

Dear MCLA Community:

Thank you for your patience as MCLA navigates the unprecedented public health crisis we face due to COVID-19. The health and safety of our students, faculty, and staff is our foremost concern, and our actions are aimed at complying with Governor Baker's state of emergency declaration and associated emergency orders, while minimizing the disruption to our students' lives and education. In an effort to provide stability to our community for the rest of the semester and in the interest of public health, we are taking the following actions:

Academic Instruction

MCLA will deliver academic courses via remote instruction for the remainder of the spring 2020 semester. Classes will still resume on Monday, March 30 in a remote/distance learning format. MCLA will share information about learning resources for students and faculty in a subsequent message.

On Campus Housing

All MCLA residence areas will shut down for the semester effective 5:00 p.m. March 27th. Residential Programs and Services (RPS) will contact resident students in the next 48 hours to arrange details and schedules to allow students to retrieve their belongings. We will be implementing procedures for a small number of students to remain living on campus as their situations require. The State Universities will continue to work with the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education and the Executive Office of Education to address concerns of student payments made for housing and other impacted services. We understand the importance of this issue to students and families, and will share more information on this matter when we have guidance from these state agencies.

Remote Work

We understand the significant challenge this health crisis puts on individuals, including all MCLA employees. We are following the State of Massachusetts and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations to encourage remote work for employees. Designated essential employees will remain working on campus. Supervisors will be in touch with additional guidelines for the rest of the semester.

Questions

We know many of you have questions surrounding this news. **MCLA has set up a hotline phone number for these questions at 413-662-5550**, between the hours of 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Monday-Friday. Please use this number rather than calling individual offices.

The onset of this global pandemic has caused all of us to make changes to our familiar ways of life. Avoiding personal interactions through "social distancing" is one of the greatest losses caused by this virus. I understand the necessary responsibility to public health and the need for this phenomenon but it seems like such a grim concept for a college campus where we thrive on the human interaction among colleagues and students.

The following reflection provided me with the reminder to continue to value one another in an era when it is increasingly hard to express. I hope you will find some guidance and comfort in its words.

Every hand that we don't shake must
Become a phone call that we place. Every
Embrace that we avoid must become a
Verbal expression of warmth and concern.
Every inch and every foot that we physically
Place between ourselves and another, must
Become a thought as to how we might be of
Help to that other, should the need arise.

--Rabbi Yosef Kanefsky

Peace and health to you,

Jaimie

James F. Birge, Ph.D.

President

Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts

413.662.5201

375 Church Street

North Adams, MA 01247

**“National Top Ten
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