

# **Working with University College to Educate Professionals and Students to Rebuild Communities after the Cameras Leave Disaster Sites**

by

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## **The Context**

- Global disasters in 2011 could impact 1/3 to 1/2 of the human population (that is, 2.3 billion to 3.5 billion of us)
- According to *Fire-Earth Forecast* (<http://feww.wordpress.com/2011-2012-megadisasters/>), the impact of anthropogenic and human-enhanced natural disasters on global population will be 600 percent more severe in 2011 compared with 2010
- Between 1998 and 2008, nearly 750,000 people died in Southeast Asia alone from causes related to natural disasters. <http://peacewindsamerica.org/why-asia-pacific/>
- Low to middle income groups represent 95% of natural disaster fatalities

## **CRSCAD**

The Center for Rebuilding Sustainable Communities after Disasters or CRSCAD is the only institution of its kind dedicated to raising awareness and possessing the expertise necessary for long-term sustainable post-disaster reconstruction.

### **CRSCAD's Association with University College**

*The collaborative development of two online certificate programs*

In partnership with UC, CRSCAD created a high-value, one-of-a-kind online graduate certificate specifically encouraging visionary, sustainable reconstruction strategies for professionals who wish to advance their careers in the field of post-disaster reconstruction. CRSCAD, with UC, has also created a non-credit professional development certificate providing similar content.

CRSCAD and UC developed these certificate programs in an entirely collaborative spirit of mutual respect.

### **Why are the certificates online?**

- Humanitarian and disaster relief agencies everywhere need staff who are trained to develop and implement appropriate post-disaster reconstruction policies especially as they relate to vulnerable populations
- Online programs provide flexibility and access, facilitating the right to education worldwide.

### **Other CRSCAD-UC Programs**

- CRSCAD Summer Institute in China
- CRSCAD International Conference on China

## **Why does CRSCAD work with University College?**

Based on my own experience, there are 79 compelling reasons why CRSCAD works, and delights in working, collaboratively with University College. I shall briefly address five of these, due to the shortness of time.

### **Reason 1**

***UC has an impressive reputation for actively promoting academic entrepreneurship by focusing on, and encouraging, faculty to operate as entrepreneurial thinkers.***

UC worked with me to achieve one of the central objectives of the certificate programs – a quest for original methods to engage with community (locally, nationally and globally) in order to generate value to the University of Massachusetts Boston by disseminating an affirmative message about it, advancing its visibility and image, creating cordiality and philanthropy for it, and constructing a distinguishing identity for it.

### **Reason 2**

***UC administrators and Program Directors are themselves original thinkers (all of them)*** and are, therefore, always willing and ready to take calculated risks; to think creatively; to venture “out of the box”; and, to explore pioneering collaborative opportunities.

### **Reason 3**

***UC administrators are entirely respectful of, and sensitive to, faculty needs***

UC’s administrative support elements for CRSCAD’s teaching faculty are always available when needed and are effective. During the planning phase of our online certificate programs, UC administrators’ decisions were always based on CRSCAD’s expressed infrastructure support needs; UC never made them arbitrarily or unilaterally.

From my experience, UC administrators operate from the premise that instructors are the best source of guidance and information on what works and what does not for their courses.

### **Reason 4**

***UC totally supports online faculty with design and development of web-based classes and offers faculty a multiplicity of other support services such as comprehensive training prior to teaching online***

UC’s dedicated and high-quality IT staff provide all the necessary state-of-the-art training required for teaching an online course. These include: Blackboard Vista; Required Instructional Design Consultation (Blackboard); Streaming Video, Adobe Presenter, Wimba Voice Tools; Wimba Classroom (for synchronous online learning); and, Required Instructional Design Consultation (Synchronous Online learning)

### **Reason 5**

***CRSCD and UC share a common mission: to provide an excellent inter- and trans-disciplinary, online, and international educational experience for students and professionals.***

***I thank you.***

*Adenrele Awotona,  
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