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Professional Development Grant

Final Report: FEMA Emergency Management Institute—Higher Education Symposium (6.5.16 – 6.10.16)

## PROFESSIONAL ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITY OVERVIEW:

FEMA's annual Higher Education Symposium facilitates the exchange of instructional and curricular best practices among Emergency Management college and university programs. It also provides an opportunity for researchers to present current original theoretical, basic, and applied research regarding the disaster context, emergency management practice, and other related fields to an audience of peers for scholarly dissemination and feedback. In the past, I have been honored to present my research and practical experience at this meeting. As important as presenting my own research may be, the knowledge and insight others present is equally valuable. I regularly incorporate others' findings into the courses that I teach.

In addition to the personal opportunity associated with attendance, this conference offers a unique opportunity for the exchange of knowledge and perspective between academics and practitioners and improving the academic presence and reputation of those institutions participating. Peer faculty members are more likely to recommend academic programs with whose faculty they have interacted. Familiarity with the activities and scholarship produced by a program is also a positive influence when individuals are selecting academic programs.

## REVIEW OF ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITY INVOLVEMENT:

My involvement in the 2016 Symposium took multiple forms. I presented my original research (A Jolt to the System: Measuring Disaster-induced Social Disruption through Water Consumption, Sales Tax Revenue, and Crime Data) during the research symposium. I am also served as a peer reviewer for the research symposium for those areas in which I was not involved. Finally, I served as the moderator for the research symposium overall. In fulfilling these three roles, I represented the Emergency Management program at Arkansas Tech University overtly.

I also presented a break-out session regarding the development of curriculum through the identification and application of core competencies in our discipline as a member of an ATU DEM group. Our session was selected as representing the application of best practices in curricular development and academic assessment. Again, Arkansas Tech University was highly visible and in a position to strengthen our reputation and professional national and international network.

## SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES:

In addition to disseminating my findings, I received for peer feedback for multiple articles being written from my dissertation work. My work as a peer reviewer exposed me to the alternative perspective of the peer review process and has informed my approach to writing and preparing proposal submissions. It also gave me a glimpse into the current research trends in related interest areas within the discipline of emergency management. This has expanded my consideration of topics for future research as well as helped me identify potential partners for collaborative projects. Furthermore, feedback regarding our group session on curriculum development was well received and has resulted in multiple contacts from peers at other institutions and opportunities to serve on FEMA-sponsored research initiatives.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

The networks and peer relationships established through participation in this conference can support a multitude of projects at Arkansas Tech University including projects for both our undergraduates and graduate students. We bring several recognized speakers to our departmental Emergency Management Conference each year. Many of these scholars and professionals are willing to travel to Russellville for little or no stipend because of their familiarity with our program, faculty, and scholarship activities. In order for our reputation to be maintained or enhanced and our networks to continue to strengthen and expand, participation at this meeting is critical. The support for my participation was greatly appreciated and I am hopeful that the committee continues to see our participation in this meeting as a meaningful and important personal and programmatic opportunity.