

From: [Mueller, Bruce](#)
Subject: UM's Winter semester plans and the College of Pharmacy Graduate students
Date: Friday, November 06, 2020 4:27:27 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
Importance: High

Hello College of Pharmacy Graduate Students:

By now you have probably seen the email below from President Schlissel regarding plans for next semester. I have been participating in many of those conversations and I'd like to briefly give an overview on how they affect us at the College of Pharmacy. I will be able to give students more detail in our weekly Tuesday newsletter and if you have specific questions that you'd like addressed. You can submit your questions in these links to make sure that I do not miss your question: [Grad Students Q&A](#)

Overall

My highest priority is the health and wellbeing of our students, staff, and faculty. Every decision for Winter semester will be based on this primary principle.

Graduate Program

The Grad program is a professional program and is not subject to the President's announcement.

Mental health days were prescribed for undergrads, but mental health break days for grad students were not. It is something I'd like to discuss in my next faculty/staff meeting. They do not have to be the dates identified by the President.

Grad courses will be taught as already planned, with in person teaching only occurring as necessary as deemed by the faculty teaching the class.

COVID testing will be available weekly on request for those working on campus even if asymptomatic. (<https://campusblueprint.umich.edu/winter-term-plan/#testing>)

GSI Work:

As we have done this semester already, no faculty member or GSI will teach in person unless they opt-in to do so. The default is that you will NOT teach in person. Faculty have told Dean Sweet their teaching plans already, and the vast majority of our teaching is already planned to be remote. Course faculty decide whether they want to teach in person, but should only do so if they believe that in person teaching is something they want to do and is necessary for the best student learning.

Working in the labs

Thankfully, COVID transmission within work areas from worker to worker has been nearly non-existent. This is because our people working in labs have been so careful. Please keep up the good work. No changes to our lab practices have been announced.

We will continue to have everybody who can work remotely to do so throughout next semester. De-densifying the campus is viewed as a major deterrent to the spread of COVID on campus.

Supervisors will work with employees as to how to conduct our core business while working as remotely as possible.

My personal observation is that our building is pretty empty but the core work of the College is still getting done. You are doing a great job!

I know that we are all operating at 200% right now. Please talk to your advisor if you need a break. These days are stressful for all of us. I have spoken to many of your advisors, and they want to support you, but they don't always know what you need or what would help. Likely it is something different for each of you. Initiate a conversation with a classmate or your advisor and talk about it!

Please take some time to enjoy what promises to be a beautiful Fall weekend in Michigan.

Bruce A. Mueller, PharmD, FCCP, FASN, FNKF
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From: President Mark S. Schlissel <targetemail@umich.edu>
Sent: Friday, November 6, 2020 11:16 AM
To: muellerb@umich.edu
Subject: More testing and remote learning options for our winter semester

To All Members of the Campus Community:

Our current semester has been like no other, with our students, faculty and staff exhibiting innovation and resilience as we taught, learned, advanced research, cared for patients and served our communities under the most challenging of circumstances. We studied in tents, wore PPE in our labs, worked from home and discovered new ways to share our creativity and access to museums and performances.

It has also been difficult. We were forced to navigate challenging modes of instruction, serious disruptions to work and personal lives, and fear and anxiety from living with COVID-19 in our community.

The pandemic hasn't gone away, COVID-19 case numbers continue to increase in Michigan and around the nation, and the winter will bring new and likely greater challenges. We know that cold and flu season, colder weather, and "COVID fatigue" present very real obstacles for us. To address these realities, our winter term plan includes:

- Major increases in asymptomatic testing to detect virus infection that will be mandatory

for some and easier to access for many individuals in the campus community.

- Only courses that must be taught in person will be delivered that way, as determined by instructors and program leaders.
- To reduce density in our residence halls, undergraduates who don't need to be on campus should remain at their permanent residences for the semester and study remotely. U-M Housing will move exclusively to single-room occupancy. We will continue to provide a safe place for smaller numbers in our residence halls – particularly, those students for whom U-M is their home or who need to be on campus for health and safety reasons, required aspects of their curricula, or other extraordinary, extenuating circumstances.

As the Winter 2021 Coordinating Committee said, "in the summer, decisions needed to be made with very little evidence. Looking forward to winter term, we have a small but growing base of experience and reflection to assist in guiding our choices." Some of our fall plans worked well, and others didn't. We were able to anticipate and prepare for many challenges, but for others we needed greater engagement in order to better address what our community was dealing with every day.

We have [engaged broadly](#) across the campus to gather input from faculty, staff, students and key experts. Our [plan for the winter term](#) reflects what we learned, what many of you have recommended, and what we've heard that you hope to achieve going forward. Thanks to your experiences, the feedback you've shared and our continual commitment to learning and doing better, we will apply several important lessons that will help us in the months ahead:

- Safety remains an utmost concern throughout our community. We saw this in our surveys and heard it first-hand in discussions. We will prioritize the health of our students, staff, faculty and the surrounding community.
- Students and instructors want to continue to advance their academic goals as effectively and safely as possible, and we want all students to continue their progress towards graduation. Our plans emphasize our academic mission, with safety measures to address key concerns and more options for remote instruction. No instructors will be required to teach in person if they choose not to.
- Activities beyond academics are essential to the success of everyone in our community. We will work to ensure that student life on and off campus as well as staff and faculty working conditions are as safe, engaging and supportive as possible.
- The stresses felt in our community due to 2020's combination of threats have been unprecedented. We must support all members of our community as they work through them, both as individuals and family members, and as contributors to our campus community. Mental health and community well-being are key components of our plans, and lower density across campus is aimed at relieving some of the higher stress work for staff.

We want to make it easier for all members of our community to comply with public health guidelines and ease pressure on our quarantine and isolation housing and contact tracing. We will also intensify our enforcement of public health guidelines for our community.

Additional details on our winter plans are available in the [University Record](#) and on the Campus Maize and Blueprint [winter term page](#). We will also be presenting information on different aspects of the winter plan during our Campus Weekly COVID-19 Briefing later today at 1:00 p.m. The briefing will be posted [here](#) when the recording is available, and you can also see updates on current campus conditions on our [COVID-19 dashboard](#).

Further information for undergraduate students in our residence halls will be shared later today. Please note that graduate and professional housing will remain unchanged as there has been very little COVID-19 transmission in those communities. We know that reducing the number of undergraduates in our residence halls will diminish a treasured part of our students' college experience in a way that is inconceivable during normal times. This was a very difficult decision we had to make to support health and safety, and we apologize for the disruption it will cause.

I want to thank all of you who have responded to our surveys and shared your experiences on our COVID-19 response. There are different views on what an ideal semester looks like for U-M. That's not a surprise given the diversity of our campus. We can't achieve our aspirations as a university without you. Many of our new efforts are the result of your feedback – and your candor and engagement are making us better and safer as a university.

I join all of you in wishing that our winter term could be normal, and we could enjoy the transition into spring free of the anxieties of this pandemic. The semester will be the third consecutive one of hardship for our community. I pledge that we will continue to engage and listen to your concerns as we work to make the winter semester a positive one despite these difficult circumstances.

Sincerely,

Mark S. Schlissel, M.D., Ph.D.
President

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