

Professor James Kendra Named New Disaster Research Center Director

The Disaster Research Center (DRC) at the University of Delaware is pleased to announce that as of January 1, 2011, Professor James Kendra will take on the role of Director. Professor Kendra brings to DRC a diverse disciplinary background. A former merchant mariner, he worked for nearly 1500 days at sea aboard a variety of vessels in worldwide service. He received his PhD in geography at Rutgers University in 2000 and spent three years as Research Coordinator at DRC. Kendra comes to the University of Delaware from the University of North Texas, where he is currently Associate Professor and Program Coordinator of the Emergency Administration and Planning Program in the Department of Public Administration. His research emphasizes human-environment interaction, and he has published extensively in the areas of risk, resilience, and organizational responses to disaster.

DRC is the oldest center in the world focused on the social science impacts of disaster. Established at The Ohio State University in 1963 by Professors Enrico Quarantelli, Russell Dynes, and Eugene Haas, DRC moved to the University of Delaware in 1985. In addition to the founding directors, other directors have included Professors Dennis Wenger, Joanne Nigg, Kathleen Tierney, and Havidan Rodriguez. Professor Sue McNeil has served as director since 2007, helping to expand DRC's collaboration across the university to include eight core faculty, two affiliated faculty, three staff members, and many post-doctoral, graduate and undergraduate student researchers.



Professor Kendra's leadership comes at a time when DRC has increased its multi-disciplinary focus and seen tremendous growth. Its projects include studies focused on use of warning and forecast technology, improvisation in sudden crisis, safer hurricane evacuation and sheltering, transportation corridors vulnerability and resilience, guidance for mitigation investments, delivery of critical supplies after disaster events, measuring post-disaster recovery, repatriation of disaster victims, and occupant response during building collapse. Known for its quick response research, DRC researchers have conducted reconnaissance field work after such recent events as the 2010 Haiti earthquake, the 2008 Wenchuan China earthquake, Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005, the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami, and the 2001 Terrorist Attacks. DRC looks forward to expanding its research family with the arrival of Professor Kendra, who will also join the faculty of the School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy and play an active role in the University's new graduate program in Disaster Science and Management. More information about the DRC can be found at www.udel.edu/DRC