

Dear Faculty Colleagues,

Due to the recent and sudden rise of Covid numbers in New England, an increasing number of residential students are opting to move home early. As a result, some of you have seen a rapidly declining number of students in your face-to-face classrooms in the past few weeks.

There have been students who have traveled home for a weekend with the understanding that they were traveling to a low-risk zone, and thus would not need to quarantine when they returned to campus. However, on two separate weekends, some of our students have been effectively stranded at home when their towns were declared high-risk by Massachusetts that weekend, necessitating a 5-day quarantine period on return to campus.

We learned Friday night that Massachusetts added New York to the list of high-risk zones that are unsafe for continued travel, creating additional complications for some of our students. Additionally, on Friday, Maine put all of Massachusetts on its high-risk list.

Even though the MCLA campus is one of the safest places in Berkshire County to be, an increasing number of students are leaving the residence halls early without permission or your agreement to accommodate them online. They and/or their families are worried about them bringing Covid to their homes, and in some cases, they are needed at home to help out.

In order to accommodate our students in these stressful, unsure times, maximum flexibility on our part is required. For some of you, the best solution to dwindling in-person numbers would be to move completely online now, instead of waiting until the Thanksgiving break. **Any instructor who would like to move completely online this week (instead of waiting until next week) may do so.** If you choose this path, please alert your students in multiple ways (email and Canvas) and clearly lay out your expectations and timeline for this week. I would also request that you inform me, your department chair, and your building administrator that you have decided to go fully online early. This decision is entirely up to you and what will work best for you and your students.

If you choose to finish out the week in-person, my one ask is that you accommodate those students who have chosen to move home early as well as those who do not feel safe commuting back and forth.

For your reference, I have attached the letter that will go out to all students.

We just need to get through this coming week! Again, I thank you all for all your hard work, and I thank you for your continued dedication to our students (and their retention) during these crazy, unpredictable days.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you,
Adrienne

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