

**EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY  
UNIVERSITY HEALTH AND SAFETY  
COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

**February 19, 2021**

**Attendees:**

Nina Contis – Commission on Women  
Audrey Farrugia – AAUP  
Cathy Gable - GSR/UAW-1976  
Chris Grant – Physical Plant  
Becky Janes – Residence Life  
Tanya Johnson – Science Complex  
Kristen Klochko – Engage@EMU  
Judith Kullberg - AAUP

Kevin Lawson – Student Center  
James McEvers - EHS  
Stacie McMullen – Athletics  
Lisa Mitchell – FT Lecturers  
Jeffrey Norris – Rec/IM  
Crystal Walrath - UACDC  
Kathryn Wilhoff - EHS

**Alternate:** Candice Hunter – Academic AAUP

**Absent:**

Timothy Allen, Jennifer Jones Barnes, Mia Bass, Julie Berger, Don Gregory, Bob Heighes, Pat McGill, Auggie Mickevicius, Brian Pappas, Tracey Piercecchi, Dan Salk, John Sidelinker, Beth Stoner, Shana Thompson, Joseph Torres and Jeanette Zalba

1. This meeting was conducted via Zoom.
2. The activity report for January/February was sent to the committee members prior to the meeting. The following items were discussed:
  - a. Lisa Mitchell asked about item 8f COVID Compliance. Kathryn noted these were site visits for verification of physical distancing and compliance with the COVID plan.
  - b. Judith Kullberg inquired about items 4k Mark Jefferson Biology GA office access policy and 4l Pray Harrold concerns over physical distancing during classes. James met with the Biology department head regarding the use of the GA office space behind the swipe card access to the CMBB lab. Also, James reviewed the physical distancing set up in several PH classrooms to verify the number of students allowed in the room.
  - c. Judith also asked about item 9ff which was a duplicate of item 4l.
3. Kathryn Wilhoff reminded the committee members to check their on-campus work areas for water damage. With the recent cold weather and expected warm up next week, broken pipes could occur.
4. Nina Contis had nothing to report.

5. Chris Grant noted the significant amount of snow in February. Grounds has met with LAZ regarding snow removal concerns, including blocking signage and sidewalks. LAZ plows the lots when there is 2 inches or more of snow. Grounds takes care of lesser amounts. Students did not move their cars out of the way for snow removal in the residence hall parking area. Becky Janes asked to be included on future requests for the students to move their cars.

Chris reported MDOT and YCUA are planning to re-do Cross Street from Huron to Summit this summer.

Chris also noted a raccoon might be on the loose in Mark Jefferson and please let Physical Plant know if the masked bandit is spotted. UPDATES: The raccoon raided the café in Mark Jefferson during the weekend causing damage to building when a water faucet was turned on. The raccoon was caught Thursday evening and removed from the building.

6. Cathy Gable had nothing to report.
7. Becky Janes noted Residence Life has been dealing with broken pipes in several locations, Westview, Downing and 601 W. Forest. Becky reported Housing applications are open for returning students for next year. Buell and Phelps will be closed next year. Housing is offering singles for first year students. This year, it was 20% singles in traditional residence halls.
8. Crystal Walrath reported UACDC is still hiring students.
9. Kristen Klochko stated that Engage@EMU is hiring approximately 150 students.
10. Lisa Mitchell inquired about the fall class plans, what is the new normal going to look like? Is distancing changing from 6 to 3 feet? Please see item 16.
11. James McEvers reported Return to Research Walk-Throughs continue and the final environmental walk-through for COB has been completed.
12. Kevin Lawson indicated the Student Center is meeting on preliminary planning for events returning to campus and reviewing what other universities are doing.
13. Stacie McMullen reported all the teams except football are currently competing. She also noted the COVID vaccination clinics continue at the Convocation Center.
14. Candice Hunter had nothing to report.
15. Jeff Norris had nothing to report.
16. Judith Kullberg asked about the fall semester planning. Will there be more in person classes? Rumors of 30-80% in person circulating. She also inquired about what changes were put in place on campus to mitigate the COVID spike in January and what was the

cause. Nina also inquired about the vaccines. Kathryn followed up with the University Administration and has the following information:

### **Summer and Fall Semester Planning**

Planning for the summer and fall semesters is ongoing. The class schedule for Summer A will be similar to last summer – nearly all classes will be taught online. Summer B will also be similar to last summer – with more in-person classes but with the large majority of those classes being online.

**The University is proceeding with fall semester planning.** The baseline fall schedule plan provides for a greater number of online/remote courses than have been offered in pre-COVID years and an increased number of in-person courses than this past year. Student data nationwide indicate a strong desire for in-person college choices for the fall semester, particularly traditional first-year students entering from high school, but also a different balance of online and in-person overall. The University is creating two alternative scheduling scenarios that could be implemented should public health conditions, especially the vaccination process, not proceed as currently predicted. The University will publish the baseline schedule but review the situation carefully as the summer semester begins and adjust as needed.

The pandemic has been marked by progress and setbacks. The University is approaching our planning carefully, with safety at the forefront and an understanding that changing circumstances will require adjustments in our overall operations. The University asks that our community members remain flexible and understanding in the face of the uncertainties surrounding the pandemic.

Subject to these general parameters, specific scheduling discussions will continue to occur in the colleges and departments.

### **Response from the University to the University Health & Safety Committee for information re: the increase in COVID-19 cases for the weeks of January 20, 2021, and January 27, 2021:**

As you are aware, the University experienced a significant increase in COVID-19 positive cases in late-January. During the weeks of January 20 and January 27, the University documented 58 and 82 COVID-19 positive cases, respectively, among students and employees.

The University took this situation very seriously because the data from this two-week period represented our largest weekly case counts since the inception of the pandemic. President Smith shared this information with the campus community in his weekly e-mail messages dated January 28 and February 4, and the COVID-19 data were updated on the online dashboard.

EMU manages a rigorous case management and contact tracing program in partnership with the Washtenaw County Health Department (WCHD), which has repeatedly and publicly praised EMU's efforts. In response to these rising case counts, the COVID-19 case management team met to determine the probable causes for the increase in positive cases.

Through this review process, the team identified several causes for the unusual increase in cases, including:

- A group of students and staff attended an off-campus funeral that led to several +COVID cases.
- Several on-campus and off-campus social gatherings by students who had recently returned from the December recess occurred during this time period. Note: Residential students had tested negative for COVID-19 prior to their return to campus.

Through the review process, no cases were traced to classroom or office interactions.

The contact tracers were able to identify all attendees of the social gatherings, and the University implemented targeted and aggressive actions to mitigate the rising case numbers. For example, the University:

- increased outreach to students, increased testing of those students, and placed students in isolation and quarantine,
- initiated student responsibility proceedings involving students who may have violated University policies, and
- initiated disciplinary proceedings against employees who may have violated University policies.

Fortunately, our aggressive actions made a positive difference. Cases of COVID-19 associated with the EMU community declined by 47% (from 82 cases to 43 cases) between the week of January 27 and February 3, declined another 62% (from 43 cases to 16 cases) the week of February 10, and declined another 56% (from 16 cases to 7 cases) the week of February 17.

Despite the recent drop in new cases, the University continues its comprehensive mitigation efforts, including:

- requiring all individuals on campus to complete daily screenings which are enforced at check-in desks in buildings where free face masks are available;
- offering free COVID-19 testing with same-day results to the campus community;
- monitoring waste water in residential facilities to identify possible COVID-19 cases before an outbreak occurs, and tying those data to testing decisions; and
- offering a telehealth clinic staffed by EMU nursing faculty, staff, and students to answer health-related questions, evaluate negative COVID-19 pass screening outcomes, follow up on contact tracing results and directives, and regularly communicate with all campus-based quarantined or isolated individuals.

### **Regarding Vaccinations**

Several Covid-19 vaccines are now available. Vaccine supplies are limited and administered based on a prioritization protocol created by the State of Michigan. You may learn more about the prioritization for vaccination [here](#).

When you are eligible to receive the vaccine, the University strongly encourages you to do so. University employees and students were asked to complete a vaccination survey and

may be eligible for vaccination through the Washtenaw County Health Department based on the prioritization protocols. You may also contact your primary health care provider or local pharmacies."

17. Tanya Johnson noted there had been some ventilation issues that James was able to address.
18. Audrey Farrugia echoed the concerns of Lisa and Judith regarding fall classes and access to the vaccine.
19. Kathryn noted the Zoom CPR and First Aid trainings have been successful and more [trainings are available](#).

**The next Health and Safety Committee Meeting is Friday  
March 19 at 9:00 a.m. via Zoom.**