

Minutes

University of Washington, Tacoma
Health and Safety Committee
Meeting of May 8, 2003

Committee chair Lia Wetzstein called the meeting to order. The full meeting was devoted to viewing a 45-minute videotape about how the California State University Northridge campus responded to the Jan. 17, 1994 Northridge earthquake, whose epicenter was almost directly below the campus. Faculty members whose labs or offices were in buildings severely damaged by fire or hazardous materials spills were devastated by the loss of research representing their life's work. Accessing student records was virtually impossible in the period following the quake, and administrators had to set up offices under tents. Conducting registration and scheduling classrooms was a huge challenge. Temporary structures were brought in to serve as classrooms. CSU senior administrators stressed that planning for emergencies is critical. The campus experienced an enrollment drop following the quake. Decision makers noted that frustrations ran high in the campus community, especially among faculty members, about the fact that the university's decision makers, when handling the crisis situation, could not always follow shared governance principles. Since telephone service was disrupted and road damage made it impossible for some key administrators to get back to the campus for some time following the quake, communications were also difficult. Aftershocks made for a continuing crisis.

The Safety Committee discussed the importance of faculty participation in safety planning for UWT.

Rather than provide notes on the videotape, the text below reflects material from the following Web site, which includes a summary of the effects on CSU Northridge of the quake, one of the costliest natural disasters in U.S. history. The quake occurred about 4:30 on a Monday morning, a holiday, which mitigated the effects of the event. Effects would have been far more serious had school been in session at CSU.

<http://www.eqe.com/publications/northridge/northridge.html>

The 1994 event is the most damaging earthquake to strike the United States since the San Francisco Earthquake of 1906.

California State University, Northridge

California State University, Northridge, enrollment 28,000, is a large modern campus sitting almost atop the January 17 epicenter. It was severely damaged by the earthquake, with the worst damage occurring to a relatively new, four-level, precast concrete parking structure on the east side of the campus, which partially collapsed. The structure was only 18 months old and presumably was in nominal conformance with the building code requirements. The design included a perimeter "ductile" concrete frame, with the exterior columns designed to carry all earthquake loads and the interior columns designed to carry only vertical (non-earthquake) loads. Although this practice is permitted by current building standards, the collapse of this structure indicates that this practice should be reviewed and changed. The codes should require that all structural members be detailed to resist earthquake-induced forces and deformations.

The campus is centered around the Oviatt Library, a large (about 90-by-90 m), 1970s-vintage, reinforced concrete building. The current library reportedly consists of an original

central building, which was subsequently expanded by symmetrical east and west additions, and earthquake damage was primarily caused by pounding between these structures. Several sections of the cantilever roof, over the entrance and elsewhere, collapsed. To the west of the library is the five-story, reinforced concrete, shear wall administration building, which had moderate cracking at floor joints and in spandrels. Most other buildings on campus had damage of a similar nature, with the exception of several buildings nearing completion, which performed well. Of interest was the science complex of four 3-story reinforced concrete buildings connected by bridges. These buildings generally performed very well but were seriously damaged by a large fire and hazardous materials spills.

The earthquake severely impacted the campus; classes had been scheduled to begin on January 31 but were postponed two weeks for demolition, building inspection and repair, and construction of numerous temporary structures on the campus' spacious lawns.

Lack of access to the Oviatt Library's collections was particularly significant, but was mitigated by a shuttle service for students to the University of California, Los Angeles, libraries.

Attendees

Darren Bailey	Beckie Etheridge	Don Higgins	Lisa Tice
Caroline Calvillo	Lorna Fernandez	Jamie Martin-Almy	Keith Ward
Tessa Coleman	Alisha Gregory-Davis	Crystal Perrine	Lia Wetzstein