



For Immediate release: September 12, 2017

Saint Leo University Classes to Resume September 18

More than 800 students, staff sheltered in 3 locations at University Campus in St. Leo, FL

ST. LEO, FL – Saint Leo University officials are expressing gratitude that the nearly 800 students and support personnel sheltered at University Campus are safe following Hurricane Irma. Damage assessment still is taking place: A number of trees are down and at least 60 rooms had water intrusion.

The university remains closed and classes are canceled until **Monday, September 18**, while staff work to reactivate the campus.

“I am so proud of our students and staff,” said Dr. William J. Lennox Jr., university president. “Our students remained respectful and calm. Our staff cared for our students and each other through this difficult time, demonstrating the university’s core values of community and respect. We thank everyone for their prayers, and we continue to pray for those suffering from the effects of Hurricane Irma.”

Students and staff took refuge in the university’s three safe shelter spaces in Lewis Hall, Saint Edward Hall, and the offices of the Marion Bowman Activities Center. The shelter areas were at capacity.

Following the hurricane, officials on early Monday morning made an assessment of the campus, and students who were being sheltered were able to return to most of the residence halls.

Residence Life, Campus Security, Dining Services, Facilities Management, President Lennox and several vice presidents ensured that all students were housed and fed, and continue to do so.

Saint Leo canceled classes beginning on Wednesday, September 6, to allow students to return to their homes or shelter elsewhere, if possible. The university closed Thursday, September 7. Students who remained on campus were moved at noon on Sunday, September 10, to the three shelter areas prior to the storm.

“We could hear the wind howling outside,” Brittany Shoemaker, a junior from Massachusetts, said in an interview with EWTN. “It was a really bonding experience between the whole community.”

Students socialized with friends, played board and card games, prayed, and even slept as they rode out the storm in the three shelters.

A Mass of Thanksgiving was celebrated on Monday afternoon by Father Kyle Smith, University Ministry chaplain.

Elsewhere, 26 of Saint Leo's education centers were affected by Irma, including the university's Key West Education Center. Directors continue to assess some center locations today (Tuesday, September 12). Some locations will reopen as early Wednesday.

Photo captions

Photos courtesy of The Lions' Pride (Saint Leo University student newspaper)

Saint Leo University students took shelter in three locations. Here, students are shown in Lewis Hall.

A large oak tree by Kirk Hall was knocked down by Hurricane Irma.

A card game occupied Saint Leo University students' time as they rode out Irma.

About Saint Leo University

Saint Leo University (www.saintleo.edu) is a modern Catholic teaching university that is firmly grounded in the liberal arts tradition and the timeless Benedictine wisdom that seeks balanced growth of mind, body, and spirit. The Saint Leo University of today is a private, nonprofit institution that creates hospitable learning communities wherever students want to be or need to be, whether that is a campus classroom, a web-based environment, an employer's worksite, a

military base, or an office park. Saint Leo welcomes people of all faiths and of no religious affiliation, and encourages learners of all generations. The university is committed to providing educational opportunities to the nation's armed forces, veterans, and their families. Saint Leo is regionally accredited to award degrees ranging from the associate to the doctorate, and the faculty and staff guide all students to develop their capacities for critical thinking, moral reflection, and lifelong learning and leadership.

The university remains the faithful steward of the beautiful lakeside University Campus in the Tampa Bay region of Florida, where its founding monks created the first Catholic college in the state in 1889. Serving nearly 15,000 students, Saint Leo has expanded to downtown Tampa, to other sites in Florida and beyond, and maintains a physical presence in seven states. The university provides highly respected online learning programs to students nationally and internationally. More than 85,000 alumni reside in all 50 states, in Washington, DC, in three U.S. territories, and in 76 countries.

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