

ACADEMIC CONTINUITY PLAN

in the event of campus closure

WHY? In the event of a major hurricane or other disaster, The President of Lamar University will announce the closure of campus and most faculty, staff, and students will evacuate. During recent Hurricanes Rita and Ike, Lamar was closed for weeks, Beaumont was placed under martial law, and residents were not permitted in the city. Since these storms, technologies of instruction and data security have improved, and now it is possible to continue academic instruction remotely. The technologies of communication have also improved and have proliferated. Almost all students and faculty have internet access, or access to such. Today, Lamar University website, Banner systems, records, and related data will be available when campus closes through servers housed at Texas State University, and the Zimbra email and Blackboard Learning Management Systems will remain functional as both are web-based and hosted far from harm. That said and following a reasonable period for evacuation, Lamar will be able to continue the delivery of instruction so that the affected semester will end on schedule and students can graduate, accept employment, enter graduate and professional programs, and matriculate without a major loss of time.

WHEN? Four calendar days and students will be notified by email (using official Lamar email addresses) and informed by web postings (via www.Lamar.edu) that instructions for electronically-delivered course work will be announced at 8:00 a.m. (CST) in two calendar days. Other communications pertaining to university activities will also be shared in this manner.

HOW? All faculty have Blackboard shells for their courses and many shells are already populated with course materials (e.g., AP, online, and hybrid courses). In the event of a disaster and after the evacuation period, course materials, assignments, chat sessions, course communications, and the like will continue for these faculty members and their students.

Those faculty without a populated Blackboard shell will be expected to: 1) post course materials, assignments, etc. in their shells and/or, 2) deliver material and assignments directly to their students through the Zimbra email system and/or, or 3) direct their students to existing online sections of their courses (e.g., start at assignment x). Before instruction resumes, all faculty and students will receive, at their official Lamar email address, basic instructions about connecting to and using Blackboard as well as directions for accessing www.lamar.edu.

NEXT? All faculty must announce to their students that, in the event of a closure, they are expected to login to their official Lamar email address/Lamar website and, if appropriate, Blackboard course(s) by the fourth day of evacuation and follow all posted directions. Faculty should prepare for such an evacuation and develop academic continuity plans. Faculty meetings is happy to assist with training and options.