

January 21, 2021

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## **Greetings from UMass Amherst Office of Parent Services (OPS)!**

Happy New Year to all of you! In just a week or so we'll begin the spring semester. We are excited to start the next half of the academic year and are looking to 2021 with hope and optimism and all the accomplishments it will bring. For those of you who are new, our office supports families through events like Parents, Family, and Friends Orientation and Family Weekend.

Whether your student is in their last year or just embarking on their college journey, this newsletter will provide useful information about campus events, tools and tips, and reminders that you can pass on to your student to help support their success! We hope you will stay informed via this newsletter, our website, and our Facebook page (see below for links).

This issue is packed with important information and tasks to get your student ready for move-in and/or the first day of classes.

### **Student communication update**

We have been communicating with students about the spring semester to help them prepare for what's ahead and we'll share additional information in the coming weeks. Please encourage your student to continue to check and read their emails for updates daily. Emails sent to students thus far include: [Spring travel guidance](#), [Important details for on-campus students with unassigned move-in reservation](#), [Important details for on campus residents with assigned move-in reservation](#), and the [Interim Pandemic Policy](#). As always, we ask that you discuss these important details and guidelines with your student as their cooperation is essential to stop the spread of this virus.

### **Visiting campus this spring**

It remains crucial for all of us to continue to comply with public health guidelines to keep our community safe, like wearing masks, washing hands, social distancing, and limiting gathering sizes. To help protect the health and safety of the campus community and the surrounding Amherst area, all visitors including parents and families are prohibited from entering campus buildings and residence halls (with the exception being during move-in when two people may help students move belongings in their respective residence hall).

Walking around campus is allowed. However, mask wearing and social distancing are required. In addition, visitors—including parents and families—will be expected to follow federal, state, and local guidelines related to testing and quarantine and cooperate with contact tracing efforts.

### **Inclement Weather Policy**

There is always potential for freezing rain, snow, or sleet in New England this time of the year. Please be mindful of the weather forecast as you and your student make plans to return to campus. You can find information on closings or delays on:

- The emergency closing hotline: (413) 545-3630
- The UMass Amherst homepage, the university's emergency closing website, and social media
- UMass Amherst alerts (sent to campus email addresses and through text messages to subscribers)



- Local TV and radio stations

Refer to the [emergency closing website](#) for details on services affected by inclement weather closings or delays and visit the [Office of Emergency Management website](#) for details on campus emergency preparedness resources.

## Spring Move-In

We look forward to welcoming more students to campus. Move-in is scheduled for Monday, January 25, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. through Sunday, January 31, 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. As you and your student plan for move-in, remember to review the move-in PowerPoint presentation available on the [OPS YouTube channel](#) and visit the [Move-In website](#) for important information. In addition, encourage your student to download the MyUMass App.

## All Technology services for spring 2021

Students have a wide range of technology services and support at their disposal this spring.

- Students use [SPIRE](#) to access their course schedule and identify the learning management system (Moodle or Blackboard) assigned for their courses. During Preview Week, starting January 25, students can log in to Moodle or Blackboard and preview syllabi and other materials for the courses for which they have already registered. Students can also use SPIRE to see attendance and synchronous expectations for their fully remote courses. Starting this spring, courses have a synchronous - required or a synchronous - optional designation.
- For wireless internet, students use eduroam, an encrypted, worldwide service developed for the international education community. Once configured, computers, tablets, and mobile devices automatically connect to the eduroam network at UMass Amherst and at participating institutions in the U.S. and abroad. Students can [set up their devices to connect to eduroam](#) before coming to campus. Wireless connectivity for gaming consoles and streaming devices is available via the UMASS-DEVICES network.
- For remote access to specialized software for Windows and Macintosh, students can refer to our [Windows Virtual Desktop program](#).
- Contactless printing is open in several campus locations: Campus Center room 162/175, CHC 160, W.E.B. Du Bois Library, and at the Science and Engineering Library.
- For technology support, students can [connect with IT User Services](#) via email, chat, or phone. For hardware repairs, students can drop off their computers, phones, or other devices at the UMass Store in the Campus Center.



## Gentle reminders

### Financial aid

All students who hope to obtain financial assistance must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) each year. The form is available online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). Students should file their FAFSA by mid-February to meet the March 1 priority deadline. Review the [2021–2022 Financial Aid Process Timeline](#) and share that information with your student.

### Tuition bills

Spring 2021 tuition bills have been issued. All students and authorized payers have received an email about the bill that includes important Spring 2021 information. We encourage students to set up Authorized Payer access for those who are helping with the financial aspects of their education. Information about [Authorized Payer access](#) can be found on the Bursar's Office webpage. Spring 2021 bills are due Monday, February 1.

### Payment plan

The UPay Payment Plan allows you to pay the balance due for Spring 2021 over five (5) monthly installments. This is a no-interest payment plan with installments scheduled for the tenth of each month. Payments begin Wednesday, February 10. Enrollment is open now and includes a \$45 enrollment

fee. Any student enrolled in the payment plan for the balance owed will be considered paid in full. More information can be found on the [Bursar's Office website](#).

### **Taxes and the 1098-T**

As tax season arrives, be sure your student has access to tax forms. To assist students and families in filing their 2020 taxes, the university issues form 1098-T. This contains important information related to tuition and other qualifying educational expenses that were paid in the 2020 tax year. Statements are available to students online through SPIRE, in the Finances section. Students who do not request online access to their 1098-T forms will have forms mailed to their permanent addresses, postmarked no later than January 31. For more information on these important documents, visit the [Bursar's information page](#).

### **Student Health Insurance waiver**

The deadline to waive the Student Health Benefit Plan (SHBP) is Sunday, February 28. Please note that the waiver process differs depending on whether your student is a new student, returning student, or international student. For detailed information on how to waive the SHBP, please visit [umass.edu/uhs/waiving-shbp](http://umass.edu/uhs/waiving-shbp).

### **Update your off-campus address in SPIRE**

Please encourage your student to update their physical address in SPIRE. This is the location where they will live and sleep most of the time for the spring semester. Physical address information will be used for public health and safety measures (emergencies, planning, contact tracing, and communications).

Email [ocsc@sacl.umass.edu](mailto:ocsc@sacl.umass.edu) with any off-campus housing questions or to set up a Zoom appointment. Resources and off campus housing information are available on the [Off Campus Housing Website](#).

### **Mental health/wellbeing services during COVID**

Mental health is a topic of concern for many parents and families, especially during COVID. The CCPH team is excited to offer new services to support students during this unusual time. CCPH offers numerous free services that can be accessed regardless of the student's location, such as [drop-in community conversations and workshops](#) on topics like stress management and building connections. One group that is new to CCPH since remote learning has been in effect is "Hello...My Name Is..." This community conversation is a place specifically for first-year and transfer students to build community with their cohort, even if from afar. "Let's Talk" is a program that provides students with the opportunity to obtain a brief informal consultation with a mental health professional. Same day individual consultations with a clinician are available throughout the day for students who wish to explore their concerns a little more deeply and/or to begin brief psychotherapy.

### **Winter/spring career fairs**

During this period of remote learning, we want to assure you that the UMass Career Centers continue to assist students in their career needs online. We also continue to work diligently with a variety of employers and our winter/spring career fairs will be held virtually for safety reasons. Students will be able to schedule one-on-one meetings with recruiters online to learn about their opportunities. We hope you will encourage your student to participate in the fairs listed below, as they are open to all majors at all levels:

- Campus-wide Career & Internship Fair, Wednesday, February 17
- Engineering & Tech Fair, Thursday, February 18
- Earth & Sustainability Fair, Tuesday, February 23
- Non-Profits & Government Fair, Thursday, February 25
- Psychology Fair, Friday, April 23

Refer to the [Career Fair Calendar](#) for more information. Students can find other employer events and career development workshops in [Handshake](#). If your student needs help with their résumé or with focusing their interests and search, please have them check with their [college-based Career Center](#). We are here to help all students!

## OPS webinar series

This spring semester, we are excited to continue our Family Webinar series as a way for you to connect with our office and the Parents Advisory Council and learn more about relevant topics, campus resources, and support services. Join us on Monday, January 25 via Zoom Webinar at 6:30 p.m. to learn how to identify eating disorder behaviors and support students managing an eating disorder while in college. The following will be discussed:



- Eating disorders and their impact on college campuses
- Statistics surrounding eating disorders on college campuses
- Recognizing the signs/symptoms
- How to support students with eating disorders
- The team approach to supporting UMass students with eating disorders: registered dietitian, physician, therapist/psychologist
- Resources on and off campus

Please click [this link](#) to register!

## For families of new students

### New Students Checklist

As your student's UMass journey approaches, there are a few tasks they must complete before they begin. Please check whether they have completed each item on their [new student checklist](#) including AlcoholEdu, YIS: Your Intervention Strategies, the health benefit waiver, immunization records, and emergency alerts registration. The first two items (AlcoholEdu and YIS) are due by Friday, January 29. If they fail to complete these items, a hold may be placed on their SPIRE account, which will prevent them from registering for future semester courses.

### 40 Days of UMass

Students who are new to UMass are invited to participate in a variety of programs hosted by New Students Orientation & Transition Programs. These events will focus on helping students navigate the physical campus, build connections with one another, and learn more about university resources. A schedule of events for the spring will be shared on the calendar of [Campus Pulse](#). Students are encouraged to log into Campus Pulse to create an account and will need to register for programs in advance. We will also share additional information regarding campus resources and services through the [40 Days of UMass](#) website and CCTVs in Residential Halls across campus.

### NSO Parents, Family, and Friends Orientation recordings

Thank you to those who participated in the Winter NSO Parents, Family, and Friends Orientation program online! Orientation materials, along with recorded sessions, will remain on the [NSO website](#) and the [OPS YouTube channel](#) until the end of February. Please view the materials and recorded sessions if you couldn't attend and contact the NSO office for assistance if needed.

## Message from the Dean of Libraries

The Spring Semester is only a few weeks away, and the Libraries are preparing to welcome students back, both virtually and, for a limited number, on campus. [Read more!](#)

## Message from the Dean of Commonwealth Honors College

We are always thrilled to welcome students and their families to Commonwealth Honors College at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. The COVID-19 pandemic has altered so much in our society, and now more than ever, the opportunity for our honors students to engage with and be mentored by our best faculty, to have access to additional and supplemental advising, and to participate in social and academic co-curricular events are now more critically important than ever. [Read more!](#)

## Important dates

January 29: AlcoholEdu and YIS deadline (**new students only**)

February 1: First day of classes for spring 2021

February 12: Last day of add/drop

February 12: Immunization records deadline

February 15: Presidents' Day (classes will be held)

February 24: Wellbeing Wednesdays (no classes)  
February 28: Student Health Insurance waiver deadline  
March 1: Wednesday class schedule followed

### **Links to UMass Amherst websites**

[Bursar's Office](#)  
[Residential Life](#)  
[UCard Office](#)

We encourage you to look through our sites and become more familiar with campus resources so you can better direct your student to the appropriate office or department as they learn how to handle their problems and concerns.

Our staff is working remotely this spring semester to monitor emails and return call back requests. If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact the Office of Parent Services, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. We're more than happy to assist you.

Sincerely,  
Rose M. Boulay, Director  
Office of Parent Services  
Knowlton Hall  
691 North Pleasant Street OFC  
University of Massachusetts Amherst  
Amherst, Massachusetts 01003-9399

**In case of a campus emergency**, always follow the university's main web page at [www.umass.edu](http://www.umass.edu). The website will display a distinctly colored stripe at the top containing pertinent status updates and information related to ongoing emergencies.

Email: [umassparents@umass.edu](mailto:umassparents@umass.edu)  
[Office of Parent Services website](#) • [UMass Amherst Parents on Facebook](#)  
• UMass Amherst [Family to Family blog](#) and [Facebook group](#)  
*Treating Our Parents as Partners*

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