

## MEMORANDUM

To: NIU Faculty and Staff

From: Laura Alexander, Senior Associate Vice President  
Human Resource Services

Date: December 1, 2016

RE: **Severe Weather and University Closure Procedures**

The following is an annual advisory notice for employees summarizing university procedures for severe weather and employee responsibility for attendance when significant weather conditions arise.

### Status of University Operations During Winter Weather Conditions

Weather conditions can develop which require the university to consider the status of operations. These considerations involve the weather forecast, status of snow removal, class cancellations, the residential student population, and maintenance of essential services. A decision to declare an emergency weather suspension of campus operations (including class cancellations) is a consultative process involving several areas including Police and Public Safety, Physical Plant, Environmental Health and Safety, representatives from the different university divisions, the Provost, and President. Decisions concerning class cancellations are finalized by the Provost. An Emergency Weather Closure of the university requires Presidential authorization. The range of potential options is summarized below:

1. Full campus operations including class schedules (unless cancelled by individual faculty members) remain in effect.
2. Classes are cancelled at one or more NIU campus locations with campus offices and physical facilities remaining operational. **Employees should exercise judgment in terms of travel conditions. Designated essential service personnel are required to report for duty.**
3. An emergency closure of one or more campus locations is authorized due to a severe weather emergency. Classes are cancelled, and all offices and physical facilities are closed with the exception of essential service operations. **Employees are placed on excused absence with the exception of designated essential service personnel who are required to report for duty** (weather conditions and the status of operations at the off-campus centers may differ from the DeKalb campus).

Among the options outlined above, condition #1 will apply in most circumstances. **As a general rule, the university is always open.**

When conditions #1 or #2 prevail, individual employees need to decide whether travel to the campus will be hazardous. With the exception of certain designated essential service personnel, *it is the personal responsibility of all faculty, staff, and students to make their own decisions and judgments concerning travel conditions and the danger of attending classes or coming to work under conditions which they personally believe to be unsafe.*

The university administration will endeavor to make the best decision possible concerning general conditions and the overall needs of the campus. However, specific situations and travel circumstances pertaining to individual members of the campus community must be independently evaluated. In the event that any (non-essential service designated) employee determines that travel during a severe weather condition would be hazardous to their individual safety, then the supervisor should be notified, and the absence will be considered approved with available vacation, compensatory time, or leave without pay authorized accordingly.

For more information on the data-informed process that goes into making decisions about the status of university operations see [go.niu.edu/weather-decisions](http://go.niu.edu/weather-decisions).

### **Online Status and Weather Information Updates**

Information concerning the operational status of the university during winter weather conditions can be accessed on the university's Winter Weather Information web page at [www.niu.edu/weather](http://www.niu.edu/weather). The page will provide detailed information specific to NIU in the event of a change in operational status at any of the university's campus locations.

On the Winter Weather Information web page ([www.niu.edu/weather](http://www.niu.edu/weather)), you will find links to the National Weather Service for Winter Weather Advisories, Watches and Warnings. You also will find a list of television and radio stations that broadcast information on changes in operational status at NIU.

**Specific notices regarding winter weather will only be posted on the NIU Home Page ([www.niu.edu](http://www.niu.edu)) whenever classes are cancelled at one or more NIU campus locations or in the event of an emergency closure (conditions #2 and #3 above).** Changes in operational status also will be posted to NIU Today ([www.niutoday.info](http://www.niutoday.info)), NIU's official Facebook page (<http://www.facebook.com/NorthernIllUniv>) and NIU's official Twitter feed (<http://twitter.com/NIUlive>).

Employees will be notified via their official NIU email address in the event of campus-wide class cancellations, delayed start times, and/or emergency closures at the DeKalb campus or other campus locations (NIU Hoffman Estates, NIU Naperville, or NIU Rockford).

### **Toll Free Weather Status Hotlines**

For the latest NIU Winter Weather Status information, you also can call the NIU Toll-Free Weather Status Hotline:

- Local residents, dial 1-815-753-OPEN (1-815-753-6736)
- Long distance callers, dial 1-888-4NIU-OPEN (1-888-464-8673)

Have a great *and safe* winter weather season!