September 3, 2019

Dear Faculty and Staff,

The devastation of Hurricane Dorian is a stark reminder of the growing threats that climate change and extreme weather are posing on society at large. As such, it is incumbent on our institutions of higher education to have a transformative impact in building a more resilient global community. This is why we are most pleased to invite you to the [*RISE 2019 National Conference: Transforming University Engagement in Pre- and Post-Disaster Environments: Lessons from Puerto Rico*](https://www.albany.edu/riseconference)(<https://rise2019.org>) to be held at the University at Albany, State University of New York (SUNY) fromNovember 18-20, 2019.

In partnership with universities and colleges nationwide, along with the National Council for Science and the Environment (NCSE), the RISE 2019 conference will bring together leaders from across the country spanning academia, government, and private and non-profit organizations. The conference seeks to explore the role that higher education plays in pre- and post- disaster settings – especially, relevant given the destruction being exacted by Hurricane Dorian.

As you know, Hurricane María was one of the worst and most deadly disasters in Puerto Rico’s history resulting in nearly 3,000 deaths and over $90 billion of economic loss. In the aftermath of Hurricane María, critical questions emerged about how universities and colleges can play a more impactful role in resilience planning and disaster recovery, while bringing to bear the power of higher education under an integrated framework. In June 2018, faculty from the University of Puerto Rico invited scholars and researchers from universities and colleges nationwide to Mayagüez, Puerto Rico. Nearly 100 representatives from 26 universities examined the challenges and important issues facing higher education and the communities in which they serve during disaster and crisis.

Building upon this work, the RISE 2019 conference will deliver a three-day series of critical conversations to explore how institutions of higher learning can strengthen preparedness, response and recovery efforts in the face of threats posed by a changing climate and extreme weather. Sessions are designed to deliver a set of actionable outcomes that will lead to the development of a national platform.

As such, I hope you are able to participate in the RISE 2019 conference and be a part of this important series of conversations. To register for RISE 2019, please visit <https://RISE2019.org/registration.html>. If you would like to become involved in the conference, please contact Ms. Tianning Huang at [thuang3@albany.edu](mailto:thuang3@albany.edu) or (518) 437-4552.

We hope to see you in November!

Sincerely,

**Campus President**

Campus