

Dear Graduate Students,

We share in your disappointment that Lehigh will not be fully reopening this fall. University leadership spent months working through a return-to-campus plan, and we had every hope of welcoming our entire campus community back. Unfortunately, over the past few weeks, the COVID-19 public health situation has changed dramatically, and we came to the conclusion that we could not fully open campus while still protecting the health and well-being of those on our campus and our friends and neighbors in South Bethlehem. We have a chance, as individuals and as a community, to protect one another's health.

As you are aware, Lehigh announced on Friday, July 31, that, due to concerns about the continued spread of COVID-19 around the country and the world, the university would be limiting on-campus housing this fall to first-year students and residents of graduate housing (Saucon Village, Packer House, and 230 W. Packer). As usual, many graduate students will secure housing for the upcoming academic year in the neighborhoods surrounding campus. Given this, we wanted to take a moment to share with you some insights into how this semester is going to look in terms of academics, student life and health and safety. **Please read all the way to the end of this long message as you may be responsible for completing two training courses and getting tested before the semester starts.**

As we recommended in the memo [COVID-19 Guidelines for Graduate Students](#), we want to remind you that graduate students have the option of studying remotely this fall if your circumstances permit you to do so. We also recommended in the July 30 memo that [international students](#) who have not been able to secure visas should not plan to return for the fall semester. Lehigh has invested much time and effort into expanding and improving our ability to deliver a high-quality educational experience online, and we are confident that our remote offerings this fall will be both dynamic and engaging.

Quarantining and other requirements

As a reminder, students traveling to campus from abroad or from states [now classified as "hot spots" by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania](#) must self-quarantine outside of a "hot spot" area for 14 days before their arrival on campus.

Until further notice, everyone on campus will be wearing face coverings, practicing physical distancing, and meeting and learning in significantly modified physical or virtual environments. Even if you are on campus this fall, it is possible that many of your courses may be delivered remotely. Social gatherings and traditional campus life offerings will be limited, and if the situation with the virus worsens, we may be forced to change course once more.

COVID-19 testing

As part of our health and safety plan for returning to campus, only graduate students who are taking in-person classes will be required to undergo COVID-19 testing shortly after arrival in Bethlehem. Please refer to the [COVID-19 Testing Protocol for Students with Campus Access](#) for more detailed information. Please note that we do not have the capacity to test spouses and dependents or non-Lehigh affiliated housemates, but we encourage them to get tested on their own.

Access to campus

If you will be accessing campus, you must complete the first training course ([return to campus training course](#)) mentioned above. Those of you who will be living on campus or in the Lehigh Valley will have access to the Health and Wellness Center, and to other campus facilities such as the counseling center, the fitness center, libraries, and

the university center. Hours of access may be limited. The opening of campus buildings and the numbers of people allowed in these buildings will be adjusted over the course of the semester as we determine what is safe given changing pandemic conditions. In other words, campus life will be visibly and noticeably different than it would be under normal circumstances, as we will all be asked to take steps to promote a safe and healthy Lehigh community.

Social contract and required training

All of us who will be studying, working and living on and around campus this fall—students, faculty, and staff—have a shared responsibility to make decisions that are in the best interest of our Lehigh community. Lehigh maintains expectations of all members of the campus community. The coming semester, in particular, will have expectations related to the health and safety of community members around COVID-19, which are outlined in the attached [Social Contract](#) that all students must agree to before arriving on campus or beginning coursework. **You will be asked to sign this contract as part of a second return-to-campus training course we will be sharing with you shortly.** This course is in addition to the one we asked you to complete in the paragraph above. Although you may notice some duplication in these trainings and some material that does not apply to graduate students, you will find that the earlier training focuses on academics and assistantships whereas this course focuses on life outside of the classroom and lab. If you are accessing campus at all, you must complete both courses.

Code of conduct

We expect that you will follow the guidelines we will set forth to the best of your ability. As always, in cases where students put others at risk by failing to meet these expectations, the [Lehigh University Code of Conduct](#) will be enforced. Specifically, we call your attention to: Article III, Section 2: Respect for Others, which states, “Lehigh University expects that all students will act in a civil manner that reflects maturity, social responsibility, and respect towards others and the Lehigh Community;” and Article III, Section 4: Respect for Community, which states, “As members of the Lehigh University Community, students are expected to serve as ethical representatives. They are expected to know and follow the Code of Conduct, and show respect for the faculty, staff, community members and administrative processes that are in place to maintain and support our community standards. Students are expected to hold themselves and others accountable and report violations of the Code of Conduct or other violations to the University.”

Social gatherings

Some of you may choose to host or attend informal social gatherings off campus. These events are a particular area of concern, not only related to the spread of COVID-19 among our students, faculty and staff, but among our South Bethlehem neighbors as well. Students are expected to limit attendance to any events held off campus to 10 or fewer participants (including residents of the house) in an effort to maintain appropriate physical distancing. Students and student organizations who host or attend events that violate attendance expectations will be held accountable by the Code of Conduct. Outcomes for violating these expectations could include removal from housing, removal from in-person classes, suspension, or expulsion for individuals and dissolution or termination for organizations.

We know gathering in person is an important part of a campus experience to many, and we are making arrangements to create outdoor spaces on campus that can be used for events for those who choose to have campus access. Tents will be available for reservation and use by students, and campus programs will continue to be offered, with smaller in-person, appropriately distanced groups. Virtual participation options will be available for those who are taking classes fully remotely or who are not near campus. While this year will look different and we may not all be physically together as a community, we are committed to supporting these vital experiences and opportunities to stay connected with one another.

We understand that a vibrant living and learning environment is important to our graduate students, but the reality is that our ability to remain on campus—and, eventually, return to a more normal campus experience—relies on every member of the campus community to do their part to mitigate risk. Working together, we are confident that we can be successful in this effort. We look forward to greeting you, whether in person or remotely, in just a few short weeks.

Sincerely,
Beth Dolan
Deputy Provost for Graduate Education

Kathleen Hutnik
Associate Dean for Graduate Student Life

Holly Taylor
Assistant Dean of Students/Director
Office of Student Conduct & Community Expectations