

A Message from UT President Ronald Vaughn:

Every year The University of Tampa spends a great deal of time preparing for and monitoring tropical weather. As you may know, Atlantic hurricane season runs June 1 to Nov. 30, and although Tampa has only seen two mass hurricane evacuations in nearly three decades and hasn't experienced a direct hurricane hit since 1946, we do not take tropical weather lightly.

As a NOAA-certified StormReady university, UT is in constant contact with local, state and federal authorities to plan for all worst-case scenarios. The safety of our University community in such situations is the highest priority for us, and we will do everything we can to make decisions that are in the best interest of our community. Likewise, I urge you to regularly check on UT's operational status at www.ut.edu/weather when weather threatens Florida. This site also contains useful information regarding preparing for tropical weather before and during a storm. The University also has a live weather station on campus at www.ut.edu/weatherstation.

In the unlikely event of a hurricane evacuation, UT has arrangements with local authorities for safe shelter in Lawton Chiles Elementary School, located in north Tampa (www.ut.edu/emergency/evacuation). UT has also arranged for transportation to and from that shelter. Specific instructions would be provided to residential students, and the Department of Residence Life has procedures to track a student's plans so that we know their intended location during the evacuation period.

UT has an Emergency Operations Team (EOT) that meets regularly when there is any type of potential threat to the University community. The EOT represents every area of the University and uses an *Emergency Operations Plan*, or EOP, that serves as the administration's procedural guide for responding to potential or developing emergency situations. Such situations may occur when:

- University community members may be in danger (e.g., flooding, hostile person).
- a potentially threatening situation is developing (e.g., a hurricane is forming).
- there may be a disruption of routine institutional operations (e.g., power outage).
- damage has occurred in areas adjacent to the campus (e.g., explosion, tornado).
- requested by governmental/emergency agencies (e.g., toxic fumes, bomb threat).
- deemed appropriate due to any unusual or threatening circumstances.

The EOT continually updates and improves the EOP, trains staff, faculty, and student leaders who respond to emergency situations and provisions emergency supplies (e.g., food, water, sandbags, fuel, etc.) that are needed for campus use. In addition, communications lists, detailed instructions for specific occurrences, and safety communication tools are revised and tested. Some safety communications tools that are employed during emergencies include global voice mail, global email, Blackboard and SpartanWeb announcements, SMART text messaging (www.ut.edu/safety/smart/), and lightning detection systems, among others.

This is not a comprehensive explanation of emergency procedures but rather a briefing to demonstrate our commitment to campus safety. Again, in all emergency situations, the EOT's highest priority is the safety and security of all University community members. Although protection of campus buildings, facilities and property is an important consideration, the administration's commitment is to first provide for the well being of students, faculty and staff.

Please take time to review www.ut.edu/safety and www.ut.edu/weather. We welcome your suggestions and input as we make a safer UT.