

Chief Alan Gutierrez

Interviewed by Isabella Trevino  
September 29, 2017  
Corpus Christi, Texas

**Isabella Trevino:** This is Isabella Trevino here with UPD [University Police Department] Chief Alan Gutierrez in his office at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. I'm recording on Friday, September 29, 2017, and I'm interviewing him about his experience with Hurricane Harvey. Uh, so, do I have your permission to record?

**Alan Gutierrez:** Absolutely.

**IT:** Uh, could you please tell me your name and where you are from.

**AG:** Alan Gutierrez. And I'm originally from Hebbronville, Texas.

**IT:** Uh, so how long have you been working at, um, Texas A&M-Corpus Christi?

**AG:** Eh, let's see, it goes back to about 1995, I believe. August of '95. Over twenty years.

**IT:** What made you want to work here? Or, how'd that happen?

**AG:** Oh boy. That's, uh. I've been in law enforcement about forty plus years throughout my career. This opportunity came up and, uh, I started here as a lieutenant back in '95. So the chief retired about two years later, and so the opportunity lent itself, and so I was able to, uh, apply for the job and I was blessed to be given the position of chief of police.

**IT:** Have you ever experienced a hurricane before while working here?

**AG:** Well, Hurricane Harvey was probably the first time that we actually experienced it. Now throughout the years we've had numerous, um, I guess hurricanes that were approaching. And throughout the years we've had several, uh, times that we've had to deploy our hurricane plan. So we've done a lot of preparation in the past. In many cases we've had to utilize our plan to a certain extent. But this time with Harvey, we actually went through the whole process because of the fact that it did make landfall close by.

**IT:** How far in the process, um, had you—like, what was the farthest you had gone previously?

**AG:** Well, previously we pretty much did all the preparation, um, and I can't remember all the different storms, but several of the storms were tracked to make landfall close to the university. And so we did all the preparation in anticipation of that, uh, but—I can't remember which storm—but at the last hour or so it turned north, and so we avoided that

one, and so throughout the years we've had more of those experiences where we've done the, uh, the evacuation, the preparation, the battening down of all the hatches and then, um, thank goodness the storms took that northern track, and so we avoided the actual landfall. But, it's been several times throughout these twenty years.

**IT:** I had another question but I forgot it (laughs). Um, when did you know that Hurricane Harvey, like, when did you know you were going to have to go through it? Like, the whole procedure, and—

**AG:** Well, the university subscribes to a weather service, and we utilize that weather service throughout the year of course. Because not only with hurricanes, but with any type of event weather related that may impact the university, whether it be lightning, whether it be a thunderstorm, um, tornados, anything like this- a lot of our athletic events also are very dependent, are very sensitive to weather events- so we subscribe to a service that the university makes available to key individuals, the University Police Department being one of those, and so that service keeps us informed on weather related issues specifically to our locations. So for example, we'll get weather alerts depending on the different levels of threat, and they're specific to our location. For example, we will get a weather alert saying, "A possible thunderstorm for A&M-Corpus Christi main campus." We may get the same alert if it's broad enough, "It's going to impact Momentum campus." So all of our locations are part of the subscription, so I may get up to four or five different alerts on the same threat depending on the severity of it. So it's pretty specific in regards to what's going to happen on our campus, and, you know, kind of interesting that watching the football game last night, the technology is so advanced now that even last night when that football game was in the middle of playing they got notice of a possible lightning/thunder storm, you know, approaching the stadium so they had everybody exit to a safe location. And they were able to pin it down to a specific time. So that's basically what we have. We have a system that tells us exactly, or as close as possible, "These are your threats." So that system is the one that pretty much keeps us alert to threats. And it tracks us from as far out as we pretty much ask of them, so we get very early notice of, "Oh, here's a storm that may end up in the Gulf or may be headed your way." So we have plenty of notice, and as it approaches, well then the threat levels start rising.

**IT:** So, um, what was your experience in following the procedures this time around? Were there any particular, like, mishaps or concerns?

**AG:** Well, we can go back a little bit on the question earlier as far as, you know, at what point do we start taking action, I guess. And so, um, as I indicated in our previous conversation about the University's Hurricane/Tropical Storm Defense Plan, and that, of course, is available to all students and anyone that has access to our web, and so if you look at that plan, it pretty much spells out what the university's going to do, so that all the folks, whether students, concerned citizen, parent, can see that and know that the university does take those threats seriously and know that we have a plan in place. So then, any time those threats from our subscribed weather service, and/or local, lets us know that there's a possible threat, first thing we do is the incident command team may

put out a notice to the decision making team or to even maybe the whole group saying, "We're monitoring this; be aware of this potential risk." And so we kind of get put on notice. So that's kind of like the first indication that, yeah, you kind of need to be watching. And by this time local media has already picked up on some things, so you have a combination of your local media resources and then we have our internal. So the first indication of that would be notice from the incident commander saying, "We're watching it." And then once we do that, it just kind of follows the plan, depending on the different trigger points. And the trigger points, in the defense plan, is put together as a combined effort, pretty much at the lead of the university Environmental, Health & Safety office. So they pretty much put the plan together. We have training on the plan. We come together as a university and review the plan. After hurricane season a lot of the times we re-meet, or we reconvene, and we go over some of the trigger points. Because the trigger points are the indicators that cause us to take action. And so even with this, uh, latest issue with Harvey, we're in the process now of gathering after-action reports from all the section chiefs. And then we are tasked to submit those after-action reports to the incident commander, which is Terry Tatum. He'll take all that data that we're going to submit to him and say, "Here's some issues, Mr. Tatum, that went well. Here's some issues that weren't as well as they could've been." And then he and the whole team will come together and say, "Well maybe we need to relook at these trigger points." So this instrument has been in place for quite some time, but through my years here it's been adapted and it's been, you know, refined to address some of those issues that come up. As I stated earlier, we've had, um, situations before, and even with those that we didn't have impact from the storm, we still learned from it. And some of those things, you know, even going back in time, is if you see the trigger point, some of our trigger points are based on actions that others are taking. For example, when the city of Corpus Christi puts out notice to the low lying areas of the island, Flour Bluff, Padre Island, and all that, that's one of the triggers that we're looking for. And so the Health & Safety office has looked at those things, and then we regroup and say, "Okay is that realistic for us?" When you look at our plan, one of the biggest differences you'll see if you review hurricane plans, and most entities have them, but if you review ours, it's a little unique in this sense. A lot of times when you have storms and/or threats, you can kind of relate to it as a student in high school or back home, and, you know, you'd get that call or you'd get that information on the local news saying, "Oh, no school today." And the reason is because the school districts, and I can't speak for them, but it just would kind of make sense that, they can make decisions later, or very early in the morning, because they can stand down their operations. They can tell their bus drivers, We're not going to have school. And so they have a little bit more latitude to not have to inconvenience everybody. In a university, we're unique, in the sense that we have residents that are dependent on us. We have students that are commuting from all over the Coastal Bend. And so we don't have the latitude, especially on a storm, you know, hurricane, for example, to wait until we are sure it's going to hit or come our way. So that's why these trigger points sometimes are a little further out—seventy-two hours, forty-eight hours, and so on and so forth—because we need to make decisions that far in advance, so that we can be realistic about our plan. And what I mean by that is that if we're truly going to evacuate people, residents, we have to understand the magnitude of that. How many people? Where are we going to take them? How are we going to be able to do that? So that's why this plan is comprehensive

in that sense that it reviews all the different aspects of it. The other one could be (coughs) you know, I mean, if you think about your own preparation, I have a relatively, have a, you know, an average home, and I have to look at "What's it going to take for me to secure my home? Two, three hours? Four hours?" Whatever. If I'm somewhat prepared I can go board my windows and such. Well now think about the university as a whole. How do we prepare the university for a storm? So that's why Mr. Tatum needs to know, from all the different entities, facility services, dining, computer service, all the different divisions, and say, "Okay, if I give the order that we're shutting down and we're leaving, we're evacuating," and part of our plan says, "These are the things you need to do." Again, for example, you need to cover all of your electronics; you need to power down things; you need to back up things. Well now you kind of start putting a timeline. How much time is that going to take? And so that's where the plan addresses those trigger points. And that's a big decision for the incident commander and, of course, administration to say, "We may end up having to close operations ahead of the storm." And so, at that point, you have people wondering, "What's A&M Corpus Christi doing? Why are they shutting down?" or "Why didn't they have class?" And so on and so forth. Well that's one of the biggest reasons is we need a lot of lead time to accomplish our task. And so, we have a good plan in place, and every time we have an incident we review it, we modify it, we address those trigger points. And then, I think, one of the things for Mr. Tatum this time around is being able to say, "We weathered this one." And so it's a little different in the fact that, the ones before, we prepared but we never had impact. Whereas this one, we had impact in the area, and I think that's going to give them a lot of valuable information as to how did an impact do? How did your plan really work this time? And so I know that the University Police Department, I've tasked my staff with putting together an after-action report so that we can submit to him. Our job, in the defense plan, is the security aspect of it, which is not as simple as it sounds because, again, going back to our plan, and let's use the example of Harvey, when the decision was made by administration, the incident command, to close campus, the incident commander gives me a directive. Says, "Chief, we are now closing the campus. Secure the campus by this time." And when he gives me that directive what that means to me and my staff, or our staff, is that we secure the campus. We make sure that no one is on campus, only authorized personnel. We make sure that we don't allow anyone on campus, and if so, we have a process to allow that. And so, at first glance it seems like an easy task, but, so that I can tell Mr. Tatum, "Mr. Tatum your campus is secure," I have to have my staff basically walk the whole campus, check every building, check every door, because we definitely don't want to have anyone left behind. So those are the things that I think people don't understand, or realize, that, on a university, if you put it in perspective of your home, it takes you some time. Well then multiply that by so many, you know, other things you must do. So the plan has those points in place and, in some cases, to ensure that we're realistic. Now, to add to that, once the decision is made for the university, we also, as leaders, and of course administration, we have to make sure that we're considerate of our employees. So in my case, so as soon as we have an idea that this might be a threat, each division, each department has to be thinking, "Okay what do I need to do?" in anticipation of those different trigger points. For example, once we start getting the weather report saying more likely than not that this is coming towards you, I have to make a decision within my department and implement our internal hurricane

plan. And what that does is that I have steps in place that allow some of our staff to go home in anticipation of what's to come as far as our task on campus. And I have to be able to do that so that they can go secure their homes. So that they can go and make arrangements with their family. So that when the employee gets called to duty on campus, they would have been allotted time to take care of their personal issues because they may be tasked to stay here. And for them to stay here, I have to give them the opportunity to take care of family first. And so those are things that everybody has to be thinking, whether it's pre-activation of our plan or post-activation of our plan. And so that's the other variable that, I guess, we have to understand is that, if we make a decision to shut down at a certain time, is that going to be in line with employees finishing their task here, and then going home and dealing with their personal, whether evacuation plan, preparation plan, whatever that is, so it gets pretty complex. And so the plan is a good reference, and once we kind of start, we activate the plan, sometimes it's a good tool to go back and say, "Okay, am I in line? Am I at the right trigger point to make sure that I'm able to complete the task within that time frame."

**IT:** Uh, earlier, uh, we were talking the other day. You mentioned the president was getting sworn in at a time that these procedures were—at the time that the hurricane was hitting. Did that cause any problems uh as far as chain of command, or, for you?

**AG:** The, uh, the defense plan pretty much specifies the structure, the organizational structure. And in the organizational structure, you have the incident commander, which in this case is Mr. Tatum. And so the president of the university is not necessarily a part of the structure as far as implementing the plan. Of course she is the ultimate leader, and so she, of course, directs Mr. Tatum, but we all—if you look at our organizational chart, you have the person in that particular task, and then you have, I guess, support, and/or assistance, and/or alternates. So for example, if Mr. Tatum's not there, there's already by designation who that's going to be, so we're not at that hour deciding, "Okay, who takes over for Mr. Tatum?" It's automatically in place. Here at the University Police Department, the task of security is mine. And then my deputy, or my assistant, is my captain, Captain Peña and Captain Wright (someone is taking out the trash in the other room). So automatically if I'm not here, if I happen to be out of town when this happens, or out, they automatically step in and take over that function. So in this particular case, um things are occurring on campus, and that's what's, I guess, unique or interesting, is when these storms are in the Gulf, or storms are out there growing and such, um life goes on. We're having class; we're having operational things. In this particular case, you know, it was right before the start of school. And so during this time that we were in preparation of Harvey, the president and others were at College Station for the Board of Regents meeting. And so, again, with the technology, you're never away from the information and/or able to make a decision, so that's always comforting to know that if I needed to get a hold of Tatum, he's just a phone call away. So we utilized our plan, and the administration, or administrators, that were on campus took over those functions. We brought the team together, put all the issues on the table in an open discussion, and then that, uh, particular vice president relayed the information to Mr. Tatum and to the president and kept them informed as to what we were doing. And so they were in constant communication as far as what was going to be done or what needed to be done.

And so then the other side of that is, we have to make sure that that information is being relayed to the consumer. So that's the other thing that our marketing, communication, public information is included in all that in the sense that they're working closely with the incident command, with the administrators in drafting and preparing press releases and information that's going to be sent to the campus community and the community as a whole. So, yes, she was away, but not really. She was still available and definitely involved in the decision making, I can assure you. And that—all that information's brought together, and then the decision's made as a unit. So it made it a little challenging, I guess. But, uh, not undoable.

**IT:** Okay, so, with all this, um, like communication and back-and-forth that needs to happen, were there any, like, fumbles in communication? Was it super hectic, or did it all go smoothly?

**AG:** Well, as anything, I mean, if you talk to anybody that creates plans, and all of us that work in this environment, emergency management, crisis, and so on, you have plans to kind of give you some guidance. But when the incident occurs, you're never going to follow, or the plan's never, or the incident's never going to follow the plan step-by-step. So you're always going to have those challenges. And so in this particular case, I mean, it would have been ideal if all the administrators would have been on campus and we could gather. So just the fact that, you know, in one, I can recall one meeting where we brought everybody together and the administrators were on their phones, and they were there via speaker phone. So they were virtually there. So that, I guess, challenging? Not really. I mean you make do with what you have to do. And so that happens, but, as we implemented our plan, different things started occurring. So as I indicated earlier, once decisions are made, and like the one that was made to say, "Okay, we've made the decision to close campus at this time, this is what it's going to look like, this is what it means," it kind of gives me, or the department, our directive of what we need to do. We deploy what we need to make that happen. We deployed our barriers to, uh, basically secure the campus. We post up personnel at the kiosk, so that we can check in people if need be. And that's the other issue, that the decision's made to close, but the minute you make that decision you start finding out that we have personnel, we have different operations. And when you think of A&M-Corpus Christi, it's not just about A&M-Corpus Christi as an academic institution. We have partners on our campus: we have state partners, we have federal partners, we have contractors, we have all types of functions that are occurring in conjunction with the university. So as a university prepares for the storm, we have to also deal with that. And so those are the issues that our department has to be available to resolve. And so those are things that when the decision's made, that's when you find out, "Oh well we had this contractor that was scheduled to deliver something that day." So do we make a decision to allow him to do that? And so those are our challenges. When you say, does the communication get out to everybody? Probably not. And so that example is a good one, is that you have outside vendors that are still trying to do their job. You have the different construction companies that are trying to meet our evacuation notice. So we kind of have to be somewhat fluid, and just kind of deal with each incident that comes up on an individual basis with at least an idea of what our charge is. And that's to secure the campus and make it safe. So do

things happen? Absolutely. Do we have to make decisions based on that? Absolutely. And so we make that decision every day. So it's not anything different. And so we have the personnel here within the department within our own command structure that can be in communication with whoever. In this case, I pretty much was here. If something came up that I needed to alert Mr. Tatum or somebody else, they were a phone call away. When we shut down campus, again, it's a decision that's made, but not knowing what that means to the campus as a whole? We have research going on, we have all kinds of things that are happening on campus, and so those different functions were coming forth and saying, You know, that's unrealistic for me to be able to shut down by noon or one. Can I get an extension? Because I really need four more hours to do this. So we work with that, and we had a process in place to identify those people so that we could get them what they needed, whether it be the extra time and then be able to get them off campus safely, and that, that's what we did.

**IT:** Are there any other examples of uh like tough calls that you had to make?

**AG:** Well, we can progress now, that, once we secured the campus and we were preparing, one of the things that might be of interest is that the University Police Department has its own plan. And part of that plan is that we have what we call a ride-out team. And then we have the recovery team. And what that means is that we identify personnel that are tasked with staying on campus, and the reason—there's a multitude of reasons why we do that. But our objective, or our task, is to secure our campus. Protect our community. And so the way we do that is we divide the police department into two teams, the recovery and the ride-out. So the ride-out team, as we anticipated the landfall, again, we have timelines within our plan, so we made sure that the ride-out team had time to go prepare. And then they were tasked to be on campus by a certain time, and prepared to stay till the storm was over, and we're able to get back, at least, to normal operations and to get our recovery team back on campus. And so we implemented that. We divided. We send our recovery team to an off-campus location, so that, the purpose of doing that is to have personnel available after the storm, post-hurricane, post-storm. Personnel can come back and take over the function that the ride-out team does. And the ride-out team, we're equipped, we have supplies to maintain us, we have our emergency operations center. That's where we locate. And so we implemented that. We took our team, as the storm started approaching, we did our task. We secured our campus. Made sure that the campus was completely evacuated except for authorized personnel, which was the university staff. And then we uh once the winds and the rains got to a point where it was unsafe, the decision was made to have all personnel come to the emergency operations center and, basically, be prepared to ride out the storm. And we have facilities there. We work hand in hand with the city of Corpus Christi's um EOC [emergency operations center] and their emergency plan. And part of that is that we notify them every hurricane season as part of their requirements that we do plan to stay during the storm. And the reason they like that or want that is so that they kind of know who's where, and they also kind of put us on notice, saying, "During the storm, we're not going to be able to provide you services. You've got to be able to support yourself; you've got to be able to take care of yourselves, and you have to be able to take care of all the staff that you have there." So we have a process before hurricane season, and we submit our paperwork to them.

Everybody's kind of put on notice of what it means to do that, and so we did that. Once it got to a point it was unsafe we brought everybody in. We were preparing for the storm. By that time it was, you know, pretty visible that it was coming and it was here. And so we have an emergency operations center that is designed to allow us to stay there with all the necessities. It's got a generator that powers the building, and so we were feeling pretty good about being at that stage of our plan. Unfortunately, about two hours into that part of the operations, the generator failed. And so when the generator failed, you know, when you talk about pre-planning, or pre-hurricane, we test everything, we review our plan. And that's one thing about the ride out, we want to make sure that, if we're going to put personnel in a certain location, that it can do what it's designed to do. All that was in place, so, again, we were feeling pretty good about, "Okay, we're ready to ride it out," and then two hours in the generator fails. Which now, we were like some of the residents in Corpus Christi without power. We were in a secure building, but now it went from having all the comforts to being just like everybody else, with no power, darkness, no means to get up to the third floor, which, that's where the emergency operations center is. So that kind of made it challenging. Uh, you know, kind of a quick note- we prepared to ride it out, meaning that we came with our air mattresses, things of that nature. I guess one of the quick lessons learned for next time is that we're going to air up the air mattresses first and not wait. So that when it came time to finally get some rest, without power there was no way to inflate those air mattresses, so that kind of changed things a little bit as far as our sleeping conditions. So did things happen? Did things not go as planned? Could things be better? Absolutely. But at the time of the storm, you just kind of have to address the crisis or the issue, make a decision that is best for everyone. In this particular case, the information we were getting that now it had been the category, up to a category four, versus, all the planning we did was in anticipation of a category three hurricane. At that point it was already up to a category four. So basically, what that told us, is that we needed to basically stay in place, shelter in place. There's no way that I was going to have my personnel leave the campus. Even under those conditions, we were still safer by staying where we were at. And so we did that. We rode it out at the emergency operations center.

**IT:** Were you guys, like, really worried? Were you worried about, like, things really going south? Like

**AG:** Absolutely.

**IT:** Flooding? Or

**AG:** Absolutely. I mean, when you're, anytime you're in a situation like a hurricane there's too many unknowns. And so that's the thing that as the department head, the leader of the department, those're things that have definitely crossed my mind as is it was my decision, in line with the hurricane plan, but ultimately it was my decision to have university personnel stay. So all the staff that was there was basically on my order. So absolutely I was concerned. You know, somebody did ask me, was I afraid? Absolutely. Because, not only for my own wellbeing, but more so for my staff. In essence, I'm the one that put them in that situation. So we had to make sure that we were as safe as

possible, and we monitored, and we did what we needed to do in preparation if it did get worse. If you know the building we're in has a lot of windows, and so if something would have occurred there, then we would've taken action to relocate to a safer location. So we're always assessing risk and then kind of reviewing, "What're our options if this happens?" And then in the midst of the storm we pretty much rode it out; we had communications with our recovery team. Which that was really a good thing to have is that they were in a location that really wasn't being impacted, so they were getting a lot of the information, and so that was a good form of keeping us up to date with what was the latest, and so they were constantly communicating with us. And then we kind of just rode it out through all of that.

**IT:** Did you have to deal with any like thrill seekers before or after? I guess not during, since

**AG:** Well, yes we did. As the storm approached, and we were doing our task and securing the campus, we put our barriers to kind of isolate the campus, but unfortunately some of the barriers failed, and the winds pretty much moved them out of the way. So in doing our routine patrol of the campus, they still went out and we maintained some patrol to ensure that people weren't accessing, and so at one point we noticed a vehicle that hadn't been seen earlier, and with our camera systems we were able to that there were some folks on campus that had breached the perimeter and were on campus. By this time the winds were pretty high. The rains were pretty hard at the time. So we were able to make contact, and we were able to identify the folks on campus. And basically, they said they needed to be back on campus that they were looking for something. What they didn't realize was by them being here then that puts our staff in danger because we have to go out there and deal with that. So that was one time prior to landfall. Once it got to the point where it was unsafe, we pretty much pulled into the emergency operations center. Once we lost all our power then we lost all of our capability of monitoring via our cameras. As soon as it was safe, then we went ahead and sent our teams out to evaluate the campus. And that was kind of amazing that, basically the storm had just passed, it was finally starting to calm a little bit, and I was surprised at the amount of traffic on Ocean Drive already. And there was people driving down Ocean Drive, um, emergency personnel like ourselves, we're tasked to do that. That's our role. And so we have cause, we have purpose of being there. And there were some hazards, and we were trying to avoid those hazards. And it just amazed me how there was people out on ca—or, on Ocean Drive, that it looked like they were just out sightseeing. And so yes, it's challenging that, you know, during these storms, you hear it all the time, "Stay at home, stay out of harm's way." And I think what people don't realize is, yes, you may want to go see just like everybody else. Human nature, you want to see what happened. But if something happens to you, and you need assistance, now you're tying up emergency personnel over something that maybe they could have utilized those resources for someone in more need. So hopefully people will learn from that. Yes, we understand that people want to see it, they want to experience it, but they probably need to do a self-evaluation. Say, "Is it really worth the risk?" Because if things go south, then emergency responders may or may not be able to assist you. And so, yes, I was somewhat surprised at the number of vehicles that were out so early after the storm hit.

**IT:** So, you mentioned having to bunker down for the worst of the storm. I was wondering if you could give me, kind of like, paint a picture of what it was like, sort of, when you didn't have to bunker down anymore. Sort of, when it started calming down. Were you guys really relieved? Or, what was that like?

**AG:** Well, once the storm, or once the conditions were somewhat safe, or not as dangerous, our task is to go out and do the assessment of the campus. What was the impact? Basically, my task is to get that information back to Mr. Tatum and to the administrators, saying, "This is what your campus looks like." And so as soon as it was safe to do so, we send teams out throughout campus. And what they did is they went building by building, and pretty much sectioned off the campus and were able to make reports as to what they were seeing, whether water in the buildings, whether what type of damage. We lost some, of course, some trees and some light poles, and things of that nature. And so that's one of the reasons we're here. Is, after the storm, is we're able to deploy, make a quick assessment of the campus, and then get that information back to the administration, to the incident commander, so that they can start the post activities. As far as, "How did we weather the storm? What's our next step? How soon can we get back in operation?" So we were fortunate, we were able to get back out pretty quickly, and the teams were out there making their assessments, and we were able to get that information back to the incident commander pretty timely.

**IT:** How long were you guys bunkered down? Was it like a night, or—

**AG:** Well, uh, let's see. It seems like they kept indicating that the storm wasn't really going to make landfall till around ten, or midnight, or during the night. It was about, I want to say, about seven. Six thirty, seven, even seven thirty, eight o' clock where the winds were just to the point where it wasn't safe for our personnel to be out there. So probably from about that timeframe, in the building that we were in, throughout the storm, when we lost power, they have what are called fire curtains throughout the building. Well when the power went out the fire curtains were released, and they came down. Well there're interior fire curtains to separate parts of the building. And the reason I'm sharing that with you is that's how I could tell that the storm was still pretty active, because throughout the night as we were trying to get rest in preparation of what we knew we needed to do the next day, the rattling of those curtains was the indicator that the storm was pretty active. So they really didn't start calming down till probably about five in the morning, six in the morning. Once we had daylight, where we could see and do a good assessment, we're able to get out there. So from probably ten to twelve hours. We pretty much were there, getting prepared to be able to deploy and get out on campus and see what we needed to do as far as our assessment.

**IT:** So there's still things that you guys are doing, like reports and stuff. So, uh—

**AG:** Well, in follow up to that, our task is we do the first assessment. And so the officers went out, checked the buildings. But, again, think about the campus as a whole. You can do a quick visual, but it wasn't until we allowed all the employees back on campus, and,

for example, even though our building looks as though it wasn't impacted, my own office, one of the walls, the wind was coming through one of the windows so hard that it pretty much pulled away from the framing. So it's not real visible, but once you do a close inspection, you realize that you did have damage. So that's one of the things that we saw, is that, at first observation, university looks well. It looked pretty good. The apartments, the on-campus apartments, there was a lot of concern throughout the years, "How is everything going to weather a storm?" And so as we did that review, the buildings all looked like they had weathered the storm pretty well. Once they came in and did the actual door by door, room by room inspection, then they started finding, of course, some of the other damage and impact that you can't do just when you do a quick observation or assessment. And so that's what happened is once we brought our employees back, and now we're into the post, now we're looking at getting back into operations, they were able to give Mr. Tatum even a more specific list or report of issues that occurred. We walked the buildings, you may see where there's standing water, things of this nature, but once an employee goes into their office, or to a classroom, then you start getting the specifics. So then all that was compiled. And so even as of today I'm sure they're still dealing with some of those issues, and of course I have to prioritize those. I don't anticipate my wall being fixed any time real soon, it'll probably be some time after, you know, the first of the year before they're able to do that. But, absolutely. I mean, up till now, once you go after post-hurricane now, it's the rebuilding, it's the assessment of damage, and prioritizing how all these things are going to be done. Order of business is, "Let's get our operations back in order." And so we did that. And I think it went very well in that sense, that if you look at the magnitude of the damage in our area, and how it impacted Texas as a whole, I think it's pretty amazing that A&M-Corpus Christi was able to get back in operation so quickly. So I think got to give credit to the plan, or the pre-preparation is essential in ensuring that you're trying to reduce your risk as much as possible. And then the other big thing was, I think, twenty, thirty mile difference of landfall made a big difference. So the fact that we weren't right in the middle of the storm, unfortunately for the folks further north, but for us, I think, it made a big difference. May have had more damage if it had come right over our campus. So we'll be putting information together. Mr. Tatum and the rest of the team, I'm sure there'll be an after-action report as a whole to identify all the different issues, not only from his perspective, but even down to the individual departments. I mean, within our own plan we saw some things that we'll probably need to address and change in anticipation of maybe the next incident.

**IT:** Any other little things to change, like the airing up the mattresses, or maybe double checking the generator!

**AG:** Well, in this case, the interesting thing about the generator is that that function or operation is for the EOC as a whole. And so we're dependent on all the different entities that were involved in doing that, and they did everything right. I mean, they checked it before, but things happen

**IT:** Hm.

**AG:** And so you always have to think of the worst case scenario. And I'm real proud of my staff. They stepped up, in some cases they dealt with issues personally. And what I mean by that is that they utilized their own funds in some cases, and some of them came prepared that in case we lost power. They didn't take it for granted that we were going to be in a building that was on a generator that was tasked to be able to keep us with all the needs. So they were able to adjust and move forward. So will we look at things? Absolutely. And review, maybe, some of the things that we did. And the thing about these storms is it's also an indicator or, the actions we take, depend on the time frame, the time of year. And so if you think about this storm, if it would have come a week later, we would have been in session already. So look at the difference that that would've made. It would have come a week later, then you wouldn't have had the other variable where we were right before move-in, and we had all that that was occurring. So that's the other thing, is that based on the timeframe, depending on the time of year that its headed our way, and those are the things that the defense, or the, uh, the defense plan addresses. And those are all the facts that that team takes into account before they make a decision. This one was unique in itself because we were right before move-in, meaning that we had people coming from all over. As far away as the panhandle and things. And so they're looking forward to coming to campus, and we're preparing for a storm. So that's why I say going back to that decision making, we knew that this was, you know, we had, uh, milestones, I guess, that we were preparing for, and we had to give our consumer, our community, enough notice, so that they didn't get caught in the middle of that. So will we change some things? More than likely. Did we do things well? I think we did as well as could have been expected under the conditions. Did we make some things or did we make some mistakes? Will we have to change some things? More than likely. But the good news, or the thing that I think that the campus community or the community as a whole is that your university does take every threat seriously, and that we have plans in place that are reviewed on a regular basis. And now we can say that our plan has not only been reviewed, but it's been tested. And that we did well during the storm, and let's hope we never have to utilize it again. But, if we do, we'll do everything we can to make sure that the campus is safe and that we're able to get back into operations.

**IT:** Is there anything else you may have wanted to mention?

**AG:** No I think that pretty much wraps it up as far as, you know, hurricanes. The thing about that is that we have time. Because by nature, you get plenty of notification, you know, the storm—in fact, in this one, it didn't give us much time. So that was one other factor with Harvey is that the tracks that were presented and were changing pretty regularly or pretty quickly. And so that caused some issues with our plan, because sometimes the plan is, of course, based on timelines and so those changed rather quickly with Harvey. But on other crisis, you don't have those timelines. And so what I would like the campus community as a whole to understand is, do your part. Be aware of what is expected of you. And be aware of what risks are out there. And always have your own personal plan. Whether it be a storm, whether it be a weather event, whether it be any type of crisis that you may encounter, always have a plan in place to say, "What would I do?" And if you do that, then that will help responders because we're trying to do our task, whether it's a hurricane, whether it's an incident on campus. But if the campus

community starts taking their steps to say, “This is what I need to do”, or “if this happens,” something as simple as knowing where your exits are. We take it for granted that we’ll know what to do in case of a fire or any other incident. So I think I would leave them with is don’t take it for granted. Be prepared. And practice those. Whether you’re on campus, or whether you’re shopping, or whether you’re dining. Always be aware of risk, and say, “What would I do if this happened?” And that way it’ll make tasks a lot easier for all of us if we do get confronted with a crisis on campus.

**IT:** Well. I think that about wraps it up.

**AG:** Yup.

**IT:** Thank you very much for your time.

**AG:** Thank you for—and like you say—Hopefully—

**IT:** (laughter)

**AG:** —this is A material (both laughing).

**IT:** Yeah! All right.