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### **Flooding and Power Loss Plague Some New England Campuses, in Wake of Storm**

*By Collin Eaton*



Flooding from the Pemigewasset River encroached on the campus of Plymouth State U.

Tropical Storm Irene left a long path of toppled trees and flooded roads through the Northeast on Sunday, cutting off some colleges from electrical power and essential roadways. On Monday, many institutions delayed classes and warned returning students to wait until repair crews could clear roads and rebuild bridges. And while many escaped without major damage, some reported extensive flooding in and around campus buildings.

In Vermont, the storm had become the worst the state has seen in decades, hitting the southeastern quarter hard and closing hundreds of roads. But many universities reported they sustained only minor damage from falling trees and high winds. Several colleges, such as Southern Vermont College, in Bennington, didn't see an inch of flooding, but delayed classes because roads that were under water prevented students from returning this week.

"The flooding around us was terrible, but the college itself didn't experience that," said Susan Biggs, director of communications at Southern Vermont. "We are high on a hill, so we got very lucky."

Others weren't so fortunate. At Castleton State College, Irene turned a stream into a river that crawled across sports fields and over a parking lot and burst into the basement of the college's athletics complex, which houses locker rooms and football equipment. Coaches and students tried to save the equipment as water rose in the basement, eventually reaching 56 inches.

"That whole level is completely gone," said Scott Dikeman, Castleton State's dean of administration. "We'll basically have to gut the facility and start from scratch."

Marlboro College, a 330-student private college, lost all electrical power, leaving dorms and classroom buildings darkened through Sunday night. Meals continued uninterrupted on Monday, however, as the college powered its dining hall and other principal buildings with a generator.

However, the campus became isolated from the rest of the world. It was accessible only with emergency vehicles, said Ken Schneck, dean of students, after the storm washed away sections of road leading to the college just two to three miles from the campus. "We're just trying to meet all of our students' needs so they don't feel stranded," he said. "I certainly slept in my office last night."

Vermont's five state colleges lost their Internet connection when the Winooski River flooded and overpowered the system's Web-services center in Waterbury.

Other states also had significant problems with power outages and flooding. Wheaton College, in Norton, Mass., sent students home after the campus lost power, according to the college's Web site.

Four campuses in the 64-campus State University of New York system have reported power outages and flooding. Most recently, flooding from the Mohawk River cut off the electricity at Schenectady County Community College, said Morgan Hook, assistant vice chancellor for communications for the state system.

SUNY's New Paltz campus, in a region that suffered heavy flooding, was still without campus telephone and online services, and it canceled classes again for Tuesday.

In New Hampshire, the main thoroughfare to Plymouth State University was under six feet of water from the nearby Pemigewasset River. Water crept four feet up the university's facilities building, and its new \$16-million Ice Arena and Welcome Center sustained flood damage as well. The college will have to replace the ice in the arena.

One factor making the recovery effort "a bit more problematic than usual," said Bruce Lyndes, media-relations manager at Plymouth State, "is that we're moving in new students." Like many institutions in states along the Atlantic Seaboard, Plymouth State had delayed its move-in date, anticipating Irene would cause problems. "That's exactly what happened," he said.

Scott Carlson contributed to this report.