



Dear students, parents, faculty and staff,

We have made two difficult decisions about the rest of the school year.

- First, EMU Commencement, scheduled for May 3, will not be held in-person on that date.
- The second is that classes will continue online until the end of June and students will not move back to campus on April 3 as originally hoped. EMU's spring sports seasons are also canceled.

We grieve with you the loss of all the celebrations, performances, competitions and all the instances of closure that the end of the semester brings. For our seniors, we are especially sorry that the traditional commencement celebration you were anticipating in May won't happen in the way we thought.

We know that we are making these decisions for the good of all and to keep our communities healthier in this pandemic, and that gives us some measure of comfort.

Moving to an online format for the rest of the semester, instead of a short portion of it, brings its own set of questions. These are difficult moments with no easy answers. We are so grateful for the creativity of our students, staff and faculty and the care you are giving each other as you continue to teach and learn through this difficult time.

#### **Residential students**

We are in the process of calculating room and board adjustments, now that we know in-person classes will not resume for this semester. Many of our residential students have personal belongings that remain in on-campus housing. We will remain attentive to best practices from our health authorities about travel and transmission prevention in the coming weeks. Residence Life will communicate directly with residential students about scheduling for official move-out when it becomes appropriate to do so.

#### **Seniors**

Your accomplishments are no less significant because of this change in our traditions. You have achieved much in your college career, and we celebrate all that you will accomplish as you "serve and lead" in the world.

Rest assured, for those completing degree requirements, your degrees will be conferred and diplomas will be mailed to you. We are exploring ways to celebrate your accomplishments in an online platform on May 3 and are hoping to announce an in-person EMU graduation during the 2020-21 academic year. We'll give you updates as soon as we have them.

\*\*\*

This Fall we decided to name EMU's distinctive as "Lead Together." Today it is more clear than ever that the world needs people who can work together. Ironically, working together right now, means "social distancing" and "sheltering in place" for the good of all. But it also means engaging our creativity and our skills and maximizing the power of the human spirit through digital platforms

Let's continue to do our part in following all of the health and safety directives from our local, state, and federal authorities. As a community of faith, let's also remember the "prayer of mercy" that EMU faculty member Carmen Schrock Hurst wrote: "*Every time we wash our hands may we receive God's call to open our hands, and to open our hearts to those in need.*"

Warmly,

Susan Schultz Huxman, President

\*Updates and communications are at [www.emu.edu/coronavirus](http://www.emu.edu/coronavirus).

--  
**Susan Schultz Huxman, Ph.D.**  
President

Eastern Mennonite University

540-432-4100

[www.emu.edu](http://www.emu.edu)

