

**Service-Learning, Serious Gaming and Video Production:
An ASSET to College and Community Emergency Preparedness**

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Dep-Wah Davis, Associate Professor
Computer Information Technology
Tomball College

Program Description: Students and faculty from Tomball College's Computer Gaming Program will demonstrate an innovative serious game aimed at improving emergency preparedness. Attendees will see the product of this first year, CCNCCE-grant funded service learning project and hear from the student designers. Additionally, information will be provided concerning the campus and community partnerships developed along with a preview of future applications to this project.

In August and September 2005, hurricanes Katrina and Rita approached and made landfall on the Gulf Coast of the United States, forcing millions to flee their homes and causing billions of dollars in damage. Among those lives disrupted by the storms were college students and personnel.

On April 16, 2007, Seung-Hui Cho committed the deadliest shooting in US history on the campus of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Students and faculty alike were victims of this tragedy and our country still mourns the losses while contemplating the future.

In August of 2006, Tomball College, one of five campuses in the North Harris Montgomery Community College District in Texas, received a subgrant from the Community College National Center for Community Engagement to develop emergency preparedness service learning projects as part of the Accent on Student Success: Engaged

Together in Service (ASSETS) grant. Our proposal entailed a three-year program centered around a new computer gaming certificate program which would tackle issues of campus emergency planning, immigration and homeland security, and environmental changes to limit hurricane damage.

Our Year One project plan was to develop computer simulations for the campus and larger community that focused on various campus-based emergency situations. These situations initially included bioterrorism, fire, tornadoes, flood from hurricanes and storms, and a campus shooter scenario. Our community partners included the campus police department, facilities manager, vocational nursing program, and our Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), organized through the Harris County Office of Emergency Management and County Judge Robert Eckels. Our ultimate goal was, once the simulations were complete, to make them available to various community entities including Tomball Regional Hospital, TOMAGWA medical clinic (which serves the local area of Tomball, Magnolia, and Waller), Tomball Police and Fire Departments, Tomball ISD, and the larger North Harris Montgomery Community College District, which serves 43,000 students on its five campuses.

This service learning project is a collaboration of the Tomball College Vocational Nursing program, directed by Tracie Woods and the college Computer Gaming Certificate Program, directed by Dep-Wah Davis. The plan of the project was to have the VN students working as an information source to the gaming students as they developed pre-production elements of the simulation during Fall 2006 and then the VN students would function as testers for the simulations once completed in the Spring of 2007. In

this way, the VN students are the “clients” for the gaming students, whose careers will be focused on meeting clients’ needs and developing projects on time and under budget.

Participants in this session will be given an overview of the project from conceptualization to present day by two student designers, the lead classroom faculty, and the college faculty service learning coordinator. Topics to be covered will include:

- I. Fits and Starts: Getting the Project Started Fall 2006
- II. Finding Our Way: How Community Partners Helped to Shape Simulations
- III. Riding the Wave: Adjusting the Project in Light of National Events

Our hope is to provide listeners with insight into this very timely service learning project from multiple campus perspectives. While recent national events alone make this project compelling, our expectation is that participants will leave inspired to develop similar projects in the emergency preparedness/homeland security sector at their campus.

Participants will be provided with handouts, including the project overview, plans for the future projects, resources we consulted, as well as campus and district background information.