Proposal to Create an Emergency Operations Center for the University of North Texas

Summary
The University of North Texas does not have a dedicated Emergency Operation Center. We need an Emergency Operations Center because it would have a two pronged effect, it would strengthen the Emergency Management program and it would provide a tangible site that could be utilized for the greater protection of UNT’s students and its assets both physical and financial. As it stands UNT’s ability to respond to, recover from, and prevent hazards relies on a network of first responders who are given direction from a body outside the persuasion of UNT. Unique hazards and scenarios are present at UNT, having an Emergency Operations Center would ensure a rapid response tailored to issues facing the campus. This Emergency Operations Center will strengthen the four bold goals of UNT, thus increasing the value of attending UNT.

The completion of this EOC could be accomplished by the summer of 2016 at the latest if we begin construction promptly. The labor, materials, software and supplies will cost approximately $745,970. I have a standing design for an Emergency Operations Center that I am willing to donate to reduce cost further.

Current Issues of Not Having an Emergency Operations Center
The Emergency Administration Development and Planning program was developed on UNT’s campus in the 1980’s. This degree is a direct reflection of UNT due to it being birthed on our campus. To continue to be at the forefront of Emergency Management it is important to stay ahead of other programs around the country. Having an EOC would allow for students to have hands on experience and gain a critical understanding of how the Emergency Management Cycle is put to use in the real world. Without an EOC on UNT’s campus they are at a greater risk to hazards facing the university. The litigious consequences of a preventable death on UNT’s campus would result in great financial loss, regardless of the outcome of the case. UNT has a responsibility to protect its students. The building of an EOC would allow for the mitigation of scenarios not uncommon to universities around the country. The ability of UNT to respond to a crisis on campus is limited in their current state. An EOC located beyond our campus is both too far away and too out of touch with the unique hazards facing a university to respond in a fast and effective manner. The absence of UNT specific plans to respond to an event leaves the university at a disadvantage to properly mitigate for, and recover from an incident. Furthermore, the construction of the new buildings around campus creates more assets that would be costly if damaged or destroyed by a natural disaster.

The four bold goals that would be strengthened by the building of an EOC are

- Provide the best undergraduate experience in Texas.
- Provide superior graduate education, scholarship and artistic endeavors and achieve status among the nation’s tier-one research institutions.
- Become a national leader among universities in student support, employee relations, operational effectiveness and service to constituencies.
- Establish UNT as a nationally recognized, engaged university and regional leader by building and expanding mutually beneficial partnerships and resources.

UNT’s first bold goal states that they want to “provide the best undergraduate experience in Texas.” Building an EOC would achieve said goal by increasing the value of an Emergency Management degree. UNT’s second goal is to “provide superior graduate education, scholarship and artistic endeavors and
achieve status among the nation’s tier-one research institutions.” The creation of an EOC would achieve their second goal by providing graduate students the possibility to achieve a working understanding of the activities performed within an EOC, as well as provide an opportunity for graduate students to staff the EOC, either as full time employees or as interns. The third bold goal’s aim to achieve operational effectiveness is accomplished through increasing the effectiveness of UNT to better meet the safety needs of students. Creating an EOC on UNT’s campus would fulfill the fourth bold goal by becoming one of the only campuses in the country to have its own EOC, putting our EADP program further ahead of competitors. Mutually beneficial partnerships would become a reality by providing a system that could benefit undergraduates and graduates of the EADP program both from UNT and other schools, or other surrounding emergency management functions in DFW.

A university faces unique hazards on many fronts. Aside from recurring natural disasters such as tornadoes man made hazards are more prevalent on a university campus. Across the United States the frequency and likelihood of an active shooter is growing. Historically universities have been the focal point for grass roots movements and social change. UNT’s culture is one of activism, making the possibility of a riot or other social uprising more profound. For example during any given semester a crowd of students can be seen exchanging in heated debates with pastors and anti-abortionists alike. It is not impossible that the heated exchanges could be whipped into a riot of sorts, often the demonstrations require a police presence to keep the situation under control. With an EOC UNT could provide a custom plan to deal with an event that we have discussed. Looking beyond the students that attend UNT there are many people who visit the campus from neighboring independent school districts. A common site is a long line of elementary school students entering the Life Science Building. The addition of the outside entities compounds the need for a fast and effective plan to deal with the hazards. If an active shooter was to target a building occupied by a bus load of elementary students would be a political, reputational, and financial disaster.

The University of North Texas has a responsibility to have a competent plan of action when responding to any of the before mentioned hazards. An EOC would ensure that the campus, the students, and UNT’s assets would be better protected in the face of a hazard. The four bold goals of the university will also be strengthened by an EOC and allow for those bold goals to be met to a high degree.

**Proposed Solution: Build an Emergency Operations Center on UNT's campus.**

The proposed Emergency Operations Center will provide UNT and its students with

- a more valuable learning experience
- Safer environment to continue their college education
- Tangible means of safety
- Increased respect for the Emergency Management program
- Meet the four bold goals to a high degree
- Reduced loss of assets due to man-made or natural hazards

**Potential Loss of Assets**

- Itemized list of assets
- Priority ranking of assets
- Customized response and mitigation plans for assets
- Hazard analysis and interpretation of effect on assets
- Decrease of hazard impact
Safety of Students and Faculty

- Quick response from first responders
- Quick identification and analysis of severity of threat
- Efficient requests for mutual aid
- Tailored plans for active shooter, and terrorism threat
- Vigilant of specific issues facing UNT

Increased Value of EADP program

- National recognition for having an active EOC on campus
- Hands on training for undergraduates and graduates
- Valuable work experience that will give students from UNT’s EADP program an edge over competition
- Fulfillment of the four bold goals to a high degree
- Internship possibilities at new EOC
- Give students the ability to staff low functions of the EOC to gain better understanding of an EOC’s role in the emergency management cycle.

If ground breaking on the EOC takes place this summer it could see completion by the summer of 2016.

My qualifications for developing an Emergency Operations Center
I have completed an emergency management class on the functions, day to day activity, design and security functions of an EOC. I am competent in designing a self-sustaining EOC capable of handling the unique issues a university faces.

Budget
The following table reflects the estimated cost of materials, software, and security parameters needed to create a fully functioning, self-sufficient emergency operations center. Budget has been stapled to the back of this proposal due to its size.

Conclusion
I am excited about the possibility of creating a self-sufficient emergency operations center at the University of North Texas. This emergency operations center will provide the university with an opportunity to increase the safety of students, faculty and will ensure their assets are better protected from hazards both man-made and natural.