

ABSTRACT

**An Evaluation of the State of Preparedness of the Mona Campus,
Of the University of the West Indies, Jamaica,
To cope with Disaster Situations**

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The Mona Campus of the University of the West Indies is located within a hazard prone and one of the most environmentally sensitive cities in the world. The Mona area itself, is predisposed to the effects of a variety of hazards due to a combination of geological, geographic and man-made factors. This investigation assessed the adequacy of administrative decisions and operational actions undertaken by the institution in response to identified hazards.

Keywords: Mark A. Allen; Disaster Preparedness; Mona Campus, University of the West Indies

Sustained involvement of Department/Unit Heads and other *Key Personnel** was considered to be fundamental to the attainment of effective Disaster Preparedness. The extent of their awareness and commitment to disaster preparedness was determined through the use of a structured questionnaire and Key Informant interviews.

The risk for fires also received particular scrutiny and the Direct Point Allocation Method facilitated an assessment of Fire Safety Provisions.

Data gathered from the aforementioned activities, considered in concert with preparedness activities routinely undertaken on campus, were used as a proxy measure of the posture of the University towards its stewardship and custodial responsibilities.

An urgent need for comprehensive disaster preparedness planning was identified, a deficiency reflected not only in the organization's modest efforts towards preparedness but also in the absence of a positive disaster preparedness culture. Respondents' attitude towards and awareness of disaster related issues were demonstrated to be independent of the duration of their tenure at the university and of their job positions. A significant association was demonstrated however, between the receipt of disaster training and the attitude of respondents towards disaster preparedness ($p = .04$).

* See Operational Definitions @ page xiv

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An unacceptable scenario prevails, one in which the potential for inimical impacts on personnel, infrastructure and functioning of the institution in the event of disaster situations, is substantial.

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