



**For Immediate Release**

October 17, 2017

**Contact:**

Michael Williams, [michael@Coremessage.com](mailto:michael@Coremessage.com)

**The Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida Offer Assistance to Students in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands**

*~ ICUF affiliated schools offering tuition and housing assistance to students displaced by recent hurricanes. ~*

**Tallahassee, FL-** The Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida (ICUF) today announced many of its affiliated schools are offering tuition assistance, expedited admissions, fee waivers and scholarships to students who have left Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI). The efforts came in the wake of devastating losses in the Caribbean due to Hurricane Maria. Additionally, the student bodies of many ICUF affiliated schools have participated in on-campus and community based relief efforts to send desperately needed supplies to the Caribbean.

Schools like St. Thomas University, Barry University, Stetson University and others are offering direct support to incoming students including free room and board, as well as books and meal plans, while other schools are bringing relief directly to the affected areas. Using air transportation donated by alumni and friends of the schools, Nova Southeastern University and the Florida Institute of Technology recently donated over 3,000 pounds of medical supplies and basic needs kits to Puerto Rico. A full list of relief efforts is provided below.

“Many of our faculty, students and their families are from the areas affected by Hurricane Maria. To see our schools and students coming together to help our neighbors and families in the Caribbean has been truly remarkable,” said Dr. Ed Moore, President of ICUF. “All of the ICUF schools are committed to finding ways to bring relief to those hardest hit by the storm and working to make sure that students from these areas do not lose progress towards their degrees. With so much catastrophic damage to infrastructure, places like Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands will need long term solutions that I know ICUF can play a part in creating. By equipping these students with the ability to continue their education with as little interference as possible, our hope is they will be able to use the knowledge gained at our institutions to help rebuild their communities and make them stronger than before.”

### **Adventist University of Health Sciences (ADU)**

- Conducted a week-long supply drive for Puerto Rico, in collaboration with Florida Hospital and the Florida Conference of the Seventh Day Adventist Church; provided two pallets containing 20 boxes of food and non-food items and cases of water.
- Volunteered at a “Blessings for Puerto Rico” sorting and packing project hosted by Florida Hospital; part of a collective effort at this event that sent six 24-foot trucks of supplies to Puerto Rico.
- Engaged in relief efforts in the USVI through an ADU faculty member who assisted a team from Florida Hospital on a medical mission; also promoting a link for monetary donations.
- Discussing a framework of assistance to students from Puerto Rico and the USVI.

### **Barry University**

- Offering expedited, flexible admissions and financial aid to affected students; current students affected will be able to file an appeal to have their financial aid re-evaluated and will not be assessed a penalty fee for late payment of fall tuition.
- Chartered a commercial airline to evacuate more than 70 students, faculty, staff, family members and pets from Barry’s St. Croix Physician Assistant program as Hurricane Maria approached; housed, fed and provided other on-campus amenities to these individuals.
- Coordinating various relief efforts, including fundraising, collection of items, volunteer/mission trips and monitoring the needs of hurricane victims.
- Reached out individually to all students from the Caribbean and offered guidance based on students’ unique needs.

### **Everglades University**

- Providing leave-of-absence and appropriate academic interruption assistance to online students in Puerto Rico.
- Offering institutional scholarships to Puerto Rican students to assist them and welcoming and expediting transfer students from Puerto Rico.
- Collecting and shipping supplies to Puerto Rico from a drop-off location at the Everglades Boca Raton main campus.

### **Flagler College**

- Responding to inquiries from students enrolled in institutions in Puerto Rico and the USVI related to opportunities to complete or continue their college education.
- Admissions, Financial Aid and the Registrar’s offices are making every effort to accommodate the students’ requests and to ensure that credits earned at Flagler will be transferable to the institution that will award their degrees, if Flagler College is not to be that institution.
- President Joyner also established an emergency aid fund to assist any students who needed financial support for travel or other short-term needs.

### **Florida Institute of Technology**

- Using a plane and resources donated by PALS Sky Hope, faculty and alumni secured 1,500 pounds of medical supplies, food, and generators, which were flown Puerto Rico.

### **Florida State College**

- Working with students who may have difficulty paying tuition due to storm effects; students can meet with financial aid specialists for assistance on an individualized basis.
- Several clubs and organizations have held or plan to hold fundraising activities for victims.
- A relief trip is planned for spring break if conditions permit.
- Reached out to students with Puerto Rico or USVI as country of origin to offer emotional support and counseling as needed.

### **Jacksonville University (JU)**

- Waiving the application fee for prospective students in affected regions; the Honors deadline has been extended on a case-by-case basis for these students.
- Working individually with JU's Puerto Rico-based Master of Fine Arts in Choreography program students to provide support and continuity in their education and programming.
- Contacted all current students from the affected areas (Puerto Rico, USVI and throughout the Caribbean) to provide support or assistance as needed, including financial aid; Student Counseling Center is offering natural disaster support group meetings.
- Its students are engaged in various projects to fundraise for and support disaster relief for hurricane victims; the College of Fine Arts will use funds raised through its three-day Fall Dance concert in November to help provide relief for residents of Puerto Rico.

### **Keiser University**

- Offering affected students the opportunity to enroll at one of Keiser's 19 campuses within Florida, the Nicaragua campus or through the Online Division.
- Keiser operates on a modular schedule which offers monthly enrollment in new courses and intakes (accepted) new (and transfer) students, allowing these students to not delay/interrupt their education.
- Offering Disaster Relief Scholarships to displaced students in need.
- Due to transcripts and school records possibly not being readily available to support transfers, the institution will work with these students and rely on other verification processes to determine admissibility.

### **Lynn University**

- Offering institutional scholarships to incoming Lynn students from areas impacted by the hurricanes.
- Organized a donation drive for Hurricane Irma victims in the Florida Keys and the Caribbean Islands, with the supplies to be distributed first to the Florida Keys, and remaining items delivered to the Caribbean Islands via a Norwegian Cruise ship; volunteers also worked with Feeding South Florida to distribute meals to affected Florida Keys residents; coordinating relief volunteer trips to Naples, Florida and the Florida Keys, as conditions permit.
- Volunteered at Boca Raton's Red Reef Park to clear hurricane trash and debris.

Reached out to all students whose families were impacted by disasters in affected areas of Florida and the Caribbean; offered support including counseling, health and financial services to affected students and employees, as needed.

### **Nova Southeastern University (NSU)**

- Using a plane and carrying medical supplies and personnel provided by NSU donor Dr. Kiran Patel, NSU officials flew three relief missions, each with 500 pounds of supplies provided by the university to Puerto Rico; also organizing collection drives and donating supplies to relief organizations.
- Opened a path for graduate students who could make their way to the mainland to be accommodated and continue their studies at NSU's Florida campuses; also adapting curricula and delivery methods to allow affected graduate students to continue their education after normalizing their living situation.
- Established an outreach program to confirm NSU students' wellbeing and whereabouts via multiple means; launched a dedicated webpage and sending daily messages on all platforms advising of aid/support.
- Created and utilized "NSUcares," a fundraising/volunteer channel originally established by President Hanbury, to help NSU victims of Hurricane Irma as well as aid NSU victims of Hurricane Maria and Hurricane Harvey.

### **Palm Beach Atlantic University (PBA)**

- Working with SF4PR (South Florida for Puerto Rico), which was created by an alumnus and adjunct instructor to collect needed donations.
- Holding themed donation events on campus, i.e., soliciting flashlights and batteries for "Light for Puerto Rico;" prepping donations for shipment.
- PBA has a representative on "Palm Beach County Cares," which is gathering donations county-wide for Puerto Rico; PBA is providing volunteers for those efforts as well.
- Considering staging a relief trip to Puerto Rico.

### **Rollins College**

- Offering a discounted transfer program for the Spring 2018 semester to degree-seeking students currently enrolled in Puerto Rican and Caribbean colleges and universities.
- Eligible, admitted students will be charged a flat fee of \$8,500 for the semester, covering tuition and room and board.
- Students enrolled at Rollins for the Spring 2018 semester under this program may continue their studies at Rollins for the 2018-2019 semester with satisfactory academic performance.
- Working individually with each currently enrolled student from the affected areas to provide maximum financial and emotional support through its Offices of Financial Aid and Student and Family Care.

### **Saint Leo University**

- Tracking all affected current students to locate them and check on wellbeing; assisting these students with continued attendance, if able, or to take temporary leave.

- Offering counseling and disaster assistance/relief to affected students; have begun disbursing relief funds.
- Offering free room and board and discounted tuition of \$8,500 for the Spring 2018 semester to college students in Puerto Rico whose studies have been affected by the hurricanes; these students may continue their studies at Saint Leo with satisfactory academic performance.

### **Southeastern University**

- Four trips planned to Puerto Rico to assist with relief efforts, starting Thanksgiving break.
- Reached out to affected students, resulting in efforts including shipping supplies to students' families, purchasing airplane tickets for students and providing for a delayed exam schedule.
- Social Work Club and Department sponsoring a donation drive gathering essential items to send to Puerto Rico, as well as holding weekly support meetings for those with family in Puerto Rico.
- Established a fund to provide financial assistance to those impacted by the recent hurricanes.

### **Stetson University**

- Waiving all room charges for the Spring 2018 semester to new students from the affected islands.
- Reaching out to students able to be identified who may be affected.
- Offering support such as counseling, academic support and financial assistance as needed to those students.
- Created a Hurricane Relief fund to assist students submitting financial appeals related to the hurricanes; funds are granted to students from the USVI, Puerto Rico and Florida not able to make payments for hurricane-related reasons.

### **St. Thomas University**

- Offering free room, board and books to prospective students from the affected islands transferring in to St. Thomas; Metz providing free meal plan and Follett providing books.
- Making it possible through testing and other means for these students to continue with the current semester's work.
- Offering 50 percent Disaster Relief Scholarships through Spring 2018; received a \$250,000 gift from the Knight Foundation to support the University's efforts to help these students, the funds of which will apply directly to scholarships.
- Offering support to sister institutions in Puerto Rico and USVI.

### **University of Miami (UM)**

- As with Hurricane Katrina, accepting undergraduate students into classes at no tuition charge, committing to prohibit these students to transfer to UM or remain at UM once their home institutions reopen so as not to deplete future revenue from these schools when they reopen.
- Hosting faculty and graduate students from Puerto Rico and USVI institutions so they can continue their academic/scholarly endeavors and activities; providing access to UM offices, labs and resources at no cost.
- UM estimates the ability to support up to 300 such undergraduate students across its schools and disciplines at UM.

## **The University of Tampa**

- Identified affected students and working closely with them on payment schedules for the Spring 2018 term; routinely issuing statements to targeted student groups affected by disaster.
- Ongoing support groups and one-to-one counseling for students affected by the storm.
- Vice President for Student Affairs hosting weekly lunches, supporting fundraisers and meeting with Caribbean Student Organization leadership to better understand needs and lend support.
- Holding relief/aid activities/events on campus, as well as providing information to all campus community members about ways to help.

*The Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida (ICUF) is an association of 30 private, non-profit educational institutions based in Florida and accredited by The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). Serving 157,000 students at 127 sites throughout the state, ICUF offers programs at main campuses and branch campuses in communities and on state colleges. For more information, please visit [www.icuf.org](http://www.icuf.org).*

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