

2021

COVID-19 Campus Update – April 15, 2021

Eastern Michigan University

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Thursday, April 15, 2021

To the Eastern Michigan University community:

The increasing number of COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations and positive tests across Michigan remains a real and present health crisis. We, along with our colleagues at the Washtenaw County Health Department (WCHD), remind everyone to please use COVID-19 prevention measures whenever possible. Wear a face covering, keep your distance, and wash your hands often. Follow isolation or quarantine guidance, and get vaccinated as soon as an appointment is available to you.

The University is reporting a higher number of off-campus cases over the past week. These cases are largely among students who have not recently visited campus. Our overall positivity rate for the testing conducted on campus remains at a very low level, 1.30%. The low campus positivity rate and the relatively low number of cases in on-campus isolation and quarantine are two key metrics we assess in terms of determining any changes to campus operations. As those metrics, which we closely monitor, remain relatively stable at this time our current operations model will continue.

As communicated earlier today, the WCHD had to postpone our scheduled campus vaccination clinic for tomorrow (Friday, April 16) due to the [nationwide pause](#) in the administration of the Johnson & Johnson/Janssen (J&J) COVID-19 vaccine.

All appointments through WCHD for a Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine at the Convocation Center for the remainder of this week will occur as scheduled. The WCHD has posted [additional details](#) about the process going forward.

If your appointment to receive a J&J vaccine on campus was postponed this week, you should receive an email from the WCHD inviting you to schedule an appointment to receive the Pfizer vaccine at the EMU Convocation Center. Please monitor your email for updates.

If you receive a Pfizer vaccine at the Convocation Center, you must be available to return to the Convocation Center three weeks later to receive your second dose.

If you will not be able to return to the Convocation Center for the second dose, we urge you to schedule a vaccine appointment at a location where you will be able to receive both the first and second doses, with the second dose occurring three or four weeks after the first. [Please click here](#) to find locations to receive a COVID-19 vaccine that will be convenient for you.

I have several additional updates to share this week:

- COVID-19 Dashboard
- Grand Prizes Announced for Free COVID-19 Testing

- Washtenaw County Vaccination Tracking
- Women of Excellence Honorees
- Men's Basketball Alumnus Returns Home – Welcome Coach Stan Heath
- Cheer Team Wins National Championship
- Congratulate a Graduate!
- Swoop's Food Pantry Update
- Celebrating Eastern Michigan University Excellence
- Health and Safety Reminder

COVID-19 Dashboard

In the seven days ending April 13, the University administered 1,157 COVID-19 tests that resulted in 15 positive cases, for a positivity rate of 1.30%. We confirmed a total of 66 positive cases during this period. Of those, 29 were students who live off-campus and had no contact with campus prior to the time they tested positive and 27 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, 10 cases were reported.

Since Aug. 12, the University has administered a total of 33,701 tests with 380 positive results for an overall positivity rate of 1.13% -- considerably lower than state and national tracking. Complete details can be found on the University's [COVID-19 Dashboard](#).

Grand Prizes Announced for Free COVID-19 Testing

Next Thursday we will have a series of drawings to select grand prize winners among students who have participated in the University's free on-campus testing process this semester. The grand prizes are sure to appeal to many students. They include:

- A free parking permit for the fall semester courtesy of LAZ Parking (the winner can select whether they want a commuter or residential permit); and,
- [A 5-star Adidas backpack with an EMU baseball hat and beanie cap](#) courtesy of EMU Athletics.
- Other prizes to be announced in the days ahead.

Next week's Student Center testing schedule:

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

You do not need to have symptoms or concerns that you have been exposed to the virus 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 13, Washtenaw County reported 80.4% of residents 65 or older had received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. For residents 16 and over, 48.2% had received at least one dose – up from 43.2% the week before. The data are being refreshed regularly. Visit the [WCHD vaccination tracking site](#) for ongoing updates.

Across the state of Michigan, as of April 13, 42.5% of residents had received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, with 28.1% reported as completing the vaccine protocol. Details, as well as a county-by-county analysis, can be found on the [Michigan vaccine dashboard](#).

Women of Excellence Honorees

Exceptional effort and service at Eastern Michigan University were recognized on Monday, April 12, during the Women's Resource Center's Annual Women of Excellence Ceremony, held virtually for the second consecutive year. Under the theme of "Women Becoming Whole: Physical, Spiritual & Mental Wellness," the event featured keynote speaker Dr. Joneigh S. Khaldun, chief medical executive for the State of Michigan.

The Women of Excellence Awards seek to recognize women and femme identified in the EMU community who live the mission statement of the Women's Resource Center: To encourage, support, and advocate for the personal, academic, and professional advancement of ALL women.

This year the Women's Resource Center celebrated three Women of Excellence Award recipients:

- Jenny Clark - CATE Lab Coordinator, Disability Resource Center;
- Allison Boone Green - Full-time Instructor and Advisor for the Interdisciplinary Leadership Minor, Leadership and Counseling Department, College of Education; and,
- Rhonda Vander Zwagg - Director of Operations for EMU Women's Basketball, Department of Athletics.

Student scholarship winners include:

- Heather Bower - Social Studies/History Comp.
- Simone Brown - Educational Leadership Doctoral Program.
- Tiffany Chen - Higher Education Student Affairs (HESA) Graduate Program.
- Hailee Hull - Secondary Education Integrated Science Comprehensive, Teaching and Learning with Secondary Certification.
- Kari Klavon- Marketing and Minor in Psychology.
- Katie Lane-Waters - Social Work and Women and Gender Studies.
- Rachel Neil - Athletic Training.

- Mikaela Trowbridge - Elementary Education Reading Comprehension and Art.

Please visit the [Women of Excellence EMU Today story](#) to learn more about the event and fine work of the Women's Resource Center.

Men's Basketball Alumnus Returns Home – Welcome Coach Stan Heath

Earlier this week, we welcomed back former student-athlete and three-year men's basketball letter winner (1985-87), Stan Heath, to become the program's 30th head basketball coach. Coach Heath is from Detroit and is a 17-year head coaching veteran. Most recently, Coach Heath guided Orlando Magic's NBA G League affiliate, the Lakeland Magic, to the franchise's first NBA G League championship and was named Coach of the Year. His collegiate career, as head coach or assistant, includes: Boston College, University of South Florida, University of Arkansas, Kent State, and Michigan State University, among others. He began coaching at Ypsilanti High School.

Coach Heath earned a bachelor's degree in social science from Eastern Michigan in 1988 and received a master's in sports administration from Wayne State in 1993. Additional details about his background can be found in the [announcement](#).

I would like to thank and congratulate Vice President and Director of Athletics Scott Wetherbee for conducting an exhaustive and successful search that brought home a coach with extensive head coaching experience, a distinctly positive and successful national reputation, with local roots, a commitment to student success on and off the court, and, to top it off, an Eastern Michigan alum and former letter winner. It doesn't get any better than that. Highlights from [Coach Heath's first day of activities and his introductory press conference](#) are available on the EMU Athletics website.

Cheer Team Wins National Championship

For the first time in program history, the Eastern Michigan University cheer program is a national champion. The Eagles claimed the [National Cheerleaders Association Intermediate Small Coed Division IA title](#) on Friday, April 9.

Congratulations to Head Cheer/Spirit Coordinator Coach Mary Spilski and all of the team members!

Congratulate a Graduate!

Our announcement last week about how to celebrate our April 25 graduates has been met with considerable interest. More than 220 people have already submitted messages and videos! Visit the [commencement website](#) to give a shout-out to your favorite 2021 graduate. You can use text, animated images (GIFs), photos, or a short video.

Visit the [celebration page](#) to see the messages already posted.

A formal graduation 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 thereafter, on the University's YouTube channel.

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](#).

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 fine examples of Eastern Excellence:

- The Victory Vertical Project: A Historical Case Study in Recreational Music Making, authored by Emeritus Professor Garik Pedersen, has been selected as the American Music Teacher Article of the Year. The award is presented by Music Teachers National Association to the author of an outstanding feature article written expressly for the magazine.

Dr. Pedersen is professor emeritus of piano at Eastern. During his 40-plus year academic career, he taught undergraduate and graduate students from the U.S. and many other countries, producing prizewinners in regional, national, and international competitions.

In 2018, he launched The Victory Vertical Project (VVP), a touring multi-media performance venture that takes its name from pianos built for the US military during World War II. The VVP has been presented to audiences throughout the United States in concert halls, churches, and museums, as well as schools, retirement centers, hospitals and military bases. You can read more about the award and Dr. Pedersen's

remarkable effort to preserve an important piece of history in this [feature story on EMU Today](#).

- Two students in the GameAbove College of Engineering and Technology will have the opportunity to create and implement interior designs and engineering for aircraft during a paid, 12-week internship with Textron Aviation, the general aviation business unit of the conglomerate Textron, home to the Cessna, Beechcraft and Hawker brands.

The students are Marie Surur, a junior pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Interior Design, and Milo Lees, a junior pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering.

The internships reflect the efforts of the College to expand relationships with leading engineering and technology manufacturers and businesses across the country. In this case, the students will be traveling to Wichita, Kansas, where Textron Aviation is based.

Surur told EMU Today, “I think what I’m most looking forward to is the hands-on, real industry experience that I’ll get at a time when we can’t necessarily get as much real-life experience in our classes given current COVID-19 lab restrictions.”

Lees added, “We couldn’t be more thankful for the faculty in the GameAbove College of Engineering and Technology for helping to coordinate these internships. Without their help and support throughout the entire process, we wouldn’t have this opportunity and access to such invaluable internships.”

Additional information about the students and the internship program can be found on the [EMU Today story](#).

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.