

September 12, 2005

MEMORANDUM

TO: Chief Student Affairs Officers
Admissions Directors
Financial Aid Directors

FROM: Mike López
Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

SUBJECT: Admitting and Awarding Financial Aid to Hurricane Katrina Victims

As you may know, the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities have offered to accommodate at least 300 college and university students who have been displaced by Hurricane Katrina. The press release describing both on-campus and online options may be accessed at: <http://www.mnscu.edu/media/newsreleases/2005/090705hurricanerelief.html> .

At this time we do not know what the size of the response to this offer will be. However, we do not expect that any single college or university will be inundated with requests for accommodations. Therefore, it should not be difficult to respond to each request on a case-by-case basis. There are a number of issues you should bear in mind in responding to student inquiries. First, to the extent possible, students should be offered admission as “regular” students in order to have them qualify for federal financial aid. Admissions Directors should keep track of any students admitted who are Hurricane Katrina victims. The federal Department of Education (<http://ifap.ed.gov/eannouncements/0902HurricaneKatrinaGuid.html>) has provided guidelines on how this can be done even when a student cannot provide transcripts or other documentation. Financial Aid Directors are requested to exercise professional judgment to increase student expense budgets if appropriate (for travel costs, etc.) and to adjust expected contributions if the student/spouse/parents have lost income. Of course, any professional judgment decisions will have to be documented. In coming days the federal Department of Education may issue guidance easing certain other regulatory requirements. I know that Financial Aid Directors will keep abreast of departmental guidance. Finally, the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Foundation is also working to obtain additional funds that may be provided to Hurricane Katrina victims who have need after any other aid has been awarded.

Thank you for your efforts to provide some relief to any students who may be coming to us, even if temporarily, as a result of Hurricane Katrina.