



Greetings parents and caregivers!

We are eagerly awaiting the arrival of your adult child (or children) and you to the EMU campus in just a few short weeks! This will be a move-in experience and a Fall Semester, like no other!

I want to assure you that EMU faculty and staff have been working tirelessly and imaginatively throughout the summer months to meet the educational demands of our new COVID reality. We are committed to delivering on our special brand of learning outcomes even as we create new "guard rails" to protect students' health & safety.

I thank you for entrusting your most precious gift into our care in these challenging times. We accept that responsibility with great honor and humility as we live into our mission "to prepare students to serve and lead in a global context" in the spirit of Micah 6:8

Below is a message that I just shared with students--both new and returning students.

If you have additional questions or comments concerning the letter below, please respond to this email, the Parent Engagement & Alumni Office, and we will get back in touch with you!

Blessings in this time of transition.

Greetings EMU students!

In just two short weeks, we look forward to welcoming you to EMU as most classes begin on August 25. The campus is beautiful and it awaits you! As you can imagine, faculty and staff are readying for your arrival in unprecedented ways and with an abundance of caution

in order to mitigate the spread of COVID. In short, it will be a Fall Semester like no other!

We are counting on your help to execute a safe and effective learning environment. We're calling it our EMU "[COVID Commitments](#)". Whether you are an undergraduate or graduate student, on the main campus in Harrisonburg, or our instructional sites in Lancaster, PA or Washington DC, commitment to a shared ethic of responsibility is a vital part of our educational success. The first 2-3 weeks are mission critical for establishing healthy protocols and containing outbreaks. In short, we "Lead Together" to meet this moment and deliver on our mission.

I want to share with you the additional precautions EMU is putting into place this fall to maximize learning in these challenging COVID times.

1. **INITIAL SCREENING.** EMU reopening will include initial COVID symptom screening for all our residential students. As move-in begins, students will access COVID symptom tracking through our health record platform. This symptom tracking notification will initially come to each student's EMU email address. Students will be asked to opt in to text messaging for future symptom screening. The need for quarantine will be assessed as students respond to initial screening and on-site COVID testing will be administered as needed.
2. **TESTING CAPABILITY.** COVID-19 testing is available on campus with the focus being primarily for symptomatic testing, available as needed by students, faculty, and staff.
3. **QUARANTINE/ISOLATION EXPANSION.** EMU housing will accommodate all residential students in single and double occupancy, leaving some additional on-campus space for quarantine. We are planning for additional rooms at a local hotel.
4. **STAFFING.** Significant additional staff allocation will be made to provide services to students in isolation/quarantine under Student Life supervision/coordination.
5. **PPE.** We will have an abundance of personal protective equipment supplies available on campus.

6. **REVISED/EXPANDED CLASS SCHEDULE.** The daily class schedule has been adapted to provide additional time between classes, in an effort to prevent crowded hallways and to allow more time for cleaning classroom furnishings. Students' schedules have been adjusted to show the new class beginning and ending times. Students can see their own schedules and a grid showing the entire weekly schedule by logging into myEMU/Academics.

7. **RECOGNITION OF LIKELIHOOD OF DISRUPTION.**

As conditions around COVID change for the campus and Harrisonburg, we will be ready to communicate updates quickly for what that disruption means for us.

8. **POTENTIAL FOR PIVOT TO ONLINE LEARNING.**

One or more of the following conditions may lead EMU to move to entirely online course delivery.

- a. EMU approaches maximum service capacity for isolation/quarantine (75% of space)
- b. A significant rise or increase in local COVID incidence
- c. Rollback in VA or Harrisonburg from Phase 3 to Phase 2
- d. Significant changes in area colleges and universities response strategies

I look forward to welcoming you officially to EMU at Fall Convocation on Wednesday, August 26, and will see some of you during move-in days. As you ready yourself for travel to campus, and attending your first class (is it in-person or online?), please read or re-read the new expectations and guidelines on our updated [Frequently asked Questions](#).

Resilience is a word we've used a lot in these past six months to describe the EMU community's response to the pandemic. We have an exceptional team of educators committed to your success even in these uncertain times. Our faculty and staff model resilience every day. Recently, a member of our Board of Trustees said to me: "Your students are going to experience a once in a lifetime learning and living experience. Knowing EMU students, I think they will rise to the challenge!" Indeed!

Be well and see you soon!

Susan

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