

## **WHITE PAPER: AN INTRODUCTION TO KUALI READY**

### **Executive Summary**

Regardless of size and location, Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) have an obligation to protect and provide for students, faculty, staff, and visitors. These commitments include the ability to provide the services required of them and to carry out functions critical to the mission and goals of the institution even in the aftermath of any disruptive event. Considerable advance planning and conscientious adherence to generally recognized procedures for responding to potential short or long term interruptions (i.e. natural or man-made events) should allow the learning enterprise to continue to fulfill its fundamental mission. Failure to have an adequate plan that ensures the continuation of critical operations and services could lead to financial loss, interruptions of academic classes, failure of research projects (existing and future), damage to the brand name and image, and delays in completing other mission critical activities. Exposures to risks that may interrupt normal operations cannot be ignored.

Fortunately, there are measures that can be taken to increase campus resiliency and preparedness. IHEs can improve their readiness abilities to effectively prepare for, respond to, recover from, and mitigate/prevent against an impending or existing threat or disruptive event, by investing in a proactive risk management maturity process known as “Continuity Planning.” One of the primary guiding principles of the continuity management process is the anticipation, recognition, evaluation, and control of risks that could have an adverse effect on the operations and viability of the learning enterprise. With this methodology, the objective is to identify and address critical areas within the enterprise (the “Departments”) that are at risk of experiencing interruptions during an incident. Continuity of operation plans are a collection of essential processes, procedures, functions, information, and assets within each department that are developed, tested, and held in readiness for use in the event of a major disruption to operations.

Continuity Planning is a well researched and broadly practiced concept in business enterprises. “Academic Continuity Planning” extends this concept to the education system – Teaching, Research, Public Service, etc. It is a proactive paradigm in contrast to the reactive model of disaster recovery. With this approach, the focus is on integrating resources, processes, actions, and information into the operational design of higher education. There is great value in an active, focused, and thoughtful approach to assessing risks, analyzing impacts, and sustaining critical operations. In the long-term it can be more effective and less costly. This is a relatively new paradigm which is being developed and applied to the task of planning for and responding to high consequence events in an academic arena. Enhancing your ability to carry on with critical operations in the aftermath of a disruptive event is achievable.

## What is Kuali Ready?

Kuali Ready is a service designed to support continuity planning for higher education. In recognition of the importance of internal continuity of operations as one of the vital components to being prepared for any disruptive event (i.e. All-Hazards Preparedness), Kuali Ready enables all departments, regardless of size, to address the resumption of critical functions, required resources, alternatives and redundancies, financial considerations, and communication issues, as quickly as realistically possible after any disruptive event. Using a web-based questionnaire, the user is led through a structured interview process that provides the necessary guidance and information to produce a departmental continuity plan that includes a series of action items or mitigation strategies designed to make the department ready for any disruptive event. Moreover, the service is highly customizable for every participating institution and can easily accommodate differences in organizational structure, terminology, procedures, or policy. Both the hosted service and the source code are distributed via the Kuali Foundation; a growing community of universities, colleges, businesses, and other organizations that have partnered to build and sustain open-source software for higher education, by higher education.

Although many IHEs have well developed Emergency Management programs that focus on protecting life safety during a crisis, few IHEs have successfully implemented a continuity of operations framework to ensure:

- Continuing instructional classes
- Mitigating potential impacts of lost tuition, grant funding, endowments or other donations
- Preventing loss of vital research data, records, and intellectual property
- Continuing revenue generating research services and programs
- Preventing interruptions to faculty tenure clocks and new faculty recruitment
- Minimizing disruption to the academic mission

Private sector tools for continuity planning are primarily designed to be used at the top levels of the organization. They are best suited for use in environments where continuity planning is centralized. None of them specifically address the requirements of university environments, where many crucial operational decisions are decentralized and made at the level of the individual College, department, unit, instructor, or principal investigator. With its easy-to-use web-based delivery model, Kuali Ready engages all administrative, academic, research, patient care, public service, and/or support units in equal fashion. Developing and delivering a sustainable service that supports continuity planning for higher education were key goals for Kuali Ready.

Kuali Ready is based on an application originally developed and launched in 2004 by the University of California, Berkeley. This application was extended by UC Berkeley to the entire University of California System in 2007. In response to expressions of interest by many other universities, the Regents of the University of California shared the code with the Kuali Foundation. It was then offered as a hosted subscription service via the Kuali Foundation to other colleges and universities. This working relationship has been instrumental in satisfying a need in higher education, assuring the long-term sustainability of this solution, and setting an example of a truly collaborative venture.

## **Benefits & Differentiating Characteristics**

In order to ensure that IHEs can continue providing critical functions there will be many factors that will have to be taken into consideration during planning and preparation. For example:

- Will the Purchasing System be able to support recovery operations? How will Payroll provide for the needs of staff and faculty?
- If half of the faculty is absent due to a pandemic and other staff members were unavailable, who will do the work?
- What if a major earthquake strikes during the Admissions cycle?
- What protocols and procedures are in place for delegation of authority and lines of succession during an emergency?

These are all important questions and examples of the structured portions of the decision making process that can be addressed with Kuali Ready when it's part of your continuity planning solution. Kuali Ready provides the mechanism to collect information in terms of the strategic objectives and to properly assess the current state of the IHEs organizational, operational, and technology levels during a disruptive event.

**What can be accomplished with Kuali Ready?** Kuali Ready facilitates the continuance of higher education's mission by defining, measuring, operationalizing, and synthesizing critical academic, administrative, and research functions. Additionally, it provides direction for the development and execution of activities needed to sustain operations in times of disruption or crisis. Ultimately, it's about improving resiliency so that you can quickly respond and recover from any interruption.

**What types of disaster are we preparing for?** Effective preparedness depends on preparing for all types of disruptive events. This is referred to as an "All-Hazards" approach. We prefer an all-hazards method as opposed to a scenario-specific method because the possibility set of potential risks is infinite. What we do know is that they will vary in nature, scope, impact on business functions, duration, and probability of occurrence.

Moreover, your recovery plans should be nimble, comprehensive, and flexible enough to accommodate the variability that's likely to be encountered during the recovery phase. Plans do not guarantee outcomes. Moreover, it is simply not possible to detail ahead of time the steps a department will need to take to deal with a crisis; there are too many types of calamities. Hence, the concept "recovery plan" has limited cogency: a good recovery plan will contain information and suggestions that will *position* your department to recover; but it will not lay out a series of sequenced and detailed steps.

**Can Kuali Ready be used by institutions that are new to academic continuity planning?** Yes. In fact, Kuali Ready is suitable for use by all IHEs, regardless of the level of maturity within their continuity planning program. There is a significant disparity between the state-of-the-art and current state-of-the-practice of models and toolkits for academic continuity planning. Complexity of models, their difficulty of use, inability to integrate them, and difficulty of evaluating complete product offerings are some reasons for the gap. Additional complexity through the interaction and interdependencies among and between the toolkits, users, and scenarios can ultimately render such tools useless for decision-making and unwieldy to utilize. With Kuali Ready you can quickly and easily address many important considerations.

Key features and benefits of the Kuali Ready service:

- Widespread accessibility.
- Well-designed and extremely easy-to-use.
- Users do not have to be continuity planning experts; Kuali Ready can be used by personnel in any department on campus.
- No training is required. End users are provided with an intuitive interface and step-by-step questionnaires that provide guidance.
- Users can begin the continuity planning process within minutes of accessing the service.
- Operational effectiveness and flexibility in any scenario.
- A tried and true business continuity planning service. Since its release, over 75 universities have adopted the Kuali Ready service for use within their environments. Currently, more than 3,400 departmental continuity plans have been produced using the tool.
- Multiple hosting sites.
- Extremely affordable.
- Scalable computing.

## Availability

Kuali Ready is available in two offerings: a software-as-a-service (SaaS) delivery model (aka hosted) or a downloadable source code package. A robust delivery framework is provided with the hosted solution. It's currently being used by highly recognized institutions in Australia, Canada, and the United States. Pricing is flexible and exceptionally reasonable. Becoming a Kuali Ready subscriber is fast and easy. Simply visit the Kuali Foundation's web site at [www.kuali.org](http://www.kuali.org) and complete the online form. Since there is no hardware or software to procure and install, you'll be ready to start using the service shortly after completing the subscription process. Institutions interested in their own on-premise installation may download the source code. Details for this option are available at the same web site.

With Kuali Ready you can ensure that faculty, staff, and students can do TOMORROW what they were doing YESTERDAY no matter what happens TODAY.

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