

Procedure for Canceling Classes Due to Inclement Weather

Preamble

This procedure is for use in canceling classes for all or part of a day due to inclement weather (e.g., snow or ice conditions that make commuting to the campus hazardous). The policy sets out a process and timeline for deciding when to cancel and how students, faculty, and staff will be informed of the decision.

Protocol

1. In advance of a storm or other weather event, the Vice President for Finance and Business' Facilities designee will assess available forecasts from the National Weather Service and campus readiness, and provide an initial report to the Provost's Academic Affairs designee.
2. If it appears that cancellation of classes may be needed, the Academic Affairs designee will establish a possible effective time (in consultation with the Registrar), and alert the Vice President for Media and Marketing (or designee) so that a pre-test of the University's weather emergency communication systems can be undertaken.
3. If conditions warrant, the Facilities and Academic Affairs designees will make a joint recommendation to cancel classes to the Provost and President. The recommendation will take the form of a cancellation message with an effective time. Efforts will be made to give University students, faculty and staff as much advance warning as possible, ideally the evening before a morning storm, or the morning of a late afternoon or evening storm. Except in a rare emergency that requires immediate suspension, the minimum notice for canceling classes is normally two hours. Thus, decisions to cancel classes in the morning or all day would normally be made and announced by 6:00 am, and decisions to cancel late afternoon or evening classes would be made and announced by 12:00 noon.
4. The President, or the Provost in the President's absence or unavailability, will make the final decision to cancel classes. Once made, the decision and message will be communicated immediately to the Media designee for distribution through the 442-SNOW hotline, the campus web-page, NYAlert, and the local media.

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Authority for Canceling Classes - The laws of the State of New York grant sole authority to close a campus or suspend normal operations to the Governor. Campus Presidents, however, have authority to suspend classes, for example in consideration of the safety of students and staff.

Expectation for Individual Responsibility for Personal Safety - The safety of the University's students, faculty and staff is the institution's first priority in making decisions about canceling classes. At no time, however, are students, faculty or staff required to put themselves into harms way in commuting to and from the campus. In any circumstance, including inclement weather, students, faculty and staff are expected to exercise responsibility for their personal safety and to make reasonable and prudent judgments about whether particular circumstances permit them to commute safely to the campus whether classes have been canceled or not.

Expectation of Faculty Sensitivity to Needs of Commuter Students - While many students live on campus, a substantial fraction of the student body commutes to campus, often from significant distances requiring an hour or more of travel. We ask students who have difficulty getting to the campus during inclement weather to communicate their situation to their faculty, and we ask faculty to be sensitive and responsive to the safety concerns and needs of these commuter students.