

ANNUAL REPORT

Due Date: August 31, 2025

Safety and Emergency Preparedness Committee

University of North Alabama Florence, Alabama

Dr. Wayne P. Bergeron

Committee Chair

August 1, 2025

Date Submitted

Submitted to: Dr. Becky Smith

Chair, Shared Governance Executive Committee

Date Received

University of North Alabama

Annual Report

2024-2025

I. Executive Summary

The members of the Safety and Emergency Preparedness Committee (SEPC) for the 2024-25 academic year were as follows:

Mr. Heath Bennett, FLEMA (non-voting)
Dr. Wayne Bergeron, Chair
Ms. Olivia Britton (SGA)
Ms. Sheena Burgreen (by position)
Ms. Cindy Conlon (by position)
Mr. Ethan Humphres (by position)
Chief Les Jackson (by position) Vice Chair
Dr. Humayun Kabir (Chem & Physics faculty, 2025)
Mr. Randall Phiifer (by position)
Parkerson Seward (VisArts & Design, 2026)
Dr. Sayeed Shohag (Eng. & Ind. Prof. fac. 2025)
Jennifer Sutton (by position)
Julie Taylor (COAD 2026)
Dr. KC White (non-voting, by position)
Ms. Angela Zwissler (by position)

During the AY 2024-2025 term, Dr. Wayne Bergeron served as the Committee Chair and Chief Les Jackson served as the Vice Chair. The SEPC consisted of two subcommittees: the Emergency Preparedness & Assessment Subcommittee, chaired by Ms. Cindy Conlon, and the Security Camera Subcommittee, chaired by Mr. Ethan Humphres.

II. The Committee's Charge

- a. To serve as an advisory committee on the university emergency/disaster preparedness and other safety and health matters.
- b. To continually review the university's emergency/disaster preparedness plans and other policies and procedures on allied safety and health matters.
- c. To develop and edit the University Safety and Health Manual.
- d. To gather information about the university's emergency/disaster preparedness plans and on other allied safety and health matters and assess university performance in these areas in light of the information obtained.

e. To propose changes in the university's emergency/disaster preparedness plans and in other policies and procedures on allied safety and health matters.

f. To handle any proposals the committee may make affecting university policy according to section C.2 "Shared Governance Procedure for Policy Change Recommendations."

g. To submit a final written report electronically by the first day of the fall semester to the Vice President for Business and Financial Affairs with a copy sent to the chair of the SGEC.

III. The Committee met on the following dates:

Meeting 1: 09/18/2024

Meeting 2: 10/16/2024

Meeting 3: 11/20/2024

Meeting 4: 01/15/2025

Meeting 5: 03/19/2025

Meeting 6: 04/16/2025 - Tabletop Emergency Exercise

Full meeting minutes can be found here: <https://www.una.edu/sharedgovernance/task-committees/safety-emergency-preparedness/minutes-of-meetings.html>

IV. What were the Committee's actions and accomplishments this year relative to each of the items of the charges?

a. To serve as an advisory committee on the university emergency/disaster preparedness and other safety and health matters.

1. The Committee recommended that the SEP's final report be reviewed by the Vice President for Business and Financial Affairs versus the Vice president for Student Affairs since the University Police Department (the executive agent for most EM functions) is now part of that portfolio.

b. To continually review the university's emergency/disaster preparedness plans and other policies and procedures on allied safety and health matters.

1. The emergency preparedness and assessment subcommittee reviewed and updated the emergency procedures flip chart and UNA Emergency Manual and corresponding website information.

d. To gather information about the university's emergency/disaster preparedness plans and on other allied safety and health matters and assess university performance in these areas in light of the information obtained.

1. The Committee reviewed the continued efficacy and effectiveness based on the decline in use of blue emergency poles in the past few years given their lack of use due to cell phone prevalence. It was advised that old blue poles are being decommissioned as they reach the end of their useful life.
 2. The Committee discussed looking at a replacement for both the Send Help" and the Lion Alert system and delegated for that discussion and evaluation to continue by the Emergency Preparedness and Assessment Team (EPAT).
 3. The committee reviewed the University's response to the Jan. 10-12 snow event with the following outcomes noted
 - a. Staging went well.
 - b. Dining Services were great
 - c. Communication was good. Color-coded weather status was helpful.
 - d. Shuttle van from outlying residence halls to Mane Market was utilized.
 - e. Families appreciated the proactive approach and how students were cared for.
 - f. It was noted that a lot was learned from the previous year's event that helped make this response smoother.
 - g. Improvements: Return weather status to green at the end of the event. Maybe the faculty could share the weather information to students in Canvas as well.
 4. The Committee also reviewed the outcome of a fire, caused by a buildup of dryer lint, in the Rivers Hall laundry room on Sunday, January 12. The fire was extinguished quickly by FFR and no one was injured. Most students evacuated in a timely manner, except for about 10 or fewer stragglers.
 5. On April 16, 2025, members of the SEPC in conjunction with the UNA Police department conducted a Tabletop Exercise facilitated by the Florence/Lauderdale Emergency Management Agency. The exercise was based on an active shooter event occurring on campus. Items addressed during the exercise included: incident command, how to notify campus, who notifies media, how to secure the scene, nullification of the threat, reunification, set up of counseling, triaging of injuries, and media releases. Florence Fire and Rescue and LifeGuard Ambulance Service also participated in the event.
- e. To propose changes in the university's emergency/disaster preparedness plans and in other policies and procedures on allied safety and health matters.
1. The Committee reviewed the Accident/Injury report protocol looking at ownership and monitoring of reports. It was found that the system was

working as intended and is integrated into the overall University reporting process.

f. To handle any proposals the committee may make affecting university policy according to section C.2 “Shared Governance Procedure for Policy Change Recommendations.”

1. The Committee recommended that the following additional charge be added to its charter: "Maintain the Emergency Preparedness and Assessment Team as a subcommittee of core members to meet year-round to review emergency preparedness and assess any changes that need to take effect prior to the start of a new academic year. This Team also forms the core of University Emergency and Crisis response and consists of the following individuals: Associate VP of Business/Finance, Chief of Police, Director of Health and Well-Being, Executive Director of IT, Director of Housing, and Director of Environmental Health and Safety"

V. What were the Committee’s formal recommendations?

- a. The current membership of the committee is based on some legacy relationships that need to be adjusted and updated based on both growth and reorganization. The following is the recommended future membership as determined by the committee.
 - a. Vice President for Student Affairs (by position - non-voting)
 - b. Associate VP of Business/Finance (by position)
 - c. Chief of Police (by position)
 - d. Emergency Management Coordinator (future position) - (by position)
 - e. Director of Health and Well-Being (by position)
 - f. Executive Director of IT (by position)
 - g. Associate Director of IT (by position)
 - h. Director of Housing (by position)
 - i. Director of Environmental Health and Safety (by position)
 - j. Florence Lauderdale County Emergency Management Agency (by position - non-voting)
 - k. UNA Student Government Association (3 year term)
 - l. College of Academic Deans (3 year term)
 - m. College of Arts, Science, and Engineering - at large (3 year term)
 - n. College of Business and Technology - at large (3 year term)
 - o. College of Education and Human Sciences - at large (3 year term)
 - p. College of Nursing and Health Professions - at large (3 year term)
 - q. UNA Athletics Staff (3 year term)
 - r. UNA Food Services (3 year term)

- b. The Safety and Emergency Preparedness Committee at its January 15, 2025 meeting considered and approved a recommendation request for the approval of a dedicated Emergency Management Coordinator/Director position. Currently, there is not a single position at UNA charged with responsibility for emergency management functions and coordination across the comprehensive emergency and disaster management cycle. Approval of this position would consolidate these functions which are currently spread across at least four existing university divisions and units. In pursuit of this request, the SEPC looked at various peer and near peer institutions and developed a draft position description which has been reviewed and scoped by UNA Human Resources and was forwarded to the Vice President for Business and Financial Affairs for consideration by the University Executive Council. The SEPC feels that this position is critical for the University to realize a modern and comprehensive approach to emergency management and response which will greatly enhance our ability to prepare for, respond to, recover from, and mitigate the effects of potential disasters and emergencies.
- c. The Safety and Emergency Preparedness Committee at its January 15, 2025 meeting considered and approved a recommendation request for the approval of a dedicated budget line in the amount of \$75,000 allocated annually for the replacement, maintenance, and future expansion of the campus security camera network and system. Thanks in advance for your consideration and approval of this recommendation. This recommendation was made following a comprehensive cost analysis and review that was conducted by the SEP Security Camera Subcommittee and was approved by the full SEP committee.

This funding request is intended to address the following key areas.

1. Replacement of Legacy Systems:

A portion of this budget will be used to replace the remaining components of the outdated security camera system. This legacy system relies on older technology and unsupported hardware, which needs to be phased out to ensure reliable security coverage.

2. Maintenance of Current Systems:

Once the legacy systems have been replaced, the budget will cover the ongoing maintenance and operational costs for the newly implemented security camera system, which operates on an annual licensing model. These recurring costs require dedicated financial support to ensure continued functionality and security.

3. Future Expansion Needs:

While the \$75,000 is expected to meet the immediate needs of replacement and maintenance, there will be a future need for additional funding as campus security requirements evolve and additional cameras are needed.

- VI. What does the Committee plan to accomplish?
- A. In the coming year? The Committee plans to adjust to the new membership structure implemented based on the SEGC decisions this past year and will continue to implement its charges for the best health and safety outcomes for the University. In particular, the Committee looks forward to the consideration and hopefully approval of the formal recommendations that it proposed this past year. The Committee looks forward to continuing its exercise program with the possibility of the implementation of a full profile emergency management exercise in the coming year.
 - B. In future years? The Committee looks to continue monitoring, evaluating, and adjusting (as necessary) the Universities Health and Safety posture going forward.
- VII. What are the Committee's weaknesses? The SEPC is an evaluation and advisory body and is not equipped for real time incident response and management especially since it is convened only during the traditional academic year (Fall and Spring semesters). The establishment of the Emergency Preparedness & Assessment Team subcommittee has mitigated this somewhat with the ability to meet throughout the entire year. There is still a need for a more formal comprehensive emergency response and management element within the University structure. The establishment of the Emergency Management Coordinator position as recommended by this committee is a significant, necessary start to this effort. Ultimately the University needs a properly staffed and resourced Incident Management Team structure.
- A. What can the Shared Governance Committee help you do to address the weaknesses? Advocate for the expeditious approval of the Committee's formal recommendations by the University EC.
- VIII. Comments – The SEPC continues to serve as an effective forum for University Health and Safety concerns and diligently considers, evaluates, and recommends solutions as concerns arise.