

Greetings Parents of Returning Students,

I am pleased to share with you highlights of our EMU Fall Reopen Plan for In-Person Instruction.

We've been working hard this summer on plans so that students can be back together in the fall. Thanks to six working groups, including student representatives (see names below), we've developed a plan that includes health and safety and academic considerations.

This plan is flexible and portions may be revised as new state and health guidelines regarding the status of COVID-19 present themselves in the coming weeks and months.

Please note that our Lancaster campus has a separate plan being developed in accordance with specific guidelines from Pennsylvania state and health authorities.

Here are the 5 major changes. More information is also available in our [updated FAQs](#).

1. **Calendar changes:** For health reasons, as some modeling projects spikes in COVID-19 during winter flu season, we will begin August 25 (a week earlier than published previously) and eliminate Fall Break (so that students are not leaving and returning to campus mid-semester). After the Thanksgiving break, students will be encouraged to remain at home for the final two weeks of the semester. All final exams will be on-line. We will continue to monitor calendar options for spring semester 2021 to give as much advance notice as possible.

2. **Course schedule changes:** We are evaluating days and length of time courses meet in order to be more responsive to health standards. We want to leave sufficient time between classes for additional cleaning, reconfigured classroom space, outdoor

options, hyflex course delivery, and flexible faculty and staff work schedules.

3. **Campus engagement:** We are reimagining hybrid deliveries for convocation, worship, and other student programming events for maximum education, community-building and safety. At the same time, we are committed to increased student support and online access, including mental health education and evaluation. New online spaces are being planned for community connection with guidelines that continue to support our values: community building, peace, service, and discipleship.

4. **Residence and Dining Hall configurations:** We are maximizing single-occupancy rooms (at double-occupancy rates) in order to limit student contact and reduce washroom traffic loads. We are also altering common space arrangements/furniture to facilitate appropriate social distancing; and make sure there is space reserved in residence halls for quarantine if necessary. Further, we will observe Virginia Department of Health COVID-19 guidelines, including staff serving for all food. Expect to see reconfigured seating and serving protocols at Royals Den and Common Grounds.

5. **Health and security:** We will continue strict limitations on visitors to campus buildings, especially residence halls. We will track visitors via online visitor registration. We will reduce entry points to buildings for sanitation reasons. The entire campus community will wear face coverings (masks) when students and employees are in common areas (i.e. not in a private office or dorm room). Students will be provided with one branded mask. Disposable masks will also be available. We will also implement testing and contact tracing protocols as per Virginia Department of Health guidelines.

Why is EMU well equipped to live-in to these major readjustments to attend to your health and wellbeing? We have built a reputation at EMU as a caring community of learners, with small classes, personal attention and instructors, mentors and coaches committed to walking alongside students and

nurturing students individually. This was an appealing educational model before the pandemic; we think this model of education is even more important today in a health emergency.

Our Harrisonburg campus – away from densely populated regions of our state and mostly a contained residential university – gives us some additional protections.

So, even as we practice social distancing and take other health and safety precautions in many spaces on campus, we are reimagining what it means to be a community of learners. From forming “Village Communities of Learning” to joining a virtual “Royal Hub,” students, faculty and staff will adopt a culture of care that both expresses our values and maintains health and safety protocols.

On behalf of President’s Cabinet, I extend a heartfelt appreciation to the following individuals who brought us excellent ideas for how to cope with COVID-19 and still maintain our distinctive and quality brand of EMU education:

Teaching & Learning | Chairs - Fred Kniss and Mary Jensen

Faculty - Daniel Showalter, Barbara Wheatley, Mark Sawin, Steve Cessna, Jayne Docherty. Dean: Tara Kishbaugh. Provost’s Office: Ronda Rittenhouse. Students: Mecca Baker, Emma Burkhart, Luz Contreras, Allison Shelly, Raviv Monahan, Noelle Yorgey, Asha Beck, Melissa Kinkaid, Kaitlyn Bridgeforth

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UG Admissions — Matt Ruth and Cerrie Mendoza, Athletics - Dave King, Graduate Programs - Melody Cash, Lancaster - Lisa Campbell, Marketing & Communications - Laura Lehman, Advancement - Laura Daily, Jennifer North Bauman, Braydon Hoover, Jasmine Hardesty, Academics - Zach Yoder, UG faculty - Matthew Siderhurst

Faculty & Staff | Chairs - Sue Cockley and David Brubaker

HR Director, Marybeth Showalter Faculty Senate Rep, Doug Graber-Neufeld, Staff Rep, Renee Leap, Library, Marci Frederick, Lancaster Rep, Darla Shober

Community & Student Life | Chairs - Shannon Dycus and Amy Springer Hartsell

Residence Life Rep - Jon Swartz, Multicultural Affairs —Celeste Thomas, Campus Ministries - Brian Martin Burkholder, SGA Rep - Anisa Leonard, Justice Allen, Seminary Rep - Sarah Bixler, Mental Health Rep, Counseling faculty member - Jennifer Cline, Campus Recreation rep - Ted Erickson, Staff Rep - Lynn Veurink, Undergraduate Faculty member - Tim Seidel

Finances | Chairs - Tim Stutzman and Susan Huxman

Scott Barge, Sue Cockley, Jason Good, Mary Jensen, Fred Kniss

Infrastructure | Chair - Scott Barge

Directors of IS, Jason Alderfer & Jenni Piper; Auxiliary Services, Cheryl Montgomery; Marketing/Communication Web Support, Athletics, Mike Downey; Marketing-Communications, Laura Lehman; Lancaster, Julie Siegfried; Facilities, Ed Lehman; Biology (lab sciences) Jim Yoder; Safety & Security, Dave Emswiler; Health Services, Irene Kniss; Food Services, Bruce Emmerson.

We Educate, Prepare, and "Lead Together."

Sincerely,

Susan Schultz Huxman, Ph.D.

President, Eastern Mennonite University



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