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Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today. – Malcolm X

The common thread in all those who work in emergency management is dedication. No matter what level they achieve, the dedication to the job and the public they serve puts emergency management in a category all its own. Then, you find these diamonds who take the word dedication and elevate it to a whole new standard; because not only are they emergency managers by day, but they are adjunct professors during their 'off' time. NEMA caught a glimpse of what it looks like to be dedicated to academics as an emergency manager by finding **Autumn Stout, Logistics and Administration Team Leader of the South Dakota Office of Emergency Management** and **Joshua Kelly, Planning Supervisor of the Delaware Emergency Management Agency**. Both are adjunct professors with Eastern Kentucky University.

The dual roles not only express their hard work but they both are very organized and created tricks to help ease the focus between their supervisory roles and teaching. Autumn, "sends out a weekly update email to my students each Sunday evening to help set the stage for the upcoming week." Josh recommends Stephen King's book **On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft**, that challenges to set time aside for your passions, whether it be writing or grading papers. The best part is how much they learn from the discussion boards of their classes. With students who span from a variety of backgrounds and in very different stages of their lives, they have an insight on what the next generation of emergency managers will compose of and how well they all mix together!



Autumn Stout



Josh & Jams Kelly

What inspires you to be an adjunct professor?

Autumn: I have always loved school, and I know the positive influence a good instructor can have on a student. In my undergraduate homeland security program at Eastern Kentucky University, Drs. Ryan Baggett and Mike Collier were critical to my success. They pushed me to do my best, be conscientious, and produce good work, which prepared me well for graduate school and my career. I will always have a passion for academia and teaching the next generation of practitioners in our field. Being an adjunct professor is an opportunity to continue to be involved in academia and do something that is worthwhile and fulfilling.

Josh: I was extremely fortunate to have some amazing professors and mentors while I was an undergrad at the University of Delaware, many of whom I still talk to and work with to this day. My junior year I had the opportunity to work as a Research Assistant at the Disaster Research Center, which really formed the foundation for the rest of my career. I'm extremely passionate about giving back to the next generation of emergency managers, no matter what their age or background, and trying to light that fire in them for the field. Now I get the best of both worlds, where I can engage the side of me that's drawn towards teaching and learning and still be out in the thick of things as a practitioner.

What advice do you give to EM students about how to get into the business or excel in their job?

Autumn: Networking is critical. Students must seek out opportunities that will enhance their degree, such as internships, student organizations, and volunteer positions. Emergency management professionals are not "in charge" of people from other agencies, but we must work with them to reach a common goal of effectively mitigating, preparing for, responding to, and recovering from disasters. Working in emergency management requires you to be a jack of all trades. You need to know which partners to

bring to the table and work with the resources that are available to you. Being able to facilitate those relationships and negotiate with others is key. In addition, writing skills are important. A lot of this field involves grant writing and reporting, creating plans and procedures, and day-to-day written communication with stakeholders. Being able to articulate your thoughts and ideas onto paper is a necessary skill.

Josh: The key is getting your foot in the door. Build up as many experiences as you can and expand your network as early as possible. If you can, take an unpaid internship or work-study class. Take a CERT class or volunteer at a full-scale exercise and introduce yourself to the staff. Take the ICS Professional Development Series and as many Independent Study classes as you can. Some of the best early career advice I received was “You know more than you think you do”, meaning don’t under count your experiences. Talk to your professors, don’t be afraid to look-up and email your local emergency manager, and remember how small the field truly is. People you meet in your classes today, will be your peers tomorrow. Your instructors and the people you intern with, you’ll most likely be interacting with for years to come. Make sure to be professional, leave a good impression, take on as many opportunities as you can, and put yourself out there early and often.

What aspects of today’s students do you see as assets to the emergency management profession?

Autumn: I think it is great to see so many individuals interested in an emergency management or homeland security degree. The emergency management/homeland security fields are really moving towards professionalization due to the growth and availability of bachelor’s and master’s degree programs; as well as accreditation and certification programs. You learn to question past practices and obtain a solid foundation of the theoretical background of the profession. You also learn to synthesize information and analyze regulations and policy. By studying past events that have impacted emergency management, you can understand what has worked well and where improvements are still needed. Knowledge of technology is also paramount. Technological knowledge does not replace traditional communications skills, but they can certainly be an asset to the field.

Josh: It’s difficult to generalize, but I would say for the most part, there are two common themes that seem to come up over and over. The first, is that students who are looking to get into emergency management in 2020 often do so because of a profound personal experience with a disaster that impacted them in some way and imparted in them that altruistic desire to help others. Whether that’s 9/11, Katrina (mine!), Sandy, Hurricane Maria, or now COVID-19 a lot of the students who I have worked with have these personal experiences that have driven them into the field. And two, students are setting out to be career emergency managers. That’s a very exciting trend and bodes well for the field. Over the past several decades we’ve built such an incredible knowledge base from blending so many different fields together and now the students coming up are

taking all those lessons learned and putting them into practice right out of school. Which, to me, is awesome to see.



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