

Student and Employee Email

SUBJECT LINE: Reminders for the Thanksgiving holiday break

11.16.2020

Lipscomb Family:

As we near the Thanksgiving season, we have much for which to be thankful. We are thankful for a record number of students who have chosen to be part of our community this fall. We are thankful for a fall semester that has been navigated successfully and a community that has remained healthy and well. And, we are thankful for each and every member of the Lipscomb family who continues daily to do their part to protect the health and wellness of the Bison Herd.

We are all looking forward to the holiday break. Although it is certain to be a season that is different than typical for all of us, we are prayerful that you each find rest, rejuvenation, comfort and joy during this time. Before we part for the break, there are a few reminders and information that we want to share with you:

1. Remote learning following Thanksgiving break
2. Post-Thanksgiving campus housing plan
3. Expanded employee cohorting option beginning Thanksgiving week
4. Follow basic COVID protocols
5. Preparing for the holidays
6. Spring calendar

Remote learning following Thanksgiving break

As a reminder, following the Thanksgiving break undergraduate courses and finals will be delivered in a remote format. The delivery format for graduate courses following Thanksgiving have been determined on a course-by-course basis by the department and has been communicated to students.

Residential students have been given the option of staying home after Thanksgiving break and completing their coursework and finals remotely or returning to campus to complete the semester remotely. Residential students should have already filed their intent to return form with the Office of Residential Life. **Residence halls will be closed for the Thanksgiving break from Saturday, November 21 - Saturday, November 28.** All residential students must vacate the dorms for these dates. Any exceptions must be approved in advance by the dean of housing and residence life.

Post-Thanksgiving campus housing plan

Increasing and even record-setting numbers of COVID cases are continuing to be reported across the country, leading to dire warnings about full hospitals, exhausted health care workers and potential lockdowns. In response to the COVID case increases, many states and cities have issued mask orders, lockdowns for two or more weeks, and required quarantining protocols for visitors entering the state. This recent [New York Times article](#) from Saturday, November 14,

provides an overview of circumstances across the country. Tennessee COVID results can be reviewed [here](#) and the status of key metrics for the Nashville area can be found [here](#). And, today, Nov. 16, Tennessee reported [a record high for the number of new COVID cases](#). A quick review of these metrics will show increasing scarcity of area medical facilities and trends going in the wrong direction.

As conditions worsen across the U.S. and in our region and given the increased risks posed by travel over the holiday break, **we recommend that all students remain home following the Thanksgiving break**. The Office of Student Life will be contacting those students who indicated a desire to return to campus and will work with those few students in limited and extenuating circumstances for possible on-campus housing options. Due to the increasing COVID concerns in the external environment, we believe this change is in the best interest of the health and wellness of our students and will limit possible COVID exposure to our students and others in the Lipscomb community.

When they leave for the Thanksgiving break, students should take all class materials and other necessary personal belongings with them that they will need through the end of the semester and throughout the winter break.

We apologize for this inconvenience and believe it provides the best route for our students to remain healthy for the remainder of their classes and final exams. We want all students to be healthy and finish the semester strong!

Expanded employee cohorting option beginning Thanksgiving week

Given the increasing number of COVID cases over the last several days and weeks in our country, in our local community and even on our campus and with the upcoming remote class sessions and reduced student population on campus following the Thanksgiving break, **we are expanding the options for employee cohorting for remote work beginning Monday, November 23 through Friday, January 1**. During this period, supervisors must ensure that offices are staffed at a minimum level each workday that is not a holiday through use of a rotating employee schedule. From November 23 through January 1:

- Supervisors can offer remote work as an option to employees whose positions can be completed 100% in a remote format and who are not required to be on campus to staff the office or for other responsibilities.
- Employees working remotely during this period are expected to be 100% productive, complete all work assignments, and report hours worked for a full work day unless they are reporting vacation or sick leave.
- Employees whose responsibilities can't be accomplished in a remote format must report to campus for each workday during this period unless they are reporting vacation or sick leave.
- Employees will be expected to report to campus when requested to staff an office, assist with admissions visits with prospective students, attend meetings or complete other on-campus duties.

We hope these additional remote working options provide an added protection for our employee community by reducing exposure on campus during this time where cases are increasing all around the country and in our region.

As a reminder, offices are closed Nov. 25-27 for the Thanksgiving holiday and Dec. 23-Jan. 1 for the Christmas holiday and New Year's Day. **We plan to return to our current employee cohorting model on Monday, January 4.**

Follow basic COVID protocols

Proactively take steps to protect yourself and others, by following the basic COVID protocols as outlined on the [General Health Protocols](#) website and summarized below.

1. Wear a mask.
2. Physically distance yourself.
3. Wash your hands.
4. Take your temperature and answer health screening questions daily.
5. Stay home when you are sick or exhibiting any COVID symptoms.
6. [Report an illness](#) promptly.

At Lipscomb University, we value and respect each person and take seriously our responsibility to do what is good for the general welfare of our community. And, if we all lead with respect for others, things will typically work out for the best. We all want to stay on campus for the full semester and, while some of that may be out of our control with this pandemic, much of it is within the control of our community and how well we follow the health and safety protocols in place. We commit to approach situations of noncompliance with empathy and understanding and with a focus on education. However, cases of significant or consistent policy violation will not be tolerated as it puts the whole community at risk of having to return to remote learning as well as risking the health of vulnerable individuals within our community. In those extreme cases where policies are significantly or consistently violated, there will be the possibility of disciplinary action. Failure to adhere to any requirement may result in disciplinary action, including up to expulsion or dismissal for students and termination of employment for employees, depending on the facts and circumstances. Student violations will be reported to Tasha Coleman, director of community standards, and will be processed in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Employee violations will be reported to their supervisor and will be processed in accordance with the Employee Handbook.

Preparing for the holidays

As you are making personal plans for Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday celebrations as well as the winter break, it is important for everyone to consider how to care for themselves, their friends, their family and their Lipscomb community during this time. Even if staying in the Nashville area, we all must continue to be aware that the risks associated with traveling or social gatherings remain high. If you will be interacting with new sets of people, extra precautions should be taken. During the holiday breaks, it is extremely important for students, faculty and staff to follow university protocols to limit exposure to COVID-19, wear a mask, physically distance yourself and wash your hands often to stay as healthy as possible.

Before the holiday break. In the remaining days leading up to the break, we encourage students and employees to reduce the number of people with whom they have close contact. Any close interaction with persons outside the immediate household or residence will present an opportunity for infection that you could then share with your family and friends during the break. Exposure can be reduced by limiting dining out and visits to restaurants or bars, avoiding social gatherings, increasing use of face masks and observing six feet or more in physical distancing.

Arriving home. The most cautious approach upon arrival home or visiting somewhere else during the break is to quarantine for the first 14 days after arrival. This is especially important if there are vulnerable, higher-risk individuals living at home and/or there is a high prevalence of COVID-19 in your local community. If quarantine is not possible, individuals should stay physically distant from family household members, avoid social gatherings, wear a face mask/covering, and avoid close contact for the first 14 days home to protect vulnerable family household members.

Gatherings during the holiday. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has shared helpful guidelines for gatherings and activities while home and during the holiday breaks. When planning to host or attend a holiday celebration, you should consider the risk of virus spread based on event size and use of mitigation strategies, as outlined in the [Considerations for Events and Gatherings](#). For detailed information about these factors and other helpful tips, [click here](#).

Spring calendar

Spring semester classes are scheduled to begin on Monday, January 11, 2021. Current plans include offering courses in the same format options as fall semester, including on-campus and remote. Students who need to request accommodations for the spring semester may find more information [here](#). Below is a summary of key dates for the spring semester. You can view the full academic calendar [here](#). Any changes in these plans will be communicated at least 30-days in advance unless changes in governmental regulations or CDC recommendations require more immediate action.

Summary of Key Spring 2021 Dates

- Jan. 8-10 Residence halls open with scheduled move-in dates*
- Jan. 11 Term I and full term classes begin
- Jan. 18 Martin Luther King Jr. Day holiday
- March 8 Term II classes begin
- March 15-19 Spring break (residence halls closed)
- April 29 Study day
- April 30-May 5 Final examinations
- May 8 Commencement

*Returning students will receive an email from the Residence Hall director that will allow them to sign up for a scheduled time to return to the residence hall.

Remember to visit the [Return to Campus](#) website for the latest updates, the [Campus COVID Statistics](#) dashboard for the COVID weekly report and to email questions to COVIDquestions@lipscomb.edu.

The Incident Management Team

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