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Grantham University moves from N.O. to K.C.

By CityBusiness staff report

2006-07-25 8:13 AM CST

SLIDELL — Ending a 55-year run in Louisiana, Grantham University has relocated from New Orleans to Kansas City, Mo., as a result of Hurricane Katrina.

Grantham, now an online university with more than 11,000 students, recently received recognition in Harvard Review's June issue on "The Future of Urbanization."

Grantham's Slidell campus was destroyed by the hurricane but the school continued to function for more than 8,000 students. As a result of Hurricane Ivan two years earlier, Grantham's chairman Tom Macon had all university data digitized and stored on a secure server in Virginia.

Grantham University so far has created 150 jobs at its new Kansas City headquarters and plans to create more by year's end.

"Prior to the hurricane, my work life was spent nourishing a newly formed team of student progress representatives and in my personal life, I was planning my daughter's Sweet 16 birthday party," said Tina Taylor, student programs coordinator at Grantham University. "I never suspected our lives would be changed so drastically. We lost everything in the hurricane."

Taylor made the move to Kansas City with her daughter by bus. Grantham University relocated the pair along with dozens of other employees, and paid for housing and all utilities for six months.

Many employees who made the move are still feeling the effects from Hurricane Katrina on a personal level.

"Just as Andrew Jackson's forces defeated the British in the Battle of New Orleans in the War of 1812, our employees from the Gulf Coast were able to defeat and overcome one of the most powerful natural disasters in history," said Tom Macon, chairman of Grantham University.

Grantham University, established in 1951, offers degree programs in criminal justice, business administration, general and interdisciplinary studies, computer science, and other technology degrees. •

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