

2020

COVID-19 Campus Update, April 1, 2020

Eastern Michigan University

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Recommended Citation

Eastern Michigan University, "COVID-19 Campus Update, April 1, 2020" (2020). *COVID-19*. 106.
<https://commons.emich.edu/covid19/106>

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Wednesday, April 1, 2020

COVID-19 Campus Update – April 1, 2020

To the Eastern Michigan University community:

Strength. Character. Resilience. These terms capture the sentiments I observe each day in communications with others on campus about the adjustments made by Eastern Michigan University students, by our faculty and by our staff. Each of us is adjusting rapidly to the turmoil and health crisis that surrounds us, which is affecting every area of our lives. I applaud the Eastern Michigan community for your perseverance, patience and support of one another during this difficult time. This is truly a mark of distinction and something of which we all should be very proud.

I have several updates to share today as the University continues to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Campus housing

We currently have fewer than 500 students who have not checked out of campus housing at this time. The number is expected to further decline in the days ahead. This has been an extremely important process as the University follows government and public health directives for physical and social distancing. We know that the actual number of students currently living on campus is likely less than the number referenced above -- including students who returned to their permanent addresses but have not formally moved out.

The students remaining on campus include international students – some who are not being allowed to enter their home countries due to the crisis, as well as students from long distances away, students who consider Eastern their permanent address, and those who are unable to return to their permanent address for other reasons, such as someone in their home being at high risk for COVID-19. As this transition continues, we remain 100 percent committed to supporting students who are still living on campus. Students with questions about their on-campus housing or the move-out process should email housing@emich.edu.

Registering for summer and fall classes

Processes for summer and fall registration remain underway. Students interested in fall registration should visit the [fall registration appointment page](#) for details. Students interested in summer classes, which are moving to an online format, should visit the [summer registration appointment page](#) to learn the schedule for registration.

New Psychology Department chatbot provides additional support for students

The EMU Psychology Department, in collaboration with X2ai.com, is conducting a research study that will provide all EMU students free access to a mental health chatbot during the COVID-19 crisis. "Tess" is an artificial intelligence-driven chatbot that is trained to deliver evidence-based emotional wellness and coping strategies in this difficult time. To learn more about the study and how to access this resource, please click [here](#). You can enter the study directly by clicking the link at the bottom of [the flyer](#), but you may also receive an email from the investigators in the near future, asking you if you would like to join the project. We encourage you to take advantage of this free service by participating in our study. Please contact the primary investigator, Dr. Karen Saules (ksaules@emich.edu) or co-investigator, Krithika Prakash (kprakash@emich.edu), if you have any questions.

This effort complements the important and ongoing efforts of [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#), which has transitioned to fully phone and video sessions with Zoom. If students have questions or need to speak with a counselor, they should email CAPS at counseling.services@emich.edu and communicate their interest. Phone messages can be left at 734.487.1118 and will be returned as soon as possible. CAPS will also continue to offer after-hours (after 5 p.m. and on weekends) phone support through its main CAPS phone line, 734.487.1118.

Cleaning and disinfecting

The deep and thorough cleaning and disinfecting of campus areas remains a priority and is ongoing. This process will continue through the spring and summer and is being conducted by our facilities team and external specialists as necessary.

Building access via card swipe for critical infrastructure employees only

A reminder that only employees designated as critical infrastructure workers or those conducting minimum basic operations are permitted on campus at this time, under the Governor's "Stay Home, Stay Safe" Executive Order. Employees designated to work on campus should have received a letter from their supervisor stating this, and are the only EMU employees who have swipe card access to their buildings. All others do not have such access. Any employee seeking one-time or temporary access must have consent from their supervisor and divisional vice president. The Department of Public Safety requests that anyone visiting campus buildings contact them so they are aware of the building entry and can ensure appropriate cleaning of those areas by our facilities team.

Update for employees working remotely

Employees working remotely will continue to do so until further notice. We will keep you advised as any new directives are issued. If employees have a specific date on their "away" phone or email auto-reply messages, such dates should be changed to "until further notice."

Looking ahead

We continue to identify positive efforts to inform and support our campus community. This week's EMU Today includes three outstanding illustrations of the excellence and creativity of our faculty members and their important connection with students. Please check out the efforts of our [School of Music and Dance](#); the inspired methods of [Political Science Professor Jeffrey Bernstein](#), who has added a bedtime story to his virtual lessons; and the expertise provided by [Economics Professor David Crary](#) about the longer term implications of the health crisis.

And, in true Broadway tradition, "The show must go on!" Virtually, of course. Examples include this year's virtual delivery of the 24th annual [Student Gold Medallion Awards](#) and the 40th Undergraduate Symposium, which is posting one student presentation a day via its social media channels:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/emusymposium/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/EMUsymposium>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/emuundergraduatesymposium/>

These are wonderful and creative representations of the use of technology to continue to support our students! My thanks to everyone involved. Please continue to relay details of any special efforts you are aware of to EMU_univcomm@emich.edu.

Follow physical distancing guidance, as well as hand washing and other [prevention](#) measures. Monitor your University email, the University's [COVID-19 website](#) and our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) for additional information and updates.

Stay well and stay safe,

James Smith, Ph.D.