

Hello,

I write to share updated information regarding Friday's message related to an uptick in COVID-19 cases affecting our campus community and provide this information out of continued caution and in the spirit of full transparency. Recently, we have seen an increase in positive COVID-19 cases in the Flagg Townhouse apartment complex. Over the last ten days we have reported 8 cases in this residence area.

We are confident that we have successfully identified and taken the necessary steps to isolate students who have tested positive for coronavirus and have notified and quarantined all close contacts. However, we will test all Townhouse residents tomorrow, March 24 between 10 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. in the Amsler Campus Center Gymnasium and will continue with increased testing, which started weekly for all resident students yesterday, and is available weekly for all commuter students.

Testing for asymptomatic faculty and staff testing will continue this week through Thursday from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. in the Campus Center Gym. If you are exhibiting any COVID-19 symptoms, please call the Berkshire Medical Center hotline: 855-BMC-LINK, or 855-262-5465. The hotline is typically open daily from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

It is clear from contact tracing that the classroom and our hybrid model is not the source of transmission.

The most common source of transmission we are seeing from contact tracing is close social contact in settings where masking, social distance, and other CDC mitigation measures are not being followed consistently. Students living together in apartments, not wearing masks, sharing food or drink, and gathering/socializing in areas that don't allow for 6 feet of distance are the common denominator in the case patterns we are seeing.

As a precautionary measure, practice/play for the men's lacrosse and men's soccer teams, which have been affected by recent cases has been suspended until further notice. We want to be sure that our teams do not inadvertently spread COVID-19 to other campuses.

As mentioned in my message last week, an increase in cases has been seen across Berkshire County and in the state over the last couple of weeks as some COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted. We still need everyone's continued compliance in following social distancing and other CDC recommended mitigation efforts in helping to help stop the spread of COVID-19.

We are all feeling the effects of "pandemic fatigue" but now more than ever we need to remain vigilant to safely and successfully complete the semester.

Please continue to reference MCLA's COVID-19 page for the latest information and updates and contact our COVID-19 hotline 413-662-5550 with questions.

Thank you for your attention and cooperation,

Gina

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