

2021

COVID-19 Campus Update – May 27, 2021

Eastern Michigan University

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Thursday, May 27, 2021

To the Eastern Michigan University community:

This is an important day for our University. Today we announced a landmark partnership with Beibu Gulf University in China to establish a joint college of engineering. It is Eastern's first-ever joint college and expands EMU's international footprint. The "Eastern Michigan University Joint College of Engineering, Beibu Gulf University," will enroll up to 1,200 students who will be able to articulate credits between the two universities and earn degrees from both.

In making the announcement, Dean Mohamad Qatu of the GameAbove College of Engineering and Technology said, "This is great news to all of us at EMU. It is a result of the hard work and dedication of several faculty members and administrators at both institutions that began in 2018, and was then cemented by an initial agreement in 2019. The partnership will enhance enrollment and advance the global presence, influence and reputation of the GameAbove College of Engineering and Technology."

The agreement calls for a 15-year cooperative partnership that will begin with up to 300 students enrolled in the new program annually for the first four years. Upon successful completion, a student may receive degrees from both Beibu Gulf University and Eastern Michigan University. It also provides opportunities for faculty to teach and advance research agendas in China.

The Beibu Gulf campus is in the city of Qinzhou, which is located in the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region of China. The Eastern Michigan-Beibu Gulf partnership represents the only international joint college in the region, which has a population of more than 50 million people.

Agreements such as this broaden the University's international footprint as well as establish mutual international understanding and cooperation with a key overseas partner. The plans developed by the two universities offer excellent career preparation for students, and create a new stream of students for EMU and the GameAbove College of Engineering and Technology that further enhances Eastern's global presence and the rich diversity of our campus.

The Board of Regents authorized the plans for the Joint College of Engineering in [October 2019](#).

For further information about the degrees to be offered and the opportunities the joint college brings to EMU faculty and students, and to learn more about Beibu Gulf University, please visit the [story on EMU Today](#).

This initiative represents an important step forward in our efforts to “Deliver High Performing Academic Programs and Quality Research.” I encourage you to visit the [strategic plan website](#) to further explore the linkage and how the strategic planning process provides a roadmap for University initiatives and activities.

We have several other updates to cover this week:

- Update on filing of new lawsuit
- Convocation Center vaccination clinic ending
- COVID-19 testing center schedule
- New campus green space
- Esports summer camps
- Celebrating Eastern Michigan University excellence
- Health and safety reminder

Update on filing of new lawsuit

A second lawsuit has been filed against the University on behalf of eight women who have bravely come forward to detail traumatic experiences with sexual assault in off campus fraternity houses. As I have stated publicly in regard to the initial lawsuit, these allegations are serious and disturb me deeply as your President. We are presently reviewing and investigating the new lawsuit’s allegations.

There is no place for sexual assault on or off our campus and we will continue to do everything in our power to prevent it from happening. We support these courageous survivors. Protecting students is critical to the University’s educational mission. Our staff in law enforcement, Title IX, student affairs, and elsewhere works tirelessly every day to try to create a safe and supportive environment for students, faculty and staff.

As I have noted previously, the University has engaged the external firm of [Cozen O’Connor](#), with which the University had no prior relationship, to review and audit our Title IX and related policies, procedures, and actions regarding these events. Cozen O’Connor is nationally renowned in Title IX investigations, and the two principals engaged in the EMU analysis are both former prosecutors working in the areas of family violence, sexual assault, and child abuse. The report, when completed, will be shared with the campus community. We will undoubtedly be given recommendations about where we can do better; we will address those head on.

Convocation Center vaccination clinic ending

The Washtenaw County Health Department (WCHD) and other health care providers are scaling back local mass vaccination clinics. COVID-19 vaccination is now widely

available, and there is less need for emergency distribution strategies like mass vaccination.

The Health Department and St. Joseph Mercy Ann Arbor Hospital will jointly staff the mass vaccination clinic at the Convocation Center on Wednesdays and Saturdays through the end of June, except for this Saturday, May 29, when the EMU clinic will be closed for the holiday weekend. The mass vaccination clinic at Pierce Lake Elementary in Chelsea has closed. At the end of June, the Convocation Center site will close.

WCHD is continuing to provide COVID-19 vaccinations through smaller [community clinics and walk-ins](#) (without an appointment) at the Health Department.

We have appreciated the opportunity to partner with WCHD and St. Joe's to provide this important resource to the citizens of our community during a critical time.

COVID-19 Testing Center schedule

The EMU Testing Center located in the Student Center will be closed next week. It will reopen June 8. The schedule for the month of June is as follows:

- Tuesday June 8: 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Wednesday June 9: 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- Tuesday June 15: 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Wednesday June 16: 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- Tuesday June 22: 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Wednesday June 23: 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- Tuesday June 29: 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Wednesday June 30: 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

COVID-19 testing is encouraged even if you are fully vaccinated. While being vaccinated limits the symptoms of COVID-19, vaccinated individuals may still be carriers and inadvertently spread it to friends and family.

The Testing Center is located in the lower level of the Student Center (next to the Bookstore). Visit the [testing website](#) to review the Center's schedule, as hours are subject to change.

New campus green space

The generous gift commitment from GameAbove that resulted in the naming of the GameAbove College of Engineering and Technology is providing assistance for a number of initiatives at the college. This funding includes equipment and support for

academic programs, as well as an [announcement](#) you may have read last week to fund a research engineer position to expand our focus on autonomous vehicle technologies.

One additional visible change happening soon as a result of the GameAbove commitment will be the demolition of the building at 600 W. Forest. This will make way for a new park/green space that will be linked directly to the College. The new park/green space will serve as a beautiful entryway to the college, with seating and gathering space for study and leisure. Work on the project is scheduled to begin next week.

Esports summer camps

The University's [Esports program](#), along with Engage@EMU and Gen.G, are joining forces again this summer for a series of virtual and in-person esports summer camps. Through July and August, students in Michigan and across the country will have an opportunity to sharpen their esports skills while playing their favorite games with competitive players and industry professionals.

The summer's offerings include two virtual camps, Girls in Gaming and Behind the Design SAG, and two in-person camps, NBA 2K Camp (July 27-29) and Super Smash Bros Camp (July 14-16).

Girls in Gaming will be hosted virtually on Wednesday, August 4 through Friday, August 6 from 4 to 6 p.m. and is open to students in grades 9-12. Registration is required and the cost is \$25.

The Behind the Design SAG Camp will be hosted virtually on Monday, July 19 through Friday, July 23 from 1-3 p.m. The camp is open to students in grades 9-12. Registration is required and the cost is \$40.

For more information, visit the [story on EMU Today](#).

Celebrating Eastern Michigan University Excellence

Please join me in celebrating these fine examples of Eastern Michigan University excellence:

- Earlier this week I had the pleasure of joining a number of our University colleagues, members of GameAbove, and baseball Hall of Fame member Reggie Jackson (representing the Mr. October Foundation), to celebrate STEM outreach progress made over the past year in Detroit area K-12 schools. The event was held at Hope Academy in Detroit, an EMU charter that is one of the schools that has benefited from the joint STEM programming efforts. It was great to meet and hear Reggie Jackson discuss Mr. October Foundation's work to promote STEM

education in communities across the country, and the work at Hope Academy done in partnership with GameAbove and Eastern. Participants also included EMU alumni and GameAbove Advisory Board members such as Charlie Batch and George “The Iceman” Gervin. For more about the celebration, including photographs, please visit the [story on EMU Today](#).

- You will find many examples of Eastern excellence in the new edition of Eastern Magazine. The all-digital issue is now live and features stories about the people and initiatives that make EMU great. One of the most interesting to me is the story of alumnus Dr. Royal S. Copeland, who was the New York City Health Commissioner during the 1918-19 pandemic. See his story and more by visiting the [Eastern Magazine website](#). You can also [subscribe to have future issues emailed](#) to you.

Looking ahead

I hope everyone is able to enjoy a restful and peaceful Memorial Day holiday. Please take some time to honor those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in service to our nation.

James Smith, Ph.D.