

Concept Paper for the 2015 – 2020 Strategic Plan
Meeting the Educational Needs of Emergency Service Personnel

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President Rosenberg, thank you for your memorandum asking for concept papers as part of the 2015 – 2020 Strategic Development Plan. I was hired as an adjunct professor for the Department of Public Administration one year ago and am happy to have joined the ranks of FIU faculty. Briefly, I am a 20 year veteran of the fire service and serve as a Chief Fire Officer for Miami Dade Fire Rescue Department. I have been involved in adult education for the past 15 years and see a growing trend/need for online based and blended courses, as well as an increase in the vocational offerings from the University. From my perspective as a public servant, emergency responder, and adult educator, I offer a few paragraphs that attempt to answer some of the questions you have posed.

A major driver of change in the fire service is an ever increasing trend on professional standards, training, and education. As this continues to evolve, the fire service continues to look for educational institutions that will meet the need while being flexible to the target audience's shift schedules and course delivery format preferences. I see potential for FIU to become a valuable provider of this education and training.

FIU has already embraced the online world of education. The University must leverage upon and continue to develop its resources in this realm. Technology has made it possible to duplicate the classroom environment in a virtual world. With the right standards, faculty training, and IT specialists, the product can be just as good or better than the traditional classroom. This particular environment, or one of a blended nature, is particularly suited to emergency response agencies.

A related opportunity for FIU is the emergency response community of Latin America and the Caribbean Islands. It has been well established that these areas are often times seeking professional training and education from their U.S. counterparts. There are a few private ventures involved in meeting this need, but none have the resources of a large university at their disposal. The development of vocational and credit programs in the Spanish language, is but one of the opportunities available to FIU. Geographically located in the gateway to South America and the Caribbean, access to bilingual faculty and subject matter experts, and the ability to deliver these programs via the internet and/or in a blended format, places FIU at an advantage over many other institutions.

In closing, FIU has limited exposure in the local and international emergency response community. There are opportunities to increase this exposure and potentially become a leader in the delivery of education to this segment of the market. With the right leadership and allocation of resources, FIU could develop a significant presence in this field and build upon the quest to be *World's Ahead*.