

**Post-storm update from Executive Dean Bob Goodman to the George H. Cook community**  
**Message #1**

November 9, 2012

Dear colleagues,

We have collectively and individually been through a rough couple of weeks. I write to express my sincere and personal hopes that whatever your experiences during our back-to-back storms—and I know some of them are really tough and even tragic—you are on the mend and making progress in restoring your lives and property. And I hope you, as I do, take the strength of our community of scholars and the work we all do as being restorative in this time of difficulties and loss.

**Students:**

For safety reasons related to power outage on the Cook campus, students were evacuated in a very smooth operation to housing on Busch and Livingston (and some were able to go home, depending on family circumstances.) Power was restored on Cook early Thursday morning last week, and students returned soon after. Classes, of course, were cancelled on the New Brunswick and Newark campuses all of last week, resuming this past Monday. But then, we had a planned outage that led to cancelling three periods of classes on Cook and Douglass on Tuesday of this week. This was to allow the power company to reconnect the back-up line to our campus sub-station (on Biel Road) in advance of the nor'easter that paid a visit late Tuesday through Wednesday. That storm we “weathered” OK.

As I am sure you can appreciate, this period has been really hard on our students. Rick Ludescher and I have been consulted on messages that will come from the VP for Undergraduate Education and the Executive VP of Academic Affairs regarding options students have for completing their semester and grading. When these come, we will pass them on to faculty and staff so that in your work locally with your students you will be consistent with university policies and procedures.

Barb Turpin and Rick Ludescher are in close communication between themselves and also with our students to give them support and advice, and where needed, consolation.

I call on all of you who deal with students to keep in mind that their experiences can be very different from our own, and that careful listening and caring attention can go a long way to helping them recover from what, in too many cases, are personal, if hidden, traumas.

**Statewide facilities:**

We have properties and personnel throughout the state. Many county offices and all of our outlying farms, labs, and other facilities have reported in, and the news is mostly heartening and encouraging. We suffered no major damage and the repair bills will be modest. This is especially true of our facilities in the southern part of the state. The Rutgers University Marine Facility at Tuckerton sustained some significant damage to the causeway and boat basin, and I understand a small vessel was lost. Injuries to personnel across the state seem to be minimal.

**Cook campus**

On the Cook campus, the situation was also not as bad as it could have been but, in some cases, research programs suffered severely and will take months, if not longer, to recover. The storm revealed the significant weaknesses of our research infrastructure and the aftermath of the storm included some

significant problems, in part related to poor planning (we are actively working already to address that issue) and in part related to inadequate support, especially back-up generators. We also had some severe complications in communication during the prolonged power outage.

So, the storm put a sharp focus on some major gaps in disaster management related to infrastructure and communications. For example, we have one building that, when built, was wired for standby emergency generators but a generator was never installed! Another building has a large generator recently installed nearby but research labs were not connected, only IT assets. (We knew this at the time and asked, but were told no). During the outage, the Internet was useless. Many of us found, fortunately, that even if we could not place mobile phone calls, text messaging worked fine. Texting became the backbone of our communications but too few of us had the right mobile numbers to text the people we needed to be in touch with! That we will fix right away.

Nevertheless, our IT staff did yeoman's work in shutting down, protecting, and restarting computers, data storage assets, computing clusters, and the network.

We had the immediate post-storm support of the Emergency Operations Center, Public Safety, and facilities staff, as well as faculty, staff, students, and department chairs, to mobilize portable generators and fueling services supporting the few standby generators to keep many freezers at or near temperature, but these efforts were incomplete and only partially successful. So, we did suffer some real losses that will take time and money to replace. Our aim is to, as fully as possible, invest the time and money to make full restoration.

#### **Lab and facility visits:**

Brad Hillman and I spent many hours last Thursday and Friday visiting all of our laboratory buildings on the Cook campus, checking in with staff, faculty and students, and hearing about experiences and concerns. What we heard over and over were words of resilience, thankfulness that things were not worse than they were, with the occasional upset over avoidable losses.

#### **Reporting losses:**

We want to spread the word about how to report (through department chairs and center directors) any and all losses so that we can prepare and submit timely insurance claims. Infrastructure damage needing repairs also needs to be reported.

- In her role of my chief of staff, Gail Alexander ([execdean@aesop.rutgers.edu](mailto:execdean@aesop.rutgers.edu)) is the point person for all such loss reports. Please document your needs in writing to simplify Gail's management and tabulation of all reports.

Please, in addition, copy the following people, as indicated:

- Lisa Estler ([estler@aesop.rutgers.edu](mailto:estler@aesop.rutgers.edu)) will be the point person for insurance filing and should also be copied on any Cook campus facilities needing repairs.
- Larry Katz ([Katz@rce.rutgers.edu](mailto:Katz@rce.rutgers.edu)) should be copied on all reports of issues and needs throughout RCE via RCE department chairs and CEDHs.
- Brad Hillman ([Hillman@aesop.rutgers.edu](mailto:Hillman@aesop.rutgers.edu)) should be copied on all reports of issues at our farms and other NJAES facilities in the state, including coastal locations.

Xenia Morin and Brad Hillman will continue to play their roles in supporting faculty who have issues related to grant deadlines and research losses (Morin) and needs for AES-related research support (Hillman), with extra attention on storm-related concerns.

**Upcoming messages**

In my next message, early next week, I want to point you to some of the examples of the services we provided the people of the state and region during and after the storms. Rutgers has many great, some heroic, stories to tell: from tracking NYC raw sewage coming down the Hudson into NJ coastal waters for the DEP; to helping farmers communicate, protect their assets, and deal with storm aftermaths; to the work of student life/residence life, public safety, and facilities on campus and off in support of our communities and stakeholders, we have a lot to be proud of as well as be thankful for. We'll tell these stories in future messages as well as on a new website we are launching called "The Newsroom."

In summary, we have a lot to learn to be better prepared for the future and we will devote the necessary time and funding to become so.

Again, with my very best wishes and thanks,

Bob