

Hello Trailblazers,

We have made it to a point in time where we can talk about post-pandemic planning and operations. That in and of itself is a victory over the virus that turned our lives upside down last year. Although we still need to be vigilant and respectful of the virus and keep any new developments on our radar, we have reached the milestone where we can be together once again. We can say confidently that planning is earnestly underway for the fall 2021 semester, which will bring a full return to the classroom.

Return to the Classroom

MCLA recognizes the importance of getting students back into the classroom with faculty and peers, and we are pleased to confirm that we will return to in-person classes in September. **All classrooms are being returned to normal capacity without social distancing between seats.** While students are encouraged to do what they are most comfortable doing, we will continue to follow CDC guidance, and masks will not be required to be worn in the classroom. The Registrar is beginning the process of collapsing sections into a normal schedule so there will no longer be hybrid meeting times for classes. We will continue to provide hand sanitizer and cleaning supplies in classrooms as this remains a best practice in helping the community remain healthy.

Vaccine Reminder

As outlined in a message to students from President Birge at the end of April, MCLA will require students to be vaccinated against COVID-19 before they attend in-person classes in the fall. This is a reminder to all undergraduate and graduate students who are attending in-person classes, conducting research on campus, living in residence halls, and participating in college sponsored activities to become **fully vaccinated** prior to the start of the academic year in September.

To submit your proof of vaccination against COVID-19: send a photo image copy of the front of your COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card showing your name, vaccine type, and date(s) of administration, along with your DOB, and MCLA A# to Health Services at HealthServices@mcla.edu **by August 1, 2021.**

Medical and religious exemptions with the proper accompanying documentation will be reviewed accordingly. Contact Health Services to obtain the Vaccine Declination Form and specific requirements for review.

Campus Life/Activities

MCLA also plans a full return to social, cultural, and recreational activities that contribute to the MCLA student experience, including many of the opening events such as Convocation, the President's Ice Cream Social, and the SGA Activities Fair. Additional

information will follow later this summer about scheduled activities and events for the fall semester.

Meeting and event spaces will return to full capacity, and student organizations will be able to return to in-person meetings and events. The Fitness Center will be fully open to the MCLA community, and all sports teams will return to competition this fall.

Athletics

Athletics anticipates running a full practice and game schedule for this year. Masking and testing protocols are to be determined by MASCAC and the NCAA. The fitness center will be open daily and, as of this time, there will be no restrictions.

Tuition/Fees

Watch for your fall student bill in the mail (and by email) at the beginning of July. Bills will be due August 1. Information regarding how to respond to your bill and make payment arrangements will be included. **In an effort to help students through financial challenges, MCLA will not increase tuition and mandatory fees for the 21-22 academic year (rates will remain the same as the 20-21 academic year).** Please note that the freeze is not applicable to room and board rates. Room and board rates are dependent on services provided and negotiated with outside organizations. If you have any questions regarding student billing or financial aid, please contact Student Financial Services, at studentaccounts@mcla.edu or finaid@mcla.edu.

Parking

Parking permits are managed by the Department of Public Safety and requested online. Vehicles parked on campus must be registered with Public Safety and have a valid parking decal. The vehicle you plan to register must be owned by you, a parent or legal guardian, or a spouse. **Commuter student decals** are \$30 per semester and authorize parking in designated commuter lots. Commuters who need a parking decal should complete the [Parking Pass Request](#) and submit payment when notified to do so. Information about how/when to pick up your decal will follow before the start of the semester.

Resident student decals are \$100 per semester and authorize parking in designated resident lots. Parking is not guaranteed to all resident students, but all may complete the [Parking Pass Request](#) to request a decal. You will be required to pay for the decal online when notified to do so to guarantee availability upon arrival to campus. Seniors who have fulfilled the residency requirement are entitled to a parking decal as part of their senior perks provided they complete the online request to obtain a decal.

Freel Library

Library seating areas will return to normal, with space for groups and socializing downstairs and a quiet zone upstairs. Study rooms will be available for reservation and

drop-in use. Food and beverages are once again welcome in the library. The lounge will reopen, and coffee/hot beverages will be available for purchase. The library will be open until midnight Sunday-Thursday. Research help will once again be available in person; the library will also continue to offer help remotely (via chat, Teams, etc.).

Spaces for commuters

Campus facilities, including the Commuter Lounge, Library, lounges & computer labs will once again be fully open to commuters during regular hours of operation.

Additional Resident Student Information

Please note, there has been a name change in recent weeks for the Residential Programs and Services Office (RPS). The department is now called Residence Life and Housing (RLH).

Housing/Costs:

This fall resident students will move in prior to the first day of classes, which is Wednesday, September 1, with a return to normal occupancy with roommates and/or housemates. Returning students will live in Flagg Townhouses and Berkshire Towers; first year students will live in Berkshire Towers. Hoosac Hall will be off-line for the year. Based on student feedback from last year, we know that residents missed the camaraderie and community that comes with full floors and having roommates, so we are tailoring housing assignments to create more vibrant living and learning communities within the two residence areas.

Based on the requirement that all students will be vaccinated and revised CDC and MA DPH guidelines, MCLA students will be able to visit friends in the residence areas in accordance with RLH guest policies. Students may obtain guest passes for fully vaccinated non-student guests in accordance with the RLH guest policy protocols.

Double occupancy room rates are as follows: Berkshire Towers, \$3,520 per semester; Flagg Townhouses, \$3,620 per semester. Single occupancy rooms will be \$ 3,670 per semester regardless of residence area.

Dining/Costs:

The Centennial Room will return to full occupancy this fall with no seating restrictions. Dining Services will continue with enhanced cleaning protocols enacted last year for the continued safety of students and dining room staff. The Sidekick Dining app will remain in place for your convenience.

Once again, two dining plans will be offered. The Unlimited Meal Plan will be assigned to all students who have a residency requirement regardless of assigned residence area; and the Senior Plan for those who have fulfilled their residency requirement but still live on

campus. The Unlimited Plan will cost \$2,522 per semester and the Senior Plan will cost \$872.50 per semester.

MCLA will continuously monitor COVID-19-related data and make changes accordingly by following State and Federal guidance in accordance with health and safety procedures.

You can continue to find additional information and an archive of communications on [MCLA's COVID-19 landing page](#). The MCLA hotline phone number for questions related to COVID-19 is still available at 413-662-5550, from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday-Friday.

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“National Top Ten Public Liberal Arts College”

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