



How did Jacksonville State University go from this

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To this in a matter of  
weeks?

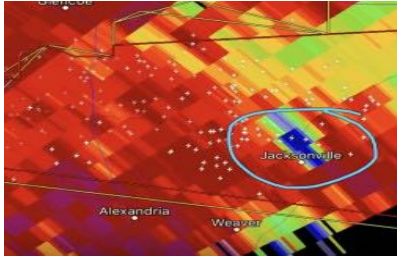
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**“When the Storm Hits: How  
PR Can Pick Up the Pieces  
When the Sky Falls.”**



# MARCH 19, 2018 TIMELINE



CONFIRMED TORNADO IN JACKSONVILLE

Another JSU Alert warns of a confirmed tornado in North Jacksonville.



IMAGES OF DAMAGE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

We start seeing images on television, pulled from social media, of the damage

8:16 PM

JSU ALERT SENT OUT

We see a JSU Alert of a tornado warning in Jacksonville, sent by campus police (phone, text, social media, email)

8:33 PM

TORNADO DOWN

A third JSU Alert announces a “tornado down near JSU.”

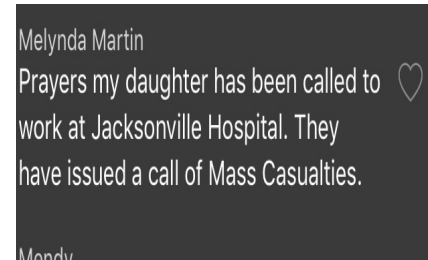
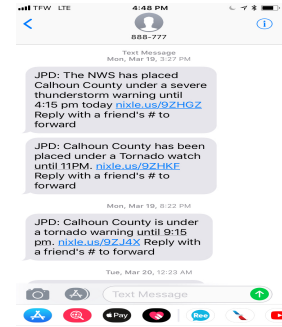
8:49 PM

9:30 PM

RUMORS BEGIN

Rumors begin pouring onto social media – reports of mass casualties on campus and a demolished Pete Mathews Coliseum.

10:00 PM



# MARCH 20, 2018 TIMELINE



## HEADED BACK TO JACKSONVILLE

We packed our bags and hit the road before dawn Tuesday morning, navigating through closed roads and downed trees to arrive back in Jacksonville

12:00 AM

## NEWS REQUEST BEGIN

By midnight, we had been contacted by CNN, The Today Show, CBS and other news outlets from across the state and nation



8:00 AM

## REBUILD JSU

Over the next days and weeks we would perform the most important tasks we have ever had the honor of completing for this university or ever likely will again.



9:00- TODAY

# rely on your training

*according to FEMA, the role of a public information office during a disaster is:*

1. Head off rumors
2. Help reduce fears
3. Tell people how they can help themselves
4. Direct the efforts of those who want to help
5. Increase the public's confidence in its leaders

# OUR IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS WERE:

**RUMOR  
CONTROL**

**MEDIA  
FLOODAGE**

**SOCIAL  
MEDIA  
FLOODAGE**

**(barely) managing the flow**





## ESTABLISH INFO CENTER

Established an information center in the Coxwell Room of the JSU Fieldhouse, which served as our workspace and as a media staging center

## CALL IN BACKUP

Called in backup (Sebastian, Chris, Josh, Carl)

## CO-ORGANIZE

Co-organized a crisis communications team with the PIO's contacts working the disaster for the County EMA and City of Jacksonville to streamline communications

**BUILDING OUR  
OWN NETWORK**



# reaching your target audience

*we had so much information to communicate and so many rumors to debunk that we spoke directly to our audience*

1. Social Media
2. JSU Strong Webpage
3. Videos (President, Provost)
4. Volunteering, Donating

JSU Strong



More Links

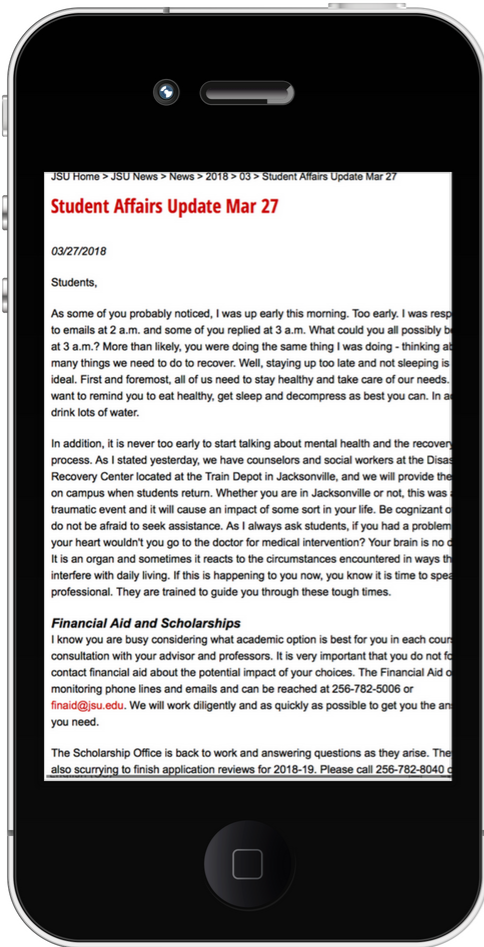
JSU Home > JSU Strong

## We are JSU Strong

JSU and the surrounding community was hit by a EF-3 tornado on March 19, 2018, severely damaging 23 buildings and impacting 50 more. Thankfully, the spring break tornado did not result in any loss of life. University faculty, staff, students, alumni, friends and neighbors have united during this difficult time and pledged to rebuild our beautiful campus and local community stronger than before. We are Gamecock Strong, Jacksonville Strong!

### Updates Concerning the March 19 Tornadoes

- [President Beehler Welcomes Students and Employees Back to Campus](#)
- [Several Offices Temporarily Relocated](#)
- [Scholarship Coordinator Mark du Pont Finds Positives In the Midst of Disaster](#)
- [Updates on Campus Dining and Donation Center](#)
- [Updates for Bookstore](#)
- [April 3 Update from Student Affairs](#)
- [Academic Options for Completing the Spring Semester](#)
- [March 29 Update from Student Affairs](#)
- [March 28 Update from Student Affairs](#)
- [March 27 Update from Student Affairs](#)



as we shifted from the immediate public safety crisis to academic concerns:

**LETTERS  
FROM VP**

**VIDEOS  
FROM  
DEANS**

**SOCIAL  
MEDIA  
Q & A**

# served as customer service

*Served as JSU customer service while campus was closed*

1. Facebook Live
2. Daily FAQ List
3. Facebook Questions

# our guiding principles were:

- **Honesty**
- **Transparency**
- **Credibility**
- **No False Hope**
- **No Broken Promises**
- **Find an answer if at all possible. If not, be honest about what you don't know and when you hope to have that information.**

*We didn't want JSU to just  
SURVIVE but to THRIVE.*

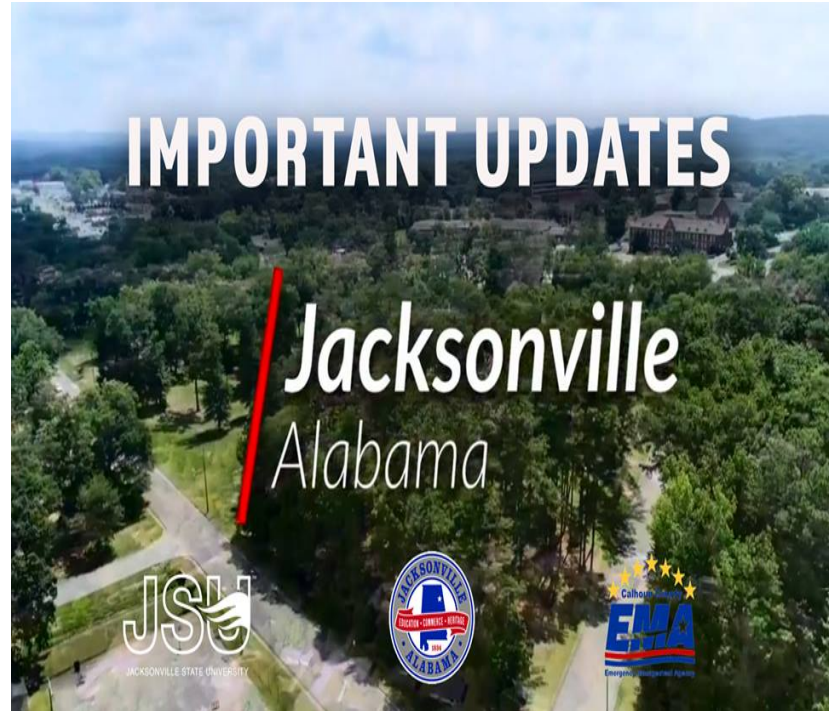




# community stewardship

Aware that community stewardship is a JSU core value, used this as an opportunity to support the city

- Volunteer Video
- Donation Video
- Shared County and City Notices



# COMMUNICATING WITH KEY AUDIENCES

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**Incoming Freshmen  
Alumni Email  
Marketing Campaign**

**earned media results**



- SEVERE STORMS EYE SOUTHERN PLAINS
- FLOODING FEARS FROM MID-SOUTH TO MIDWEST
- SPRING SNOW TO BLAST THE NORTHERN PLAINS

Airport Delays Source: FlightAware.com

<b>ANC</b>	Arrive - On Time Depart - 0h 44m
<b>ATL</b>	On Time
<b>BOS</b>	On Time
<b>CLT</b>	On Time

**AMHQ** JACKSONVILLE STATE UNIV. CLOSED  
University will be closed until April 2

7:41c FLOOD THREAT to Ohio Valley this week Widespread rainfall of 2-3 inches expected Locally 3-5 inches

The Weather Channel FLAGSTAFF, AZ TONIGHT 25° Partly Cloudy 10% Chance of Snow



**NEARLY**

***\$6,000,000,000***

**IN NEWS COVERAGE**

***630 MILLION***

**PEOPLE WERE REACHED THROUGH NEWS MEDIA  
COVERAGE OF THE STORM THROUGHOUT THE  
US, PARTICULARLY BIRMINGHAM,  
CHATTANOOGA, HUNTSVILLE, MONTGOMERY.**

# social media results

### Actions on Page

March 13 - April 9

# 410

Total Actions on Page ▲832%



### Page Views

March 13 - April 9

# 133,611

Total Page Views ▲1,861%



### Page Previews

March 13 - April 9

# 9,932

Page Previews ▲339%



### Page Likes

March 13 - April 9

# 5,156

Page Likes ▲1,099%



### Reach

March 13 - April 9

# 1,042,934

People Reached ▲253%



### Recommendations

March 13 - April 9

# 6

Recommendations ▲100%



### Post Engagements

March 13 - April 9

# 1,062,539

Post Engagement ▲661%



### Videos

March 13 - April 9

# 129,998

Total Video Views ▼11%



### Page Followers

March 13 - April 9

# 5,557

Page Followers ▲1,098%



Created: Jun 16, 2010 · Videos: 268

CHANNEL

Last 28 days (Mar 14, 2018 – Apr 10, 2018)

### Watch time

Hours

# 5,304



### Average view duration

Minutes

# 3:33



### Views

# 89,604



### Likes

# 279



### Dislikes

# 6



### Comments

# 21



### Shares

# 486



### Videos in playlists

# 141



### Subscribers

# 76





***\$500,000***

**IN SOCIAL MEDIA COVERAGE**

***1,042,934***

**WE WERE ABLE TO REACH 1,042,934 PEOPLE ORGANICALLY FROM THE MOMENT THE TORNADO TOUCHED DOWN TO CLASSES RESUMING ON APRIL 9, 2018.**

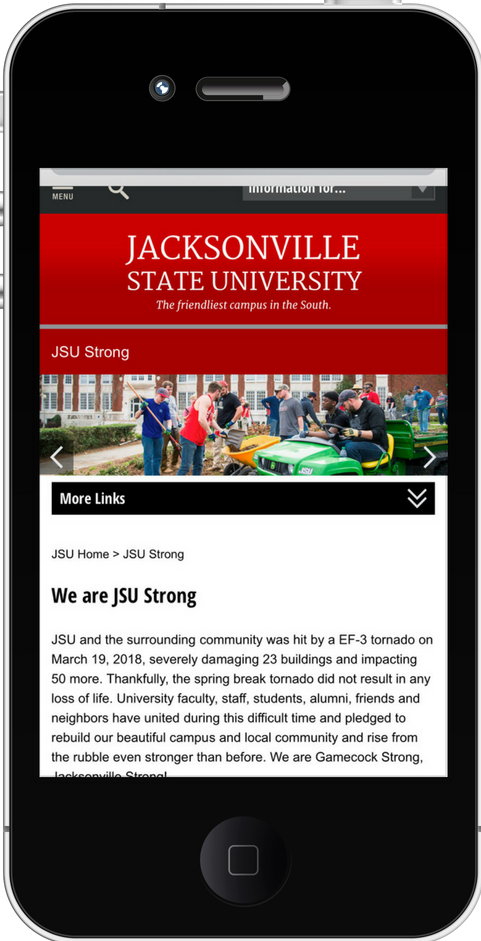
***89,604***

**VIEWS ON YOUTUBE**

***5,064 HOURS***

**SPENT WATCHING THE CONTENT SEBASTIAN CREATED. WE WERE ABLE TO HAVE DAILY VIDEOS TO SHARE WITH VIEWERS, REPORTERS, AND ON SOCIAL MEDIA. IN 21 DAYS WE RECEIVED 76 NEW SUBSCRIBERS, POSTED 10 NEW VIDEOS, AND HAD ONE VIDEO GO VIRAL NATIONWIDE.**

**web traffic results**



# JACKSONVILLE STATE UNIVERSITY

*The friendliest campus in the South.*

## JSU Strong



### More Links ⌵

JSU Home > JSU Strong

## We are JSU Strong

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**THE JSU WEBSITE HAD A**

***30%***

**INCREASE OVERALL**

***30,000 VIEWS***

**THE AMOUNT OF VIEWS THE JSU STRONG WEBSITE RECEIVED THE DAY IT WAS ROLLED OUT.**

**WEB SERVICES CREATED JSU STRONG WEBSITE WEDNESDAY, MARCH 21. JSU STRONG WAS CREATED AS A CENTRALIZED HUB FOR TORNADO INFORMATION**

**lessons learn:**  
*what no one tells you*  
*in crisis training*

**01**

**Internal Struggles  
Will Be Your  
Biggest Hurdle at  
First**

**Do you have access to your  
CEO or President? ? Do you  
have a seat at the table when  
decisions are made?**

***It's important at all times but  
especially during a crisis.***





**Are there people you don't  
get along with at work?  
Internal power struggles?  
Office politics?**

***A crisis will only put more strain on these  
relationships.***

**Do you have people who try to interfere with your work?  
Micromanagers? Backseat drivers? People who think they can do your job?**

***They're going to try to get your way too.***



## **THE GOOD NEWS:**

**If you play your cards right, the crisis will clear up a lot of these problems for you and make the future better.**

## **THE BAD NEWS:**

**You are going to see the best and worst in people. You'll be surprised at who steps up to help and provides support (both at work and at home) and who doesn't. Some people don't react to crises well, others are just self-absorbed. People who are not close to the center are just not going to get it. Find your tribe and lean in to those who are giving you what you need at that time.**



TICKETS

GAMECOCK  
STRONG  
REBUILD JACKSONVILLE

GAMECOCK  
STRONG  
REBUILD JACKSONVILLE

GAMECOCK  
STRONG  
REBUILD JACKSONVILLE

02

**Unity Doesn't Last  
and the Emotional  
Impact Will Take  
Its Toll**

# 5 stages of grief

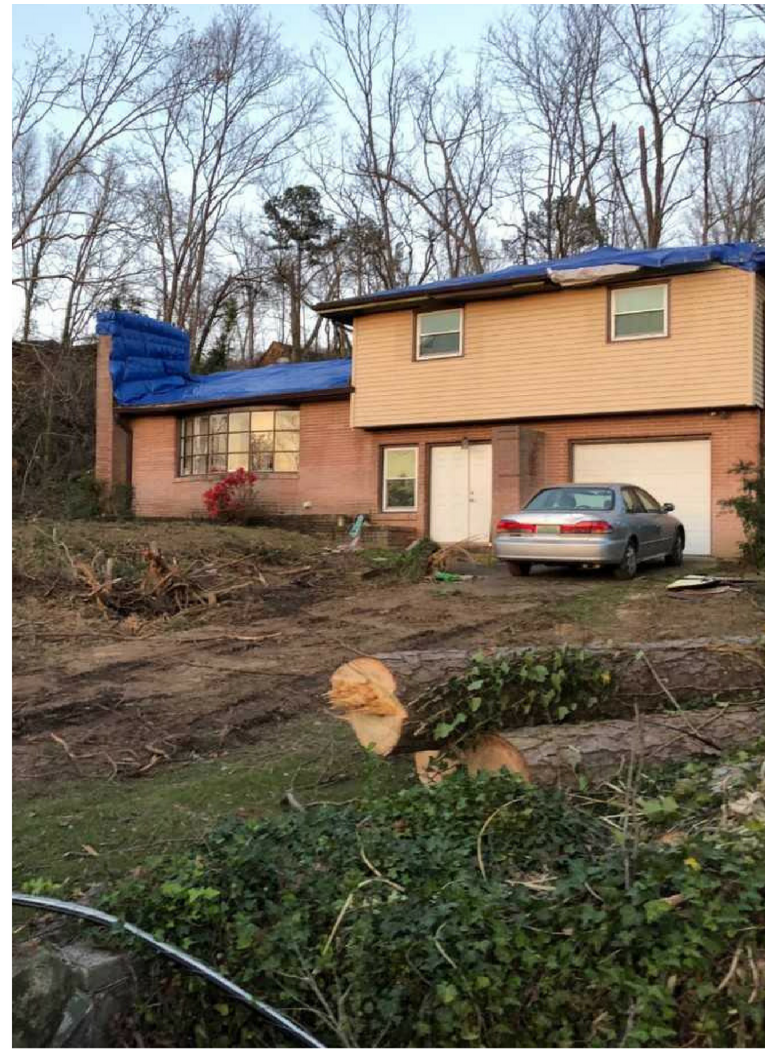
*according to the United Methodist Church Organization*

1. Shock
2. Denial
3. Anger/ Guilt
4. Despair/ Depression
5. Acceptance

**Understand where you and  
your team are personally and  
protect yourself.**

**You might be a victim too, but  
PR people have to be selfless.**

***Buffy's home ----->***



03

**You Lose Anonymity**





**You'll be recognized in public.**

**Your community and your employer will depend on you for leadership and emotional support**

***Hiding from the JSU community on her day off like...***

04

**Your Attitude Make or  
Break the Response and  
Recovery**

*Attitudes are contagious.*

**People know that you know more than you are telling them, so if you are panicking they will assume things are even worse than you're telling them.**

***Be yourself. Feel what you need to feel.  
Just be aware of your role.***



**final tips**

# **BASIC SURVIVAL TIPS**

**CALL IN YOUR  
PR FRIENDS**

**TAKE  
VOLUNTEERS**

**GET SNACKS**

**BREAK BEFORE  
YOU BREAK**

# crisis communication plan

*Don't have one? No one will read it anyway...but you need to know these things today:*

1. Organization chart
2. Defined roles and reporting structure
3. Essential personnel
4. Skilled personnel who can assist
5. Media contact list
6. Community contact list

# word of advice: enjoy it.

obviously, if you are managing something like Sandy Hook, this won't apply, but you won't do this often in your career. Get the most out of it. A firefighter doesn't want someone to lose their home and yet they want to be able to put out fires...there is satisfaction in actually being able to use what you've been trained to do. Pour yourself into it.



# let's connect



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