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Self Generated Story

Frozen From Class

Saint Mary’s University (SMU) closed school on Jan. 27 because of record low temperatures. Chris Kendall, vice president for student life at SMU, said the university rarely closes for this reason.

Early Monday morning at 6 a.m., SMU sent out an email to the students regarding the cancellation of school. “Monday, Jan. 27 recorded only the third weather related school cancellation in the past 30 years in which I have been here,” said Kendall. Prior to Kendall’s decision, former Provost Jeff Highland was responsible for the call. Highland is no longer with the university, nor is the position.

This cancellation was a big deal to SMU not only because it rarely happens, but also because of the controversy it caused. Thomas Garside, a sophomore student at SMU, said, “It would have been nice to have been notified a day in advance.”

The attitudes towards the cancellation varied from person to person. Emily Weber, a sophomore student at SMU, said, “I woke up to get ready for class and walked all the way from Saint Joe’s Hall only to find out school was cancelled, but on the bright side I had a day to myself even though I woke up for nothing.”

The big argument seemed to be the “wait-time” in the decision. A senior, Mary Flynn, said, “I was surprised the alarm system that campus safety uses was not efficient and we were notified so late.”

SMU has no exact temperature policy used for cancellations that are weather related. “We will try to stay open no matter what,” said Kendall.

Faculty and staff members remained fairly calm about the cancellations. Admissions counselor Aubrey Hollnagel said, “It's not very often that the university decides to close offices, even if classes are canceled, so it's usually left to our discretion as to whether or not we are able to make it in on days like that. Since I live in La Crosse, there were safety concerns driving that distance in such cold weather but I was able to wait a while for the temperatures to rise before coming in.”

Accounting Professor Derek Jackson didn’t seem to mind as well, just felt badly for students. “Personally for me work is work, so coming in really didn’t impact me at all, I just felt bad for students who had to find out so late.”

The official temperature Jan 27 was -12, one of the coldest days of the year. Kendall said, “The day will not be made up.”