NATURAL DISASTERS AND OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL BARRIERS TO STUDENT SUCCESS

An Innovative Approach to develop an active and caring online community for when disaster hits
This session explores an innovative new program for addressing barriers to online students’ success during natural disasters and other major events.

Details will include program design, severity and impact rubrics, use of technology for efficiently tracking event data, student outreach, success metrics and developing individual student care plans.
Evaluate Sessions and Win!

- Download and open OLC Conferences mobile app
- Navigate to specific session to evaluate
- Select “Evaluate Session” on session details screen (located under session type and track)
- Complete session evaluation*

*Each session evaluation completed (limited to one per session) = one contest entry

**Five (5) $25 gift cards** will be awarded to five (5) individuals
Must submit evals using the OLC Conferences mobile app or website
WGU ENVIRONMENTAL BARRIER (EVB) PROGRAM

An Innovative Approach to develop an active and caring online community for when disaster hits

1) Year One – the EVB Pilot (2017)
2) Year Two – the EVB Expansion (2018)
3) Year Three – the EVB Integrated Care Plan (2019)
THE ENVIRONMENTAL BARRIER PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

To proactively support students facing barriers to their academic success due to natural disasters or other major events; to help minimize the barrier to their success and provide individual support as a Community of Care.

• As part of our student obsession, WGU greatly values our students’ safety and well-being.

• We realized that natural disasters and major events greatly affect our students’ ability to be successful.

• We decided we needed to take an innovative and proactive approach to supporting our students by monitoring daily for severe weather barriers, fires, and other major events, which may hinder student progress in their studies.

• We committed to provide the academic resources necessary to support students in managing their studies while working through the events that may potentially affect them.
THE ENVIRONMENTAL BARRIER PILOT

Year 1 (2017)
THE ENVIRONMENTAL BARRIER (EVB) PROGRAM DESIGN
A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT

WGU developed a university-wide initiative to provide a high level of support to students and their mentors when experiencing disasters that impact our student’s ability to progress in their learning journey.

Hurricane Harvey (2017) created an opportunity for synergism and early cross-departmental collaboration, which resulted in formal development of this initiative, one that has allowed us to be more proactive in our Student Obsessed efforts and a proven success in reducing barriers to student success.
NATURAL DISASTER - SEVERITY RUBRIC AND DEFINITIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Severity Category</th>
<th>Student Impact Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1: Declared Disaster, High Severity</td>
<td>1: Completely Displaced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2: Declared Disaster, Moderate Severity</td>
<td>2: Partially Displaced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3: Non-Declared, Moderate Severity</td>
<td>3: Not Displaced, Impacted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4: Non-Declared, Minimum Severity</td>
<td>4: Not Displaced, Not Impacted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Student Category Diagram**

- **Severity 4**: Not Impacted, Potentially no assistance needed.
- **Severity 3**: Not Impacted, Potentially no assistance needed, Not Displaced, Minimal Impact.
- **Severity 2 (Declared)**: Not Impacted, Potentially no assistance needed, Not Displaced, Minimal Impact, Partial Displacement, Impact, Displaced, Impacted.
- **Severity 1 (Declared)**: Not Impacted, Potentially no assistance needed, Not Displaced, Minimal Impact, Partial Displacement, Impact, Displaced, Impacted.
EVB EVENT DEFINITIONS

Definitions

• **Declared** - Indicates an event has been federally declared, and is on the FEMA website. Events declared at the state or local level are not considered officially declared.

• **Displaced** – Student is unable to return to or inhabit their home for an extended period of time.

• **Partially Displaced** – Student is temporarily displaced by an issue related to the disaster or major event. Student unable to access their belongings due to law enforcement boundaries (such as quarantines, road closure or mandatory evacuations)
EVB Event Creation – EVB Team (Assessment Services)
1. Daily event tracking (AES Weather Trackers)
2. Event Severity Rubric
3. Student Impact (Cognos EVB List)
4. Federal Declaration Confirmation
5. Create EVB Event in Salesforce

EVB Event Communication – EVB Team
1. Student Communication (Megaphone, email)
2. Send Working Group EVB Notification
3. Send Mentor Emails (those with EVB Students)
   Currently sent via Outlook Mail Merge
4. Executive Group Notification
Sample EVB Alert — Multiple severe tornadoes touchdown in 8-county area of Pennsylvania.

- **Type of Event:** Multiple Tornadoes
- **Potential Length:** 10-3-18 to 10-10-18
- **Event Severity:** Severity 2/ Impact 2
- **Areas of Impact:** Lackawanna, Jefferson, Carbon Counties
- **Potential Student Impact:** 84 (82 active; 2 on term break)
- **Federal Declaration:** not at this time

*Related Links — [Environmental Barrier Event](#) and [Event Weather Reports](#)
*Event Updates also available in the EVB Teams — [EVB Working Group Notifications](#) and the [EVB PBI Report](#) (includes student list by college)
EVB STUDENT RECORD (SALESFORCE)

The 2017 EVB Program pilot included development of an individual student EVB Record for all students identified as potentially impacted by the EVB Event. Salesforce technology was leveraged to use the data-upload feature to create multiple EVB Student Records at once, connected to the primary EVB Event object.

The Program Mentor assigned to the student updates the student status in the EVB Student Record.
STUDENT DISASTER SUPPORT
Fiscal Year 18 in Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EVENTS Monitored</th>
<th>STUDENTS Identified</th>
<th>Required OUTREACH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>11,380</td>
<td>6,567</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUPPORT Types Provided</th>
<th>of students were able to remain in ACTIVE status</th>
<th>of students impacted have since GRADUATED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20+</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many LIVES changed, thanks to Faculty and Staff Collaborative support!
2017 HURRICANES – STUDENT IMPACT

Hurricane Harvey and Irma Student Impact

- No Impact
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- Unknown Impact

- Hurricane Harvey
- Hurricane Irma
Departments across the university gathered together and provided incredible support to our students during each Environmental Barrier Event.

The support provided allowed successful outcomes, truly changing lives.

The initial pilot was successful and determined that these types of support will now be continuously available to students moving forward.
• Healthcare Management student in Andrews, TX. The laptop was damaged by the hurricane flooding. The student was able to stay in school with a loaner and is still active.

• EVB Student able to have her course enrollment reset so that she continues her aspirations later.

• EVB Student able to have her tuition adjusted for a period so that he could stay active in the program while working through the impact of the Hurricanes that devastated the State of Florida.

• Student impacted by the Hurricanes was withdrawn and able to be readmitted back into the program once their family home was restored.

• Student and their family were displaced by Hurricane Irma. To stay active and engaged in their program, the student used their car battery as the power source needed to study and complete assessment requirements. Frequent support calls provided to student.

• Multiple students were offered shelter at their place of employment, many of which stayed for weeks as they were completely displaced due to the Hurricanes that impacted both the State of Florida and Texas. Students were able to proctor their assessments out of their office and use employer resources to continue to engage in their programs and progress.
THE ENVIRONMENTAL BARRIER PROGRAM EXPANSION

Year 2 (2018)
THE EVB PROGRAM- 2018 REVIEW

EVB Successes
• Successful learning interventions during natural disasters
• Enhanced development of Community of Care culture

EVB Lessons Learned
• Carefully vet EVB alerts for scope and impact in order to avoid casting too wide a net when preparing contact lists of potential EVB Students

EVB Pain Points
• Lack of integration of student care plan during events
• EVB Training gaps across faculty teams/colleges
Cat 4 Hurricane – FL Panhandle
Cat 1 - AL, GA
Tropical Storm- SC, NC, VA

Hurricane Michael – 6 States
# EVB EVENT SUMMARY FY19 (Q1,2)

## FY19-Q1 EVB Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total New Events</th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Event Severity Level</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Potential Student Impact</td>
<td>2,503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual Student Impact Level 1</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual Student Impact Level 2</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual Student Impact Level 3</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual Student Impact Level 4</td>
<td>561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual Student Impact Unknown (record incomplete)</td>
<td>1,483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Complete EVB Records</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## FY19-Q2 EVB Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total New Events FY19Q2</th>
<th>12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Event Severity Level</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Potential Student Impact</td>
<td>5,409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual Student Impact Level 1</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual Student Impact Level 2</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual Student Impact Level 3</td>
<td>676</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual Student Impact Level 4</td>
<td>2,769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual Student Impact Unknown (record incomplete)</td>
<td>1,716</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Complete EVB Records</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## FY19 Q1 New Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Name</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carr Fire (Northern CA)</td>
<td>07/23/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ranch Fire (Mendocino Complex)</td>
<td>08/09/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurricane Lane Hawaii</td>
<td>08/23/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas Flood</td>
<td>09/03/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typhoon Mangkhut Guam</td>
<td>09/10/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurricane Florence-Carolina Coast</td>
<td>09/11/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston Gas Explosion and Fires</td>
<td>09/13/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pole Creek Fire - UT</td>
<td>09/14/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roosevelt Fire - WY</td>
<td>09/15/18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## FY19 Q2 New Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Name</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PA Tornadoes</td>
<td>10/02/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurricane Michael</td>
<td>10/09/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Llano River Flood TX</td>
<td>10/16/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typhoon Yu - Mariana Islands</td>
<td>10/24/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pittsburgh Mass Shooting</td>
<td>10/27/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camp Fire (N. CA)</td>
<td>11/08/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thousand Oaks Mass Shooting</td>
<td>11/08/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woolsey Fire (S. CA)</td>
<td>11/08/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alaskan Earthquake</td>
<td>11/30/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia Floods (SE)</td>
<td>12/01/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwest Tornadoes</td>
<td>12/03/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Winter Storms</td>
<td>12/10/18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## FY18 EVB Event Total

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total</th>
<th>14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

## FY18 EVB Student Total

| Total | 6,572 |
EVB STUDENT IMPACT (FY19 Q1, 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EVB Student Impact - SCP Integration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY19Q1,2 Total Events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avg Event Severity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total EVB Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirmed Impact L-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirmed Impact L-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirmed Impact L-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirmed Impact L-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Impact Unknown (record incomplete)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avg. of Completed EVB Records</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Hurricane Michael SCP Audit*  
Student Care Plan in record for L1, L2 students 9 of 145 students (7%)
**EVB MENTOR RESPONSE**

**Environmental Barrier (EVB) Mentor Response Protocol**

**Reach - Assess - Assist**

**Reach** out to your student(s)

**Assess** actual level of impact of the EVB Impact[1-4].

**Assist** the student with individual learner support strategies, as needed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Impact Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Completely Displaced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<td>Not Displaced, Not Impacted</td>
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The mentor will reach out to the student and complete three crucial steps to help their student move forward in their learning journey.

The mentor will notify the assigned program mentor and include the EVB Link for updates.

The mentor will update the EVB Record with the severity level and mentor details.

**Severity Levels:**
- Severity 1
- Severity 2
- Severity 3
- Severity 4
EVB STUDENT IMPACT AUDITS

STUDENT CARE SCENARIOS

<table>
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<th>Event Impact Category</th>
<th>Student Impact Category</th>
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</table>

Mexico Beach, FL (Hurricane Michael)

**EVB Student Care Plan Scenarios**

Student stress and delay in timely support noted in audits; noted lack of centralized documentation of SCP in student record.

**Scenario 1** - Student lost home, PM uncertain of SCP options, drops off radar, unaware that EVB exceptions for IC, TB, WI are readily available. SCP efforts unclear.

**Scenario 2** - Student displaced, fell behind, now back in home but feels unable to catch up. Several service lines involved, multiple emails later, student connected to TB Counselor, EVB Record still appears to lack SCP, each service line provider has to research record to see what help has already been offered.

1) Fall Off Radar  
2) Jump Thru Hoops
NEXT STEPS

• EVB Training Module for faculty

• Automation of mentor notification from EVB Event records in Salesforce.

• Regulatory chart for students in Higher Ed impacted by Natural Disasters

• Expansion of Salesforce EVB event record, to include Student Care Plan boxes for needs identified by category, with link to student mentor platform.
  – Financial Services
  – Academic Services
  – Student Services
  – Hardship Support
  – New Student Enrollment
  – EdTech Support
  – Assessment Services
THE ENVIRONMENTAL BARRIER PROGRAM INTEGRATION

Year 3 (2019)
EVB STRATEGIC PLAN FY19

1) EVB Notifications – Process automation in Salesforce
2) EVB Student Care – Integration of EVB Student Care Plan in the EVB Record
EVB STUDENT CARE PLAN (SCP) INTEGRATION

SCP Integration needed due to:

• Lack of clarity of student support pathways during major events delays support during critical time in student journey

• Student/mentor experience of “jumping through hoops” to get to the appropriate service line

• EVB Student fatigue/frustration of getting to that service solution, while facing intense EVB situation
EVB Student Megaphone and Email

Megaphone request for students in Guam (Typhoon Mangkhut)

Please let your mentor know if Typhoon Mangkhut has affected you and your family. Whether the typhoon’s impact is direct or indirect, this is a difficult event to go through and we are here to help. Individualized student support is available if needed! Our thoughts are with you and your community during this event. Your mentor is eager to hear from you and has additional information for you when you call or email.

URL: https://cm.wgu.edu/t5/Assessment-Services/Natural-Disasters-and-Major-Events/ta-p/1723

EVB Mentor Email Notification

Dear Mentor,

You have received this notification email because you have a student identified as potentially impacted by a recent local environmental barrier (EVB) event. Please review the entire email for time-sensitive EVB mentor response information, student details and contact information for additional assistance.

10-4-18 Environmental Barrier Event Alert – PA Tornadoes (details…)

You have one or more students on that EVB list. Please support your student (listed below), using the Reach – Assess – Assist EVB mentor steps*.

Potential EVB Student Impact: (Name)
Student ID: (Student_Banner_ID)

*EVB Mentor Response Protocol
Reach out to your student(s) identified as having an environmental barrier potentially placing them at risk for success with their WGU program goals.
Assess actual level of impact of the environmental barrier and identify individual student care plan needs related to the event. (Document in the student EVB Record, see steps here.)
Assist the student with the individual needs identified, to minimize the impact of the environmental barrier event. (Consult with your manager for learner intervention questions.)

Note: If you have additional students that are not on the EVB Event list, but have been impacted, please email their name and student ID to assessmentservices@wgu.edu to request an EVB Record be created for them as well.

Thank you for your ongoing support for our students. You truly make a difference, one student at a time! Please reach out to assessmentservices@wgu.edu if you need guidance on specific student support needs related to their EVB Record in Salesforce, or any specific student needs related to this event.

Automated Push notification to mentors from student EVB Record will link mentor immediately to the student EVB Record in Salesforce!
NATURAL DISASTER EVENTS AND THE EVB CREATION PROCESS

**EVB Event Creation** – EVB Team (Assessment Services)
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2. Event Severity Rubric
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2. Send Working Group EVB Notification
3. **Send Mentor Emails** (those with EVB Students)
   1. Currently- Mail Merge
   2. FY19- Push Notifications with FormStack (SF)
4. Executive Group Notification

#1 Automate
**EVB Student Record** – Available to be the hub for the *push notifications* to Mentors and for housing an *integrated SCP* (Student Care Plan) for the highly impacted EVB Student.
Vision: To progressively embody the “WGU Cares” Community Culture by expanding the current Environmental Barrier Program to a fully integrated student support care plan that is automated and efficient, while providing a highly personalized and proactive “WGU Cares” experience for students impacted by natural disasters and other events.
Mexico Beach, FL devastated by Hurricane Michael 10-11-18

Photos by Douglas R. Clifford / TNS
EVB Event Tracking and Vetting

Faculty
- GPTW Faculty Support Team
  - Evaluation Manager Notification
  - Cross-faculty Notification

Student Support
- EES Student Support Portal
  - SRM-Integrated Student Care Plan

WGU Cares - Community Service Response
PERSONAL REFLECTION QUESTIONS

(OLC WORKSHOP FORMAT)

1. What barriers have you seen in your students’ experience due to natural disasters or other major events?

2. What responsibility does an online university have for students impacted by local events?

3. How can natural disaster student support programs be part of an extended Community of Care initiative?

Group Discussion

*Environmental Barrier Student Support in your Online Community*

Q and A
Evaluate Sessions and Win!

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