



A COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS TO GRADUATES IN EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

By Jim Mullen

Congratulations. You have completed a step most of your future colleagues have never done – achieving formal academic training in your chosen profession before entering it.

As a result, you know a fair amount about the issues and the challenges many of us had to learn on the fly. Hopefully, you also will benefit from being exposed to the errors we have made along the way.

One problem you will face is that entrenched emergency management shops may not know how to react to you. You have energy and ideas and likely are much more technologically advanced than some who will oversee your work. You are better educated in the history and mechanics of the field than most of us were, and yet it will be a while before most of you are paid as well or have an opportunity to lead or direct operations. At times, the road ahead and the people in your path will seem obstacles to your advancement.

My answer to the “experience” question back then, when I had almost none, was that this was a chance for an employer to take my personal characteristics and work ethic and mold me into a valuable professional. That finally worked, yet I soon learned that part of my responsibility in that job – not in emergency management – was to quickly add value with my observations, perceptions, and innovative proposals. Learning how to do that took time. Give it time. But, be alert for opportunities to be helpful to your boss and coworkers, and they may soon seek your input before you have a chance to offer it.

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There remains a balance between “book learning” and practical experience. Both are important in your growth. In my time, trainers were often not well-versed in the professional challenges we faced or even the specific subject they were training us in. The old saying “them that can’t do, teach” was too often the rule. But on the job, there are many lessons to be gleaned from the experience of assisting communities to recover. Or from preparing a community to sustain itself in advance, and those lessons can be merged into future preparatory work that, one day, you might be called upon to teach to others. When that day comes, there will be in your audience bright, young, motivated individuals who will lean forward when you share a detail from your experience that may not have been covered at all in the classes they took.

Well, I will not keep you. As a graduate in emergency management, you will take your learning and passion into government, education, the private sector, or even some profession that does not presently exist. The skillset you have demonstrated and acquired will be helpful to

anywhere you land, and you very well might land just about anywhere.

It takes special people to aspire to work in emergency management; I often observed: “The pay is low, but the hours can be brutally long!” What drives most of us is the conviction that when the social equilibrium is threatened, we choose to be among those that work to minimize human suffering and restore normalcy to society.

After spending about six months as Director in Seattle’s Office of Emergency Management, a friend listened to me enthusiastically discuss the duties and responsibilities I had assumed. He dryly commented that it “sounds like a great job until something happens,” to which I now, thirty years later, would retort, “It is a great job because something will happen, and I will have a chance to make things better.

There, you already know more now than I did then.

Good luck, and thank you.





ELITISM WITHIN HIGHER EDUCATION

By Kellie Hale

Universities vs. Community Colleges. Which is better? We have heard this argument for decades. The truth is, both are great. Not one is better than the other. Whether a student enrolls at a university or community college, either institution will have a meaningful impact on their lives. A student obtaining an education at a community college should not be looked down upon or viewed as less than. A student receiving an education at a university should not be sneered at or be considered to be impudent.

Now that we have that out of the way let's talk about the elitism within the higher education system. What do I mean by that? Well, for nine years, I have worked at Pierce College's Center of Excellence for Homeland Security Emergency Management (HSEM). I started as an intern, then work-study transitioned to Special Projects Coordinated, and finally promoted to Program Manager.

During my time at the Center, I have obtained an Associates' degree in General Office: Administration, a Certificate in HSEM, and a Bachelor's of Science degree in Business. I had an excellent support team who continued to inspire me along my education journey.

However, I have noticed that those in the higher education system tend to look down on others regarding degree status and even job status. Bachelor's degrees vs. Master's degrees vs. Doctorates. Part-time vs. full-time. If one is a part-time staff or faculty, then others should view you as less than. I have experienced (and continue to experience) elitism only because I am a part-time staff, despite all I do for the Center as the organization's Program Manager.

When we get too caught up in the petty minutia of meaningless details such as a degree or job status, we often lose sight of what is essential. Higher education

provides a wonderful learning experience to students wanting to expand their knowledge, skills, and abilities. We also need to think about how staff and faculty of the colleges/universities (whether they are part-time or full-time or the type of degree they have) strive in a working environment that is positive and free of elitism, which only set to create barriers.

I am proud of the education I have obtained. I do love my job, as it has helped me become a more structured and critical-thinking individual. I am proud of my journey.

I will end with a quote from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.:

"The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character – that is the goal of true education."

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP PROFILE: TANYA KNIGHT



By Deb Moller

Most people, counting down the five or ten years until retirement age, would never consider tackling a doctoral program.

Tanya Knight isn't like most people.

As Tanya says, "As long as I'm healthy, why not keep going? After all, I might live forty more years!" She doesn't expect her learning, her growth, or her contributions to be limited just because her driver's license shows a certain age.

Tanya joked that she's never paid much attention to her age. A story her family still laughs at happened decades ago, when one of her five children asked her how old she was. Tanya wasn't quite sure. Her children were astonished. But not paying close attention to her age may be one reason Tanya has succeeded in forging a career that many would have declared unlikely.

Building a family of five children was Tanya's first career. It was the one she expected to follow forever, the one she'd been raised to embrace. She homeschooled the children and loved her role. But she wanted more.

When Tanya's youngest child was getting closer to the teenage years, she decided to earn a two-year degree in Information Technology at Peninsula College. It occurred to other people that she might be too old to branch out from her first career. It

didn't occur to Tanya.

It wasn't easy juggling the demands of her coursework and the needs of her family. Tanya noted that taking the long-term view and jumping on opportunities as they came helped her get through. During her long career in education, Tanya has advised many students. She reminds them that even if they can't be employed in their field immediately because of family or other responsibilities, it is important to get ready for the time when life changes and new possibilities arise.

After Tanya earned her AA degree, Peninsula College launched a new bachelor's program in Applied Management, with classes held at night. The schedule was key to launching Tanya toward her next degree. To complete her studies, she needed a 500-hour internship. Through her church, Tanya had a background in putting on emergency preparedness fairs. A local Emergency Manager selected her for an internship that included work on multiple tabletop exercises. Tanya notes that she has done such a variety of vivid tabletops that she feels she has lived through many disasters, even though her actual disaster experience is limited.

Tanya was first in her class as she finished her bachelor's degree. She was chosen to be a commencement speaker at the graduation ceremony. It didn't matter that she wasn't the youngest in her class; it did matter that she hadn't let the inevitable bad days and doubts stop her progress.

With her experience as a tenured professor in Information Technology, several national certifications in the IT field, three cutting-edge certifications earned from IBM in 2020, a Ph. D in Educational Leadership and Administration granted in 2021. After many years working in various roles related to Homeland Security and Emergency Management, Tanya is undoubtedly ready for the next opportunity that

comes along. Don't be surprised when you see her children and grandchildren cheering her on in whatever is next, still laughing at the family story of the woman who can't quite remember how old she is.



DEB MOLLER BIO

Deb Moller is the former public-private partnerships manager at the Oregon Office of Emergency Management. She is a senior fellow at the Center of Excellence, Homeland Security - Emergency Management. As principal of Moller Consulting, Deb has over ten years of experience assisting local, state, federal and tribal governments, as well as private profit and not-for-profit organizations, achieve performance goals. Deb's experience includes twenty years designing and managing adult education and job training programs for marginalized populations. She holds an M.A. in applied behavioral science from Bastyr University. She is the founder of Cascadia Calling, a community based earthquake preparedness organization.

CHMURA – JOBSEQ: EVALUATE LOCAL WORKFORCE AGAINST EDUCATION THROUGH DATA ANALYTIC TOOLS

By Nancy Aird

Do you understand the local workforce? JobsEQ by CHMURA software tools provide data analytics on critical indicators, including occupation and industry data, demographic profile by age and race, income and poverty levels, underemployment, growth demands, wages, and employment by history. JobsEQ for Education also produces data projections on what skills, certifications, and occupations will be high-wage and in-demand in the coming years. Ten of the Centers of Excellence (COE) have joined together to develop a CHMURA Data Pilot to research, analyze and disseminate information on workforce supply and demographic data for a quarterly report with final recommendation on the tool's effectiveness.

Each COE will be submitting 2-4 occupations by 6-Digit SOC (Standard Occupational Classification is a federal statistical standard used to classify workers into occupational categories). The Center of Excellence for Homeland Security Emergency Management (CoE-HSEM) will be looking at the following occupations:

- SOC 11-9161 Emergency Management Directors
- SOC 19-5011 Occupational Health and Safety Specialists
- SOC 33-2022 Forest Fire Inspectors and Prevention Specialists
- Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security (CTE Cluster)

We are just starting to learn about the JobsEQ site. The site can drill down from the total state percentages to county levels.

It also will break down the employment to industry, wages, education profile, job posting, top skills and gaps, and county distribution. Here is some of our first data: Current occupation demographics (CHMURA) data:

- Emergency Management Directors – averages are 86.2% white and 63.4% men.
- Occupational Health and Safety Specialists – average 88.0% white and 66.9 % men.
- Forest Fire Inspectors and Prevention Specialists- average 84.5% white and 77.3% men.
- Law, Public Safety, Corrections, and Security - average are 82.5% white and 65.9% men.

How will we use our data? First, the CoE-HSEM's Advisory Board (41 members) reviews the current position statement. In addition, it communicates with constituencies regarding its position on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) to our pathway programs.

Our board looks at how colleges develop and deliver social equity/social justice content in courses and activities.

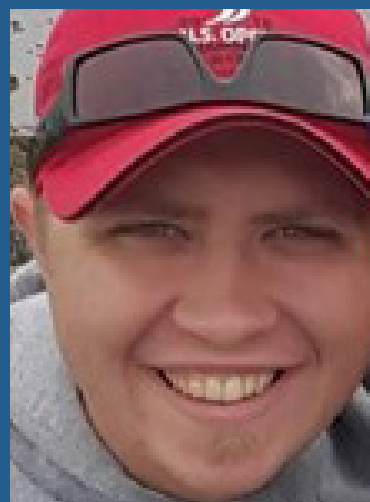
Also identified and addressed are EDI issues of racism within the all-hazard emergency management field intending to improve outcomes to communities and vulnerable populations. Program changes promote racial equity and the recruitment of diverse individuals into the workforce from underrepresented groups. We will also provide forums for collaborative learning to prepare participants to engage and build core values of EDI and model those behaviors.

Why do we need a diverse occupation demographic? Societal protests and demands for the inclusion of representation are arising daily. Facing climate change repercussions and natural hazard risks (flood, drought, tsunamis, hurricane, tornado, volcano, fires, earthquakes, rising sea level) are societal concerns. The need for expanding our investment in training and educating citizens to address social vulnerability and community resilience is becoming more urgent. Hazard emergency management programs can fill the gaps and needs with educated professionals from our underrepresented groups and communities.

FEATURED PODCAST WITH JOSEPH DILLEY

Center Director Linda Crerar interviews Fire Services Leadership and Management Program Coordinator Joseph (Joey) Dilley on college programs within the Fire Service and HSEM fields. We are excited to have Joey as an Advisory Board member and continue collaborating on projects that will allow us to work on common goals and outcomes for professional training and student development.

Check out our podcast with Joseph Dilley:
<https://soundcloud.com/user-851177719/joseph-dilley-interview>



JUNETEENTH IS RECOGNIZED AS A FEDERAL HOLIDAY!

*Taken from the Chancellor and Presidents of Pierce College

This week, Congress passed a bill to make Juneteenth the nation's 12th federal holiday. Starting in 2022, Washington state will also recognize Juneteenth as an official state holiday and day off for state workers. This legislation marks a significant milestone in recognizing and addressing historic racism in our state and nation. It also affirms Pierce College's commitment to becoming an anti-racist institution, leading with racial equity, and advancing racial, social and economic justice in service to our diverse communities.

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Juneteenth is a time for colleges to confront their racist legacies, and to examine how we can and should actively work to disrupt and eradicate racist practices and policies.

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We would like to share the words of Dr. Ciera Graham, our Associate Director of College Access, Retention, and Engagement, regarding the impact of Juneteenth:

“Juneteenth holds a special significance in the lives of Black Americans, and in our nation's history. While Independence Day is commonly and traditionally celebrated on July 4th, June 19th is a marker of Black independence, freedom and liberation. On June 19th, 1865, Union soldiers occupied Galveston, Texas and announced that slaves were now free from the rule and bondage of their slave masters. This historic occasion came two and half years later after President Lincoln signed the [Emancipation Proclamation \(https://www.archives.gov/exhibits/featured-documents/emancipation-proclamation\)](https://www.archives.gov/exhibits/featured-documents/emancipation-proclamation) in 1863. After June 19th, 1865, former slaves celebrated Juneteenth by delivering inspirational speeches, singing songs of jubilation and praise, and holding gatherings with family and friends centered on celebrating Black culture

in all of its beauty, joy and greatness. Today, Juneteenth serves as a powerful reminder of how Black people are empowered to take back the racist narrative surrounding our lives.

Juneteenth implores us to recognize and center the humanity of Black people. Black people are remarkable in all of our shades of melanin; Black people are brilliant in all of our forms of knowledge creation, and Black people are innovative, constantly pushing the limits and boundaries of creativity and originality. Black joy is an act of resistance. Black joy is revolutionary and transformative. Black joy is about affirming one's beautiful life. Black joy is commemorating the resilience, grit and fortitude of our ancestors and remaining steadfast in our mission to break generational curses and build legacies. Black joy is self-love. On Juneteenth, we know that to be joyful and Black is an act of resistance to white supremacy and systems of oppression. Black joy is a flame that never extinguishes.

As a college who remains fervent in their ability to dismantle white supremacy and advance racial and social equity, Juneteenth is a time for deep reflection on how anti-blackness remains deeply entrenched within the walls of higher education, and our most powerful institutions. Juneteenth is a time for colleges to confront their racist legacies, and to examine how we can and should actively work to disrupt and eradicate racist practices and policies. Civil rights have always been delayed for Black people, and Juneteenth forces us to contend with the contradiction of freedom and liberation for our most marginalized populations. The fight for true freedom and liberation continues and we need our most vocal and action-oriented allies and advocates to stand with us.”

To learn more about Juneteenth, check out these [resources \(http://juneteenth.com/\)](http://juneteenth.com/), and listen to the historic and dynamic speech by Fredrick Douglas, “[What to a Slave is the 4th of July?](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z3YsMWLSyxY&t=18s)”(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z3YsMWLSyxY&t=18s>)

Thank you to Dr. Graham for these important words, and to all of you as we commemorate this historic milestone.

