



# RUST

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## OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Johnny M. Moore, PhD, President

[www.rustcollege.edu](http://www.rustcollege.edu)

January 30, 2026

Dear Parents and Families,

In times like these, it is only natural for parents to worry, especially when severe weather disrupts daily life and routines. We want to speak with you directly, with clarity, honesty, and reassurance, about how your students are being cared for during Winter Storm Fern and its aftermath.

First and foremost, your students are safe. They have shelter, heat, food, and the support of dedicated staff. By God's grace, Rust College was spared from catastrophic damage, and no students were harmed during this storm. For that, we are deeply thankful.

We also want to acknowledge an important reality: some circumstances remain beyond the immediate control of any college or community. Even institutions with vast resources are experiencing prolonged outages and infrastructure challenges. For perspective, the University of Mississippi - despite its scale and resources - continues to operate without power in portions of its campus due to extensive regional damage. This underscores the unprecedented nature of this storm across North Mississippi.

At Rust College, preparation began early. The Executive Team convened during its regularly scheduled Cabinet meeting on Tuesday, January 20, to initiate planning for anticipated inclement weather. A comprehensive Inclement Weather Preparedness meeting followed on Thursday, January 22, addressing safety measures, staffing coverage, facilities readiness, and communication strategies.

An operational impact assessment was conducted, and our Physical Plant staff worked diligently to prepare all academic buildings, residence halls, and College-owned housing. Meetings were held with students residing on campus to confirm emergency contacts and ensure clear lines of communication. The College also organized a store run to assist students in securing personal necessities and stocked additional food, bottled water, toiletries, paper goods, and other essential supplies.

Throughout the storm, official Winter Weather Notices were issued to keep students and employees informed. A dedicated webpage was launched to centralize updates, student arrangements, and frequently asked questions for families. That information remains available at: <https://rustcollege.edu/weather-announcement/>

During the height of the ice storm, the Rust College main campus - along with much of the Holly Springs community - experienced power outages. Because Rust College houses students and provides essential services, the Holly Springs Utility Department responded quickly, and power was restored to the campus.

Some residential areas, including one residence hall, experienced interruptions to hot water service. We understand how concerning this situation is for students and their families. While this issue results from utility-phase limitations beyond the College's control, interim accommodation was implemented promptly. Students were offered relocation options, and shower access was provided in other residence halls. Campus staff and Residential Life professionals remain present, responsive, and attentive to student needs.

Dining Services has continued to provide meals as long as conditions remain safe, and bottled water is available in all residence halls. Campus Security and staff also assisted the small number of students residing in the MIC Dormitory with temporary relocation due to power grid issues affecting that area.

Due to continued hazardous road conditions across multiple Mississippi counties, the College transitioned to remote instruction and remote work on Monday, January 26, with designated essential personnel reporting as needed. Executive leadership has continued to meet regularly, including Sunday, January 25, to assess conditions and determine next steps. We remain flexible and responsive as forecasts indicate gradual improvement later this week.

We recognize that these are unsettling times. Ice-covered roads, closed highways, and widespread utility disruptions across the state remind us that safety must always come first. We ask for your continued patience as restoration efforts continue and as decisions are made day by day, guided by the best available information.



Please know this: your students are not navigating this alone. They are surrounded by staff who are checking on them, feeding them, housing them, and advocating for their well-being. While some challenges are outside our immediate control, care, vigilance, and communication are not - and those remain our unwavering commitment.

We are grateful for your trust, your prayers, and your partnership. These are difficult days, but Rust College has weathered many storms over its long history. With faith, preparation, and community, we will move through this one together.

Warm regards,



Johnny M. Moore, PhD  
President, Rust College

