

# Preparing for Crisis Communication

Dean Ron Vetter, UNC Wilmington – Weather Threat

Dean Amy Hurd, Illinois State University – Budget Threat

Dean Karen DePauw, Virginia Tech – Physical Threat

Wednesday, December 7, 2016

9:00am - 11:30am

# Preparing for Crisis Communication: Weather Threat

**Ron Vetter, Ph.D.**  
**Associate Provost for Research and  
Dean of the Graduate School**



UNIVERSITY *of* NORTH CAROLINA WILMINGTON

# About UNCW

- **Over 15,700 students (1,826 graduate, 12%)**
- **Student body**
  - **15% out-of-state (11% graduate)**
  - **62% female (68% graduate)**
- **Degrees offered**
  - **Bachelors: 54 in 49 majors**
  - **Masters: 29**
  - **Doctoral: 4**



# About UNCW

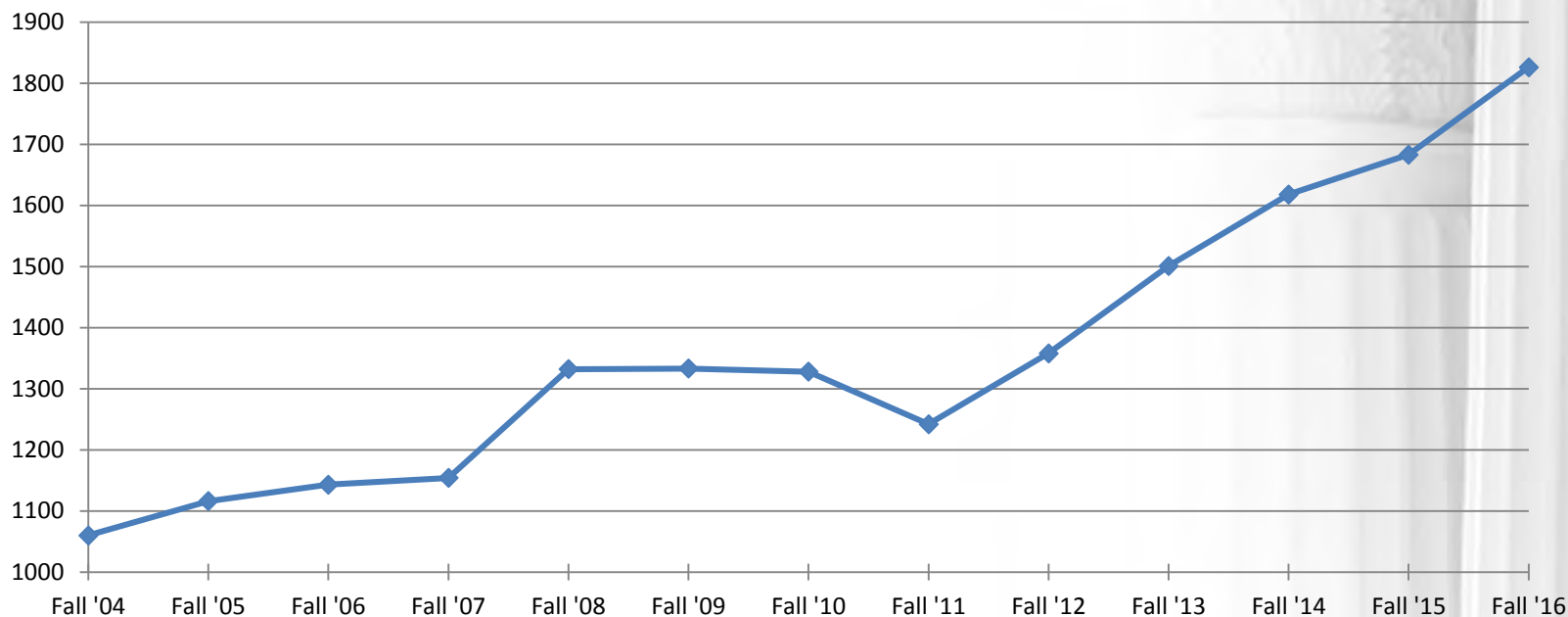
- **Notable facts**

- **Internationally renowned graduate programs in the marine sciences, creative writing and psychology.**
- **Produce more marine science-related M.S. graduates than any institution in the U.S.**
- **M.F.A. in creative writing is ranked one of the best in the U.S.**
- **Graduate School provides funding for 300 graduate assistantships (\$3.4M), 83 out-of-state tuition waivers (\$1M), and tuition scholarships (\$338K)**



# About UNCW

- Graduate enrollment is growing



UNIVERSITY of NORTH CAROLINA WILMINGTON

# About UNCW

- **New programs in the planning/implementation phases:**
  - **MS in Data Science – Fall 2017**
  - **PhD in Psychology – Fall 2017**
  - **MFA in Filmmaking – Fall 2018**
  - **PhD in Integrative Coastal & Marine Sciences – Fall 2018**
  - **BA in Digital Arts – Fall 2018**
  - **MS in Business Analytics (online) – Spring 2018**
  - **MS in Finance & Investment Management (online) – Fall 2018**
  - **MA in Film Studies – Fall 2018**



# About UNCW

- **New programs in the planning/implementation phases:**
  - **MS in Athletic Training – Fall 2018**
  - **BS/MS in Health Informatics/Analytics – Fall 2018 or later**
  - **MS in Healthcare Administration – Fall 2018 or later**
  - **MS in Respiratory Therapy – Fall 2019 or later**
  - **Master of Public Health – Fall 2019 or later**
  - **MS in Exercise Science – Fall 2019 or later**
  - **MS in Speech Language Pathology – Fall 2019 or later**
  - **Physician Assistant – Fall 2019 or later**



# About UNCW

- Coastal location





# Research at UNCW

- **Coastal and Marine Science Research**



Biology & Marine Biology



Center for Marine Science



Chemistry and  
Biochemistry



Coastal & Ocean Policy



Earth & Ocean Sciences



Environmental Studies



Physics & Physical  
Oceanography



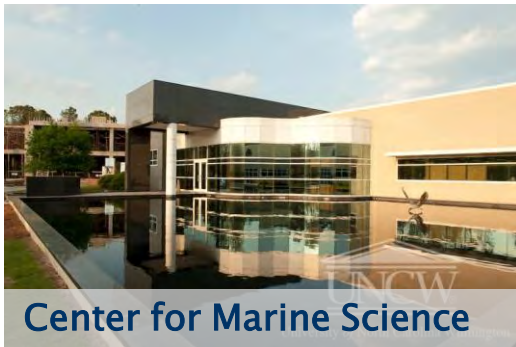
MARBIONC



Shellfish Research Hatchery

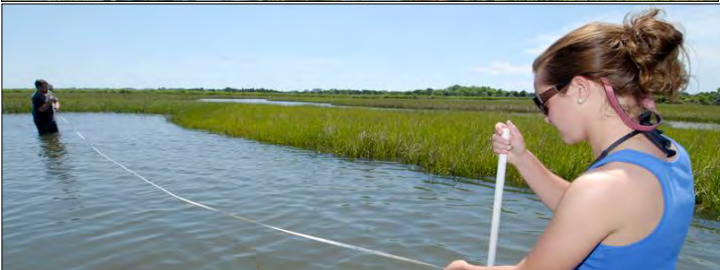
# Research at UNCW

- In the marine sciences there are five specific support units located along Masonboro sound.



# Research at UNCW

- Student involvement in research



# Research at UNCW

- Student involvement in research



# Environmental Health & Safety

- **Environmental Programs and Services**
- **Safety & Health Programs and Services**
- **Emergency Management**
- **Severe Weather**
- **Training**
- **Institutional Risk Management**



# UNCW Emergency Management



... strives to integrate emergency planning, response, recovery and mitigation for a variety of man-made and natural disasters into the daily operations. As a Disaster Resistant University, UNCW promotes a disaster resistant culture on campus through education, mitigation projects, and well-practiced emergency plans and procedures.

# UNCW Emergency Management



**Hurricanes are the most likely natural hazard for UNCW.**



**UNCW has a well practiced, federally compliant Hurricane Operations Plan. UNCW has faced many hurricanes and tropical storms since its founding, and the Hurricane Operations Plan enables UNCW emergency personnel to respond effectively and efficiently to tropical weather.**



UNIVERSITY of NORTH CAROLINA WILMINGTON

# Hurricane Operations Plan

- **Procedures in preparation for, during and following a hurricane and describes actions required for protecting university students, faculty, staff and property.**
- **Mechanisms to ensure timely communication and coordination between university emergency personnel and key university decision makers.**
- **Facilitates coordination among university departments.**
- **Acquaints university personnel with hurricane hazards and actions that must be taken to overcome these hazards.**





# Hurricane-related challenges

- **Damage is typically in the form of flooding, high winds and storm surge.**
- **Forecasts are often days in advance thus causing on-going communication challenges.**
- **May require mandatory evacuations (students must leave campus).**
- **Requires close coordination with other agencies (e.g., National Weather Service, state, city, county, and local media).**



# UNCW Alert Suite

- **Siren system**
- **Text messaging / Email / Telephone calls**
- **Notifications on university computer screens**
- **A marquee facing South College Road**
- **University-owned web sites**
- **A web site located on a non-university owned computer**
- **Emergency information hotline**
- **Social media**



**#UNCWMatthew**

# Case Study: Hurricane Matthew

- The university began preparing for Matthew on October 3rd and Matthew had its greatest impacts on campus October 8th.
- The campus was spared the expected 12 inches of rain and most of the wind. The highest wind gust measured by the National Weather Service was 74 MPH around 11 pm - after the center of the storm had already passed. That is unusual for hurricanes.
- This was the first time UNCW evacuated students from campus since 2007. UNCW, along w/most of eastern & central NC received a FEMA disaster declaration which we are still working through.



# Case Study: Hurricane Matthew

## ALERT: Mandatory Campus Evacuation Issued for All Students

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 05, 2016

Oct. 4 - 3:55 p.m. -- In preparation for Hurricane Matthew, UNCW has issued a mandatory campus evacuation for all students. Students are encouraged to depart campus on Thursday morning and not to travel during the evening hours. Students must leave campus no later than 12 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 6. All classes, events, trips and activities scheduled to occur at or after 5 p.m. on Wednesday are canceled until further notice.

Residence Life will hold floor/building meetings tonight at 8:30 p.m. to provide instructions and answer any questions students may have about evacuations. If a student does not have a designated location for evacuation, the university will assist; details will be shared at the Residence Life meetings tonight.

A determination regarding a potential campus closure (for faculty and staff) will be made and communicated by 12:30 p.m. on Wednesday, based on the latest information available.

As weather conditions develop, the university will convey updates in real time based on the latest confirmed information from the National Weather Service and other authorities. Parents are encouraged to share questions and concerns with their students for addressing at tonight's meetings. Additional updates will be shared as conditions warrant. Please continue to monitor the [UNCW homepage](#), the [UNCW Alert website](#), the Emergency Information Hotline at 910.962.3991 or 888.657.5751, [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) for information. These sources of information contain the latest information available to university officials.



UNIVERSITY of NORTH CAROLINA WILMINGTON

# Hurricane Matthew: Lessons Learned

- **Need to brief parents/students during orientation about hurricane evacuation & re-entry process while they are a captive audience.**
- **Need to communicate better with admins in each department about where to obtain emergency supplies such as plastic tarps and bags to cover equipment.**
- **The Emergency Operations Center should be activated with a greater number of staff during damage assessment as capturing all communications was difficult with two persons assigned to the role.**



# Hurricane Matthew: Lessons Learned

- **Need to use text and telephone communications with students and parents more during the incident rather than just post information to social media.**
- **We should have activated our emergency call center contractor during the re-entry portion to assist in directing students and parents on safe ways to access campus.**
- **There needs to be better communication with faculty prior to weather emergencies to assist them in decisions on absences and make up work before the beginning of the semester.**



# Final Thoughts

- **For critical communications, paraphrase and repeat back the key points that the other party has said to ensure you heard everything correctly (active listening).**
- **Confirm critical tasks before performing them if you don't understand the directive.**
- **When you don't know the answer, admit it, note it, and get back to the questioner with the answer in a timely fashion.**
- **Don't be afraid to ask for help.**



# Final Thoughts

- **Coordinate, Coordinate, Coordinate**
  - **With National Weather Service for Decision Support**
  - **With Chancellor/President's cabinet for campus actions to be taken**
  - **With Faculty Senate/Faculty Senate president**
  - **With University Relations for messaging to faculty, staff, students, parents**



[UNCW Housing & Residence Life](#) shared [UNCW's post](#).  
[October 11](#) ·

A message from the Chancellor, Provost and Faculty Senate President:  
[#uncwhrl](#) [#uncw](#) [#UNCWMatthew](#) [#HurricaneMatthew](#)



*Thank you!*



UNIVERSITY of NORTH CAROLINA WILMINGTON

# Discussion Points

- **What are some weather hazards to which your campus is vulnerable?**
- **Who is currently involved in message development? Is faculty senate involved? Are external stakeholders involved? (i.e. National Weather Service, County Emergency Management, State emergency management)**
- **What types of messages need to be issued? To whom?**
- **What messages that your campus has issued during past emergencies that you remember to be effective? Ineffective?**
- **If effective, what made them effective?**
- **If ineffective, what made them ineffective?**
- **How involved is the faculty in message development? How can this be relationship between message developers and faculty be improved?**
- **What are some ideas or concerns not previously addressed that would benefit the group?**

