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**[list#sa] Update: Winter semester dates approved**

1 message

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**President's Office** <nmupres@nmu.edu>

Fri, Sep 18, 2020 at 2:18 PM

Reply-To: President's Office &lt;nmupres@nmu.edu&gt;

To: list#aaup@nmu.edu, list#adh@nmu.edu, list#adjunct@nmu.edu, list#ap@nmu.edu, list#coaches@nmu.edu, list#deans@nmu.edu, list#exec@nmu.edu, list#fmp@nmu.edu, list#grad@nmu.edu, list#jcf@nmu.edu, list#pdf@nmu.edu, list#sa@nmu.edu, list#srmgmt@nmu.edu, list#top@nmu.edu

NMU Students, Faculty and Staff,

There are several items to update the campus community about today, including decisions from yesterday's special NMU Board of Trustees meeting, which you can read more about in [Northern Today](#).

**WINTER SCHEDULE:** The Board of Trustees approved the recommendation to revise the winter 2021 semester academic calendar, delaying the start by one week to Tuesday, Jan. 19. That Monday (Jan. 18) is Martin Luther King Jr. Day. There will be no spring break and the semester will end on Saturday, May 1, as originally scheduled. I know students, in particular, look forward to spring break, but canceling it will reduce the potential for COVID-19 virus transmission from travel between campus and other destinations. I want to thank the members of the Ad Hoc Calendar committee for their work regarding this matter.

**COMMENCEMENTS:** The Board also approved a recommendation from the Commencement Committee to hold a virtual graduation recognition ceremony since an in-person event will not be possible by late November due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The date of the event is being finalized, but is tentatively set for Nov. 28. Details will be sent later in October to those graduating. While I know an in-person commencement is not possible, I really feel for our graduates who won't have the opportunity to gather on campus with family, friends, and their NMU family members to celebrate. We will make the decision about the format of the May commencement in February.

**TESTING CHALLENGES:** The Clinical Science Department ran its pilot surveillance testing this week as scheduled and found some inconsistencies between one point of analysis and another. We are pausing the plan to begin full-group testing next week while we have an external vendor evaluate the initial results. We are doing this to provide confidence to the campus community that any future results are accurate and reliable. The testing seems to indicate so far that our mask wearing and social distancing is reducing spread of the virus and keeping any positive cases more mild in its impact to the infected person. We are also monitoring a national trend in delayed delivery of COVID-19 testing materials. In fact, we are in a lengthy back order for testing kits for our Health Center equipment. As such, the Health Center is limiting its testing to symptomatic individuals and those meeting CDC and Marquette County Health Department testing protocols at this time. Contact your personal health care provider or the NMU Health Center (227-2355) if you have symptoms or are concerned about possible COVID-19 exposure. Information about local external testing sites is available through the Health Center for those who are not symptomatic but desire testing.

**STUDENT FUNDING:** Now that the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the fall semester (Northern's official census date) has passed, eligible students are receiving the Emergency Grant of \$115. This grant comes from unused portions of the federal CARES Act funding Northern received last spring. When not all of the funding was exhausted by the first round of grants distributed over the summer, Northern decided to provide unused funds to students for any pandemic-related disruptions they had this fall semester. Students did not have to apply for this grant. Distribution has been by direct deposit or mailed check. Students with questions about eligibility can contact NMU Financial Aid (227-2327). Some of the federal eligibility requirements include (but are not limited to) being eligible for federal financial aid and having filled out a FAFSA, not being a Global Campus or international student, and making satisfactory academic progress.

I hope you get a chance to enjoy our beautiful Upper Peninsula environment this weekend. Wherever you go and whatever you do, please remain vigilant about mask wearing, social distancing, avoiding large gatherings, frequently washing your hands and not touching your face with unclean hands.

Stay safe,  
Fritz Erickson, NMU President