

Hello,

This message is an urgent and time-sensitive update to yesterday's communication regarding an uptick in positive COVID-19 cases in the Flagg Townhouse Apartment Complex.

Following the latest round of on-campus testing through the Broad Institute, we have identified a cluster of 13 positive cases impacting 5% of the townhouse population. This percentage prompts further action as detailed in our COVID-19 control plan and in consultation with our local public health partners.

- **As of 8 p.m. this evening (Wednesday, March 24) the entire Flagg Townhouse Complex and all 242 residents will be placed on a temporary targeted lockdown.** Details follow further below in this message. Residence students received a detailed communication pertaining to their specific residence area a short while ago.
- **The Trailblazer Fitness Center will be closed until further notice.**
- **ALL athletic practices/play for ALL MCLA teams is suspended until further notice.**

This is a very serious situation.

Stay-in-place measures are recommended by medical experts as a first step to end campus COVID-19 outbreaks and they have been highly successful on other campuses.

Please note: classes will continue to be in-person for non-Townhouse students (including commuters) and Townhouse students will be attending classes virtually during this lockdown.

This communication is to illustrate that we are approaching this cluster with the utmost caution and are taking proactive measures to keep our entire campus community safe. These precautionary measures will allow us to progress through the remaining six weeks of the semester in residence and in our hybrid learning format.

We ask all members of our community to respect the privacy of individuals affected by COVID-19 so they can focus on their health. At this time, all COVID-19 positive students in the Flagg Townhouses are recovering in isolation. While we cannot disclose specific private health information, please be assured that all symptomatic students are being cared for.

Flagg Townhouse Temporary Targeted Lockdown Details

Students in this residence area will be participating in courses remotely and will be confined to their individual residence except:

1. To pick-up food from MCLA Dining Services
2. To seek medical attention
3. To participate in MCLA's COVID-19 testing protocols.

Students that violate the lockdown measures will be held accountable to the MCLA Trailblazer Agreement to the fullest extent.

It's important to note that, based on extensive contact tracing and testing data, there again is no evidence of classroom transmission or transmission to other residence areas. As stated yesterday, the most common source of transmission we are seeing 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 six feet of distance are the common denominator in the case patterns we are seeing. This has disproportionately affected several of our athletics teams.

We will continue to diligently monitor COVID-19 testing data and local and state trends as we reevaluate all of the safety measures and make further decisions.

Students with questions should reach out directly to Dr. Cathy Holbrook, Vice President of Student Affairs: catherine.holbrook@mcla.edu

Faculty and Staff, please reach out to me directly with questions.

This case cluster is a stark reminder that this pandemic is still very real, and that we need to be unwavering in our commitment to common-sense public health guidance and the requirements of the Trailblazer Agreement.

As the last year has proven, our campus community is nimble and resilient. We will persevere.

Gina

Gina Puc
Vice President for Strategic Initiatives
Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts
413.662.5428
375 Church Street
North Adams,
MA 01247
