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COVID-19 Campus Update, April 8, 2021

Eastern Michigan University

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COVID-19 Campus Update – April 8, 2021

Thursday, April 8, 2021

To the Eastern Michigan University community:

Fortunately, the dramatic surge in positive COVID-19 cases in Michigan is not being replicated on our campus. As you know, Michigan now has the undesirable distinction of leading the nation in the growth of positive cases, with hospitalizations and deaths increasing exponentially as well. Later in this message you will see that the University's case numbers remain relatively low and the frequency of our on-campus testing process continues to be robust, but we are closely monitoring what is happening in our state.

We've heard the term "pandemic fatigue" used frequently as an explanation for the increase in cases. While part of the reason for the increase is the reopening of external events and activities, it also is attributed to a greater number of people letting their guard down, not wearing face coverings, and not respecting physical distancing guidelines. I also need to emphasize the importance of getting vaccinated. With vaccines more readily available to everyone 16 years old and over – I encourage you to get vaccinated as soon as you can.

We have come so far in the last year – but we have yet to cross the finish line. So please, be safe. And be respectful of the safety of others.

I have several additional updates to share this week:

- One-Shot Vaccine Availability for Students
- COVID-19 Dashboard
- Free COVID-19 Testing
- Washtenaw County Vaccination Tracking
- Top 10 National Finish for Forensics Team – Showcase Tonight
- Michigan Chief Medical Executive to Deliver Keynote Address for Women of Excellence Ceremony
- Congratulate a Graduate!
- Swoop's Food Pantry Update
- Celebrating Eastern Michigan University Excellence
- Health and Safety Reminder

One-Shot Vaccine Availability for Students

Michigan has announced the distribution of vaccines to colleges to support the vaccination of students. Under the state plan, Eastern is receiving an initial allotment of vaccines with additional allocations expected soon. Our team is currently making plans to conduct vaccinations. We also hope to offer on-campus vaccination to employees in the very near future. Please watch your email for updates. In the meantime, there are a number of options available for vaccinations and I strongly encourage everyone to schedule an appointment as soon as possible. You can find registration information at any of these sites:

[Washtenaw County Health Department](#)
[Ford Field, Detroit](#)
[Vaccine Finder](#)

COVID-19 Dashboard

In the seven days ending April 6, the University administered 1,181 COVID-19 tests that resulted in 12 positive cases, for a positivity rate of 1.02%. We confirmed a total of 31 positive cases during this period. Of those, eight were students who live off-campus and had no contact with campus prior to the time they tested positive and 16 were on-campus students – defined as a student who was living on campus or had visited campus during the applicable time period prior to the time they tested positive. Among University employees, seven cases were reported.

Since Aug. 12, the University has administered a total of 32,544 tests with 365 positive results for an overall positivity rate of 1.12% -- considerably lower than state and national tracking. Complete details can be found on [the University's COVID-19 Dashboard](#).

Free COVID-19 Testing

We continue to provide free COVID-19 testing at the Student Center at University expense. Next week's schedule:

- Monday 12 - 4 p.m.
- Tuesday 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.
- Wednesday 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
- Thursday 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Students who get tested are automatically entered to win a special prize package; next week's prize is provided by EMU Dining.

You do not need to have symptoms or concerns that you have been exposed to the virus in order to be tested. All students, faculty and staff are encouraged to get tested, and to test frequently, regardless of how you feel. The testing process is fast and easy; results are provided within a matter of hours. You must register in advance; on-site registration is not permitted. Please visit [our testing site](#) to complete your profile and reserve a time.

Student Body President [Luis Romero shows how easy the testing process is in this video](#). Visit the [testing FAQ](#) if you have additional questions.

Washtenaw County Vaccination Tracking

The number of people receiving vaccines in our area continues to increase. As of April 6, Washtenaw County reported 81.9% of residents 65 or older had received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. That's up from 80.2% last week. For residents 16 and

over, 43.2% had received at least one dose – up from 37.4%. The data are being refreshed regularly. Visit [the WCHD vaccination tracking site](#) for ongoing updates.

Top 10 National Finish for Forensics Team – Showcase Tonight

The EMU Forensics team is among the Elite Eight nationally, with perhaps more success to come. The team competed virtually this past weekend at the American Forensics Association competition, placing eighth in the country! The team will compete in another nationwide competition, the National Forensics Association, on April 16-19.

Tonight, beginning at 6 p.m., the team will put its skills, competitive zeal and commitment on display in its annual Forensics National Showcase, to be held virtually. The event will feature five performances – a sampling of the 75 individual performances that will compete next week.

To watch the Showcase, you can register on the special newsletter page for the Department of Communication, Media and Theatre Arts.

You can read more about the team's success and its marvelous winning tradition in [the EMU Today story](#). And be sure to check in later this month to see how the team fared in its next competition.

Michigan Chief Medical Executive to Deliver Keynote Address for Women of Excellence Ceremony

Dr. Joneigh Khaldun, Chief Medical Executive for the State of Michigan, will serve as the keynote speaker for Eastern's annual Women of Excellence Awards Ceremony on Monday, April 12. The talk is scheduled for 6:30 p.m., and is free and open to the public. You can [register in advance at the registration link](#).

Dr. Khaldun also serves as the Chief Deputy Director for Health and Human Services in Michigan. In these roles, she provides overall medical guidance for the State of Michigan as a cabinet member of the Governor, and oversees public health and aging programs, Medicaid, and behavioral health for MDHHS.

The Women of Excellence Awards recognize women and femme identified individuals in the EMU community who live the focus of the EMU Women's Resource Center: To encourage, support, and advocate for the personal academic, and professional advancement of all women. The 2021 Women of Excellence Ceremony Theme is: "Women Becoming Whole: Physical, Spiritual & Mental Wellness."

Congratulate a Graduate!

We are planning several activities to celebrate our graduating students. A formal ceremony video will be posted at 9:30 a.m. on Sunday, April 25. Graduates, families

and friends can view the video at that time, or anytime after, at their convenience on the University's YouTube channel.

You can give a shout-out to your favorite 2021 grad. Use animated images (GIFs), photos, or a short video to share well wishes and advice for the class of 2021. Visit the [commencement website](#) to submit your message.

We are planning to have in-person graduation celebrations at a later date for all graduates who have not had an in-person experience due to the pandemic. We are hopeful this will take place during our fall commencement, depending on public health considerations and the removal of restrictions for large gatherings.

Swoop's Food Pantry Update

The hours for the John and Angie Sabo Swoop's Food Pantry Room are Mondays 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., Wednesdays 12 - 6:30 p.m. and Thursdays 12 - 5 p.m. The Food Pantry will be closed the week of April 26-30, and will reopen Monday, May 3.

Shoppers 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](#).

Swoop's most needed items are rice, large snacks, cereal, garbanzo beans and large containers of juices.

If you wish to donate items, please email swoops_pantry@emich.edu in advance to make sure someone is present to handle your delivery. Please maintain physical distancing when picking up or delivering items to the Pantry. [Monetary contributions can be made online](#).

Celebrating Eastern Michigan University Excellence

We are pleased to celebrate these examples of Eastern Excellence:

- Dr. Mary Ramsey, professor of English language and literature, has been selected as one of 52 emerging college and university leaders for the 2021-22 class of the ACE Fellows Program, the longest-running higher education leadership development program in the United States. Since its inception in 1965, the ACE (American Council on Education) Fellows Program has strengthened institutions in American higher education by identifying and preparing more than 2,000 faculty, staff, and administrators for senior positions in college and university leadership through its distinctive and intensive nominator-driven, cohort-based mentorship model. Dr. Ramsey, who joined EMU in 2011, has served in a variety of leadership positions, including interim assistant vice president of The Honors College and English department head. She earned her doctorate in medieval studies at Yale University and master's degrees at the University

of St. Andrew's and the University of Oklahoma. Dr. Ramsey told [EMU Today](#). "I see this fellowship as an important step in my career trajectory. I am excited to begin what promises to be an extraordinary year of professional and personal growth."

- "EMU dazzles Duke, 75-60." That was the headline in The Ann Arbor News when Coach Ben Braun's Eastern Michigan team dominated the Blue Devils in the first round of the 1996 Men's NCAA Basketball Tournament. That victory was among the many highlights for Coach Braun. In his 10-plus seasons at Eastern, he led the men's basketball team to the most successful decade in school history. This month, we will have a special opportunity to hear from Coach Braun about his fine career and approach to life and basketball. The Eastern Michigan University Center for Jewish Studies is presenting a "Conversation With Coach Ben Braun" on Tuesday, April 20, at 7 p.m. There is no cost to attend the virtual event; registration is required at <https://tinyurl.com/CoachBraun>.

The event is co-sponsored by Hillel at Eastern Michigan University, the Harold Grinspoon Foundation's Life and Legacy Program, and Eastern Michigan University Athletics.

Please join me in congratulating everyone involved in these fine examples of Eastern Excellence!

Health and Safety Reminder

An important reminder as I conclude. Please continue to:

- Practice effective hand washing and the use of hand sanitizers;
- Wear face coverings;
- Observe physical distancing; and,
- Get vaccinated when you are eligible.

These four actions, when taken together, dramatically reduce the risk of contracting COVID-19.

I thank you for your work on behalf of the University and your ongoing support of our #EMUSafe initiatives. Please continue to follow [the University's COVID-19 Planning and Preparedness website](#) for ongoing updates.

James Smith, Ph.D.