

Important COVID-19 Thanksgiving Update

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Dear students and colleagues:

Our Thanksgiving holiday is less than two weeks away, and the members of our campus leadership team and I hope you are making plans to celebrate safely. COVID-19 has interfered with so many traditions we hold dear, and Thanksgiving is yet another time when we all must remain vigilant and responsible.

With this in mind, I write with an important announcement. **Following Thanksgiving, UW-La Crosse will transition to exclusively online/remote instruction for the remainder of the fall semester.** Nonetheless, our residence halls, Whitney Center dining hall, REC, classroom buildings, and other facilities will remain open for all students for the rest of the semester. **(Again, our residence halls will remain open for all students who would like to continue living on campus for the rest of the semester.)** We feel our campus is among the safest places in La Crosse—as evidenced by our daily COVID-19 test results— but in light of alarming numbers of positive cases in the greater La Crosse community, we want to give our students the ability to choose where they will reside as they complete their fall semester courses through online and other remote modes. Students currently residing in our residence halls will receive more details early next week.

We have all made so many sacrifices this year, and I know the holidays are a time when we look forward to gathering with our friends and families. But due to the recent case spike, I must join public health experts in urging you to refrain from in-person celebrations this Thanksgiving — especially if those plans involve travel. Experts say small and mid-size gatherings are one of the primary culprits for the rising numbers. Our public health officials and health care providers are imploring us to limit our contact to those within our households.

That's not to say you shouldn't celebrate. I encourage all of you to celebrate virtually with your friends and families, and to take advantage of a number of opportunities on campus. We will have a variety of foods available in our Student Union dining facilities Nov. 26, 27 and 28 — including a traditional Thanksgiving meal — as well as holiday-themed programming for students. In addition, the Recreational Eagle Center will be open Nov. 27, 28 and 29.

If you choose to visit friends or family this Thanksgiving, you should begin a self-quarantine today and will be required to get tested for COVID-19 both before and after the holiday. Quarantine and testing are tools that can help ensure you don't transmit the virus to your loved ones, and that you don't contract it at a gathering and promote its spread afterward. To sign up for a free test, please visit www.uwlax.edu/go/covid-test

Finally, I want to say that the UWL leadership team is proud of the way our campus community has done its part to slow the spread of COVID-19. We are grateful for everything you've done to make that happen, from adhering to health and safety protocols to making responsible decisions about where to go and who to see. We can't afford to undo all that hard work. Thank you for doing everything in your power to keep our communities safe — not just this Thanksgiving, but over all these difficult weeks.

Sincerely,

Joe

Joe Gow, Chancellor
University of Wisconsin-La Crosse