

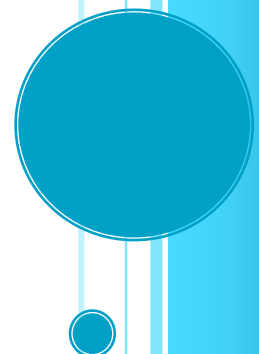
ASFPM HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE STATUS REPORT

Annual Conference—Grand Rapids, Michigan (2016)



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2015-2016

Introduction and Goals

The mission of the Higher Education Committee is to promote flood risk management curriculum within institutions of higher learning. Many universities teach floodplain management related courses, but these courses reside in a wide variety of independent departments and degree programs. There are no comprehensive flood risk reduction programs. With our most frequent and costly disasters being flood related, with more than 22,000 communities participating in the National Flood Insurance Program and where federal law requires designated floodplain administrators, there is need and demand for degree programs.

In 2014 and 2015, we were able to establish a Bachelors of Interdisciplinary Studies with Floodplain Management Concentration at Western Kentucky University, and a Master of Infrastructure Planning and Management Floodplain Management Option at the University of Washington (Seattle).

The University of Washington program was restructured in 2015 to include two two-week summer resident programs and extending over 24 months. The previous year's curriculum called for two four-week summer sessions and the programs possible to complete within 18 months. Both the original program and the restructuring did not receive sufficient interest and it appears that the program will require a third attempt a reorganization. One of the difficulties encountered is that few organizations appear willing to send employees to UW for the summer element of the degree program. We are exploring the possibility of offering the face-to-face portion of the program on-site at some of the larger flood control districts or water resources companies.

The WKU program is a Bachelors of Interdisciplinary Studies with a concentration in Floodplain Management. Though there is interest in this program from working floodplain managers, currently only about 1/3 of the curriculum is offered online. This has limited its accessibility to those with the greatest interest. However, Interdisciplinary Studies approach is one that can be emulated by other colleges and universities. Most schools have Interdisciplinary Studies and the Higher Education Policy Committee is available to encourage others to follow this approach.

At the 2015 ASFPM conference in Atlanta, Georgia, we had a Higher Education Early Bird session that was well attended. At the session the Western Kentucky

undergraduate and UW, programs were discussed. Also discussed were the Gateway community college program leading to Associate Arts degree and an emerging program at the University of Florida.

From the ASFPM Atlanta session there was agreement that programs were needed at the subcommittee should provide a resource to all emerging programs.

Over the past year, the subcommittee focused marketing the UW and Western Kentucky programs. Flyers were developed and distributed at conferences including at the American Planning Association conference in Phoenix AZ. Articles marketing the program appeared in variety of journals and newsletters and ASFPM Foundation members were contacted.

There continues to be little or no government support for these existing programs other than through the universities themselves. It is difficult to persuade faculty to do research or to develop programs if there are no grants to do so.