

Campus Update – Mon., 10:13 p.m., Sept. 14

Although Hurricane Sally is churning less than 100 miles south of the City of Mobile, we're only experiencing light winds. Forecasters are expressing on TV that Mobile will receive 50-65 mph gusts early in the morning coupled with rain bands. Unfortunately, Jim Cantore is in Mobile, but we've not seen him flapping his arms on Ann St.

Currently, about 100 students and 20 staff members are weathering the storm on campus. Am I concerned at this time? No and yes. Sally has been upgraded to a category two hurricane, and the track keeps moving east. And, I am always concerned for our students and their well-being and hope that those still on campus will not become too fearful when they hear howling winds and thunder and eye street flooding.

I do trust that the ASMS buildings can withstand heavy winds and severe weather. They were built in the 1940s and were designated as bomb shelters at that time. Our students are trained to shelter when they hear a severe-weather alarm, and the campus has plenty of protected hallways and other areas. If conditions deteriorate, we will gather all of our students in the safest places on campus.

My life experiences have conditioned me to take hurricanes seriously, and I will be on campus until the storm passes. In 1979, my dad and I helped a neighbor clean up after Hurricane Fredrick damaged his home on Dauphin Island. After midnight, we entered the house after walking two miles on flooded roads. My dad shook glass and debris off the guest bed comforter so I could sleep. When I looked up, the stars were bright because the roof had blown off. In 2005, I lived in New Orleans and endured Hurricane Katrina. Not-so-fun fact: The storm destroyed all six of the schools I attended and where I worked. This storm will also pass.

Should we have completely evacuated the campus? You know, schools are easy targets for Monday morning quarterbacks and armchair critics. Dealing with a pandemic and hurricane at the same time has not been easy. But it's 2020 – nothing comes easy!

When we made our decision, we did so with the storm still tracking well west of Mobile. We also knew that we would have had to finish the term remotely if we sent everyone home.

Time for a walk around campus. After that, some sleep. We will wake up early and provide an update when the winds and rains are supposed to kick up.

John Hoyle, Ph.D.
President

