June 4, 2024

Dear Faculty Colleagues:

As you turn your attention to the courses you'll teach next year, I ask that once again, you prepare for hurricane season.

The serious difficulties faced by institutions such as Texas A & M after Ike; Tulane, Loyola, and Xavier in the wake of Katrina; and more recently, Florida Gulf Coast University in the aftermath of Ian, underscore the vital importance of every faculty member having a continuity plan for delivering their courses should a hurricane or similar weather event require evacuation and prolonged closure of the campus. We do not want our students to feel they must transfer in order to continue their education; we must be able to say to our students and their families that our courses will proceed, even if the campus is closed for a time.

To these ends, all Eckerd faculty members should complete appropriate planning and preparation this summer in order to provide our students with the best possible learning experience in the event of a weather disruption. To assist in these efforts, the document that follows outlines specific tasks, course delivery guidelines, and overall expectations for how faculty will continue to teach their Autumn Term and Fall Semester courses if the campus must close. Please read and save the document as a guide.

Discipline Coordinators, please share this document with all adjunct and newly hired faculty, and then follow up with them individually so that the directives are clear.

Collegial Chairs, please update and distribute to your faculty your collegium's "Individual Responsibility Checklist," which outlines the tasks every faculty member will follow to secure their offices before leaving for any extended period of time, including in the event of a hurricane or other emergency.

Thank you all for your efforts to develop, share, and implement these plans. I hope they are not needed.

Best wishes,

Christine Wooley, Ph.D.
Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of Faculty

HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS & THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

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HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS & THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

COURSE PREPARATION

☐ **By the end of the first week of each term (Autumn Term, Fall semester, Winter Term, and Spring semester)**, faculty are expected to **provide their Collegial Chairs** with the following:

1) **Copies of syllabi for each class. Each syllabus will include a contingency statement** that establishes expectations for students in the event that class delivery is interrupted or the campus is closed. This statement should indicate that courses will continue during the interruption/ closure, describe how this will occur, and refer to student responsibilities during and after the class interruption. An example contingency statement:

> *If for any reason, class delivery is interrupted, students should continue their studies. And if Eckerd College is evacuated, students who leave campus for stays of overnight or longer should bring their texts, notes and syllabus so that they are ready to continue their course work. In the event of any interruption to classes, check your Eckerd e-mail from your on- or off-campus location and continue with the course work according to the syllabus and as delivered via Online Course Materials (Moodle).*

2) **A cover memo describing a back-up plan for each course in the event that class delivery is interrupted (or the college is closed) for**
> **a) 5-10 days during the short term or semester and**
> **b) the rest of the short term or 2-4 months during the semester**.

The back-up plan should explain, for both the short and long closure/interruption, what faculty would do to deliver their courses and maximize the students' learning experience. An example back-up plan for a course:

> *If we get an announcement (say) a possible evacuation where class delivery might be interrupted for several days, I will distribute 2 weeks of homework questions to students and have students work with the textbook and get as far as they can in answering the questions. I have a moveable homework assignment (not due for several weeks) and would go ahead and distribute it as well.*
>
> *If we have a significant break in the semester, my plan will be to convert my course to an appropriate mix of synchronous and asynchronous delivery. I will either describe the nature of the course to the students prior to evacuation or I will contact students (using contact information collected on the first day of class) if we evacuate in a hurry. As we continue to follow the course syllabus, individual homework assignments will include application of course concepts to assigned readings and material I deliver in lecture format, a comprehensive reading journal and an open book final. Depending on the circumstances, I will have students return their work via the Moodle assignment utility, email or the postal service.*

☐ The Director of Instructional Technology and ITS have developed Online Course Materials (Moodle) into a one-place online resource where students can go to access all course materials posted online by their professors.

   By the end of the first week of the Fall semester (and likewise the first week of each term—Autumn, Winter and Spring), faculty are to **1) post course syllabi online** and **2) be sure the links in Moodle connect to these syllabi and any other posted course materials.**

1) Faculty should prepare syllabi and course materials and post these themselves in Moodle, by using the "Drag and Drop" Moodle utility, other Moodle activities and resources, the Academic Wiki, or as web pages. Posted resources should be in PDF which is accessible to students without expensive software, or in Word (which most students have). Collegial Offices have the ability to scan paper documents into PDF format. If there are any questions or problems, please contact the Director of Instructional Technology, and he will be happy to assist you.

2) The Moodle links are created automatically when faculty use the "Drag and Drop" Moodle utility. In other cases, faculty may control the links in the Moodle program themselves or request the Director of Instructional Technology to do this for them as they modify posted materials, post additional materials, and create new links.

In order to track the academic program's progress towards hurricane preparedness, Collegial Chairs will be given access to all materials posted by their collegium's faculty for student access on Moodle.

☐ We want to encourage students to develop the habit of going to Moodle for information about their courses, as habits developed in fair weather are likely to carry over during a hurricane closure or any class interruption. Therefore, faculty are asked to **post something online for each course that is useful to students during fair weather** (e.g., homework, handout supplement, resources, activities, unofficial grades, etc.), and to **require students to access this material in the early days of an academic term** via the Moodle Course Materials link at MyEckerd (https://my.eckerd.edu/).

☐ Given the possibility of a hurricane arriving early in Autumn Term or Fall semester, *prior to* students engaging with course materials or obtaining their books, please plan for **how you would make your first reading assignments available to students** and **launch your courses** in such an event.

☐ In light of the importance of hurricane season in Florida, as we **become more deliberate in our planning for continued course delivery,** please consider whether changes in course scheduling might facilitate this effort; for instance, perhaps the Fall-Spring rotation for some courses might be switched, so that courses that lend themselves more readily to distance delivery might be moved to the Fall. Likewise, faculty are encouraged to be thinking now how they will prepare materials for future courses that will foster high-quality distance delivery.

IN-CLASS CONTACT TIME

To meet Eckerd College's standards, the academic calendar for a semester is based on 14 weeks of class (3 hours per week per class), plus final exam week; in addition, students are expected to complete a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work for every hour of seat time. In the event of cancelled class periods due to campus closure, the College, as best it can, will make adjustments to the academic calendar so that faculty might recoup as many of the lost class days as practicable, depending on the length of time back on campus. While anything we might say now could be altered in response to unpredictable specific circumstances, it seems advisable to provide faculty with some idea as to the arrangements the College is likely to make. Our current thinking governs the following changes in the academic calendar.

☐ The College will continue to monitor tropical weather during the hurricane season. In addition, faculty must be ready to switch from our in-person delivery to remote delivery for a variety of reasons, not just a disruption to College operations from a hurricane. In the case of a hurricane evacuation, this will involve continuing to deliver our courses using whatever medium the situation supports or allows. Below are some suggestions to reasonable approaches but this is ultimately at the <u>discretion of each individual faculty member</u>.

- A reasonable approach might be to give students assignment(s) to work on over a few days, **while allowing a couple of days for faculty and students to relocate safely away from the projected tropical weather conditions**.
- You might also interact with students via email or Moodle (if there is available access to electricity and internet). Then, when feasible (as changing conditions allow), make up any missed course material and class time.

If **up to five class days (for example, Monday thru Friday) are lost due to interruption or campus closure,** we will invite the **discretion of <u>each individual faculty member</u>** to decide how to make up the missed course material and class time.

☐ If hurricane frequency or damage results in **numerous class days lost**, planned remote delivery will be the necessary path. If too many class days are lost due to tropical weather conditions, then once back on campus, it may be essential to require makeup contact time. In such a case, **a schedule for Friday evening, Saturday and Sunday classes will be announced** to facilitate class makeups with minimum time conflicts between classes.

☐ If the College is **closed for several weeks**, it may be necessary to adjust the academic term(s) and require the use of January to make up classes to finish Fall courses. The College will make every effort to announce this calendar adjustment in a timely fashion.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT

☐ ITS maintains primary systems in Amazon Web Services instead of on campus to enable the College to continue business operations, facilitate admission activities and support the academic program. Eckerd email is accessible through the link in MyEckerd web page (https://my.eckerd.edu/). Gmail at http://gmail.eckerd.edu will be available and will not be impacted in any way if the campus is closed.

You can review service impacts from a Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery Event on the website https://its.eckerd.edu/bcdr

The materials faculty have posted online through Moodle will be available for students to access. All of these will be live, meaning that faculty can continue to modify these materials and links even though the campus is closed. Also, most faculty resources found in Banner and on the MyEckerd site, including Residential Student Information (student locator, class rosters, mentor lists, transcripts, sports rosters) will be available and live, and accessible **via Remote Desktop**.

Faculty should be prepared to use commercial internet service providers (ISPs) to connect to the Internet. Other options for access include Internet Cafes, public libraries, and hotels, which will probably have power and Internet long before homes in a serious storm.

In addition, in the event of an unexpected technology glitch, or, say, a widespread power loss restricting internet (or other) access for some students or faculty during a hurricane closure, faculty **should continue to keep in mind <u>low-tech backup plans</u>** and **be prepared to deliver**

their courses with whatever technology and communication paths (e.g., postal mail, phone, cell phone, text message, alternate email address) are available.

   Faculty resources stored in Google Docs/Drive will be available. The way to access documents in Google Docs will not be changed and will not be interrupted (not even briefly) if the campus is closed. Therefore, **Google Drive** is an excellent place to store files you may need during a BCDR event. Google's servers are not affected by Hurricanes or anything else in Florida.

Active Directory Shared Drives
You can access your files stored on Active Directory (AD) Shared Drives (H:, S:, etc.) from off campus using the Remote Desktop provided by ITS as described below.

Remote Desktop
   To use Remote Desktop to access Banner or AD you should first configure your computer to connect to the Eckerd network through the VPN. Once you are connected to the VPN you can access the Remote Desktop Server. Instructions for downloading and connecting to the VPN are located on the BCDR website (https://www.eckerd.edu/bcdr). There are also instructions on that page for connecting to Remote Desktop. **Please test your ability to use VPN and Remote Desktop** under "blue sky" conditions.

☐ The Technology for Professors–A User's Guide is available
https://academics.eckerd.edu/moodle_perm/course/view.php?id=4/
and instructs faculty on a variety of resources enabling them to do the following:
- Post materials (Moodle, unofficial grades)
- Host online video meetings (Google Meet)
- Create and manage Moodle links (that students will see and can click to connect to various posted materials), including hurricane folder(s) with links to materials viewable only during campus closure
- Restrict who has access to the links (the default setting in Moodle is students in a class, but this can be modified)
- Perform editing functions (add comments, track changes) or create a webpage using Word; convert a Word document to a PDF file; put internet links into web pages.

   While the Guide is designed to enable faculty to teach themselves, it is highly important for faculty to gain hands-on experience with these resources *before* the upcoming Autumn and Fall terms. For this reason, at the Dean of Faculty's request, the Director of Instructional Technology and ITS will be offering **faculty workshops** on **using various resources and Moodle**. These workshops will be scheduled multiple times, allowing faculty to choose to attend early in the summer and prior to the start of the Fall. In addition, the Director of Instructional Technology is available for **one-on-one assistance** which can be scheduled at your request. The Dean of Faculty encourages faculty to attend these workshops and/or request one-on-one assistance.

☐ Moodle is managed so that after each term, the posted materials are **available online** for faculty use **for four years**. (If desired, faculty can remove their materials, allow student access, etc.) Materials five years or older will be archived and moved offline.

☐ Also, each academic term, every offered course, faculty member and student will be registered in **Moodle**. Besides allowing professors to post materials for their classes, Moodle has

many other features that faculty may also choose to use. Prior to Fall, the Moodle site for Autumn and Fall 2024 will be set up and ready for use.

☐ Accessing specialized software (**GIS, Mathematica, SPSS, Adobe Creative Suite**) will be disrupted for at least a short period of time. Faculty who plan for a course to have access to this software should consult with ITS about the available option(s) and likely time frame for restoring access. Faculty should then plan for class continuation over this time of no access, and also develop a backup plan in case of a longer disruption in access to the software.
    ITS can provide advice and assistance for providing software to your students. Options include student licenses for some packages and the Virtual Computer Lab system (https://sites.google.com/eckerd.edu/virtual-labs).

AUTUMN/FALL COURSE DELIVERY: EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS

☐ The Dean of Faculty's **Student Academic Message** will be updated before the start of the term to communicate to students and their parents the College's expectation that students will continue their school work during evacuation.

☐ To encourage continued student engagement in course work, it is essential also for **faculty to take initiative to be explicit and clear about their reasonable expectations for students** in the event of an evacuation. For best results, in addition to written contingency statements, we advise faculty to clarify and remind students of these expectations several times, including the first class day, the second week, right before evacuation (in class or by email), then once again by email during evacuation.

☐ Students have suggested they would be more willing to continue their school work during evacuation if the consequences were made clear. While of course there needs to be greater flexibility, this underscores the **importance of establishing consequences** and making sure students understand that assignments given over a hurricane closure carry weight similar to other work in the class.

☐ In sharing our expectations and contingency plans with students, we do not want to be alarmist, but positive. **Our goal is to assure students** that should the contact time on campus be interrupted, there will be no interruption in students completing their courses or progressing towards earning their degrees.

EMERGENCY CONTACT

☐ On the first day of class, every faculty member should **collect emergency contact information for their students** (address, cell phone, alternate email address).
In addition, in the event of a decision to evacuate, an emergency contact information form will appear on the MyEckerd site at https://my.eckerd.edu/; faculty should emphasize the importance of **students posting and updating** their emergency contact information **on the MyEckerd form** at the beginning and throughout any evacuation. (During campus closure, faculty will be able to view student information as needed to support the continuity of the academic program.)

☐ In the event of campus closure, in order to facilitate continued academic program operation, all faculty will **post their emergency contact information online** on this same MyEckerd form,

and **update** this information **throughout the closure**, so that they may be contacted by the administration and other faculty, as necessary. (For privacy reasons, faculty information will *not* be viewable by students.)

☐ In advance of an evacuation, every faculty member must find his/her own way to **make their emergency contact information available to their students,** perhaps posting this information on their course syllabus, sending an email to the class alias or posting this information on a hurricane syllabus in Moodle.

☐ If the College does not resume operations and on-campus classes **by the end of one week after evacuation**, the Dean of Faculty's Student Academic Message advises all students to contact their professors so their course work may proceed in a timely manner. Also, at that one week mark, in order to increase the chances of student-faculty connection, **faculty are to contact all of the students in their courses**.
    Shortly thereafter, faculty will be asked to report to Student Affairs, their Collegial Chair, and the student's mentor, the name of any student with whom they do *not* successfully make contact.

UPDATES ON COLLEGE OPERATIONS

During emergencies and hurricane season, when the College is closed, the College website will post updates on college operations. **Please carry this information with you,** so you will know how to access updated announcements.
- **Eckerd College's web site for tropical storm and hurricane information**:
  Tropical Weather Update web site at http://www.eckerd.edu/tropical.
  1. Please visit this site soon and bookmark it so it will be convenient for you during the hurricane season.
  2. While away from campus, all faculty should continually monitor this site for information about the College and instructions for returning after the storm.
  3. If the Eckerd College Web site is down, updates will be posted on the public Eckerd College Facebook Page at http://www.facebook.com/eckerdcollege.
- **Eckerd College's toll-free number**: **1-800-456-9009**
  This number will be maintained at a hardened backup WOW location.

SUMMER PREPAREDNESS: OFFICE, HOME & FAMILY

☐ **Many faculty plan to leave the campus or the area for the entire summer or an extended period of time.** The items in faculty offices could be damaged by fire, hurricane (wind or wind-driven rain), tornado, or even a broken water pipe. Faculty are **responsible for securing their offices before they leave**. **Collegial Chairs are now asked to update and distribute to their faculty the collegium's Individual Responsibility Checklist** that outlines the tasks every faculty member is expected to follow to secure their offices. To underscore here, please do the following.

- Store your important computer data on the campus server and/or in Google Drive.
    (This should be where you keep your important files all the time.) ITS recommends that you save your important files on **Google Drive** to ensure the easiest access.

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On the campus server:
You may also save data you want preserved to the **College's H: Drive** or **S: Drive**. The H: Drive data is available only to you; the S: Drive is shared department or Collegium wide. The IT department backs up the data on the H: and S: drives every day. If you need assistance with the use of the H: or S: drives, please send an e-mail to itshelp@eckerd.edu.

On Google Docs/Drive:
Go to the Eckerd email web site through Gmail at http://gmail.eckerd.edu (or through Google Drive https://drive.google.com) and log in. At the top left, click on "Drive" (or "Documents"). Upload documents to this site. All of these documents are stored securely, backed up, and available from anywhere, at any time, and without interruption, even when the campus is shut down.

- Take with you copies of important non-electronic files such as vital research notes, lecture notes, and personnel papers, along with back-ups of electronic files, and the materials you would need to be able to deliver your courses from off campus.
- Leave emergency contact information with your Collegial Chair, Discipline Coordinator and Collegial Administrative Coordinator, and also enter this address in your Personal Information - Emergency Contacts on ECWeb at https://myecweb.eckerd.edu.
- Protect personal items of value. Consider taking them with you. If you cannot take them with you, place them in waterproof containers if possible, off the floor and away from windows. (Be certain to mark with your name in case the container is moved.) Check to be certain your personal insurance policy covers any valuable personal items you leave behind. NOTE: The College does not insure an individual's personal items.
- Shutdown your computer, printer, and any other electronic devices. Once they are shut down, unplug them from the wall. Please do not unplug other cables unless you need to move the computer, as this will delay getting your office up and running when you return to campus. If they are on the floor please move them to somewhere with a higher elevation to protect from flooding (especially if you are on the ground floor).
- Review items in the bottom drawer of file cabinets or bottom desk drawers. If the items are important to you, consider moving them to a higher location or place in waterproof containers, or taking them with you.
- Consider taking digital photographs or video of your office in case needed for proof of loss.
- Discuss protection of any particularly valuable piece of equipment and any College art work with your collegial chair or discipline coordinator.

☐ Finally, when all is said and done, Eckerd College will be as strong and vital as its people. **Please review your family's personal protection plan**. Each year, Pinellas and other surrounding counties update their emergency management pages to provide some very useful information in a Hurricane Preparation Guide. Each county website includes information relating to getting ready before a storm. Consider preparing your home, data, documents & photos; protecting your pets; checking your insurance coverage; building your hurricane kit; stocking up on masks; medical advice for storm, evacuation, pandemic; and the like. These steps for family preparation apply whether you are leaving the area during the summer or evacuating to safety from an oncoming storm. Below are the links to visit for your county:
- Pinellas County - pinellas.gov/department/emergency-management/
- Hillsborough County – hcfl.gov/residents/public-safety/emergency-management

- Manatee County – mymanatee.org/departments/public_safety/emergency_management
- Pasco County – pascocountyfl.net/services/emergency_management/index.php
- Sarasota County - scgov.net/government/emergency-services/emergency-management-4420