

2020

## COVID-19 Campus Update, April 14, 2020

Eastern Michigan University

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Tuesday, April 14, 2020

COVID-19 Campus Update – April 14, 2020

To the Eastern Michigan University community:

Greetings on a snowy mid-April Friday. I'm not sure what happened to spring, but I know many of you join me in not welcoming the cold and the sight of the white stuff this time of year!

I hope many of you are able to enjoy some respite in the weekend ahead. It is a good time to get away, emotionally, and decompress from the stress and challenges in the world around us. A mental health expert interviewed on WEMU this week emphasized the need to focus on simple things – such as sleeping, walking, laughing, eating healthy, practicing mindfulness and taking deep breaths. Finding diversions from the 24-hour news cycle is important – as is staying connected with family and friends through all the various online social sharing platforms. Most of all, continue to stay home and stay safe.

I have several good news items to share as we wrap up the week.

EMU CARES Grant expanded to graduate students

I am very pleased to announce that we have expanded the EMU CARES Grant for students affected by the COVID-19 crisis to include graduate students. The EMU CARES Grant was introduced last week, initially for undergraduate students while the University assessed the most effective way to support graduate students. After that assessment, we determined that graduate students would benefit from the grant under the same terms.

The one-time grant provides \$500 to all students, undergraduate and graduate, enrolling in three credit hours, and \$1,000 for all students, undergraduate and graduate, enrolling in six credit hours.

The grant is designed to offset new costs and other hurdles students face as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, including the additional expenses associated with online and hybrid courses. It provides an additional benefit to students to help them persist in their education and complete their degrees.

Many of our graduate students face layoffs and other financial hardships and we want to support them, as well as our undergraduate students, as they navigate these unprecedented challenges.

No application is required to obtain an EMU CARES Grant. It will be automatically credited to students' accounts for eligible summer 2020 courses. If you have already registered, the grant will be reflected in a future ebill.

Extracted from <https://www.emich.edu/coronavirus/index.php> on 10/22/2020

Because the grant is designed to offset additional online fees students must pay due to COVID-19, the grant is available to students who take courses in which an online fee is charged -- this includes the majority of summer courses. The grant aims directly to address concerns raised by some students about being required to take an online course because of the COVID-19 crisis.

A few important qualifications should be noted. Students who receive full-tuition scholarships for their summer classes and international students may not be eligible for the EMU CARES Grant. Students may e-mail [ebill@emich.edu](mailto:ebill@emich.edu) if they have questions.

Summer registration is currently underway, with more than 650 courses to choose from. Classes begin May 4. Students can visit the [University's online enrollment page](#) to learn more about the University's extensive online and transferable summer course offerings.

#### Renewal conditions relaxed for 2020-2021 student scholarships

Some students have expressed concern that the changes in the delivery of instruction and housing status due to the COVID-19 global pandemic may impact their ability to meet the GPA requirements for EMU scholarship renewal. I am pleased to announce that all scholarships listed below will automatically be renewed for the 2020-2021 aid year if students meet other scholarship conditions such as their remaining semesters of eligibility, enrollment requirements for the 2020-2021 aid year, and Federal Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP):

- Presidential Scholarship
- Regents Scholarship
- Recognition of Excellence Scholarship
- Education First Opportunity Scholarship EFOS (must maintain Pell eligibility)
- Emerald Scholarship
- National Scholars Program Scholarship

Students should contact [fa\\_scholarships@emich.edu](mailto:fa_scholarships@emich.edu) with questions about this process or other scholarship awards not listed above.

#### Update to pass/fail reporting requirements

The Provost's office yesterday distributed a helpful update to students about the University's Winter 2020 Pass-Fail Grade Reporting Options. Details are included in this link: [Provost's Update to Students](#).

#### COVID-19 international students survey

A survey has been designed specifically for our international students to request feedback on their experiences at Eastern during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Provost's Office and the Office for International Students and Scholars (OISS) will review the information to determine the best ways to continue our support of international students during this difficult time. We ask international students to please check their email in order to access and complete the survey by April 24, 2020.

Campus hotspots identified, coordination with other universities

In order to provide students throughout the region with free access to WiFi, Eastern Michigan has joined with other area universities to establish a network of on campus outdoor hotspots where people can access WiFi from inside their vehicles. An Eastern hotspot is located at the Convocation Center, Parking Lot B. The strongest signal can be found nearest the entrance of the Convocation Center. Hotspot access is available from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. and users should remain in their vehicles when using the hotspot due to physical distancing guidance. Other University parking lots are being evaluated for hotspot/WiFi access. We will provide further details as these are determined.

Eastern is participating in a regional hotspot project with other universities to assist students across the area with hotspot/WiFi access. Students from Eastern or any of the participating institutions can access hotspots at participating institutions. Complete details about how to access Eastern's hotspot, as well as the location of hotspots at other participating universities, can be found on the [Information Technology hotspot link](#).

GameAbove offers \$50,000 matching gift to Student Emergency Fund

The EMU Foundation is reporting a positive response to our message earlier this week about the \$50,000 matching gift directed to the EMU Student Emergency Fund. This opportunity is offered by the [GameAbove](#) alumni group in response to the COVID-19 crisis. If you would like to help us realize the full match by making a gift, please follow this link: [EMU Student Emergency Fund](#).

Next week's Swoop's Food Pantry hours/donations needed

The John and Angie Sabo Swoop's Food Pantry Room will be open next week on Tuesday (4/21) and Thursday (4/23), from noon – 3:30 p.m. Clients are requested to complete an [Online Shopping Request Form](#) before arriving. Items will be bagged by staff and brought out to clients when they arrive. Visitors to Swoop's can enter through the main entrance on the north side of Pierce Hall near the elevator. Swoop's requires any student who has not used the pantry this year to complete the [Swoop's Food Pantry Intake Form](#).

If you wish to donate items – those most needed are milk, tofu, canned beans, pasta and pasta sauce, cleaning items such as dish soap, laundry pods, dishwasher pods, canned cat food and baby wipes.

Items can be dropped off Tuesday and Thursday from 10 a.m. – noon at 104 Pierce Hall. Swoop's can pick up items from your porch for those in the Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti area. Send an email to [swoops\\_pantry@emich.edu](mailto:swoops_pantry@emich.edu) to arrange a donation pickup.

Please maintain social/physical distancing guidance when picking up or delivering items to the Pantry.

Financial contributions to support Swoop's should be directed to [Swoop's Food Pantry](#).

Looking ahead

As many of you know, we truly value the inspiring stories emerging among our students, faculty, staff and community volunteers. I like to capture highlights of these efforts in our messages, and today I have a wonderful and profound message to share about the work of a faculty member and her engagement with our students. It seems a fitting way to close out the week – with a strong reminder of why we all do what we do.

Dr. Beth Henschen, associate professor of political science, sent this message to us:

*I applaud my faculty colleagues for the creative ways in which they have connected with their classes during this pandemic as well as their remarkable dedication to continuing to “teach well.” I’d like to say a few words about the students...*

*I was fortunate to be the recipient of a Faculty Research Fellowship (FRF) for the winter 2020 semester. My research “team,” a graduate assistant and an undergraduate funded by the fellowship, have continued to work diligently. Electronic conversations replaced our regular in-person meetings and our methods for coding data were adapted to an online format. Through it all, they have cheerfully continued to work, thanking me when I send them another set of items to code. A work-study student in the department asked if I had any projects for her to undertake, even though she would continue to be paid for the remainder of the semester whether she logged any hours or not. I offered her a contained data-gathering task. She thanked me for giving her something interesting to do, for bringing a bit more focus to her days, and completed the assignment in record time.*

*My point is this: These students have had their lives upended. Symposium presentations that have gone undelivered, honors events that have not taken place, send-offs to law school put on hold, graduate student receptions cancelled. Yet through it all, these students—our students—have shown grit and grace and good humor. Let’s applaud them.*

Thank you for sharing this poignant message with us, Dr. Henschen.

To all in our community, please continue to let us know about positive initiatives among our students and faculty, and in the community. Send a message to [emu\\_univcomm@emich.edu](mailto:emu_univcomm@emich.edu).

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

Have a safe, warm and relaxing weekend.

James Smith, Ph.D.

To the Eastern Michigan University community:

Students have expressed considerable interest in the EMU CARES Grant, a one-time grant initiative to support registration for undergraduate students in 2020 summer online/virtual classes, which was announced in an [email to students last Thursday \(4/9\)](#).

The Grant provides a \$500 grant for students enrolling in one class/three credits and \$1,000 for students enrolling in two classes/six credits.

Some of the positive comments we have received include:

- “Thanks so much, I have already enrolled, and was considering dropping the class, but this will really help me and I can stay enrolled :)”
- “Thank you very much. This will help tremendously since my husband lost his job due to COVID-19.”

The grant program was established to address the serious disruption in students' pursuit of their degrees. We understand the profound impact the global health crisis is having on everyone, particularly the financial hardship on students and their families. We are committed to doing everything we can to help students persist in their education and complete their degrees.

The new EMU CARES Grant directly addresses concerns raised by some students about the online fees for summer courses, which total \$240 for a three-credit class. In fact, the CARES grant not only covers the online fee, but also provides students with an additional financial benefit. With the new grant, students will benefit with an additional \$260 (\$500 grant minus \$240 online fee) for those taking three credits. Students taking six credits will receive an additional \$520 (\$1,000 grant minus \$480 online course fees).

The CARES grant was designed to maximize a student's ability to qualify for financial aid because the CARES grant is specifically excluded from a student's financial aid award calculation. Removing the online fee does not accomplish this goal and may, in fact, negatively impact a student's financial aid award calculation.

As you might expect with a grant offering of this nature we received several questions, which I will answer below:

Q: What do I have to do to apply for the EMU CARES Grant?

A: There is no application process. The grant is automatically credited to your account upon registration.

Q: What if I have already registered, do I still qualify?

A: Yes. The credit will be reflected in a future ebill.

Q: Why isn't this particular grant offered for graduate students?

A: We greatly value our graduate students and are evaluating the best way to support them.

Q: Why do students have to pay online course fees for summer classes now that we are required to take these courses online?

A: The online course fee is an existing fee that has been in place and supports the additional technology, software and design support required to offer these course sections on an ongoing basis. As outlined above, however, the CARES grant is designed to address this concern in a way that does not negatively impact students' financial aid eligibility.

Q: Will I receive the CARES grant if I take a one- or two-credit summer course?

A: Yes. The grant will be pro-rated based on the number of credits taken. For example, a student taking a one-credit course will receive a CARES grant of \$166, and a student taking a two-credit course will receive a CARES grant of \$333. The maximum allowable grant is \$1,000 for undergraduate students taking six or more credits this summer.

### Join us in celebrating our 2020 graduates

As I indicated last week, we are finalizing plans for an online/virtual celebration for our more than 2,200 soon-to-be new graduates in advance of an in-person Commencement ceremony that will occur this fall (we hope to announce the date soon). We've had a great response to our request for "selfie videos" congratulating the class of 2020. It's not too late -- all students, faculty, staff and alumni are invited to send us a video to be included in the celebration.

Even though we are apart -- learning, teaching and working remotely -- we can come together virtually to cheer on our graduates and acknowledge all they have achieved.

The deadline for video submissions is Saturday, April 18.

Please send your video to [grad\\_2020@emich.edu](mailto:grad_2020@emich.edu). In your email, please include your name and your connection to the EMU community (graduation year if alumni, faculty/staff title, student standing, community member, etc.).

Suggestions for making the video:

- Be enthusiastic!

- Be dynamic and active in your presentation.
- Be concise.
- Hold camera vertical - selfie angle.
- Wear EMU gear.
- Record selfie message in a controlled environment to limit background noise.
- Do not record with a large window in the background to avoid being backlit.
- Have fun!

I encourage everyone to participate, have fun and be creative, as we start to celebrate our 2020 EMU graduates in a memorable way.

### GameAbove offers \$50,000 matching gift to Student Emergency Fund

After listening to EMU student leaders discuss their priorities for this year, the [GameAbove](#) group made a significant investment in the well-being and success of students by creating the Students Matter Most Initiative, which launched in January 2020. Through this initiative, the Student Emergency Fund received a substantial boost with the first round of gifts from GameAbove. The fund now stands to receive additional funding through a \$50,000 match that this group of passionate alumni is offering in response to the COVID-19 crisis.

If you would like to help us realize the full match by making a gift, please follow this link: [EMU Student Emergency Fund](#).

### Engage@EMU PPE volunteer effort

Engage@EMU has initiated a PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) volunteer effort. More than 100 individuals (mostly EMU students, faculty and staff) are participating in the project, making masks, face shields and gowns for St. Joseph Mercy Ann Arbor Hospital and community organizations in need. Engage and its volunteers will produce 1,200 masks. Once this first round is complete, more fabric will be purchased and more masks constructed and distributed. The project is supported by GameAbove (see above). Engage@EMU has established a [website with additional details about the PPE initiative](#).

### Swoop's Food Pantry hours/donations needed

The John and Angie Sabo Swoop's Food Pantry Room was open today and will be open again on Thursday (4/16), from noon – 3:30 p.m. Last week saw 115 clients in the seven hours Swoop's was open.

Clients are requested to complete an [Online Shopping Request Form](#) before arriving. Items will be bagged by staff and brought out to clients when they arrive. Visitors to Swoop's can enter through the main entrance on the north side of Pierce Hall near the elevator. Swoop's requires any student who has not used the pantry this year to complete the [Swoop's Food Pantry Intake Form](#).

If you wish to donate items, the most needed items this week are:

- Bread
- Ketchup and other condiments
- Tofu
- Rice side dishes
- Chicken noodle soup
- Large snack items
- Individual frozen meals

Items can be dropped off Thursday from 10 a.m. – noon at 104 Pierce Hall. Swoop's can pick up items from your porch for those in the Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti area. Send an email to [swoops\\_pantry@emich.edu](mailto:swoops_pantry@emich.edu) to arrange a donation pickup.

Please maintain social/physical distancing guidance when picking up or delivering items to the Pantry.

Financial donations to support Swoop's should be directed to [Swoop's Food Pantry](#).

#### Moving forward/community support

I continue to be amazed by our University colleagues and the great support we provide to the community. Below are just a few new initiatives that are underway, as well as an update on an item we had noted previously:

- EMU faculty members in the College of Engineering and Technology have built plastic intubation boxes to be donated to hospitals/health care workers. You can see images of the devices in the [Everyday Eagle Heroes photo gallery](#).
- EMU Police continue to support Ypsilanti Meals on Wheels, with officers volunteering to make deliveries.
- EMU Police joined other area agencies last week to acknowledge the front-line health care heroes at St. Joseph Mercy Ann Arbor Hospital with [a Parade of Lights](#).

Let us know about positive initiatives among our students and faculty, and in the community – send a message to [emu\\_univcomm@emich.edu](mailto:emu_univcomm@emich.edu).

Please follow your University email, the University's [COVID-19 website](#) and our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) for additional information and updates, as well as resources to help keep you safe. Observe physical distancing guidance, as well as hand washing and other [prevention](#) measures.

Thank you for your resilience and care for one another as we all work through this crisis.

James Smith, Ph.D.