 Continuity Planning

- We are required by State law and by UT System policy (UTS) 172 to have continuity of operation plans in place to insure continued operations of all of our critical functions in case of a natural disaster, electrical outage, system failure, etc.

- Continuity, during times of unplanned events, is a key responsibility of each of our jobs at UT Dallas. Continuity Planning ensures that the services we deliver are addressed during an emergency and that we have the least amount of disruption to the lives and schedules of students, faculty and staff. An effective and executable plan requires input from faculty, researchers and staff.
Click on the link below, or copy and paste the link to watch the California Earthquake video: (you may also type the link on your browser exactly as it shows).

https://youtu.be/AVCKz1HsYuY
Authority

A. Federal
- NFPA 72 Annex E Mass Notification Systems
- National Response Framework
- National Incident Management System (NIMS)

B. State of Texas
- Texas Administrative Code Title 1 Part 10 Chapter 202 Subchapter C Rule §202.74
- Texas Executive Order Rick Perry (RP) 57
- Texas Department of Information Resources: Business Continuity Planning Guidelines December 2004

C. The University of Texas System (UT System)
- University of Texas System (UTS)172-Emergency Management
Goals of Continuity Planning

- The goal of continuity planning is to reduce the consequence of any disruptive event to a manageable level (e.g. reduce disruption, resume services- teaching, grading, exams, research, public service, achieve a timely recovery, and minimize financial loss). Any hazards may impact the following:
  - **Space**: Damage to or loss of primary facility classrooms, labs, offices.
  - **Infrastructure**: Loss of data, IT, power, water, sewer, networks, phones.
  - **People**: Loss of employees- faculty, staff, students.
  - **Equipment**: Computers, microscopes.
  - **Funds**: Income stream, research grants.

- The word “business” in business continuity planning refers to the core mission of our institution: teaching, research, and public service.
Continuity Planning Process

- Appoint a departmental continuity planning coordinator.
- Create a continuity planning group (e.g. upper and middle managers, assistant deans, directors, faculty and researchers).
- Decide the number of plans needed (e.g. one for entire department or school, or for each unit).
- Identify critical functions, services and personnel, (e.g. classroom and lab scheduling, paying employees, purchasing, testing and grading posting).
  - Develop alternate procedures
  - Document critical contact information and procedures
  - Conduct drills and exercises
Who Should Be in the Planning Group?

- Upper and middle managers: assistant deans, assistant directors, your departmental HR and IT managers, building coordinators, etc. These are people who have access to the dean or department head and who understand how the organization operates.

- Keep the group size manageable.

- Faculty input is essential. Try to enlist at least a couple of faculty and researchers into your group.
The group will typically meet & discuss, with little-or-no “homework.”

The coordinator will operate The UT Dallas’ Continuity Planning Tool, often right at the meetings using a projector. Alternatively, the coordinator can provide the group with the printed plan (which includes all entries-to-date) for discussion.

On occasion, the coordinator or someone else may interview a key manager or do a bit of research, but even the coordinator’s role should not require a heavy time commitment.
Deciding Which Functions are Critical

- First, identify all the normal functions your unit performs.

- Second, determine if any of the normal functions are critical:
  - A normal function is “critical” if that function must be restarted during the first 30 days post-disaster, in order to enable teaching or research to restart.

- Next, identify any extraordinary functions your unit performs:
  - These are things we would not normally do, but which the crisis demands of us.
Processes are the steps needed to accomplish a function. For example, the function “provide meals for residents of university housing” is accomplished through the processes of “buying food, food storage, cooking, serving, and cleanup”.

We focus on major functions because processes are too specific and detailed for our level of planning.
How Long Does it Take to Create a Continuity Plan?

- Think of this as roughly a four to six weeks project. Most of the first week will be “white space” waiting for meetings to happen and people to come to agreements on priorities and action items.

- The number of actual staff hours required is surprisingly small, because The UT Dallas’ Continuity Planning Tool uses a "fill in the blanks" process.
What’s in the Plan?

- Planning Assumptions
- Critical Functions
- Vital Records and Databases
- Dependencies
- Succession Planning
- Recovery Time Objective (RTO)

- Communications
- Attachments
  - Mutual Aid Agreements
  - Policies and Procedures
  - Phone trees
Recovery Time Objective (RTO)

- Used to prioritize critical functions.
- Based on maximum allowable downtime:
  - Determine the RTO for your critical function.
  - Consider:
    - Peak times.
    - Legal, financial, contractual and regulatory factors.
Revising and Updating

- Continuity planning is a process, not a project
- Review and update plans regularly
- Maintain continuity readiness:
  - Train key personnel
  - Conduct periodic continuity exercises
  - Institute a continuous process to ensure the plan continues to be updated as necessary
Things to Think About

Administration

- *Access to buildings*: Depending on the situation you may be unable to enter your building for an extended period of time.
- *Locating temporary space*: Administration will work closely with the effected departments to locate alternative space on campus, bring in temporary buildings, or lease space off campus.
- *Computing infrastructure*: Take steps to backup data and make plans for recovering your own servers and applications.
- *Contacting your staff (phone trees)*: Each department should keep its own emergency contact list.
- *Care of staff and Temporary staffing*: Departments should seek guidance from HRM when uncertain how to act in these matters—both before a disaster and after it.
Things to Think About, Cont.

Teaching

• Develop & embed alternate modes of teaching (Distance learning technology).
• Prioritize courses for time when fewer classrooms may be available (list all high priority courses).
• Use same course materials for different sections of a course (so instructors can sub for each other).
• Exams: guidelines for use of take-home exams, term papers, and online exams.
• Resolve issues relating to continuance of financial aid when students are forced to lower their course load.
Things to Think About, Cont.

Teaching, Cont.

- Grades: guidelines for maintenance of grade records & calculation of grades during periods of duress.
- Communication strategy for rapidly notifying instructors, students and staff about alternative instruction modes.
- Develop additional technology tools for instruction, for laboratory courses, for administering of exams.
- Electronic archive (webcasts) of high-priority courses.
- Departments develop plans for substitution instructors for high-priority courses when needed.
Things to Think About, Cont.

Research

- Keep good records for replacement/reimbursement.
- Plan for relocation or consolidation of lab space.
- Duplicate storage of records, materials, specimens.
- Maintain inventory of freezers.
- Bolt-and-brace lab equipment.
- Hold advance discussions with research sponsors.
- Develop relationships with other universities & corporate partners.
Assumptions we make about what the campus will do after a disaster?

Here are some reasonable assumptions:

- **Access to buildings:** If campus officials have reason to suspect that a building is hazardous to enter, they will immediately close the building and call in trained inspectors. In the worst case (a major tornado with many buildings damaged), the inspection process alone could take weeks, with hazmat cleanup and repairs taking much longer. You may be unable to enter your building for an extended period of time.

- **Locating temporary space:** Administration will work closely with the effected departments to locate alternative space on campus, bring in temporary buildings, or lease space off campus.

- **Computing infrastructure:** Restoration of our many centrally supported IT applications will be of highest priority after any disruption. This includes email, internet, Galaxy, Orion, Gemini, payroll, and many other applications, as well as the physical campus data network. Definite predictions of IT resources impacted are not possible. Within your unit, you should be taking steps to backup data and make plans for recovering your own servers and applications.
Assumptions we make about what the campus will do after a disaster, Cont.

- **Communication protocol:** General communications with students, faculty, staff and the public will be handled by the Communications Office, and will be tightly managed so that messages are consistent. As your unit resumes functioning, communications of an operational nature will be your responsibility.

- **Contacting your staff:** This will be a departmental responsibility. Each school or department should keep its own emergency contact lists.

- **Care of staff:** Many staff issues arise during disaster recovery: pay, temporary leave, temporary alterations of assignment, safety, benefits, layoffs, work-at-home, stress, and family issues. You should assume that the Office of Human Resources Management (HRM) will be available with guidance and mechanisms to assist departments in these complex areas. Conversely, departments should seek guidance from HRM when uncertain how to act in these matters—both before a disaster and after it.

- **Temporary staffing:** Mechanisms will be available (via HRM and Procurement Management) for hiring temporary staff and for redeploying existing staff. Available staff that are less critical to your operation may be redeployed elsewhere.
Recommendations

- Develop a student orientation program in which all students are taught the technology tools which are used to deliver classes online.
- Encourage all students to use the course management system, web conferencing for discussions, access to course syllabus, etc.
- Assure that students are experienced with the technology before an emergency occurs.
- Faculty members need to be facile with the technology before the crisis occurs.
- One time trainings just don’t do the job.
Recommendations, Cont.

- Daily use of the e-learning, web conferencing, and related technologies.
- Build the tools into the class – blend some portion of your classes.
- Use the electronic tools regularly – they are efficient, less expensive, and green.
- Try blending at least a portion of your classes so students and faculty members build electronic rapport.
- Build relationship with faculty members at other institutions – use virtual guest lectures.
Resources

- Continuity Planning

- UT Dallas’ Continuity Planning Tool
  [https://utdallas.kuali.co/](https://utdallas.kuali.co/)

- California Earthquake Video
  [https://youtu.be/AVCKz1HsYuY](https://youtu.be/AVCKz1HsYuY)
Business Services Can Help You With
Continuity Planning, Facilities Inventory & Records Retention

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