

Northwest University's Student Magazine

TALON

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AS MULTIPLE RECORD SNOWFALLS HIT CAMPUS IN FEBRUARY, PROVOST CLARIFIES SNOW POLICY



Photo by Holly Hollopeter

By Maggie Bright

Northwest University's administration is planning ahead as a [winter storm warning has been issued by the National Weather Service](#) through tomorrow night for western Washington. Local-news forecasts are also predicting snow through the end of the week.

Multiple days of classes have already been canceled, delayed or let out early last week due to the snowy and icy road conditions. In some programs, this is critical because of state-accreditation requirements, as well as the need to cover enough content over the semester.

As a result, the NU administration is seeking a way to safely approach inclement weather in the days and weeks ahead. Students and faculty are instructed to watch for updates regarding class cancellations via email and the campus wide NU Alerts text-message system, as well as notices on the [Eagle page](#).

According to an email sent out by Provost Jim Heugel to faculty and staff on Sunday, NU's snow day policy is continuing with the protocol implemented last year.

The email said that the weather and road conditions specifically in Kirkland are the basis for the university's decision-making. Although NU employees and students commute from many places, Heugel said that because two-thirds of traditional undergraduate students live on campus, decisions on canceling classes cannot be based on what is happening miles away. Instead they are based on Kirkland weather conditions.

"We don't want to cancel classes more than absolutely necessary," Heugel said in the email. "So we use delayed start often to allow conditions to improve. If bad weather is predicted during the day, we try to get as much class time in as possible before it arrives."

Heugel said that faculty members are encouraged to teach virtually if possible on days that classes are unable to meet in person. Many faculty members also incorporate out-of-class projects, documentaries or other forms of remote work so that students don't fall too far behind.

Ultimately, keeping staff, students and faculty safe is the basis for the university's decision-making, according to Heugel.

"Student safety is the highest priority," he said. "We err way on the side of caution when it comes to students...there are times we keep offices open even though classes are canceled."

Office closure is a university-wide decision that is not taken lightly. Closing offices affects the payroll of some employees and the amount of work that can be done and therefore official closure is avoided when possible. However, Heugel said that the university is concerned about the safety of the entirety of the NU community and that work schedules can be adjusted if commuting employees feel unsafe.

"If ever your commute is not safe, even if the university is open, you should call your supervisor to see about adjusting hours for the day, or take a personal leave day," Heugel said.

Please check back to *The Talon's* homepage and social-media accounts for updates on how winter weather is affecting campus.

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