

This message is long but it contains critically important information for the rest of this semester if you plan to leave campus, including the requirement to inform us about any planned overnight travel so we can work with you on your return; guidelines and implication for travel to high risk/red zone areas; new travel guidelines for other states; when a class absence may or may not be excused; and additional guidelines should you be planning to travel to a high risk/red zone area beginning the week of Veterans Day.

Contains corrected travel form link

Dear Resident Students,

I write to share a new travel protocol that is *effective immediately* for the rest of the fall semester. **We are asking that every student who plans to travel away from campus overnight complete this [Fall Travel Form](#) at least 24 hours before leaving campus.**

As you are likely already aware, COVID-19 cases have been rising dramatically in Massachusetts and other states and the number of communities designated "high risk" or "red zones" is increasing weekly. In Massachusetts alone, 77 cities and towns have been labeled high risk for coronavirus ([interactive map](#)) as of October 22, and given recent daily counts we anticipate this number will increase again this week. In contrast, North Adams is currently considered a low risk community, and MCLA and our local community have been able to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and remain relatively safe. This is in large part to the good work all of you have been doing to follow COVID-19 guidelines. We want to ensure that the low risk environment continues until you all leave campus for the Thanksgiving Break and move to remote learning.

For this reason we are urging all resident students not to travel for the remainder of the semester, and most importantly not to travel to high risk or red zone communities. Thanksgiving is a few short weeks away – 28 days to be precise – and while we realize it has been a long, unusual semester and everyone misses family and friends, we ask you to remain here on campus until it is time to leave for the break. We want you stay safe, to keep our community safe, and for all students to be able to return home healthy next month.

That said, we know there will be some emergencies and situations that necessitate a student travels. Due to the increased risks in so many communities and the potential your travel has for exposing you to COVID that could then be introduced to campus, we are looking to know when and where you will travel so we can make the appropriate decisions around testing and quarantine when you return to campus. Many of you have reached out in recent days, asking questions about protocol and offering information about our plans, so we have developed an easier way to gather this information, both for you and for the College. **When a student will be travelling, wherever they go, they are asked to complete this [Fall Travel Form](#) at least 24 hours before leaving campus.**

Information to Help Guide Your Decision about Traveling

There are some things we want you to know to help guide your decisions whether you should travel or not, and its potential impact on you academically. More specifically:

- **When you travel to a designated high risk/red zone area** you will be required to quarantine for a **minimum** of 6 days pending 2 negative tests. That is the *current* expectation, but upon further guidance from DPH, this could change to a full 14 days with no option to “test out” at any point.

- **If you have had direct exposure to a COVID positive person during your travels (whether to a high risk area or not),** quarantine is mandated for 14 days, regardless of negative tests. This is a directive from the local DPH.
- **When you are required to quarantine,** you must remain in your residence room and cannot attend in person classes, go to work, or participate in any club, organization, or team's activities.
- **These class absences are NOT necessarily excused, and whether they can be excused depends upon the circumstances of the student's quarantine.**
 - **If a student is required to quarantine due to illness, possible symptoms, or exposure to a COVID positive person,** Academic Affairs has asked faculty members to accommodate a student and allow them to make up their work.
 - **However, if a student must quarantine as a result of travel they have chosen to take,** their absences from class are not considered excused absences.
- **Regardless of the reason for quarantine,** resident students will receive quarantine meals for the duration of their quarantine.

Travel the Week of Veteran's Day

As we move closer to the end of the semester, we are concerned about travel surrounding the Veteran's Day holiday on Wednesday, November 11. Should anyone be looking to extend the holiday into a long weekend because they do not have in person classes on Thursday or Friday, and go to a high risk/red zone community, the result of this travel would have significant academic impact. More specifically, upon your return to campus you will be required to quarantine for the entire *last full week of classes from November 16-20* as you are tested twice to rule out contraction of COVID-19 while away. Your release from quarantine would be no sooner than Saturday, November 21, leaving you with only two remaining class days before the Thanksgiving Break.

As a result, we are asking that students do NOT travel to a high risk/red zone after November 9, and if they do that they remain at home and not return to campus until it is time to move out of residence for the semester. Because this travel will require the student to quarantine, they will be unable to attend their in-person classes during the quarantine period. We do not want to run the risk of a student being exposed to COVID-19 in a high risk/red zone community and bringing it back to campus so late in the semester.

Information about Out of State Travel

Please note: The Massachusetts Travel Order is still in effect and requires anyone returning to Massachusetts from a location not designated as low risk is required to complete a Travel Form and quarantine for 14 unless they can present a negative COVID test taken 72 hours or less from time of arrival. Complete information and forms can be found here: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-travel-order#lower-risk-states->.

In addition to MCLA's concerns about student travel within and throughout Massachusetts, two neighboring states are also concerned about the increasing incidence of COVID in Massachusetts, issuing guidance about travel to their state from Massachusetts just this week. Here are the details:

- **Connecticut** added Massachusetts to its Travel Advisory on Tuesday, October 27. In summary, anyone who has spent 24 hours or more in an "affected state" in the 14 days prior to entering Connecticut, is required to 1) complete the "Connecticut Travel Health Form" and (2) self-quarantine for a period of 14 days from the time they were last in the Affected State, unless they qualify for an exemption from the requirement to self-quarantine. An exemption can be made for someone producing a negative COVID test taken 72 hours or less from time of arrival

in Connecticut. Read the complete travel order/find forms here: <https://portal.ct.gov/coronavirus/travel>

- **New York** also issued an advisory for travel between Massachusetts and New York, saying Massachusetts now meets the criteria for the NY travel advisory. New York is discouraging all *non-essential travel is discouraged*. A quarantine from Massachusetts was determined to be not practically viable and was NOT implemented.

Finally, please remember to complete the [Fall Travel Form](#) in its entirety 24 hours before you travel. You will be contacted with information and additional instructions for your return. If you have any questions about the protocol, or emergency based travel, please let me know.

Thank you for your cooperation with this new protocol and working to keep us all safe! Please note that additional information becomes available we will share it with you.

Best,
Cathy

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