral changes and student whereabouts are often lost (Drysdale et al., 2010). In addition, unlike many other organizational types, the autonomy of the faculty and administration can also detract from campus planning initiatives. Many university employees are not mandated to engage in any training or preparedness actions leaving a formal authority structure practically absent (Drysdale et al., 2010).

In addition, the structure and governance of a university system is vastly different and unique from other institutions. According to Birnbaum (2003) university governance can be divided into two different but equally valid systems of organizational influence
and control. One system is based on legal authority which would include positions such as trustees, and administration. The other system is based on professional authority which justifies faculty. States also have a role in overseeing institutional autonomy as it is balanced with public accountability (Toma, 2007). Power struggles are often involved between the faculty, administration and trustees. The questions concerning who is in charge are often left ambiguous within the university system due to the idea of shared governance between these groups (Toma, 2007). This lack of decision making clarity is often criticized due to limiting the agility of the higher education system. This can create obstructions in making rapid decisions for the university system (Birnbaum, 2003).

The system of higher education governance can be pictured as two concentric circles with presidents, faculty, administrators and trustees at the core. Community, parents, students, alumni, and other external agencies operate on the outside or periphery environment (Gayle, Tewarie, and White, 2003). With so many internal and external constituents involved in the higher education process, politics and influence touches virtually every decision. University wide resources can also impact this structure of governance and decision making.

Birnbaum (2001) argues that institutions can display varying levels of governance based on resources. Those universities that have fewer resources seem to have more direct accountability and a greater bureaucratic environment. Given the structure and governance of the higher education system, the crisis leadership process can be impacted. In addition to the structural and communicative barriers discussed by Drysdale et al., (2010), the issue of governance in higher education also adds its own set of complexities involving authority and decision making. These decisions can not only
surface in a crisis, but also as the university looks to reestablish operations during and after a disruptive crisis incident. For these reasons, further supported by the research review conducted in Table 1, there is a significant need to reexamine crisis leadership specifically in the context of higher education.

Review of Research

To date, research concerning training for crisis events has been limited to empirical studies organized around pre- and post-test models. In these studies, participants were pre-tested to determine their baseline knowledge concerning crisis response activities and procedures. Participants were then trained in any number of crisis response models. Table 1 summarizes these research studies. As listed, Bartley et al. (2007) used a video training method. Perry (2004) used a disaster exercise. A common finding across this literature was that following training participants increased their knowledge of handling crisis events as measured in post-test assessments. Although several of these studies in Table 1 reported encouraging findings (e.g., Bartley et al., 2007 trained 40 hospital registrars on a disaster plan using a 15-minute video and after viewing the video, 35 out of 39 passed the post-test; Matthieu et al. [2006] demonstrated increased abilities, awareness, and confidence of the participants after watching a training video), none of the literature to date has employed follow-up studies.

The absence of field-based empirical research leaves open the question of if or how training affects actual practice. Furthermore, these studies have not addressed the question of practicality of training. In other words, while participants may have performed better on post-tests, it is unknown if they believed the training would benefit
them should they ever be faced with a crisis, if the training could be conducted in a more beneficial manner, or if the training was aligned with the career goals of participants.

These studies are summarized in Table 1. As has been previously noted, early crisis training was offered on the assumption that training would have positive affects for performance in the field. However, this assumption has never been tested nor have participants had the opportunity to provide critical feedback for systemic change. The proposed research seeks to fill this void.

Table 1
Crisis Training Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Study</th>
<th>Summary</th>
<th>Research Methodology</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bartley, Fisher &amp; Stella (2007)</td>
<td>Study was conducted to test whether an instructional video from a disaster drill is effective for educating registrars on the hospital disaster plan.</td>
<td>Pre and post intervention study was conducted using an edited disaster drill to train registrars on the disaster plan: 40 registrars, 15 minute video.</td>
<td>The findings suggest that use of a training video may encourage more hospital disaster preparedness. 35/39 passed the post-test.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ray, Bishop &amp; Wang (1997)</td>
<td>Accountability for a behavioral safety program led to safer work practices -- not just training. Training alone may not be enough to change behavior.</td>
<td>Concluded that components led to safer work practices by introducing them one at a time.</td>
<td>Training alone did not show an impact in the safety index. Real results were demonstrated by the experimental group when the union representative posted the “score” weekly (feedback) and additionally when goal setting was introduced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Study</td>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>Research Methodology</td>
<td>Findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peterson and Perry (1999)</td>
<td>Studied the effects of two disaster exercises: one hazmat and one medical mass casualty. Assists to confirm the relatively unproven assumption that exercises are beneficial.</td>
<td>Quasi-experimental design. Professional firefighters- treatment &amp; experimental group. Likert type responses were measured for gain score.</td>
<td>Disaster exercises have impacts on perceptions. Change in perceptions of teamwork, response network effectiveness, training adequacy, equipment adequacy, and job risk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perry (2004)</td>
<td>Participants in disaster exercises were given pre- and post-tests to measure gain from disaster drill involvement.</td>
<td>Quasi-experimental design used at an airport disaster drill on police, firefighters and citizen volunteers. Survey measured perceptions before and after the exercise.</td>
<td>Participation enhanced the perceptions of response knowledge and teamwork for all three participant groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key (1997)</td>
<td>Use of case studies to assist managers through crisis thinking. Studied trained vs. not trained MBA students’ responses to ethical dilemmas.</td>
<td>Two groups of managers were identified: One group had taken the ethics course and one had not. Their responses to ethical dilemmas were captured and analyzed using regression and z-score analysis.</td>
<td>States that it does make a difference, but not sure how much or its efficacy. Suggests that MBA training in ethical issues may reduce the risk of managerial inaction to a small degree and advert organizational disaster.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornell &amp; Sheras (1998)</td>
<td>Crisis teams need to be integrated for informational purposes and share common goals and understand their own duties and roles within</td>
<td>Looks at five different school crisis situations and discusses why the responses failed. Leadership, teamwork and responsibility</td>
<td>Crises usually begin as small incidents no one pays attention to and they escalate from poor management. Acting quickly can</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Study</td>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>Research Methodology</td>
<td>Findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>the organization. Having a crisis plan is not enough.</td>
<td>themes were identified.</td>
<td>stop student issues from escalating.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noe &amp; Schmitt (1986)</td>
<td>Influences on trainee attitudes on training effectiveness.</td>
<td>Participants were evaluated before a training simulation. Six skill dimensions were assessed. Pre- and post-test scores were used as training effectiveness indicators.</td>
<td>Discusses that training may be more effective if the work climate supports change in behavior from applying the learned skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthieu, Ross, &amp; Knox (2006)</td>
<td>Suicide hotline training was conducted using a 3-hour video.</td>
<td>Participants completed a pre- and post-test measure of knowledge and efficacy to manage a caller in distress or in a suicidal crisis.</td>
<td>Participants scored significantly higher after training. The program increased the abilities, awareness, and confidence of the participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Van Hasselt, Baker, Romano, Schlessinger, Zucker, Dragone, &amp; Perera (2006)</td>
<td>Study looked at the efficacy of hostage negotiation training.</td>
<td>Forty five special agents were assessed on a role play test of crisis negotiation skill before and after completing a 2-week course.</td>
<td>Results showed significant pre- and post-test differences on active listening and decreased attempts to problem solve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paton (1994)</td>
<td>The study evaluates the applicability of the training and operational practices of a group of firefighters to disaster search and rescue duties.</td>
<td>The study identified applicability of work to assessing the incidence of stressor characteristics. The data were collected using a survey and with quantitative interpretations.</td>
<td>The study showed that the training and experience of the firefighters did not prepare them for disaster work as well as non-emergency volunteers who were trained specifically for disaster work.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Need

Even though crisis leadership research has been circulating for over 40 years, there is still much to learn about training processes. Currently, the system of crisis training is aging, and few researchers have called attention to a reexamination of this system. An exploration of crisis practices and perspectives is necessary to determine if a new paradigm is indeed necessary to evolve the system of higher education crisis management into a more applicable context, and further connect the training to developing better university leaders. It is past time for researchers to dissect and question what has become known as “standard” crisis training practices and look at actual results.
CHAPTER III

METHODS

Introduction

This chapter reviewed the research questions, data collection, and analysis methodology. This study employed the qualitative research method. A short review of qualitative methods introduced the chapter. The dissertation sought to answer the following:

Main Research Questions

1. How do leaders in higher education describe their preparation and training for addressing crisis situations?
   a. What higher education factors do leaders attribute to supporting effective crisis leadership?
   b. What higher education factors do organizational leaders attribute to detracting from effective crisis leadership?
   c. What specific aspects of training do higher education leaders attribute to supporting effective crisis leadership?
   d. What specific aspects of training do higher education leaders attribute to detracting from effective crisis leadership?
Qualitative Research and Epistemology

This study used the qualitative approach to research. The history of qualitative research spans over 60 years in fields of social anthropology, social phenomenology, social and behavioral sciences, and linguistics as well as with practitioners who concern themselves with organizational functioning (Huberman & Miles, 2002; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Research can serve different functions. It can be basic or pure which seeks to advance knowledge, or applied to solve a problem (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The research technique is chosen based upon the questions the researcher seeks to ask.

Qualitative methodology revolves around asking questions such as: 1) How do we know what we know? and 2) Is what people say different than they actually do? (Davies, 2007). The premise of qualitative research lies in constructing truth through interpretation.

Qualitative research is based on a philosophy of science that suggests that truth and reality are interpretative constructs, that are constructed by individuals who have participated in that reality, and multidimensional by individuals relying on their own interpretations and experiences (Gall et al., 2007). This can be described as “truth” with a small “t”, meaning the researcher believes not in a concrete truth, but a truth that is limited to our understanding of the phenomena at this time. Qualitative researchers study a determined phenomenon -- a process that is of interest to the researcher. The researcher strives to understand the meaning of the phenomena assigned by the participant as communicated through their observations, opinions, beliefs, and experiences. This research philosophy is also referred to as post-positivistic.

As opposed to the positivist philosophical ontology of quantitative research, qualitative is post-positivistic in orientation. The post-positivist position is also referred
to as the scientific method. The term refers to thinking after positivism, challenging the traditional view of an absolute truth (Creswell, 2003). This orientation is also viewed as constructivistic or naturalistic in approach where aspects of the human environment are created by the individuals who participate in the environment (Gall et al., 2007). This participation and interpretation is extended to the researcher as the interpretive tool.

**Researcher as Instrument**

In qualitative studies, the researcher is the instrument. The presence of the researcher in the lives of the participants to be studied is vital to the research paradigm (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). Whether the research is an in-depth longitudinal study or using case study design implementing field surveys, the researcher has closeness to the participants. This closeness is necessary to gain access to their personal reflections and phenomenological descriptions. What the researcher records and captures is of importance to the research. Both verbal and nonverbal interactions become pieces of analytical data (Esterberg, 2002). Since there is no way to record and capture everything involved in the interview experience, the qualitative researcher must use their own judgment to decipher what is important (Esterberg, 2002). For this reason, the term interpretative research is sometimes used instead of qualitative research (Gall et al., 2007). Qualitative researchers make holistic observations of the total context observed, study meanings and human interactions, become personally involved with research participants, and assume that reality is constructed by the participants (Gall et al., 2007). These methods of inquiry have been scrutinized and enriched over time (Huberman & Miles, 2002).
The qualitative method relies on an emphasis of more open data collection methods such as case studies, interviews, observations, self-reflection, documentation, and others. Qualitative research is not statistical or mathematical in nature but relies in capturing the shared experiences of individuals and a socially constructed versus objective reality (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In the areas of crisis leadership and decision making, research has called for increased use of qualitative methodology (Conger, 1999) to capture additional contextual richness quantitative research cannot provide. This study used the qualitative method of case study.

Case Study Research

As illustrated and explained in the literature review chapter, many studies in the crisis field use a quasi-experimental pre-post test research design. For a long time scholars incorrectly thought that case study design was one type of quasi-experimental design; however, this misperception has been corrected and the use of case study stands as its own unique design (Yin, 1994). The use of a case study approach is common in qualitative research and can provide additional context and description of phenomenon far beyond the single pre-post test snapshot. This method supports a countervailing trend in social science research in sidestepping the “artificially and narrowness of experimental studies” and allowing researchers to be more flexible in exploring phenomenon (Rudestam & Newton, 1992, p. 29).

According to Gall et al. (2007), “Case study research allows an in-depth study of instances of a phenomenon in real-life settings and from the perspective of the participants involved in the phenomenon” (p. 634). Typically, case studies involve
fieldwork in which the researcher interacts with study participants in their natural settings and learn about the phenomenon from the perspective of those in the field (Gall et al., 2007). Case studies are a preferred strategy for qualitative researchers to study “how” and “why” phenomena questions and can be complemented by two other case types: exploratory and descriptive case studies (Yin, 1994). The goal of exploratory case studies is to develop hypotheses and propositions for further study (Yin, 1994). Conversely, descriptive case studies involve making careful descriptions of a chosen phenomenon. This study used the descriptive case study design which is intertwined with the interview technique of narrative inquiry.

**Narrative Inquiry**

For this research, the strategy of narrative inquiry was used. People tell stories to make sense of their lives and their experiences. In narrative inquiry, life stories are the focus of interpretation (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). Stories are one way people make sense of their world, producing and reproducing social knowledge for generations. Narrative approaches bring the qualitative researcher closer to the investigative process than quantitative or statistical methodology (Josselson & Lieblich, 1995). Once the story is gathered, the researcher must “decode, recognize, recontextualize, or abstract that life in the interest of reaching a new interpretation of the raw data of experience” (Josselson & Lieblich, 1995, p. ix). While the art of gathering personal stories may sound easy, this is not an approach that comes naturally for most researchers.

Qualitative researchers rarely focus specifically on eliciting narratives during the interview process. Conventional methods of interview tend to suppress or even ignore
respondent stories as they naturally try to tell them (Chase, 1995). Too often during the interview process the researcher is looking for a certain point or response. By suppressing this function, the research can end up being shallow in detail and lacking the thick description needed for thorough analysis. If the researcher wants to hear stories rather than reports, “the interviewer needs to invite others to tell their stories and encourage them to take responsibility for the meaning of their talk” (Chase, 1995, p. 3). Chase (1995) further explains the process of capturing narrative lies in the questions researchers ask. Questions should be phrased “in the everyday rather than sociological language; that we need to ask about participants’ experiences, thoughts and feelings to gather data thick enough to shed light on our sociological problems; and that the relationships we construct with interviewees affects the quality of their responses to our questions” (p. 3). The methodological approach including the interview process utilized to gather the narrative statements will be explained.

Methodological Approach

This research sought to understand the process of higher education crisis leadership development. As described, this study used a case study methodology to explore the phenomenon of crisis leadership. Qualitative research typically uses a small sample formula or even a single case for exploration. Davies (2007) provides several reasons why a small case sample is favorable for qualitative research. Since the researcher will collect all data first hand, the ability to get involved in face-to-face encounters can add another dimension to authenticity to the research. The interviews can be free of time constraints, where the focus is put on the participants’ experience and
what they want to share about their perceptions of reality. There is more time to extrapolate their feelings, beliefs, and perceptions on the topic of study.

A small sample will yield results that are detailed descriptions of individual experience with the potential for important patterns to develop across the cases (Patton, 2002). Therefore, five case studies were compared using the interview protocol designed to capture participant stories regarding issues on crisis leadership. As often used in qualitative research, the sample will be of a typical case. This is a “case that exhibits the characteristic to an average or typical extent” (Gall et al., 2007). The sampling set is purposeful since there are only a limited number of experts involved in the phenomena of study.

Since this is a multiple case design, a cross case comparison method will be used. The cross case analysis chart, located in Chapter 5 uses data specifically from the original interview data. While some interview data is left out of the chart, this additional information does not contradict any findings. The information was deemed redundant or superficial and did not add anything additional to the research. The main research themes were extracted from the data using constant comparison until the point of theoretical saturation. The cross case analysis displays the salient themes gathered from the analysis. According to Yin (1994), “the evidence from using multiple cases is often considered more compelling and the overall study is therefore regarded as being more robust” (p. 45). Using a multiple case design should result in replication logic. If similar results are predicted from each of the cases, replication is said to have taken place (Yin, 1994). Two individual cases, treated as a set, came from a private higher education setting. Three other cases came from a public higher education setting. The researcher sought to explore
if the themes and issues that emerged from the data were comparable or unique to the university specifically. Once the interviews were conducted and recorded, they were transcribed, coded, and analyzed based on the a priori themes that emerged from the literature as well as emergent themes based on the cross-case comparisons.

**Interview Protocol**

An interview is a meeting of two persons to exchange information and ideas through questions and responses, resulting in communication and mutual construction of meaning about a particular topic (Esterberg, 2002). For this research, focused semi-structured interviews were conducted. In semi-structured interviews, the goal is to explore a topic more openly and to allow interviewees to express their opinions and ideas in their own words. This allows the researcher to delve deeper into understanding the perception and beliefs of the interviewee. In some situations, asking the interviewee for their insights into certain occurrences can also be helpful in understanding the exchange process (Yin, 1994).

In this research, the participants were asked a set of predetermined core questions. Follow-up questions in some cases were different depending on the participant’s response or if more clarity or explanation was needed for the study. The interview was not a two-way conversation; it served as a system of asking questions and soliciting narratives. The interview was structured with clearly defined roles of interviewer and interviewee. The researcher allowed for some free dialogue if it was relative but off the main question so the participant could add what he or she felt was important to the area of study. If the participant misinterpreted the question, the researcher was quick to rephrase the question.
in a way that made sense to them. This kept the participants’ responses comparable. If a topic came up that was not part of the interview but could be an important contribution, the researcher asked for expansion.

The interviews lasted on average about one hour. Since the researcher was conducting the interviewing in the field while the participant was on the clock, a reasonable time frame to complete an interview was necessary. The participants did not review the questions before the interview. In addition, the main research questions were not provided to the participants either. All questions focused around the central themes found in the literature: leadership, training, and crisis management. The following interview questions were presented:

**Interview Questions**

1. Can you take a few minutes to describe your position?
   a. What does a typical day look like?
   b. Can you think of an atypical day and describe it?

2. Would you say that handling crises are part of your job?
   a. What kinds of crises have you handled in this position?

3. What kinds of training did you receive to be prepared for handling crises in your work?
   a. Do you think the training was effective in training you to respond?
   b. Where was the training lacking?
   c. Are there accountability structures related to crisis training?
i. Can you describe them?

ii. Is training mandatory or voluntary?

4. What personal characteristics or skills are most important for crisis leaders to be successful in handling crisis?
   a. Have you have had any training that has helped you develop those characteristics or skills?
   b. What has your organization done to help leaders develop those characteristics or skills?

5. What aspects of the organization help you to handle crisis well?
   a. Do you think you have direct supervisor support?

6. What aspects of the organization detract from handling crisis well?
   a. Have organizational politics ever influenced how a crisis is handled?

7. How might current practice be improved?

8. Anything else you would like to share?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Questions</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>1a</th>
<th>1b</th>
<th>1c</th>
<th>1d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Questions to provide general background on the participant and the organization in which he or she works.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>3a</td>
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<td>3b</td>
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<td>3c</td>
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<td>3cii</td>
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<td>4a</td>
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<tr>
<td>4b</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>5a</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>6a</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5. Interview question matrix.

Selection of Participants

The known leaders and experts on this topic were chosen for their extensive experience. This was also defined as performing key informant interviews. Key informant interviews are conducted when the “interviewer collects data from individuals who have special knowledge or perceptions that would not otherwise be available to the researcher” (Gall et al., 2007, p. 243). The participants in this study had to be actively involved in the area of crisis management, exercises, and decision making at a university to be part of the study. Traditionally, there is only one or two of these individuals at any given organization. Therefore the selection process was purposeful to capture the specific information necessary for the study.
The researcher was actively involved in this area of study and therefore knew who the experts were in this area. The field involves only a small number of these experts. Therefore, the researcher either knows many of these people or knows the people that can get her access to the others. The participants were selected based on the positions they hold and their general reputation in the field of crisis and emergency management. The participants held a reputation of being the experts in this area of study and were chosen for the expertise and richness they could bring to this issue of crisis leadership. The interviews were conducted at the participant’s work location. The researcher felt it was important to be on their “turf” to minimize disruption and attempt to access the most comfortable surroundings during the interview process. A chart summarizing the case description is outlined below.

The interview cases were tape recorded, transcribed, and interpreted using the theoretical framework outlined in the literature review as a lens for analysis and understanding. This process is further explained.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cases</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Public/ Private University</th>
<th>Years in current position/ years at university (if different)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D. Jenkins</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Vice President of Campus Services</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Six/ Thirty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. George</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Director of Emergency Management</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Mock</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs and Chief Housing Officer</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Six/ Twenty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Thomas</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Emergency Management Coordinator</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Seven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Fletcher</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Vice President of Student Affairs</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Three</td>
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Figure 6. Case description chart.
Data Collection and Analysis

Guba and Lincoln (1994) explain that in research guided by interpretative epistemology, “terms such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability replace the usual positivistic criteria of internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity” (pp. 105-117). Several research examples were identified to assist in addressing validity threats and increase credibility of research conclusions. These research strategies were broken down into two sections: strategies to ensure thorough data collection and strategies reflecting sound research design.

Several strategies were used to ensure thorough research design and data collection. Data were collected in a standardized open-ended interview format. This method involves a “predetermined sequence and wording of the same set of questions to be asked of each respondent, in order to minimize the possibility of bias” (Gall et al., 1997). An interview guide was also used at each interview. The same questions were asked of the respondents using the same wording. This helped to ensure the same types of responses from the key informant interviews. The guide listed the questions in order to be asked and had space after each question to record key information. In addition, coding checks were in place. Each interview was recorded and transcribed. Member checking took place to give the respondents the chance to review statements for accuracy and completeness (Gall et al., 2007).

Instead of the common term “triangulation”, crystallization was used. If inconsistent or contradictions occurred within the data, they were generally explained using an exploratory framework (Gall et al., 2007). Contextual completeness was also kept by including tacit knowledge into the case studies while recording rich data. The
nonverbal responses such as (laughs, sighs, pauses) were all kept during the transcription process. Once the data began to be coded into themes, intervention and pattern matching took place to check whether the patterns found in the data corresponded to predictions drawn from the literature theory underlying the study. The themes being identified in the research were followed closely with the previously outlined themes found in the literature. The analysis and coding process including emic and etic perspectives along with interpretational analysis are explained further.

The data collected are soft data, meaning contextually rich in the description of situations and events and are not easily handled by statistical processes (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). Qualitative researchers are less concerned with answering specific questions with their research or testing hypotheses. The researcher strives to understand the subject’s behavior or beliefs from the subject’s own frame of reference (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982).

Using the interview technique, case studies produce detailed descriptions of the phenomenon, develop possible explanations, or evaluate the phenomenon. In this study, thick descriptions utilizing the data collected from the interview process were analyzed for deeper understanding and meaning. Thick descriptions seek to recreate a situation and context accompanied by meaningful interpretations (Gall et al., 2007). This perspective must be balanced with the etic and emic approaches to qualitative research.

One important characteristic of case study research is to portray the etic perspective of the researcher as well as the emic perspective of the participant. The emic perspective is usually demonstrated by using their own statements or stories as well as other descriptive observations. The emic or professional perspective adds theoretical and
conceptual analysis to the study for reporting and research contribution purposes (Gall et al., 2007). The researcher looked for etic statements that build the constructs necessary to bring order to the data collected. These constructs assisted in relating the data to the findings in the literature base. The researcher then searched for themes within the descriptive data which were salient, characteristic features of a case study using constant comparison and interpretational analysis.

Interpretational analysis is the process of examining case study data closely in order to find constructs, themes, and patterns that can be used to illustrate and explain the phenomenon of interest to the researcher (Gall et al., 2007). The data were then broken down into coding segments to capture themes. Since multi data sources (multiple interviews) were used, the data were analyzed using constant comparison to the point of theoretical saturation (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). This occurs when no new data or categories emerge relevant to the established coding categories and relationships appear to be well established using a multiple case design generalizability of constructs and themes. The method of constant comparison is most often used in conjunction with multiple sites, participant observation studies (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982) such as this research project.

Researcher Stance

Since the researcher was actively engaged in the qualitative research study through the data collection, analysis, and interpretations stages, it was important for her to openly disclaim anything that could be contributed to bias. The researcher was open in disclaiming her background as an Associate Professor of Emergency Management. She is
the lead faculty member of the Bachelors Degree in Emergency Management. With this
career, she has been involved in many crisis training and exercise activities as an
observer and evaluator at both the government and private sector levels. She has spoken
at the national conference level concerning the topic of crisis training, exercises, and
leadership. The researcher knows many crisis leaders in various levels of government
(known as Emergency Management and Homeland Security Directors) as well as in
private industry and higher education settings (known as Environmental Health and
Safety Directors, Emergency Managers, Crisis Managers, Risk Managers and other
related titles).

Researcher Perspective

The researcher has seen positive and negative aspects of training at the
governmental, university, and private sector levels which has led to her line of inquiry.
With the frequency of natural and technological disasters in the United States, she has
witnessed the many organizations dealing with emergency management functions fumble
with crisis response and leadership activities. Private sector and higher education
organizations have specifically begun adopting crisis training and exercise practices
within the last 5 years at exponential rates and the crisis just keep coming. As an
example, at this point in time British Petroleum is dealing with the largest off shore
drilling crisis in history; Toyota is trying to recover from a faulty gas pedal crisis; and a
professor killed three other faculty members after a tenure denial meeting. Crisis
leadership could not be a timelier subject.
With everyone on the crisis training bandwagon no one is really stopping to ask if current practices are even adequate to prepare someone for a real situation. With the amount of training that is conducted within various types of organizations, the lack of leadership and role clarification in actual times of crisis is puzzling. She hypothesizes the current system of crisis training may have something to do with the failures. She is interested to see if anyone else is questioning current practices and what perceptions/recommendations they may have to improve the current system of crisis training and leadership. It is hoped that this research can add even a small piece of value to the research base.

Institutional Review Board

Permission to conduct this research was cleared with The University of Akron’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) before proceeding. The proposal was found to be exempt from IRB review since it was not deemed to present any physical or psychological harm or distress to the participants. With this exemption, no IRB extension was necessary as the dissertation progressed. Under the rules of the IRB, the participants had to sign an informed consent form. The participants signed in agreement to be interviewed and then again in agreement to be audio taped for the purpose of transcription and statement use (see attached informed consent form for participants). All participants have signed the waivers and agreed to both conditions.

Before the interviews began, the participants were informed of their participation in a doctorate dissertation study on crisis management practices. They were informed that they would remain anonymous in the published findings and represented only by a
pseudonym. Only the researcher would know the actual identity. They were informed that they were in full control of the interview process and could stop the interview completely at any time or choose to skip over questions they did not wish to discuss. It was stressed that they could stop the process at any moment they did not feel comfortable. No participants during the study skipped or stopped the interview and were happy to answer any questions related to the topic of study.

Summary

The purpose of Chapter 3 was to describe the qualitative methodology used in this dissertation. This chapter included a detailed description of the need for more qualitative research in complex areas relating to crisis training and leadership, also illustrating the benefit of conducting qualitative research in this area of study. The strategies of inquiry included an ethnographic approach with case study interviews of selected key informants involved in the higher education crisis leadership system. The researcher has followed all IRB protocols and has been given full consent and participation by those she has interviewed in the field.
CHAPTER IV
CASES

In this chapter, five individuals who identify themselves as part of a campus crisis management team are interviewed. Two cases are with dedicated, full time campus Emergency Managers. Three cases are with university administrators at the Assistant Vice President or Vice President level. Each of the participants is introduced to the reader and substantial portions of the interview text are presented. The purpose is for the reader to develop familiarity with the participant’s reality as related to the subject matter of the study. The narrative cases provide a link between the theoretical base and analysis. Cross case analyses are performed in Chapter 5 for additional application and analysis based on the underlying theory. Therefore, this chapter provides the reader with narrative cases that illustrate the findings of the study as they relate to foundational theory; however a more extensive analysis and explanation appears in Chapter 5.

D. Jenkins – Background

D. Jenkins. is a Caucasian male. He holds a Masters Degree in Business Administration and is vice president of campus services at a mid-sized, private, urban, Midwestern university. He has held this position for the past 6 years, however has been employed by the university for about 30 years. Shortly after graduating from college with his bachelor’s degree in Criminal Justice, Jenkins worked in the East side of the city in
the security department for a large utility company. He then took a position in the security department at the university moving up ranks to director of security, then director of campus services, to the current position of vice president for campus services.

Jenkins says he has responsibility for a number of programs including public safety, security, fire safety, emergency response, and environmental health and safety. As Vice President, he is the senior administrator that oversees the police, public safety, parking transportation, food service, retail, purchasing, bookstore, sporting events, fitness center, and other campus services/operations that support the environment and academic endeavors of the institution. Jenkins begins the interview describing a typical day on the job:

Well they vary. During when school is in session we stay pretty active. We get in here early in the morning and stay until typically later in the evening working on meetings with directors, dealing with policy issues, putting out fires, things that come up during the day, attending meetings, committees, a lot of e-mail communication. Mostly you know leading the efforts of about 10 directors and about 200 staff members in all of those different activities, working with colleagues in the senior administration, on policy issues, major projects, so that’s kind of the big picture. (dj:17-23)

As is true for most participants, meetings and answering e-mail communication takes up a large amount of time in Jenkins’s typical day. Being a senior administrator, he is often busy working with various groups and keeping up on activities.

D. Jenkins and Crisis

Jenkins then turns the discussion to talk about some atypical experiences he has had on the job. Being a university member for 30 years in related security and safety positions, he could go way back into organizational history for some interesting stories:
Let’s see where do I begin? Well probably... there’s two that are most noteworthy in my experience that I had to deal directly with one is the one right behind you, the fire, when the building burned down here and this building burned in 1991 I believe. It was a total loss and that was our administrative headquarters for the university so we had to not only deal with the sort of loss of the building, move the operations, resume operations, deal with all of the clean-up activity, restoration and rebuilding of the building and the impact on the institution. It made us upheaval for at least 6 months, 3 to 6 months of pretty serious upheaval. (dj:26-33)

An atypical day can mean many different things, and participants answered this in different ways, however Jenkins jumps right into crisis mode describing his top three events on campus. He was calm, informative, and very relaxed as he recounted the next crisis which gained national publicity:

The next biggest occurrence that was unusual that we had to respond to was the shooting in 2003. At the end of spring finals week we had an active shooter situation and one person was killed and two were wounded. There were about 70 people that were held hostage for about 10 hours almost until the next day and there was such a siege. It got a lot of national publicity. It got resolved although unfortunately right away we lost one student and had a couple of people wounded. The rest was resolved without any further injuries and I think all in all was handled pretty well considering the fact that you know at the time all we had a emergency response plan but it wasn’t as developed as it is now so I thought the reaction good but it was fairly traumatic incident. (dj:34-43)

Jenkins did not expand any further on that situation and moved on immediately to one more recollection he decided to share from his past. This time he smiled to emphasize the point that anything can happen on an urban campus like his:

Another one is kind of actually a little on the lighter side but nonetheless was kind of a serious situation. This goes back about 25 years. I got a call one morning. (The city) police were calling us and wanted us to seal off our incinerator where we essentially burned animal carcasses that were used in medical research and they said please seal off the incinerator, we’ve got a body, a human body, which we did -we cooperated. A guy had killed a guy somewhere in the city who worked in the animal facility, the guy who shot the guy worked in the animal facility, and the police found out about it and put two and two together and heard he actually brought the body and burned it in the incinerator so we sealed it off and they came
down, sure enough human bones were in there. We have it on film burning the body. Then they used a forensic anthropologist to identify that person’s bones because the incinerator can really cook and ah- that was kind of unusual back when I was involved in the security program specifically. (dj:43-55)

Jenkins then discusses the frequency of less severe crisis issues on campus and how they try to deal with those issues in a collaborative way to intervene before they become severe, such as the shooting incident reported earlier. He explains how they are being more careful and mindful in their reaction to student issues:

Just all forms of situations the come up almost weekly involving students. Probably during the academic year, at least one per week where there is some kind of situation we have to monitor or react to. Really stepped up our response, or I would say our detection I should say, of potential problem situations with behavioral issues and so we have an active committee in fact we just met yesterday. I’d say we error on the side of caution so anything that might present an issue to us we now review whether it’s a student, faculty, staff, you know what is the potential if this person is acting out or there are threats, how should we deal with this. We’ve come to a critical evaluation and decide with all the right players – counseling, legal, police, student affairs, academics. It’s really risk management. I think it’s now kind of now the best practice we spend a lot of time with them. It’s not like we have a lot of crazy people here but you know it’s just being precautious. (dj: 55-66)

When asked if he feels managing crisis events is part of his job responsibility, he breaks his informative demeanor, relaxes his posture, and discusses how dealing with crisis events impacts him personally.

Yeah unfortunately I guess. Probably the thing that gets the most wearisome about it, I don’t know if that’s the right word, is just you are always getting called in. You never know if you are going to get called in at 3:00 in the morning anymore because you never know what’s going on. I have been doing that for really like my whole life. I am (used to it) but you know . . . you never know. It still gets you sometimes. (dj:69-73)

Jenkins has dealt with some serious crisis events in his 30 years at the university. Each event resulted in a phone call to him. He appeared tired just talking about the
experience of being called at all hours for that many years, never knowing what is going
to be said.

D. Jenkins and Training

The interview turns to discuss training that Jenkins has received to handle the
incidents described. He explains:

I think a lot of it earlier was experience based. It wasn’t as much as a formal. . . . I
have a degree in criminal justice at [name] State. I have a Masters degree in
business administration from here at the [name] School and so I have you know
quite a bit of formal academic education that was related to some degree generally
speaking and administration response, but a lot of seminar based programs I have
been to over the years. I was a member of IACLEA, International Association of
Campus Law Enforcement Administrators, ASIS the International Security
Association. I’ve been to a whole slew of different courses and then just hands on
experiences handling situations over the years. (dj:83-91)

Jenkins then discusses some continuing education courses he feels were helpful
for his position, one major seminar being from the Harvard Business School. The seminar
was focused specifically on higher education crisis management. He pulls his certificate
off the shelf and hands it to me for review as he continues to discuss the specialization he
sees emerging specifically in higher education crisis management:

One of the best programs I went to was . . . they do this every year at Harvard at
the Kennedy school specifically crisis leadership and higher education. They have
really almost an international attendee list from the universities around the world.
I went last year but it was really interesting. It really almost takes a scientific look
at crisis response when you break it down into how it unfolds and what are sort of
the key issues, as best I can recall from the course, the ah- life of an emergency,
where you have preplanning and critical response, managing the expectations. It’s
just a very good program, a lot of anecdotal stories from our participants. I guess
my take away is really kind of a science and you are getting more and more of
this kind of really specific training. There is crisis leadership in higher education
and the reason they came up with this is because of the unique nature of higher
education in terms of you know all the different constituents in the outer
community so it’s a good program. That is the type of thing recently that I have
Jenkins then explains how over the years he saw the area of campus crisis management expanding to its own specialization. After handling various tasks related to crisis management, he saw the need to bring in someone specialized in the area that could focus just on campus preparedness. He was becoming overwhelmed trying to handle it all alone:

A real evolutionist thing is to bring in an emergency manager to [the university] because it would be recognized. I recognize it. I mean really a lot of it was falling on me as a person I mean I was kind of driving the whole thing. We had police chief, security director and all that but someone has to kind of take the lead on developing the procedures. I became the de facto on that. I was the emergency manager in addition to everything else. I saw at some point needing someone specialized. I think that is an emerging field I really do the more the more we see. I mean I see more and more people looking for emergency managers, higher ed. as well as other places so we are fortunate to get him and develop that function and it’s really key because it does take full-time person for a place this big. A smaller institution you could get away with having a plan. You don’t have as much. With mid size to large university, I think you almost have to have someone to focus just on emergency response. (dj:111-122)

Jenkins then discusses how his training relates to his ability to respond:

I think it’s effective in helping you think about what you need to respond and what you have to develop in terms of preparing and responding. I don’t know if I’d really draw during an emergency situation. You would draw then if you had technical training and first responder that kind of stuff. Some of it is almost you own ability to react just how you process information but I did think it did teach me to stick to what you have to plan and stick to the plan and follow your command structure assuming you have a command structure. (dj:126-132)

Jenkins splits his opinion about training. He feels that technical, experiential training or one’s own ability to react would relate to how he handles a situation. More formalized or structured education has taught him the management structure which he
differentiates from decision making in crisis. He then discusses the importance of realism in training. Jenkins identifies realism as an area of training weakness:

I am trying to think from a critical nature but I am trying to think back to the content of the training. I have had some trouble with some of the, what would you call it, play acting and role playing or simulation because some of it gets a little goofy. The more realistic you could make it . . . we’ve had some good ones don’t get me wrong out here with good facilitators, very good actually where they put you like you are really in the thing. I probably forgot to mention that it’s probably training as well. We’ve done three or four major tabletops here. Almost like each one got better than the last one. We got a couple that people really got intense like we are really in the situation. I have been to some programs like offsite where the tabletops leave a lot to be desired because you can’t really set the stage and you feel like you are in the thing, you are sort of sitting over here and the situation can’t happen that way but prompting is sort of phony. Now when you get into a real situation or a real tabletop where they act everything and it’s in real time, it gets very real. I think that’s the best sort of learning. You see how your plan works so I’d say realism and the exercises. It’s really the realism because it’s typically how you react when you actually get in a situation. We have to get intense. But that is where you learn most. (dj:137-154)

Jenkins feels the issue of realism directly relates to the quality of the training and transfer of training into an actual situation. He further explains the university training structure in relation to mandated training and training accountability:

For me, I wouldn’t call it mandatory. It’s necessary for professional development if you are going to get involved with the stuff. You have to have some knowledge. To me, honestly, once we hire an emergency manager, we look to that person to sort of plan, update, and coordinate train. Some of the burden I think has been passed on. I still voluntarily would want to stay involved. There is no one really to mandate at my level. It’s just professional responsibility and curiosity. Now every year I . . . not by a policy, by university direction – all senior administration has to take part in at least one major tabletop per year and that’s the president and myself. I have to set that up with (the emergency manager) and me. We’ve used outside facilitators for less than 4 years. One major one per year. We do other lesser ones but always one major one with the whole team. Yes (there is accountability). We do an after action plan. I am largely along with the senior administration responsible for tracking what we discover what’s wrong and making the changes and making sure the equipment is adjusted. Now I depend a lot on (the emergency manager) to carry the ball to make the adjustments. (dj:183-198).
Jenkins explains that at his level of administration, there is not mandatory training. He decides to better himself through professional development. Conversely, the administration is not mandated by policy to participate in university crisis training, however chooses to participate and expects others to do the same. He then explains what he feels are crucial crisis leadership skills, focusing on the ability to work with a team and collaborate:

You have to be able to assimilate a lot of data quickly and you have to have the ability certainly to work with other people as a team to recognize all the components of the different skills as they are required. You have to blend all those together. You can’t be sort of turf person. You have to be steady in terms of your composure, assimilate data, make decisions, follow the plan whatever skills, follow the plan, whatever you have to do but follow the plan, stick to the plan and you have to be able to work with a cross section of people, the team approach. (dj:206-212)

Jenkins explains how he feels he has obtained those skills:

Academic training, some technical training but mostly experience just kind of baptism by fire over the years. (dj:219-220)

He then discusses how he feels the university has assisted others in obtaining those skills focusing on administrative support:

Professional training, professional development, tabletop exercises, membership in professional organizations, support, very supportive of the whole idea, having a plan, having resources, top administrative support for all things public safety, first response, no higher priority I think from the administration, the whole place is very supportive. (dj:224-227)

Absolutely (all the way up) no question. Support all the way to you can take it to expectation. It’s not only support but they have an expectation we are going to see that as a top priority. Trustees – everybody – Our current president is very . . . they have all been you know added advances. This day in age at least the last 10 years you better be proactive in emergency response. (dj:231:235)
Jenkins takes a minute to explain that crisis management at the university was not always a top focus with the administration. There were circumstances and incidents that molded their campus crisis management system into what it is currently. He thinks back to when he first started working for the university and how a series of incidents escalated the importance of university crisis preparedness over the years:

It sort of ratcheted up as the years went by because of things that have happened. I can remember back when I first came here everyone was sort of cost driven and they didn’t have the same type of . . . now they had just come out of the 60s and all that so they had to kind of a civil disturbance mentality but it was less of a willingness to take on a responsibility, it’s somebody else’s problem. The city of [name] or whatever. What happened is that we had so many security issues not just crisis response but day in and day out robberies and so the mind set changed we’ve got to do something about it because if it becomes a competitive issue in terms of students who hear its unsafe. We are going to start losing students . . . so I think somewhere in the 80s, the pendulum started swinging to we’ve got to start doing something so we started to develop our security program so taking on that responsibility and as an off shoot of that you know are starting to deal with fires and buildings burning down so the awareness just kept escalating. Then you hit 9/11. The last three presidents I mean like every one of them is like hey we’ve got a task force and we’ve got this whole. . . . I think the whole higher community after 9/11 began to really kick in and now our current president is like you know I have absolute support its #1 emergency response (dj:238-253) . . . at least for the last 10 years. Probably though you know we had that big shooting and that raised the bar especially with the trustees. (dj:267-268)

Jenkins then turns to discuss the challenges of university crisis management. He uses the simple issue of closing for a snow emergency to illustrate his point about being a decentralized organization with many constituents and interests:

We are a particularly decentralized university so you’ve got to get everybody on the same page and follow the same procedures. Simple things like snow emergencies for instance. It took us forever to keep tweaking a snow plan, bad weather, winter storm, what is our closing procedure? How do we go about making that decision? How do we communicate that when you have individual schools like the law school that shut down? Now wait a second, you can’t shut down if we are not shut down so it decentralizes the challenge. Broad multifaceted community of constituents, various constituents you’ve got to deal
with so there are communication challenges and they could face other types of businesses. Those are kind of tough parts. Big challenge is knowing the inventory of our people? Where are our students at any given time? Where is everybody? How do you track them all? It’s hard- so those are some of the main challenges. You know faculty could be a challenge especially tenured ones but generally they are pretty good in their support and stuff like that. (dj:281-294)

The discussion continues into the politics of handling crisis on a university campus:

I think in the end you work it out but there is a sort of this clash. That could be all your public relations people arguing, your administrative people hollering but I don’t think it’s ever ended up affecting the result. There are a turf battles. I don’t know how you do that in this type of environment. I’ve seen those happen. (dj: 297-300)

Jenkins then begins to discuss how the process of university crisis management could be improved going back to the idea of mandated training and a dedicated emergency management position:

Well I think greater awareness, this is probably unrealistic, but the ability to mandate the people have sort of understanding their role, training. We have a hard time with that. It’s hard to get the word out so if we can mandate more training so the people would follow procedures or be required to know the procedures. I think it’s a way to get people all on the same page to decentralize the environment (dj: 303-307) . . . Otherwise we have good resources, good coordination, good big city response agencies. I think the emergency manager position is key, dedicated person to keep updated on procedures some of the areas I have seen. More people graduate from emergency management degree programs. (dj:314-317)

Jenkins ends the discussion with his thoughts on the field of crisis preparedness and the growing need for specialists:

The one thing that is the most recent ever changing, high priority growth or area of focus has been emergency response. Of all the things, I have been involved in its front and center and it continues to be evolved. I think- I guess – fortunately maybe, it’s a growth business. It’s good to be prepared. But I think this field . . . I mean I really, to me personally, I have a director in emergency management. That field is going to grow. Any good size company, city to me is going to have that. I don’t know how you guys think of the business but it seems to me that is sort of a
J. George – Background

J. George is a 33-year-old Caucasian male. He holds an Associate’s degree in Fire Science, an Associate’s degree in Emergency Management, and is finishing up some graduate level work in Homeland Security. He is the Director of Emergency Management at a mid-sized, private, urban, Midwestern university. He has been employed by the university for 2 years and has 12 years of first responder experience.

George describes his position as involving emergency policy and procedure, training, and updating of emergency response plans. This also includes integrating emergency response across all university departments, and overseeing university-wide exercise design. He is also responsible for crisis program evaluation, coordination, emergency communications, crisis communications, and other safety related initiatives. George begins the interview describing a typical day on the job:

Meetings, meetings, more meetings, meetings about having meetings (laughs), reviewing probably on a daily average about 120-150 emails, dealing with direct report employees, I have about ten direct reports actually, but I have two managers that filter those for me. Overseeing the daily fire safety stuff obviously which is dealing with any problems that come up within the course of a day, the daily communications stuff, which is making sure that all communications that are emergency related, safety related, police, I oversee all that on a day to day basis so I have to monitor that . . . and project management of course. I probably have a dozen open projects at any given time that are capital projects so right now for example working on designing an emergency operations training center, that’s one of the projects. We just finished up campus safety month which is our university wide 30 day campus safety education program all the way from seminars to we just had a safety fair, that type of stuff so those are examples of some of the larger projects that are continuously moving and take up big amounts of time. Revision of the emergency management plan is constant. (jg:14-27)

As echoed in other participant interviews, meetings and email correspondence seem like a consistent part of George’s day. Being a Director of Emergency Management, George has some
level of responsibility within any function surrounding university safety and security. His work often extends into late hours at home. He describes his work load this way:

It’s supposed to be an eight hour job but it’s not. I mean I find myself at home after the kids go to bed I am constantly checking my email during the day. Once you have a university cell phone and are wired with laptops and everything you never work that eight hours anymore. I mean I am constantly doing stuff at home especially from the time the kids go to bed until about midnight. We task out a lot of stuff at the meetings and then because you have so many meetings in a day you end up with that hole. When do you have time to catch up on stuff you have to do from the meetings? So when you talk about hours I mean . . . even though it’s you know . . . 40 hours is your typical work week I am probably 60-70 hours so . . . I never leave this place really (and am on call) all the time because any crisis that happens usually makes it up to me to some degree so yeah. (jg:28-42)

J. George and Crisis

J. George is asked to recall an atypical day on the job. He pauses for a moment to gather his thoughts and then immediately recalls several crisis events in a row that caused disruption to the campus, and his day:

An atypical day, a good example of that is we have a large construction project here that is going on now that they had damaged a waterline so now I have a building, two buildings actually that house several hundred university associated employees, students, etc. that is threatened to be evacuated by the city fire department if it’s not corrected immediately so that’s an atypical day where meetings are cancelled until the problem is resolved and that is one of the smaller crises that happen more periodically. (jg:45-51)

George explained that the construction project was not even part of a university project. Being part of an urban campus means being in the middle of many different city activities which can indirectly impact the university. He then moves on to discuss the H1N1 outbreak of 2009 and its impact on his daily routine:

Every day was atypical during H1N1 which was last year because you never know what new developments are going to come out of it and how you are going
to have to adjust your strategy so we were basically in an emergency operational period for 8 months with H1N1. (jg:56-59)

So you never know what can happen every time my cell phone rings someone always starts out with I have a problem. That happens all the time . . . I’ve got a situation or some type of call like that. (jg:64-66)

When asked if he feels like managing crisis is part of his job responsibility,

George answers without hesitation:

Absolutely and there’s no defined crisis. It seems like anything that could result in anything comes my way these days from small building disruptions to construction project problems to little things that effect daily operations when they are safety related especially, water main breaks we’ve had several of those, we had a student hit by a bicycle recently. (jg:69-73)

J. George and Training

The interview then focused on training George has received to handle the types of events described. He explains that he has had both first responder experience as well as formal higher education. He describes how the two different modes have added to his crisis preparedness this way:

Well I was a first responder for 12 years – a police, fire and EMS so that is responding to crisis all the time and basically whether you are in an administrative position or you are responding as a police or fire officer the basic steps for managing it are pretty much the same. So it’s a lot of experience and you get a ton of training in those positions in dealing with the specific things like medical emergencies etc. etc. where you have to troubleshoot quickly, and make educated decisions based on your training. A lot of it is incident command based and if I had to say there is one training that fits crisis well it’s that incident command and dealing with the first hour especially focusing on that. Then there is the college level courses . . . and that is the emergency management level stuff. (jg:79-89)

George notes that he is not forced to take any additional training by the university structure, however chooses to keep on top of new and emerging crisis preparedness topics. He feels that the university understands that importance and supports his continuing education:
I have the freedom to choose my own on the job here so I have continued. I choose continuing education on the job and they do support continuously staying ahead of that. (jg:97-101)

George further explains his motivation for engaging in additional continuing education. He also feels that there are many ways to gain additional knowledge and information about crisis preparedness other than structured training plans. He explains other helpful sources:

I mean you are always trying to stay up with the latest stuff in this field or you’ll fall behind quickly in crisis because one of most important things is to get into that work where you can learn from other people’s crises and there are a lot of ways to do that like websites like lessons learned, and information sharing through DHS, or whether you are on a list serve like Disaster Resilient University where information is exchanged. It’s not formal training but it’s almost the best training you can have because you see a lot of after action critiques of other people’s mistakes and stuff and that is what you really need to stay ahead of so you don’t fall under the same pitfalls other people have. Virginia Tech was a great example of that and that is part of reason why I have this job today. (jg:105-115)

George then explains how he feels his training experiences relate to his ability to respond in an actual crisis, emphasizing the issue of confidence:

It helps with confidence because if you’re not dealing with crisis all the time a lot of times the training will present you simulated crisis’s to work through as teams or with people you haven’t worked with before so it’s a confidence builder because in a crisis you have to have quick decision making. A lot of times you are not afforded the time to sit around and debate things. A lot of new crisis managers aren’t always comfortable with making decisions without debate and the training helps with that you know increase your confidence level so that is a huge part of it because if you aren’t dealing with crisis all the time you have to at least deal with simulated so you get that built off. (jg:120-128)

As other participants have stated, having realistic training is also important to George. When asked where training is lacking, George confidently answers the question, explaining the importance of realism and how that relates to the participants involved. He discusses the issue:
Well what I’d like to see more in training is more real world examples. I mean a lot of times I think they build training around hypothetical things when there is certainly enough real world crisis’s . . . they tend to put hypothetical’s instead of building on people’s experiences which I think are lot more valuable and I understand that sometimes it’s hard to use people as examples because it feels like you are selecting them specifically or targeting them and saying oh this is what you did wrong and this is what you did wrong but really it is the most valuable thing you can do. It helps put things into perspective to people especially if they don’t believe something could happen to them. You know if you take five examples of that in your training class and say these are five real world examples of what we’re learning today that have happened so it kind of helps a lot with that. I’m big on the whole real world training stuff and not so much always hypothetical scenarios. (jg:131-143)

When George is asked about accountability for training, he emphasizes the expectation of the university along with his individual freedom:

It’s more of a free reign development thing. Um you know obviously, it’s a class that your supervisor sends to you and says hey go to this and they know what it’s all about and there is a specific reason for sending you because we’ve identified a problem and we don’t have anybody that has that knowledge so if it’s a new type of knowledge that you’re bringing back yeah. So if it’s to stay current on stuff that we already know about, can you make recommendations based on new practices that you’ve learned? Absolutely. Is it mandatory that everything you come back from you have to institute change? Again, there is a lot of times they will say, like with social media right now, we don’t have anybody. So right now, we don’t have anybody who really knows a lot about that and how to use it and what the best ways are so as we are identifying the people who are involved in it we need to get some people more training. So now the expectation is as we get that training yes we are supposed to bring that knowledge back and make change based on that knowledge or make recommendations for change. (jg:146-162)

George then acknowledges the accountability that happens within the university at some level. He feels that eventually he would be accountable for his skill level:

I am proactive enough that I realize the importance of it so maybe if I wasn’t doing it they may say hey you need to get your behind out there and get more training . . . you probably can’t say behind in your paper . . .( laughs . . ). So yes if it wasn’t aggressive actions on my part to standards you know I’m sure they’d recognize that in my review because you do get your employee reviews and part of it is professional development you know. Have you done anything to professionally develop yourself in the areas you work in? So it’s definitely looked
at by the university as far as quality improvement and employees here but for most of them I think it is a self-initiating thing to really stay on top of it on their own with the exception of there are times when you get ordered to go to things (jg:176-185).

The discussion then turns to focus on important leadership skills in crisis. George uses his experience within the university to explain what he feels are the most important factors in leading a crisis response. He discusses the importance of building relationships and obtaining experience:

You have to be extremely extroverted to do what crisis managers do OK? So the best thing I can say about crisis managers is it’s not so much about managing a crisis . . . it is . . . but it is managing the people before the crisis building the relationships, working together on policies and procedures relating to avoiding crisis’s, planning for resources during crisis’s before it. I mean that takes a lot of time. (jg:206-210)

Experience is a big important part of that too. I mean I think it would be extremely difficult for somebody who is starting out as a crisis manager to manage a crisis without having mentored first. You know so there is that too. You really have to build your way up and see people and be part of crises ahead of time and be confident. If you don’t have a level of self confidence and you are not a decision maker, ah those are some other things that definitely play …high self confidence and your communications part of it. You know I think they are very important. (jg:225-231)

When asked how George feels he has obtained those important leadership skills he struggles to pinpoint a specific example:

I haven’t been to any specific leadership courses or self development stuff that is related to that. Does it get talked about sometimes in some of the other courses? Yeah, yeah it does. I mean what is the difference between a manager and a leader. You know I always said that my position should be called emergency leader not emergency manager because manager means a whole different thing to me. You know that means that you can just meet the minimum criteria for getting through something. You know as a manager in a crisis a manager will be OK but you really want a leader making the decisions in a crisis and that kind of stuff. Yes could I get more leadership training – yes. You know those types of things are pertinent but is it something I seek out specifically? No because it has been rolled into other things periodically and I think that a lot of the college level courses too
have gone (into it) because I have taken some management courses and they talk about leadership a little bit but again I think they are two separate issues here. (jg:235-247)

George feels the university however does support the development of core leadership skills specifically through a program called Lead. He explains:

Well we actually, I just applied for a program called Lead. It’s a university program for people who have supervisor responsibility for a set number of people and it’s almost a half a year program. It’s a certificate program so it does help develop a lot of that leadership and development stuff. It starts up every year. They run a class every year and they select people by application. (jg:251-255)

George then begins to discuss other supportive efforts of the university. He specifically feels that he has top administrative support for his position which assists him in handling crisis well. George begins by describing university relationships:

I would say that there is really good interpersonal relationships. I mean there’s really if you look at academia you have you know the people who are focused on the education part and people who are focused on the making things work part of it you know getting the roads plowed, keeping the buildings running so that educators can do their jobs. One of the hardest things is a lot of places have getting everyone integrated correctly in a crisis. I think we are very good at integrating well because it’s really been a top down leadership approach where it’s fully supported that crisis management is going to be an issue that we want to stay ahead of at (the university) and that comes right from the President’s office so it helps when you have that top executive support. (jg:261-269)

He continues to explain the involvement of the university and the support system.

George emphasizes the importance of working together when it comes to crisis leadership:

Oh absolutely (I have direct supervisor support) beyond that all the way up. Our President participated in the last tabletop. She was even vocal in the hot wash afterwards expressing some of her concerns. We have most of our emergency operations group is VP level executives and they are all very open and asked about how they feel if it’s working or if it’s not working you know helping to build it as a team not just as a safety department. Doing it in a vacuum which a lot of places do that with crisis leadership. It’s one department doing it in a vacuum
and then they want everyone to know and understand it when it has to get implemented but it has to be a bigger group effort especially when you are dealing with a large organization like we are in this pretty big operation here (jg:272-280).

George digresses from the main conversation briefly to better explain the university environment and the importance of having a supportive network. He emphasizes the unique challenges and complexities of managing crisis preparedness for an urban university:

We have unique challenges being in the urban environment that we are in. A lot of campuses are very isolated and by themselves. You know we are very intertwined. But I haven’t mentioned as far as crisis goes here we are in a university circle which is 50 aces of a lot of high profile cultural institutions like that. We have the art museum here, a (high profile) Hall which you are in right now, a hospital which you can’t separate in a crisis. You can’t separate any of these institutions from one another so. It’s not just internal integration it’s external too. It’s very important in relationship building because while I’m trying to work to make us as self sufficient as we can being in a crisis you can’t exclude your external stakeholders at all. I mean you really have to work with them hand in hand. A lot of universities have their hospitals report to the same administrators and things because they are really associated and we’re not. We’re two independently run organizations. Even though we are closely related in a lot of aspects with what we do, property wise you can’t separate us. Employee wise it’s very difficult, and student wise . . . we have a lot of students and employees that are crossover and have offices here and have offices there. We have independent crisis management plans that we have to make sure work well together and that goes back to that people aspect. If you can’t bridge those gaps ahead of a crisis it’s gonna hurt you later. (jg:285-302)

George discusses the university aspects that detract from handling crisis well. He keeps the focus on the size and complexity of the university. George begins with the issue of resource tracking:

Again it’s that whole size thing. I am trying my hardest and I still don’t know what every asset is that we have to deploy in a crisis. You know I am working on just a resource survey to go through various departments and schools and ask-- What do you own? What do you already have? I know the people. I know the departments but I don’t know all the physical assets we have to deploy in an emergency. That is going to take time to figure out. (jg:305-310)
George continues to explain the complicated nature of university communication:

The other part of it too is the educational piece and getting everybody on the same page and making sure that people aren’t trying to handle crises in a university this size. If it’s a smaller thing that could lead into something bigger a lot of times people tend to try to handle it themselves first and then that’ll grow bigger and by the time we get the call it’s already grown into something that is a bigger crisis than it was when it started and could’ve maybe been prevented from getting to that size and scope. So there are some challenges there as far as intercommunication. Still communication is always a problem when you have a large area to cover, a large diverse organization like ours and then you know just resource management and knowing what we have and what is available to us . . . what we can and can’t do because those gaps are going to come into play. When we need to figure out who we need to call to help us or if we need to call someone to help us and if I don’t know them it’s a challenge. But it’s not something you can just say we are going to have this done in six weeks --to figure all this out I mean it’s taking a long time to get there. (jg:305-323)

As George continues to discuss the complicated university system, he explains the issue of university politics in crisis decisions:

I would say and this isn’t always true here, but we are very good about putting some of the politics aside during a crisis. Now does that always happen? No. It’s a hard question because you know there are some things that have happened that I wouldn’t share because they were political and they were taken care of and we got through it. I guess it is a factor that definitely affects crisis management. Are there political decisions made? Absolutely all the time. (jg:326-331)

George continues to explain the timing of crisis politics. He does not feel university politics influence the initial moments of the crisis, but become more complicated and involved in the later stages of the crisis. He explains this perception:

In the initial phase, they tend not to effect though a crisis that has a life safety aspect related to it. It is usually in the later parts of the crisis when it becomes an executive management phase per se and decisions have to be made about do we invest in preventing this from happening again or something like that. That’s when a lot of time politics comes into play later. But for the most part the political, you won’t see that influence until a little bit further down the road. Because everyone knows even the people who make the political decisions that we have a job to do in the beginning and that the most important thing is people and safety protection, and then as it progresses on there is a reputation
management part of it too. So there is always politics in crisis. Hopefully you won’t have to deal with that in the initial phase if there are lives on the line because those decisions usually come up later when it comes to how do we make improvements and then you have to balance factors like money. Sure could we make this go away forever yeah but what’s it going to cost? . . . that is where politics comes into it later. (jg:331-345)

George ends the discussion with his thoughts on how crisis practices might be improved within the university system. He explains how there is process is of improvements and practice:

Oh yeah I have a long list because you learn as you go and my emergency management plan will never be what I consider perfect because every time I go through something I find things that need to be changed. I can’t even write them down fast enough sometimes and get them in print before we find new things that have to be changed. So part of the crisis management process is constant evaluation – where you are at policy and procedure wise and what’s changed. What have you learned from your mistakes and other people’s mistakes? So I think it’s always chasing your tail as far as staying up to the best practices and I don’t know anybody that can say we have the perfect plan in place that doesn’t need any improvement. Maybe they are out there but I haven’t met them. (jg:348-357)

J. Mock – Background

J. Mock is a 42-year-old Caucasian male. He holds two Masters Degrees. One degree is in Business Administration with a focus on organizational theory and corporate finance. The second degree is a Master’s of Science in Instructional Leadership. Mock has been working for a large semi-urban, public, Midwestern university since 1990. He was hired as the Director of Residents Life and Housing and now holds the title of Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs and Chief Housing Officer.

Mock says he is responsible for the overall management of the residence hall system for the university. This includes all operations, all educational programs, and all integrated co-curricular activities and programs. He also serves on a leadership team for
student affairs with specific oversight on retention efforts and fiscal matters. Mock
supervises over 100 employees, 500 student employees, and around an additional 150
seasonal temporary workers depending on the time of year. Mock manages an operating
budget of $27 million dollars. Mock begins the interview describing a typical day on the
job. It is immediately apparent that Mock has a lot of responsibility and involvement in
many daily activities on campus:

Well actually there is not much you can consider a typical day. Everyday when I
come to the office the first thing that I do is I load my e-mail which contains all
the police logs and the duty records from the student staff in the halls. If I haven’t
been contacted during in the evening for an event, I would come across it in the
duty reports and this would be anything from a malfunctioning toilet, to a parent
trying to find their kid, to two roommates beating the snot out of each other, to
somebody getting sent to detox, to an extensive number of fire alarms in specific
building, to any number of things that might come up during the course of the
night . . . a seizure, bizarre, entertaining, sometimes frightening things that might
have happened and then I follow-up with the staff that is responsible to make sure
they are either working with the students or getting the situation resolved.
So depending on what has unfolded during the evening, the first hours of my day
are telling people how to follow-up or what we need to follow-up or myself
following up with the police, physical facilities needed on campus, media if that is
necessary depending on what is going on. In most cases, it is usually not
important and relatively fairly boring . . . a keg party here, a vomit there, an upset
student there that type of thing. So there is that part of me checking in. (jm:13-33)

Mock has just described his morning or the “checking in” part of his day. He then
describes how the rest of the day looks:

Then I respond to a whole bunch of stupid stuff. Stupid stuff is random meetings
that I try to engage in, negotiating the administrative environment is just that. So
sometimes getting things done involves me signing a hundred different documents
on any given day, responding to parent inquiries that have risen to the level that
they can’t be managed by somebody in the unit, and then looking at new
initiatives, serving the division life meetings. I chair the assessment process. I
meet with my staff about what is going to help them to negotiate, what needs to
be handled. I am typically or have been typically involved in the construction
projects for the past 5 years steadily. So it’s not uncommon that any given point
any given day I am doing something with construction or the open new
construction. On occasion I get to meet with students and squeeze lunch somewhere in there and that would be the day. Lather, rinse, repeat. (jm:34-44)

Mock then explains that his day does not always end at 5:00. He often attends student functions or gatherings in the evenings to see if they are successful. He also begins to discuss responding to crisis events just within the context of a typical day:

Also then what happens is we do offer a number of programs and activities which typically occur in the evening hours and I may or may not attend one or two of those to see how students respond to it, and then more likely than not if we are going to have something go wrong, it is going to happen in the evening hours. (jm: 45-48)

J. Mock and Crisis

As the discussion focuses on a typical day, Mock automatically begins to describe crisis events on campus and even barriers to crisis response:

We have power failures typically in the evening hours and we have students go the hospital, we have sprinkler heads go, we have that type of stuff typically happens in the evening hours. Actually I probably shouldn’t editorial this but it is probably easier to manage those types of situations during the evening hours so that administrators who aren’t typically involved with that type of stuff don’t get in the way when we are trying to manage a situation and that does help. (jm:48-53)

He then explains what an atypical day looks like. Unlike some other participants, the crisis response portion of his answer comes under the context of a typical day. He takes a deep breath to think for a minute what an atypical day would then be like, and then states:

Having time to get work done on projects, having time to sit back to process, evaluate, and strategically move forward. Having time to get stuff accomplished doesn’t exist. (jm: 56-57)
It is almost as if not being in crisis mode is atypical for Mock. When asked if crisis events are part of his job, Mock had this short answer:

Yes it is actually written into my job description. (jm:61)

When asked what types of crisis events Mock has handled at the university, he provides a list of events, mixing in statements reflecting campus crisis management politics. He also explains that crisis events can have different interpretations:

Oh take your pick. Um, we have managed entertaining …not entertaining but something as simple as a pepper spray discharge during the evening hours. Some of the responding staff evacuated the building for which they shouldn’t have. We have managed sprinkler head discharges which have compromised the fire suppression system in the whole building. We had to move students around. Power failures, assaults of a sexual nature, assaults of a physical nature, drug busts, all kinds of stuff. I mean I don’t know if I consider it a lot of stuff. Most stuff is routine for residence hall operation that most people consider a crisis. (jm:64-71)

Mock’s next example reflects some campus politics. He provides a real example of a situation that involved campus politics:

Like a fire alarm in a residence hall is something that we are able to respond to quickly because it’s what we do. A suicide attempt is easy and quick, specifically an ideation. We know the protocols we kick into it automatically. Power failures assuming no other levels of administration get involved, the Director of the Physical Plant and I can manage a power failure fairly easily. Now I will give you an example, we had a transformer blow in a residence hall and it was probably November. It was a Friday evening/Saturday morning about 3 a.m. and it knocked out power to about 1400 residence hall students. So the Director of the Physical Plant and I responded to the campus as we normally do. I contacted the dining services folks and said are you going to be able to execute meals for the kids in the morning and they said well yeah we can always operate the student union for meals it’s not a big deal. OK. We had to bring in Edison to look at the power grid to see what we could bring in back online. So we are standing there having this conversation going through this plan and somebody who is not necessarily familiar with the environment who tends to on occasion overreact to emergency situations says we’ve got to evacuate the residence halls. Well its 3:00 in the morning, we have reasonable temperatures outside, generators, we’ve got 12 hours on the fire suppression system in these buildings, we’ve got generators for
eight hours, the kids are asleep, why would we evacuate the buildings? . . .
Because the buildings aren’t safe. . . . Well, we are not going to evacuate the
buildings. . . . But what are you going to do? We are going to let people sleep.
When it comes time for a student to eat, we don’t have sufficient water, we don’t
have sufficient heat then we’ll question whether or not it’s safe to walk through
the hallways. But folks that don’t think in that area would think “well my god
we’ve gotta evacuate a 500 bed building because of a pepper spray discharge”…
because somebody didn’t understand the air system in the building. So something
that happens in the hallway doesn’t necessarily affect the air quality in the room.
Rather they executed a judgment call without consultation and brought 500
students across (the) street in the middle of the night because they didn’t want
them to be effected by the pepper spray. Not a good judgment call. A good
judgment call . . . stuff a towel under your door just like you are smoking weed,
open your window, you’ll be fine. (jm:71-103)

Mock now explains the aftermath of the situation. Not only does he feel he has to
manage the incident against how others want it handled, but he also must manage the
media. Mock continues the story focusing on managing people in a crisis event:

So we manage stuff and then we manage people. The tail end of that is after we
have any of this happen, we are communicating with the media relations folks
because (the news) channel is bored constantly, the (local paper) is bored
constantly and every student is calling their parents on their cell phone every five
minutes to say this is what is going on. So you know in any given situation, half
the time we are managing parents and inaccurate information. Getting accurate
information out there as quickly as possible is what we need to do. As soon as we
get into different levels of administration in there that aren’t familiar with stuff,
we have to spend our time controlling those individuals from making poor choices
or bold statements. In a lot of ways the protocols that are present at this and every
other institution are great as long as they are really adhered to in terms of in the
residence hall and making judgment calls. Sometimes we put some additional
layers in there that creates some complications. (jm:104-114)

Mock then turns to another example of campus politics affecting a crisis response.
This time, he does not focus solely on other internal members of a crisis management
team. Mock discusses what he feels can be another complicating group: parents and the
political influence parents have on crisis response. Mock tells this story:
We had a kid while playing a video game kick off a sprinkler head in his room. He said it fell off. You know that sprinkler heads just don’t fall off and called his mom and mommy came right at me and said that we were liable and this is a troubling situation. I was not letting people back in the building. We had this happen on the fifth or sixth floor so we had a significant quantity of water through the building. We were still cleaning up the floors and mother demanded to go in and see the property and I wouldn’t let her in because we are running cabling down the hallway in pools of water to scoop it out. What has become typical is that parents will simply feel they supersede the right and privilege on behalf of the student which tends to complicate things a great deal in crisis situations and then admit other administrators are likely to cave to parents and go the other way and that creates additional challenges. Specifically when you are managing an incident, you don’t need that. (jm:116-128)

J. Mock and Training

Mock then discusses what he feels has prepared him to handle crisis events on campus:

Ah . . . I have a lot of on the job training in fact almost all of it is based upon the experiences that I have had. You know you don’t know how to manage a student death until you manage a student death, you don’t know how to manage hysterical illness until you have dealt with hysterical illness or like right now hysterical bedbugs, we don’t have them . . . you know but everybody is reading about them so they think we have them so we are spending an enormous amount of money on that. (jm:132-137)

Mock also discusses campus based training and his thoughts. He thinks back to the campus crisis management team and the interaction that takes place among the group members. Mock feels that he has the most hands on experience dealing with residence hall issues. He explains:

I think negotiating the political environment is part of that. When you work in a large environment you need to be able to function effectively with a whole bunch of people that don’t understand what you do. Formal training – I have had all of the required training that is available with regard to campus crisis and responding to crisis and most of this stuff was well before Virginia Tech and then from that time I have since had the opportunity to do the NIMS (campus-wide) training and stuff and that type of thing so But . . . I think that training is either I am in the

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wrong level position or that level of training is great for folks who aren’t familiar with hands on management and somehow I have ended up in a position with folks that aren’t responsible for hands on management and probably I have the most experience at hands on management so that creates some unique situations. In a lot of ways that might be good. (jm:137-149)

Mock feels that at times the campus crisis training process is more structure focused than decision focused. He then describes what has been positive about the campus training he has received. However, when it comes to actual crisis decision making he feels more can be done:

On the job training has been the most affective. I think in an institution like ours the semantics training is helpful. Knowing how to negotiate for example with the city. How to get those folks on board what the Red Cross can do what the Red Cross can’t do in those types of incidents. As it relates to most of the crises I deal with on a day to day basis, I think that there’s opportunities out there. I think case study example has been the most useful. (jm:152-157)

Mock is asked to expand on where he feels training is lacking. He explains the difference between focusing on the process of managing a crisis versus making actual decisions. He tries to differentiate between these concepts and training in this way:

I think my recent experience with training and I’ll focus on the annex management is that yes these processes and protocols work but we have so many people lost in the protocols and processes that nobody is sure what is happening and I am almost fearful at that point what is supposed to help decision making might actually compromise decision making and I don’t think that is any part of the process or annex development because it’s actually pretty rock solid in terms of what anybody already does anyway. (The trainings) just bring in a whole group of people that because of their inexperience or sometimes opposite overzealous response to things gives a knee jerk reaction as opposed to a guided reaction. You know it’s funny we provide resident assistance but how do you handle a criminal roommate? How do you handle this . . . not a step by step fill out this form . . . but how do you think through? How do you observe what is actually happening and how do you share that information to get the desired outcome? (jm:160-171)

Mock discusses how he feels focusing solely on the structure of crisis management is different from how he operates. He explains this frustration:
If you don’t define the desired outcome you are too caught up and then . . . we have to do this . . . and only this person has to arrive before we can do this . . . and this station needs to be set up here. Something gets lost along the way. I think those types of training, those types of protocols that were developed were developed by people who were used to working in those types of environments and expect to be working with those people from those types of environments and when that doesn’t happen we have some significant challenges. I’m sure I have almost bitten off somebody’s head when they said . . . well that’s not what the protocol is and I’m sure they (looked around) just like what are these people doing? There are some people I would duct tape in a room and push them out of the way so we could help the students and you have that on tape and I don’t care what the secretary says. (jm:171-182)

He then explains the accountability structure in place for his staff and himself in regard to crisis training:

Because my profession is not one where certain certifications are required and one that certifications need to be maintained, I have accountability measures in our department that require to train our folks on certain things every single year and that people need to go out and seek new opportunities for managing different situations but I am almost at a point, this is going to sound arrogant, but my position is such that I am not on top of the day to day every single day. So the other day I did have three different meetings about bedbugs yea! . . . um . . . we met with the experts and developed a plan to address it. It’s great and we’ll be held accountable for it at some point because it’s bedbugs yea! . . . But my job is expected that I manage issues and crisis in the residence halls and if I do not manage those either through my staff, through my training, or through experience or whatever, then ultimately I will lose my employment. (jm:185-195)

While the staff has some mandatory training requirements for working with safety and human resource related issues, no mandatory training specifically in the area of crisis management was mentioned:

Yes my staff has mandatory training. We do have some voluntary training and then they have professional development so they have opportunities to explore specific areas of interest to them. But my building services, maintenance group, everyone of them has to go through the harassment training, they have to go through safety among liquids and supplies, you know the blood borne pathogen training. (jm:201-205)
The interview then turns to discuss personal characteristics needed to manage crisis. When asked what characteristics or skills are important to good crisis leadership, Mock explains the importance of people management:

A touch of insanity probably. The hard part, I think anybody would tell you the hard part isn’t the crisis. That is going to sound silly the hard part is not the crisis it’s managing the people around the crisis. It’s managing the administrators and the opinions and the reporters. You know a colleague of mine would say for a university of higher learning we’ve got a lot of stupid people on this campus. So I mean I think it’s managing those folks. It’s not getting the kid who is suicidal to the appropriate care. It’s not dumping 25,000 gallons of water out of a building it’s not trying to restore the heat in the dead of winter. It’s managing the other people who have an opinion or want to weigh in or have an expectation. (jm:213-221)

Mock then explains how he feels he has obtained those skills:

My background is in Administration, Business Administration, which teaches you to manage difficult people collectively and individually and then Educational Design is my technical background the other side of my degree. So (sighs) it’s a whole lot of common sense and a whole lot of patience. The patience is what wears thin so if anybody needs any training on anything – it’s how not to kill somebody during an incident who is performing random acts of stupidity. You need a good sense of humor. Somebody needs to teach anybody balance and perspective. (jm:225-231)

He then shares a personal crisis experience to further illustrate his point of having balance and perspective in a crisis incident:

I dealt with a situation where a student died while he was moving out of the residents’ hall and I had to work with the team that he was living with and I had to go take his belongings to a parent and that just wears on a person but I think helping everybody seeing that we are managing the incidents so we can still have a sense of humor during the incidents is appropriate. We can still be supportive during the incident but that is manageable and separate the person: this didn’t happen to me [states name] this happened to a person in this position. That’s hard and I think that’s what folks need a lot of help on. (jm:231-238)

When asked to explain how the university helps to build those skills, Mock responds:
(We) show them what to do. We look at every incident and I’m talking about my department first. We look at every incident and see how we can manage it differently or better or worse. (jm:244-246)

He then provides an example of a large scale operation that was handled by his department without incident, and explains how it becomes an effective learning tool:

You know here is another crisis that can be a crisis. We moved 3,300 students onto a small urban campus in a period of three days. You have each of them typically has a parent if not two moving them into the hall within a very short period of time into very small spaces. We are cramming people in. So the planning that goes in to that is huge. An execution is huge because if one thing goes wrong things fall apart. One elevator breaks and you are thrown down by two and a half to three hours of move in. You’ve got 200 angry people. Every parent is in the hot row or somebody could have a heart attack. If you look at the big picture and spend time with your staff and your team is looking at what’s processed through this, I think that is what we learn the most because not only do we have these generalized protocols out there and we have the best practices out there but when you take the two together to see if they work at your institution, the only way you know is when you try it. (jm:246-257)

Mock then compares his real situation to the crisis training exercises that are conducted at the university:

No offense to the tabletop (crisis exercises) but we always know when it’s a tabletop. It helps us think through but there is always somebody like me or another person, I am going to tell my staff I still want you to do this because we can’t rely on this. If we have five feet of snow in the middle of the night, I am not going to get to campus . . . not by copter. The President drives a Cadillac, he’s not driving past my house to pick me up so we need to be able to talk to folks that are on campus through the management – comeback, and then we need to reflect on what will go better and we also need to listen. A bad thing that people at my level or above do is say this is how it should be done because we really need to listen to the response of our folks that are actually implementing the on call. (jm:257-265)

He then explains what aspects of the university help him handle crisis well:

Good staff, good team, listening group of people, a responsive team. A team that can make decisions which is kind of a hard thing to train people to do because as a university we are very control oriented . . . , very. Micromanaging. (jm:268-270)

When asked if Mock feels he has direct supervisor support, he states:
It depends on the situation. I have some folks that have functioned in my capacity may be 20-30 years ago still would like to weigh in on my decision making which can be challenging. (jm:275-277)

Mock then explains the university aspects that detract from handling crisis effectively. He begins the discussion this way:

I think a little bit bigger than that is sometimes we have a whole bunch of people that are self proclaimed experts that are dealing with situations. When we execute some of these emergency preparedness plans of the 15 people in the room, four of them have to respond to campus on off hours to deal with the situation and that changes the context of everything. That can be a deterrent when we have my personal favorite well is “that’s not what’s listed in the policy to do” – the policy should work for us at managing a situation. I’m not out making renegade decisions. I am not going to evacuate a building that is made out of cement. (jm:281-288)

He then provides an example of how the decision making process can get complicated. Mock explains a situation which occurred during a university crisis training exercise:

If we look at the last tabletop (exercise) that we did when we had a tornado running through (the campus), there were folks that made a decision to shut down a residence hall building and evacuate for whatever reason during the tornado, so I was given the charge of you need to resolve where these kids are going that type of thing. The challenge for anybody is if you are not involved in any of the decision it can be frustrating. When that decision violates all reasonable realms of decision making. I would never evacuate a building with 13 inch cement walls during a tornado because it is our most secure tornado shelter. It’s going no where . . . so unless it fills with toxic fumes and we can’t generate basic levels of survival down there, we would never evacuate it. (jm:288-296)

Mock reflects upon this moment and examines how he reacted to this decision. He explains his frustration in executing a decision he does not support and wonders how he would react in an actual situation:

With that being said, I think what was interesting in that demonstration was that I didn’t question the decision. I was like OK they evacuated and this is what we are going to do. We are going to reassign the students here. This is the number of
students that we have that type of thing. I think what happened was somebody internal started yelling at me as to why I decided to evacuate the building anyway. I’m like we are engaging in activity we need to accept some of the decisions made just like when we have no power we have to accept there is no power. If we’ve got a toxic fume, we’ve got a toxic fume so I forget what the original question was but I think the challenge and the frustration is you know the controllable versus the uncontrollable accepting that but then looking at it going what would you do if you could really manage a situation? What would you do differently? Knowing you are going to be held accountable for the decisions that are made for you or knowing you need to make a decision that you don’t like . . . sometimes you have to go on record as saying I object in particular to doing this. That is not welcomed in my level . . . at all. (jm:296-309)

He then explains how campus politics influences crisis decisions. Mock provides two stories to represent two different sets of politics. His first story begins explaining differing views between him and senior administration on how to handle a rape incident:

. . . if they are able to make an adequate decision, we ask the student. We do not want the student to become a victim twice. There are some folks who do not believe that and we have gotten into some very intense arguments about who is going to call, who is going to the hospital especially when we are dealing with split parent situation. We don’t always know a divorce situation. Managing that is when your values are called into judgment and I regularly have an argument with those people who outrank me that they are not going to the hospital and I do not recommend calling the parents. I have had two situations where I have been asked against my better judgment to contact the parents and I said please note on record I am against calling. I am not comfortable with it I’d rather have somebody else do it. You are telling me it’s my job and I’ll do my job but these are the possible outcomes for you guys and I felt in the right and that gets you in trouble and then I get in trouble. (jm:321-324)

Mock then explains another level of politics between him and some of the safety staff. As opposed to the first example, Mock holds higher rank politically:

So there is politics there and then there is the what I consider the entertaining politics. We have some folks on our campus that are in charge of specific responsibilities and they’re super, super, enthusiastic about their work and when they arrive at a specific (crisis) situation sometimes they’d like to manage it differently and they’d like to do that through self-appointed authority rather than actual real authority. I think part of the challenge is sometimes those individuals lack some credibility on campus with regards to their expertise. Specifically when
you are charged with a certain type of response and they fail to provide it because nobody answers the phone or they come into a situation 40 minutes after it’s over or they exacerbate a situation by amplifying the stress and tension levels by shouting at people, by creating fear and panic, screaming at people “you got burned”, that type of thing. So it’s not you know uncommon in the political world for some of us that carry slightly bigger sticks to swing with them sometimes. Also you know is where those lines that are written in protocol books are helpful but sometimes you have to have mutiny on the bounty to have things work. So there is some rank pulling. (jm:334-347)

When asked how crisis trainings could be improved, Mock focuses on the importance of allowing the appropriate people to make crisis decisions:

I think the problem is folks confuse emergency preparedness with crisis management. I might be wrong or off base or misinterpreting stuff but the people that tend to get in the way of us effectively handling stuff are saying “this is what the book says to do”. Which book are you looking at? Is this the residence hall protocol book? No we are looking at the university protocol. So let’s look at this in context to systemic protocol in terms of the university. If we have an outbreak of measles that could spread to the entire campus community, then we enact XYZ. Let’s keep it with the appropriate groups making the decisions. This is how we need to train people. Not everything needs to be micromanaged to the level or macro managed should I say to the level of knee jerk reaction. (jm:361-371)

He then describes what he would change in the university crisis management system if he felt he had a voice in the issue:

If I had a voice, I would get some of the egos off the table. I would get the real frontline management team together. We would get some absolute not leadership but regulation of our safety office and maybe some more support for our safety office. I think part of the challenge is credibility issues amongst teams. Somebody would say “hey look you are the ones that really know” so it’s not adversarial its a partnership. I think the egos we have going on this campus are intense, crazy intense. You know it’s funny not funny sort of sad a lot of people don’t understand that when we call the police into the residence hall to assist us we step down. How can you do that? It’s very easy. When we assess the situation that it is out of our management realm then we call in the people with the expertise to do that. I think we could learn a great deal from that. If you need to call in the police, you need to call in the safety office. If you need to call in the physical plant, whoever, you need to step down or do whatever they tell you to do. That is who gets the lead. I think that’s what is missing. (jm:378-390)
Mock shares his last thoughts about the topic:

You know as much as you go through those things there is never going to be a policy or practices perfect or right. It’s always going to need to change. There needs to be an expectation that because something went wrong more stuff is going to go wrong and all you can really do is damage control. I think there is a fear of action along the way. The way the media scrutinizes items these days makes it all the more difficult to make good decisions because you are making media based decisions and there you have it. (jm:396-402)

C. Fletcher – Background

C. Fletcher is a Caucasian male. He holds a Masters of Education Degree in counselor education/ college student personnel services and a Doctor of Education in administration in higher education. Fletcher has been working for a large, semi-urban, public, Midwestern university for the past 3 years. He was hired as the Vice President of student affairs.

Fletcher says he reports to the university President through the Provost and is responsible for the majority of the out of classroom student experiences. This includes the co-curricular, extra-curricular, learning and living activities that students experience at the university. His job spans across 15 departments within the university and includes areas from housing and residence life, the student union, counseling center, career center, health center, recreational sports, and all other student life activities affiliated with the student union. He also has all of the academic achievement areas under him as well as the student judicial affairs area, enrollment management, admissions, financial aid, registrar’s office, international student programs, student transfer center, student success, student support services center, and other departments.
Fletcher begins the interview describing a typical day on the job:

There is no typical day. That’s the first thing you need to get. That’s why I have stayed in student affairs. Every day is different from the one before so you’re not getting terribly bored. The only consistent thing throughout this position is that I have meetings all the time. I sit in meetings 85-90% of my day. Some are very productive, some of them I lead, some of them I am just a participant, some are boring as the day is long and I don’t know why I am there, so yeah, so that’s my typical day. I see as many students as I want, I mean I can see students all day long or I can go days without seeing students so that’s a privilege in many ways because with all the meetings and things that I sit through, walking out of here and going into the student union and just walking around with the students and talking to the students – it just kinda changes the perspective and puts it back where it belongs. So when I am feeling particularly off put by (laughs) my administrative side of my job I’ll go over to the student union and spend a half hour- hour and sit and talk to students or I’ll tell (the administrative assistant) that I need to see some students so I’ll see the student government president or I’ll call somebody in that I need to talk to about something else. I’ll get my student fix for the day then its (laughs) back onto the rest of it. (cf:18-32)

He then discusses what an atypical day looks like:

Today, yesterday . . . (laughs) I have direct reports that are senior staff so each of the departments that I mentioned report to me through somebody so I’ll do that and then I come completely out of my realm and am talking to you about something different but it’s administrative, it’s within my scope. I wouldn’t do this on typical days. So later today I’ll have a meeting with the Provost normally, the Provost and staff on student success. What makes it atypical today is the Provost won’t be there so therefore it’s falling on me to run that meeting so I’ll do that and I need to plan differently when I’m running a meeting than when I am just hanging out so . . . my atypical day is typical (laughs). People wonder . . . I’ve had them ask “What are you doing later?” I don’t know, I have to look at my calendar because I really don’t know. Every day is different and I can’t look at the week on Monday and say alright let me get a glimpse at what I am doing. . . . I can . . . but by Tuesday it’s all changed . . . so . . . I kinda go day to day . . . hour to hour. . . . I don’t know who I am meeting after this I have to look at my calendar to figure it out . . . in fact I am curious . . . who am I meeting after this? Oh, again atypical. [Name] is on the board of elections for [the] county . . . . I gotta go show him a potential polling place site here on campus that’s the first time it’s happened since I’ve been here. (cf:35-53)
C. Fletcher and Crisis

Fletcher is then asked if he feels handling crisis situations is part of his job responsibility. He states the following:

On a daily basis. It may not rise to the level of university importance or global importance city-wide, county-wide that kind of thing but to the student who is facing something, that crisis is all consuming. So it just depends. I have handled in my 38 years every kind of crisis you can think of having to deal with other than a mass shooting. I haven’t done that. We’ve had single shootings. (cf:57-61)

He has already started to address the crisis situations he has handled in his career; however, he expands upon these experiences in further detail:

You know the ones that have happened here. They haven’t been major ones since I have been here. We had bomb threats and stuff before. We had a bomb threat at (the branch campus) last year and we’ve had a chemical problem down at (name) Building last year, last summer with an explosion of toxic fumes in the building but beyond that . . . we had a student death 3 weeks ago excuse me, it wasn’t a student death, it was a traffic fatality of one of our ex-students who was visiting at a party so we had to intervene in that one. That has been pretty much the typical kind of stuff here. We had a shooting outside the fraternity house 3 years ago my first year here, that could have become a disaster but it didn’t. We’ve had muggings. We have had that kind of thing. I hate to trivialize this they are very serious for people are going through them. (cf:64-74)

C. Fletcher and Training

Fletcher then reflects upon the training he has received to handle these types of campus incidents. He begins to discuss the incident management system adopted by the campus (called NIMS):

It came through my formal education. I am a counselor. I have a Masters in counseling and I have been trained and hired as an administrator with an Ed.D. and that has been my formal training. I mean NIMS didn’t exist until what 10 years ago? Quite frankly, I am not a fan of NIMS. I think the whole damn thing is stupid and I’ll point to one example. (cf:79-83)
Fletcher then provides an example out of the news concerning a response that used a structured system like the university’s system:

I don’t know if you saw it in the paper yesterday. There was an article about this guy whose family was murdered. He has two daughters and his wife. They were raped, murdered, and tortured, and forced the woman to withdraw money. The police got there. The bank teller told them what was going on. They went to the house and didn’t go in because they waited for backup or they waited for stuff to happen. In the meantime, the woman came home with the money and they killed her too. I heard yesterday on the news report some FBI maybe that said . . . people said why didn’t they take care of this? Well they fell back on their training and their training may or may not have been adequate for that situation, but they did what they were trained to do. I said to myself that’s the problem with people thinking training does everything and that you just have to follow your training. There is no scenario that will always fit every training scenario and if you aren’t willing to say I am a human being with judgment and I can make a judgment call and I am going to do this with this situation, then I think we are in trouble. (cf:83-95)

He then relates this story to the training he has received through the university:

I think part of our problem, I don’t want this to get back to a person but I think that’s our situation. We have a few people in a (training) scenario that’s all they want to do is here is my check list, and let me check this stuff off, and that’s not how you run a crisis. In my opinion, crises don’t follow check lists. Do you want to have that training as a back up? Yes. Is that part of what you ought to use in your total arsenal in figuring out how to handle something? Yes, but you need to say right now in this situation there is nothing in my book that tells me how to do that so my judgment with my experience is going to say I am doing this. That’s how I have run crises in the past. (cf:95-103)

Fletcher then reflects on the applicability of his training experiences to handling crisis situations. He explains:

I think my counseling background and my higher education training has helped me and my experience has helped me as much as anything. I will tell you I have the NIMS 100, 200, 300, 400. . . . I don’t know I have three of the programs done. Not one of them has told me a damn thing about how to handle a crisis. What they’ve told me is their structure. You know we have this division, we have district, we’ve got you know your incident command system here, you’ve got your EOG there so it’s all about how to do the structure. Well, they never told me what to do when the real problem happens. (cf:106-113)
He shares an example from a recent campus crisis training exercise that he feels demonstrates the focus is more on structure and protocol than making intelligent decisions about handling crisis:

You know how do you handle the situation? Even last spring when we did our (training) scenario and what, they were so busy, I don’t want to mention names but they were so busy worrying about what our check list is gonna be that they didn’t do the smartest thing which was start notifying people that we had a crisis. It was 40 minutes in before they notified anybody at the university that we were going to do anything because that is what the check list said they needed to do. The first thing you need to do is make sure the people on campus become prepared in this. That would have been an extra 40 minutes that I would have been having time to get here to campus before the tornado hit or before the major garbage hit. That’s judgment and they can’t exercise it. (cf:113-122)

Fletcher continues to explain where he sees crisis training lacking:

My counseling training only gives me tools. I’ve still got to implement it. I’ve still got to know when, and what time, and what case and scenario to use this kind of technique versus this kind of technique. The training isn’t the be all end all. It gives you tools but you have to know when and how to implement them and use those tools. I think that’s where we are falling short. I have been here for 3 years and we’ve been working on this (explicative) – comprehensive emergency management plan thing and it’s still not done. We are worrying about getting the plan done but we’re not worrying about --are we ready to actually do anything if a crisis happens? If a crisis happens tomorrow, I guarantee a plan isn’t going to help us solve the problem. (cf:125-133)

When asked if there is any accountability to campus crisis training, Fletcher had the short and pointed statement:

My answer has to be a qualified no because there is no one in authority over it. (cf:136)

He adds:

It’s voluntary. It’s required but it isn’t required. What’s going to happen if you don’t take it? Nothing. (cf:142-143)
He then explains what skills or characteristics he feels are important to be successful in handling crisis:

Well all leading up to what I am going to say is contradictory to what I am saying but I think you do need to have some training and understand how to deal with the scenarios in emergencies and people training. Second I think you need to have people who have had experience in crises who can be put in charge of dealing with it. I think we ought to be doing a better job at doing the practice for it. We did a tabletop (training exercise) and one where we got together and put in place a incident command area and then the (command) centers but we haven’t done any since. We are not going to do one now, we’ve put it off again, and the next one we are going to do is still not going to be a (full) exercise so I think we need to do that. It’s funny that I’m saying that because 4 years ago I never would have said you need to do that. I think what I’ve seen here tilted me. I didn’t think that in my last job (it was necessary) to do the exercises. (cf:148-158)

Fletcher then explains the difference he has seen at this university versus his previous university:

We had more crises there than we’ve had in the last3 years here but we had people that knew what they were doing you know and it wasn’t so much ego that played among the people. The chief of police, I’m not saying the chief of police here has an ego I think he is really good, but the chief there and I were the chairs of the crisis management group and he had absolutely no interest in running the group, none. But he wanted to be fully there and support me or support what we needed to do so it was a good, good, mix. Here it’s like who’s in charge and why are we not doing this and basically dancing around each other. (cf:158-165)

Fletcher then explains how he feels he has developed the skills necessary to deal with crisis events. He focuses his discussion on the crisis events he has experienced first hand over the years:

What gives me, I think, and it’s only my own interpretation of my skills, is that I’ve gone through them. I’ve gone through situations of people committing suicide numbers of times on campuses from taking a shot gun and blowing his own head off to stabbing oneself. I have had attacks in a residence hall of a person’s throat being slashed and dealing with that kind of an issue, of course falling off a five story rooftop. (We had) a major spring event where we had 10,000 students on campus for the event and it ended at 2:30 in the morning. A young woman who wasn’t even at the event partying, she was at home studying,
wanted to go out and get something to eat got into her car . . . we had a cop coming off the highway at a high rate of speed sirens blasting and lights flashing. This woman came up in her car and stopped. This cop is coming down with lights blazing. She saw the cop and stayed there. The cop went through, she pulled out and didn’t know there was a second cop car and he blasted that car. He must have been going 80 and killed her on the spot. There were thousands of students that saw that. So I got that crisis and we dealt with that. I have kind of seen it all. The only thing I haven’t seen is a major shooter. The training I’ve had really is because it’s on the job. I’ve gone through all those things. (cf:169-192)

Fletcher then discusses what the university does to help develop those skills. In an almost sarcastic way he shrugs his shoulders and responds:

This university? We have them go through the NIMS (incident command) training. We’ve done one or two exercises. You were part of one and I don’t know if you’ve had observations but you’ve kind of heard mine – kinda. (cf:196-198)

He then explains what aspects of the university assist him in handling crisis events:

This organization? There are people within the organization that do that, the chief of police, and police department do a really good job. I am very supportive and thankful for things. (They) are very cooperative and very frankly differential except when they really need to say sorry, you gotta take this. (cf:201-204)

When asked if Fletcher feels he has direct supervisor support, he explains why he has decided to pull out of the university crisis management group:

I would say benignly yes. What you need to know I’ve basically pulled out of the (executive operations group) EOG manager position and (another vice president) thinks he should be doing it. I have looked at a couple of states, Florida for example, which the chief of police is in charge of the EOG and I thought that’s fine he can do it. I am less enthralled with how we operate our crisis anyway, our crisis team. I might be a hindrance. My philosophy versus what the rest of them are wanting to do so I am glad not to be involved with it. If they need me, they can come and get me. (cf:207-213)
Fletcher then begins to explain what aspects of the university detract from handling crisis well. He starts by addressing some communication issues that revolved around a car accident:

It really depends on what the kind of crisis was. If you had a major safety related emergency, I think we could handle those pretty well. (I am concerned about) a crisis that might involve how students are reacting to something. Take the fatal car accident that happened at the beginning of the semester. They handled the actual incident fine. They never notified the communications person to notify us on campus. I didn’t hear about it until a full day later. That’s not true, about 14 hours later but I didn’t hear about it until 2:00 in the afternoon. What we failed to do is recognize what trauma those students observed or would have been going through. The police dealt with the incident and didn’t have either any clue or thinking of what all the spill around kind of mess would have been. So had I not heard about it the next day and decided on my own I would call people together to do this to start planning a reaction and getting my staff and counseling center and others into the community to talk to people. Nothing like that would have happened. (cf:216-228)

He then explains what he would like to see happen regarding communication and why:

Contrasting that is I am not responsible for the police but I would have known enough if I were fully in charge to say when I should get the call and number one, the dispatchers need to be trained better in my opinion. They need to know that when a crisis like that happens they need to call in this case [name] and tell her. She is the university communications coordinator and she then would be notifying me and the Provost. (Then) I can know whether or not this is an incident that needs more support than the safety officers provide. That doesn’t happen. That’s going to be I think the biggest problem with our (training) scenarios. So if a big crisis happens that is not you know a chemical fire or something, but it’s a student who threatens to kill herself in the residence hall – hasn’t committed suicide, but is sitting there locked in her room threatening to commit suicide, maybe calls the news media and says whatever happened, they don’t think beyond here’s the deal. (cf:229-240)

Fletcher continues the discussion focusing on the issue of handling crisis related student trauma and where he feels the crisis trainings should focus:
All those students in that hall are going to become traumatized by what’s going on and I won’t necessarily know about it unless my residence advisor contacts the community coordinator, and that person contacts the director of residents life, who contacts . . . you know get up the chain for me to say wait a minute. Thank god [name] is very good at this and understands how to deal with it and immediately gets involved. See it’s a matter who’s at play and whether they will make the right call. Those are the things that happen much more frequently than a fire in the residence hall, or a bomb wherever. 3500 students in a residence hall and 30,000 students on campus, the interaction problems are going to happen there. They are not going to be in the 85 buildings we have which is a police matter or if there is a murder. Does that make any sense? (cf:240-250)

He feels that the university crisis training system does not focus on helping the students enough. He explains his frustration and different viewpoint:

All our crisis stuff is built around how we manage the building issues. We are working on trying to get our building evacuation plans and our building lock down plans and all that crap. It’s all about the buildings and very little about how do we handle helping the students and faculty deal with stuff around, manage them. By the way in the EOG, there is the counseling center director, there is the housing director, so I have my staff available, not just available but participating. It’s the issue of who’s leading it. I’m not going to screw this thing up by letting my ego say I am better at doing it than somebody else. If that’s not going to happen, fine but then run it. My staff is available in the building and in the room so I can take care of that. If they need me, call me I’ll come in. (cf:240-259)

When asked if politics has ever gotten in the way of how a crisis has been handled, Fletcher states the following:

Well a real crisis, I don’t know. The one I just said (with the car accident). It wasn’t politics they are just not thinking that way. They’re scenario building with the check list. I think the gap is the problem with the dispatcher not being trained to handle that stuff. Either that or they are calling (the communications coordinator) or the police chief, and they don’t do it. When chief is getting these calls, he is calling me so I think it’s the dispatcher. (cf:262-266)

Fletcher then shares some last thoughts on the university crisis training system:

I don’t want to sit around and bitch about it all. (laughs) That’s not right. I think the disconnect is in the philosophy, the set up for NIMS. The belief that NIMS and that training and program satisfies every emergency need you have, I think is just ridiculous. It doesn’t work that way in real life. (cf:278-281)
He explains how he would like to see the crisis management system change:

I think we need to look at the kinds of issues that happen on a college campus. They could take any 3-year period and plot out problems that have gone on and what had to happen with those, then look at how we train people and the procedures and protocols we put into place to address generally how you handle those things and I don’t think we’ve done that it all. We’ve looked at how the federal government tells us we have to manage stuff. I think the federal government is designed for major catastrophes. Take a look at what happened on any college campus examined over a three year period and then lay out your protocols of handling those kinds of issues and some cases it will be you need an incident command thing and some cases not going to. We don’t operate, we don’t activate our emergency group but through the incident commander and I think that’s crazy. Incident command isn’t always going to be in place for situations that I just described or some situations that they think will happen. I just think one size fits all isn’t accurate. It doesn’t fit all. We need to put people in place who have and can use exercise judgment, have done it, can do it and will do it. (cf:282-304)

Fletcher discusses how he feels the structured incident command based system used at the university suppresses creative thinking and decision flexibility during crisis:

You know when we were talking the other day about what went wrong; we didn’t use the check list. That’s what went wrong? We didn’t use the check list? (laughs) OK. This is just observational at the end (of the training) one of the other criticisms was we didn’t write reports about every event and pass it along. Write all this stuff down and give it to the next guy to write it all down to give it to the next guy, I am thinking why are we doing that? The bottom line for me is that we are doing that to avoid litigation afterwards. OK that is not how I’d run my job. I’m not worrying about litigation afterwards. I am worrying about whether or not what I do hurts a student or helps a student, whether it’s a crisis or whether a student wants to drop a class. What I do has to help that student in not hurt that student so let’s worry about that. When we are sitting around doing our crises, what are we doing to make sure our constituents, our students, our faculty, and staff, our neighborhood people, are being helped and how are we helping them to make sure they avoid danger and the rest of the stuff can happen afterwards. At the end of this stuff, if they need a report about what happened, I’ll write down a summary report but in a middle of a crisis I am not going to worry about whether I had written down everything that happened on my shift because you know what it takes me a long time to do it. So if I am wasting the time that I need to be thinking about solving this problem and documenting that between 1:00 and 2:00 I fed the dog or whatever, it’s just . . . that’s just me. I am not a sequentially oriented person. I am not a person that is type A. I am a random thinker. I know
what we have to do at the end of this and to getting there is not following step 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 . . . never deviating. That’s not how I operate and it’s done very well. (cf:304-327)

He continues his reflection on the structured system:

If you have to be structured into a sequential operational style which is what the NIMS stuff requires you to do, it will stifle your ability to do your strongest and best thinking therefore it puts people at risk because we are not getting your best. Your best is fine and we ought to be using your best and not trying to force it into this accounting mode of you should have put this in this column. OK if that’s what you think is important fine. (cf:333-338)

Fletcher continues to explain the politics involved between university groups relating to the crisis training system:

No, (the President does not provide any feedback) . . . (laughs). Our President will not, this is just not something he is interested in. However, when it goes wrong he is going to wonder why it went wrong – what didn’t you do . . . yada-- yada. Somebody has to be. So this (new) Provost I think is taking a little bit more interest in the running of things. I think probably we’ll get to that but the point is for me, we have been without clear direction forever maybe and he has been here now full time since June something we are now in September in the middle of the academic year. We don’t have yet anybody formally in charge. If you are requiring training, why haven’t we required training? Why aren’t they going through it- that kind of stuff? We are going to wait until a freaking crisis happens and then they are going to rely on something that has not been complete, it has not been effective, we have not done the training and we are going to have problems because we are going to have someone who cannot exercise judgments say screw that book this is what you need to do to get it done. I am not afraid to make those decisions. I am not afraid to exercise my judgment. That is why [name] had such problems in what I was doing. Everything that happened was appropriate and got it done but I know they didn’t call in on the right number.(laughs) ok [name] OK call back on that number. It’s like come on. (cf:341-357)

He ends the interview explaining his intentions for the crisis system:

I hope I am not coming across negative I am not trying to mean that. I want to empower people and if I am a stumbling block I am getting out of the way because I can’t be arguing that we ought to be doing it this way and someone else in authority is arguing to do it this other way. I am not going to get in that battle. Fine. You do it your way and we’ll hold you accountable for doing it your way. If you need my help, call me. I don’t want to sit there being a road block because I
think I know how to do it better. (But in a real situation I would act) in a
heartbeat if my students are at risk, I would take over and they will have to take
me out of the room. The police chief will have to say get out you are under arrest
(laughs) and he wouldn’t do that. (cf.358-366)

R. Thomas – Background

R. Thomas is a 39-year-old Caucasian male. He holds a Masters Degree in
public administration, as well as a Bachelors degree in Emergency Management, and an
Associate’s Degree in Fire Science. Thomas has been working for a large, semi-urban,
public, Midwestern university for the past 7 years. He was hired as the university
Emergency Management Coordinator.

Thomas says he is responsible for executing all of the emergency planning on
campus, including three branch campus sites. He coordinates the outdoor warning system
and creates, coordinates, and participates in emergency exercises. Externally, he also
coordinates the campus efforts with the county and works with the county emergency
management director. He oversees all of the university emergency management activities
relating to hazard mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. He claims he is a one
man show. Thomas begins to discuss what a typical day on the job looks like:

I come in here at 8:00 in the morning. I read my e-mails for about a half hour to
45 minutes and then look and see what is going on, see if anything happened
during the night that I need to be aware of and then I’ll start either doing planning
. . . we’re currently working on a human resource functional annex and finance
and risk management functional annex, fixing that up. I’ll have meetings
throughout the day. I also do training for different things. Currently right now,
I’ve been doing hands-on fire extinguisher training. I’ve also been doing ALICE
training which is the lockdown training for the campus. This summer, I created
some evacuation maps for the audiology and speech pathology center down there.
It just depends, every second Wednesday, I have to make sure the outdoor
warning system is tested. At least about once a week I make sure and see if
everything is up and running and take a look and do silent tests or something like
that. I respond throughout the day if there are fire alarm calls. I respond to fire alarms and hazard materials incidents and stuff like that which is a little different than most people in emergency management. They don’t really usually get to respond. I get to do some of response for the university. That is one of the kinds of parts of the job that I like is that I get to respond not just sit in my office all the time. I get to respond to quite a few mulch fires and stuff like that. I work from 8:00 to 5:30 and sometimes 6:00 sometimes more. Plus I am also an adjunct faculty member and I teach for an hour and 15 minutes every Monday and Wednesday. So on the weekends I do incident command, I am part of the incident management team, for home football games too. So I have some preparation time on the planning section for that too. Sometimes I have to prepare for that. Also we are trying to finish the creation of 88 comprehensive emergency action plans for all our buildings and that is a big feat. (rt:15-38)

R. Thomas and Crisis

Thomas then explains what an atypical day looks like:

An atypical day. Well and that is the one thing. My days are . . . I want to do planning but sometimes the planning doesn’t get done because a hazardous materials incident occurs, or people above need something in emergency management explained or bullet points for something they need to give to the administration and I have to provide that for them. So doing that and actually every other Tuesday we have a core emergency management meeting and usually I come up with four or five things I have to do from there for them to present to the administration so that takes me off my game. Most of the time, it is responding to emergencies that I may not be able to do emergency management, going in different directions. Back in 2007, we had seven bomb threats in six weeks so we were doing mostly incident command and responding to bomb threats so a lot didn’t get done there. So it just depends, I try to be in here planning but it doesn’t always work. Different emergencies occur and I have to stop what I am doing and go put out different fires or do something with mitigation, hazard materials stuff like that, respond to a mercury spill and all that fun stuff. (rt:41-54)

When asked if handling crisis is part of his job, Thomas immediately begins discussing the political aspects of his position. He feels they are intertwined with his crisis responsibility. He explains the university environment:

Handling regular crises and putting out political fires are part of my job. Trying to be ah. . . ah. . . politically correct, playing the politics at universities. Another
emergency manager told me, a county emergency manager, said if you can handle university politics you can handle anything because here at the university you have departmental politics, you’ve got staff politics, even inner office politics, as well as building politics, as well as campus politics, so you’ve got to deal with all those types of people. You better be a very good mediator type of person, a good listener, as well as good educator explaining to people what’s the problem, why we are doing stuff like this. (rt:57-65)

Thomas when explains the types of crisis situations he has handled while at the university. It is apparent that he has handled situations across the campus:

I had seven bomb threats in six weeks in 2007. I’ve had some major flooding issues because of pipes breaking. Two years ago, we had a residents’ hall in the dead of winter, I think a pipe broke, and we had lots of water. I can’t tell you. Last January in the Science Library, another pipe broke. It was on a Sunday. We had to respond there and mitigate that issue. Lots of water damage not just in the library but two levels below the library and research labs and stuff like that so we cleaned up water and had some hazard materials stuff to do. I responded to a residents’ hall room and contents fire that we had to evacuate students from in the middle of the night. Heating emergency at the Arts and Science building and we had to evacuate the building. They were without high temperature heat in that building for a week so we had to do some business continuity, continuity of operations, schedule classes other places that type of thing. I’ve done that. (rt:68-78)

R. Thomas and Training

He then discusses the formal and informal training he feels has helped him deal with handling crisis issues on campus:

Well the first training I’ve had is my Bachelor’s in Emergency Management. I’ve also completed all seven requirements for FEMA Professional Development. I have all my NIMS training and that’s from 700, 100, 200, 300, 400 and 800B -- did that, working on my CEM certified emergency management, the hands-on training I get during the emergencies, as well as putting exercises on and being part of exercises. Plus I have a 256 career firefighting certification for (the) State so I am a volunteer firefighter on the side. Other training I have gone to, I have certified CPR and AED that is Firefighter II level in the State for that and on-the-job training that you receive. You know that is probably one of the big things. Before 2007, I had never dealt with a bomb threat but in 2005 we had one, but other than that once you have seven bomb threats in six weeks, you get used to
bomb threats pretty easy and dealing with them. I also dealt with bomb threats last year at (the branch) college. We had two bomb threats down there. (rt:83-94)

Thomas describes how he feels this training and experience has assisted him in responding to campus crisis management issues:

Oh yeah (the training) definitely has. You have to have training. I mean even if it’s on-the-job training. You get that experience and you know I think you have to have book experience, in classroom experience, but you also have to have that on-the-job training too, learning what is going on as things are unfolding as well as doing exercises. We dealt with pandemic issues to last year so I’ve done pandemic planning, including three open to the community H1N1 clinics with coordination with Akron Health Department and we also held two closed to the campus H1N1 clinics for our students, facility, and staff. So last year pandemic planning and pandemic everything was most of the job last year. (rt:97-105)

Thomas explains where he thinks his training was lacking focusing on people and project management issues:

Probably project management training. How to manage people and projects. The one that is frustrating about emergency management is that it is my number one job, but when you try to get other people to do it – its fourth or fifth or sixth or seventh down the list of getting things done. I would say that project management and people management is probably where I lack the training . . . and sometimes you get that on the job. Response training – I am good on that . . . incident command -- lots of training there. That project management . . . managing people would be very good. (rt:108-114)

He then explains the accountability structure for crisis training. He discusses the value he has seen in the incident command training:

Oh yeah like we just held incident command review training. All the people already had incident command training from levels one to four but we did an exercise and if you don’t use it all the time you lose it. One of the after action requests that came out is that we need to have ICS review so we did that and we had it. Now we are back to using incident command in our two home football games so far and it seems to refresh their memory, using that type of thing. Plus the NIMS training is a mandatory training and we are making sure all the emergency management personnel are having it and doing it. I will tell you for sure when we did ICS 300, two weeks later the police had to implement what they learned for the bomb threats in 2007 so I can definitely see that the training has

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helped, what they have learned in training, and what they have implemented in real response as well as implemented in exercises. (rt:117-127)

Thomas explains what training is considered mandatory, and what is voluntary for university employees:

It depends on what department you are in and what type of training you are participating in. The NIMS training is mandatory. We have to have it. The Department of Homeland Security says if you are higher education you must have the training. Some people have taken that training and taken it serious and some haven’t taken that training. You know some training is not mandatory. The FEMA professional development series I have done wasn’t mandatory. I’ve also done independent study courses for FEMA, not mandatory. I did it for I guess continuing education trying to educate myself. Homeland security exercise evaluation program training I did, not mandatory. I did it so I could understand how exercises are created and ran, after action assessments that type of thing. Emergency operations group – yes (the campus crisis training is mandatory). Certain groups, no but some are mandatory. Like the building emergency action plan. The seminar is mandatory and then if we do fire drills and tornado drills that’s mandatory but it’s only mandatory now because they have a plan but before it wasn’t mandatory. If they didn’t have a plan, you didn’t have to do the fire drills. (rt:133-146)

Thomas then explains how a college environment falls under different rules for crisis training and how that works at the university:

Colleges are considered businesses so not all buildings have to do evacuation drills. Now on our campus, we have the high school so any building that houses a high school class has to have once a month fire drills. When it comes April through July, they have to have tornado drills once a month too and they have to have an annual lockdown drill. The Center for Childhood Development, which houses 18 months through 4 or 5 years old, has to have fire drills once a month mandatory and tornado drills throughout the time tornadoes occur and lockdown. They do it two or three times a semester so they are proficient in it because their lockdown is a little different than ours. (rt:146-154)

He then discusses what characteristics or skills he feels are important for successful crisis leadership. Thomas focuses on knowledge and management issues:

Leadership, calm, cool and collected under pressure, handles stress very well, knowledgeable on how to handle the crisis, knowledgeable in incident command
and that’s how to manage the incident. I think you need to have some type of knowledge on what types of hazards you are dealing with. If it’s a natural hazard, you need to know how tornadoes are formed and what kind of damage can occur that type of thing, man made you need to know the different types of terrorism and that type of thing. I always say emergency managers are jack-of-all-trades but a master of none. They need to know a little about everything but you don’t have to be an expert on all of it. You just need to know how to manage and those types of things. (rt:158-166)

Thomas then focuses on how he feels he has obtained those skills, again first stressing the importance of his command training:

Yeah I mean the incident command training has helped tremendously and us using incident command on campus on a daily basis as well as special events. Last year was the first time we ever used incident commands for a student affairs special event and we used it for Spring Fest so that was pretty neat to see. We used it on football games but that is different but really a student event- student affairs event we used it and it was pretty neat and hopefully we are going to use incident command at graduation and stuff like that. I think all the training helps you develop that type of thing. (rt:170-176)

Thomas then thinks back to what he feels was important knowledge in his undergraduate education and other training:

The training I received as an undergrad like I said emergency managers need to know what causes earthquakes or what causes tornadoes, that helps tremendously, how things go. Where earthquakes occur, I mean in the northeast we have fault lines. Are they major? Not really, but the most major earthquake fault in North America is the New Madrid and Intercontinental which a lot of people forget about. Just knowing that kind of stuff is very important. My emergency management training taught me how to do planning and stuff like that. Different courses with FEMA have taught me different things. Professional Development series is very good. They teach about each step in emergency management. (rt:176-185)

Thomas then explains what the university has done to support his training and skill development:

I guess one of the things is they allow me to attend conferences and trainings off campus or they will pay for the event. Also in the fall of 2005, they allowed me to bring in a national training for our people to participate in. It was an incident
management training for command post personnel put on by ICLECA which is International College Law Enforcement Chiefs Association so that was pretty neat. They allowed me to attend training like going to conferences. The last two years I have been to the college and university caucuses’ international emergency management. It’s a one day seminar workshop they do. There is one in Kansas and one in Orlando, Florida. They allow me to go to training, allow me to even put on training on here at the university and give me the opportunity. (rt:189-198)

He discusses what the university has done to help him handle crisis events. He explains that the entire process is relatively new to the university and how the structure is established:

I guess first of all before 2003 we didn’t have the position of emergency management coordinator. I guess they implemented the position itself and the fact they said we need to go and design an emergency operations plan and also that we needed to train people on what’s going on with emergency. We established three executive management groups which are made up of presidents and vice presidents, the emergency operations group which is made up of middle managers, directors, people that will implement the functional annexes, and we have the incident management team which is the one that is going to manage the incident from on scene response type thing. (rt:202-209)

Thomas then explains how he feels about direct supervisor support, providing a mixed response:

Sometimes I have direct supervisor support and sometimes I don’t. It seems like in certain situations I’ll get their support and other situations when people don’t want to ask people above them to do something or don’t want to. . . . I guess rock the boat type of thing they won’t support it. Most of the time they do support it. My reporting goes from the university health and safety director, to the assistant vice president of campus safety, which is the chief of police, and then I have two vice presidents that sit on our core emergency management committee that I report to so I have many bosses. Sometimes they support and sometimes they don’t. (rt:212-219)

He then explains how the university can detract from handling crisis situations well. He begins to discuss the lack of follow through from crisis committee members:

One of the things is, and I’ve talked about this before, is emergency manager is my number one job and people have been chosen to participate in our emergency
management organizations but they cannot find the time to do mandatory training or sometimes it seems like they are so busy that they can’t do anything with the emergency management or they feel like the training is too long or the training is unnecessary. It’s very frustrating. (rt:212-227)

Thomas then explains how individuals were chosen for the crisis management team and where he sees a difference in effort and motivation:

Some of them were selected and some offered to be a part of it. How they were chosen were by the functional annexes that they had to create. Like our internal communications director, he is in charge of the notification and warning part of our functional annex. So because of his job, he was selected to be on the emergency operations group. Some of them were selected because of their expertise and their daily function. Some were chosen because they have some emergency background and some knowledge. Yep, (I) definitely (see a difference in people). It is the same thing with my emergency action building plans. If people were selected, it seems like just another thing I’ve got to do on my plate but if the people chose to do it, they seem to be more into it. They want to do the trainings. They like to do the stuff. It’s not a bother for them. It’s not just another thing they have to do. They actually like doing it. They actually like responding and doing that kind of stuff but if they were chosen by someone else higher up than them, sometimes it’s just another thing they have to do. It’s bothersome to them. (rt:228-242)

He then discusses how university politics can influence crisis decisions. He begins by using an example from the 2007 bomb threats:

I would definitely say there have been times that politics have influenced the way things have been handled on campus. Some particularly like back in the 2007 bomb threats, actually all seven (threats) we evacuated the building because the President said he wanted us to evacuate the building. During that time period, we found out that if you keep evacuating, the bomb threats are going to keep going, they are going to keep happening. Out of those seven bomb threats, actually two of them were homegrown. One was written on a bathroom wall, one was text message into our radio station so they were homegrown. The other five were e-mails from overseas. Because we were evacuating all the time and canceling classes, students saw that as a way to get out of class. To err on the side of caution, we evacuated every time. After that, we went back and wrote a policy about bomb threats and there has to be certain guidelines to cause an evacuation. If not, we don’t evacuate. If they are not specific threats to that building or on our campus, we won’t evacuate. We will bring in the dogs and search the building.
while people are in it still. So that was one way politics was influenced. (rt:245-258)

Thomas then explains how campus politics have influenced crisis response:

Other things, different politics within the department and how people perceive the scene should be run is different from each department. When I first got here, not all the departments played together nicely. It’s getting a lot better. Since we’ve instituted this emergency management structure, it’s gotten a lot better. People have come to the table and started talking. Back in 2007, during the Arts and Science heating emergency, that was the first time we ever called together a bunch of people to discuss what’s going to happen. Usually one department will run with it and then other departments find out what’s happening in mid process. So definitely politics play different things in response. (rt:258-266)

He then explains how he would like to see crisis training changed within the university. He feels the administration needs to complete their crisis training. He discusses his frustration and concern:

Well one thing I would improve is make sure the executive management group completes all their necessary and mandatory training they are supposed to complete. Also educate them better about emergency management and make sure they had group decision making training because an emergency situation, you don’t have a lot of time to make decisions. A group decision is hard to get everybody to decide on the same decision. We need to educate them on this is the emergency this is what we need to do. Also get them to buy in more so in an emergency management program. Make emergency management a priority for everybody, not just this is another job I’ve got to do but a priority. You know so we are better prepared when the next emergency or disaster occurs. The Department of Education it’s highly suggested that senior administrators complete certain training. Certain NIMS training is 700 and 100. I’ve also tried to get them to have an in session class called G402 incident command for elected officials to give them some heads up about that too but there has been stalling on their part. They don’t want to do it. They believe they are too busy. They don’t want to take four hours to complete the training. They don’t want to do it online. They really don’t want to do it at all. My thing is if a real emergency does occur, they are going to want to be in charge and they aren’t going to have the training to be in charge. There is going to be some real politics go down when that occurs. (rt:269-287)

Thomas shares his last thoughts on the university crisis management system. He feels that the university needs to experience a crisis event to get serious:
One thing is it's hard is being at a university that never really suffers a major disaster because until someone really suffers a major disaster, they don't understand how important emergency management is. Why you need to take this training. You can show them exercises but it's really not the same thing until life and property are on the line for real, they don't take this stuff serious. Yes I (think I would have more support then). I will tell you. (rt:290-295)

He then provides an example of how an incident at Virginia Tech provided him some further support and the importance of a crisis:

We’ve seen this after the massacre at Virginia Tech. We were pushing for three years to get a fire alarm notification system that worked, our fire alarm panels, and the day Virginia Tech occurred, I called and got another quote and within two months we started having our first installation of our mass communications system. Before Virginia Tech, we didn’t have a text message system. So definitely, emergencies and disasters especially disasters that occur on college campuses, make people say oh maybe we should do something, maybe we should put money towards this, maybe we should get that education, we should do the training. I mean since we’ve started having emergency plans, we’ve had pandemic workshops, pandemic tabletop, we’ve had severe weather functional exercise. So we’ve come a long ways. Before that we didn’t even have an emergency operations plan. We’ve come a long way. Do we have a long ways to go, yeah but I think it’s easier for emergency managers that live in areas that annually suffer disasters than people that don’t and don’t have disasters. It’s hard for people to say hey we can spend $40,000 on an emergency operations center for technology but we might not use it so that’s one of the hardest things about emergency management is getting buy in and keeping it, making sure it’s a top priority. (rt:295-310)

Chapter IV Summary

Chapter IV presented five case narratives told by the participants within the study. The cases were presented in the order of interview questions asked, focusing on the issues around higher education crisis, leadership, and training. In the following chapter, the cross case analysis illustrates the themes extracted from the research data. These themes are then explained more fully, answering the research questions presented in Chapter 3.
CHAPTER V
CONCLUSIONS

This chapter presents the dissertation research findings and conclusions. The research questions are examined in the order presented and answered through both case and literature analysis. The combination of these research methods allows for a rich, in depth picture of the issues presented. While some data corresponded with the literature base, other participant information highlighted additional areas for future research and study. After the analysis section, recommendations for improvement and future study are provided.

This research sought to answer the following research questions:

1. How do leaders in higher education describe their preparation and training for addressing crisis situations?
   a. What higher education factors do leaders attribute to supporting effective crisis leadership?
   b. What higher education factors do leaders attribute to detracting from effective crisis leadership?
   c. What specific aspects of training do higher education leaders attribute to supporting effective crisis leadership?
   d. What specific aspects of training do higher education leaders attribute to detracting from effective crisis leadership.
During the data analysis phase of this research, two main meta-narratives emerged: higher education factors that support and detract from crisis leadership processes, and training factors that support and detract from effective crisis leadership processes. Within these two meta-narratives are six inter-related main themes, which assisted in developing and explaining the meta-narratives as they emerged. These include supervisor support, crisis training accountability, frequency of crisis events, crisis training issues, turf wars, and power/politics. Participant stories and findings provide discussion for each of these themes. A general overview is provided to discuss the main findings. Research questions 1a and 1b focusing on crisis leadership factors are then examined as a set, followed by research questions 1c and 1d that focus on crisis training factors.

Overview

The overarching research question examined the ways in which leaders in higher education described their preparation and training for addressing crisis situations. Participant responses were mixed, especially when comparing the two higher education institutions: public and private. However, despite the differences captured between the two higher education institutions, a common finding was clear: the frequency of university-wide crisis events makes a difference in crisis preparation activities, and top administrative leadership, accountability, and actual participation in the university crisis management system is imperative to the success of the university crisis management system. These main findings and other themes found in the data are discussed in further
Cross Case Analysis

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cases</th>
<th>Supervisor Support</th>
<th>Crisis Training Accountability</th>
<th>Frequency of Campus-wide Crisis Events</th>
<th>Crisis Training weaknesses</th>
<th>Turf Wars</th>
<th>Power and Politics</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D. Jenkins</td>
<td>No higher priority for the administration.</td>
<td>Senior administration must participate per university direction from the President’s office.</td>
<td>Named several actual events that have caused campus disruption. Campus began dealing with crime in the 60’s and kept the process going.</td>
<td>More realism is needed in training scenarios. Use actual events from other campuses. Would like to be able to mandate training so people have role awareness.</td>
<td>Decentralized campus. Hard to keep everyone following the same protocols through communication. Tenured faculty at times.</td>
<td>Does not feel that they have ever affected the outcome. Admits there are turf battles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. George.</td>
<td>Top priority from the President’s office.</td>
<td>Takes training out of own motivation, not mandate.</td>
<td>New to the university, has dealt with construction issues, and H1N1. University has a history of crisis events.</td>
<td>More realistic examples. Use people’s own experiences and dissect the situation to learn.</td>
<td>Feels there are good interpersonal relationships between groups.</td>
<td>They are put aside in the initial phase of crisis. Emerge later in the crisis when issues of money or improvement are discussed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Mock</td>
<td>Feels parents have more power than he does at times.</td>
<td>Does not have mandated training at his level. Acknowledges not handling job correctly will ultimately be accountable in job loss.</td>
<td>Deals with many student crisis but none campus wide.</td>
<td>Feels he is better with hands on management versus the structured university crisis system. In crisis, protocols are guidelines that can be broken if necessary. Questions if getting everyone together to make decisions just complicates them further.</td>
<td>Easier to manage incidents in the evening when less people are involved. Fees inexperienced people take decisions away from him when he is the expert concerning residence halls.</td>
<td>Will execute an opposing decision under protest if from higher administration. Will pull rank with some safety personnel rather than execute their opposing strategy. Hard part is not crisis, it is managing the people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Thomas</td>
<td>Mixed response. Support his personal training, but not always job related support.</td>
<td>States incident command training is mandatory through the Dept. of Homeland Security for H.E. institutions. No one is held accountable, still a choice to complete mandated training. He personally trains out of motivation not mandate.</td>
<td>No major incidents. Residence hall fire (minor), pipe breaks, bomb threats. H1N1 planning. Would have more support if campus had a crisis. Would take it seriously.</td>
<td>Stresses the importance of following the structure, plan, and protocol. Needs more training in people and project management, getting buy in. Training needs mandated and held accountable.</td>
<td>Feels if people volunteered versus appointed, they are more involved and motivated. Fees climate is better since crisis training was enacted.</td>
<td>It is his number one job, however sixth or seventh for everyone else. They’re too busy. He doesn’t feel they take it seriously or really care. They are going to want to be in charge, but not know how to do it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Table 2

The cross case analysis chart below (Chart IV) displays the main themes and participant relationships dissected from the data.
### Crisis Leadership

One key component of this research sought to examine higher education factors that either support or detract from effective crisis leadership practices. In the past, organizations and researchers focused on forms of leadership surrounding the leader themselves, their behaviors, and traits (Bass et al., 2003; Bass & Stedlmeier, 1999; Boin & t’ Hart, 2003; Vroom & Jago, 2007). However true to the “post-heroic” era of leadership, both higher education institutions studied employ a system of shared leadership in their crisis management organizational structure. At some level, both universities share the power, decision making, and resources for crisis activities. According to Bligh, Pearce, and Kohles (2006), influence not only flows vertically, but also horizontally across organizations that employ shared leadership orientations. Fletcher and Kaufer (2003) describe this leadership process as dynamic, multi-

#### Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C. Fletcher</th>
<th>Feels supported by police chief and his staff.</th>
<th>No major incidents. Bomb threat, chemical spill. Deals with many student crisis issues.</th>
<th>Thinks the university command system is stupid. System stifles his creative decision making and flexibility. Training needs to be more realistic and go further than discussions.</th>
<th>Crises don’t follow check lists. Some people are more concerned with following the correct checklist. They have told him how to set up structure, not what to actually do in a crisis.</th>
<th>If a crisis happens tomorrow, a plan is not going to help solve our problem. Has pulled out of the crisis management group, citing a difference in perspective. Does not want to be a roadblock to the process. Does not feel people think of the student enough, more structure focused than what is best for the students.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Note. * All data found in original interview transcripts
directional, and a collective activity that is mutually enacted. Influence is fluid and often reciprocal as team members take on the tasks for which they are most suited or motivated to accomplish (Bligh et al., 2006).

A common, shared organizational system is important as higher education institutions evolve and problems become more diverse and complex. Having an established crisis management team is a positive foundational beginning for both institutions. However, the core of any shared leadership process is collaboration, which is built upon a main system of foundational blocks that include trust, a skill set or expertise, and communication structures (Rawlings, 2000; Rosenthal, 1998; Schrage, 1990). While the participants from the private higher education institution display evidence of true cross divisional collaboration and shared leadership, participants in the public higher education institution have yet to reach a true collaborative structure across university divisions and reach authentic shared crisis leadership. The areas of crisis, leadership, and training are examined in relation to higher education factors that support and detract from effective crisis leadership.

*Higher Education Factors Supporting Effective Crisis Leadership*

The experience of having university-wide crisis events has been credited for gathering support around crisis leadership initiatives. Crisis situations differ from normal times of organizational operation in several ways. Unlike normal conditions of organizational leadership, researchers have suggested that crisis events threaten the viability of the organization (Pearson & Clair, 1998), are rare in nature (Cornell & Sheras, 1998), have the potential to dismantle an organization (King, 2002), and fall
under close media scrutiny (Fink, 1986). The private sector higher education participants, illustrated by D. Jenkins, provided several crisis events true the literature definition:

Let’s see where do I begin? Well probably . . . there’s two that are most noteworthy in my experience that I had to deal directly with one is the one right behind you, the fire, when the building burned down here and this building burned in 1991 I believe. It was a total loss and that was our administrative headquarters for the university so we had to not only deal with the sort of loss of the building, move the operations, resume operations, deal with all of the clean-up activity, restoration and rebuilding of the building and the impact on the institution. It made us upheaval for at least 6 months, 3 to 6 months of pretty serious upheaval. (dj:26-33)

Then in 2003 the school experienced an active shooter situation. The media filmed the response live on television. Jenkins described this crisis:

The next biggest occurrence that was unusual that we had to respond to was the shooting in 2003. At the end of spring finals week we had an active shooter situation and one person was killed and two were wounded. There were about 70 people that were held hostage for about ten hours almost until the next day and there was such a siege. It got a lot of national publicity. It got resolved although unfortunately right away we lost one student and had a couple of people wounded. The rest was resolved without any further injuries and I think all in all was handled pretty well considering the fact that you know at the time all we had a emergency response plan but it wasn’t as developed as it is now so I thought the reaction good but it was fairly traumatic incident. (dj:34-43)

Having a crisis event occur on a university campus seems to eliminate the “it can’t happen to me” or “it can’t happen here” feeling and change the culture of the higher education institution to take crisis preparation activities more seriously. The literature cohesively posits that leadership in times of organizational crisis is imperative to organizational survival (Boin & t’ Hart, 2003; Borodzicz & van Haperen, 2002; French & Niculæ, 2005; Heath, 1998; t’ Hart et al., 1993). It is the experience of university-wide crisis events that are credited for gathering the momentum around crisis leadership support. As Jenkins shared,
It sort of ratcheted up as the years went by because of things that have happened. I can remember back when I first came here everyone was sort of cost driven and they didn’t have the same type of . . . now they had just come out of the 60s and all that so they had to kind of a civil disturbance mentality but it was less of a willingness to take on a responsibility, it’s somebody else’s problem. The city of [name] or whatever. What happened is that we had so many security issues not just crisis response but day in and day out robberies and so the mind set changed we’ve got to do something about it because if it becomes a competitive issue in terms of students who hear its unsafe. We are going to start losing students . . . so I think somewhere in the 80s, the pendulum started swinging to we’ve got to start doing something so we started to develop our security program so taking on that responsibility and as an off shoot of that you know are starting to deal with fires and buildings burning down so the awareness just kept escalating. Then you hit 9/11. The last three presidents I mean like every one of them is like hey we’ve got a task force and we’ve got this whole . . . . I think the whole higher community after 9/11 began to really kick in and now our current president is like you know I have absolute support its number one priority emergency response (dj:238-253) . . . at least for the last 10 years. Probably though you know we had that big shooting and that raised the bar especially with the trustees. (dj:267-268)

Another factor supporting crisis leadership related to the experience of university-wide crisis events, is obtaining the upper level administrative support described.

Participants that had not only verbal support from their university President and Vice Presidents but also feedback and involvement, felt it was vital to crisis management success. George explained:

Oh absolutely (I have direct supervisor support) beyond that all the way up. Our President participated in the last tabletop. She was even vocal in the hot wash afterwards expressing some of her concerns. We have most of our emergency operations group is VP level executives and they are all very open and asked about how they feel if it’s working or if it’s not working you know helping to build it as a team not just as a safety department. Doing it in a vacuum which a lot of places do that with crisis leadership. It’s one department doing it in a vacuum and then they want everyone to know and understand it when it has to get implemented but it has to be a bigger group effort especially when you are dealing with a large organization like we are in this pretty big operation here. (jg:272-280)

Whether or not participants had support from their upper administration, one common finding was that all participants credited collaborative relationships such as, “a
good staff, good people, and a good police department.” Participants felt the ability to work as a team, collaborate, and have competent people around them supported effective crisis leadership. The system of collaboration is at the foundation of the shared leadership processes found within the makeup of both university crisis management systems. The ability to collaborate not only within one’s own department, but also across university departments is vital to successful crisis leadership. Schrage (1990) defines collaboration as a process of creation when two or more individuals interact to form a shared and understood objective. The true component of collaboration is other people. This factor was listed by all participants as one that supports crisis leadership effectiveness. Both Fletcher and Mock shared this perspective:

> Good staff, good team, listening group of people, a responsive team. A team that can make decisions which is kind of a hard thing to train people to do because as a university we are very control oriented . . ., very. Micromanaging. (jm:268-270)

This organization? There are people within the organization that do that, the chief of police, and police department do a really good job. I am very supportive and thankful for things. (They) are very cooperative and very frankly differential except when they really need to say sorry, you gotta take this. (cf:201-204)

The creation of a new position or committee was also cited as another way the university supported effective crisis leadership. This was mentioned by participants from both institutions. Thomas explained this aspect,

> I guess first of all before 2003 we didn’t have the position of emergency management coordinator. I guess they implemented the position itself and the fact they said we need to go and design an emergency operations plan and also that we needed to train people on what’s going on with emergency. We established three emergency management groups which are made up of presidents and vice presidents, the emergency operations group which is made up of middle managers, directors, people that will implement the functional annexes, and we have the incident management team which is the one that is going to manage the incident from on scene response type thing. (rt:202-209)
The private sector institution stressed the importance of collaboration on detecting possible threats ahead of time, and explains a new committee instituted at the university that supports being prepared for crisis events. Jenkins stated:

Really stepped up our response, or I would say our detection I should say, of potential problem situations with behavioral issues and so we have an active committee in fact we just met yesterday. I’d say we error on the side of caution so anything that might present an issue to us we now review whether it’s a student, faculty, staff, you know what is the potential if this person is acting out or there are threats, how should we deal with this. We’ve come to a critical evaluation and decide with all the right players – counseling, legal, police, student affairs, academics. It’s really risk management. I think it’s now kind of now the best practice we spend a lot of time with them. It’s not like we have a lot of crazy people here but you know it’s just being precautious. (dj:57-66)

Just as there are several higher education areas that support effective crisis leadership processes, answering research question 1a; participants also noted higher education areas that detracted from successful crisis leadership as well, answering research question 1b. The focus begins around the same areas; lack of crisis events, lack of administrative support, and lack of collaborative relationships.

Higher Education Factors Detracting From Effective Crisis Leadership

While the presence of university crisis events was related to support for effective crisis leadership, conversely the opposite was also found to be a factor that detracted from effective higher education crisis leadership. The public university participants who had not experienced a university-wide crisis felt in some ways they almost needed a crisis to gain upper administrative support for crisis preparedness activities. Thomas shared this view:

One thing is it’s hard is being at a university that never really suffers a major disaster because until someone really suffers a major disaster, they don’t understand how important emergency management is. Why you need to take this
training. You can show them exercises but it’s really not the same thing until life and property are on the line for real, they don’t take this stuff serious. Yes I (think I would have more support then). I will tell you. (rt:290-295)

In addition, the lack of experiencing university-wide crisis events is believed to be one reason the public sector upper administration has not been involved in crisis preparedness activities. This leads to another factor that detracts from effective crisis leadership. Fletcher stated:

No, (the President does not provide any feedback) . . . (laughs). Our President will not, this is just not something he is interested in. However, when it goes wrong he is going to wonder why it went wrong – w hat didn’t you do . . . yada—yada. (cf: 341-343)

Without the involvement of upper administration, the collaborative structure of the crisis management team can become loosely held together, leading to power struggles, egos, and turf war issues among the group members. This lack of true collaboration is another detractive factor in establishing crisis leadership. Rosenthal (1998) explains that collaborative relationships have the potential to be shallow and inefficient without the development of trust. Several statements, including one by Mock demonstrated this disconnect.

We have some folks on our campus that are in charge of specific responsibilities and they’re super, super, enthusiastic about their work and when they arrive at a specific (crisis) situation sometimes they’d like to manage it differently and they’d like to do that through self-appointed authority rather than actual real authority. I think part of the challenge is sometimes those individuals lack some credibility on campus with regards to their expertise. (jm:335-340).

If I had a voice, I would get some of the egos off the table. I would get the real frontline management team together. We would get some absolute not leadership but regulation of our safety office and maybe some more support for our safety office. I think part of the challenge is credibility issues amongst teams. Somebody would say, “Hey look, you are the ones that really know” so it’s not adversarial it’s a partnership. I think the egos we have going on this campus are intense, crazy intense. (jm:378-383)
Trust enables participants to act together more effectively and pursue shared objectives. This fosters norms of coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit. Rawlings (2000) builds upon this by emphasizing the role of a specialized skill set or expertise in developing trust among organizational members. The collaborative members have to acquire a trust in an individual’s competencies to allow that individual to contribute and add a specialized dimension to the shared objectives and its goals. If that trust is not acquired, this can lead to people removing themselves from university crisis initiatives all together and stifling communication channels. Fletcher described this feeling:

I hope I am not coming across negative I am not trying to mean that. I want to empower people and if I am a stumbling block I am getting out of the way because I can’t be arguing that we ought to be doing it this way and someone else in authority is arguing to do it this other way. I am not going to get in that battle. Fine. You do it your way and we’ll hold you accountable for doing it your way. If you need my help, call me. I don’t want to sit there being a road block because I think I know how to do it better. [But in a real situation I would act] in a heartbeat if my students are at risk, I would take over and they will have to take me out of the room. The police chief will have to say get out you are under arrest (laughs) and he wouldn’t do that. (cf:358-366)

Until the lines of communication and collaboration are more open, deep “below the waterline” discussions will remain absent. This will detract from allowing the team to develop integrated joint solutions that lead to reciprocity and mutual accountability in the shared decisions and outcomes (Rawlings, 2000; Schrage, 1990). In addition, the issue of communication across a diverse, university-wide population was also a detracting factor from effective crisis leadership. Jenkins and George discussed this challenge:

We are a particularly decentralized university so you’ve got to get everybody on the same page and follow the same procedures. Simple things like snow emergencies for instance. It took us forever to keep tweaking a snow plan, bad weather, winter storm, what is our closing procedure? How do we go about
making that decision? How do we communicate that when you have individual schools like the law school that shut down? Now wait a second, you can’t shut down if we are not shut down so it decentralizes the challenge. Broad multifaceted community of constituents, various constituents you’ve got to deal with so there are communication challenges and they could face other types of businesses. Those are kind of tough parts. Big challenge is knowing the inventory of our people? Where are our students at any given time? Where is everybody? How do you track them all? It’s hard- so those are some of the main challenges. You know faculty could be a challenge especially tenured ones but generally they are pretty good in their support and stuff like that. (dj:281-294)

So there are some challenges there as far as intercommunication. Still communication is always a problem when you have a large area to cover, a large diverse organization like ours and then you know just resource management and knowing what we have and what is available to us . . . what we can and can’t do because those gaps are going to come into play. When we need to figure out who we need to call to help us or if we need to call someone to help us and if I don’t know them it’s a challenge. But it’s not something you can just say we are going to have this done in six weeks --to figure all this out I mean it’s taking a long time to get there. (jg:316-323)

Therefore, higher education factors found to support effective crisis leadership included the frequency of university-wide crisis events, upper administrative support, collaborative relationships, and open communication between groups. The same higher education factors, reversed, were also found to detract from effective crisis leadership: lack of experiencing any university-wide crisis events, not having upper administrative support, lack of true collaboration, and communication issues. Next, the following section answers research questions 1c and 1d which focused on aspects of training that supported and detracted from effective crisis leadership.

**Training Aspects That Support Effective Crisis Leadership**

One main training aspect that contributed to effective crisis leadership was experiential learning. This finding was not surprising, given the literature on experiential learning, and its long standing research history (Kolb, 1984; Larsen, 2004; Maslow,
One of the most popular forms of leadership development is to learn through authentic experience. There is truly no equal substitute for actual experience. Experiential learning can be defined as learning achieved through experience or learning by doing (Valkanos & Fragoulis, 2007). Given that all participants mentioned handling crisis as part of their job description and function within the university, it is logical that they have had to deal with crisis on some level. Traditionally, experiential learning takes place on the job in an authentic learning environment. As in the old apprenticeship model, this setting is more economical for the employer since the employee is already present at the organization and training can be tailored to the learning needs and capabilities of each trainee (Larsen, 2004). Mock shared his experience:

Ah . . . I have a lot of on-the-job training in fact almost all of it is based upon the experiences that I have had. You know you don’t know how to manage a student death until you manage a student death, you don’t know how to manage hysterical illness until you have dealt with hysterical illness or like right now hysterical bedbugs, we don’t have them . . . you know but everybody is reading about them so they think we have them so we are spending an enormous amount of money on that. (jm:132-137)

Given that an experiential learning environment is authentic rather than artificially created, the training is more likely to become transferred into the workplace and an integrated part of the organization (Jones, Rafferty, & Griffin, 2006). Fletcher illustrates the transferability of experiential learning.

What gives me, I think, and it’s only my own interpretation of my skills, is that I’ve gone through them. I’ve gone through situations of people committing suicide numbers of times on campuses from taking a shot gun and blowing his own head off to stabbing oneself. I have had attacks in a residents’ hall of a person’s throat being slashed and dealing with that kind of an issue, [and], of course falling off a five story rooftop. (We had) a major spring event where we had 10,000 students on campus for the event and it ended at 2:30 in the morning. A young woman who wasn’t even at the event partying, she was at home studying, wanted to go out and get something to eat got into her car . . . we had a
cop coming off the highway at a high rate of speed sirens blasting and lights flashing. This woman came up in her car and stopped. This cop is coming down with lights blazing. She saw the cop and stayed there. The cop went through, she pulled out and didn’t know there was a second cop car and he blasted that car. He must have been going 80 and killed her on the spot. There were thousands of students that saw that. So I got that crisis and we dealt with that. I have kind of seen it all. The only thing I haven’t seen is a major shooter. The training I’ve had really is because it’s on the job. I’ve gone through all those things. (cf:169-192)

While Yukl (2006) supports the finding of experiential learning, noting that it is commonly best practice to emerge personnel in real world tasks and issues, this cannot always be done. Organizations may lack time or instructive teaching opportunities. Therefore, many organizations turn to specialized types of training according to their needs. Both universities have formal training systems for crisis preparedness, focusing around scenario use. The use of these scripted, or scenario-based exercises, is commonly used for complex issues that involve specific departmental functions or the entire organization itself. Participants found these were supportive when realistic in design and implementation. Jenkins explained this aspect:

Now when you get into a real situation or a real tabletop where they act everything and it’s in real time, it gets very real. I think that’s the best sort of learning. You see how your plan works so I’d say realism and the exercises. I haven’t seen a lot of variations on natural structure of the plan. It’s really the realism because it’s typically how you react when you actually get in a situation. We have to get intense. But that is where you learn most. (dj:148-154)

The private university participants also credited overall university support in backing crisis training involvement. Jenkins discussed this support:

Now every year I . . . not by a policy, by university direction – all senior administration has to take part in at least one major tabletop per year and that’s the president and myself. I have to set that up with (the emergency manager) and me. We’ve used outside facilitators for less than four years. One major one per year. We do other lesser ones but always one major one with the whole team. Yes (there is accountability). We do an after action plan. I am largely along with the
senior administration responsible for tracking what we discover what’s wrong and making the changes and making sure the equipment is adjusted. (dj:189-197)

Having an opportunity to use the training and implement it back into the university was also a supportive factor. Thomas explained how this is beneficial.

All the people already had incident command training from levels one to four but we did an exercise and if you don’t use it all the time you lose it and one of the after action requests came out is that we need to have ICS review so we did that and we had it and now we are back to using incident command in our two home football games so far and it seems to refresh their memories and using that type of thing. Plus the NIMS training is a mandatory training and we are making sure all the emergency management personnel are having it and doing it. I will tell you for sure when we did ICS 300, two weeks later the police had to implement what they learned for the bomb threats in 2007 so I can definitely see what the training has helped what they have learned in training and what they have implemented in real response as well as implemented in exercises. (rt:117-127)

In addition, having upper administrative support to seek external training opportunities relevant to crisis leadership was also identified as a supportive factor by all participants. Bedingham (1997) notes that the overall purpose of training is not to develop a better individual (while that may be a side effect in some cases), but to increase organizational efficiency. George stated:

I am proactive enough that I realize the importance of it so maybe if I wasn’t doing it they may say hey you need to get your behind out there and get more training (you probably can’t say behind on your paper laughs . . .). So yes if it wasn’t aggressive actions on my part to standards you know I’m sure they’d recognize that in my review because you do get your employee reviews and part of it is professional development you know. Have you done anything to professionally develop yourself in the areas you work in so it’s definitely looked at by the university as far as quality improvement and employees here but for most of them I think it is a self initiating thing to really stay on top of it on their own with the exception of there are times when you get ordered to go to things (jg:176-185)

Participants were free to pursue professional development opportunities of interest, and even expected to do so as part of their job performance. Research suggests
that this type of supervisor support for training positively affects employee training motivation and transfer back into the organization (Chiaburu & Tekleab, 2005; Hughey & Mussnug, 1997; Saks & Belcourt, 2006). Thomas explained:

I guess one of the things is they allow me to attend conferences and trainings off campus or they will pay for the event. Also in the fall of 2005, they allowed me to bring in a national training for our people to participate in. It was an incident management training for command post personnel put on by ICLECA which is International College Law Enforcement Chiefs Association so that was pretty neat. They allowed me to attend training like going to conferences. The last 2 years I have been to the college and university caucuses’ international emergency management. It’s a one day seminar workshop they do. There is one in Kansas and one in Orlando, Florida. They allow me to go to training, allow me to even put on training on here at the university and give me the opportunity. (rt:189-198)

Several aspects of training were found to be supportive of effective crisis leadership. The main finding was experiential learning through campus crisis events. Other training aspects included: conducting realistic exercises, having university backing for upper administration involvement and follow through. Additionally, having an opportunity to put the training to use within the university, and university support for external crisis training activities/professional development were aspects of effective crisis leadership. All these examples are discussed and serve to answer research question 1c. Participants also noted training aspects that detracted from successful crisis leadership as well, answering research question 1d. This section begins by focusing on the lack of training accountability.

Training Aspects That Detract From Effective Crisis Leadership

A main detraction identified in crisis leadership training was the lack of mandated training. All participants mentioned the need for better accountability measures. While
the private higher education institution had upper administrative support and involvement, neither university had a structure to ensure crisis training was conducted. Jenkins discussed this problem as a training area that needs changed:

Well I think greater awareness, this is probably unrealistic, but the ability to mandate the people have sort of understanding their role, training. We have a hard time with that. It’s hard to get the word out so if we can mandate more training so the people would follow procedures or be required to know the procedures. I think it’s a way to get people all on the same page to decentralize the environment. (dj: 303-307)

As discussed in Chapter II concerning training transfer, whether considering organizational or individual success, the foundation of any training program is a commitment to and attendance at training events. The premise of shared leadership focuses around the collective synergy of skills and knowledge. Furthermore, mere seat time alone cannot produce improvement performance, but is a vital first step. As Hughey and Mussnug (1997) found, the organization needs to be committed to training goals, rather than training employees just to “check off the box” or satisfy rules and regulations. This lack of true organizational commitment was especially a concern at the public higher education institution. Neither the university President, nor the Provost were actively participating in the training process, leaving accountability measures loosely organized. Fletcher illustrated this point:

My answer has to be a qualified no (no one is in charge) because there is no one in authority over it (cf:136). It’s voluntary. It’s required but it isn’t required. What’s going to happen if you don’t take it? Nothing. (cf:142-143)

Somebody has to be (in charge) so this Provost I think is taking a little bit more interest in the running of things. I think probably we’ll get to that but the point is for me we have been without clear direction forever maybe and he has been here now fulltime since June something we are now in September in the middle of the academic year and we don’t have yet anybody formally in charge. If you are requiring training, why haven’t we required training? Why aren’t they going
through it- that kind of stuff? We are going to wait until a freaking crisis happens and then they are going to rely on something that has not been complete, it has not been effective, we have not done the training and we are going to have problems because we are going to have someone who cannot exercise judgments say screw that book this is what you need to do to get it done. (cf:343-353)

The training was required, but people were left to comply by their own choosing. Interestingly, senior administrators seemed to be a main group not completing training at the public sector institution. While they would often make sure their middle manager representatives were participating, they often declined. This became a large area of concern for the public sector university emergency manager. Thomas explained this frustration:

The Department of Education it’s highly suggested that senior administrators complete certain training. Certain NIMS training is 700 and 100. I’ve also tried to get them to have an in session class called G402 incident command for elected officials to give them some heads up about that too but there has been stalling on their part. They don’t want to do it. They believe they are too busy. They don’t want to take four hours to complete the training. They don’t want to do it online. They really don’t want to do it all. My thing is if a real emergency does occur, they are going to want to be in charge and they aren’t going to have the training to be in charge. There is going to be some real politics go down when that occurs. (rt: 279-287)

The literature argues that there is a great risk of failure in executive positions (Hogan, Curphy, & Hogan, 1994). As senior executives, many often think they are above professional development and fail to acquire necessary new skills. One explanation for failure is that executives report a lack of desire to change. Research suggests that many leaders believe that the ways they have worked in the past have resulted in their promotion to a leadership role (Jones et al., 2006). Thus, they are reluctant to change and accept new ideas, attributing their success to past behavior. Fletcher discussed having a difference in crisis training philosophy:
What you need to know I’ve basically pulled out of the (executive operations group) EOG manager position and (another vice president) thinks he should be doing it. I have looked at a couple of states, Florida for example, which the chief of police is in charge of the EOG and I thought that’s fine he can do it. I am less enthralled with how we operate our crisis anyway, our crisis team. I might be a hinderance. My philosophy versus what the rest of them are wanting to do so I am glad not to be involved with it. If they need me, they can come and get me. (cf: 207-213)

In conjunction with the idea of philosophical differences in training, participants may not complete the crisis training because they feel the training does not offer them anything additional, or is not conducted the way they believe is most salient. Many of these factors can be contributed to organizational politics and turf war issues, another detraction to effective crisis leadership. Rather than working collectively toward changing the environment, some participants choose to withdraw or challenge the training, limiting their level effort into the process. Like any investment, the decision to work entails certain risks (Randall, Cropanzano, Bormann, & Birjulin, 1999). In essence, people are careful to watch and gauge their investment efforts, often only putting into the organization what they feel they will get in return. Fletcher discussed his resistance to the process:

I think my counseling background and my higher education training has helped me and my experience has helped me as much as anything. I will tell you I have the NIMS 100, 200, 300, 400. . . . I don’t know I have three of the programs done. Not one of them has told me a damn thing about how to handle a crisis. What they’ve told me is their structure. You know we have this division, we have district, we’ve got you know your incident command system here, you’ve got your EOG (executive operations group) there so it’s all about how to do the structure. Well, they never told me what to do when the real problem happens. (cf: 106-113)

High levels of organizational politics are often associated with intent to exit, job neglect, turnover, and other self interested behaviors (Vigoda, 2000). These behaviors
emotionally disconnect the employee from investing back into the organization, keeping
the employee locked on self interest, rather than working toward the collective good of
the organization. This element is arguably the most important aspect of the training
transfer model. Several participants seemed to place more of their energy and investment
on fighting the training process, rather than working to make it better for the organization
as a whole. Mock illustrated the principle of training focused away from the organization
goal of crisis preparation:

If you don’t define the desired outcome you are too caught up and then . . . we
have to do this . . . and only this person has to arrive before we can do this . . . and
this station needs to be set up here. Something gets lost along the way. I think
those types of training, those types of protocols that were developed were
developed by people who were used to working in those types of environments
and expect to be working with those people from those types of environments and
when that doesn’t happen we have some significant challenges. I’m sure I have
almost bitten off somebody’s head when they said . . . well that’s not what the
protocol is and I’m sure they (looked around) just like what are these people
doing? There are some people I would duct tape in a room and push them out of
the way so we could help the students and you have that on tape and I don’t care
what the secretary says. (jm:171-182)

Pfeffer (1981) further states that organizational politics involve activities to
acquire, develop, and use power and other resources to obtain one’s preferred outcome
when there is a disagreement. With the focus being on individual gains, less attention is
given to collaboration on organizational goals. The workplace becomes an egocentric
atmosphere. This atmosphere breeds other types of negative behaviors detrimental to
collaborative efforts and organizational crisis leadership success. Mock illustrated how
power works in university crisis situations:

So it’s not you know uncommon in the political world for some of us that carry
slightly bigger sticks to swing with them sometimes. Also you know is where
those lines that are written in protocol books are helpful but sometimes you have
to have mutiny on the bounty to have things work. So there is some rank pulling. (jm:344-347)

Another inter-related detraction to effective crisis leadership discussed specifically was lack of realism in training. While this corresponds with politics, and the idea that the training does not apply, it was a separate finding supported by both higher education institutions and mentioned by all participants. Jenkins and George both illustrate this aspect:

I have had some trouble with some of the, what would you call it, play acting and role playing or simulation because some of it gets a little goofy. (dj:138-140)

Well what I’d like to see more in training is more real world examples. I mean a lot of times I think they build training around hypothetical things when there is certainly enough real world crisis’s . . . they tend to put hypothetical’s instead of building on people’s experiences which I think are lot more valuable and I understand that sometimes it’s hard to use people as examples because it feels like you are selecting them specifically or targeting them and saying oh this is what you did wrong and this is what you did wrong but really it is the most valuable thing you can do. It helps put things into perspective to people especially if they don’t believe something could happen to them. You know if you take five examples of that in your training class and say these are five real world examples of what we’re learning today that have happened so it kind of helps a lot with that. I’m big on the whole real world training stuff and not so much always hypothetical scenarios. (jg:131:143)

While tailoring the crisis training to realism, and designing the training to be more applicable to the participants is a vital step toward getting buy in for the crisis training process, the literature argues that the bottom line still leads back to supervisor and organizational support. This was the first training aspect discussed, found to detract from effective crisis leadership. Work by Thomas and Ganster (1995) found that organizational supportive practices, namely flexible scheduling and supportive supervisors, increased employee perceptions of control over their own lives, thus lowering their perceptions of organizational politics. Therefore, one of the main factors in curbing the politics involved
in crisis training (a found detraction) is having supervisor support (lacking in the findings).

Therefore, while several aspects of training were found to be supportive of effective crisis leadership: experiential learning, conducting realistic exercises, having university backing for upper administration involvement and follow through, having an opportunity to put the training to use within the university, and university support for external crisis training activities/ professional development, several of these issues were also found to be detracting factors in answering research question 1d. Training aspects found to detract from successful crisis leadership included: lack of training accountability/ overall lack of support, lack of senior administration completing the training, the role of organizational politics, and the lack of training realism.

Implications for Higher Education

This research suggests findings that both support and detract from effective crisis leadership practices, focused around higher educational aspects, and training aspects. As outlined in Chapter II, the context of higher education adds to the complexity of preparing for crisis events. As discussed by Drysdale, Modzeleski and Simmons (2010), many higher education institutions are composed of many buildings, often have large classrooms, separate faculty by department, have more uncontrolled access and egress, and have more irregular scheduling. These issues separate students from faculty and also faculty from each other throughout the day. Unlike more closely integrated environments, communication becomes fragmented. Therefore, the structure and design of a university campus becomes an underlying challenge to even begin crisis
preparedness activities. At the top of this challenge lay the issues discussed in the research findings.

While Cohen and March (1974) studied 46 college and university presidents concluding that organizational success and failure were largely outside of their control, the findings from this study suggest that they can still have influence on contributing processes. Since collaboration is at the foundation of any successful shared leadership process, this must first be achieved to build a successful crisis leadership process. Without top administration actively supporting the university crisis leadership process, appears to be destined to fail from the onset. While the higher education institution lacking this support in the research remained loosely organized, the direction and authority necessary to make crisis leadership a top organizational priority is absent. Therefore, many senior executives did not feel it is a top organizational priority for them, simply because the organization has not made crisis leadership a clear goal. Without clear organizational direction, and top administrative involvement, the process can get lost in organizational politics and philosophical differences.

One finding that supported the organizational goal of crisis preparedness was the frequency of university crisis events. Participants believed crisis events fueled administrative support, and conversely, the absence of crisis events kept the administration from being involved. Therefore, in an ironic way the research suggests that the catalyst for obtaining administrative support for university crisis leadership processes may well be a crisis. Using these dissertation findings, a crisis leadership model is proposed for the system of higher education. The Higher Education Crisis Leadership Practical Process Model will be further examined and explained.
According to Figure 7, the Higher Education Crisis Leadership Practical Process Model consists of five distinct actions that were found to support effective crisis leadership. These include top administrative support and involvement, training accountability/mandate structure, gathering of baseline information/ recognition of crisis differentiation, involving motivated participants/ gathering training voice and process ownership, and designing training around diverse crisis/participant areas of concern. Each of these actions are further discussed.

The first action of the process cycle is to ensure top administrative support and involvement into the crisis leadership involvement. The findings suggest that it is not
only necessary to have “the blessing” of top administration, but also have unit leadership actively involved in taking ultimate authority and accountability of the crisis leadership system. In this role, top administration should provide process feedback and monitor follow up actions.

This relates to the second aspect of the model training accountability or mandate structures. Politically, if the top administrators are involved, the accountability of other participants may automatically increase due to visibility. However, some form of accountability needs to be emphasized for participants. Those that are expected to make the necessary crisis decisions need to be the ones participating and functioning in the crisis leadership activities.

The third consideration includes gathering baseline information and recognizing crisis differentiation. This is especially important when working with a higher education institution that has not experienced a true crisis. Findings suggested the participants had different perspectives regarding the crisis distinction, and this may not be apparent at the onset of the crisis leadership process. Participant perspectives on crisis, as well as their own needs/ concerns should be fully understood and communicated before training is designed or conducted. The absence of this baseline information can lead to confusion regarding training purpose and applicability to the participant’s role in the overall crisis leadership system. This process is related to the selection of participants, gathering voice, and process ownership.

If possible, participants should have an interest in the area of crisis leadership, not be forced to participate. However, depending on the skill set and expertise required to properly manage a crisis incident, it may be understood that forced participation may be
necessary. Therefore, it is even more important to discuss their participation, and gather their training needs for better applicability and training transfer. Having participants acknowledge the purpose of the crisis leadership process is vital to establishing the collaborative foundation of authentic shared leadership.

Lastly, the training should be designed around the needs of both the higher education environment and the participants. The findings suggest that participants did not fully understand the training purpose or its applicability to their role specifically. Additionally, participants felt the training was more focused on securing and protecting buildings and structure versus focusing on the students, staff, and faculty. Therefore, the training purpose, goals, and objectives must be articulated clearly and written with diverse needs in mind. This point demonstrates that the crisis leadership cycle must also include a loop of communication and feedback into all process areas (communication and feedback process points).

Conclusions and Implications for Future Research

Leadership research has evolved from examining the traits, behaviors, and contexts of leaders and leadership into more current theories and perspectives focusing on collaboration and shared leadership structures (Bass et al., 2003; Bass & Stedlmeier, 1999; Boin & t’ Hart, 2003; Kruse & Louis, 2009; Pfeffer, 1977; Vroom & Jago, 2007; Yukl, 1999). While each of these theories has moved the body of leadership research forward, few studies have examined the collective process or system of leadership qualitatively, especially concerning crisis leadership. This research examined the system and process of crisis leadership in two higher education institutions, and while some
findings coincided with the literature base, other findings present new paths for examination.

Examining the crisis leadership system within higher education institutions is a dynamic environment. The design of a traditional higher education institution itself represents many challenges in crisis. Decentralized buildings, functions, and personnel add to the complexity of crisis preparedness. While the process of crisis leadership has to be a shared process given the complexities involved in higher education, there still needs to be a clear leader responsible for overseeing the crisis leadership process. Without this clear oversight and direction, the crisis team remains loosely organized. Self interested organizational politics increase, pushing the true focus of organizational betterment further out of sight. While experiencing a crisis can curb these politics and place the focus back on protecting students and staff, this is an uncontrolled factor. Therefore, the process of crisis leadership needs to remain applicable and valuable to the participants through increased communication and process feedback.

While it is important to note that all of the research participants conveyed a strong sense of caring, some failed to recognize those aspects in their colleagues. Every participant interviewed shared an authentic sense of organizational commitment, and the determination to do what “is best” for the university and students despite politics. The foundational underpinning of crisis leadership is present at both universities; it just needs to be further communicated in some cases to put the focus back on the organization, not the individuals.

More research is needed to strengthen the study findings. The participant group was composed of all Caucasian males. Diversifying the participant group, in both gender
and race would gain additional perspectives. In addition, the research should go further and possibly consist of interviews from all university personnel involved in a crisis leadership team. While the private sector higher education institution displayed a unified perspective in its crisis system, the question remains if this would have still held true to the same strength if more interviews were conducted. Several factors emerged in the research that should be examined further.

These peripheral findings include: the differentiation in crisis as defined by the participants, student versus structure perspective as training focus, philosophical training differences in participants, the role/voice of university presidents, motivation for training participation/selection process, and other communication and organizational barriers to effective crisis leadership processes. While crisis leadership has called for more qualitative measures (Conger, 1999), quantitative analysis could also be used to measure the variables discovered in survey form for statistical analysis allowing for more generalized research results on larger scale sample size formulas.

It is understood that researchers have their own preferred methodologies and the qualitative approach in this dissertation was purposeful. Years of research have shown that we still do not know exactly what to measure when it comes to crisis leadership. It is a moving target. Participants needed a voice and needed to be asked since the relevant factors could not be pinpointed in the literature. It is hoped that this research has sparked interest in higher education crisis leadership and that these future recommendations are expanded upon by other scholars, using both qualitative and quantitative methodologies—especially since so many lives depend on the vital system of higher education living and learning each day.
REFERENCES


APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

You are invited to participate in a Doctoral Dissertation research study being conducted by Stacy Willett (Associate Professor of Emergency Management and Doctoral Candidate) from The University of Akron, Akron, Ohio.

This project focuses on various aspects of crisis and emergency management, including leadership and training issues as well as perceptions and recommendations for future best practices.

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to take part in a focused interview at a convenient time and place for you. The interview should take less than an hour of your time. Participation in this interview is completely voluntary. If you do not wish to participate in this project, you may withdraw at any time.

Your confidentiality will be protected throughout this study. Any audiotapes of interviews and other data obtained from you will be kept confidential and will not be viewed outside of the researcher and dissertation advisor. All audiotapes will be retained in a locked office and erased after the completion of the project.

There are no anticipated benefits or risks to you as a participant, aside from helping to have a better understanding of crisis and emergency management practices.

If you have any questions about this research project, you can reach Stacy Willett at 330-972-7795. If you have any questions concerning your rights as a subject, please call the University of Akron IRB office at 330-972-7666.

Thank you for your participation!

I consent to participate in this interview project:

Name _________________________________ Date __________________________

I consent to be audio taped for this project:

Name _________________________________ Date __________________________
APPENDIX B

IRB EXEMPTION LETTER

Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs
Akron, OH 44325-2102
(330) 972-7866 Office
(330) 972-5261 Fax

July 12, 2007

Stacy Willett
Public Service Technology
The University of Akron
Akron, Ohio 44325-4304

Ms. Willett:

Your protocol entitled "Crisis Management Dissertation" was determined to be exempt from IRB review on July 12, 2007. The IRB application number assigned to this project is 20070707. The protocol represents minimal risk to subjects and matches the following federal category for exemption:

☐ Exemption 1 - Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices.

☒ Exemption 2 - Research involving the use of educational tests, survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior.

☐ Exemption 3 - Research involving the use of educational tests, survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior not exempt under category 2, but subjects are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office.

☐ Exemption 4 - Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens.

☐ Exemption 5 - Research and demonstration projects conducted by or subject to the approval of department or agency heads, and which are designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine public programs or benefits.

☐ Exemption 6 - Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies.

Annual continuation applications are not required for exempt projects. If you make changes to the study's design or procedures that increase the risk to subjects or include activities that do not fall within the approved exemption category, please contact the IRB to discuss whether or not a new application must be submitted. Any such changes or modifications must be reviewed and approved by the IRB prior to implementation.

Please retain this letter for your files. If the research is being conducted for a master's thesis or doctoral dissertation, the student must file a copy of this letter with the thesis or dissertation.

Sincerely,

Sharon McManter
Associate Director

☒ Approved consent form attached

Cc: Sharon Kruse, Advisor
Rosalie Hall, IRB Chair

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