

2020 PLANNING DOCUMENT

Knights *Return*

Providing a safe educational environment for our campus family



For the Students, Faculty & Staff of
MARTIN LUTHER COLLEGE





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9/22/2020 Update

- Standards for Campus Life > Quarantine in Place > [View update](#)
- Prevention > Ventilation Adjustments > [View update](#)
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8/26/2020 Update

- Standards for Campus Life > Quarantine Protocols for Students > [View update](#)

7/24/2020 Update

- Prevention > Face Coverings > [View update](#)

“That gospel guides us in all our preparations as we seek to provide a safe educational environment for our campus family.”



Guiding Principles

The mission of Martin Luther College (MLC) is to train a corps of Christian witnesses who are qualified to meet the ministry needs of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. To fulfill this mission, MLC carries out all instruction and programs of student life according to the gospel as revealed in the inspired and inerrant Word of God. That gospel guides us in all our preparations as we seek to provide a safe educational environment for our campus family.

Students on Campus

MLC, under God's grace, will conduct its fall semester with face-to-face instruction.

In making this decision, we have drawn upon the best resources and information available. We continue to be guided by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) related to COVID-19 infection prevention practices. We are also communicating and collaborating with Brown County Public Health (BCPH) and local medical centers as we consider the health needs of our students, faculty, and staff—especially those at increased risk for the COVID-19 virus.

Through all the changing conditions in our society, we trust a Savior who holds our lives in his nailed-marked hands. In careful stewardship of his gifts of health and strength, we will work to keep our campus family safe in every area of campus life, from dormitory to classroom to athletic venue, and showing love to our neighbors in the New Ulm community by hosting only essential, safe, on-campus events, and providing virtual events whenever possible.

Please note, this plan remains flexible and may change as pandemic circumstances change.

In fact, our current efforts are focused on creating a learning environment open to and prepared for change. Our top priority is providing the highest level of safety and confidence in our campus learning environment, while adhering to the spiritual and educational standards WELS expects from its college of ministry. Our commitment remains, under God's grace and guidance, to conduct our ministry so our students may complete their programs in a timely manner while enjoying all the academic, athletic, cultural, and social amenities we can provide under our present circumstances.

Communication

The MLC administration and Fall Planning Committee continue to monitor the situation and consider available information to plan for campus safety. Since this plan is evolving, we will update



it regularly, communicating all protocols to ensure a safe return and an effective educational environment this fall.

In addition to this document, MLC has carefully worked through our COVID-19 Preparedness Plan, which will also be instrumental in our daily operations. You can access that plan from [this link](#).

Stay informed by checking email, MLC social media posts, and website announcements.

Standards for Campus Life

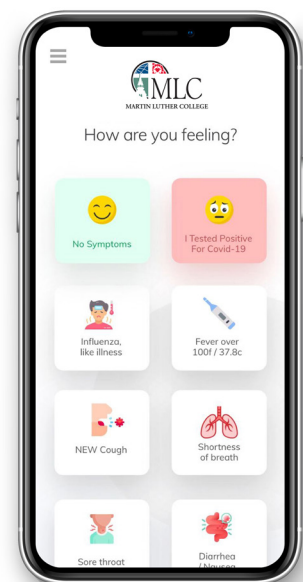
These standards detail the measures campus members are expected to observe to minimize the incidence and spread of COVID-19 on our campus. (In this context, “campus” refers to everyone who is an active part of the daily ministry at MLC—students, faculty, and staff.) Individual departments and divisions may adopt additional guidelines consistent with these standards.

This is a part of our evolving Knights Return plan and as a living document, we expect it will be revised throughout the academic year as understanding of the virus deepens, best practices change, and therapeutic measures become available. Changes made to the document will be announced to the campus family and each person is expected to remain apprised of these changes as they occur. The most recent updates will be posted at the beginning of this document along with the date of publication.

Daily Health Screenings

Participating in daily (particularly morning) screening, and then staying home or in a dorm room when necessary, will be key to reducing community exposure to COVID-19.

- The campus family at MLC will be using a mobile and web (online) app called CampusClear (<https://www.campusclear.com/>) for personal, daily screening.
- Each student, staff, and faculty member will be expected to conduct a self-screening procedure (including a temperature check) before starting the day’s activities, and must log the results using the CampusClear app.
- Individuals reporting no symptoms after their personal screening will be cleared for work or study. Others will be instructed to follow appropriate protocols, including contacting MLC Health Services (507-233-9101).





Isolation and Quarantine Protocols for Students

Isolation and quarantine precautions are used to help stop the spread of disease from one person to another. MLC will follow CDC and MDH guidance regarding isolation and quarantine protocols.

- *Isolation Protocol:* Students living on campus who exhibit symptoms and/or test positive for COVID-19 must live in isolation, away from healthy individuals. MLC will ask anyone in this situation to travel to and isolate at home. If students cannot return home they will be moved to living quarters identified for isolation purposes. Currently two vacant campus homes are designated for isolation, one for men and one for women.
- *Quarantine Protocol:* Students who are determined to have been in close contact with an individual who has exhibited symptoms or who has tested positive for COVID-19 will be directed to quarantine. MLC will ask anyone in this situation to travel to and quarantine at home if possible. Currently the fourth-floor carpeted wing of Summit Hall has been set aside as quarantine housing for men, and the first-floor carpeted wing of Summit Hall has been set aside as quarantine housing for women.
- *Quarantine in Place:* In the event that an MLC student's roommate is tested for COVID, that roommate will be asked to Quarantine in Place (stay in their dorm room) since their roommate being tested will be quarantining away from the dorm.

In the event of a COVID-19 case on campus, our isolation protocol procedures will be followed, BCPH will lead contact tracing efforts, and MLC will actively consult with local and state health agencies if additional safety measures are necessary.

Prevention

As wise stewards of our own health, and the health of those God places around us, it is important for everyone in our campus family to take steps to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Even though individuals may not consider themselves to be at high risk, others on our campus or in our community may be, and we are compelled by the love of Christ to be sensitive to their condition.



Face Coverings

On Wednesday, July 22, Minnesota's Governor, Tim Walz, issued Governor's Executive Order 20-81, a mask mandate for the state of Minnesota. As of July 25, 2020, people in Minnesota are required to wear a face covering in all indoor spaces. Individuals who are outdoors, should wear a face covering when social distancing cannot be maintained.

Follow this link for more details and specific applications for the Emergency Executive Order 20-81: mlc-wels.edu/health/mask-up-knights

- Following directives from MDH and BCPH, faculty, staff, and students are required to wear face coverings in common building areas such as the classroom buildings, Luther Student Center, chapel, and dormitory hallways and common areas.

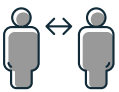


- Students are not required to wear a face covering in their own room, except when interacting with individuals other than their roommate.
- Faculty and staff are not obligated to wear a face covering while alone in their office. Faculty and staff are expected to wear a face covering in their office when other individuals are present in the office.
- Faculty, staff, and students are not required to wear face coverings outside unless they cannot maintain social distancing.



Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

- Practice proper handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
 - It is important to wash your hands at the beginning and end of a work shift, prior to any mealtimes, and after using the toilet.
 - Avoid unnecessary touching of objects such as door handles, countertops, vending machine buttons, etc.
 - Avoid touching your mouth, nose, and eyes with your hands.
 - If soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitizer will be available throughout campus.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or use the inside of the elbow. Used tissues should be thrown in the trash. Hands should be washed immediately with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use of hand sanitizer when necessary. The Minnesota Department of Health “Cover Your Cough” protocols reinforce the importance of this behavior.



Social Distancing Protocols

Classes will be conducted with reduced classroom capacity to implement a minimum of 6-foot distancing between students, as well as between the instructor and students. MLC has conducted an initial classroom-by-classroom analysis to apply these distancing requirements across the college and will continue to refine this analysis.

Permissible seating in classrooms is marked to reinforce space separations as well as to ensure distance from an instructor. Entrance and exit from classrooms will be managed to prevent crowding around doorways at the beginning and end of classes.

Social distancing arrangements have also been implemented in the Chapel of the Christ, auditorium, cafeteria, and other campus communal locations.

Plexiglass barriers have been installed at points of contact with MLC personnel in accordance with CDC recommendations where a 6-foot distance cannot be maintained.



Cleaning and Disinfection Guidelines

MLC is establishing appropriate standards and protocols for cleaning and disinfecting based on recommendations from the CDC and MDH. **The cooperation of students, faculty, and staff will be critical to the success of these cleaning and disinfecting guidelines, allowing us to enjoy the fall semester together on campus.**



- Priority spaces and objects have been identified and will be cleaned and disinfected more frequently due to their location in high-traffic areas. Daily cleaning and disinfecting will be applied to high-touch objects such as door handles, elevator panels, and railings, as well as common areas in the work and academic environments.
- We encourage students, faculty, and staff to keep personal items (e.g., cell phones and other electronics) and personal work and living spaces clean. MLC will provide hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes and supplies for cleaning classroom areas and other school work spaces (e.g., physical ed. areas, library, music practice rooms, and labs).
- Students are asked to provide their own Personal Protective Equipment and cleaning materials for their residence hall rooms.



Ventilation Adjustments

HVAC equipment adjustments to help MLC combat COVID-19 include exhaust modifications to the Early Childhood Learning Center and cafeteria, as well as increased outside ventilation in the fitness center, cafeteria, and chapel. All other HVAC systems throughout campus will have new air filters installed before students arrive and will be programmed to run longer and set up to allow more outside air to be introduced into the spaces they serve.

In addition, a portable air filtration unit has been placed in the Chapel of the Christ. The unit is specifically designed for high-density areas such as our worship space, where large groups of people gather in close proximity and where infection risk is high.



Large Group Gatherings and Visitor Restrictions

Our guiding principles state, **“We will keep our supporting community safe by hosting only essential on-campus events with all necessary precautions, and by providing virtual alternatives for other events where possible.”**

To ensure the ongoing safety of our campus and local community, our **essential on-campus events will include only audience/congregational participants who are active members of our campus—students, faculty, and staff**. Even with those restrictions, due to necessary distancing and capacity requirements, it is likely that some campus members may need to participate in some events virtually.

MLC empathizes with friends and family members who want to see MLC student events, and will do everything possible to create virtual options to keep families and friends connected under these safety precautions.

- MLC will follow the most current State of Minnesota guideline for numbers of persons allowed to gather in groups. Groups will be expected to follow the physical distancing requirement of 6 feet between people and follow guidelines for temperature screening, face coverings, and handwashing/use of hand sanitizer.



- MLC will provide enhanced virtual group events, gatherings, or meetings whenever possible.
- For fall 2020, guests will not be allowed to reserve or use campus facilities.
- Campus vendors necessary to support campus operations are expected to follow guidelines regarding temperature screening, physical distancing, wearing of masks, and handwashing/use of hand sanitizer.
- While we cannot accommodate visitors to our indoor spaces, since recruitment is considered an essential element of our ministry, the Admissions Office will coordinate all requests for prospective student campus visits following MLC guidelines regarding group sizes, temperature screening, physical distancing, wearing of masks, and handwashing/use of hand sanitizer.
- While it will not be possible to accommodate guests at MLC events this fall, guests may briefly visit the campus if they limit their movements and interactions to outdoor spaces. All guests are reminded to refrain from entering our campus if they are experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms. Masks will not be required in outdoor spaces, but all are asked to please maintain appropriate social distancing.

Off-Campus Activities

- While MLC is very aware that students have off-campus employment obligations, the college administration is strongly encouraging all students to only attend essential off-campus activities and, thereby, avoid activities that will put them at greater risk of contracting and transmitting COVID-19. Students, faculty, and staff should follow all current physical distancing, group activity, hand hygiene, and face covering expectations at off-campus events as recommended by MDH and BCPH.
- Students will need to complete off-campus academic clinicals and student teaching and are expected to practice the necessary precautions when leaving campus.



Travel

Throughout the school year, the college will be evaluating travel necessity based on guidance from the CDC and other government agencies. Students are encouraged to limit travel, including travel home—remaining on, or close to, campus when possible.

Academics

The MLC administration and faculty are excited to have students back to campus this fall! Ministerial education involves so much more than just the mechanics of taking classes, and MLC remains committed to Christ-centered education that fully equips students to serve our churches and schools around the world. We are also committed to organizing our courses so all students can complete their programs on time. In our preparation for this academic year, faculty members have developed their courses to accommodate various scenarios as they unfold. Our departments are applying sound educational practices and evidence-based teaching methods so that all our students receive a creative, rigorous, dynamic, Christian higher education, no matter the delivery modality.



In the 2020-2021 academic year, we are planning for most of our courses to be delivered in-person, with less than 10% of courses being a blend of online and in-person instruction, all supported by Moodle and videoconference technology as necessary. All courses have received necessary modifications to maintain the health of both students and faculty members. Our faculty are planning new and creative ways to deliver high-quality learning experiences in these settings. We will communicate with students frequently and clearly so that everyone understands the style of each course. Student success and thorough preparation for the ministry are our highest priorities.



Academic Calendar

Our academic calendar has been developed and adjusted to reinforce our guiding principles for the safety of both our campus family and the city of New Ulm and its residents. It ensures that our students will complete their rigorous educational programs on time and be well-prepared for their future calling into the public ministry.

- Our first semester of 2020-2021 will begin as originally intended: Monday, August 24.
- Face-to-face, in-person instruction will conclude at the end of the day on Wednesday, November 25.
- Two more weeks of classes will then be conducted via distance learning.
- The semester will end on Thursday, December 10, a week earlier than planned.
- To make up for the earlier dismissal, classes will be held on September 7, October 15-16, and November 25 (typical days off).
- Students participating in field experiences (i.e., clinicals/student teaching) will receive further guidance as it becomes available from our state licensing board as well as local education and health agencies.
- Altering the start of the second semester is not yet under discussion.
- The Student Life and Mission Advancement Offices are working together to construct ideas for campus activity and release time during this long stretch of class.

We commit to this schedule with the assurance that our faculty is working diligently at developing parallel instructional plans. With these plans at the ready, our faculty has the capability of pivoting to alternate/distance instructional methods very quickly.

Student Life

We encourage all students to take special precautions in the 14 days prior to the return to campus this fall. Anyone tested and diagnosed with COVID-19 should not return to campus until symptom-free for 14 days. If a student is exposed to a known case of COVID-19 or suspects that he or she is developing symptoms, that student should be in close communication with the MLC Student Life and Health Services Offices for appropriate safety measures.

MLC staff continue to study best practices for residential life. Currently, we do not anticipate setting occupancy limits. Rather, roommates will be considered a “family unit”. Screening protocols using the CampusClear app will be implemented to mitigate the risk of spread within residence halls. Facial coverings will be required when in hallways and public spaces within residence halls. Facial coverings will only be required in dorm rooms when visitors to the room are present.



MOVE-IN AND DORM LIFE

MLC is asking that returning upper-class students move into their dorms without the help of family members if possible. First-year students and new students are asked to limit their accompanying help to one other person.

After the move-in period, no outside visitors will be allowed in dorms or campus buildings.

Housekeeping in dorms will be increased. This includes cleaning and disinfecting communal restrooms, kitchens, laundry areas, and lounges. Housekeeping will continue to focus on disinfecting high-touch areas with an EPA-approved product per CDC guidelines. Some disinfectant and disposable toweling will be made available, but students are also asked to bring equivalent cleaning supplies from home, so they can disinfect their personal living areas regularly.

MLC's Student Life Office has arranged safe housing accommodations for with students who are at high risk for COVID-19.



INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

The MLC International Services Office (ISO) is in direct contact with our new and returning international students.

Most of our international students have remained in the United States since the beginning of the year, and none will be returning from countries currently under a travel ban.

The ISO has been working with any students who need assistance with their readmittance or visa procedures and will confirm that all conditions will be met that are necessary for these students to begin and complete their semester safely.



FOOD SERVICE

Our partners at Pioneer College Catering (PCC) are planning a safe dining experience for our campus family with the same quality of service that our students have come to know and love!

As the semester begins, our cafeteria will limit service to students only, so that the logistics of serving and cleaning can be established. After those protocols are in place, and to maintain our campus safety, our cafeteria will serve only our campus family—students, staff, and faculty. PCC is looking forward to when they can again serve our extended MLC families, emeriti, and other guests.

Our dining area capacity is currently set at 250 by the MDH, so seating is arranged to allow for necessary social distancing. Students have been assigned lunch hours to be adjusted to reduce the volume of students dining at any given time. The Pioneer Catering staff will wear PPE to maintain the health and safety of our campus family.



Buffet and self-serve options will limit the number who can be present on the buffet line at one time and limit the number who can dine in. In addition to dining in, students will be able to utilize “to-go” options. Additional seating will be available outside in campus green space for those who make use of “to-go” options.

Most, but not all, cafeteria food options will continue to be available, and certain items will require plating by cafeteria staff.

The cafeteria will incorporate some strategically placed Plexiglass barriers, and cafeteria workers will clean tables, chairs, and high-touch surfaces on a regular basis. We will also expect students to follow social-distancing guidelines when dining and when disposing of trays and dishes. Entrance and exit procedures have been modified to ensure distancing protocols during high volume times.

Athletics

As of August 24, 2020 Martin Luther College is suspending all athletic contests for the fall sports season following a vote by the Upper Midwest Athletic Conference (UMAC) Council of Presidents/Chancellors.

The Council of Presidents/Chancellors supported a recommendation from the UMAC Council of Athletic Directors and the Athletic Directors voted to suspend the fall season following new changes by the NCAA Board of Governors in their requirements for competition, as well as a recommendation from the NCAA Division III Administrative Council for no competition this fall.

While competition has been suspended, practices are still allowed for fall sports. All eight MLC fall sports (football, volleyball, soccer, cross country and golf) will hold practices and strength and conditioning opportunities, while non-traditional sports seasons for baseball and softball will also be provided this fall.

The UMAC and its leadership councils continue to pursue the potential for spring seasons and championship events for all suspended fall sports.

As of September 1, 2020, The Upper Midwest Athletic Conference (UMAC) Council of Presidents and Chancellors supported a recommendation from the UMAC Council of Athletics Directors to suspend conference competition through December 31, 2020, in the sports of men’s and women’s basketball and men’s and women’s indoor track and field.

Conference competition in winter sports will begin in 2021 with modified conference schedules for men’s and women’s basketball. The adjusted conference basketball schedules will be finalized when additional information is available including but not limited to NCAA Sports Science Institute (SSI) requirements for winter sports and confirmed NCAA Division III Championship dates.



Co-curriculars

Co-curricular activities (clubs, student-led activities, aulics) are an important part of ministry training at MLC. We are committed to provide as many campus activities this fall as possible, and we will utilize some modifications to ensure everyone's safety.

The Student Life department, working in coordination with student groups, campus committees, and the Event Planning office, will develop new, innovative activities for this unprecedented semester at MLC. Through student input and leadership, we are excited to offer events that will provide fun, social opportunities for our campus family.

Other college events, campus ministries, performing arts, student clubs and organizations, and other campus activities will fully follow MLC protocols for smaller group sizes and using virtual resources. Look for additional information in the weeks ahead.

Health Services

The Health Services office is open Monday-Friday from 8:00am-2:00pm and is staffed by a registered nurse. This semester, no walk-in visits will be accepted. Students who would like to schedule an appointment must use the "Request an Appointment" feature on the health services website: <https://mlc-wels.edu/health/>.

In accordance with our MLC COVID-19 Preparedness Plan, students who are sick for any reason, exhibiting any of the COVID-19 symptoms that cannot be attributed to another non-COVID health condition, test positive or are presumptively positive for COVID-19 must stay home or in their dorm room, and call the Campus Nurse (507-233-9101). If a student does not pass daily screening via the CampusClear app, they should contact the Campus Nurse (507-233-9101).

Testing

MLC Health Services will not be conducting or collecting COVID-19 tests on our campus at this time. MLC is studying systems and practices for screening for the COVID-19 virus among members of the campus family that are consistent with the most recent guidance provided by the CDC and MDH to institutes of higher learning.

The New Ulm Medical Center will provide COVID tests to symptomatic and asymptomatic students through a phone screening and a curbside drive-up test. We are working closely with local public health departments (BCPH) and local medical facilities to establish sustainable arrangements for testing and medical care.

Students who are experiencing COVID symptoms should contact the campus nurse.
Area clinics include:



- New Ulm Medical Center <https://www.allinahealth.org/new-ulm-medical-center>
- Mayo Clinic Health System – Mankato <https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/locations/mankato>
- Mankato Clinic <http://www.mankatoclinic.com/>
- Sleepy Eye Medical Center <https://semedicalcenter.org/>

Working with Local Medical Providers

Symptomatic students will likely need to be seen by a healthcare provider at a local clinic. We strongly recommend that students take the time to set up an account at a local clinic of their choice before arriving on campus. This will greatly expedite the process if a student becomes ill during the school year and needs to schedule an appointment. This can be done by calling the Patient Services or Scheduling department. They will collect student information to get an account set up. They will need:

- Health insurance information (company name and ID number)
- Health insurance subscriber (usually mom or dad) and their date of birth
- Social Security Number
- Personal contact and billing information & emergency contact information.
- If needed, students can also transfer health records to the clinic before arrival on campus.
- Once students have an account set up it is recommended they also set up a virtual account via the clinic's health app, (for NUMC = Allina Health account, for Mayo Mankato = Mayo Clinic app). This will allow access to virtual visits, appointment summaries, and test results quickly and easily.

We recommend that students contact their health insurance customer service department to see which of the clinics is preferred by their insurance provider.

Students without health insurance are encouraged to contact Insurance Enrollment Assistance at Open Door Health Center. For more information, please visit: <https://odhc.org/insurance-enrollment/>

Medical Supplies Needed

- Students should bring a thermometer they are familiar with, in working order, for daily self-temperature checks. Thermometers should not be shared with other students.
- Students should also have on hand any over-the-counter medications they may need in addition to their prescription medications.
- Students should keep their health insurance card (or a copy) in a safe location in their dorm or wallet.

Special accommodations are available for students who are at high risk for COVID-19. If you are in this category and have not already made arrangements with the Campus Nurse (507-233.9101 or 507-441-1372), please call as soon as possible to discuss options and make needed arrangements.