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Contact: [Tom Hardy](#)  
Chicago  
414 AOB/MC 971  
1737 West Polk  
Chicago, IL 60612  
312-996-3772  
Cell 312-543-7476  
Fax 312-996-1836

Contact: [Lex Tate](#)  
Urbana-Champaign  
108 HAB/MC 370  
506 S. Wright St.  
Urbana, IL 61801  
217-333-6400  
Fax 217-333-5733

## NEWS RELEASE

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### U. of I response to Katrina

URBANA – All three campuses of the University of Illinois have opened their classrooms and residence halls to more than 150 Gulf Coast-area college students whose education and lives have been disrupted by the Hurricane Katrina disaster.

As of Thursday, the University of Illinois at Chicago had registered 76 undergraduate and 12 graduate students, mostly from Tulane and Xavier universities, with more admissions expected. The U of I Medical Center at Chicago also will admit students placed through the American Association of Medical Schools.

The Urbana-Champaign campus has so far registered nearly 50 undergraduates and offered admission to 10 law students, about 30 medical students and some graduate business students. Students are also being steered to Urbana 's Guided Individual Study program that lets them study one-on-one with faculty members.

The University of Illinois at Springfield has enrolled three displaced students, and one of its best-known online education leaders is spearheading a national drive to offer tuition-free, accelerated online courses to as many as 10,000 displaced students this fall. The program is funded by a \$1.1 million grant from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation.

Ray Schroeder, director of the UIS Office of Technology-Enhanced Learning, and Burks Oakley, director of U of I Online, are overseeing the major national initiative, which is set to begin Oct. 10.

“We will serve as surrogate universities for students who have been displaced,” Schroeder said. “UIS and the other participating colleges and universities will offer classes that will be transferred back to the students' home institutions.”

UIS Chancellor Richard Ringeisen said Thursday that 37 have already enrolled in the online classes, and the initiative has not even been advertised yet.

**Housing being offered.** Finding rooms in residence halls and other facilities for the displaced students was one of the first hurdles to clear. At UIC, gymnasium space will be made available in the Physical Education Building, which can provide lockers, restrooms and showers for 100 people with cots or up to a maximum of 175-200 people. UIC officials are also working with a private property owner to find additional housing in the campus area for another 40 people.

UIS officials found on-campus housing to their newly admitted students and have 16 additional

residence hall spaces available.

The Urbana campus has room for about 50 people in their residence halls. Campus leaders have worked with United Way and community leaders to identify available community housing. The local Red Cross and United Way chapters established an office in the Illinois Terminal Building in Champaign .

**Other efforts** . In addition, the U of I Medical Center at Chicago joined with Rush University Medical Center and the Stroger Cook County Hospital to send a team of 100 medical professionals for hurricane relief duty. Seven staff instructors of the UIC Disaster Emergency Medicine Readiness Training Center have deployed in support of Katrina rescue operations. Five center staff members were dispatched to the field hospital at Baton Rouge , while two others are helping at Illinois locations to help free up Illinois Medical Emergency Response Teams to go to the Mississippi delta. Dr. Maximo Brito, a UIC assistant professor and an infectious disease specialist, was attending a medical meeting in New Orleans when the hurricane struck. He set up a triage in the Ritz-Carlton Hotel and treated patients for four days before being evacuated last Friday. He has volunteered to return.

Urbana 's civil and environmental engineers and experts in urban and regional planning have offered their serves to FEMA, as have several U of I police and other staff.

**Fundraising.** Students, faculty and staff at each of the three Illinois university campuses are raising money for the victims. Fans at the University of Illinois-Rutgers game raised more than \$18,000 last Saturday and expect to double that amount at this Saturday's game against San Jose State . At Urbana , the Wesley Foundation and United Methodist Church have set up a memorial and prayer space for the hurricane victims in their sanctuary on the corner of Green Street and Goodwin Avenue in Urbana . The memorial and prayer space is open to the public from 7:30 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.

UIC's undergraduate student government raised more than \$2,500 at a concert fundraiser Wednesday and plan to continue their efforts through the next few weeks. UIS students and faculty and staff are contributing to the disaster, as well.

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