

Weather-related closings at Geneva College

Information for Employees

Updated November 2018

In the case of snow or ice (or some other emergency situation), the Provost will consult with the Dean of Student Development, the Director of Physical Plant, with the President, and/or with other appropriate persons before making any decisions about the status of the campus. We typically remain open unless the campus cannot be cleared or the main roads are impassible. Please note that closures or delays will be rare and are not tied to the local school districts' announced delays or closures. Remember that school districts are running buses very early in the morning and have the ability to make up lost days at the end of the year. Geneva, as with most colleges and universities, does not have this ability, so it is important for us to minimize the number of classes lost due to weather.

Please carefully review the following information regarding weather related closings and postponements. Every attempt will be made to make and communicate decisions by no later than 6:30 a.m. regarding day classes and 4:30 p.m. regarding evening classes. If there is no announcement, you should assume that there is no postponement or cancellation.

Notifications will be made in the following ways:

- GC Alert
- Geneva's web site
- Campus e-mail
- Pittsburgh news outlets

Please carefully review the following detailed procedures and policy statements regarding weather-related closings and postponements.

For those staff who are uncomfortable driving in the snow, and if your presence is not required for the day's operations, please note that your supervisor can give you permission to leave work early, arrive late, or not come in at all on a day when the campus is open. However, you must log that day as vacation (see the Employee Handbook for guidelines on taking vacation time).

Only the Provost or President has the authority to delay the class schedule or close the campus. Faculty are expected to make every reasonable attempt to meet with their class(es). If you are teaching a course and are unable to come to campus, please contact Provost Melinda Stephens (724-847-5235(offices) or 724-480-9668 (cell)) or Administrative Assistant Cathy Schlachter (724-847-6605) as soon as possible. In addition, you should attempt to notify your students using any reasonable available means. Cancelling a class despite the fact that students have driven through inclement weather does not reflect well on us collectively, and it is also problematic for a variety of reasons when some classes are held while others are cancelled.

On days with snow and / or ice, please allow extra time to commute to campus safely. Faculty members need to be aware of the fact that some of our commuter students live in very rural areas and are sometimes unable to reach campus to attend class, even on days when the campus is open. The College's attendance policy specifies that students who are unable to attend class due to inclement weather are to be given an excused absence (see the College Catalog for the complete attendance policy).

The campus will not operate on a compressed class schedule for days with delayed starts. For example, if the start of class is delayed until 10 a.m. on a Monday, Wednesday, or Friday, then the 8 a.m. and 9:05 a.m. classes will not meet, and the regular schedule will begin at 10:10 a.m. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, delays are made until 9:30 or 11 a.m.

Classes at Additional Locations - The Directors of the programs that have classes that meet away from the main Beaver Falls campus have the authority and responsibility to make decisions about the status of those classes independent of the decisions that are made about classes on the main campus. The primary reason for this independence is that local weather conditions may be better or worse in different geographical locations. Students in these programs should contact the appropriate program personnel for guidance and instruction about weather-related situations.

Please be assured that the campus always strives to make informed decisions that balance student, faculty, and staff safety with the class time for which our students pay. Thank you in advance for your patience and understanding.

The following is an excerpt from the College Catalog.

Adverse Weather

From time to time it is necessary to close the college and to cancel classes due to inclement weather. On other occasions, there may be adverse weather conditions, but they are not sufficient to justify cancellation of classes. In such cases, commuting students who honestly believe that travel to campus may be hazardous may choose not to travel to campus. These absences will be considered as “excused,” provided that the student contact the professor on the day of the absence.

The faculty member, at his/her discretion, may arrange a make-up date with the student if a class is canceled due to inclement weather. If the student has a valid conflict with the established time, it will be considered an excused absence. (See College Catalog for a list of acceptable excused absences. In this situation, a work scheduling conflict would also be considered an excused absence.)

The following is an excerpt from the Employee Handbook.

Severe Weather and Emergency College Closings (F & S)

The College’s policy is to remain open as much as possible during most severe weather conditions and other types of emergencies (e.g., power outages, loss of heat, etc.). One reason for this is that Geneva is primarily a residential campus and thus is ‘home’ for many students and a number of staff members.

There are two levels of college closings. One is the cancellation of classes for part or all of a day (or longer). The second is the closure of part or all of non-teaching functions such that certain employees are asked not to report to work. Class cancellation does not automatically trigger the closing of other campus functions. The general expectation is that non-faculty employees are expected to report for work regularly and on time even when classes are canceled.

The nature of work fulfilled by teaching faculty is different from that of staff because their work is directly connected to classes. Accordingly, when classes are cancelled, faculty members have discretion about whether they come to campus or not. Thus, in the messages listed below, “staff”

does not include faculty whose primary assignment is classroom teaching.

If the weather or other emergency prevents a staff member from reporting to work on time, or if the staff member will miss the entire day, the appropriate supervisor should be notified immediately, just as if the staff member was missing work for some other reason (such as illness). Employees should check with their supervisor if they are not sure about their reporting time. (Generally, this is a judgment that is made for the campus as a whole, not department by department.)

Some employees play a critical role in the operation of the College during severe weather or emergency situations. These employees will be called “Essential Operational Staff” for purposes of communicating instructions to employees. “Essential Operational Staff” include:

- physical plant/maintenance employees,
- housekeeping employees,
- food service (Geneva and Pioneer),
- security,
- Health Services Director,
- the Emergency Readiness Team (ERT) members not already listed,
- Residence Life staff,
- switchboard operator,
- President and vice-presidents,
- and others designated by their supervisors either before or during the particular event.

These employees should make every effort to be at work during a severe weather event, unless alternative arrangements are otherwise approved by their supervisor.

When it is necessary to cancel classes, to close other college functions in part or in whole, or to otherwise limit regularly scheduled College activities, an announcement will be communicated through the College’s “GC Alert” notification system, on local radio and television stations, on Geneva’s website, and by way of a general email announcement. If a closing decision is made during the work day, supervisors will be asked to notify their employees as well. Possible announcements include:

- Classes canceled until [insert time], all staff report.
- Classes canceled until *insert time+, only essential operational staff report. Other staff should report at [insert time].
- Classes canceled until *insert time+, only essential operational staff report. Next update on the report time for other staff at [insert time].
- (Some other appropriate announcement)

If severe weather or other emergency begins during the work day, and the college decides to cancel classes and/or other functions, an announcement similar to one of those listed above will be made. The announcement will include information as to which employees should remain at work. Please consult with your supervisor if you are unclear about the college’s expectation about your staying or leaving campus. (Supervisors should check with their supervisor/vice president/provost before making this decision. Generally, this is a judgment that is made for the campus as a whole, not department by department.)

Ordinarily, when the College initiates a campus closing, staff who were scheduled to work during

the closing are considered on paid leave. When an employee has a voluntary absence due to a personal or weather emergency that prevents them from working, they should use the applicable paid time off (vacation, personal day, or sick day – whichever is appropriate).

The suspension of social, cultural, or athletic events is determined by those directly responsible for the events and/or the appropriate vice president responsible for such events.