

Colleagues,

This email provides key employee updates as we transition to remote learning for the remainder of the semester.

We continue to monitor state and local COVID-19 data carefully. On Friday evening, Governor Baker added New York to the list of states that are unsafe for continued travel. Additionally, on Friday, Maine put all of Massachusetts on its high-risk list. Even though the MCLA campus is one of the safest places in Berkshire County, cases are rising in the Central Berkshires, in New England and beyond.

While we demonstrated the forethought to send students home next week to finish the semester remotely, our overall goal is to facilitate a safe and smooth as possible end to the semester. With that in mind, VP Wootters communicated to faculty that they can choose to either finish out this week in person or move completely online a week early. If they finish in person, instructors will accommodate resident and commuter students with remote learning starting this week. Residence halls will remain open as scheduled until 7 p.m. on Tuesday, November 24. Students can maintain their original move-out appointment but are being allowed them the flexibility necessary to arrange for an earlier move out.

Staff Remote Work

As a result of increases in positive COVID-19 cases in the Berkshires, staff whose work allows them to work remotely must begin telework (remote work) on Monday, November 23 through January 1, 2021, returning to campus on January 4, 2021. Offices need to ensure that work continues and to develop a rotation of periodic on campus coverage for administrative tasks such as mail pick-up and distribution. Also, staff who will telework who did not complete an Interim Telecommuting Guide in the Spring please contact me to do so now.

Please be aware campus will remain open during this period. While some staff have work that allows them to work remotely, other staff will need to be on campus to provide services in areas including:

- Campus Police/Public Safety
- Facilities/Power Plant
- Mail Room/Copy Center/Shipping and Receiving
- IT and Media Support
- Staff supporting students who have been approved to remain in residence on campus

Holiday Schedule

Massachusetts requires that Commonwealth offices be open on days other than state holidays (Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 30, Section 24). With the exception of the dates noted below, as noted above, the campus will remain open for business. We encourage staff to use accrued leave to spend time with friends and family and anticipate that many offices will operate with limited staff during this period.

- MCLA will be closed on Thursday, Thanksgiving Day, November 26 and will reopen on Friday, November 27, 2020.
- MCLA will be closed on Christmas Day, Friday, December 25 and will reopen on Monday, December 28, 2020.
- MCLA will be closed on New Year's Day, Friday, January 1 and will reopen on Monday, January 4, 2021.

To ensure adequate institutional operations please consult with your department/division leaders regarding use of use accrued leave immediately preceding and/or following Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and/or New Year's Day.

Travel

If you travel out of state and do not travel to a low-risk state (currently Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and Hawaii), you must complete the Massachusetts Travel Form (<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-travel-order>) quarantine for 14 days upon return or produce a negative test result administered up to 72 hours prior to your return. If people are not tested until they return, they must quarantine while awaiting test results and notify Human Resources.

Employee Testing

MCLA is providing COVID-19 tests for asymptomatic employees on Thursday, November 19; sign up [here](#). You must bring a picture ID and a [signed consent form](#). Do NOT make or keep an appointment if you are symptomatic or feeling unwell. In those circumstances, please contact your primary care provider or the Berkshire Health Systems COVID-19 hotline: 855-BMC-LINK, OR 855-262-5465. Employee testing will suspend after the 19th and resume upon the return of students for the Spring semester.

We came together as a campus community to execute our original fall plan and make it through the semester as safely as possible. I commend all of you for your cooperation and patience. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Have a happy and safe Thanksgiving.

Thank you,
Barb

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