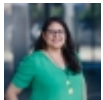


# Ask your institution to respond in the wake of Maria <sup>[1]</sup>

Submitted by [Giovanna Guerrero-Medina](#) <sup>[2]</sup> on 22 September 2017 - 3:28pm



<sup>[2]</sup>



Dear members of the CienciaPR community,

Many of you have reached out to learn how you can ask your institutions in the U.S. to support members of the university community who have been directly and indirectly affected by hurricane Maria, as well as relief efforts in the Caribbean. This has undoubtedly been a stressful week and for many of us, it's been hard to focus on work, school or science.

**We are providing a template (below) that you can use to contact institutional leaders and student organizations to ask they communicate with their stakeholders regarding Hurricane Maria, its devastating impact, and what can be done.** If you are at a university, we recommend you send the message to the President and the Dean for Student Affairs, and copy your Department head. **There is a part at the end specifically for scientists.**

We sincerely hope that you and your loved ones are safe.

In solidarity,

The CienciaPR Team

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## TEMPLATE

Dear [NAME],

This past Tuesday and Wednesday, the Caribbean was obliterated for a second time by a powerful hurricane. In Puerto Rico alone, 3.5 million Americans are without power, water and communication in the archipelago. Puerto Rico received 36 inches of water in 24 hours—to put it in perspective, during Harvey, Houston received 32 inches in three days. This destroyed bridges and roads to the towns. The USVI and BVI, recuperating from Irma, were destroyed a second time.

It has been a stressful week, and especially agonizing for those of us waiting to hear news about our loved ones in the affected areas. Many of us have been trying to keep with their daily work, while agonizing about not having any news from their families and friends.

I am proud to be in an institution that will acknowledge the devastation and the sorrow of our community. I have yet to receive an official communication (or any kind of communication) from the University about how to support students, faculty and community here that have been unable to connect with family members after these crises. I have been underwhelmed and wished to nudge about the urgency of a response from our University to our community.

With the goal of constructively contributing to this, I offer below a few suggestions.

Sincerely,

[YOUR NAME]

1) Acknowledge the crisis

- Members of our community have been directly and indirectly impacted by the devastation caused by Maria. Many people have loved ones and collaborators who are in the midst of the crisis.
- Hurricane Maria has killed at least 31 people in the Caribbean and has left 3.4 million people in Puerto Rico alone in a massive humanitarian crisis. Almost 100% of the population of Puerto Rico has no power and 75% doesn't have water service. Approximately 80% of the population does not have communication, as landlines, cell towers and internet access have been severely affected.

## 2) Provide support

- Provide a specific list of resources that our institution could offer to support members of its community that have been directly or indirectly impacted by Hurricane Maria (e.g. counseling services).
- Waive graduate or professional school application fees to students and/or applicants from Puerto Rico and extend the application deadlines for these applicants.

## 3) Provide suggestions of outside support (Below links our partners at [CenadoresPR](#) [3] and [CienciaPR](#) [4] collected and vetted)

- If people need to find information about family, friends or community in Puerto Rico, email the Puerto Rico Federal Affairs Administration (PRFAA) at [maria1@prfaa.pr.gov](mailto:maria1@prfaa.pr.gov) [5] or contact them at 202-800-3133 or 202-800-3134.
- Another organization providing assistance to PRFAA is the Puerto Rico Family Institute at 212-414-7895.
- Google has also activated its [Google Person Finder](#) [6]
- The American Red Cross has a [Safe and Well](#) [7] page, where survivors can register and post messages, and loved ones can search for registrants.
- Those worried about missing friends or relatives with a serious health condition are encouraged to call the Red Cross at 1-800-733-2767 so volunteers on the ground can follow-up.

4) Provide the community with ways to contribute to the recovery now (All of these have also been vetted)

- Donations to vetted organizations
  - Here is a vetted list of donation campaigns and drives across the United States: <http://www.losambulantes.com/help-puerto-rico/> [8].
  - People can donate to [USVI Hurricane Recovery](#) [9] to help rebuild the battered US Virgin Islands, or to the [Red Cross](#) [10] the help island nations recovering from the hurricanes in the Caribbean
  - [AmeriCares](#) [11] is a relief and development organization which provides health services to those in need, and is working with officials in Puerto Rico and USVI to stock emergency shelters with medical supplies.
- [CienciaPR](#) [4] (the largest community of Puerto Rican scientists in the world) has created [this registration form](#) [12] ([bit.ly/CienciaPRMaria](http://bit.ly/CienciaPRMaria) [13]) to help coordinate and disseminate offers of aid to scientists and students in Puerto Rico and other areas of the Caribbean, whose work has been affected by Hurricane Maria. As communication with Puerto Rico re-establishes, CienciaPR will work with scientists in Puerto Rico to channel offers and requests for aid. CienciaPR also published this list with more information that is relevant to the scientific community (<https://goo.gl/5jSDVS> [14]).
- Advocate that the NIH and NSF to provides assistance and deadline extensions for researchers in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands impacted by hurricane Maria. Nothing has been updated on their websites with regards to hurricane Maria ([NSF](#) [15], [NIH](#) [16])

5) Future outlook:

- Our institution should commit to keeping a close eye on how events unfold and be ready to lead in assistance to academic colleagues and students in Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and the Caribbean impacted by Maria, and use its expertise in a collaborative way in future rebuilding efforts.

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**Source URL:** <https://www.cienciapr.org/en/blogs/equipo-informa/ask-your-institution-respond-wake-maria?language=en>

#### Links

[1] <https://www.cienciapr.org/en/blogs/equipo-informa/ask-your-institution-respond-wake-maria?language=en>  
[2] <https://www.cienciapr.org/en/user/gguerre?language=en> [3] <https://cenadorespr.org/> [4] <http://www.cienciapr.org/en> [5] <mailto:maria1@prfaa.pr.gov> [6] <https://google.org/personfinder/2017-maria/> [7] <https://safeandwell.communityos.org/cms/index.php> [8] <http://www.losambulantes.com/help-puerto-rico/> [9] <https://www.usvirecovery.org/> [10] [https://www.redcross.org/donate/disaster-relief?scode=RSG00000E017&gclid=EAlaIQobChMI663HkoW\\_1gIVTbXtCh1R2AI-](https://www.redcross.org/donate/disaster-relief?scode=RSG00000E017&gclid=EAlaIQobChMI663HkoW_1gIVTbXtCh1R2AI-)

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[https://secure.americares.org/site/Donation2?df\\_id=22510&mfc\\_pref=T&22510.donation=form1](https://secure.americares.org/site/Donation2?df_id=22510&mfc_pref=T&22510.donation=form1) [12]  
[https://yalesurvey.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_6YigLXts7kTr2YJ](https://yalesurvey.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6YigLXts7kTr2YJ) [13] <http://bit.ly/CienciaPRMaria> [14]  
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[https://grants.nih.gov/grants/natural\\_disastersfaq.htm](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/natural_disastersfaq.htm)