



# Public Administration Research Colloquium

Organized by the Center for Public and Nonprofit Management (CPNM)

*Hear leading experts discuss contemporary problems and strategies in public administration research and practice during this event.*

## The Politics of Presidential Disaster Declarations: Eisenhower to Obama

By Dr. Richard Sylves

Thursday, January 15, 2009

4:00-5:30 p.m.

HPA II – 247

Please RSVP by January 14, Wednesday to Fatih Demiroz at [fdemiroz@mail.ucf.edu](mailto:fdemiroz@mail.ucf.edu).

Dr. Sylves' talk and presentation will be about the old and new politics of presidential declarations of major disaster and emergency. I will demonstrate that while disasters and calamitous misfortunes of various types are empirical realities, presidential decisions about whether or not to approve or deny governor-requested declarations for these events is also much about political and social constructions of reality.

What do presidents win or lose in deciding whether or not to approve a governor's request for a presidential declaration of major disaster or emergency? How does Florida do in the competition to win presidential disaster declarations? Why should Floridians care about the politics of presidential disaster declarations? Why are there seemingly so many president-declared disasters today compared to 20 years ago?

**Richard Sylves** is a Professor of Political Science and International Relations and Senior Policy Fellow of the Center on Energy and Environmental Policy at University of Delaware. He has researched presidential disaster declarations for more than twenty years, the last four supported by the PERI Foundation (see [www.peripresdecusa.org](http://www.peripresdecusa.org)) and he has co-edited (with W. Waugh) two books on disaster management. He also authored the book, **The Nuclear Oracles** with Iowa State University Press in 1986. He recently published **Disaster Policy and Politics**, a text book with Congressional Quarterly Press and he is working on a trade book about budgeting for emergency management with Elsevier Butterworth/Heinemann. From 1995-1999, Sylves completed two research grant projects for the U.S. FEMA. He has served on the National Academy of Science (NAS) panel, "Estimating the Costs of Natural Disasters;" and, he completed a three year term as an appointed member of the NAS Disasters Roundtable in 2005.

