Homeland Security/Defense Certificate Program Review

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CENTER FOR HOMELAND SECURITY

Program Review Objectives

- What constitutes bona fide professional education [in homeland security & emergency management] and where is it found? (McCreight, 2009)

- The efficacy of the information provided in the program must be both dynamic and constantly tested through rigorous program evaluation (Pelfrey & Pelfrey, 2009).

- To evaluate the UCCS HSHD certificate program to facilitate the development of curriculum and a discipline in HS.

- Methodology: Based on Retrospective Pretest-Posttest Model (Pelfrey & Pelfrey, 2009).

Certificates

Graduate in Homeland Defense

- Developed in conjunction with UCCS-School of Public Affairs, NPS & US NORTHCOM in 2004

  – 4 course, 12 CR program, School of Public Affairs

  – Intro to Homeland Defense

  – Interagency Relationships

  – Understanding the Threat

  – Protection of Critical Infrastructure

Undergraduate in Homeland Security

- Modeled after Graduate Cert in HD primarily for Ft. Carson personnel

  – 3 course, 9 CR program (SPA)

  – Public Administration & Homeland Security

  – Understanding Terrorism

  – Intro to First Responder Organizations

Evaluation Components

- Basic demographics

- Evaluation of course content

- Evaluation of course objectives against assumed standards

- Application of education to current job or employment opportunities & Personal Skill Enhancement

- General comments

- Overall satisfaction of program

Demographics

N = 70

Completed Certificate	60%
Age Groups	
25 and under	1%
26-35	13%
36-45	38%
46-55	41%
56+	7%
Previous Education	
Bachelor's Degree	84%
Master's Degree	73%
Doctorate	5%
Employment	
Military	36%
Government	41%
Private	16%
Emergency Service	1%
Other (Non-Profit, Self-employed)	6%
Employment Level	
Executive	11%
Managerial	54%
Administrative	10%
Technical	25%

Course Content

- 27 parameters to include:

  - Defining HSHD terms, implications in public administration, relevance to specific HS and/or NORTHCOM objectives, graduate student skill development, instructor performance, applicability of learning to job, and applicability of course to overall HSHD education in field.

- Responses ranked: *Poor, Fair, Good, Very Good, Excellent*

  - ***Poor or Fair:*** *None*

  - ***Good***: security & civil liberties exploration, all-hazards response, risk management issues.

Course Content (*cont…*)

– **Very Good**: Definitions & historical context; Roles of DHS directorates & agencies, & US NORTHCOM; Defining governmental responsibilities in HSHD (law & policy issues); critical infrastructure & key resources; Addressing issues of public policy; Incorporating a relevant body of literature; Enhanced listening, strategizing & critical thinking skills; Preparing for effective leadership in HSHD community.

– **Excellent**: Defining threats, terrorism, roles of government agencies & legislation; Exploring preparedness & response issues; Developing skills for scholarly discussion, debate, & influential involvement in HSHD community; Relevance of assignments & course materials; Instructor knowledge & performance; applicability of learning to current job.

What Employers Want (based on AAR, Workshop on National Needs, 2007)

- Across 12 standards defined as imperative to knowledge and skill base of HSHD professionals

  - *Good*: Espousing DHS vision & building resiliency; Duty to embody respect, dignity & accountability in honor of America's liberty, democracy & diversity; Creating innovative opportunities to enhance HS efforts & foster creativity; Promoting vigilance & safeguarding against threats; Protecting Constitutional rights & American values; Promoting trust & collaborative relationships across sectors in building a layer of defense & resilience; Applying risk management toward vulnerabilities, threats & most significant consequences; Fostering a culture of preparedness across a broad range of challenges; Capitalizing on emerging technologies.

  - *Excellent*: Emergency management all-hazards approach & effective response capabilities.

Application to Current Job or Employment Opportunities & Personal Skill Enhancement

- Job Ranking: *Not at all improved through Significantly improved (4 pt scale)*

  - ***Slightly Improved:*** Application of skills to current job

  - ***Moderately Improved:*** Job responsibilities, promotional opportunities, & competitiveness in job market.

  - 28% reported a moderate increase in job interviews specific to HSHD field

- Skill Ranking: *Not at all improved through Significantly improved (4 pt scale)*

  - ***Not at All Improved:*** Technology & technical aspects of planning, budgeting & project management

  - ***Slightly Improved:*** Communication, critical thinking & analytical skills; scientific procedures, research & writing skills; knowledge of specific fields (cyber, business, law enforcement, criminal justice).

Personal Skill Enhancement (*cont…*)

- ***Moderately Improved:*** Understanding of literature & reading, interpretation & discussion of large amounts of material; Ability to work well with federal, state, local & tribal agencies; application of learning to real-world problems; knowledge of emergency management, intelligence principles, risk management & international considerations.

- ***Significantly Improved:*** HSHD policy documents (National Strategy, NRF, NIMS); fundamentals of HSHD.

General Comments

- ***Most effective component:*** Depth & breadth of material; Instructor knowledge, respect & willingness to explore issues further; interaction with HSHD practitioners; multidisciplinary approach; "really grasping" the fundamentals of HSHD.

- ***Least effective component:*** Lack of relevant literature for interagency issues; emphasis on research – would like more real-world projects; complicated approach to critical infrastructure protection (business model).

- ***Relevance to State & Local HS issues:*** Projects were beneficial & allowed for real-world application; Challenges in information sharing through all levels of government were explained well.

Recommendations for Improvement

- Want to see Bachelor's, Master's & Ph.D.'s emerge

- Increase discussion on issues of health & public policy

- Establish strong academic standards across HSHD discipline

- Instructors strengthen facilitation vs lecture style of teaching

- Field trips

- Offer career placement or assistance in HSHD field

- Develop senior executive webinars on HSHD topics

- Need more applicable textbooks

Biggest Challenges in HSHD Today

- Stronger need for SMEs

- Cyber policy & education

- Networking & interagency communication

- Establishing the educational foundation & standards of learning

- Sustainability of a career in HSHD

- Funding shortfalls & prioritizing resources

- Making it "real" & personal for the average American

Overall Impressions

Program well-received

Program covered elements of HSHD & its evolution over the years well

Desire to focus on HSHD as an academic discipline with appropriate degrees available

Stronger literature base needed (comprehensive texts)

Research needed

Limitations

- Evaluated across all courses combined

  – Limited identification of each course's effectiveness

- Questions were more evaluative over entire time – resembling a satisfaction survey.

  – Lacked methodological approach to evaluate retrospectively with empirical intensity

Implications or Questions for Future Research

- Apply more rigor to evaluate each course independently.

- Implement evaluative tool for maintaining accreditation.

- What job "types" might be promoted with education specific to HS?

- How does a standardized curriculum factor in the multi- & cross-disciplinary nature of HS education? Is it too broad, too general, specific enough to HS issues?

- What are the developmental processes for implementing HS study at the K-12 level?

- How do we answer: "Does HS represent a discipline, a field of study, or some other academic entity" (Pelfrey & Pelfrey, 2009).

Are we teaching what we should be teaching?

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QUESTIONS?

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