

Dear President:

As you know, there is great concern in Florida about our preparedness for the coming storm season. This concern is heightened by the growing attention to the threat of a devastating pandemic that could spread quickly throughout the United States. The purpose of this message is to inform you of the initiatives that we are taking to enhance preparedness and to make several requests.

In March 2006, I asked Dr. Sandra Flake, Provost of the University of West Florida, to chair a State University System Emergency Management Task Force (EMTF). The purpose of the EMTF is to develop recommendations to the Board of Governors for a more comprehensive system approach to meeting the emergency management challenges of our public universities.

The Task Force first will develop recommendations for hurricane preparedness. Then, it will address issues related to other emergency management challenges including those related to pandemics.

The view from Washington through the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is that "colleges and universities will play an integral role in protecting the health and safety of students, employees and their families in the event of an influenza pandemic" and a Pandemic Influenza Planning Checklist has been developed to guide our efforts. Please review the following checklist and share it with the appropriate university emergency management personnel:

<http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/collegeschecklist.html>.

As you may be aware, by September 2006, all Florida universities will be required to comply with the Department of Homeland Security's National Incident Management System (NIMS) as part of the Florida domestic security strategy. NIMS was developed to enable emergency responders from different jurisdictions and disciplines to work together when responding to natural disasters and emergencies such as terrorism and pandemics.

Federal preparedness funds (grants) via the Department of Homeland Security are available, but there is an expectation that universities must receive NIMS Training and Certification.

On behalf of the Board of Governors, I respectfully ask for your assistance with the following:

- I. To receive federal preparedness funds (grants) through the Department of Homeland Security, key university emergency responders (including one Vice President appointed by the President) must receive NIMS training and certification. The training may be taken on-line at: http://www.fema.gov/pdf/nims/06_training.pdf. In the event members of your emergency management team have taken NIMS training already, they may forward the certification to Bob Donley, Chief of Operations and the BOG liaison to the statewide emergency

management effort. You may reach Bob directly at 850-245-9698 (SunCom 205-9698) or bob.donley@flbog.org.

- II. Please identify the appropriate Emergency Management personnel to help the Task Force identify some key emergency preparedness areas. Specifically, the Task Force would like your institution to take a few minutes to review a survey checklist at: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=178382064967> and return it by Wednesday, May 10, 2006.

Sincerely yours,

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- c: Members, Board of Governors
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Susan Skelton, Senate Committee on Domestic Security