

From: Official ESU Email <esumail@live.esu.edu>

Sent: Friday, July 14, 2020

To: ESU Students <ESUStudents@live.esu.edu>

Subject: Message from ESU President Marcia G. Welsh - July 14, 2020

I hope this message finds you well and in good spirits. As we, along with the rest of the country, continue to monitor the latest data related to the COVID-19 pandemic, we cannot ignore the risks to the health and safety of our students, faculty, staff, and local community. While we were certain we could all return to campus with a “new normal” this fall, we know now that this is not the safest, most realistic, option for our greater ESU community.

Today I must announce that East Stroudsburg University will be returning to remote learning for the majority of classes during the Fall 2020 semester. While this will have major implications for many in our community, we must continue to always put your safety as a top priority.

We were thrown into the world of remote learning rather suddenly this past spring and learned a lot from that experience. My leadership team and I, in communication with faculty, students and staff, have taken note of everything that did and did not work during that time. Now, with more time to plan, we are certain we can continue to offer a top quality education in a remote format as students work toward their ultimate goal of obtaining their degree. Keep in mind, while we planned to return to full on-campus learning this fall, we told you planning for the semester would be fluid and we were prepared to adjust if necessary. Though we didn’t think we would need to make this decision so soon, we were always prepared to make it. Further, our decision to keep the majority of classes online enables us to prepare for what we hope will be a more normal University experience when we reconvene for the Spring 2020 semester.

We will offer a very limited number of classes in a hybrid format, meaning both remote and in-person, to assist students with student teaching, clinical placements, internships, etc. We are committed to ensuring our students reach their educational and professional goals. We know it is important now, more than ever, to have highly trained professionals ready to work in our community.

The University will make adjustments to dining, housing, and other student fees impacted by this shift to remote instruction. For the Fall semester, tuition and fees will be adjusted to reflect the changes in the availability of amenities to students during this pandemic. Most students will receive approximately a 4-15% reduction in total charges as a result of the change to remote format. The university will also issue a 15% tuition waiver to the out-of-state tuition rate for non-residential students. Additional details about specific adjustments will be communicated in the coming days with changes in billing occurring shortly after.

We will be releasing students from all on-campus housing contracts for the Fall 2020 semester. ESU on-campus housing is developing plans to welcome a limited number of students to our residential facilities with added precautions for their health and well-being. Priority will be given to students who are in academic placements (i.e. student teachers, clinical placements, and internship sites), international students or other special circumstances. Further information on how to apply for housing will be forthcoming to students who have currently applied for Fall 2020 housing. For students who may have already signed a housing lease off campus, please reach out to your landlord and discuss options. We are certain there are many in the region who will work with you to cancel your contract given these unusual circumstances. For those who have difficulty, we remind you that as an ESU student, you have

access to some legal advice/assistance through the Student Activity Association (570) 422-3291 and if necessary, the university will assist in advocating with local property owners.

We have a dedicated page on ESU's website (www.esu.edu/open) that will answer most of your questions and provide you with plenty of resources and services in place to help you succeed this fall. In the next few days we will be posting and updating our Frequently Asked Questions with responses that convey information related to this new change to our Fall 2020 opening. We ask that you revisit the webpage later this week (and often) to carefully read through the information provided as it will be updated as needed. There will also be an open forum discussion via Zoom in August for students with Interim President Ken Long and other members of the senior leadership team to answer any additional questions you may have. Information on the forum will be available in the coming days.

In these times of uncertainty, I know we will all work together to provide the best education for our students while making the health and safety of our campus and the community at large a top priority. I urge you to reach out and ask for help when you need it. What we, and you, do between now and December will determine what happens in January. We must all work toward the goal of a safe reopening and the return to some level of campus normal. It is with so much personal love for ESU that I wish you all continued resolve to stay Warrior Strong.

Marcia G. Welsh, Ph.D.
President
East Stroudsburg University