Dear Spartans,

As the weather gets cooler and leaves start to turn, we are now in the middle of the fall semester. This is the time that midterms are in full swing, and papers are due. Soon, football will come back to Spartan Stadium, and some minor sense of normalcy will return.

As I walk around campus and East Lansing, I want to thank the many Spartans I have seen wearing face coverings and keeping physically distanced from one another. I recognize how difficult it can be and how awkward it feels. With your diligence, we have been able to flatten the surge from earlier in the semester. Thank you for doing your part!

**MI-COVID Alert**

Last week, MSU announced the [MI-COVID Alert](go.msu.edu/spartan-spt) app, which notifies you if you might have been exposed to someone who has recently tested positive for COVID-19. It’s simple to use, and the alerts are confidential. If you haven’t already, I encourage you to download and use the app as we enter the winter months. Students are also encouraged to join the COVID-19 Early Detection Program to play an easy, yet crucial role, in enhancing the health and safety of everyone in the Spartan community. For more information, visit [go.msu.edu/spartan-spt](go.msu.edu/spartan-spt). Between the seasonal flu and the coronavirus, these are easy ways for you to get early notifications of potential exposure.

**Spartan Football**

This weekend, our Spartan football team will be back at Spartan Stadium. I am sure you will be watching, as I will. I want to encourage you to watch the games with safety in mind. MSU strongly discourages in-person watch parties. Please do not gather in large crowds or host watch parties – that goes for our Spartans both on and off campus. I also strongly discourage travel to Ann Arbor for the rivalry game against the Wolverines on Saturday, Oct. 31. Large group gatherings can quickly switch from fun to dangerous, giving the virus the chance to spread throughout the community. In addition, the City of East Lansing has a [new emergency ordinance](https://www.cityofel.org/departments/health) requiring compliance with public health orders. Those who disregard public health orders could be ticketed, punishable by a fine of $500.

If you do gather with your fellow Spartans, keep the following safety precautions in mind: Stay in small groups of 10 or fewer people, wear a face covering and stay 6 feet apart while together. Try to stay outdoors as much as possible, but if you’re indoors, open windows to provide fresh air circulation. Instead of a big platter of shareable snacks, serve food in individual cups or designate one person to be the “server,” so fewer people touch the serving utensils. Guests can also bring their own snacks and drinks, as sort of a BYOP (bring your own picnic) event. Place a bottle of hand sanitizer out so guests can use it before and after eating. Always drink plenty of water to stay hydrated and eat something healthy. And keep track of your guests’ contact information, in case there is a need for contact tracing. These simple steps can help keep Spartans safe.
Halloween
Shortly after the first home game of the season, another social gathering holiday will be upon us: Halloween. Instead of gathering at a house party, test your creative strengths during University Activities Board’s Pumpkin Party with Sparty or watch a scary movie on the Residence Hall Association’s On Demand platform (yes, off-campus students can watch as well). Host a virtual costume contest, leave Halloween treats at your friend’s door or go on a Halloween scavenger hunt in your costume. Halloween is scary enough on its own; we must embrace the holiday with an extra dose of responsibility this year.

2020 Election
Just as we all have a responsibility to protect the health and safety of ourselves and others, we must also take responsibility for making our voice heard. I encourage Spartans, far and wide, to vote in this year’s election Nov. 3. I understand many of you may be voting for the first time. If you have any questions about registration or polling locations, visit the MSUVote website at msuvote.msu.edu. MSUVote is your on-campus, nonpartisan information source for the upcoming elections.

The healthiest way to vote this year is to vote early. This process is secure and will help to reduce lines on Election Day. If you are a registered voter in Michigan, you may visit your city or township clerk’s office from now through Nov. 2, request an absentee ballot and vote while you are there. Be sure to wash your hands before and after voting, wear a face covering and maintain a 6-foot distance from poll workers and other voters. If you are registered to vote in another state, visit msuvote.msu.edu to review your state’s voting procedures and timelines.

Should you find yourself in a conversation about the election over the next two weeks, please be respectful of others and their opinions, even if you disagree. Political debate can be healthy, but only if you engage with listening ears and an open mind. Remember, you can always decline to participate.

I know this fall semester has not been what we expected, and our traditional fall festivities have been altered. Trust me, I miss watching football in Spartan Stadium with 75,000 of my closest friends. It will be odd to not participate from the stands this year. I, for sure, will never again take these traditions for granted.

Again, I want to thank those of you who continue to follow the guidance provided by our public health officials. It does make a difference for the safety of our community.

Go Green!

Vennie Gore
Senior Vice President for Auxiliary Enterprises
Interim Vice President for Student Affairs and Services