Lessons Learned (and Lived) from Hurricane Florence

WHO WE ARE

- 6th LARGEST COLLEGE IN THE NC COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM
- SERVING 2 COUNTIES: NEW HANOVER & PENDER COUNTIES
- 2017-18 ENROLLMENT: 22,943 UNDUPPLICATED STUDENTS (CURRICULUM + CONTINUING EDUCATION)
- LOCATED IN WILMINGTON, NC
  - DOWNTOWN CAMPUS IS ON THE CAPE FEAR RIVER
- 2 MAIN CAMPUSES, 2 SATELLITE CENTERS
HURRICANE FLORENCE

- MADE LANDFALL IN WILMINGTON ON SEPTEMBER 14, 2018 AS A SLOW-MOVING CATEGORY 1 HURRICANE
- OVER 30 INCHES OF RAIN RECORDED IN SOME AREAS ACROSS SOUTHEASTERN NC
- RECORD RIVER FLOODING COMBINED WITH THE RAINFALL TO CAUSE SEVERE FLOODING AND INFRASTRUCTURE DAMAGE TO THE ENTIRE CAPE FEAR REGION
- MANDATORY EVACUATIONS THROUGHOUT THE REGION

HURRICANE FLORENCE

- WILMINGTON CUT OFF FROM THE REST OF THE STATE DUE TO FLOOD WATERS
- HUNDREDS OF HELICOPTER AND WATER RESCUES
- 1.1 MILLION WITHOUT POWER
- EVERY PUBLIC SCHOOL BUILDING IN NEW HANOVER COUNTY WAS DAMAGED
- $140 MILLION IN DAMAGES TO UNCW
- $24 BILLION IN TOTAL DAMAGES
- 52 FATALITIES (22 DIRECT; 30 INDIRECT)
PREPARING FOR THE WORST

• FACILITIES PREPARATIONS
• RV HATTERAS
• DISPOSAL OF PERISHABLE AND UNSTABLE MATERIALS
• COMMUNICATION PLANS
• COORDINATION WITH GOVERNMENTAL/UTILITY PARTNERS

THE AFTERMATH
COLLEGE CLOSED ON SEPTEMBER 10, 2018
REOPENED ON OCTOBER 8, 2018

CAPE FEAR COMMUNITY COLLEGE - NORTH CAMPUS

RESUMING OPERATIONS

• ASSESSING STUDENTS' NEEDS, DISPLACEMENT
• MAKING UP INSTRUCTIONAL TIME
• MINIMIZING IMPACT FOR STUDENTS NEEDING TO WITHDRAW
• REGAINING ACADEMIC MOMENTUM
• TOO SOON?
• COMMUNICATING WITH FACULTY/STAFF
WE ARE HERE TO HELP…

CFCC nets $1.1 million for students hurt by Hurricane Florence

Benefit Concert-CFCC students to get a whole lotta love at ‘Led Zeppelin’ concert

COORDINATED ASSISTANCE FROM THE STATE

NC STATE LEGISLATURE PASSED SEVERAL PROVISIONS TO HELP AFFECTED SCHOOLS

• Impacted colleges may use excess bookstore revenues for repair projects or equipment replacements that are a result of damage caused by hurricane florence and are not covered by insurance or FEMA reimbursements.

• Colleges may enroll, distribute an academic credential, or issue a transcript to an impacted student with an outstanding balance for tuition, registration fees, or other monetary obligation arising as a result of hurricane florence.

• For impacted students unable to complete one or more fall 2018 courses due to circumstances arising from hurricane florence, a college may apply tuition paid by the impacted students for those courses to offset the tuition for courses impacted students enroll in spring 2019, summer 2019, fall 2019, or spring 2020 terms.

• Colleges may waive a prerequisite required by the combined course library for an impacted student if the chief academic officer or designee determines the impacted student has adequate prior knowledge to successfully perform in the course.
**HURRICANE FLORENCE EMERGENCY GRANTS FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS**

- The state board approved the allocation of $4,900,000 to be allocated to twenty-one community colleges and to establish $100,000 to be retained in the system office from the hurricane florence disaster recovery fund appropriation.
- Community colleges shall have the discretion to establish criteria for the eligibility of postsecondary students in addition to the legislative criteria. Colleges may establish a priority for students who have demonstrated the greatest financial need or shall award funds in the order in which applications are received.
- CFCC received $1,092,297 (most of any NC CC)

**PROCESS FOR DISTRIBUTING EMERGENCY FUNDS**

- Student completes and submits application through online student portal
  - Student login & password function as electronic signature certifying all information is true
  - Student lists hurricane-related expenses in several categories (home repairs, lost wages, etc.)
  - No further documentation is required (per state guidelines)
  - Both curriculum and continuing education students are eligible to apply
- Preliminary review in VP Student Services office to determine eligibility
- Emergency Fund Committee reviews applications to determine final eligibility & level of funding
- Student is notified that they have been awarded and encouraged to visit Academic Advising or Counseling to develop a plan for remaining enrolled
- Financial Aid records award on student record
- Business Office processes awards and disburses funds
• HURRICANE FLORENCE DISASTER RECOVERY FUND  
  • 1,145 students received up to $1,250 in state funds to help them remain enrolled  

• TUITION WAIVERS  
  • Students enrolling after fall 2018 received a tuition waiver equal to the tuition lost if they withdrew due to the hurricane  

• FINISH LINE GRANTS  
  • Collaboration with NCWorks and Workforce Development Board to offer emergency funding for students nearing completion  

• TEXTBOOK REPLACEMENT  
  • CFCC bookstore worked with vendors to offer free textbook replacement for students affected by the hurricane  

• INSTRUCTOR REFERRALS  
  • Faculty forwarded names of students not returning after the storm to student services for follow-up  

MAKING UP INSTRUCTIONAL TIME  

• NUMBER OF CLASSES IMPACTED BY CLOSURE: 1,664  
• NUMBER OF INSTRUCTORS INVOLVED: 415  
• NUMBER OF CONTACT HOURS TO BE MADE UP: 33,546 (APPROX.)  

• MAKE-UP OPTIONS:  
  • RESCHEDULED INSTRUCTIONAL TIME  
  • EXTENDED CLASS TIMES  
  • OUT-OF-CLASS ASSIGNMENTS, ONLINE  
  • OPEN LABS
WHAT HAVE LEARNED FROM THIS?

LESSONS LEARNED

• Change in withdrawal policy requiring students to speak with a counselor before withdrawing
• New emergency response plan (in progress)
• New ideas for student support: food pantry, raised awareness of student need
  • Vulnerability of students, community
  • Housing costs, scarcity
• Still a need among students
  • Fall 2019 CFCC received an additional $80,000 to distribute to students still affected by the hurricane (reallocated funds that other community colleges were unable to distribute)
• Need for centralized resource information source
• Fragility of IT infrastructure (power loss, vulnerable location)
• Benefits of online shells for all classes
• Communicating with System Office (auditing requirements)
• Communicating with DOE
LESSONS LEARNED

• Resilience of students, faculty & staff
• Impact on success rates
• Dedication of faculty & staff
• Need for closely-coordinated administrative team
• Importance of community partners
• The role of the college in restoring normalcy

Lauren McMahon, her husband, son, and three dogs were displaced for six weeks after Hurricane Florence—making do in a small hotel room until their insurance funds were exhausted.

McMahon faced negative thoughts like “You aren’t good enough” and “You won’t ever finish.”

However, with understanding and encouraging words from her ACA 122 (Student Success) instructor, she developed the strength to continue in pursuit of her goal.

CFCC GRADUATE DEFEATS DOUBT AND HURRICANE TO EARN DEGREE
LESSONS LEARNED:
WE ARE
#CAPE FEAR
strong