

Information about Fall 2020 Return to Campus

7/10/2020

Dear MCLA Student,

I hope this message finds you well and provides the additional information you need to finalize your plans for your return to campus this fall.

The information provided here is based on a return to campus with an in-residence experience for Fall 2020. We recognize that the COVID-19 pandemic has created an unprecedented set of circumstances for our students, and we thank you for your patience. We have been working on a variety of details and share some of them with you now, including:

- Process for requesting exceptions to the outlined plan
- Housing costs and arrangements
- Dining costs and preliminary plans
- Online ordering from the Bookstore
- Opening of our new fitness center
- Resiliency Fund depletion

Process for Seeking Exceptions to Outlined Plan

Although returning to campus this fall presents some risk, we are working to make the campus experience as safe as possible for everyone. We continue to monitor guidelines as they are developed by the state to make the necessary adaptations.

As a community, we have a shared responsibility to keep one another safe. We also understand that some students may seek exceptions to our outlined plan and have developed a process for to request to do so by completing the following link. **Please read the information below about possible exception categories before completing this request form.**

[Student Exception Form](#)

Academic Delivery Exceptions

MCLA's fall 2020 plan features a slightly altered calendar, blended learning course design, and staggered attendance in the classroom. This proposed model combines our signature small liberal arts face-to-face practices with an accessible technological environment.

Students may request to take only the scheduled fully online courses. Special consideration will be given to those who are immunocompromised, a member of another high risk category, or presenting with a disability making on-campus study under planned conditions a challenge. While we stand ready to accommodate students who are at higher risk than others to ensure they can continue to learn, it is important to note that the number of online courses available will be limited. We will work to accommodate extenuating circumstances, but we cannot guarantee a completely remote schedule that will maintain a student's timeline of scheduled graduation. To request an academic delivery exception, please complete the [Student Exception Form](#). Priority deadline is July 31.

Housing Information/Exceptions

Students will be housed one to a room, regardless of the residence area in which they live. Residential Programs & Services (RPS) is currently communicating with students regarding their fall assignments in seniority order. The cost for fall housing will be \$3,598 for all students residing on campus.

Move in will be scheduled by appointment later this summer. Each student will have two hours to move into their residence area and may bring only one person with them to campus. We strongly encourage you to pack lightly for the fall semester. Students will move out of their residence area on Tuesday, November 24.

Residents will be expected to wear a mask or face covering within their residence area, with the exception of their own bedroom. Three masks will be provided to you upon move-in as part of your welcome back package. No guests will be allowed during the fall semester. A complete list of the safety measures being put in place within your residence area and the guidelines established to help alleviate the spread of COVID 19 will be available later this month.

To request an exception to your residency requirement this fall, please complete the [Student Exception Form](#). Priority deadline for release is July 31.

Dining Information/Exceptions

All students, including those who have completed their on-campus residency requirement, will be required to have a meal plan in the coming year. These are the meal plans:

- The first, required for all those with a residency requirement, is the Every Meal plan, which provides a meal during all 19 scheduled meals per week, plus \$100 in declining balance and \$25 in Blazer bucks. This plan will cost \$2,140 for the fall.
- The second plan, required for all those who have fulfilled their residency requirement but opt to live in campus residence this fall, includes 65 meals, \$100 in declining balance and \$25 in Blazer bucks. This plan will cost \$700 for the fall. If you have fulfilled your residency requirement, you may opt up to the Every Meal plan.

Dining plans are still being developed, but there will be two dining areas with limited seating to meet state guidelines. Students will be required to reserve a spot in either the Centennial Room or Venable Gym during meal times, and there will be several seating times per meal. Most items will be pre-packaged and take out will also be available. The retail dining operations will likely provide a limited choice meal at lunch and dinner on the meal plan to help ensure adequate availability of meals.

Students who require a medical meal plan accommodation, may complete the [Student Exception Form](#). Priority deadline for release is July 31.

Bookstore and Online Ordering

As we return to campus for the fall, the bookstore's number one priority will be efficiently getting all students their books in the first week of classes. Students should visit our [website](#), pay for their books, and choose to pick them up in the store. We also have a tool located [here](#) (or by clicking the "Textbooks" icon to the left of the search bar on our home page) that can assist in locating all of the required (or recommended) textbooks for every class on your course schedule if you already have one.

If you have any questions or concerns, please, do not hesitate to e-mail Houston Taylor, the bookstore's manager, at william.taylor@mcla.edu.

Fitness Center and Athletics

We are very excited to tell you that the Fitness Center will be open for student use this fall, operating under the Massachusetts Phase 3 guidelines. We expect the project to be complete within the month and equipment installed by mid-August.

We anticipate a decision with the next two weeks about fall Athletics competition from our conferences, MASCAC and NAC. Student athletes, please note that fall pre-season start dates have changed. Pre-season for all athletes will start no earlier than August 29, with move-in no earlier than August 28.

Resiliency Fund and CARES Act fund

We have depleted the allotment of CARES Act funding that has made it possible to award Resiliency Fund grants this spring/summer. Over \$225,000 has been allocated to over 250 students since this process began in April. This is in addition to over \$32,000 awarded as the result of MCLA community member donations to this fund prior to our receipt of the federal funding. As our Advancement staff works to raise additional donations to the Resiliency Fund, the application link has been temporarily suspended. If you have an application in the system as of July 10, it will be reviewed with priority going to students who have not yet received any CARES Act funds. We hope to have this Fund back up by September.

Future Communications

Finally, we will be sending you updates regularly from now until the start of the semester with important information, such as testing for return to campus.

Should you have any questions, please call the MCLA COVID-19 hotline phone number at 413-662-5550, between 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday-Friday.

Best,

Cathy

Catherine Holbrook, Ph.D.
Vice President, Student Affairs
Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts
375 Church Street

North Adams, MA 01247
email: Catherine.Holbrook@mcla.edu
phone: 413-662-5231
Pronouns: she/her

[MCLA COVID-19 Information](#)