

2020

COVID-19 Campus Update, March 20, 2020

Eastern Michigan University

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Friday, March 20, 2020

COVID-19 Campus Update, March 20, 2020

To the Eastern Michigan University community:

I appreciate everyone's patience and understanding in these difficult times. The actions and decisions we are implementing daily are in direct response to the national emergency surrounding COVID-19 and directives from the executive and state branches of government. They also are in alignment with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Washtenaw County Health Department.

In response to yesterday's message about closing residence halls and on campus apartments effective Tuesday, March 31, more than 700 students are scheduled to move out this weekend. Housing staff is deliberate in the scheduling process to spread the move-outs apart in observance of social distancing guidance. I thank students and families for your cooperation through this process. My sincere appreciation to housing staff who are working tirelessly to ensure a safe and efficient process.

As noted in yesterday's communications, students living in residence halls or on campus apartments should visit the [housing website](#) for move-out details and to schedule a check-out time. This must be completed by 11:59 p.m. tonight, Friday, March 20. Our housing team will not be able to accommodate all those who want to check out at the same time, so please be flexible. At their scheduled time, students should check-out at their respective service desk. Parking will be free during the move-out process.

We understand that not everyone can move out. In some cases, Eastern is a permanent address, or a destination for international students and students from far away in the U.S. Other students have other special circumstances that affect their ability to return to their permanent place of residence. Exceptions to the mandatory move-out exist for those students. Please email the housing office if you have questions at housing@emich.edu.

Some students have asked how they will be notified about their housing and/or meal plan credit, as was [announced](#) yesterday. Eligible students will be notified by email from Student Business Services once the assessment process is completed. As noted yesterday, processing the entire population of students living in campus housing and on meal plans will take some time, and we ask for your patience. It is important to remember the unprecedented time we are in and the state of emergency that surrounds, and affects, all of our actions.

The Dean of Students Office

The Dean of Students Office is a resource for students on any issues or concerns they are facing. Like other campus offices, the Dean of Students Office is operating remotely. It is prepared to assist with student questions or concerns of many types, including food insecurity, academics, technology, health and wellness, or any other challenges a student may face. Please contact the Dean of Students at EMU_DeanofStudents@emich.edu.

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

Student employees

Student employees received their regular pay yesterday, March 19. Student employees may, if they wish and if their supervisor approves, continue to work remotely (and only on campus with the approval of a vice president and following strict social distancing guidance). Students should only report on their timesheets those hours that they have worked.

The University recognizes that with the temporary modification of campus operations, certain student employees may not be needed. We understand that many students rely on their student employment to make ends meet and that the impact of not working could lead to serious financial consequences. We are reviewing this matter, as well as guidance from the U.S. Department of Education and other government agencies. We hope to provide additional information as soon as possible.

Students should examine the [Student Emergency Fund](#) and seek assistance if eligible. Students are also encouraged to explore the [Community Resource Page](#) developed by Engage @ EMU.

Halle Library

Library services have been adjusted during this period of modified operations. Although in person services are suspended because of the Governor's executive order, the library is committed to providing research support, which is available online in a variety of ways:

- 24/7 chat reference through the [Ask a Librarian](#) service (EMU Librarians are now staffing most hours normally covered in person via this chat service);
- E-mail or phone by filling out this [online form](#); and,
- [Virtual appointments](#) via phone or Google Meet with subject specialists.

Much of the library's collection is available electronically via Esearch and the library's other databases. This includes many [ebooks assigned in courses](#). Faculty and students who need to access specific material that is not available electronically should contact their [subject specialist](#) to help identify alternatives.

The computer labs in Halle, which reopened temporarily yesterday and today with limited hours and social distancing, usage limits and cleaning and hygiene protocols in place, will close effective Monday, March 23. They will remain closed until further notice.

The labs were reopened to assist students who do not have access to a computer during the wind down of on campus operations. The labs received very limited use over the past two days. Students with challenges for resources to finish classes online should contact the Dean of Students Office, as noted above, for assistance.

The library has a number of resources available for faculty for online learning (via Canvas or another option.) In Canvas, there is a "Library Guides" link at the bottom of the LH navigation

column that will take you directly to an appropriate [research guide](#). Additionally, the library offers a number of [tutorials](#) and [instructional videos](#) that you can point students to.

Please keep library materials until the library reopens, including EMU, MelCat, and Interlibrary Loan items. Due dates will be automatically extended and fines will be waived.

Please see the [Library Services for Online Learners](#) and [Library Services Updates](#) pages for additional information.

Swoop's Food Pantry

Over the past three days of being open 3½ hours a day, the John and Angie Sabo Swoop's Food Pantry Room was visited by 159 shoppers. The need is great and demand is high. We are working to continue to support those in need. Swoop's will be open next week from Tuesday – Thursday from noon to 3:30 p.m.

Swoop's is seeking these supplies through donation to keep up with demand:

- Refrigerated items such as milk, eggs and cheese. Also, beans - both canned and dried - and pasta, rice and bread.
- Self-care items such as body lotion, soap and bubble bath. Also creative outlets such as used (but with all the pieces!) puzzles, games, journals, and other creative things such as coloring books, markers, and crayons.

Swoop's can arrange pick-up of these items from your porch if you are in the Ypsilanti/Ann Arbor area. Please email Swoop's to inquire about making a food or self-care product donation, or to arrange a pickup, at swoops_pantry@emich.edu.

For those who wish to contribute financial support so that Swoop's can purchase necessary items based on client needs, donations are accepted here:

[Swoop's Student Food Pantry donations](#)

In addition, donations to support students can be made here:

[EMU Student Emergency Fund](#)

Please join me in thanking the staff of Swoop's for their extraordinary efforts on behalf of our students and the community.

Additional community resources

Engage @ EMU has compiled a [list of community resources](#). It includes services available for financial assistance, childcare, business support, food services, housing, internet, volunteer opportunities, and other community needs.

Further guidance and information

As many of you, I am closely monitoring government and public health updates. The number of positive COVID-19 cases in Michigan today increased to more than 500. There were no cases reported in Michigan just 10 days ago, until Tuesday evening, March 10. The predicted escalation in the number of cases is clearly happening now and the health care system is under tremendous stress.

The University is taking every precaution to ensure the safety and well-being of our students, faculty and staff. This guides every decision we make, every day. As I've said repeatedly, our students, faculty and staff have conducted themselves with the greatest of skill, expertise and understanding throughout this crisis. This is a time for everyone to work together, to protect one another, and ensure we follow hygiene and social distancing guidance.

Please continue to follow that guidance and the Washtenaw County Health Department [prevention recommendations](#) that have been provided in my daily updates.

If you know of someone who has contracted the disease, or an individual or family that is quarantined as a result, you might find this Health Department guidance helpful: [Directions for Isolation, Quarantine, Monitoring and Social Distancing](#). It is one of the many helpful resources on the University's [COVID-19](#) website. Please continue to monitor it, and your campus email, for ongoing updates.

Please be safe.

James Smith, Ph.D.