



MEMORANDUM

September 8, 2017

Dear FIU family,

The next 72 hours likely will be very challenging. Hurricane Irma has shown it has no mercy: the wind will be loud and nerve-wracking, the pounding wind-driven rain will seem unending, and storm-related noise will be annoying, to say the least.

Our collective experience with Hurricane Andrew, and more recent serious storms – as well as our preparation – will serve us well. But the key element is our resilient FIU family and the community of family and supporters from around the nation and indeed the world who have expressed their concern and care for our FIU. Experience tells us that in a situation such as this, individuals can make a big difference. I challenge you to try to make a difference – particularly in supporting family and community. And because we care about you, I want to share with you what is likely to happen.

You will go through a lot during the next few days. I am sure that most of us are already exhausted by the draining efforts to prepare and support others. Safety must be first. If you are bunkered at home, understand that you will likely lose electricity, and may need to retreat to a windowless room if all else fails. During the last major hurricane, many benefitted from battery-operated TVs and radios which provided life-saving information. Understand that while you may be afraid, your family members will be equally fearful and that you have an unprecedented opportunity to give comfort to loved ones and to rise above the difficult moments. Because everything indicates that this will be a long storm, don't be fooled by moments of calm – we may either be momentarily in the eye of the storm or we may be in between rain and wind bands. This storm is expected to last all day Sunday and possibly into Monday. Stay inside throughout.

Because you will likely lose power, you should conserve whatever the battery power you have in flashlights and cell phones. Prior to the storm's arrival you should fill bathtubs and containers with water. If you have running water after the storm, it's a good idea to boil it before drinking it.

After Irma has passed, there will be a period of eerie silence before the helicopters, generators, and grinding chain saw sounds fill the void. Because air conditioners will not function, you will feel the blistering heat of our South Florida tropics. Cell coverage and phone connectivity will be limited. Local television and radio will be your best source of information. Standing water is dangerous and so are downed power wires. Stay away from both. Local travel will be difficult: street signage will likely have been blown away, stop lights at intersections may not work, and basic supplies such as generators, plastics and tarps will likely be in short supply.

If your dwelling has sustained significant damage, you will need to make sure that the house number is visible – even if you must spray paint it somewhere on the property. Beware of unlicensed door knockers selling repair services. There were many families ripped off by these con artists.

If you have a generator, please be aware of the dangers of [carbon monoxide poisoning; electric shock and electrocution; and fire](#). Use it outdoors, away from open windows, vents and doors. Do not run it in an enclosed space like your home or a garage. Make sure to turn the generator off and let it cool down before refueling.

Expect that our ability to communicate with you, initially, will be limited by the lack of wireless connectivity. We have back up plans to keep current our website, but if you cannot get access to it, that will not help you.

At this point, we are closed through Monday evening. But we expect to be closed for more days after that. Our first objective will be to ensure that the FIU family is intact. We urge you to help friends and colleagues in recovery. Then we will immediately turn to safety and facility issues. All buildings and systems will be carefully checked to ensure good working order.

Then and only then will we determine a timetable to first reopen the university, and then resume classroom instruction. It is highly unlikely that we can both reopen the university and then resume class simultaneously. We understand that our students, faculty and staff need time to begin the process of recovery. Once the university resumes operations, our [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) team will be available to support our students.

Please stay alert to announcements about university operations. Information about campuses reopening will be communicated through the local media and FIU's official channels:

- Messages to your FIU email account
- FIU social media accounts ([Facebook](#) and [@FIU](#))
- The university news site: news.fiu.edu
- Call 305-348-HELP (4357) for recorded updates

Please be safe and keep those around you safe as well. I look forward to seeing you back on campus soon.

Remember this: staying calm can be the Panther Superpower.

Best,



Mark B. Rosenberg
President