

Dear MCLA Employees,

We should be proud of ourselves for being part of a team that created a safe environment for our students and colleagues this fall. While we did have a handful of COVID-19 cases among our community, we had no community spread from these cases and a positivity rate that was 10 times lower than that in the state. We attribute this to the careful planning and protocols established in accordance with the best advice of DPH and CDC, and an effective testing and contact tracing process mandated by the state. These protocols will continue in the spring, with an even more robust testing program that will result in increased testing of all our populations.

The information below outlines key pieces of information as we close out the fall semester and look ahead to spring 2021.

Temporary Telework Continuation

As noted in previous communications, many staff are teleworking until January 4, 2021, when they are expected to return to campus. At this point, we are opening the process for staff who qualify for consideration to request to temporarily continue to telework from January 4, 2021 through the end of the spring semester. Please keep in mind that the responsibilities of the position and operational needs of the college are among the various considerations when assessing temporary telework requests.

Staff who qualify for continued telework are staff who:

- Have underlying medical conditions that make them vulnerable to serious complications from COVID-19;
- Are 65 or older;
- Have a family member in their immediate household who has a medical condition that makes them vulnerable to serious complications from COVID-19;
- Have a family member in their immediate household who is 65 or older;
- Have children who are learning remotely or do not have childcare options available due to the pandemic.

To apply for telework consideration, please fill out the attached Request for Temporary Telecommuting Continuation Form - Spring 2021 and return it to Barb Chaput in HR by January 1, 2021. For the remote learning qualification, we understand that school district policies are evolving and that requests may need to be made after the stated deadline. Additionally, if schools return students to classrooms full-time during the semester, approved arrangements may need to be altered so that those staff return to the office.

If you previously received approval to work remotely for your own or a family member in your immediate household's underlying medical condition, then you do need to complete a new Request for Temporary Telecommuting Continuation Form Spring 2021, but you do

NOT need to resubmit medical documentation of the condition if it has not changed. The medical documentation that you previously submitted for the fall semester is sufficient. If you did not previously apply to work remotely, and you qualify for your own or a family member in your immediate household's underlying medical condition that makes you or them vulnerable to serious complications from COVID-19, you will need to complete the Form and submit the supporting documentation.

All forms can be found on the COVID-19 page under "+ All Employees" on the right-hand side. You can also contact Linda Lazzari in HR at x5596 to be directed to the forms you will need to complete. Please do not hesitate to contact Barb Chaput in HR at x5599 with any questions. Please note that the faculty have already completed these forms for Spring.

Campus COVID-19 Dashboard and local access to testing

Campus dashboard updates are paused until the start of the spring 2021 semester when MCLA's campus testing program is back up and running. For employees seeking access to COVID-19 tests for symptomatic and asymptomatic needs, Berkshire Health Systems continue to operate testing sites in North Adams, Pittsfield, and Great Barrington. Recently, BHS was added to the statewide "Stop the Spread" program and is expanding access to free testing. For details and to make an appointment please contact the Berkshire Health Systems Covid-19 line at 855-262-5465. Also, please make Barb Chaput aware if you are being tested.

Spring 2021

While there are still a number of details that will depend on the latest guidance and COVID-19 trends at the local and state levels, we wanted to provide as much information as possible at this point as the fall semester winds down.

Spring 2021 Academic Calendar

Classes for the spring semester will begin on Tuesday, January 26, 2021. Similar to fall, MCLA's spring 2021 plan features blended learning course design, and staggered attendance in the classroom. There will be no Spring Break this year but an additional day for students has been added to the President's Day weekend with the recess beginning on Friday, February 12, 2021.

Spring 2021 COVID-19 Testing

In order to comply with the updated testing guidance for higher education from the state, MCLA will again partner with the Broad Institute and expand our spring testing program which will be implemented with guidance from our local public health partners. Similar to the fall, we will test all residential students upon move-in and then once a week for the next two weeks. After that, we will move to surveillance testing, with an increase to fifty percent of resident students tested each week. We are also expanding commuter student testing, with mandatory testing of all commuter students to begin the semester and then mandatory once-a-month testing. Faculty and staff will again have the voluntary option to test once a month at no cost, and at

additional times at their request for the cost of \$25.00 per test. The spring plan represents an increase of approximately 3,000 tests over the fall semester.

As always, the COVID-19 website, mcla.edu/covid-19, remains functional and is a comprehensive catalogue of information as well as an archive of all campus communications related to COVID-19. We will continue to share additional information in the coming weeks.

Thank you for taking the health of our campus community seriously and doing your part to keep our fall semester as safe as possible. I wish you a happy and healthy holiday season.