WESLEYAN

UNIVERSITY

Vice President for Finance and Administration 

237 High Street

Middletown, CT 06459-0241

To: Students

From: John Meerts, Vice President for Finance and Administration

Date: December 12, 2011

Subject: Response to Call for Action

My team has reviewed the issues raised in the “Call to Action” document that some students developed after the recent power outage. While our emergency planning is quite robust, we could not possibly plan for every crisis, so we learn from and seek feedback after every incident in order to improve our responses in the future – we therefore appreciate all constructive suggestions.

Wesleyan’s first responsibility during an emergency is to ensure that we meet the basic needs of our students. This often requires that designated staff be present on campus. We have procedures in place to ensure that these individuals receive the information they need during emergencies, whether they work directly for Wesleyan or through contractors such as ABM or Bon Appétit. In the wake of the most recent storm, we convened staff groups to assess the effectiveness of our communication procedures and determine how they might be improved in the future.

No Wesleyan employee will face discipline or dismissal if that person is unable to report for work during an emergency. If Wesleyan closes in an emergency, all salaried and hourly employees are fully compensated for a normal workday and do not need to use vacation or personal time; the same is true of ABM employees. Since providing food to students and staff who are on campus during an emergency is essential, Bon Appétit considers their employees essential personnel. In accordance with their collective bargaining agreement, Bon Appétit staff who do not report to work during a campus emergency are not paid for the day. However, Bon Appétit makes every effort to put their employees up in a hotel, if necessary, at the company’s expense during an emergency.

The University’s emergency response team considers the welfare of all members of the campus community when making decisions during a time of crisis. Even within our relatively small community, these decisions are complex and sometimes involve competing needs. While focused primarily on our students, we offer support to our faculty and staff, to their families, and to local residents when we are able to do so.

Again, my team welcomes constructive feedback about how we can improve our crisis response in the future. I am happy to meet with you if you have other suggestions. Alternatively, any member of the Wesleyan community can offer feedback directly via e-mail to jmeerts@wesleyan.edu