

Homeland Security Academic Programs and Initiatives

At

The University of Central Missouri

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The University of Central Missouri has a long and rich history of academic programming in the areas now commonly grouped under the broad heading; Homeland Security. That history is outlined herein along with a summary of current activities.

In the late 1960s Safety emerged as a program focus at UCM. The impetus for this came from several different programs then in place on the campus. These included fire science, industrial safety, criminal justice and law enforcement training, driver's education, industrial hygiene; nursing, transportation safety, and industrial security. These programs, and others, were combined into a School of Public Service with both an academic component and an outreach/extension component.

Over time the administrative structures shifted and program emphasis changed. Today the academic elements are in the departments of:

Safety Science

- Fire science

- Occupational Safety

- Industrial Hygiene

- Industrial Security

Criminal Justice (includes the National Police Academy which conducts initial certification training for Missouri law enforcement personnel)

Nursing

Aviation (aviation safety)

The primary outreach activities are housed in:

Missouri Safety Center

- Law Enforcement Training

- Driver Education

- Traffic Safety

The academic programs include both undergraduate and graduate programs. At the undergraduate level the fire science and industrial security programs are offered as minor concentrations only. The other options are offered as major concentrations that may be adjusted to meet the individual student interests. UCM also offers Masters Programs in Occupational Safety, Industrial Hygiene, Criminal Justice and Nursing with various concentrations available.

In the fall of 2001 the university undertook to expand these programs offerings to include greater breadth and depth. As part of that effort UCM did the following:

Developed and implemented a new undergraduate program in Crisis and Disaster Management. The initial full set of course offerings took place in the spring of 2002. The core courses are offered on-line using the blackboard instructional platform.

Signed a training contract with the Missouri State Emergency Management Agency for the delivery of professional development training to Missouri first responders and emergency managers. Areas of program emphasis include:

- Weapons of Mass Destruction Awareness and Response

- Incident Command System

- National Incident Management System/National Response System

- Missouri Emergency Information Resource System

Developed additional academic programs with a specific emphasis on graduate certificate programming;

- Geographic Information Systems

- Homeland Security Studies (in process)

 - Criminal Justice

 - Geography

 - Agriculture

 - Political Science

 - Crisis and Disaster Management

 - Communications Studies

Developed the Rural Emergency Management Institute as an outreach and research unit

The lessons learned from the efforts and activities of the last seven years include:

Homeland Security academic programming is by definition interdisciplinary especially at the undergraduate level. There are several potential disciplinary anchors for such a program. However, to anchor the student in a specific discipline can, depending on the structure of an institution's undergraduate programs, seriously restrict the depth and breadth of a student's preparation. The biggest challenge is in fact to develop the right mix of courses to promote appropriate depth and

breadth. And, it is important to allow considerable program flexibility to accommodate student interests and the frequently shifting needs of potential employers. It is important that students exit such programs with specific credentials/skills.

Homeland Security at the graduate level focuses, usually, on one of two goals; re-credentialing or updating existing skills. The former involves people moving from other fields into homeland security. These students are typically already professionals and are looking to acquire new skills. The latter involves people currently in the field who seek to strengthening/up-dating existing credentials, typically these students are already working in the homeland security field and are looking to up-date and/or expand existing skill sets.

For both groups of students certificates seem to provide a better route to their educational goal for several reasons. Certificates are typically fewer hours than degree programs and thus usually more focused. However, to build academic programming around certificates raises issues about admissions processes and standards; at UCM we have generally attempted to adhere to the same process and standards for graduate degree programs and certificate programs. This makes it somewhat easier to address the other major issue raised by certificates; how does the institution treat work toward a certificate when half way through the program the student decides to actually pursue a degree. By structuring the certificate process so that it is indistinguishable from the academic degree process (except in number of hours required for completion) it is less likely that unqualified or marginal students will be able to use the graduate certificate as a back door to a graduate degree.

Program accessibility is another important issue for both undergraduate and graduate programs, especially for a regional university. If we are targeting our graduate programs at serving professionals those programs have to be accessible to working students. This basically means they cannot be campus bound, or exclusively campus bound. Since we are located on a relatively rural campus removed from major population areas we have emphasized the use of distance learning in the delivery of homeland security programs, or at least we have attempted to. We have specifically used interactive television and on-line instruction sometimes mixed with more traditional delivery models. We also offer traditional programs on the campus in Warrensburg.

One of the reasons we focused on graduate as opposed to undergraduate programs is our decision to target serving professionals as the primary audience. As we looked at how to put together the offerings it became clear that delivery of on-line undergraduate degrees at a distance presented several problems which we were not ready to address (general education, admissions and advising, graduation, etc, all delivered at a distance). Graduate programs offered a more compact and focused approach that was frankly easier to manage.

The University of Central Missouri certainly does not view the process of developing and implementing homeland security programs as complete. The international studies program is still in-process as is the interdisciplinary certificate in Homeland Security Studies. We are also considering other program possibilities. In addition the prospects for partnering with other post-secondary institutions and with the private sector need to be explored. Finally, we need to look at the possibilities

presented by new technologies such as our digital television station. UCM anticipates the program emphasis on homeland security will continue well into the future.