



ECKERD COLLEGE

OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT & DEAN OF FACULTY

May 5, 2025

Dear Faculty Colleagues:

Believe it or not, you will soon turn your attention to the courses you'll teach next year. When you do so, I ask that once again, you prepare for hurricane season.

Last year we came to know first-hand the serious difficulties faced by college and universities after major storms. Helene and Milton presented us with challenges similar to those experienced by Texas A&M after Ike; Tulane, Loyola, and Xavier after Katrina; and Florida Gulf Coast University after Ian. In the face of these challenges, you, our faculty, responded with dedication, resilience, and creativity. You continued to deliver courses and provided support to students during the evacuation. When our students returned, you welcomed them back and helped them stay on track for the remainder of the semester. You did all of this even as you managed the impacts of the storms on your own homes and families.

These experiences underscore the vital importance of continuity planning, and the necessity of planning well in advance of the start of the semester. Should we face an evacuation, you will need time to focus on your own safety; if you are implementing (rather than creating) continuity plans, you are giving yourself time for the many personal and professional tasks hurricane preparations require of us.

Advanced continuity planning protects the College too: in the wake of an evacuation, we do not want our students to feel they must transfer to continue their education. We must be able to say to our students—and their families—that our courses will proceed, even when the campus is closed.

Thus, all Eckerd faculty members should once again complete appropriate planning and preparation this summer, with the goal of providing our students 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 the document now, save it as a guide, and keep an eye out for addenda that will likely be issued this summer based on feedback we gathered last fall. Note too that through the good work of the InspiredNetwork, we will also be adding a toolkit to the Dean of Faculty's website. The toolkit will support planning for and teaching during an evacuation.

Discipline Coordinators, I ask that you 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christine Wooley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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 email 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 up to 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 of an evacuation during which class delivery would likely be interrupted for several days, I will distribute 2 weeks of homework questions to students and have students work with the textbook in order to get as far as they can in answering the questions. I have a project that's due in three weeks and would go ahead and distribute instructions for 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 my plans for the course to the students prior to evacuation or I will contact students (using contact information collected on the first day of class) and explain these plans if we evacuate in a hurry. We will 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 link at MyEckerd (<https://my.eckerd.edu/>).

□ Given the **possibility of a hurricane arriving early** in the 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 for reasonable approaches but this is ultimately at the discretion of each individual faculty member.

For the short or initial time period:

- 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 each individual faculty member to decide how to make up the missed course material and class time.

For a longer time period:

- If hurricane frequency or damage results in **numerous class days lost**, then **remote delivery planned by each faculty member** 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** for the College to **require makeup contact time**. In such a case, **a schedule for Friday evening, Saturday, and/or 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 for the College 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 hosted by Google. It can be accessed through the link in MyEckerd web page (<https://my.eckerd.edu/>) or directly at <http://gmail.eckerd.edu>. Email 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://www.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 low-tech backup plans 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 from the Instructional Technology for Professors Moodle course:

https://academics.eckerd.edu/moodle_perm/course/view.php?id=3

Direct Link:

https://academics.eckerd.edu/moodle_perm/pluginfile.php/660/mod_resource/content/0/Technology4Professors--A_Users_Guide2025.pdf

This document instructs faculty on a variety of resources enabling them to do the following:

- Post materials (Moodle, unofficial grades)
- Host online video meetings (Google Meet, Zoom)
- 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 2025 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 Evacuation Location Form will be made available online for students: faculty should emphasize the importance of **students posting and updating** their location and emergency contact information 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 location and emergency contact information online** on the Evacuation Location Form that will be made available for faculty & staff, 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 coursework may proceed in a timely manner. Also, at that one week mark, in order to increase the chances of student-faculty connection, **faculty (if they have not previously) 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 website for tropical storm and hurricane information:**

Tropical Weather Update website 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 website 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 is not affected by events that disrupt campus network services.

- **The main ITS information page for business continuity during a disaster is** <https://www.eckerd.edu/bcdr>.

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.

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 website 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 on your Banner Profile, accessed using the **My Profile** link in the ECExperience Employee Quick Links, then click on your Personal Information on <https://myeckerd.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/departments/emergency-management/
- Hillsborough County – hcfi.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