

2021

COVID-19 campus update, September 2, 2021

Eastern Michigan University

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Thursday, September 2, 2021

COVID-19 Campus Update – September 2, 2021

To the Eastern Michigan University community,

It has been a wonderful start to the fall semester! I thank all of our students, faculty, staff and volunteers who play such an important role in getting the semester off and running in what is certainly a challenging and sometimes stressful time for everyone.

I particularly want to acknowledge our residential students and housing staff who coped with the extremely warm weather situation for move-in last Thursday, Friday and through the weekend. Having visited the residence halls and met with many of our students and housing staff during move-in, I know first-hand the hot temperatures you experienced. I continue to be amazed by everyone's patience, positive spirit and camaraderie in completing the move-in process.

Students, I know it is only your first week but you have been incredibly supportive of our #EMUSafe practices, particularly in terms of your compliance with the wearing of masks while indoors. I know it is not always easy to follow all of the measures we have in place, but it is heartening to see that you are doing your part to keep your fellow students, and the rest of our community, safe! Please visit our [EMU Safe website](#) to review a full list of our EMU Safe programs and policies.

As a reminder, students and employees who receive a COVID-19 vaccine and [certify their vaccination](#) status will be entered in a drawing to receive prizes through the EMU "[Get the Vax to Win](#)" program. Prizes available to students include a \$5,000 credit to your student account, free semester of housing, free parking pass, a new computer, and Bookstore gift cards. Prizes available to employees include cash awards and dollars to be used at EMU Dining facilities.

We are looking forward to announcing the winners of this week's drawing. We will do so next week. So please stay tuned! Future drawings will take place the weeks of:

- Sept. 13, 2021
- Sept. 20, 2021
- Sept. 27, 2021
- Oct. 11, 2021

Each of the remaining drawings will feature a new \$5,000 credit to the student account winner and other prizes.

We are continuing to make free vaccinations available with on-campus pop-up clinics; these are scheduled for tomorrow and through the rest of this month:

- Friday, September 3, 2021: 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.
EMU Student Center Ballroom
No appointments needed - walk-in!
- Saturday, September 18, 2021: 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
EMU Student Center Ballroom
[Please register for an appointment here](#)
- Friday, September 24, 2021: 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.
EMU Student Center Ballroom
No appointments needed - walk-in!

The process is fast, easy and simple. You can also find vaccination clinics at many other locations. Please visit the [Centers for Disease Control Vaccination Locator](#) where you can search by zip code for a clinic near you.

Free COVID-19 testing continues in the Student Center. A short video that describes the testing process and the hours of operation can be found on the [testing center website](#). Frequent testing is encouraged.

On Monday, we provided an [overview to the campus community](#) of the extensive processes in place to help protect our students, faculty and staff. The [EMU Safe](#) program for the fall semester expands on last year's successful strategies and adds additional layers to those contained in our 2020-21 safety program. We remain committed to an ongoing and routinely updated response to the changing pandemic environment, and appreciate your support and understanding as we implement those updates.

I have several additional items to share:

- Fall enrollment and housing
- Diversity, equity and inclusion project earns students national award
- Aviation program test flight
- Public radio station WEMU 89.1 increases listening audience
- First football game of the season tomorrow
- Former Eagle wins silver medal at Paralympic Games
- Swoop's Food Pantry fall schedule
- Looking ahead

Fall enrollment and housing

We are welcoming more than 2,250 new first-year students to campus this fall – that represents a 20% increase from fall 2020, and an increase of 7% over the pre-pandemic incoming class in 2019. There are a number of highlights to the new incoming class that are worth noting:

- The overall high school grade point average of new students is 3.43, the highest-ever for an incoming class at the University.
- The new class reflects Eastern's commitment to serving diverse communities -- 43.8% of our new students represent ethnically diverse populations (African American, Hispanic, Asian, Native American).
- International student enrollment of new Eastern students increased 60%, from 117 last year to 189 this year (this includes first year, transfer and graduate students).

The large number of incoming students also boosted the number of students living on campus. More than 2,750 students have paid contracts for housing this fall. Last year, 2,031 students lived in student housing. This represents a year-to-year increase of approximately 35%. Eastern offered discounted single rooms – and as a result, single rooms account for approximately 36% of the students in campus housing.

The enrollment and housing numbers reflect the great attention paid by our faculty and staff to providing quality degree programs, experiential learning opportunities, and support services that lead our graduates to successful careers.

Diversity, equity and inclusion project earns students national award

The student chapter of the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) has been awarded a 2020-2021 Outstanding Student Chapter designation by the national organization for providing superior growth and development opportunities to its student members.

Only 12 schools nationally were chosen for the honor, which is the society's highest award. More than 200 schools applied for the award.

The EMU SHRM Student Chapter project focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Associate Professor of Management Anushri Rawat, who is co-advisor of the group, told EMU Today that the primary goal of the project was to raise awareness about diversity, equity, and inclusion to students, as well as to highlight the role of human resources professionals in furthering those efforts in the corporate setting.

Professor of Management Fraya Wagner-Marsh, also a co-advisor for the student group, said the chapter has won the Superior Merit award for the past 28 years and has won the top award 18 times since it was established in 2000. This is an impressive record and an indication of the hard work and dedication of our students and their faculty. You can read the full story on [EMU Today](#). Congratulations to all!

Aviation program test flight

I had the opportunity of visiting our [new aviation partner](#), Crosswinds Aviation, at Willow Run last Saturday. I toured the facilities and was able to join one of our flight instructors for a flyover of campus and through parts of southeast Michigan. It was a first-class

experience and the instructor gave me a good bit of hands-on training, which, of course, is just a tiny fraction of what our students receive. Check out this [video](#). It was a great experience and wonderful to see first-hand our aviation program reaching new heights!

Public radio station WEMU 89.1 increases listening audience

WEMU-FM 89.1 increased its listening audience by 32% in spring 2021 when compared to fall 2020, according to Nielsen Audio broadcast radio's ratings service. The increase moves the station from sixth most listened to station in the market to third, with market share of 6.2.

WEMU General Manager Molly Motherwell explained that when the pandemic began, WEMU, as did some other stations, saw a surge in listening, especially at-home listening, because of the shutdowns. The encouraging development is that even as restrictions have somewhat eased, the station's audience levels remained high.

WEMU is a listener-supported NPR affiliate with format of local news, jazz, blues, and roots music, in addition to NPR news, information, and cultural programming. The station broadcasts to an eight county area including all or part of Washtenaw, Wayne, Oakland, Monroe, Livingston, Lenawee, Jackson, and Lucas (OH) and streams live 24 hours a day at WEMU.org.

First football game of the season tomorrow

Join us at Rynearson Stadium tomorrow night for the opening kickoff of the 2021 football season. It's sure to be a festive night as the Eagles take on Saint Francis University at 7 p.m.

EMU Athletics is beginning the season with a special CommUniversitE Night -- a family-centric event that will showcase and celebrate the people who make our University and community a special place to live, work, and learn. Prior to kickoff, fans can enjoy a free petting zoo and carnival games, interact with EMU student-athletes and coaches, and pick up coupons from local business partners.

Additionally, as a thank you to educators for their dedication to students of all ages, EMU Athletics is offering all local teachers and staff up to four complimentary tickets to the home opener. Interested parties should contact the EMU Office of Athletic Marketing at 734-487-3263.

Enjoy the EMU "Pride of the Peninsula" Marching Band and many other highlights during the game.

Visit the [gameday protocols](#) site for general safety information for fans related to COVID-19.

EMU students can attend free of charge and must present their student ID. For all others, please visit the [ticket website](#).

Former Eagle wins silver medal at Paralympic Games

The Eastern Michigan University track and field program saw former Eagle Brittni Mason shine at the 2021 Summer Paralympic Games on Aug. 31 in Tokyo, Japan. Representing Team USA, Mason sprinted her way to a silver medal in the T47 100m dash, crossing the finish line in a strong 11.97 clip. For more about Brittni, read the story on the [EMU Eagles website](#).

Swoop's Food Pantry fall schedule

Current hours for the John and Angie Sabo Swoop's Food Pantry Room can be found on [the website](#), as well as information about in person shopping and online ordering and pickup, which is available four days a week.

If you're interested in donating items, Swoop's is in need of toothpaste, notecards, sticky notes, rice, ramen, cereal and condiments. You can also donate using [Swoop's Amazon wishlist](#).

Looking ahead

I firmly believe the policies and guidelines we have in place are the best path forward to providing a safe environment for our students, faculty and staff. We will continue to monitor the situation closely and are prepared to make further adjustments to our plans as necessary. I know that it has been said repeatedly, but the only certainty about this disease is its uncertainty. I ask for your continued support and patience as we navigate the ongoing pandemic.

Please stay safe and continue to look out for one another.

James Smith, Ph.D.