

The International Emergency Management Association student members are the most valuable asset to the overall IAEM organization. These student members should provide the majority of new professional members to the association. We have the first opportunity to show prospective members what an amazing organization this can be for them as they embark on their journey to becoming emergency managers. The Global Student Council (GSC) is the student board that coordinates with all regional student boards and has a voice on the Global Board. We have a responsibility to create a good return on investment and prove ourselves as the indispensable resource for not only full-time students, but also working professionals seeking higher degrees.

In order to attain these lofty ambitions, we need to have a plan. This plan needs to be grand in scope yet attainable by committed individuals. We currently possess such an opportunity in our own emerging markets, places such as South America, Europe and Asia. In the North American and Oceania regions, we have the prospect to capture more students as they begin their journey to becoming emergency managers. The key is to do some things very well, and make sure that in doing so we truly establish ourselves as the best organization for students pursuing education in Emergency Management.

This plan details eight major topics that present areas for opportunity in 2016.

Those eight categories are:

1. Career and Education Exploration
2. Opportunities to Support Current Students
3. Service (Volunteerism)
4. AEM/CEM®
5. Communication
6. Recruitment
7. GSC at the Annual IAEM Conference
8. Backpack to Briefcase Initiative

All would require an investment of time and intellect, but only some would require capital expenditure. Of course as we invest in things that promote new membership and the renewal of membership, those additional membership dues will provide additional support for these initiatives. The anticipated financial burden will be addressed in each individual section.

All these items are designed to boost the overall membership, but they are also designed to bring value to our members first and the greater community as a whole.

### *Career and Education Exploration*

So, you're interested in a career in Emergency Management. Now what? What does this emerging field actual do? No, were not first responders like Police, Fire, or EMS. Yes, we are mostly public sector employees working for a jurisdiction. No we do not manage the Emergency Room/Department at the hospital. Every member started their career path at step one, finding out more about the field of Emergency Management. The IAEM can and should be the place to get this sort of information. We should be a one-stop shop to those who have an interest in this career path.

We need to give prospective students an honest explanation of what this job is, and the many things it isn't. This can be accomplished many different ways. The IAEM website already provides some great preliminary information about the role of an emergency management and what the career field is all about. We could add some anecdotal essays from current practitioners. Multimedia presentations could also assist a prospective student with getting an overall sense of what this field requires.

The IAEM GSC should provide the most comprehensive directory of all schools offering any sort of Emergency Management program, from basic certificate to a Doctoral degree. This will help people find the right program for them. This

will also give them a nice introduction to the IAEM at the earliest part of their path, giving us an easy chance to capture them as members. US FEMA started this task several years ago, but their listing has become outdated (see <https://www.training.fema.gov/emiweb/edu/collegelist/>). FEMA seems to rely on those institutions sending information in regarding the educational institutions various offerings. The GSC could be far more proactive in searching out this information, compiling it and keeping the information updated.

The added benefit to the GSC in cultivating this list is we will have a great direct marketing list. We can develop relationships with the faculty and hopefully get them to at least provide information to students, and maybe even put in an encouraging word for the IAEM.

The good news about this initiative is the first, and hardest phase, has been completed. Thanks to the hard work done by Matthew Ellis and Charlie Whorton, Secretary for the USA Student board, the data has been collected. The question is what to do with the information now. We need to consider what the best medium to maintain and distribute this information would be. Depending on what is decided for this information will determine any financial obligation associated with this information. The decision of what to do with this information needs to be a priority for 2016.

### *Opportunities to Support Current Students*

Students truly do represent the future lifeblood of the IAEM. If we bring them value now, we have the chance to make them IAEM members for the life of their professional careers. As an organization, there can be no greater priority than to make sure we are getting as many students while they are pursuing an advanced degree. The challenge is how we make a professional organization a valuable asset to someone who may not have yet been working professionally in the field. There are three key areas that the IAEM GSC can add real value to a student.

First is being a major repository of scholarship information for anything related to Emergency management, including opportunities such as the Credential reimbursement program (see point 4). Most students will immediately recognize real value in an organization that can help them get money. This will also open an opportunity for organizations that offer scholarships a chance to list them in a central database that is focused on students pursuing a degree in emergency management.

Second is becoming an equally definitive resource for internships. Most students see the real value in participating in an internship, and some programs require such participation. In our 2010 survey, 87% of respondents who participated in an internship said the internship enhanced their learning experience. However, according to that same survey, only 25% of the total student members responding actually participated in an internship during their studies<sup>2</sup>. We have a real opportunity to help students find a wide variety of internship opportunities. While some schools will be helpful at this, even those that have resources will usually only extend to the immediate local area, where the faculty has roots in the greater public safety sector. This is a fine resource, but we can offer more, such as our green flag program at the annual conference that indicates if they are looking for people to hire or participate in internships.

Third is a mentorship program that pairs students with experienced leaders in the field and gives them practical experience to be paired with the academic pursuit of a higher degree. Many of the projects assigned in these programs have students needing to get real life information, and we can bridge that need with willing individuals. Of 72.3% of all students surveyed in our 2010 survey that they had not received any formal counselling while attending school.

These initiatives really don't have a financial burden to them, but would require time to research and coordinate information.

## *Service (Volunteerism)*

Service is a core value of most every Emergency Manager. We do this job not purely for profit but because we feel a need to serve our fellow members of the community and to be a guiding light when there is trouble. An overwhelming number of our members believe in doing some volunteerism, some 77% of the respondents to our 2010 survey. Organizing this belief creates a branding opportunity. Every year in the fall we, as an organization, descend on a city for our annual conference. While we are all together, we should seize the opportunity to gather all for a project for good. If we engage local emergency management or the local VOAD, we could come up with a worthwhile service project to perform that would be emergency management related and necessary to our hosting community. We, as students of this great organization, get a chance to give back.

This is an event that will have several wonderful outcomes. First is the most obvious, we will have a chance to leave our hosting community with a lasting legacy of our collective hard work. This will also create a wonderful networking opportunity as students from around the world gather and work together. This could also get the attention, support and even additional hands involved from the professional membership population. We would welcome all to our service project. Finally, we would make sure to get all of our members in an identifiable T Shirt that brands the IAEM and possibly their own school. We would of course take great pictures and videos for our internal use, but we would also invite local media and any industry specific media that may be in attendance to come join us and report on our great work. Finally, it could give students great real world experience and may even count as a potentially eligible activity for CEM certification.

The best part of this is at best our expense would be limited to promotional materials for members volunteering, such as t-shirts or hats, and any signage or

other promotional material we might want to invest in. We may even have an opportunity to partner with a corporation who may sponsor the entire activity.

### *Associate Emergency Manager (AEM®) & the Certified Emergency Manager (CEM®)*

The visibility of the Associate Emergency Manager (AEM®) program needs to be expanded for those undergrads that are looking to distinguish themselves as they enter the workforce. Currently there are only 151 AEM® certified members worldwide, and this certification doesn't seem to get the same prominence in IAEM literature. Since the main thrust of the other councils is the working professional, most of these members will be looking to get the Certified Emergency Manager (CEM®) since they will possess the required years of service for this certification. The responsibility of advancing the value and prestige of the AEM® seems like a natural task for the GSC.

The GSC can make the advancement of the AEM® certification a priority with a focused program accentuating the requirements and the advantages of this certification. The GSC needs to offer ample online programs and literature to help students navigate the AEM® requirements. Make these programs nominally priced or even free to expand the appeal of the certification. Promotion throughout our communication will also increase the appeal the AEM® program.

At our annual conference in Clark County, Nevada we have rolled out a program for five students to receive the AEM certification. We have set several basic requirements, we stated up front that students from outside the US and Canada region will receive priority since both those regions have done programs similar to this in the past. Our goal is not only to financially provide for this opportunity, but also to monitor and coach the participants as they spend the year to complete the certification. Our goal needs to be 100% achievement at the end of the one year period they have to complete the certification.

The goal for this program should be to really shine a spotlight on these students for doing more than just earning the certification. They earned a scholarship of sorts, and had to complete additional steps to achieve this. We should recognize the individuals for their extraordinary accomplishment. After the first year is complete we can assess the program and make changes as our feedback dictates.

Above all, though, we need to have a pervasive philosophy that being part a student in the IAEM means you will at some point be pursuing certification. Every one of our members has made a commitment to advance their careers through education, and making sure they take advantage of the IAEM certifications is the best way to ensure our members enjoy long, productive careers in the service of Emergency Management.

### *Communication*

Communication will be the key to all of these initiatives. Working with the existing membership to continue to demonstrate value will be our best way to protect our existing numbers. Publishing information that is valuable, topical and authoritative will be a great lure for new members. The question is what is the best and most cost effective way to “advertise” all these great things?

Social media is how people are having a conversation about anything and everything. Facebook and Twitter are the overwhelming favorites, and most people couldn't envision a job search without Linked In. There are many other specialized services, and many more that are more specific to a country or a region of the world. While pursuing a broad base of social media outlets seems like casting a wider net, we should concentrate our efforts on the big three sites, Facebook, Twitter and Linked In.

The GSC has established a social media coordinator position who would have the primary responsibility to oversee all of the communication avenues. Email

and social media avenues are very low cost-high yield actions that will help advertise our achievements when we accomplish these many initiatives. The key is to find an individual who is **passionate** about both social media and emergency management to administer these sites for the GSC. This person will need to be a true journalist adhering to all the rules of traditional journalism and also exist on a regular publishing schedule. This individual will need to moderate all conversations and remove or redact anything inappropriate. The most successful organizations approach the role of social media as an entirely separate task. If this is executed well, we will have the engagement of our membership in a truly democratic fashion. We can also invite the more casual observer to our information to take the next step in joining the IAEM. To quote the American Society of News Editors, "Social networks are tools, not toys"

Much like several other key positions in the IAEM GSC this will be a volunteer position. This way the cost will be kept to a minimum.

### *Recruitment*

In an effort to be forward leaning about increasing our membership in the emerging markets we have identified the need to reach out directly to these members and invite them into the association in a very personal way. We are developing a few different strategies to make this happen. First, we need to go outside the IAEM events to meet students, educators and mentors who may be able to bring members into the IAEM. I propose we attend three different conferences this year. The two based in the USA we should partner with the USA student council, and the one based in Canada we should partner with the Canadian council. The events are as follows:

RES/CON New Orleans March 1-3, 2016

RES/CON is having a separate exhibition area specifically for students, the Student Research Expo (SRE). If accepted, students get free conference



registration and one night hotel, so this is a great opportunity to meet motivated students who are sure to attend. Perhaps there is an opportunity to create a networking event or sponsor something for the SRE specifically?

National Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters (NVOAD) Conference  
Minneapolis, MN May 22-25

Volunteering is one of the best ways to distinguish yourself as a student. Many students are getting a degree in Emergency Management as a result of volunteering, or are looking to accumulate experience through volunteering opportunities. Students should be part of this highly worthwhile organization, and I think it would be a great place for the council to interact with students. This conference is taking proposals for breakout sessions and someone from the council should submit a proposal tying students and volunteering.

World Conference on Disaster Management (WCDM) Toronto, Canada June 7-8

The WCDM is, for the second year, pushing student participation by offering a \$99CAN registration fee. They are committed to getting 200 students for this event. The marketing coordinator has already spoken to the organizers about possibly trying to organize a networking event or sponsorship opportunity. There will be more information coming soon regarding this.

Second, once we identify potential members based on their academic pursuits in our developing regions, we will send them a personal invitation to join the IAEM. We have created a directed letter of introduction to accompany the IAEM developed membership brochure. Once we have a certain number of members involved, we hope to create a grassroots campaign using those early

joiners as taste-makers for the region they belong. Our hope is those first in will embrace taking on a leadership role.

In an effort to reach out and personally meet those individuals that may be potential members, we are also developing a standard trade show booth outfit that will be available to each new region once they have completed their region voting process. This outfit could go anywhere there is an event going on that could create new members, and we have people in place to staff that booth. It will have a personalized table cloth, a couple large banners with high visibility graphics and branding standardized from the IAEM, and a tent to surround the entire area. In addition, we will have several handouts, brochures and pamphlets available in the local language. This booth would be perfect for local or regional meetings or fairs, and certainly for any sort of on campus recruiting that a chapter might want to utilize.

We have the first trade show booth setup in the US in storage at the IAEM headquarters in Falls Church, VA. After deploying it for the 2015 annual conference in Clark County, NV we were able to identify some improvements that will be able to be replicated many times over as each region develops a need for this. We will put those improvements in place during the 2016 year for the US based booth setup. At the annual conference in Savannah for 2016 we intend to roll out those improvements, and also position the booth not only as a place for students to meet the members of the GSC and find out more about what we do, but also to create a comfortable area to facilitate spontaneous networking and fellowship.

There will be costs associated with this initiative. Then cost for board members of the GSC to attend the conferences plus any costs associated with a networking event or sponsorship opportunity will need to be ascertained and voted on. We should also look to share those costs with the various regions

these events are taking place in, since they will benefit them directly. There will be additional expenses to improve the basic trade show booth we developed for use at the conference. We may also need to assist regions getting their own booth up and running. We will have ongoing expenses with replenishing handout items and any potential shipping costs.

### *GSC at the Annual IAEM Conference*

This most recent IAEM conference in Clark County, NV was a great opportunity to effectively present ourselves to the student membership and make them aware of the GSC as resource for them. We managed to make many new connections as a result of our booth, our outing and the scheduled GSC meeting. We certainly want to continue that momentum into the future! The question is what do we want to do at our next conference in Savannah, GA in October, 2016?

**GSC booth at EMEX.** The booth at EMEX allowed for many opportunities of spontaneous interactions with students and professional members. It was a great success and created a wonderful meeting point for our members. For the upcoming conference, we would like to make sure we are not in the middle of the EMEX floor with paying vendors, but up towards the front with other IAEM functions. We would like to expand the booth to include a lounging area where students could come and connect with others and find out more about what we are doing. We also will be upgrading some of our trade dress and signage from last year. My hope is to share some of these upgrade costs with the USA student region, and the conference committee.

**Recreational Outing.** The outing, despite some logistical complications, was viewed as a great success! Many of the members got a chance to have some fun and get to know one another. We should try to replicate that success in Savannah. We will need to look at potential places for this sort of activity. Also,

we need to have it planned earlier enough so that the conference committee can include it in the official program of activities.

**Green flag program.** This is a program that was not in use during the most recent conference, and many have requested it be reinstated. The green flag program designates vendors on the EMEX floor who are hiring or may have potential internship opportunities. We should then provide a list of those companies to any of our students from our booth. Also, I think we should strongly encourage those that are participating in the green flag program to have representatives participate in all of the student based activities as a way to further encourage networking.

**Student day of Professional Development.** We received a request too late to fulfil for last year's conference to develop a session or series of sessions to help with students and new emergency managers with the particular needs of their professional development. Topics such as job seeking strategies, emerging technology in the emergency management workplace and a Grant writing workshop are potential breakout sessions, but we want to create a day, probably Sunday before the official start on Monday, that is dedicated to the students and first time emergency managers. We should work with conference committee on this to develop the slate of sessions and attract talent for these sessions.

**Contests.** We should work with the regional conferences to successfully develop some student contests, and then ask for assistance from the professional membership for independent, non-biased judging of any contests. There have been essay, photo and poster contests in the past, and there should be a decision made as to what will be run for the 2016 conference and then create a uniform procedure for administering these contests that are transparent for any inquiries. Also, there needs to be a multi-platform approach to advertising these contests so all are made aware of them and can equally participate.

**Service Project.** As detailed in the Volunteerism section, we should do a large service project involving as many of the student members as possible. This will create so many wonderful opportunities for our members!

**Ribbons.** Making sure that GSC ribbons are created for our members would be great. Also, ribbons for job seekers and internship seekers would be a great way for students to put themselves out there for vendors.

**Conference cost to Students.** Unlike most of the professional membership of the IAEM, most students are paying for all of their expenses out of pocket. That combined with a lack of professional job in the field and it creates a financial hurdle for most students to attend the annual conference. Attendance has usually varied between 75-100 students attending each year. In order to boost that number, we should examine any and all ways to make the conference more affordable for student members. Stipends, scholarships and even lower conference rates or coordinating a large house for lodging could be some of the ideas worth exploring.

### *Backpack to Briefcase Initiative*

The Global Student Council strives to be the best conduit for professional membership to the IAEM. As such, we have created an initiative that we've called Backpack to Briefcase. The basic premise is that we are shepherding students from the halls of academia to solid professional employment. Once they have crossed that threshold they should see the long term benefit of professional membership in the IAEM. The Backpack to Briefcase initiative is the purest distillation of the concept that we here at the GSC are best poised to create the next generation of members for the whole of the IAEM. Our success is truly the IAEM's success and represents the future of the organization! There are a few activities we are looking to do with this initiative to make it effective for our members and the association.

First is a more complete job board. We have many members in every part of North America and around the world. We should be crowd sourcing this activity to our many members rather than just waiting for submissions. The more robust our jobs board is, the more people can effectively find employment in this field and retain as members.

Second is to spend time with our students preparing them for getting their first job in the industry. We are proposing a slate of breakout sessions geared specifically towards students and professional development at our annual conference next year in Savannah, GA. Many of these will specifically address the challenges of obtaining that first job in Emergency Management and some best practices to give our members the a real advantage. We will discuss this more in our section titled Our Role at the Conference.

## *Conclusion*

Some of these initiatives are new ones but many of these projects are carried over from last year. If we intend to advance the GSC into the emerging markets of South America, Europe, Asia and increase our presence in North America and Oceania, we need to get these things done in 2016, and make that be the foundation of our council. With this plan, we have a framework to advance our mission, to assist our member students and attract those new members that will increase the overall membership of the IAEM.

The GSC has the opportunity to expand our AEM® program since students would be able to reasonably make the qualifications. Doing so, we can also elevate the value of the CEM®, and truly make this the mark of a seasoned emergency manager. We should educate prospective students of what it takes to be an Emergency Manager and what is required to join the field. We can raise awareness of the overall field by intelligently and respectfully branding

the IAEM. The future of our field is excellent and we need to seize a leadership role in telling the world about it!