Chapter 15
Navigating Campus Disasters from Within the Library: Lessons and Implications from Gulf Coast Institutions

Mahauganee Dawn Shaw
Miami University, USA

ABSTRACT
The post-hurricane recovery processes of two universities are presented in this chapter, with an emphasis on the experiences specific to their library facilities and holdings. Interviews were conducted with library staff and campus leaders at both institutions. Case studies are constructed of the experiences of these libraries with Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in the Fall 2005 Semester. One library experienced major destructive damage and the other suffered minor damages to the collection. The tales of recovery presented lead to implications for disaster management within academic libraries. Recommendations are offered for each stage in the crisis management process: planning, prevention, response, recovery, and learning. These recommendations provide guidance on disaster mitigation and contingency planning for librarians, library staff, archivists, curators, and university administrators.

INTRODUCTION
The term campus crisis likely evokes images of either the most large-scale or most recent emergencies to impact higher education institutions. Zdziarski (2006) provides the most useful definition of crisis for institutions of higher education: “A campus crisis is an event, often sudden or unexpected, that disrupts the normal operations of the institution or its educational mission and threatens the well-being of personnel, property, financial resources, and/or reputation of the institution” (p. 5). Campus crises range in impact, from those affecting only an isolated portion of a campus community to those that affect normal operations both on campus and in the surrounding community. This book is focused on the latter, disasters that spread beyond the borders of campus.

This chapter examines the disaster management process of institutions that have weathered

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-4666-8624-3.ch015
Navigating Campus Disasters from Within the Library

experiences with destructive hurricanes, focusing
on the impact to and recovery of their library
facilities and holdings. Each institution’s story
is presented separately. The stories detail an
institution’s experience with recovering, restoring,
and preserving an art collection that is partially
displayed in the library facility, and an institu-
tion’s experience assessing and recovering from
hurricane damage to the library facility. Recom-
mendations derived from these two institutions’
experiences are offered. These recommendations
focus on disaster management within academic
libraries. Knowledge of others’ experiences
with disaster management can assist readers in
thinking through the potential impacts of similar
disasters on their own institutions, libraries, and
job responsibilities.

The background section provides an overview
of literature that describes how campus crises are
classified, the general considerations in managing
a campus crisis, and how libraries have approached
these processes in the past. This overview of the
literature explains the crisis management terminol-
ogy used throughout the chapter and establishes
a baseline for understanding the challenges that
libraries face in the wake of a disaster. Following
this review, the chapter moves into presenting the
two institutional cases. The combined examination
of these cases illustrates how similar events can
have different impacts and outcomes. Lessons
and implications for other academic libraries are
presented, and suggestions offered regarding how
to approach the work of disaster mitigation and
contingency planning.

BACKGROUND

Crisis management is the process of planning
for, organizing and implementing a response to
an emergency situation. The crisis management
process is often described as occurring in separate
stages, and multiple conceptualizations of these
stages have been offered by different researchers.
The resultant crisis management models have
ranged from three to five stages. Five stage models
have been offered by Pauchant and Mitroff (1992),
Zdziarski (2006), and Zdziarski, Rollo, and Dunkel
(2007); these models each add a learning phase
to the end of the crisis management cycle. Thus,
crisis management, as described in the literature, is
a cyclical process with the following stages: plan-
ning and mitigation, preparation and prevention,
response and business continuity, recovery, and
learning (see Figure 1). This chapter will touch on
all phases of the crisis management cycle, plac-
ing emphasis on the lessons that can be learned
from other institutions of higher education, and
specifically their libraries.

Offering a means to further define campus
crises, some researchers have also developed clas-
sification schemes to help identify different levels
and types of crisis. Campus crises have typically
been written about as having three potential levels.
From least to most severity, these levels are criti-
cal incidents, campus emergencies, and disasters
(see Zdziarski, Rollo, & Dunkel, 2007). While
campus emergencies are those that are confined
within the campus boundaries, critical incidents
are those emergencies that are even further con-
fined to a particular subset of the campus popula-
tion. Disasters, as explained in the introduction,
are crisis events that cross campus boundaries
and also impact the surrounding communities.
More recently, disaster researchers have begun
to suggest catastrophe as a fourth level of crisis,
more severe than disasters (Quarantelli, 2006).
Catastrophes resemble disasters in many aspects;
however, catastrophes cause exponentially more
damage to the impacted area. Given the focus
of on hurricane recovery, there is opportunity to
focus on a disaster that can easily rise to the level
of catastrophe.

The two libraries discussed fall on opposite
ends of the severity spectrum in terms of damage
sustained to a collection and the resulting length
of the recovery process. The data presented will
come from institutions that weathered Hurricanes
24 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the product's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/navigating-campus-disasters-from-within-the-library/135198?camid=4v1

This title is available in Advances in Library and Information Science, InfoSci-Books, InfoSci-Library and Information Science, Library Science, Information Studies, and Education. Recommend this product to your librarian: www.igi-global.com/e-resources/library-recommendation/?id=99

Related Content

Beyond the Collection: Emergency Planning for Public and Staff Safety
www.igi-global.com/chapter/beyond-the-collection/135188?camid=4v1a

Perceptions and Viability of Launching LIS e-learning Programs in Developing Countries: A Vietnam Case Study
www.igi-global.com/chapter/perceptions-and-viability-of-launching-lis-e-learning-programs-in-developing-countries/99961?camid=4v1a

Trends in LIS Education and Research in Pakistan
www.igi-global.com/chapter/trends-in-lis-education-and-research-in-pakistan/99960?camid=4v1a

Overview of Theory and Practice in Library and Information Science Research in Asia-Oceania
www.igi-global.com/chapter/overview-of-theory-and-practice-in-library-and-information-science-research-in-asia-oceania/99948?camid=4v1a