

CONFLUENCE

Confluence serves as an intersection where we share events, interests, and important information about our Center and the state's all-hazard emergency management pathway programs.

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Important

IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM THE COE HSEM DIRECTOR

Our Center and staff, Kellie Hale, Jasmine May and Bryan Johnson, along with our Advisory Board Members, Senior Fellows and Center Associates all hope that you and your families remain safe and healthy during this challenging time. Kellie, Jasmine and I will be working remotely from home for the time being trying to make sure we are proactive in limiting potential exposure and impacts on our staff and associates.

You can contact us via our email addresses: lcrerar@pierce.ctc.edu, khale@pierce.ctc.edu and jmay@pierce.ctc.edu.

Our Center's website, www.coehsem.com, will continue to post up-to-date information on what is happening with our schools, colleges and the decisions of our education leadership in K-12 and at the college/university level. We want to commend our leadership at both the K-12 and college/university level for the ongoing timely and clear communications to all of our education community and their families. You all have made much needed quick decisions and altered policies and processes to continue to limit potential exposure and keep our students, faculty, staff and community members safe.

We want to thank all of our "all hazard emergency personnel" who are working tirelessly to help carry out the federal, state, local and non-profit plans. Your ongoing support and understanding of our community needs are very much appreciated. We all will continue to work together as a "whole community" of caregivers working to mitigate the uncertainty surrounding this pandemic.

We are a dedicated team of Advisory Board Members, staff, volunteers and Senior Fellows who support our community and technical colleges, along with business and industry partners to train and educate a skilled workforce. Our goal at the Center is to help maintain safety and security in order to build emergency and disaster resilience in our communities.

Please let us know how our communications can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,
Linda Crerar, COE HSEM Director

JAMYE WISECUP TESTIMONIALS



Earlier this year, the Center staff visited Clallam County Sheriff Bill Benedict and Undersheriff Ron Cameron to talk about the amazing contribution Jamye Wisecup had on the community. Sadly, Jamye passed away last year, which had a devastating effect on the emergency management community. To keep Jamye's legacy alive, the Center established the Jamye Wisecup Scholarship through Peninsula College's Foundation to help potential students looking to garner an education in homeland security emergency management. Jamye was a wonderful advocate for students who were interested in emergency management. So much so, that she was more than willing to help provide internship opportunities to students. One of those students was Alec Risk. Alec is a campus safety officer at Peninsula College, along with being a Board member for the Center. Alec shares his experience working with Jamye and how she changed the dynamic of emergency management in her community. Please take the time to watch Bill, Ron, and Alec's testimonials on Jamye to learn more about how amazing this woman was and how inspiring she continues to be.

Bill and Ron's Testimony
<https://youtu.be/ZSKBXL7goKA>

Alec Risk's Testimony
<https://youtu.be/CtNhIMmSOdY>

MEET THE CENTER'S NEW BLOGGER



PETER REKERS

With over 30 years emergency experience, Peter Rekens is professionally recognized as being one of the most veteran and polished crisis management specialists in Australia. His experience encompasses developing crisis management communications systems and risk management systems for private and public sectors, to operational experience in war zones as a senior communications officer, to being a Spokesperson for various agencies and Governments, to coordinating the communication strategy for Tropical Cyclones for the Queensland Government.

After completing a degree in Media Studies, Peter joined the Navy where he trained as a Seaman Officer and Naval Police Officer. He led 100 bush fire fighters in the Blue Mountains in 1993 and coordinated the media liaison for the Navy for the Tony Bullimore rescue. He was the Australian Naval Commander's Media Advisor during the 2003 Gulf War and later in Baghdad was the Coalition Media Director.

He was the Manager of Media and Strategy at QLD's then Department of Emergency Services managing all media liaison for Queensland Fire and Rescue Service and Emergency Management Queensland including coordinating all media liaison for Cyclone Larry.

In his spare time he runs Brisbane based consultancy Crisis Ready. Peter has been a Senior Fellow for the Center since February 2019. He will be working with the Center with the development of an online certificate course through the Center's HSEM Institute on the topic of risk management and communication in disasters. Other topics will be on high risk events and basic effective communication strategies: defining and meaning of message, establishment of effective dialogue between the responsible parties and their constituencies and the why behind how to establish that effective dialogue.

PETER REKERS INTERVIEW: PUBLIC INFORMATION IN THE COVID-19 ERA

By Alexander Lee-Rekers

Interviewer: To begin with, can you briefly outline your areas of expertise?

Peter Rekens: I am an Australian-based crisis and disaster consultant with extensive real-world experience. My first experience in emergency was as a volunteer firefighter in the early 80's while I was still at University doing a degree in Media Studies. My early career was spent in theatre where I was a sound engineer and stage manager, including being stage manager to the Pope. It was a great place to start learning about crisis management as the show must go on, and so that real pressure of troubleshooting and fixing things on the fly is still useful today. After that, I spent a number of years in the Australian Navy where a different type of management experience was developed. It was also a time when I experienced nine

cyclones at sea and many other challenges.

Later, as a Naval Reservist, I did two tours to Iraq, the second of which was as the Coalition Media Director. I looked after all the local and international media that were in Iraq and also provided 24/7 liaison to the world's media. I then spent some time back in emergency services before setting up my own consultancy, Crisis Ready, which has been operating for over 10 years. I work with a variety of clients, including Cowlitz County Sheriff's Office where I'm helping them with the re-write of their Hazard Mitigation Plan.

So, while I do have significant operational experience in emergencies and disasters, I suppose my key focus is on the communications aspects of these. And while I think this is partially due to my background in media studies, I'm also keenly committed to the idea

that communications is one of the biggest challenges we have in disaster operations. It's often the one we don't think about until it's become too much of a headache.

I: How are you finding the response to COVID-19, both here in Australia and abroad?

P: I think it's varying. I'm seeing some very good responses, and some fairly ordinary responses. It's a particularly interesting field, because many of us have been involved in pandemic planning for, frankly, decades, and they actually follow a fairly predictable path. COVID-19 is, in many ways, doing exactly that. So if governments or departments had plans in place, then they'd probably be in a much better position right now.

I: Are there reasons such plans aren't so readily in place? >>

P: One of the frustrating characteristics of pandemics is their infrequency. They are so rare that they are not something we tend to exercise or train for and as a result, a lot of jurisdictions have been caught off guard. One of the best responses I've seen—and this is by no means a statement about where Pierce College is located—is from Washington's Governor Jay Inslee. The comments, messages and language choice coming out of the Governor's office are really interesting, and I'm sure very effective.

I: And here in Australia?

P: In Australia, we've got a different political and geographic set-up, and so there are greater challenges. We only have seven states and territories, and therefore the heads of those states—who we call Premiers—are much more powerful than their U.S. Equivalents. Because of this, we often see a power-play between federal and state governments, and that results in their messages and responses becoming out of sync when communicating with the public.

I: In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, there's been a lot of discussion about public information: what's effective, what's not effective... Why is PI such a frequent stumbling block for governments and agencies?

P: Because governments and agencies often fail to implement public information with any thought to strategy. PI is treated as a sort of ready-made commodity—coming straight out of the emergency operations centre with clearance to go to the public—and yet in many cases the language hasn't been refined, and no thought has been given to how it's being put out there. We're going, for example, straight to the media or social media because we think that's the right idea. To think strategically, within an incident management team or command system, you're able to identify and address the objectives that are most in need of fixing—often within a crucial 24 hour period. Not

enough organizations think: "What is our objective?" and "How are we going to achieve it?" We seem to pump out information to the public and wonder why it's not achieving what we want it to achieve.

I: Is it safe to say we're seeing these trends in current messaging at home and abroad?

P: Right now, a good example would be rules around "social distancing", "shelter in place". We're not seeing people respond to this information because the messaging we're giving them is either coming from the wrong spokespeople, the wrong media, the wrong channel of how to get that information to the public or the wrong language. We're not speaking in a way that they're going to react.

I: What sort of messaging is the most effective?

P: The most effective messaging aims to reach the emotional part of the brain. If you think in terms of left and right-brained activity, the side of the brain we want to reach is not the logical, mathematical side, but the side that deals with emotion, images and stories. This is because the same parts of the brain control risk-taking behaviour. Again, I'll exemplify Governor Inslee's office. Don't talk about "shelter in place", talk about "looking after your loved ones". Talk about caring about people and staying home together. That sort of language is going to be far more effective than logical terms—even if they are, technically, correct.

I: What other strategies should be implemented? And where should they be coming from?

P: The number one thing is co-ordination of messaging. We need to be very clear and 'scientific' about how we deal with a pandemic, so co-ordination is paramount: co-ordination between the political leaders and the health experts. Strong leadership will reassure people—which doesn't mean good political

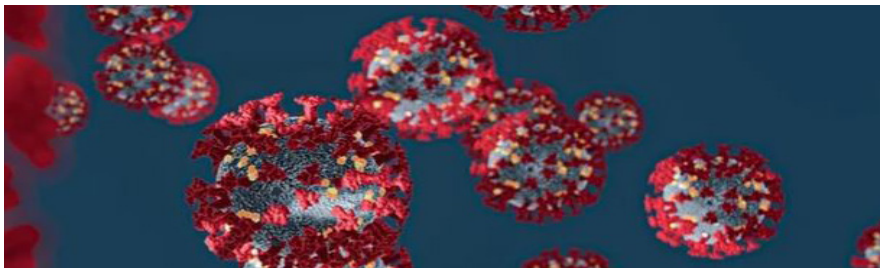
leadership, because we know from other research that politicians are among the least trusted people in our societal structures. And when you have them speak in front of a room full of journalists—another group sadly regarded as unreliable—they can be delivering the perfect message and still wonder why they failed to reach the public.

I: So what makes for effective leadership in a crisis?

P: Leadership has to go beyond the political. Our health leadership in this case would be much more important. Or, really, any person who can lead us—that we look up to and are inspired by: it could even be a movie star. The question is: who are the people going to listen to and respond to?

I: We seem to be witnessing a lot of panic in response to the virus. What do you think is causing this, and how might it best be mitigated?

P: The near-exclusive reason it occurs—and this is sadly relevant to our current situation—is when contradictory advice is issued by leadership. In the context of COVID-19, we're hearing the word "panic" a lot more than usual, despite there being plenty of research telling us that panic is actually a rare occurrence in an emergency or disaster. Panic is best thought of as people making emotional decisions as opposed to logical ones. People are making emotional decisions—that's something we need to shift them away from. If you take the hoarding of toilet paper as an example, I read that as breaking down into three groups of people: the first group saw an opportunity and bought up on the idea that they could sell it and make a profit. The second group reacted to this information rationally and left it alone. The third group, however, saw the 'entrepreneurs' on the news at the same time they were hearing a conflicting "all is well" from leadership. It didn't add up; it didn't make sense to them. >>



I: I'd like to move to a slightly different topic, that of SPOT: Single Point Of Truth. What are your thoughts on this concept in regard to the rise of social media and its prevalence in contemporary society/crises?

P: The Single Point Of Truth is an aspirational position that lead agencies, in a disaster, want to be seen as in the eyes of the public. Take any health department right now: they want to be viewed as the SPOT, where everyone will turn to them for the right answers, and can co-ordinate their messaging to eliminate confusion and therefore panic. The reality is, we haven't been able to do that for roughly a decade now: both social media and 'legacy' media—the "old" media—have made that incredibly difficult. On social media, everybody's posting about how you should wash your hands, or the correct recipe for hand sanitiser, and there's variations on all of them. In Australia, media agencies are publishing pages on where to get the best information on COVID-19, directing you to another source entirely. They should not be presenting themselves as a point of truth. SPOT is still a concept I hear about, despite it being a virtual impossibility; many lead agencies still think it's achievable.

I: What should these agencies be doing instead?

P: It's always good to acknowledge these sources are out there, but to try and lead people to the number-one source. Governments and agencies often fail to see a media conference as an opportunity to talk to the media as well; not everything has to be said to the public. We can appeal to the media directly to help us get important and accurate information out. Dr. Michael Ryan from the WHO made a fantastic

statement the other day about how before we have a vaccine or medication, all we've got is risk communication. This is exactly why we need the media involved in that. And the same is true for social media: companies should be guiding people to a single place that contains the number-one source, whether it be on a state, national or even international level like the WHO.

I: Why aren't there more stringent guidelines to this kind of messaging?

P: In terms of guidelines, a lot of what we do in emergency communications is not strictly enforceable. We have different jurisdictions with their own rights; a governor can speak on behalf of their state, but so can a member of congress, so can leadership, so can Health. Even private industry: the likes of Bill Gates can speak with some authority. It's difficult to try and control, so the best measure is to ensure that extensive training and exercise are performed in advance—of how different departments and entities will work together. In my own experience, it's very rare that I see that an elected official or a CEO get involved in an exercise; this is troubling, because when the plan is actually implemented, they don't know what's happening. On the day of a major exercise, they will often come into the room and not know where to begin. They haven't worked for it.

I: Can you speak to the certificate course you're currently helping to develop in response to these topics?

P: I'm delighted to be joining the Center of Excellence for Homeland Security Emergency Management, which is housed at Pierce College in Lakewood, Washington. I will be helping to devel-

op an online course in Crisis Communication, which will be delivered through the Center's HSEM Institute. Students will be awarded Continuing Education credits through Pierce College's Community and Continuing Education program. I have been in contact with the Center for a couple of years now, and I'm very impressed with their approach to helping the all-hazards emergency industry when it comes to staying up-to-date on trends and new innovative ways to deliver education to students. Lately, I've been thinking about the word "credible". Credibility is vital in the sort of field I operate in, but it also gives me a nice acronym—CRED—which covers the four different types of comms we need to identify and strengthen: CRISIS, RISK, EMERGENCY and DISASTER. If I can build up the skills and understanding of what those four different types of communication are, students will be well-equipped to do a better job of public information in their jurisdiction when they return to them. I think it's important to understand the subtle differences of the kinds of communication and how they're actioned: a disaster is an emergency that has impacted an entire community, whereas a crisis is when we deal with outrage and outrage management. If we can make the outrage go away because people understand response is doing the best it can, then we can go back to disaster communication—a much easier situation to manage.

I: And what sort of experience can your students expect?

P: My approach to teaching is intensely practical. Not only will we explore the above concepts, I'll be sending them away with tools, templates and planning ideas so they can return to their jurisdictions ready to implement their new knowledge and understanding. It should be an interesting course, and a lot of fun.

Alexander Lee-Rekers is a writer, director and producer based in Sydney, Australia. He completed his Masters in Writing For Performance at the National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA), and has since written work for the Australian Theatre For Young People (ATYP), the Kings Cross Theatre and The Walt Disney Company. In addition to his work, Alexander maintains a presence in academia lecturing on film criticism, history and screenwriting at NIDA, the University of Wollongong and ATYP—where he is currently under commission for the work "Lights In The Park".

IMPOSTER SYNDROME: MY OWN BATTLE

By Kellie Hale

I had the pleasure of attending the Empower: Women in Leadership Conference on March 9, which was hosted by the Centers of Excellence for Construction and Marine Manufacturing. It was my first time attending the conference that was geared towards women in the trade industry. With an array of women presenters offering insight into their own experiences in areas such as discrimination, sexual harassment, mental health, and equal rights, it was very eye opening that as women, we still have quite a way to go in order to be viewed as equals to our male counterparts.

One topic that came up quite a bit at the conference was “imposter syndrome” and how it can negatively affect a woman’s mind set on whether or not she can succeed. What is imposter syndrome? The term refers to “the idea that you’ve only succeed due to luck, and not because of your talent or qualifications” and was first identified in 1978 by psychologists Pauline Rose Clance and Suzanne Imes. Both psychologists theorized in their paper how women can be “uniquely affected by imposter syndrome.” Imposter syndrome can have damaging effects on a person’s career progression, particularly for women entering into the workforce.

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It can be hard recognizing one's own success and abilities to do amazing work. For myself, I had imposter syndrome when I started my job at the Center of Excellence – Homeland Security Emergency Management. I could not fathom how my supervisor, Linda Crerar, believed in me so much and had such confidence that I could do anything if I put my mind to it. I would think to myself, "Today is the day where she is going to see that I don't have it in me. That something is missing." I would also worry about what my coworkers would think of me and wonder if I deserved my position at the Center. That feeling of doubt and lack of self-confidence in my knowledge, skills, and abilities lasted for 2 ½ years. I actually expressed to Linda how I felt and in doing so, helped alleviate that stress. I told myself, "Yes, I deserve to be here. Yes, I might not know everything or it may take time to understand certain aspects of the job, but I deserve to be here."

Once I got rid of that negative mindset, I was able to flourish at my job. I felt more confident in my abilities to take on certain tasks and projects, such as establishing the Women in Leadership conferences back in 2015, along with mentoring others who are starting their careers. I make sure to remind myself of the positive impacts I can have on others, while also accepting my strengths and limitations.

HOW TO TAKE ON IMPOSTER SYNDROME

- Accept that there is no cure. This is an issue that can be managed over time but will never completely disappear.
- Talk about your feelings to people you trust. If you don't have support in place, find that community online, through your bank or at business networking events
- Positive thinking does not work so do not beat yourself up if your attempts to cheer yourself up and leave IS behind are unsuccessful.
- Remember that IS tends to affect high achievers who set far higher standards for themselves than other people.
- Imposter Syndrome is irrational so combat it using your rational mind: write down all your achievements and look at your career history. If you've been successful, accept that it's because you are good at your role.
- Accept your strengths and your limitations: outsource the stuff you hate doing or are bad at.
- Motivate yourself through kindness, not fear. Think of the positive impact you've had by starting your business or creating jobs.

Source: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/women-entrepreneurs/imposter-syndrome-women-careers/>

R E S I L I E N T

RESILIENCE: BENDING WITHOUT BREAKING

By Jim Mullen

To “bend but not break” may seem more like a description of a National Football League team’s defensive strategy – keeping the opponent’s offense between the 20 – yard lines, never yielding a touchdown. While a field goal still is possible three points is easier to overcome than six or seven! Limiting the damage is always a sound approach, because regardless of how strong a defense you have on the field, it’s not always possible to emerge completely “unscathed”.

To bend without breaking in disaster terms is similar: natural hazards will occur and do some damage. We cannot prevent storms, floods, or earthquakes, or infectious diseases. We can minimize the issues that inevitably follow. In both examples, resilience (bending without breaking) helps keep the “score” down.

At the local level, where public and private interests intersect to protect the “social equilibrium” (life, the economy and the environment) support for resilience is indispensable. Local governments have become dependent upon federal funding to facilitate mitigation activities that help protect their respective jurisdictions. Even if one differs (as do I) with the overall approach this federal administration employs in the arena of homeland security and emergency management,

one cannot discount the rightness of their view that local governments must rely less on the feds to provide pre and post disaster support. The federal interest is largely financial; local officials have a longer standing, more personal interest in strengthening the resilience of the places where they, themselves live.

Weaning local (and state) government away from dependence on federal preparedness and mitigation funds will take time. A program of education, incentivization and candid discussions with local decisionmakers needs to occur to bring about the necessary attitude adjustment.

Volunteer groups like the Natural Hazards Mitigation Association, or NHMA (full disclosure – I am a Board member) have developed programs aimed at educating and training communities and their leaders on the benefits of a thorough analysis of hazards, followed by development of a community – based resilience strategy that enhances both public safety and economic viability. NHMA’s membership boasts expertise that would be invaluable to any community wishing to proactively address known hazards.

Even relatively quiet times are merely a prelude to a future disaster that will take a toll on our own community. Are our defenses adequate to bend, but

not break? Can we, will we, choose to hold the score down, and pave the way for a comeback?

PostScript RE COVID-19: we are fortunate in Washington State that a coordinated team at county and state health agencies, along with the emergency management community is on the job. Their efforts illustrate the importance of advance team- building across professional disciplines. As we profit as a state from the competent, candid and coordinated teamwork from health, emergency management and other public safety personnel, let’s recall that the state agency relationship between the State Health Department and the Emergency Management Division of the Washington Military Department is the work product of four outstanding public servants: former Secretary of Health Mary Selecky and John Erickson of the State Public Health Department, and the late M/G Tim Lowenberg and my predecessor at Washington EMD, Glen Woodbury. Because of their foresight, our state may bend, but those that are now at the helm will not break. They will hold the score down and lead our recovery. That is resilience.

<http://www.coehsem.com/resilience-bending-without-breaking/>

Internship & Job Shadow Interview



Trio Group Creative Director Ricardo Ibarra interviews Bellevue City Emergency Manager Curry Mayer and Washington Military Department Catastrophic Planner Shane Moore on Internships and Job Shadowing in Washington State.

<http://www.coehsem.com/internship-interview-with-curry-mayer-shane-moore/>

JOB SHADOWING AND INTERNSHIPS IN GOVERNMENT AND BUSINESS

By Ricardo Ibarra

Ensuring public safety is perhaps the most important government function there is. Municipal and state governments always need smart, well-trained professionals who are passionate about this line of work, and so do businesses. Curry Mayer is an Emergency Manager in the city of Bellevue and co-chairs the Advisory Board of the Washington Homeland Security Emergency Management Center of Excellence. Shane Moore is a Catastrophic Planner with Washington State's Emergency Management Division, and an emergency planning coordinator. They each shared with us their insights about job shadowing and internship opportunities.

The Homeland Security Emergency Management Center of Excellence serves two main populations: students interested in the fields of homeland security and emergency management and employers throughout the state. Curry says that the benefit for both students and the business community lies in knowing they have "a curriculum that has been tested." She explains that students have a number of options including getting a certificate, earning an AA associate's degree, or a B.S. in applied science. It all depends on what works for their schedule and areas of interest. Meanwhile, employers providing internships know that they have students coming from a system that's been tested, in which the professors are all experienced professionals in the field.

Shane returned to college in his early 30s after serving in the US Army. Starting off as a physics major, he became intrigued by the prospect of a homeland security/emergency management degree, so he pursued that. The program is a hybrid experience where you take your core classes in English and Math on a college campus

(or online) and all the emergency management classes are online. This works well for students who are parents and can-do coursework at home, while also doing an internship.

Both the AA and BS degree programs require an internship component, and Shane really sees the value in continuing to gain practical work experience. After his internship, he did some informational interviews while still in school, and discovered that even with the right degree, you still need work experience to build your resume and distinguish yourself from other new graduates and people already in the field. That helped him "make it through HR" while applying for a higher-level position, where he could be considered by experts.

Curry said that while internships can be beneficial in any field, they are really critical in emergency management and homeland security because young professionals must be stress-tested in the real world to demonstrate they can handle a "super stressful situation." She explained that employers must rely on "people being able to think on their feet and change course at a moment's notice... and to act with authority working among folks from other disciplines" even though their personal legal authority may be lacking.

According to Curry, Shane has "crazy good skills with people" as an emergency manager, developed through his work experience, that are hard to demonstrate on paper or in an interview. She mentioned that internships also provide great networking opportunities within the field. Curry believes that while it's best to have both, relevant work experience is even more important than education.

Shane described how internships provide the opportunity to make important connections between the random bits of knowledge, or "puzzle pieces" picked up in school and textbooks. Then you can "paint that whole picture."

We asked Curry about best practices for creating an internship job shadow, and she said you have to start off by developing an understanding from the

employer about what qualities they are looking for in an intern. Next you focus on jobs they want the person to work on and/or roles held by a professional whom they can shadow throughout the workday. As Chair of the King County Critical Infrastructure working group, Curry would want an intern to be involved in the work of that committee with her, so they can understand "how critical infrastructure fits into emergency management or homeland security." Making connections about working relationships and interactions with other departments or agencies is important. Before an intern starts, you want to clearly outline a plan and a path for the internship to follow.

Curry also highlighted the importance of spending quality time with interns to let them ask questions, mentor them, and refer them to other professionals they can talk to. Apparently, there are many good related jobs that don't have the words 'emergency management' or 'homeland security' in the titles.

Shane advises students and educators to do their research into an organization for a prospective internship and find out what they do, so you have some idea about what to expect. How do they interact with other stakeholders? He encourages students to understand in advance what role the person they're going to be working for has within the organization, and to signal their own specific areas of interest upfront. He reiterates that clear expectations on all sides are key.

Employers should avoid the mistake of undervaluing the existing skills of an intern, or the routine work that they do well, according to Shane. Employers should invest in interns' professional development and teach them the 'magic words' they should use in resumes and job applications. For their part, however, student interns should avoid the mistake of expecting an employer to take charge of all their continuing education needs, he says. It's a two-way deal.