

Spring Return to Campus

Dear Trailblazers,

I want to thank you for such a successful fall semester. All of you came together this fall during a very unimaginable situation by doing your best to implement everything within our control to keep each other safe, and I am proud of this community for staying the course. In true MCLA form and in light of the many obstacles brought on by the Coronavirus Pandemic, racial injustices, and political and social unrest, our community persevered.

Although this week's warmer temperatures have been a welcome surprise, winter is still on the horizon. With the change of seasons in mind, I want to share more details and plans for our spring semester reopening and a few key reminders as resident students return home and we all transition to remote learning.

Fall Semester Move-out

Resident students, if you have not yet signed up for a move-out date, please do so now. Those who have confirmed a move-out date will also receive a corresponding COVID-19 test date. Everyone is schedule approximately 48 hours prior to move out, but not more than 72 hours as some states require those returning to that state to have a negative result taken no earlier than 72 hours before arriving in that state. All resident students must confirm a move-out date with Residential Programs and Services.

If you have an extenuating academic circumstance and seek campus housing from November 25 thru December 17 please complete the [Post Thanksgiving Residential Exception](#) form. Please note there is a cost for this extended housing.

Resources for the Transition to Remote Learning

Attached to this email is a guide and checklist to reference as you go remote. I encourage you to utilize it as you complete your courses this semester.

Campus Food Pantry

As the end of the semester nears, we remind you about the Campus Food Pantry. The Pantry is accessible 24 hours a day 7 days a week via the link below, with pick-up twice a week (including during the upcoming winter break). The Pantry offers a variety of food items, frozen Aramark meals, as well as toiletries/personal care items. The Pantry also offers \$25-\$50 WalMart Gift Cards (available during the winter break as well) and the link to that application is also below.

To place a food pantry order, click on this form: [Food Pantry Order Form](#)

To request a Walmart Gift Card, click on this link: [Gift Card Application](#)

Resiliency Fund Available on a Limited Basis

The Resiliency Fund has a limited amount of money available to support unexpected/unusual needs of students as they transition this semester from on-campus living and learning to remote learning and relocate for the intercession between semesters. This fund can be used to address some of the expenses associated with the period between Thanksgiving and the start of the spring semester for those who cannot go home, need transportation assistance to do so, assistance with local storage, technology needs to support remote learning, etc. This money is not intended for ongoing expenses that are factored into financial aid disbursements, such as tuition, fees, room and board or rent for your local apartment, and regular monthly expenses such as car payments, insurance, etc.

The application is open now and available here – [Resiliency Fund Fall 2020](#)

Please be specific with costs in each category and in the description box with the details. You may be expected to provide actual bills or documentation for some expenses. Each student is asked to submit only one application as we want the limited funding to support as many students as possible. Money will be awarded until it is gone.

Spring 2021 Academic Calendar

Classes for the spring semester will begin on Tuesday, January 26. Similar to fall, MCLA's spring 2021 plan features blended learning course design, and staggered attendance in the classroom. Once again, this model combines our signature small liberal arts face-to-face practices with an accessible technological environment. There will be no Spring Break this year but an additional day has been added to the President's Day weekend, and the recess will begin on Friday, February 12.

Spring 2021 COVID-19 Testing

In order to comply with the updated testing guidance for higher education from the state, MCLA will 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 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. The spring plan represents an increase of approximately 3,000 tests over the fall semester.

MASCAC/NCAA Winter Sports

After an in-depth review of the information from the state and NCAA, consultation among the Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic Conference (MASCAC) Presidents, athletic directors, and athletic trainers and after exhausting all possibilities, including a review of the risks involved, the eight MASCAC Presidents have made the difficult decision to cancel all winter sports competition. Similar to the fall sports, the state universities are planning to provide winter sport student athletes with on-campus, in-person practices, conditioning and training opportunities

throughout their traditional season to support their physical and mental well-being. These practice and training opportunities will not use a year of NCAA Eligibility and will be done in compliance with the campus, state, federal and NCAA COVID guidance and protocols

Spring Course Registration

Online registration through Self-Service Banner for Spring 2021 will continue through 5:00 pm November 17. Students were assigned a specific registration date/time and can register for classes from that specific date/time through 5:00 pm on November 17. All students should register during this registration period to maximize course availability and minimize course cancellations. More information about registration is available [here](#). Contact the Registrar's office with any questions at registrar@mcla.edu or (413) 662-5216.

Spring Billing and FAFSA Reminder

Bills for the spring 2021 semester will be generated the third week in November with a December 21 due date. Please contact the Office of Student Financial Services at 413-662-5230 or email studentaccounts@mcla.edu with any billing or payment questions.

FAFSA is open for the 21-22 academic year! Renew online at www.fafsa.gov. The priority deadline for funding is January 1. If you need any assistance completing the FAFSA, please contact the Office of Student Financial Services at 413-662-5219 or email aid@mcla.edu for an appointment. The office is happy to assist you with getting this important step completed

Spring Semester Activities

With the uncertainty of what the spring semester will look like, you will still have plenty of opportunities to engage with your fellow classmates and get involved on campus. Many of our clubs and organizations will continue to plan events that encourage participation ranging from trivia nights, regular clubs meetings, and more. It is essential for students to stay connected with each other and build lasting friendships outside of the classroom environment. Consider trying out clubs or events that in a normal year you wouldn't or taking on a leadership role you never saw yourself in. To join clubs, view your non-academic profile, and see what is happening on campus go to <https://mcla.presence.io/>

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.