Academic Continuity of Operations Plan

Academic Affairs

Virginia Union University

Fall 2021

L. Green

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1 PURPOSE

This guide provides a general planning and decision-making framework for the academic functions of the university in the event of a campus crisis. The focus is on Virginia Union University's (VUU) overall response to an institutional crisis and addresses issues related to the academic core of the institution.

The scope applies to the functions, operations, and resources necessary to ensure the continuation of VUU's academic functions in the event its normal operations are disrupted or threatened. This document ensures VUU is capable of conducting its essential academic missions and functions under all threats and conditions.

1.1 Overview

It is the policy of Academic Affairs to maintain an effective continuity plan for continuing the academic functions through and from a catastrophic emergency. This includes teaching and learning as well as those processes that impact faculty instruction. These processes serve to prepare for a proactive response for:

- Prolonged campus closures or quarantines,
- Damage to campus buildings and equipment,
- Disruption of computer systems operations, and
- Acts of violence that necessitates focused closures and security measures.

Since the university level risk assessment is essential to the continuity planning, this assessment is outlined in the *VUU All Hazards Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan 2021-2022*.

1.2 Objectives

The academic continuity objectives:

- Ensure academic functions can be performed, if applicable, under all conditions,
- Reduce or mitigate disruptions to academic operations,
- Ensure the academic unit has facilities where it can continue to perform its essential functions, as appropriate, during a continuity event,
- Protect essential facilities, equipment, records, and other academic assets, and
- Achieve timely and orderly academic recovery from an emergency.

2 VUU EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT TEAM

The Emergency Management Team forms a coordinated effort during a major campus emergency. The Emergency Management Center will house the team controlling the operations during a disastrous situation. The center will be equipped with tables, chairs, phones, FAX, radio, computers, maps, reference documents, operating procedures, and office supplies. Major functions performed by the team within the center include:

- ***Direction and Control*** - The center is a single point where all information is received, analyzed, decisions made, priorities established, and resources allocated.
- ***Information Collection and Evaluation*** - The situation can be reviewed and evaluated where gathered information is used to make assessments and priorities.
- ***Coordination*** - Important in communications, facilities coordination among responding personnel, departments, and off-campus agencies will be synchronized.
- ***Establishment of Priorities*** - Determines the order problems should be addressed.
- ***Resource Management*** - Facilitates the acquisition, distribution, and the use of personnel and materials needed in an emergency.

The primary location of the Emergency Operations Center is in the first floor conference room 105 in Pickford Hall (1500 N. Lombardy Street). If the conference room in Pickford Hall is unavailable, the center will be established in the CD King Building conference room 100 or 200.

2.1 Group/Response Team

The following positions and/or their assigned alternates are required to work as part of the Emergency Management Team in the Emergency Operations Center:

- President or Designee
- Executive Vice President/COO
- Provost/VP of Academic Affairs
- Chief of Police/Dir of Public Safety
- VP of Business Affairs/CFO
- AVP of Enrollment Management
- Dean of Students
- VP of Institutional Advancement
- Manager, Food Services
- Director of Facilities
- AVP Administrative Services and Business Solutions
- Chief of Staff/Executive Communication

2.2 Start-up, Equipment, and Supplies

Although the preliminary preparations may begin at any time, the president will order the opening of the Emergency Operations Center. The center should be operational within two hours. Two hours and thirty minutes after the order is given, all center personnel, their alternates, and others as designated should report to the center for a formal briefing by the President, his or her designee, the Chief of Police, or the Director of Public Safety.

The center will contain individual workspace and telephones for the Campus Emergency Response Team plus a large meeting area for briefing team members. Appropriate office equipment will be available, such as computer access, a computer printer, an electric/manual typewriter, copier, and generator backup for the building in case of a power blackout.

2.3 Communications Network

The Business Intelligence Institutional Effectiveness and Technology office and the University Relations office will establish a communications network using the available resources:

- Telephone (including cellular phones)
- Voice Mail
- E-mail, Listserv (Executive Council, all faculty, all staff, and all students, etc.)
- World Wide Web
- Fax
- Radios (handheld)
- Local television channels CBS6, ABC8, NBC12, and FOX35
- Messenger

3 INSTRUCTION

3.1 Interruption Guidelines

Teaching, research, and instruction are the primary responsibilities of the academic core and during a crisis are the most susceptible to interruption. The following guidelines will be considered during the development of each school's academic operations of continuity plan.

- Timely communications to students will be relayed for further information.
- Flexibility is a vital part in continuing with academic functions and student accommodations may be considered:
    - Academic units and faculty may be flexible to allow students to make up missed time/coursework for students being affected by a crisis.
    - Alternative course offerings may be considered through the use of technology, alternate teaching space, etc.
    - Academic schools will inform students participating in clinical, fieldwork courses, or student teaching the procedures used should they continue with their offsite experiences. Attendance expectations at offsite field locations may differ from the decisions for campus buildings and are outside of VUU's control.

3.2 Preserving Academic Integrity

These guidelines should be considered when taking into account instruction time lost due to campus crisis:

- ***Early term(s)*** - If students miss the first few classes, faculty may adjust the workload in the course by altering assignments. Changing course face time is subject to classroom and computer camera availability. Make up assignment postings and lecture notes are another possibility. School deans and department chairs will confer with faculty on courses that are affected by absences.
- ***Middle term(s)*** - Interruption during the other terms will be dealt with according to assignment adjustments. Faculty can post make up assignments and lecture notes.
- ***Midterm and Final Exams*** - Interruption coming at midterm or at term end will require exam flexibility on the part of faculty. Make-up exams may be necessary.

- ***Later term(s)*** - Faculty could entertain the idea of giving incompletes, giving a make-up exam later, or giving the grade earned to-date in the course.

3.3 Class Considerations

Schools will maintain a list of courses and their faculty of record. Each academic school will communicate its policy on class cancellation to students in courses. There may be:

- Flexible spaces on campus suitable for classes, offices, and service spaces.
- Alternative rental spaces within the community that surrounds the campus for acceptable spaces.

3.3.1 Alternative Course Delivery Modes

Alternative modes of course delivery if classrooms are inaccessible include:

- Online or distance learning,
- Alternative course schedule and locations, and
- Blended courses that share existing classroom times.

In the event of a catastrophic event, within 72 hours, in-seat courses will transition to either online, podcasts, or other modes which require faculty to adjust their traditional way of teaching. With courses delivered online, alternative courses are already delivered asynchronous or in hybrid mode. In the event of a temporary university closure greater than 72 hours, it will be VUU's responsibility to inform students of a reasonable recovery timeframe, teach out options, transfer out options to outside institutions, and the location of student records.

3.3.2 Library Services

The L. Douglas Wilder Library provides many online collections and databases. If the campus library is closed, these online resources will be available and accessible.

4 FINANCIAL COMPENSATION FOR UNDELIVERED INSTRUCTION

In the event of undelivered instruction, the university will appropriate the proper refund amount in accordance with the written university policy.

5 STUDENT RECORD STORAGE

The protection of vital information system records (classified or sensitive data, applications, electronic and hard copy documents, and references) is essential to the confidentiality, integrity, and the availability of records needed to support the university post crisis.

Within 72 hours of activation, personnel should have access to student records, including:

- A local area network,
- Electronic versions of vital records,
- Supporting information systems and data,
- Internal and external email and email archives, and
- Paper copies of vital records.

5.1 Student Record Collection

The Office of the Registrar staff is responsible for collecting and maintaining academic information. Active student files are housed in Ellison Hall room 106, under a double lock and key in fireproof file cabinets.

Student files are stored electronically with Vital Records Control (VRC), an outside third-party company. In addition, electronic storage of student files occurs every five years. Once these files are archived, they are accessible to the Registrar staff through PaperVision, a web-based server of the Vital Records Control company.

5.2 Student Records Storage – Permanent School Closure

In the event Virginia Union University permanently closes, the institution will inform both the Virginia State Council for Higher Education (SCHEV) through the "Report on the Closing of a Campus" form and the US Department of Education.

It is VUU's responsibility to inform students of teach out options, transfer out options to outside institutions, and the location of student records. The Registrar would contact the VRC representative to plan the process for archiving and storing of all student records.

6 INTERNAL EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS

6.1 Executive Level

POSITION	OFFICE	CELL	HOME
President	804-257-5835	On File	On File
Executive Vice President/COO	804-257-5719	On File	On File
Provost/VPAA	804-257-5606	On File	On File
Dean of Students	804-257-5875	On File	On File
VP Financial Affairs	804-257-5750	On File	On File
VP of Institutional Advancement	804-257-5856	On File	On File
VP OIA	804-342-3938	On File	On File
Director of Human Resources	804-257-5841	On File	On File
Director of IT (Integrated Technology)	804-257-5842	On File	On File
Chief of Staff/Executive Communication	804-937-7936	On File	On File
Food Services Management	804-257-5780	On File	On File
Dean of the School of Theology	804-257-5715	On File	On File
Director of Facilities	804-257-5783	On File	On File

6.2 Emergency Resources in Richmond

DEPARTMENT	OFFICE	EMERGENCY
Richmond Police	804-646-5100	911
Richmond Fire	804-646-5100	911
Richmond Ambulance	804-254-1100	911
Rich. Emergency Management	804-646-2404	911
VA (Veterans Affairs) State Dept. Emergency Management	804-674-2400	911
Verizon Telephone	804-347-6764	
Retreat Hospital	804-254-5100	
VCU Medical Center	804-828-0958	
Dominion Energy	866-366-4357	

6.3 Student Contact Resources

DEPARTMENT	Individual	Phone	Email
Financial Aid and Student Accounts Services	Keisha L. Pope	804-257-5854	klpope@vuu.edu
Registrar Services	Erica Jackson	804-257-5848	emjackson@vuu.edu
Counseling Services		804-342.3821	
Workforce Development Services		804-257-5616	workforcedevelopment @vuu.edu

6.4 On Campus Remote Student Support Resources

For students who may need access to:

- ***A computer*** – A local computer lab with public access is recommended.
- ***Internet Access*** - Free public WIFI hotspot locations such as Starbucks, Panera Bread, and or McDonalds are recommended.
- ***Textbooks and Other Course Materials*** – Additional resources such as webinars, YouTube videos, free e-books, etc.
- ***Library Services for Off Campus Users*** – Includes online databases, peer reviewed journals, and professional articles. https://www.vuu.edu/library/off-campus-users
- ***Navigating Jenzabar or Canvas*** - Contact helpdesk@vuu.edu.

6.5 Student Course Communication

The university encourages students to use their VUU email account as a primary means for communication.

- Instructors should provide their contact information to students. They may also schedule virtual office hours and/or virtual meetings.
- Students should allow instructors *48 hours to respond* to emails and voice messages.