

Leading the Way in Disaster Management

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Tulane University has launched the Disaster Management Leadership Academy, the first university program in the nation to offer training through the doctoral level in international disaster management. Tulane faculty members Nancy Mock and Charles Figley are among those who are applying their expertise in international disaster management to the new academy.



Tulane faculty members Nancy Mock and Charles Figley are helping to lead the work of the new Disaster Management Leadership Academy at Tulane. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

“This program is timely and unique in its global reach, systems approach, and its emphasis on providing current and future disaster management and humanitarian agency/program leaders with the analytical tools they need to lead robust, effective and efficient interventions,” said Tulane University President Scott Cowen.

The importance of the new academic center is underscored by the fact that more than 80 million people are displaced globally due to war, violence, urbanization and

natural disasters, Cowen added. “Moreover, the number of storms, floods and earthquakes has increased threefold over the past 30 years,” he said.

Among other important partners, the U.S. Agency for International Development's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance provided a \$2.1 million grant to launch the academy.

The new center is the culmination of a five-year effort by Tulane, which has a long history in the field of disaster management and firsthand experience through Hurricane Katrina, which flooded 80 percent of its campuses and inflicted more than \$650 million in damages to the university.

It will be an interdisciplinary academic center affiliated with various Tulane units including the A. B. Freeman School of Business, School of Law, School of Social Work and School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine. In addition to its doctoral program, the academy will provide certificates and master's degrees in disaster management.

The United Nations and humanitarian agencies around the country have signaled their enthusiasm for the academy.

“The support we have received from leaders in the humanitarian community has been tremendous,” said Ky Luu, senior director of the academy, who has extensive and intimate experience in the field of disaster management as former director of the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance and vice president of International Medical Corps.

Josette Sheeran, executive director for the United Nations' World Food Programme, said, “It goes without saying that the World Food Programme welcomes the DMLA's efforts to ensure humanitarian leaders are trained to meet the global challenges of today and tomorrow.”

Primary academy staff members in addition to Luu are Eamon Kelly, president emeritus of Tulane and a renowned leadership management specialist; [Mock](#), associate professor in international health and development and technology transfer at the School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine and an accomplished humanitarian response scholar; and [Figley](#), who holds the Paul Henry Kurzweg Chair in Disaster Mental Health and is director of the Tulane Traumatology Institute in the School of Social Work.