EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

Maintained & Coordinated by the Offices of the Registrar & Student Affairs

Ascent College
14525 John Marshall Hwy
Gainesville, VA 20155

Updated April 2024

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents

EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS **1**

PREFACE **1**

PURPOSE **1**

SCOPE **2**

ASSUMPTIONS **2**

DECLARATION OF CAMPUS STATE OF EMERGENCY **2**

GENERAL BUILDING EVACUATION PROTOCOL **3**

FIRE EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROTOCOL **3**

UTILITY FAILURE RESPONSE PROTOCOL **4**

MEDICAL EMERGENCY & FIRST AID RESPONSE PROTOCOL **4**

BOMB THREAT RESPONSE PROTOCOL **4**

STRONG WINDS/TORNADO RESPONSE PROTOCOL **5**

HURRICANE PROTOCOL **6**

INTRUDER & SUSPICIOUS PERSON PROCEDURES **6**

COVID-19 PROCEDURES **8**

CONTINUITY OF INSTRUCTIONAL OPERATIONS **10**

EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS

Emergency 911
Prince William County Police Department (non-emergency) (703) 792-6500
Prince William County Fire Department (703) 792-5004
Prince William Emergency Management Office (703) 792-7050 (TTY:711)
Dominion Energy VirginiaReport Emergency
Dominion Energy Virginia (866) 366-4357
Designated School Official for International Students – 703-753-2791

PREFACE

This College Emergency Response Plan is designed for Ascent College administrators, faculty and staff and serves as a guide of proper protocols to be followed by College personnel in campus emergency situations. While this manual does not cover every possible situation, it does supply the basic administrative guidelines necessary to cope with most campus emergencies. **This plan does not cover campus safety issues resulting from criminal acts. These crimes should be reported immediately to Emergency 911.**
The Ascent College policies and procedures herein are to be followed by all College personnel whose responsibilities and authority cover the operational procedures found in the Manual. Campus emergency operations will be conducted within the framework of these College guidelines. All requests for procedural changes, suggestions, or recommendations should be submitted in writing to the Office of the Executive Vice President.

PURPOSE

The emergency procedures outlined in this document are intended to provide for the protection of lives and property through effective use of Ascent College's campus and community resources. Whenever an emergency affecting the campus reaches proportions that cannot be handled by routine measures, the President, or designee appointed by the president, will consult with the host, Bethel Temple Church designee, to declare a state of emergency, and the College Emergency Response Plan will be implemented.
There are many types of emergencies that may result in the implementation of this plan. These include natural and manmade events. Specific examples are described below. Since an emergency often occurs suddenly and without warning, these procedures are designed to be flexible in order to accommodate response contingencies of varying magnitude. For the purpose of this Plan and to assist College personnel in determining the appropriate response, the categories of emergencies are defined as follows:
ACCIDENT: Any incident, actual or potential, which is localized in nature and has little impact on the overall functional capacity of the College. These are normally limited in scope to a few individuals.
MINOR EMERGENCY: Any incident, actual or potential, which is not likely to seriously affect the overall functional capacity of the College.
MAJOR EMERGENCY: Any incident, actual or potential, which affects one or more buildings, and which will disrupt the overall operations of the College. Outside

emergency services will probably be required, as well as major efforts from host support services. Major policy considerations and decisions will usually be required from College Administration in consultation with Bethel Temple Church personnel.
DISASTER: Any event or incident that has occurred and has seriously impaired or halted the operations of the College. In rare cases, mass personnel casualties and severe property damage may be sustained. A coordinated effort of all campus-wide and Bethel Temple Church resources would be required to effectively control the situation. Outside emergency services will be essential.

Any incident which fits one of the definitions above and concerns campus resources, and/or instrumentalities of the College immediately should be reported to the President or designee, Executive Vice President or designee, or the Office of Student Services.

SCOPE

The response procedures in this document apply to all Ascent College personnel. The College Emergency Response Plan includes response protocols for the following types of emergencies:
- Fire
- Utility failure
- Medical emergency
- Bomb Threat
-Strong winds/Tornado
-Hurricane
-Intruder and Suspicion Person Procedures

ASSUMPTIONS

The College Emergency Response Plan is based on a realistic approach to the kinds of problems likely to be encountered on the campus during an emergency or disaster. The plan is based on the following assumptions:
- An emergency or a disaster may occur at any time of the day or night, weekend or holiday, with little or no advance warning.
- The succession of events in an emergency is not predictable, thus published support and operational plans will serve only as a guide and checklist, and may require field modification in order to meet the requirements of the emergency.
- Disasters may affect residents in the geographical location of the College, thus Town or State emergency services may not be immediately available to assist with an emergency at the College.
- A major emergency or disaster may be declared if information indicates that such a condition is developing or is probable.

DECLARATION OF CAMPUS STATE OF EMERGENCY

The authority to declare a campus state of emergency rests with the College President or designee appointed by the President, as follows:
During the period of any campus major emergency, the President or designee will immediately place into effect the appropriate procedures necessary to meet the

emergency, safeguard persons and property, and maintain facilities. The Executive Vice President will immediately consult with the President or designee and Bethel Temple Church personnel regarding the emergency and the possible need for a declaration of a campus state of emergency. When the President or designee makes this declaration, only those persons authorized by the College administration will be allowed on campus. People who do not have urgent business on campus will be asked to leave the premises. Unauthorized persons remaining on campus may be subject to arrest in accordance with the law.

GENERAL BUILDING EVACUATION PROTOCOL

1. All building evacuations will occur when an alarm sounds and/or upon notification by the President or Executive Vice President.
2. When the fire/evacuation alarm is activated during an emergency, leave by the nearest marked exit and alert others to do the same.
3. Use stairs in case of fire and/or other emergencies. DO NOT use elevators.
4. Once outside, proceed to a clear and safe area away from the building.

FIRE EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROTOCOL

REPORTING A FIRE:

1. Pull the nearest fire alarm box in the corridor.
2. DO NOT attempt to fight the fire. Use extinguishers for personal safety.
3. Exit through the nearest door to the outside building to the nearest assembly area.
4. Notify the President or Executive Vice President that you pulled the alarm and the location.

RESPONSE TO A FIRE ALARM WHEN YOU ARE IN THE AREA OF THE FIRE:

1. Evacuate all people from the area and to the safe assembly area.
2. Assist the handicapped in exiting the building where possible. Move handicapped personnel to a stairwell and close all doors as you move to the first floor. This will keep the fire out of the stairwell.
3. Last person leaving the area should close the door to the corridor.
4. DO NOT use elevators.
5. Leave the building by the closest exit.
6. Move to an external assembly area away from the building.
7. DO NOT RETURN TO AN EVACUATED BUILDING unless told to do so by a college official.

RESPONSE TO A FIRE ALARM WHEN FIRE IS LOCATED IN ANOTHER AREA OF THE COLLEGE:

1. Leave the building by the closest exit. DO NOT use elevators.
2. Assist the handicapped in exiting the building where possible. Move handicapped personnel to a stairwell and close all doors as you move to the first floor. This will keep the fire out of the stairwell.
3. Move to an assembly area.
4. DO NOT RETURN TO AN EVACUATED BUILDING unless told to do so by a college official.

UTILITY FAILURE RESPONSE PROTOCOL

1. Whenever a major utility failure or phone failure occurs - either during regular business hours Monday through Friday 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM) or after business hours, weekends or holidays - immediately notify Bethel Temple Church physical plant staff.
2. If there is a potential danger to building occupants, activate the building alarm to initiate the evacuation protocol.
3. All occupants will evacuate a building when an alarm sounds continuously.
4. Once outside, move to a clear and safe area away from the affected building. Keep the walkways; fire lanes clear for emergency personnel.
5. If requested, assist the emergency personnel as necessary.
6. DO NOT RETURN TO AN EVACUATED BUILDING unless told to do so by a College official.

RESPONSES TO SPECIFIC TYPES OF UTILITY FAILURE:

NOTE: Always observe Steps 1 and 2 above whenever the following utility emergencies arise:

- ELECTRICAL/LIGHT FAILURE: During the failure, contact Bethel Temple Church physical plant staff for flashlights that are available for such emergencies.
- PLUMBING FAILURE/FLOODING: Cease using all electrical equipment. Notify Bethel Temple Church physical plant staff. Vacate the area if directed to do so.
- VENTILATION PROBLEM: If smoke odors come from the ventilation system, immediately notify Bethel Temple Church physical plant staff. If necessary, cease all operations and vacate the area.

MEDICAL EMERGENCY & FIRST AID RESPONSE PROTOCOL

In the event of a medical emergency incident involving an injury illness on campus:
If the injury or illness is life threatening, call 911 first; then contact the Executive Vice President and do the following:

- State the type of medical emergency
- Give the location of the victim(s)
- Stay on the phone until 911 operator tells you to hang up.
- Stay at the location of the emergency until Police/Fire arrives on the scene.

Campus Staff Role During Medical Emergency:

- Respond to scene of emergency
- Call 911, for ambulance/emergency medical personnel, if needed; then assess situation.
- Have personnel located at door exit and elevator to assist ambulance/emergency personnel to the injured or ill person.

BOMB THREAT RESPONSE PROTOCOL

1. If the threat is received by telephone, encourage the caller to talk. The person receiving the bomb threat should ask specific questions such as:
a. When is the bomb going to explode?
b. Where is the bomb located?
c. What kind of bomb is it?
d. What does the bomb look like?
e. Why did you place the bomb?
2. Keep talking to the caller as long as possible and record the following information:

a. Time of call.
b. Approximate age and the gender of the caller.
c. Speech pattern, accent, other distinguishing vocal traits.
d. Emotional state of the caller.
e. Background noises.
3. Inform the Executive Vice President that a bomb threat has been received and location of the device. After the caller hangs up, DO NOT hang up your phone but use another phone to call.
4. Upon being informed of a bomb threat, the Executive Vice President will immediately:
a. Notify police (911) of the received bomb threat at the College.
b. Notify the President and Bethel Temple Church personnel of the bomb threat.
c. Pull the fire alarm to evacuate the buildings as directed by the President.
d. Inform personnel in all College buildings to evacuate as necessary.
5. If a suspicious object or potential bomb is observed on campus, Do Not Handle It! Clear the area and immediately notify Bethel Temple Church personnel.
6. Upon hearing the alarm bells, quickly exit the building by the nearest door. Once outside, move to a clear area away from the building. (See General Evacuation Protocol.)
7. DO NOT RETURN TO AN EVACUATED BUILDING unless told to do so by a College official.

STRONG WINDS/TORNADO RESPONSE PROTOCOL

Tornado Watch

A **tornado watch** means that weather conditions are favorable for the formation of a tornado. When notified of a **tornado watch**, prepare to seek shelter and stay tuned to local television or radio stations (WAVY 10 TV) for severe weather updates. Information can also be obtained at the National Weather Service website or at the Weather Channel website. Building staff must be prepared to evacuate these areas quickly and move persons in these areas to a place of shelter in the event the tornado watch is changed to a tornado warning.

Tornado warning

A **tornado warning** is issued when a tornado has actually been sighted in the surrounding area.

If a tornado warning has been issued and you are inside

 _Stay inside.
 _Stay away from outside walls, windows, mirrors, glass, overhead fixtures, and unsecured objects such as filing cabinets or bookcases.
 _Do not use elevators.
 _If requested, assist persons with disabilities to the safest area on the same floor.
 _Appropriate shelter areas are a below-ground-level floor, interior corridor, or room or office without windows. Crouch low with your hands covering the back of your head and neck.
 _Do not leave the shelter area until after the storm is over.
 _Continue to monitor the weather via radio, television or internet until the tornado watch has been lifted for your area.

If a tornado warning has been issued and you are outside:

 _Look for a nearby safe structure in which to take shelter.
 _If you are on campus go to the shelter area of the nearest building.
 _If you are in your car, get out of it. Never try to outrun a tornado.

 _If there is no shelter, lie down flat in a low area such as a ditch away from trees with your hands covering the back of your head and neck.

Severe Thunderstorm Warning

A severe thunderstorm warning means that severe thunderstorms are in the area. These storms are possibly accompanied by cloud-to-ground lightning, high winds and hail. If you can hear **thunder** you are within striking distance for **lightning**. Seek sturdy indoor shelter. Stay away from windows. Do not touch items that conduct electricity.

HURRICANE PROTOCOL

The Executive Vice President is responsible for monitoring the development of hurricanes and advising the President on the likelihood that a storm with dangerous winds will impact the main campus.

• **TROPICAL STORM:** Winds in excess of 39 MPH are expected
• **HURRICANE WATCH:** Hurricane conditions (sustained winds in excess of 74 MPH) are ***possible*** in the specified area, usually within 36 hours.
• **HURRICANE WARNING**: Hurricane conditions are ***expected*** in the specified area, usually within 24 hours.

Decision to Close

The decision to close the College will be based upon the projection of a threatening situation. Bulletins issued by the National Hurricane Center, and WAVY 10 weather will be considered in determining the implementation of emergency procedures. The President may close the college depending on local conditions.

Decision to Evacuate the Campus

The decision to evacuate the campus will be made by the President or his designated representative based upon the size of the hurricane and the proximity to the campus with which it is expected to make landfall.

If the decision to evacuate the campus is made, students should contact their families and inform them of the requirements to evacuate. Every effort will be made by the college to assist the students in relocating, but students should be aware that they should not rely exclusively upon the college, as personnel will be involved in safeguarding college records and property. In the event that a student is completely without means to leave, the Dean of Students will work with local agencies to find adequate shelter. Non-essential personnel should no longer be present on the campus during this phase of preparation.

Post Storm Recovery

Authorized college personnel will conduct damage assessment and debris removal during the first daylight hours following the cessation of storm winds. Employees not authorized to be on the campus during this damage assessment should monitor local media sources (WTTG TV) for information about re-opening. Upon returning to the college, employees are to reverse preparations completed during the Hurricane Watch. Report damage or requests for assistance to the Office of Student Services.

INTRUDER & SUSPICIOUS PERSON PROCEDURES

If an armed or threatening intruder comes on to Ascent College property it is very important that faculty, staff and or students **report it immediately and take protective actions**. Ascent College maintains an open campus in the middle of a

residential/commercial area, creating unique challenges when dealing with this type of situation.

If you see an armed intruder and you are in an office or classroom:

- Remain in the classroom or office and immediately lock all doors, if possible.
- Call 911 and alert the Hampton Police Department. Try and remain calm so you can give an accurate description of the person or person(s). Note type of dress, height, weight, sex, and any other characteristics/physical items that are particular to the individual(s). Report the type of weapon (if known) and direction of travel or building entered.
- Lock the windows and close blinds or curtains.
- Turn off lights and all audio equipment.
- Stay out of the open areas and be as quiet as possible.
- Call Bethel Temple Church Facility Manager (757-508-9045) and Ascent College Executive Vice President (508-9038) and report the above information.
- Try to remain as calm as possible.
- Keep classroom or office secure until police arrive and give directions.

If you are caught in an open or exposed area and you cannot get into a classroom or office you must decide upon a course of action:

Hiding

Look for a safe and secure hiding area. Once in place try and remain calm. Stay hidden until you can make contact with emergency personnel.

Running

If you think you can safely make it out of the area, then do so. If you decide to run, stay low and do not run in a straight line. Attempt to keep objects (trees, vehicles, trash cans, etc.) between you and the hostile person. When away from immediate area of danger, summon help and warn others.

Playing Dead

If the intruder is causing death or physical injury to others and you are un-able to run or hide you may choose to assume a prone position and lay as still as possible.

Fighting

Your last option if you are caught in the open and are in close proximity of the intruder is to fight back. This is dangerous, but depending on your situation this could be your last option.
If you are caught by the intruder and are not going to fight back, obey all commands and avoid eye contact.
Once emergency personnel have arrived and taken over the situation, obey all commands. Once the threat is over, render first aid to injured near you and summon emergency aid responders.

Office of Student Services will:

- Assure that students and faculty are notified by all possible means to include the SMS system and Ascent College Facebook.
- Will coordinate with Hampton Police and Bethel Temple Facilities Manager to assure that all resources are available as needed.

- Assure that students and faculty are notified by all possible means of the All Clear sign given by the Hampton Police.

COVID-19 PROCEDURES

(Can be re-implemented when deemed necessary)

Completing the Spring 2020 Semester:

Online courses:
Online courses will continue as normal.

On-campus courses:
COVID-19 has necessitated that Ascent College adjust its on-campus classes accordingly. Starting March 26 2020, all on-campus courses will revert to meeting by GoToMeeting. The Executive Vice President's office will coordinate these meetings and assure that students are notified of the GoToMeeting link. Assignments, tests, etc. will be turned in by email to the instructor's email address. Students are expected to attend the GoToMeeting session and attendance will be taken. The attendance policy remains in effect for these GoToMeeting classes.

Fall 2020 Semester and Forward:

Ascent College will re-open for the Fall 2020 semester with on-campus courses with the following modifications for public health:

Classes will be held in rooms that can accommodate the social distancing rules required at the time of meeting. The Executive Vice President's Office will monitor the current guidance to assure that every class meets these the current guidelines. Classrooms will be scheduled with at least one hour between occupancy so that the room can be sanitized by administrative personnel.

All students and faculty are required to wear facemasks on campus at all times.

Students or faculty who are not feeling well will not come to campus. They should notify the office by phone or email of their situation.

Students or faculty who have been exposed to COVID-19 must not come to campus until the 14-day quarantine rule has been satisfied. They should notify the office by phone or email of their situation.

Assignments will not be turned in during class time. All assignments will be turned in using the instructor's email address. For assignments where email is not possible, the assignment should be mailed to the college office.

Students will not exchange personal pens, pencils, or highlighters or other personal items.

All campus activities except for on-campus courses will be prohibited until further notice. Students and faculty should make use of our Zoom account for activities and gatherings.

Use of the library will be allowed under the library policies posted in the library and provided by email to all students.

If the governor's guidelines for responding to COVID-19 mandate that institutions of higher learning shutdown or hold no on-campus courses, Ascent College will revert to Spring 2020 semester procedures with classes held via Zoom.

International Students:

Unless otherwise excepted by Homeland Security, International Students must maintain their requirement of only three credits out of 12 credits that are allowed to be online. If the governor's guidelines dictate no on-campus courses, International Students must either transfer to an institution in another state that is holding online classes or return home. If this situation occurs, the DSO will contact the student and assist them in making the necessary arrangements.

The DSO will issue new Forms I-20 for each student by August 4 2020 in accordance with the Broadcast Message: COVID-19 and Fall 2020.

The DSO will update the operational plan by August 1 2020 and submit to SEVP in accordance with the Broadcast Message: COVID-19 and Fall 2020.

Any change in these operational plans should be submitted to SEVP within 10 calendar days.

Continuity of Instruction and Records During Catastrophic Events

A. Purpose

This plan provides guidance to the college President and Academic Dean in a catastrophic event where instruction is interrupted for more than one day or the college must close as a result of the catastrophic event.

B. Assumptions

1. The college has no student housing.
2. The college uses Populi as the Online Learning Management Platform and Student Information System. This software is housed on servers outside the regional area and accessed by the internet.
3. Our third-party servicer for Federal Financial Aid is located outside the region and all correspondence and financial aid files are located on the Campus Ivy platform, accessed via the internet.

C. Policy

1. Existing online classes will continue as scheduled using the Populi platform.
2. Existing on-campus courses will transition to the online platform. On-campus faculty are trained in the online platform because many teachers use this platform already. Appendix 1 provides some guidance for faculty as they transition to online classes.
3. If faculty teaching an existing class are unable to resume teaching duties, the Academic Dean will assign another available instructor.
4. If the Academic Affairs Office and the Student Affairs Office are unable to function from the campus building, the employees will be reassigned to work from home. All the student files are located in Populi and administrative files are located on one drive in Microsoft365, so they would be accessible from home via the internet.
5. If there is a regional outage of electricity and internet services for two weeks or less, classes would be suspended for that time with the intent of prolonging the semester by these two weeks.
6. If there is a regional outage of electricity and internet services for more than two weeks, academic affairs and student affairs functions and the necessary staff will be relocated outside the affected area. First choice would be Gainesville, Virginia, the location of the Potomac Network for the Assemblies of God, which has agreed to accommodate in such a catastrophic situation.

D. Responsibilities

1. The Academic Dean will direct and coordinate the activities to implement this plan.
2. The President, in consultation with the Academic Dean, will make the decision to re-locate the Academic Affairs and Student Affairs functions outside the Hampton Roads area.

E. Closure as a Result of a Catastrophic Event

1. Continuity of Instruction

Refer to the Teach-Out Policy When Closing a Branch Campus or Degree Program.

2. Continuity of Academic and Financial Records

In the event of school closure, Ascent College will (i) make arrangements for the transfer of the academic and financial records of all students to the State Council of Higher Education in Virginia within 30 days of the closure or (ii) with the approval of the Council, ensure preservation of the academic and financial records of all students by entering into an agreement with another postsecondary school.

Appendix 1 – Guidance to Faculty for Transitioning from On-Campus to Online Course

Prepare for change and consider access

- Prepare your students for change. Students should be aware that classes may be altered in approach or cancelled. Talk to students about being flexible and engaged in course material even if the schedule or technology changes.

- Communicate with your students early and frequently. Cultivating a sense that you are present with the students in a meaningful sense is crucial to successful online teaching.
- Think about access. Remember that your students may not all have the same level of access to internet connections, computer software, hardware, etc. Gather information about potential needs and brainstorm workarounds. Use the Student Survey referenced in the Canvas Commons section on this page.
- Figure out ways to maintain your internet connection even if you are unable to come to campus. If you do not have access at your home or are concerned about reliable internet access, please discuss with your department chair who will relay this information to the appropriate Academic Dean.

Be flexible and accommodating

- Revisit and update your course policies, specifically attendance policies, to ensure they allow for flexibility should unforeseen sickness or other interruptions occur. Create additional plans to assess attendance and/or participation, if needed. Consider that not all students will have continual access to technology and/or internet.

- Convert synchronous activities into asynchronous activities to ease scheduling and access (internet, computer, etc.) challenges.
- Explore and provide options where possible. What objectives can be met in different ways? What can be reordered? What knowledge or skills can be shown in a different way?
- Consider different ways for students to show their work or progress. It might be that exams or group presentations need to be reconfigured. Consider deliverables in the form of video recorded presentations or demonstrations, oral exams, small group creation of an artifact, developing an infographic, student

created study guide, writing a research or opinion paper, a series of short quizzes, etc. Need more ideas? Contact CITL.

- Think about what you will do if YOU get sick. Some options include adding an alternate instructor, ask students to do asynchronous work, record online lectures in advance, import or build online modules, utilize external resources or courses (for example, Coursera, EdX, FutureLearn – free online courses with modules you can assign), create a long-term project where students work on their own for a bit, etc.

Maintain continuity by focusing on outcomes

- Focus on learning outcomes even if you need to adjust the specific activities that contribute to those outcomes. Keep students moving toward those outcomes. Avoid "busy work."
- Maintain normal course scheduling as much as you can. You can hold synchronous activities to promote community, but do not penalize students who cannot participate due to time zone differences, poor internet access, sickness, or similar factors. Record synchronous sessions for those unable to attend or wanting to review. Additionally, it's ideal to schedule synchronous activities during the normal class time (relative to the Central time zone), to avoid putting students in the untenable position of having to choose between simultaneous activities for different classes.
- Prioritize course activities and focus on delivering the ones with the most significant impact on learning outcomes. If necessary, rearrange course activities if needed to delay those activities where face-to-face interaction is most crucial.