PANELISTS:
Meredith Beers, PhD, MPH
Associate Director Business Continuity of Operations
Office of Emergency Preparedness & Response

Donald Veals, LEM
Assistant Director of Emergency Response Systems
Office of Emergency Preparedness & Response

MODERATOR:
Penny Wyatt
Director, Parent Programs and External Relations
Division of Student Affairs

Tulane
OFFICE OF EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE

- We help prepare, help prevent, and respond to incidents at Tulane University.

- We perform annual risk assessments, trainings, create emergency plans, and constantly think of all things that could cause business and learning interruptions.
We use an all-hazards approach when preparing for emergencies. Anything can happen and our alert system and response system are both nimble and can be adjusted to meet the needs of each incident. In addition to our all-hazards approach, we also prepare for hazards that are most likely to affect us. These include active shooter, severe weather, fires, boil water advisories, pandemics, and of course, hurricanes. On Thursday, July 14 at 6pm central we will hold a parent webinar to discuss our all-hazards planning; this presentation will focus on hurricane preparedness and actions you and your student should take.
One component of preparedness is knowing how we will inform your student and you about emergency situations.
There are several ways we will communicate with you – the parent/guardian/family member of our students – when there is the threat of a tropical storm or hurricane, during a storm, and post-storm. The primary methods used to contact you will be email and the university’s emergency website. To make sure you will receive emails you can have your student add your email address in Gibson, or you can sign up via the link on the screen.

The secondary methods used to communicate with you will be social media (our office’s social media handle is @TulaneEmergency) and we are on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. The university’s main social media account (@TulaneU) will also be used. Additionally, Tulane Today will be used. You can subscribe to Tulane Today using the link on the screen.
The students get an introduction to Emergency Preparedness in one of the required online education modules they must complete by August 22. Then, on the students’ first night on campus, Donald Veals, Assistant Director of Emergency Response Systems, will deliver an Emergency Preparedness and Response presentation that focuses on active shooter and severe weather situations. Parents are welcome to share the parent Hurricane Preparedness and Response PPT slides with narration notes and/or the webinar video with their students now to help their families discuss, prepare, and submit the students’ hurricane evacuation plans.

When there is the threat of a tropical storm or hurricane, during a storm, and post-storm, there are several ways we will communicate with your student. The primary methods used to contact your student will be through their Tulane email address, the university’s emergency website, and through our mass notification system via the Everbridge App, text messages, and emails. When we use our mass notification system these will be titled TU Alerts. Students are automatically enrolled to receive TU Alerts, including text messages. They should download the Everbridge App to receive TU Alerts through it.
The secondary methods used to communicate with your student will be email for groups including Housing & Residence Life and Dining Services. Social media will also have links to the emergency website and updates. It is imperative that students follow directions from all university officials, including Student Affairs and TUPD.
To ensure your student receives our text alerts they should log into Gibson, look on the left side of the screen under “records,” and click the link to Update Address, Phone, and Email. They should confirm or correct that their own contact information – including their cell phone number – are listed.
The Everbridge App is one way we send emergency alerts. It is available for free in the Apple and Android stores. Your student should download the app and log in with their Tulane.edu credentials. Not only can we push emergency alerts through the app, it has three safety features your student can utilize at any time.

The first is Safe Corridor – your student can push this button to set a timer for when they are traveling from one place to another; for instance, if they are walking from the Howard-Tilton Memorial Library to their residence hall. They will be prompted to enter a 4-digit code of their choice, select a time for how long they anticipate it will take them to walk from the library to their residence hall, and then upon arrival at their residence hall they turn the timer off by entering the same 4-digit code they used to set the timer. If they do not turn the timer off, Tulane Police Department will be notified and the TUPD Dispatchers will call your student to find out if they need assistance. There is no penalty if they have forgotten to turn the timer off upon arrival at their destination.

The second feature is Emergency Call. If your student pushes this button, it will call TUPD. They will be able to talk to a TUPD dispatcher and tell them what assistance they need.

The third feature is SOS. If your student finds themselves in an emergent situation and pushes this button the TUPD dispatchers will be immediately notified and your student’s name, phone number, and the forward-facing camera on your student’s phone will be turned on so the dispatchers can see who is in need of emergency assistance, what
number to use to call them, and what is happening. It will also show the dispatchers your student’s GPS location so TUPD can be dispatched to their location to provide assistance, if needed.
Let’s move now to our main topic: hurricane preparedness.
Currently we are in hurricane season, which officially runs from June 1 – November 30. The peak of the season (when we historically see the most activity) is from late August – mid-September. Just because hurricane season officially starts on June 1 does not mean there can’t be a storm in May; June – November is when hurricanes are most likely to form.

When a storm forms in the Atlantic Ocean we see these storms at least seven days before they make landfall. Around five days before landfall we will start to have a good sense of its projected path.

When a storm forms in the Gulf of Mexico, or just south of the Gulf in the Caribbean, we typically only have about four days to prepare.

Regardless of where the storm forms, once we are within its forecasted area of impact, university senior leadership tries to make and announce a decision about if we will close and evacuate or close and shelter in place as soon as possible.
With hurricanes there are several hazards including, high winds, storm surge, and heavy rainfall that can cause inland flooding (along with storm surge).

Hurricanes can also cause multiple impacts such as power outages, loss of internet service, water and sewerage pumping station problems resulting in boil water advisories, flooding, supply chain disruptions and interruptions, and fuel shortages.
When a storm is forecast to enter the Gulf and its projected path are forecast, we have several options of what we, as a university, can do.

Our first option is to Close and Shelter in Place. This means that we will transition to online or remote classes or cancel classes, cease normal business operations, and shelter on-campus residents in their residence halls. If this is the decision that is made it is because the expected impacts from the storm to New Orleans and Tulane are manageable.

Our second option is to Close and Evacuate. If this decision is made then classes will be cancelled, we will cease normal business operations, and everyone MUST evacuate. If the City of New Orleans does not declare a mandatory evacuation even if the City of New Orleans does not.

If we shelter in place or evacuate, the university will run shuttles from campus to the airport. Tulane Shuttles & Transportation will send out information for how students can reserve a spot on one of the shuttles. The shuttles will run until about one day before
the storm is forecast to make landfall.

Our third option is to do nothing. If this decision is made New Orleans is not actually in the forecast area for the storm and there are no expected impacts to New Orleans or Tulane from the storm.
So – how do we decide what to do? There are multiple factors that are taken into consideration including forecasted storm size, current and forecasted storm forward speed, forecasted storm surge, forecasted storm category at landfall, and forecasted storm direction relative to New Orleans. All of these components – which can change as the storm gets closer to landfall – are considered. It is our goal to announce what we will do (evacuate or shelter in place) about 2.5 to 3 days before projected landfall. We want to give you and your student as much time to implement your plans as possible, while also having as accurate a forecast as possible.

We work with weather partners at the National Hurricane Center, AccuWeather, and a local meteorologist to gather all this information. We talk with our weather partners multiple times a day beginning when we see a storm forming through landfall, if we are in the forecasted impact area.

Remember – no two storms are the same, so just because a storm has a similar path or the same category as another storm that does not mean it will act the same way as the previous storm.
If the university decides to Shelter in Place and your student lives on campus, our residence halls and select other buildings have backup power that will allow them to maintain full power, including HVAC. Additionally, on-campus students will be provided a three-day supply of Meals Ready to Eat (MREs) – non-perishable food. Students will not be allowed to leave their shelter location from onset of tropical storm-force winds until after damage assessment team completes initial sweep of campus.

- This could last upwards of 24 hours
- Recreation activities (including Reily Center) will be unavailable

From the time we start experiencing tropical storm-force winds through when the storm has cleared our area and our damage assessment team is conducting their initial safety sweep of campus students will not be allowed to leave their buildings at all. This is for their safety and the safety of first responders. Please be aware that this time period could last upwards of 24 consecutive hours.

When we close and shelter in place this also means that activities, including the Reily Recreation Center, will be closed. When we shelter in place the Reily Recreation Center becomes the shelter location for essential employees who stay on campus from before the storm arrives through when it is deemed safe to begin resuming some or all our normal business operations to protect life safety and our physical assets. This group includes members of the Tulane Police Department, Facilities Services, Student Affairs, Dining, and our office.
If your student lives off campus when the university decides to shelter in place, they will need to take the necessary steps to be personally prepared. This means they will need to ensure that they have enough bottled water to last each person (and service animals or pets they may have) multiple days in case there are problems with the water plant that result in a boil water advisory, enough non-perishable food to last at least 3-5 days per person, flashlights, batteries, a first aid kit, portable chargers for their electronic devices, and the like.

They should also check with their landlords to see if their residence has a generator, and what preparatory steps they need to take to prepare their home. This could include securing garbage and recycle bins, bringing in porch and patio furniture, and closing shutters. They should also ask what steps the landlord will be taking to prepare their residence.

If your off-campus student does not feel comfortable or safe sheltering in place in their off-campus residence, we CANNOT guarantee that we will be able to accommodate them on campus.

Off campus students need to be prepared for the likelihood of losing power – with tropical storm and hurricane-force winds loss of power is not uncommon or unexpected. Part of the charm of this city is its age, but it is an old city and has a very old infrastructure, including above-ground power lines that tree limbs or trees can take down. Power losses can last hours to days to weeks following a storm, so they should
keep this in mind as they prepare their emergency supplies.

Another issue that comes with an aged infrastructure is the increased likelihood of problems with the city’s pumping stations and sewerage stations, and if the latter is compromised not only will the city take on a putrid odor, but there can be sewerage backups into people’s homes. Lastly, garbage pickup tends to experience delays following storms as removing large debris is the initial priority.

Campus will remain closed immediately following the storm, and at least through the initial damage assessment. This means that as soon as the storm has passed your off-campus student cannot come to campus since it will not yet be determined if it is safe for people to be walking around campus.
If the university decides that we need to close and evacuate you and your student need to immediately implement your student’s personal evacuation plan.

Your student should plan to be evacuated for at least five days. When your student is packing to leave these are some essentials we strongly encourage them to take with them:

- Clothes
- Medications (prescriptions and over the counter)
- Sanitation and personal hygiene supplies
- Anything they need to do their schoolwork and attend classes remotely/virtually
- Portable chargers for their electronic devices
- Electronic devices and the associated chargers
- Important documents, which includes their Splash Card, government issued IDs and government documents, such as visas, a copy of their off-campus residence lease, proof of insurance, etc.
- Any valuables and sentimental items that cannot be replaced or that they would be devastated to lose
- A written copy of their emergency contacts and associated contact information

They will not be allowed back on campus once campus has closed if they have forgotten something. If they are found to be in their residence hall room once the campus has closed, they will face student conduct disciplinary action because they will be putting themself and others in danger. Evacuation is not something that is taken
lightly and is done because the threat for significant damage and risk for life safety is great.
As a reminder, your student's personal evacuation plan must be submitted by this Friday, July 15th.

You and your student should NOT rely on us to be your student's evacuation plan. You and your student need to create a plan that can be implemented without us. Please note that we will run shuttles to the airport until about one day before the storm is forecast to make landfall. YOUR PRIMARY PLAN ABSOLUTELY SHOULD NOT BE TO HAVE YOUR STUDENT EVACUATE WITH US. IT NEEDS TO BE SOMETHING ELSE.

If your plan changes after July 15th, and that is entirely possible that it may, that is OK. For instance, if your student’s personal evacuation plan is to fly home or to a city where you have relatives or friends and then when an evacuation is declared your student wants to evacuate with their roommate or friends, that is OK. (Side note: when Meredith was an undergraduate, she once took nine friends home during an evacuation – most of their plans had been to fly home. She and two others who had cars caravanned to Houston and stayed with her parents for five days).

Perhaps your current plan is for you to come pick your student up but later you decide that there is a friend or relative who lives closer who can pick your student up for you – that is OK. Plans can change. But now is the time to think through what is Plan A, Plan B, and Plan C. Having your student evacuate with the university should be Plan Z.
If your student evacuates with the university they will be taken on a bus ride that could take 8 or more hours to sleep on a gym floor at another university where they will most likely not have cots or air mattresses, will have no privacy, and will have to share locker room bathrooms with everyone else who has evacuated with the university. It will be far more comfortable for them to evacuate to you, with friends, with relatives or family friends, or with roommates than to evacuate with us.
You are an important component to hurricane planning. You need to discuss with your student if both of you comfortable with your student sheltering in place during a tropical storm or hurricane if the university has decided to shelter in place.

Your student is required to have an evacuation plan. We hope we never have to use any of our evacuation plans, but you should not skip having this important discussion based on our hopes.

As you think about your and your student’s preparedness for a storm be aware that it is OK for your student to evacuate before the university has made a decision about sheltering in place or evacuating. If you and your student are more comfortable with your student evacuating rather than sheltering in place for a storm, then they should evacuate. If you and your student decide to do this, your student must communicate with all of their professors.

It is also OK for your student to evacuate if the university has decided to shelter in place. We will run shuttles to the airport for students who want to evacuate.

We also strongly encourage you to talk with your insurance carrier to find out if your student’s belongings are covered under your policy or if your student needs to get a separate property/renter’s policy. You should have this conversation whether your student lives on- or off-campus.

Tulane’s Office of Enterprise Risk Services offers the following
information on a program, [https://www.collegestudentinsurance.com](https://www.collegestudentinsurance.com), to help protect your student’s property:

Protect your student’s personal belonging against loss, theft, disappearance, or damages, regardless of whether they live on-campus or off-campus with premiums as low as $126 for $5,000 of coverage with deductibles as low as $25. This includes protection for their cell phones, bicycles, computers, clothing, household items, and other valuables.

For additional questions on this protection product, please contact Tulane’s Office of Enterprise Risk Services at 504-865-5653.
How do you help your student develop their personal evacuation plan? Think through these questions:

- Where will my student go?
- When will you and your student make the decision to stay or leave?
- How will your student travel out of the city?
  - Rail and bus transportation will not be available options if the city institutes a mandatory evacuation
- Who is your student’s designated out-of-town contact?
- Remember to include your student’s service animal, emotional support animal, or (when your student lives off campus) pets in their plan
- Whether on- or off-campus, review your family’s homeowner’s insurance coverage or secure separate property/renter’s insurance for your student

The university staff who stay on campus during storms to protect life safety and our physical assets do not have the capacity to care for animals so your on-campus student CANNOT evacuate and leave their service animal or emotional support animal in their residence hall.

Does your family’s homeowner’s insurance policy cover your student’s belongings? If not, be sure to secure a separate policy for your student.
When a storm has formed and is approaching the Gulf, or if we are in the forecast impact area, you have several very important roles.

First: read the university announcements that are sent via email and check the emergency website for all official updates. The parent Facebook pages may be your source for some information, but leading up to, during, and following a storm they should not be your source of information! Remember that past storms had different dynamics and impacts which required specific responses. Get current information from official Tulane sources rather than unofficial sources on Facebook.

Also, watch local New Orleans news. Donald and Meredith’s favorites are WWLTV, Fox8, and WDSU. The Weather Channel should not be your source of information – they and other national news outlets tend to show footage from the last “worst case storm” and remember, all storms are different. Our local news outlets have meteorologists and reporters who can speak with authority about how each approaching storm could impact our area. They are who we trust, and hope you will watch them, too.

Finally, and this one is very important: remind your student to check their Tulane email! In addition to university-wide communications, there may be communications sent only to students or only to students who live on-campus, and these will go to their Tulane email. These communications could come from Housing & Residence Life, Student
Affairs, and others, and they will all have important information your student needs to see. This cannot be stressed enough: they need to check their Tulane email.
In addition to resources on our website, and we will share that link, there are also great hurricane planning resources available from the city at ready.nola.gov and from the state at getagameplan.org.
Following a storm, it is imperative that your student follow all instructions from Tulane administration. All instructions and updates will be sent via their Tulane email. Follow-ups may also be sent via TU Alerts. These will also be posted on the emergency website.

Students should NOT return to any of the university’s campuses or buildings until expressly told by the university that they may do so. Buildings may have power but that does not mean they are safe to occupy.

Your student should also be prepared to attend classes remotely for multiple days or longer post-storm. So please remind them when they evacuate to take what they need for their classes!
QUESTIONS ON HOW TO #BETUREADY?

CONTACT US

- Emergency Preparedness & Response Staff
  - Jason Ferguson, MPH, Executive Director Emergency Management
    - jferguson@tulane.edu
  - Meredith Beers, PhD, MPH, Associate Director Business Continuity
    - meredith@tulane.edu
  - Donald Veals, LEM, Assistant Director of Emergency Response Systems
    - donald@tulane.edu
  - Department email
    - emergencyprep@tulane.edu

Follow us on social media @TulaneEmergency
Check out our website: emergencyprep.tulane.edu

Please feel free to reach out to us with your questions, follow us on social media (our Instagram is particularly great!), and to look at our website for additional planning resources.