

The Eastern Echo

Volume 143, Issue 15
Serving EMU and Ypsilanti since 1881

Tuesday, September 1, 2026
easternecho.com



Fall semester takes off at EMU

Welcome to campus. First called *The Normal News* when it was founded in 1881, *The Eastern Echo* is the independent, student-run newspaper at Eastern Michigan University. We serve the campus and Ypsilanti communities with fair, ethical, accurate and timely reporting.

Our print editions are free and published weekly on Tuesdays during the school year. We also publish daily all year round at easternecho.com. We have the inside scoop on all the local and EMU happenings — check our newsstands and website for the latest. Have a great year, eagles!



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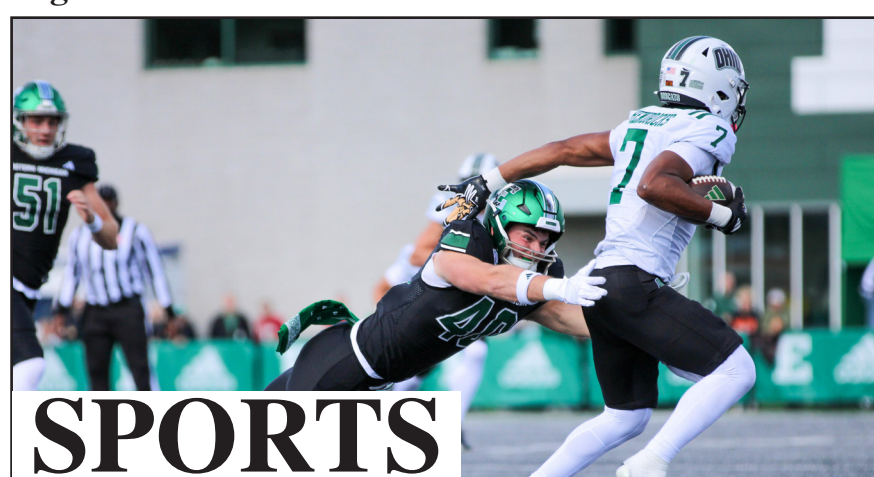
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The Eastern Echo

The Eastern Echo serves the Eastern Michigan University and Ypsilanti communities as an independent student-operated newspaper. Founded in 1881 as *The Normal News*, *The Eastern Echo* distributes weekly print editions on campus and throughout the surrounding Ypsilanti community during the fall and winter academic semesters. *The Eastern Echo* also publishes online year-round. Published content is subject to copyright and may not be reproduced without prior written consent of the newspaper.

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THE ECHO MISSION

The Eastern Echo informs the Eastern Michigan University and Ypsilanti communities by highlighting newsworthy content in a fair, accurate and timely manner.

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Fall 2026
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At *The Eastern Echo*, we correct our mistakes. If we got it wrong, we want to make it right. Errors should be brought to the attention of the editor-in-chief by email: editor@easternecho.com.

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CAMPUS
LIFE

September Events

Commuter Cookout

Student Center Patio
Sept. 2nd, 3 - 6 p.m.

RSO Kickstart

Student Center Ballroom
Sept. 3rd, 5 - 8 p.m.

EagleFest

University Park
Sept. 9th, 4 - 7 p.m.

Together Walk

University Park
Sept. 10th, 3 - 6 p.m.

Sex in the Dark

Student Center Ballroom
Sept. 15th, 7 - 9 p.m.

SOS: Org Recruitment

Student Center Room 300
Sept. 20th, 6 - 8 p.m.

National Hazing
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September 21st - 25th

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Student Center Third Floor
Sept. 25th, 7 p.m. - 12 a.m.



The Eastern Echo

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David's Books
Domino's Pizza
Downing Hall
Eagle Crest Golf Club
EMU Department of Public Safety
EMU Rec/IM
EMU Credit Union
Ford Hall
Halle Library
Insomnia Cookies
Jet's Pizza
Jimmy John's
Judy Sturgis Hill Building
King Hall
Lakeview Apartments
Laundry Pro

Luca's Coney Island
Lucky Garden
Ma Lou's Fried Chicken
Mark Jefferson Science Complex
Marshall Building
MAÍZ Mexican Cantina
McKenny Hall
Miny's Mexican Restaurant
Northern Grind
Peninsular Place
Phelps and Sellers Halls
Pierce Hall
Plant Based Coneyes
Porter Building
Pray-Harrold Building
Rackham Hall
Roosevelt Hall
Sherzer Observatory
Sidetrack Bar and Grill
Sill Hall
SPARK East Innovation Center
Speedys Big Burger
Standard Printing+Design Co.

Strong Physical Sciences Building
Student Center
Subway
Sweetwaters Coffee & Tea
The Commons
The Eastern Eateries
The Golden Egg
The Honors College
The Village
Thompson & Co.
Trinity Health Ann Arbor Hospital
Trinity Health IHA Urgent Care
U-M Health Ypsilanti Health Center
Walton and Putnam Halls
Washtenaw Auto Care Center
Welch Hall
Westview Apartments
Wild Side Smoke Shop
Wise Hall
Ypsi Real
Ypsilanti City Hall
Ypsilanti District Library
Ypsilanti Food Co-op



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The Eastern Echo’s guide to campus resources

Laleh Walker
News Reporter

It’s the beginning of the academic year, a time that can be filled with excitement, but also uncertainty. Some students are leaving home for the first time, while others may simply need an extra hand but don’t know where to look. Whatever the case may be, *The Echo* has nine resources to help students navigate college life and succeed at EMU.

Affordable food, item access

Swoop's Food Pantry is filling the gap between students and food insecurity. Located in Pierce Hall in room 100, Swoop’s Food Pantry provides EMU’s community with free food and non-food items including school supplies, hygiene items, clothing and more. Current students and staff members, as well as anyone who has taken classes at EMU within the last calendar year, are eligible to visit Swoops.

Ben Roberts, director of Swoop’s Food Pantry, said he recognizes college students have diverse dietary needs and that Swoop’s works to provide inclusive food options.

“Our food is 100% bought or donated or bought with donated dollars, so it’s always changing, but we try to provide all your basic necessities,” said Roberts. “That’s canned goods, meat, dairy products; but we also do our best to support any dietary restrictions you may have, so if you are vegetarian, vegan, gluten free, halal, low sodium, we try our best to stock as many items as we can.”

Prior to shopping at Swoop’s, students should be sure to complete the required Swoop’s Food Pantry intake form. This form takes approximately five minutes to complete and needs to be filled out before each academic year in order to utilize the pantry.

Among its other resources, the University Advising and Career Development Center operates a Career Closet that provides students and alumni with free professional clothing and accessories for career fairs, networking events and more. The closet offers clothing in a variety of sizes and styles.

Located in Room 251 of

McKenny Hall, the Career Closet is open from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on weekdays during the fall and winter semesters.

Academic support

EMU offers a number of free resources to support students throughout their academic journeys.

Located in Room G04 in Halle Library, the Holman Success Center provides students with tutoring, success coaching, supplemental instruction programs and more. Drop-in tutoring is available for many general education courses and is offered virtually through Google Meet or Zoom. Tutors can assist students with quick questions or provide long-term academic support.

Success coaches help students create personalized academic plans based on their short- and long-term academic and personal goals that are both achievable and sustainable.

Pointing to a whiteboard, Tracey Sonntag, one of the associate directors of the Holman Success Center, said, “Everything we do in Holman is basically centered around one question: What is in the best interest of our students? For example, in tutoring, we work very hard to make sure our tutors understand how to relate to anyone else who might be sitting across the table from them. How do you provide the right amount of challenge and support so that they’re actually learning something from tutoring rather than showing up to get answers?”

For students who struggle with math and statistics, the Math Lab is available to help.

Located in Room 411 of Pray-Harrold, the Math Lab offers tutoring in one-on-one and small group settings. Tutors help students understand difficult concepts, work through challenging homework problems and develop strategies to solve problems independently.

When it comes to writing, sometimes students need more than help with grammar and punctuation, and the University Writing Center recognizes this. The UWC supports students throughout every stage of the writing process, from turning ideas into writing and citing sources to reviewing drafts

before submitting a final paper.

Students can meet with a consultant in Room 104 of Halle Library, over Zoom or receive written feedback. Visit the center’s website to schedule a consultation.

Career, professional development

Whether students are beginning a career journey, need academic help or want better interviewing skills, they can turn to the University Advising and Career Development Center for support.

Located in Room 200 of McKenny Hall, the UACDC connects students and alumni with employment opportunities through career fairs, mock interviews and Handshake, EMU’s career management platform. The center also works with students to develop their academic and career goals.

One UACDC service that academic adviser Colleen McChesney believes more students should know about is drop-in advising.

“We offer drop-in advising every week and then every day for the first two weeks at the start of the semester,” McChesney said. "This is for if you need help with something right away and don’t want to wait for an appointment.”

John Carlson, a job and internship specialist at the UACDC, described the variety of ways the center helps students and alumni prepare for their careers.

“We help students with infrastructure,” Carlson said. “What I call infrastructure is your resume, your cover letter, how to articulate your ‘why,’ your passion for your profession, your role and your industry.”

Carlson said the UACDC teaches students how to advocate for themselves, develop a pitch statement and search for employment opportunities. The center can also connect students with EMU alumni, prepare them to conduct informational interviews, help them practice for job interviews and teach them how to negotiate an offer professionally.

Health, safety services

As students adjust to campus life, there are resources to bring a sense of safety and security. Student



EMU’s Campus Wellness Center is home to both the Counseling and Psychological Services office and the Community Behavioral Health Clinic. Both offices offer in-person appointments at various times of the day. The counseling services program can also be reached after hours via a phone line. *Josh Cromwell / The Eastern Echo*

Eyes and Ears for University Safety, a student staffed program operated through EMU’s Department of Public Safety provides escorts to students walking alone after dark to locations across campus.

Kaylen Lawton, a SEEUS supervisor and senior at EMU, acknowledges that students may be hesitant to ask for support but encouraged them to reach out.

“When you finally do ask for that help, it feels great knowing that they’re trained to do this. They know how to do this and the fact that we’re going to help you. We’re gonna figure out how to get you together and get you to the place that you need, or whatever it is that you are asking,” Lawton said. “You’re going to feel great afterwards. Like, just ask for that, scan that barcode or dial our number whenever you see our signs around.”

Students can identify SEEUS staff by their bright yellow jackets or a T-shirt with the SEEUS logo on the back and ID badges.

SEEUS operates Monday through Friday from 5-10 p.m. and students can reach the program at 734-487-3387.

To support students’ mental health, EMU’s Counseling and Psychological Services provides free, confidential counseling through a short-term model. CAPS is open Monday through Friday

from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and is located at 1075 N. Huron River Drive, Ypsilanti.

Students can receive individual, couples and group counseling, along with emergency services and crisis intervention. CAPS also offers limited psychiatry appointments for medication, which require insurance or payment.

Students must be enrolled at least half time to receive services. For questions, call 734-487-1118 or email counseling.services@emich.edu. Students can reach a counselor after hours by calling 734-487-1118.

Beyond EMU, Ypsilanti also has resources to support the community. Located a little more than a mile from EMU’s campus in downtown Ypsilanti, The Corner Health Center strives to provide affordable health and mental health care to young people in a nonjudgmental environment.

The center offers a variety of services, including primary care, sexual health services, mental health care and psychiatry.

It is open from 1-5 p.m. Monday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesday through Friday.

To make an appointment, visit the center’s website or call 734-484-3600.

The Eastern Echo’s guide to dorm safety



Students and parents move belongings into the Downing Hall residence building at Eastern Michigan University, Aug. 23. *Lilly Kujawski / The Eastern Echo*

Sam Peterson
News Reporter

As students move into residence halls and apartments this fall, there are certain rules and guidelines to be mindful of. Here is what Eastern Michigan University students should know as they prepare for campus living.

Theft

EMU’s Department of Public Safety officers say the biggest safety issue they see isn’t a stranger sneaking around the stairwell, but instead an unlocked door.

“The biggest problem we have is theft,” said Andrea Elliott, an EMU community engagement officer. “It

often happens because people don’t lock the doors in their rooms.”

Elliott said students will often prop doors open for friends in their hallways, leaving the area vulnerable to strangers.

Elliott also warned about the practice of tailgating. This is the act of letting someone slip in behind a secure door on campus, inviting strangers to areas designated for students with exclusive access without buzzing visitors in.

Elliott says if a student notices someone suspicious loitering around a residence hall, they should be sure to not let them follow through any locked doors.

Elliott’s advice is simple: report it to a resident adviser, front desk staff, a housing specialist or EMU police

directly. She said students should be ready to describe what makes the person suspicious along with their appearance.

Students should call both police and residence staff in an event they feel is dangerous.

Fire safety

Due to fire safety concerns, open flames, candles, incense, hot plates and improper extension cord use are prohibited in residence halls.

The 26-27 HRL Guide to Campus Living explains, “Air fryers and similar appliances with covered heating elements and shut off timers are allowed but must be used in the common kitchen or apartment kitchens

for cooking. Microwaves, toasters, and coffee pots are allowed for room use.”

In the event of a fire, students should report the incident to housing and the police, clear the area and pull the fire alarm.

Jeanette Zalba, the director of EMU Housing and Residence Life, also said students should evacuate within three minutes of any fire alarm.

“Whenever an alarm sounds in your building, you must exit the building. Don’t forget to take your keys, shoes and a jacket ... Close and lock your door behind you,” Zalba said.

During monthly residence hall fire drills, students will learn fire procedures and designated safe locations.

Alcohol misuse

According to the 26-27 HRL Guide to Campus Living, all residents must follow state and federal regulations regarding alcohol. No one under the age of 21 is allowed to consume or own alcohol or alcohol containers.

Any room that has at least one occupant under the age of 21 may not have alcohol on the premises. This makes Putnam and Phelps dry halls, because they are predominately first year student housing.

Those 21 years or older can keep alcohol in their room, but cannot drink in the presence of those underage, including roommates. Students over the age of 21 are permitted no more than one case (twelve count) of beer, two liters of wine or one liter of spirits.

Unhealthy relationships

Unhealthy roommate dynamics and dating relationships that may involve abuse are another concern on campus,

Elliott said.

If a student suspects someone they know is in an abusive relationship, she recommends starting with a conversation. Students can also anonymously file a Title IX report if they feel someone needs help. If they believe a serious crime has been committed, they should contact the police. Staff are required to report such situations under the Clery Act.

For everyday roommate friction, Elliott says students should use housing’s conflict-resolution process. This includes speaking to their roommate first, and if needed, contacting their resident advisor for further help. Serious concerns can be taken to EMU Housing and Residence Life.

Weapon safety

The student handbook states that weapons and explosives of any kind are prohibited on campus. In addition, students should never use replica weapons or toys in halls, including airsoft and foam dart guns, which can trigger EMU’s Zero Eyes gun-detection cameras.

Students who wish to feel safer are permitted to carry pepper spray, but they must register it with DPS and verify that they know how to use it safely. DPS often offers free pepper spray within the first weeks of the semester. Pepper spray is strictly prohibited from all athletic and large campus events.

Elliott and Zalba encouraged students to review their housing policies before and after arriving on campus. Those interested in learning more can access the student handbook



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Letter from the Editor

Fall 2026: Welcome back, eagles!

Welcome back, eagles! I hope you all enjoyed a fun, restful and fulfilling summer. Between heat waves, wildfire smoke-filled days and the cyclosporiasis outbreak, it was certainly an unusual summer. Personally, I spent mine in Midland, Michigan, completing a reporting internship at the Midland Daily News. In my internship, I learned valuable skills and journalistic insight, all of which I'm looking forward to incorporating into what we do here at *The Eastern Echo*. In addition, *The Echo* published online all summer. *The Eastern Echo* is Eastern

Michigan University's independent, student-run newspaper, but we are a lot more than just your college news publication. We also have the scoop on what is happening in Ypsilanti, bringing you the latest campus and community news. You can find us weekly in print at newsstands located on and off campus and daily online at easternecho.com. While I'm sad to say goodbye to warm days and long summer nights, I'm excited to begin a new school year. Whether you are a veteran EMU student or stepping foot on campus for the first time this semester, here at *The Eastern Echo*, we have plenty of

tips and tricks to help you find success this year. Take a look throughout this special edition of *The Echo*: we've chocked it full of resources, guides and our own staff recommendations to support your personal and academic goals at EMU. Start at Page 3 for our guides to campus. If you're looking for events and activities to usher in the new year, check out Page 7, where we've compiled campus happenings during the first week of classes. For information about parking on and off campus, take a look at Page 8. If there's anything we didn't cover or something on campus you're

wondering about, let us know at news@easternecho.com, so we can find out the answer for you. In addition to bringing you the latest headlines, *The Eastern Echo* is also your campus voice. Did you do something exciting or unusual this summer? Have a message you wish to share with your campus community? Want to get the word out about an issue that matters? Write us a letter at editor@easternecho.com and let us know what's on your mind. We accept letters from our community, which includes Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti and

Ypsilanti and Superior Townships. *The Echo* reserves the right to reject or edit any letter. Letters containing personal attacks against individuals or inappropriate or illegal material will be automatically rejected. Letters must be 500 words or less, address an issue of interest to *The Echo's* audience, and include the writer's name, hometown, email and telephone number (email and telephone numbers will be used to verify content and will not be published). Happy first week! Lilly Kujawski Editor-in-Chief *The Eastern Echo*

Eastern Echo advice for the semester



As the new school year approaches, staff at The Eastern Echo offer their advice to new students. AnnaBelle Favre/ The Eastern Echo

Eastern Echo Staff As the 2026-2027 school year approaches, seasoned staff at The Eastern Echo wanted to share some advice for new and returning students. "Explore what campus has to offer, but don't stop there. Ypsilanti is your home for the next four years, and it has

plenty of signature shops and hidden gems to check out. Venture off campus and try something new. Whether it's enjoying a flavor-filled meal from Earthen Jar, playing a game of mini golf at Putt-R-Round, discovering a new album from Wyrd Byrd, singing karaoke at Sticks (for those over 21!), or grabbing a fun coffee drink at Northern

Grind, there are so many cool things to do in Ypsi — do them!" -Lilly Kujawski, Editor-in-Chief "When a good opportunity comes, take it and run with it as hard as you can. Try literally anything that interests you at least once. Never ever assume that 'nobody else is doing this' means that you shouldn't try. Ask people for

help. Ask people a million questions in general! There are so many resources available to you while you're in college, and there are so many people willing to connect you with those resources if you just ask around. I like to think, 'When I look back on my college experience in the future, what am I going to wish I had done to set myself up for success?' Go get 'em, tiger." -Laura Meriweather, Managing Editor - Operations "Don't limit yourself based on your major; take classes, go to events, and join clubs that you are interested in! Involving yourself in a wide variety of topics across campus can be really fun, a good networking opportunity, and can even help you decide what you want to do in the future. Explore and have fun!" -AnnaBelle Favre, Managing Editor - News "Don't be afraid to explore the amenities offered by different departments on campus! Visit different departments, meet the office staff, and chat about what they have to offer and how you can utilize those offerings for your own success!" -AJ Grams, Comic Artist "Get out there and take every opportunity that sounds interesting to you! Don't forget to make time for fun. Go to club meetings, attend events and get out there. You never know where you're gonna find your people. Also, get off campus! Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor are super walkable and public transit is super simple to navigate, so get out there and explore!"

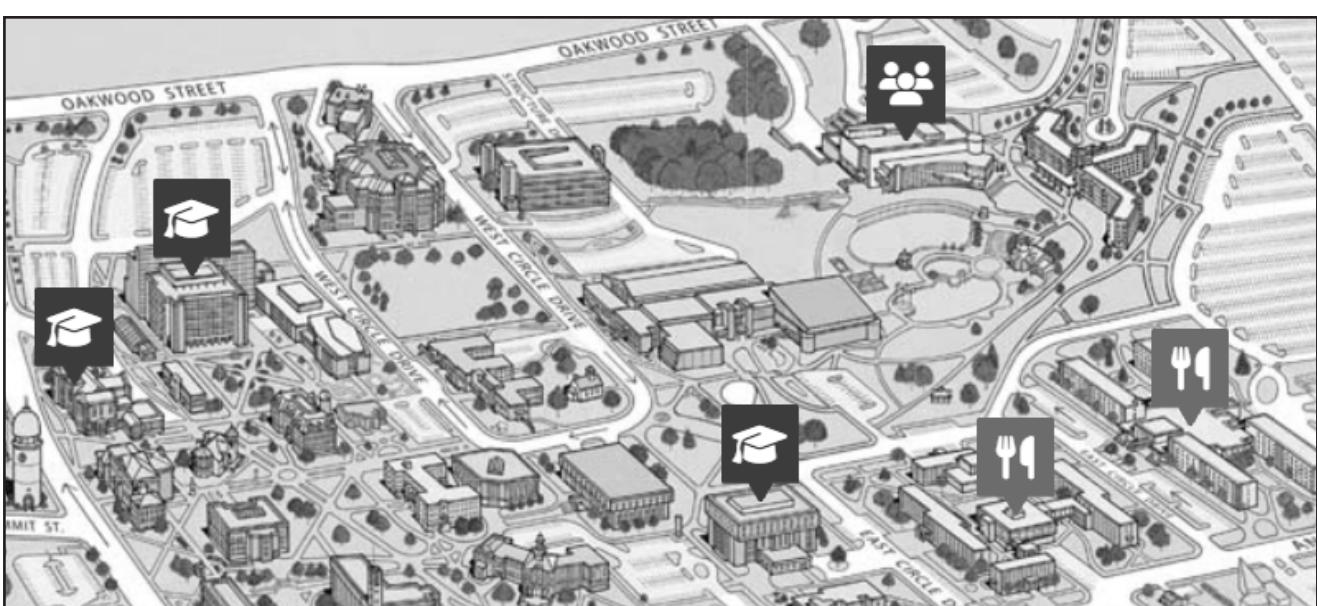
-Jada Hauser, Arts and Entertainment Editor "Look for ways to get involved on campus! Whether it's working an on-campus job or joining a student organization, being involved helps you feel more connected to the campus and the people who are part of it. Whatever your interests are, there is a community for you on campus." -Allie Beecher, Copy Desk Chief "My biggest advice is to get involved and try new things! If you're a Digital Media Production major and you're interested in filming, social media or even getting into interviews, I definitely recommend joining The Eastern Echo. It's a great way to get hands on experience, meet people and build your portfolio while you're still in school." -Samantha Stevens, Social Media Content Creator "Always come prepared with snacks and a drink in case you get hungry!" -Courtney Prielipp, Photographer "Get involved early. Whether it's The Eastern Echo, a student organization, intramurals, Greek life, campus events, or athletics, finding your people makes EMU feel much smaller!" -Ruby Brannon, Sports Editor "I know it can be scary, but please push yourselves outside of your comfort zones to get the college experience you want. The energy you put out is the energy you get back, so make the most of it. It's never too late to find your community!" -Laleh Walker, Feature Reporter

E|Dining 101: where to go, what to eat, how meal plans work

Lelaina MacDonald News Reporter

Ever since President Brendan Kelly settled in at Eastern Michigan University, he has made it a priority to make changes and improvements to dining at EMU. From Starbucks to The Commons to the markets on campus, E|Dining has several options on campus. Whether new to EMU or have been here for a while, here is what students should know about E|Dining for the fall 2026 semester. "Dining is an important part of the college experience," Beth Smith, the residential district manager for E|Dining told The Eastern Echo in an email. "We want every student to feel confident that they can find food that meets their needs, supports their wellbeing, and helps them feel at home on campus. This year, we're excited to continue expanding wellness, sustainability, and student-focused dining experiences across EMU." In a video posted on EMU's Instagram page, President Kelly announced some of the changes with E|Dining, including Chick-Fil-A moving from McKenny Hall to the Student Center, a new Chipotle-style restaurant at The Eastern Eateries, a bagel and coffee shop in McKenny Hall and more.

The Student Center, McKenny Hall, Pray-Harrold, Halle Library, The Commons and The Eastern Eateries all have different food options for dining. The Student Center has Starbucks, Little Caesar's Pizza and Chick-Fil-A. McKenny Hall has The Daily Bagel. The Eastern Eateries has Ciao Bella, Copperhead Jack's, Cluck and Melt Lab. The Commons offers all-you-care-to-eat food. In addition, the Student Center, Pray-Harrold, The Eateries and Halle Library have markets. Reference the graphic below for what days and times each place is open. "We encourage new students to take some time during their first few weeks on campus to explore everything E|Dining has to offer," Smith told The Echo in the email. "From our residential dining in the Commons and Eastern Eateries to markets and coffee locations, there are a variety of options designed to fit different schedules, tastes, and dietary needs. We also recommend students familiarize themselves with their meal plan benefits, including meal swipes, mobile ordering, and flex dollars, so they can make the most of the convenience and value available to them throughout the semester." Students can purchase a meal plan or purchase flex dollars for on-campus dining. Those living on campus can purchase meal plans through housing and commuter students can purchase



Places that are labeled have food options for students, faculty and staff.

meal plans on the E|Dining website. The E|Dining website explains that flex dollars is a cash equivalent that is loaded directly onto a student's EagleOne ID card and work the same way as debit cards, but without sales tax. All on-campus dining locations accept the flex option, including markets and concessions. Flex dollars are recommended for commuter students, but students who live on campus can get them, too. The website page also states, "Your meal plan includes a set number of meals that you can purchase in advance for the academic semester. Each time

you use your plan to get a meal, it's called a 'meal swipe.'" Meal swipes can be exchanged at select campus locations for "Meal Exchange Friendly" menu items. Different swipe plans have different rules and limits when it comes to the location and how often the swipes can be used. Each time a meal swipe is used, one meal is deducted from the student's total balance in their account. There are two apps that students can download to keep track of their account balance, observe prices and order their food ahead of time — Transact eAccounts and Transact Mobile

Ordering. Both apps can be located in the App Store on iOS and Google Play on Android. Additionally, the E|Dining website has information for students who may have food allergies, intolerances, specific diets or food insecurity. More information about meal plans, the dining locations and hours can be found on the E|Dining website. "We're excited to welcome students back and help make campus feel like home, one meal at a time," Smith said in an email to The Echo.

EMU performing arts to kick off with block party, fall theater auditions



Abby Siegel, Jennifer Felts, Tesia Brown, Abby Labbé and Myranda Wiggins pose for a photo outside of the Judy Sturgis Hill Building at the EMU Communication, Media and Theatre Arts program’s welcome back picnic on Aug. 27, 2025. Photo courtesy of Pam Cardell.

Hannah Borders

Arts & Entertainment Reporter

On Wednesday Sept. 2, Eastern Michigan University’s School of

Performing Arts is hosting its annual block party to welcome in the new school year. Auditions for EMU Theatre’s fall shows will be held that evening after the party.

The block party will be outside in

the space between Alexander Music building and Judy Sturgis Hill building on campus, 3:30-5 p.m.

The event will be open to anybody that wants to join, not just performing arts students. The event will offer games, and theater-related student organizations such as EMU Players and Alpha Psi Omega will table the event. Attendees can also receive tours of Judy Sturgis Hill and Alexander Music buildings and free food.

“It is just going to be a chill opportunity for people to gather together and hang out, and meet and greet one another, and learn more about the School of Performing Arts and where we hope to go moving forward,” said Pam Cardell, assistant managing director of the School of Communication, Media and Theatre Arts.

Following the block party, theater auditions will be held in Judy Sturgis Hill building, 6-9 p.m. Acting and singing auditions will be from 6-8 p.m. and dance auditions will be from 8-9 p.m., said information on

the CMTA website. Auditions will be for three shows: “Jumpin’ Jamboree,” the Applied Drama and Theatre for the Young graduate program’s fall tour show; “Ride the Cyclone,” the December musical; and “Someone is Speaking, Someone is Silent,” a student-directed lab show.

Auditions are open to all students, not just students majoring in the School of Performing Arts, Cardell said. The casting calls ask for actors of any race, ethnicity, gender or ability. Students must complete the audition form prior to showing up for auditions and make directors aware of any rehearsal scheduling conflicts.

Upon arrival to the Judy Sturgis Hill building’s main lobby, students will be checked in to ensure they have completed their audition forms, have their picture taken and be assigned a number for reference before moving into the Lab Theatre to audition individually. Once dismissed, students may stay or come back for a dance audition, or leave if they are not

interested in a dance audition, Cardell said.

Auditionees must audition with a one minute-long contemporary monologue of their choice, the website states. Sample monologues will be provided in office 103 Judy Sturgis Hill ahead of auditions, which students can choose to use. In addition to the monologue, auditionees will perform a 16-bar song cut from “Ride the Cyclone” or of similar style if auditioning for “Ride the Cyclone” or “Jumpin’ Jamboree.”

Students auditioning for “Someone is Speaking, Someone is Silent” do not need to complete a dance audition, but students auditioning for “Ride the Cyclone” or “Jumpin’ Jamboree” do.

Those interested in being a part of the tech crew for any of the fall shows can fill out the crew interest form.

Callbacks will be held Thursday, Sept. 3, in the same location as auditions.

Additional audition information may be found online on the CMTA website.

Mich. Renaissance Fest brings 16th century fun

Lauren Holloway

News Reporter

A winding road through the trees in Holly, Michigan leads to the village of HollyGrove, a portal back into the 16th century. Starting Aug. 22, the Michigan Renaissance Festival returns every Saturday and Sunday through Oct. 4.

Upon heading through the gate entrance, visitors are immediately greeted by the sounds of revelry. Fairies sing along to pirates strumming guitars, and tinkling bells echo across the grove. But perhaps the most unfamiliar sound is the metallic clang of swords clashing.

Festival offerings

The Valiant Combat Company uses dull blades to simulate medieval

fighting. Sir Emeric, or Steven Schwall, as he’s known in the 21st century, has been an actor since the age of nine. Schwall always enjoyed historical reenactments and martial arts.

“I discovered I can combine my love of swords and my love of acting,” Schwall said about how he got into staged fighting.

Schwall is also a certified teacher of stage combat with the Society of American Fighting Directors. Under his direction actors learn to block, jab, parry and swipe with all sorts of weapons. The Valiant Combat Company uses longswords, halberds, sabres and hand buckles, as well as some custom-designed pieces. Schwall does the assembly himself and has remounted certain blades to different hilts. The fighting troupe brings history alive with some actual service blades from the late 19th century that were never sharpened and never saw combat. Schwall said his favorite part about the faire is seeing the excitement on people’s faces.

“It’s mostly about the good times of the patrons,” Schwall said.

If visitors are looking for entertainment with higher stakes, there are rounds of jousting with real horses. The faire uses drum horses, a combination of Clydesdale, Shire and Gypsy Vanner breeds that produce an agile and strong steed. This breed is perfect for jousting because they can carry their rider and armor that weighs from 80-110 pounds, with the animals themselves ranging from 1,500-1,700 pounds.

While many safety precautions are taken, injuries can still happen. For a gentler option, festival goers can visit animals at the petting zoo. Soft and sweet, the alpacas Pearl and Sir Richard have fluffy necks good for stroking.

If there is some gold burning a hole in that coin purse, the artisan marketplace has everything from clothing and jewelry to weapons and art. Visitors can get their hair braided, face painted

and even their future revealed by palm readers and astrologists.

All kinds of food await at the festival: Wood-fired pizza, tacos, turkey legs, burgers, deep fried treats, ice cream, kettle corn, pickles and of course, lots of ale.

Medieval characters to enchant

With so many vibrant colors and intricate costumes around the village, one may assume it’s difficult to stand out, but each character at the festival is intended to offer a rich background and be utterly distinctive. One example is Cloverleaf, the fairy of good luck. A part of the fairy ensemble, the Cloverleaf has been a fairy for nine years. They are decked out in bright green with clovers and treasure adorning their clothes. Cloverleaf enjoys teatime and doing crafts with children. They created their character because they are always happy to shift the balance from bad to good luck and because they wanted to be different from other fairies, they said.

“I wanted something that felt really unique,” Cloverleaf said.

Another eccentric character is Princess Jasper of the Royal Court. An official journalist of the realm, Her Highness is always speaking into a magical fairy microphone. While Princess Jasper doesn’t quite know who her audience is, her friends assure her people are listening, she said.

Even further up the royal totem pole is the Princess Regent. The daughter of the King, the Princess Regent loves gazing upon herself with her plethora of mirrors and assuring her subjects that she has absolutely no plans to overthrow the current monarch, she said.

The beloved singing pirate is Curtis Bodiker; he has been working at renaissance festivals for five years. This year marks his second season in Michigan. While tent festivals are good, HollyGrove is special because of its infrastructure, he said. He explained



From left, Alastair (Aruther) and Trixanna (Carmen) battle at the Michigan Renaissance Festival in Holly, Michigan, Aug. 19. Alastair recently joined the cast and has been at the festival for just over three weeks, while Trixanna has been with the festival for two years. Courtney Prielipp / The Eastern Echo

that there is something magical about being immersed in a place. Bodiker’s favorite things about his character, Sebastian Bain, are that he is talented, charming, funny and good with kids.

“I like that he is the best version of myself,” Bodiker said.

The village bookworm is Paige Turner-Bookswell. This year marks her sixth season trying to bump up HollyGrove’s literacy rate. While she’s not had much success getting the other townspeople to write, she does enjoy the little kids who mistake her for Princess Belle, she said.

Festival information

The person behind all the fantasy is Chip Schultz, the general manager of the festival. Schultz has been working at the faire for 34 years, starting as a paramedic and moving through different positions until he became the general manager in 2024.

Schultz said the renaissance festival is important because it is something different, and it brings in business for the surrounding communities. The

location in Holly is perfect because it’s only an hour from major cities like Detroit and Lansing, but far enough away that people can disconnect from the real world, Schultz said.

“I love seeing everybody coming out and enjoying themselves,” Schultz said.

For anyone who enjoys the dressing up aspect of the festival, there is a costume contest and a couple’s costume contest. All ages are welcome at the festival, with a play structure and a craft station offered for kids. Dogs are permitted as long as they are registered; more information on dog rules can be found on the festival website.

Staff members advise guests to beat the heat by wearing light, breathable fabrics, long sleeves for sun protection, taking breaks in the shade and drinking lots of water.

The Michigan Renaissance Festival will run every weekend from Aug. 22-Oct. 4, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., as well as Labor Day, Sept. 7 and Festival Friday, Oct. 2. Tickets are available online at <https://www.michrenfest.com/>.

Annual Ypsi Pride celebration to close out summer Aug. 30

Lelaina MacDonald

News Reporter

Ypsi Pride is set for Sunday, Aug. 30, bringing community, activities and performances to Depot Town.

Originally slated for July 18, the event was postponed due to poor air quality. Many of the events and aspects of the event will remain the same as before. However, some performers and activities will be different.

Beginning at noon, attendees are welcome to Riverside Park for family-focused events and activities. Families can expect to experience storytimes, a theater workshop and other activities.

At 2 p.m., entertainment

representing a variety of genres and performances will take place. There will be performances at both the Street Stage (sponsored by Habitat for Humanity Huron Valley) and the Freighthouse Stage (sponsored by Spectrum BRG at NSF).

At the Freighthouse, DJ Mercury, Applejack, Versus the City, Unveiled Dance/Rhizome Roots Studio and Dead Daisies will perform 2-6 p.m., then adult-only performances will take place. Comedy hour will be hosted by MX. Kiki, and Burlesque hour, hosted by Kitsu Fondue, will follow.

At the Street Stage, located on Cross Street, performances by more than 20 guests will start at 2 p.m. The order

of performances will be as follows: Intro and Land Acknowledgement, The Ypsilanti Youth Choir, My Salamander, Drag King/Thing Hour, Out Loud Chorus, Drag Hour, Baddie Brooks, Tonio Adonis Act 1, Melodic Nocturne Dance Tribe and Tonio Adonis Act 2.

Audience members can tip the performers by cash or Venmo. QR codes for Venmo tips can be found on the schedules. Tips sent after Aug. 30 will go to the Ypsi Pride General Fund. For those who are interested in volunteering for Ypsi pride, visit the link in Ypsi Pride’s Instagram bio or email the organization ypsipride@riversidearts.org.



Zooney Gaychanel interacts with fans at Ypsi Pride on Friday, June 6, 2025. Lelaina MacDonald / The Eastern Echo



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TikTok @theeasternecho



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Dive team future in jeopardy



EMU diver makes the last spring before diving at Jones Natatorium on Jan. 24. Zach Sturgill / The Eastern Echo

Ruby Brannon
Sports Editor

Eastern Michigan University’s Jones Natatorium will close May 9, 2027, which could mean the discontinuation of the women’s swimming and diving program if no NCAA-compliant alternative pool facility is found.

The announcement came to the EMU community from President Brendan Kelly in an email on Aug. 14. The decision to close the pool facility was described as a necessary move for long-term institutional sustainability.

A facility in decline

Jones Natatorium has been a staple of the Ypsilanti campus for over 40 years. However, Kelly said in the email that decades of exposure to a demanding pool environment have resulted in facility degradation that is now financially unsustainable.

The university conducted an extensive evaluation of its options before reaching this conclusion, Kelly said. A complete renovation of the current space would cost between \$19.2 million and \$21.5 million, he said in the email. Such a project would also require the facility to be shuttered for 18 to 24 months, leaving athletes without a home for two full seasons. Alternatively, the cost of replacing

the facility entirely is estimated at \$30 million to \$33 million, Kelly said.

“This decision reflects EMU’s responsibility to prioritize investments that support the greatest number of students and ensure long-term institutional sustainability,” Kelly said in the email.

Substantial outside philanthropy would be required within the next nine months to allow a capital project to address the issues of the facility, EMU administrators said on an informational webpage. Even if funding is secured, the multi-year project would still cause program disruption.

The impact on student-athletes

One of the most significant consequences of the closure is the possible discontinuation of the women’s swimming and diving program following the 2026-27 season. President Kelly’s email noted that the program will only continue if an NCAA-compliant alternative facility can be secured.

To allow current roster members to finish their immediate competitive goals, the facility will remain operational through the end of the next academic year. This provides the 2026-27 team one final season to compete in their home waters before the May 9 deadline. However, the university made it clear that without significant philanthropy, the pool and the program are nearing their end.

Community impact

Beyond the impact on EMU’s swim and dive team, the decision could also impact others who use the pool, Kelly said.

Beyond the varsity roster, the facility is a hub for high school teams that

utilize the lanes for evening practices and weekend competitions, as well as local swim clubs and recreational users who take advantage of free swim hours and exercise programs. The university has pledged to work closely with these partners to support scheduling transitions as the 2027 deadline approaches.

“We recognize the impact this decision will have on our student athletes, coaches and community partners,” Kelly said in the email. “We will work closely with campus and community partners that rely on the natatorium to support their programming.”

Title IX and legal concerns

The potential removal of a varsity women’s program raises significant questions regarding Title IX compliance. Federal law requires that educational institutions receiving federal funds provide equal athletic opportunities and equivalent benefits, opportunities and treatment to male and female athletes. This includes the quality and availability of practice and competitive facilities.

In his email, Kelly said the university is “carefully assessing the potential Title IX impact” that the closure and the potential loss of the varsity program could bring.

Under the “Three-Part Test” used by the Office for Civil Rights, schools must demonstrate they are effectively accommodating the interests and abilities of the underrepresented sex.

“EMU remains confident in its ability to consistently offer outstanding and equitable athletic opportunities for its student-athletes,” Kelly said in his email.

EMU 2026 football schedule

- Aug. 29:**
Sacramento State University at EMU, 6:30 p.m.
- Sept. 4:**
San Jose State University at EMU, 6:30 p.m.
- Sept. 12:**
EMU at Michigan State University, 3:30 p.m.
- Sept. 19:**
EMU at University of Wisconsin-Madison, 11:30 a.m.
- Sept. 26:**
Lindenwood University at EMU, 1 p.m.
- Oct. 3:**
EMU at University of Massachusetts Amherst, time TBA
- Oct. 10:**
EMU at University of Akron, 3:30 p.m.
- Oct. 17:**
University of Toledo at EMU, 3:30 p.m.
- Oct. 24:**
EMU at Ohio University, time TBA
- Nov. 4:**
EMU and Central Michigan University at Ford Field in Detroit, 7/7:30 p.m.
- Nov. 17:**
EMU at Western Michigan University, 7 p.m.
- Nov. 24:**
Kent State University at EMU, 7 p.m.
- Dec. 5:**
MAC Championship at Ford Field in Detroit, 12 p.m.

Eastern Michigan football to begin fall season with two co-defensive coordinators

Darrell Justice
Sports Reporter

The Eastern Michigan University football defense will be led by a coordinator duo for the first time when the Eagles play their first game of the season on Aug. 29, against Sacramento State University, the newest team to the Mid-American Conference.

On December 22, 2025, Eastern Michigan head coach Chris Creighton announced the promotion of Tate Omli and Kasey Teegardin to co-defensive coordinators. The move came after Ben Needham, who led the Eagles’ defense for three seasons, left the program. Rather than hire from outside, Creighton turned to two coaches already on his staff and handed them the defense together.

A new approach

Instead of naming one coordinator, Creighton offered Omli and Teegardin

the idea of building the defense as a pair. The two coaches sat down, planned out what each would run on his own, and combined their ideas into one system. Both have described the partnership as a smooth one so far.

“Honestly, it’s been seamless,” Omli said in a written statement. “It’s been really smooth. It’s been a blast.”

The two coaches bring different styles to the field, according to senior defensive back Bryce Llewellyn.

“Coach T is more of the aggressive, intense guy,” Llewellyn said in a written statement. “And then Coach Omli comes back and then kind of chill, kind of thinking more intuitively and making sure everybody’s on the right line of communication.”

Coach Omli

Omli enters his fourth season at Eastern Michigan. Before arriving in Ypsilanti, he spent three seasons as the defensive coordinator at Hutchinson



Chris Creighton, head coach of EMU’s Football team, runs onto the field after pregame with his team surrounding him before the game against Ohio on Oct. 25, 2025. Bradan Copeland / The Eastern Echo

Community College in Kansas. His time there was successful, as his teams

went 28-3, won two league titles, reached multiple national championship games and won the NJCAA National Championship in 2020-21.

That success carried over to Eastern Michigan in 2025. Bryce Llewellyn led the team with 103 tackles, two interceptions, and 5.0 tackles for loss, and became the first Eastern Michigan defensive back to earn all-conference honors since 2020. Along with Llewellyn, Barry Manning added 73 tackles in a hybrid safety-linebacker role, while Jason Marshall finished with 64 tackles of his own.

Coach Teegardin

Teegardin begins his third year at Eastern Michigan, adding to his already-experienced coaching background. He spent 10 seasons at Indiana University and has more than 18 years in college coaching from previous jobs at Valparaiso University, Northwood University, and the University of Charleston in West Virginia. At Charleston, he became the youngest defensive coordinator in the NCAA at age 24, leading a defense that ranked 19th in the nation against

the run.

At Indiana, Teegardin coached 10 All-Big Ten players and built special teams units that blocked 10 kicks over four years. That development has continued with Eastern Michigan’s defensive line, which is led by Carter Evans and freshman Quincy Byas. Byas made an early impact in 2025, finishing with a team-high six tackles for loss.

Looking ahead

Eastern Michigan finished the 2025 season with a record of 4-8 and now turns its defense over to two new leaders. The Eagles return key pieces in the secondary and a young defensive line that is set to keep improving.

“There’s a lot of differentiation between last year’s defense and this year’s defense,” he said in a written statement.

With Omli and Teegardin sharing the coordinator role, Eastern Michigan is set up to grow as a team and to improve upon last season’s record.



Eagle Nation cheers for EMU’s football team after they scored against BGSU on Nov. 8, 2025, at Rynearson Stadium. Bradan Copeland / The Eastern Echo

Events to attend during EMU's first week of classes



Students attend Campus Life's "Movie in the Park" night. Photo courtesy of Campus Life

Lelaina MacDonald
News Reporter

As the new school year kicks off, Eastern Michigan University will host several events to welcome new and returning students to campus. Here are the top campus events to start off the fall semester.

Move-in movie - Thursday, Aug. 27

After freshman move in the Thursday before classes start, they can celebrate with a welcome event from 7:30-11 p.m., featuring a screening of “Project Hail Mary” at the Student Center University Park. Students who attend can expect free food, games and opportunities to connect with each other.

First home football game - Saturday, Aug. 29

Competing against Sacramento State University, the first EMU football game

of the season will be at the Rynearson Stadium from 6:30-9:30 p.m.

Students get free tickets to every EMU home game and can access their pass by clicking the link sent in an email from Eastern Michigan Athletics.

Tickets for the game can be purchased on the EMU Eagles website, the EMU Ticket Office at 799 N. Hewitt Road or students can call 734-487-3369.

Recharge at the Rec - Sunday, Aug. 30

From 5-8 p.m. at the Rec/IM building, students can relax and have some fun by playing games, winning prizes, eating food and more. The Rec will be open for new and returning students to check out the center's equipment and services and enjoy an evening with friends.

First Day of Class Celebration - Monday, Aug. 31

To celebrate the first day of the fall

semester, EMU welcomes students to commemorate the occasion with a photo. Students are invited to the the Block E in front of the Student Center to take photos and enjoy Tom's coffee from 9 a.m. to noon.

Student Employment Fair - Wednesday, Sept. 2

In the Student Center Ballroom from 1 to 4 p.m., EMU is hosting a Student Employment Fair. This event is for new and returning EMU students who may be looking for a part-time job on campus or in Ypsilanti. Employers who will be there include EMU departments and offices, restaurants, retailers, hotels, healthcare facilities, day care centers and local businesses.

EMU advises that students dress for success at this event. Students can find professional clothing at the Career Closet in McKenney Hall.

For questions and more information, students can contact John Carlson, a member of the University Advising

and Career Development Center, by calling 734-487-0400 or emailing him at jcarls18@emich.edu.

EMU Theatre fall auditions - Wednesday, Sept. 2

At Judy Sturgis Hill building Room 107, students can audition for three different productions: “Jumpin’ Jamboree,” “Ride the Cyclone” and/or “Someone is Speaking, Someone is Silent.”

The Communication, Media and Theatre Arts websites states, “EMU Theatre auditions and crew calls are open to any currently enrolled EMU student, in good academic standing, regardless of major/minor. We encourage students of all races, ethnicities, gender identities, sexualities, and abilities to participate in the EMU Theatre production program.”

Auditions run from 6-8 p.m., while dance auditions run from 8-9 p.m.

Requirements, the audition process, callbacks and more can be found on the Auditions and Crew Calls page on the CMTA website.

Questions can be directed to Assistant Managing Director Pam Cardell, at pcardell@emich.edu or 734-487-1220.

Honors College Welcome Back Popsicle Party - Thursday, Sept. 3

The EMU Honors College is hosting a popsicle party to welcome students back to campus. Those in attendance can connect with faculty and staff as well as returning and new students from 3:30-5 p.m. at the Honors College.

This event is open to all students, even those who are not in the Honors College.

RSO kickstart - Thursday, Sept. 3

From 5-8 p.m. in the Student Center Ballroom, student organizations will be provided with the tools, resources and updates they need to operate successfully and meet the registration requirements for the academic year. Students will be exposed to funding opportunities and campus resources, be able to connect with campus partners and fellow student leaders, build their leadership skills and enjoy the food giveaways and raffle prizes.

Students who want more information or have questions can contact Campus Life’s Juniper Bamrick at 734-487-3045 or campuslife@emich.edu.

International Student Mixer - Friday, Sept. 4

International students are invited to Student Center room 352 from 6-8 p.m. for games, food, and community building. CORE is collaborating with the International Student Association and EMU Student Government to welcome new and returning international students.

Home football game - Friday, Sept. 4

EMU will be playing against San Jose State at the Rynearson Stadium from 6:30-9:30 p.m.

Tickets for the game can be purchased on the EMU Eagles website, the EMU Ticket Office at 799 N. Hewitt Road or students can call 734-487-3369.

Students get free tickets to all EMU home games and can access their pass by clicking the link sent in an email from Eastern Michigan Athletics.

Campus Life welcomes students back with event series

Lelaina MacDonald
News Reporter

The fall 2026 semester is just around the corner, which means it is almost time to get back into the swing of things — waking up early, going to class and studying. However, college life doesn’t have to be only about academics.

At Eastern Michigan University, Campus Life is holding a Weeks of Welcome program for all students at EMU who wish to do something a little different, meet new people and have fun. The program features several events over the first few weeks of the semester.

“The Weeks of Welcome programming is designed to get the fall term off to a great start and to provide spaces where students and faculty and staff can build connections in the EMU community,” Dwight Hamilton, the interim chief student affairs officer, told The Eastern Echo.

There are eight main events in which students can participate: Welcome Back Bash, Commuter Cookout, EagleFest, Ypsi Block Party, EMU Gaming Arena: Find Your Party, Cultural Expo!, Field Day and Ignite the Night.

“We want to make sure that we are starting off the new academic year with a flurry of activity,” Hamilton said. “Great opportunities for student engagement, great opportunities for students to interact with faculty and staff outside of their professional roles, to build spirit, and to provide better connection with our football and other athletic programs.”

Students, whether they are new or have been at EMU for a while, are encouraged to attend these events, Hamilton said. All of the Weeks of Welcome events and information can be found on the Weeks of Welcome 2026 website. Those who may have questions can contact Campus Life by phone at 734-487-3045 or email at campuslife@emich.edu. They can also visit the Campus Life office in Student Center Room 345.

Welcome Back Bash
Day: Saturday, Aug. 29
Location: Gervin Center and Rynearson Stadium
Time: 3 p.m. for the Convocation

(GC), 4:15 p.m. for the Eagle Walk (RS), 4:30-6:30 p.m. for the Connect Tailgate (RS) and 6:30 p.m. for the Football Game Kickoff (RS)

“The first program is the Welcome Back Bash,” Hamilton said. “It’s going to feature a program at the Gervin Center which will feature the president. We are going to have the coach with a hype video to promote the athletic season and the football game.”

This will be followed by students walking out to see the Eagle Walk, Hamilton said. There will be tailgating and then the first EMU football game of the season.

There will also be a T-shirt giveaway that is first come, first served.

Commuter Cookout
Day: Wednesday, Sept. 2
Location: Student Center Patio
Time: 3-6 p.m.

The Commuter Cookout is an event that welcomes students to enjoy some freshly cooked food and entertainment. Hamilton said that this year’s Commuter Cookout will be bigger and better than previous years.

This year, there is going to be a bucket hat giveaway as supplies last. Free food, provided by EIDining, will be available, and students can win prizes and play outdoor games.

“I want to stress that all students are welcome to the Commuter Cookout,” Hamilton said. “They don’t have to be commuters to be there.”

Hamilton said he wants the Commuter Cookout to highlight the students at EMU, allowing them to meet and interact with lots of people.

“It is not only for them to enjoy the cookout, but also to get connected with some of the resources that we have here at EMU,” Hamilton said.

EagleFest
Day: Wednesday, Sept. 9
Location: University Park
Time: 4-7 p.m.

EagleFest, the EMU student organization fair, will have around 200 student organizations this year, Hamilton said.

“[It is a] great opportunity for students who are looking to join a student organization. [They can] meet with the leaders of those organizations

and get exposed, potentially, to groups they didn’t even know exist,” Hamilton said.

Hamilton also said that this year, there will be a DJ, music and food trucks at EagleFest.

Additionally, there is going to be a crew sock giveaway for those who attend.

Ypsi Block Party
Day: Thursday, Sept. 17
Location: Depot Town
Time: 5-8 p.m.

The week after EagleFest, EMU will be having a block party in Depot Town. “It’s a new event,” Hamilton said. “That evening, we are going to essentially have a big block party in Depot Town.”

President Brendan Kelly wants to strengthen the relationship between EMU and Ypsilanti. The Ypsi Block Party will give the students of EMU the opportunity to explore Ypsilanti’s Depot Town and enjoy some food and music.

Students also have the chance to win an Ypsi embroidered patch on a first-come, first-served basis.

EMU Gaming Arena: Find Your Party
Day: Friday, Sept. 25
Location: Student Center
Time: 7 p.m. to midnight

“This is another new program,” Hamilton said. “Essentially, we are taking over the Student Center. So there will be several concurrent games taking place in different rooms.”

Arcade games, computer games, card games, tabletop roleplay games and many more will be in different rooms within the Student Center. The goal for this event is to celebrate gaming in all of its forms and to provide a way for EMU students to gather together and form new bonds, Hamilton said.

Those who attend have the chance to receive a special jersey; first come first served.

Cultural Expo!
Day: Saturday, Oct. 3
Location: Student Center Ballroom
Time: 5-9 p.m.

The Cultural Expo! is an annual tradition that celebrates international



University Advising tables at EIDining's Commuter Cookout, and hands out trinkets, fidget toys, and informative papers on Tuesday, Sept. 9 2025.

Max Taylor / The Eastern Echo

students and the different places and cultures of the world.

“International students [will be] highlighting information about their home countries,” Hamilton said.

The International Student Association, the Southeast Asian Student Alliance and the Center of Race and Ethnicity are sponsoring this event, along with Campus Life.

Attendees can expect cuisines from different parts of the world and the opportunity to learn various cultural dances.

There will also be a button giveaway at this event.

Field Day
Day: Thursday, Oct. 8
Location: Rynearson Field
Time: 6-9 p.m.

Much like the childhood classic of a field day in place of classes, this event will give students the chance to let loose and have fun.

“There will be field games there and food and a great time will be had by all,” Hamilton said.

Students will be able to tie-dye a free T-shirt, enjoy some classic fair foods and have the chance to win a clear fanny pack. Students are also encouraged to stop by the Student Alumni Association table that will be

at the event.

Ignite The Night: Homecoming Golf Cart Parade, Pep Rally and Bonfire

Day: Friday, Oct. 16
Location: Rec Ball Field
Time: 6-9 p.m.

To finish off the Weeks of Welcome, students can experience a golf cart parade, pep rally and bonfire on homecoming weekend.

Students are encouraged to wear green and white for Ignite the Night.

There will be a first-come, first-served beanie giveaway for anyone who participates.

“It is going to start off with a golf cart parade down Ainsley Street and also culminate in a big bonfire. It’s designed to serve as a pep rally for the football team prior to the homecoming game the following day,” Hamilton stated.

These are the main featured events during the Weeks of Welcome. However, Hamilton told The Echo that there are over 100 different programs and activities that are going to take place during those same weeks. Campus events are posted on the EMU calendar.



Instagram @easternechoofficial



TikTok @theeasternecho

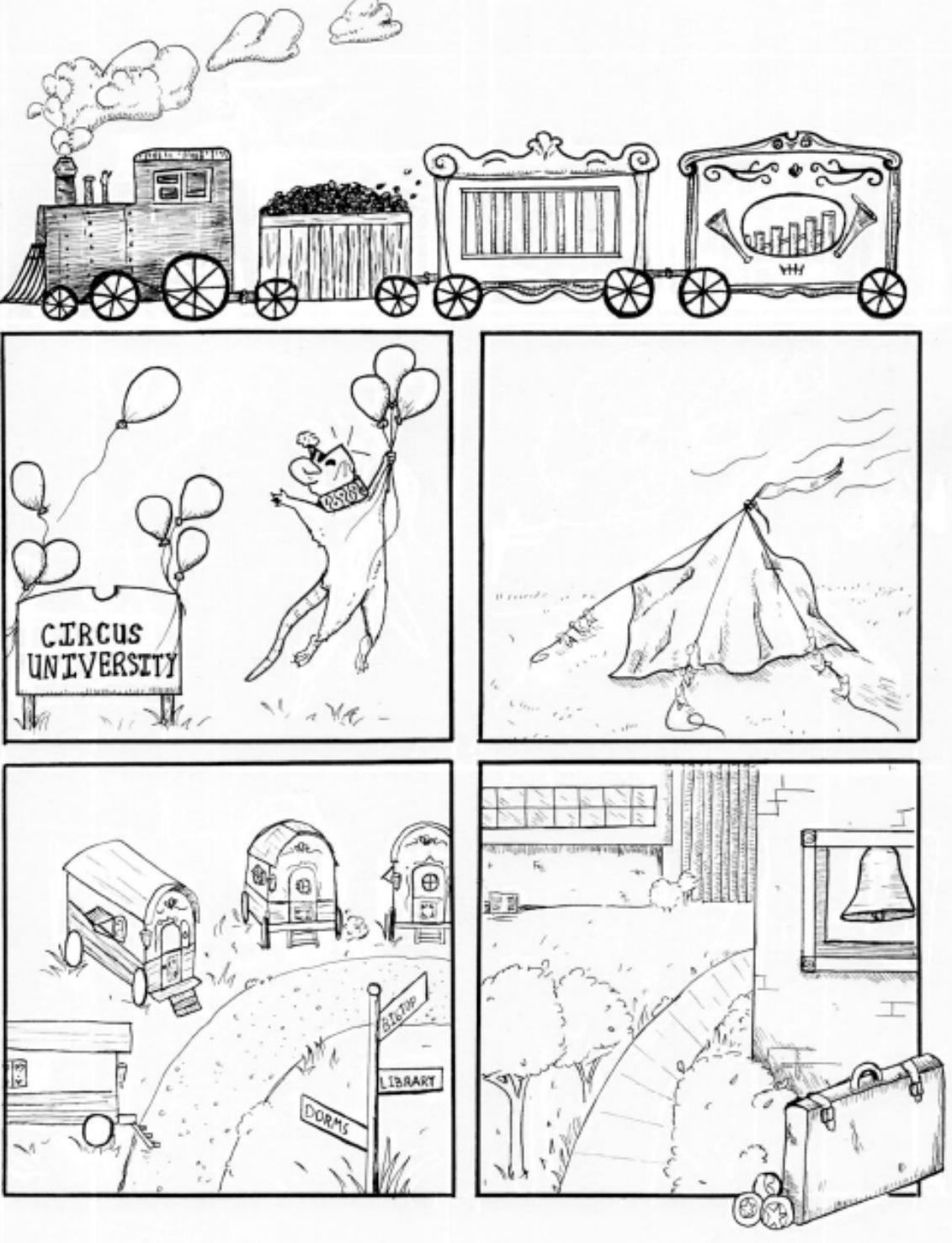


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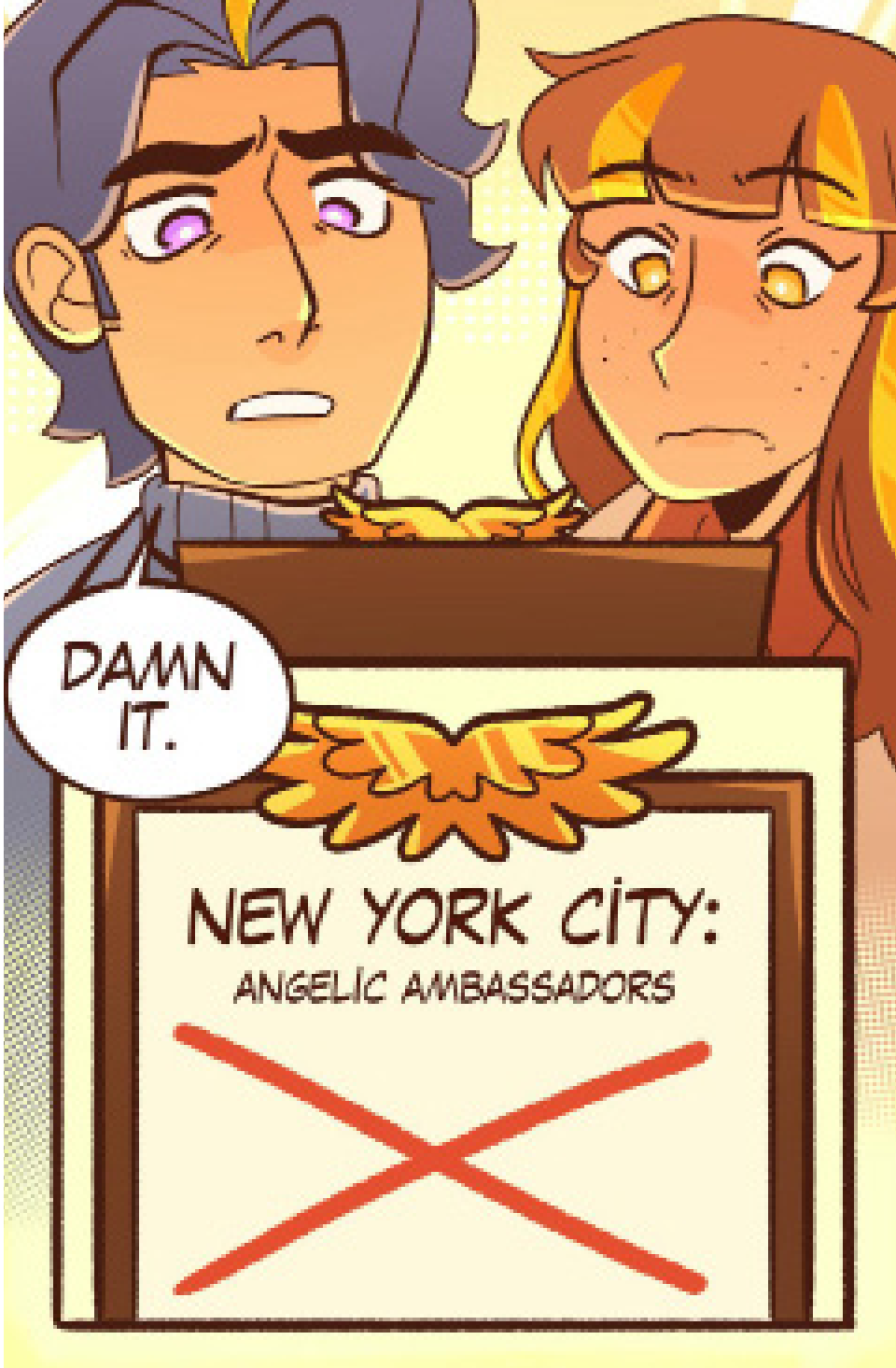
Hello! From Beyond The Stars! | *Katelyn Hollis*



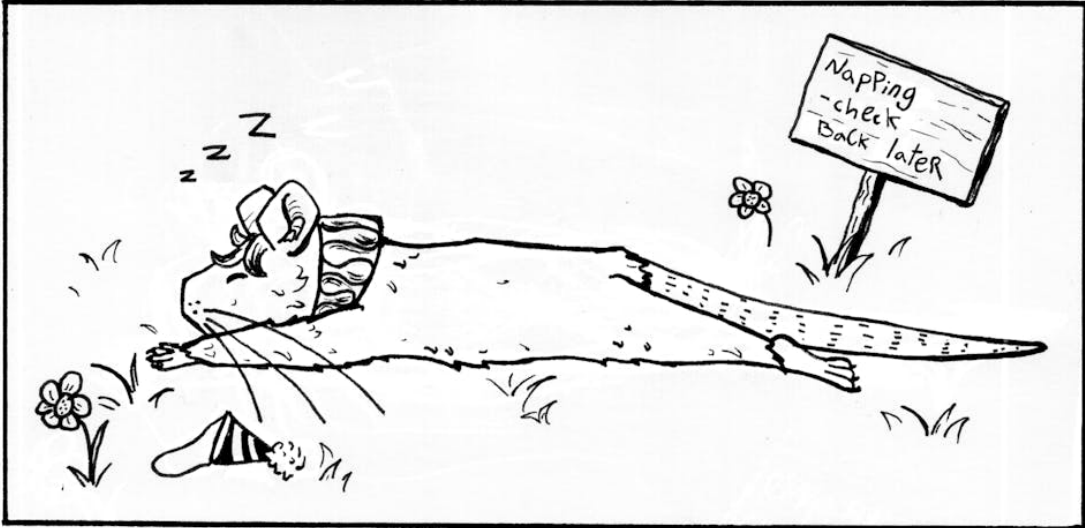
Welcome! | *Jamie Owens*



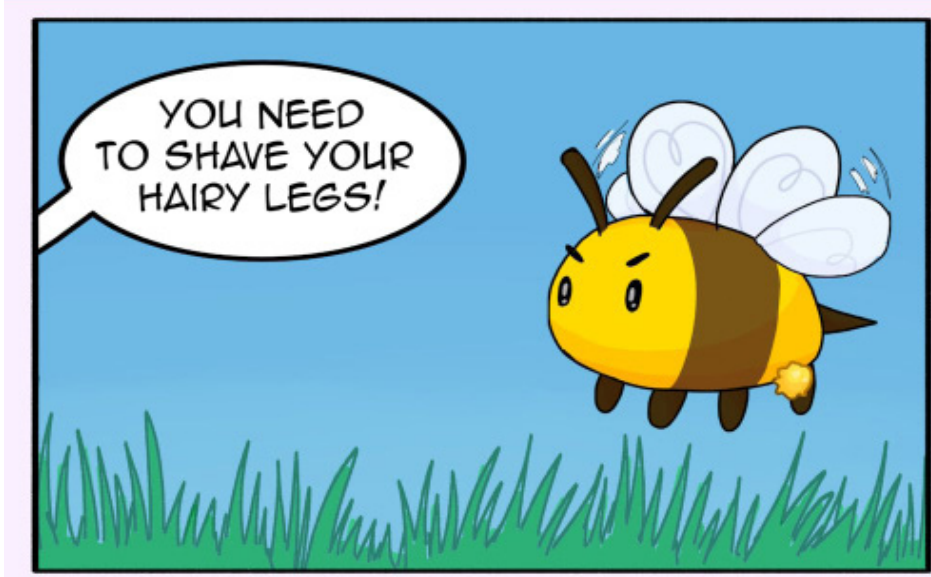
City Angel - Part 1: Help Wanted! | *AJ Grams*



On Break... | *Jamie Owens*



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EMU Honors College changes curriculum requirements for all students



The front Eastern Michigan University Honors College building at 511 W. Forest Ave. Hannah Borders / The Eastern Echo

Hannah Borders
Arts & Entertainment Reporter

The Honors college announced changes to its curriculum requirements to create more flexibility for students while maintaining the academic rigor, high standards and distinctive opportunities that come with being an honors student. The announcement was made in an email sent to all honors students on Aug. 18.

The email mentioned three major changes that will take effect immediately: reduction in honors credits required for transfer honors students, replacement of the Star Lecture requirement with new Campus Lecture requirement and modifying CLIPS (Cultural exploration, Leadership, Intellectual, Professional development and Skill development) requirements in three different ways.

The first change addressed in the email is a reduction in honors credit requirements for students pursuing transfer honors. Each Honors Pathway has different requirements for the number of credit hours a student must

complete by taking honors courses. Initially, transfer honors students were required to complete 18 credit hours in honors courses; now the requirement is that they complete 15 credit hours. This credit requirement applies to both current and incoming transfer honors students.

Prior to the new changes, all honors students had to complete the Star Lecture requirement. Every academic year, the Honors College would host six lectures between the two semesters that fit that year’s theme. Students were required to attend three different lectures all within one year and write a reflection paper on them. This is being replaced by the new Campus Lecture requirement.

The Campus Lecture requirement is designed to allow more flexibility in student’s schedules and allow them to explore more lecture topics, the email said. Students pursuing university honors, highest honors or departmental honors are required to attend four campus lectures throughout their time at EMU, not just in a single year, while transfer honors students are required to attend three.

Any Star Lectures or campus lectures current students have attended in past years may be submitted for credit, and students who have already attended three Star Lectures to complete the requirement do not need to attend a fourth lecture. Students are still required to write a reflection essay on each lecture attended.

Students can attend any lecture hosted by EMU, with proof of attendance, to meet the Campus Lectures requirement. Additionally, each lecture the student attends must fit into a chosen theme. Themes can be related to the student’s major, personal interests or other. They can be specific or very broad, as long as each lecture can be woven together in some way.

“We want students to pick lectures that are really meaningful to them. We changed this requirement because we want it to be more in the students’ hands for whatever they’re interested in,” said Nick Malendowski, assistant director of the Honors College. “Not only does that help students not feel super boxed in by what we’re putting on as lectures, it also has more flexibility for students.”

With students no longer being required to attend Star Lectures hosted by the Honors College, they will no longer be hosting them. The Honors College wants to host two lectures each academic year to help students meet the requirement. Instead of following a specific theme decided by the Honors College each year, the new lectures will focus on topics that can be applied to a wide range of different themes to meet students’ different needs and interests, Malendowski said.

Kim Waldroop, an honors student majoring in environmental science with a concentration in biology, said the new rules allow more freedom and

flexibility for students.

“It allows students to find a common theme between what the presentations they are attending, but to also apply it to their learning and reflect on their ideals, thoughts, and academic integrity as a student,” Waldroop said. “Star Lectures often felt confining because the topics didn’t always resonate with me and my learning, but with the new Campus Lectures, I have so much more to choose from, and [it] even encourages me to attend more lectures on campus.”

Additionally, the email outlined three changes to the CLIPS requirement. A variety of CLIPS, or cultural exploration, leadership, intellectual, professional development and skill development, experiences are required for each of the honors pathways. Now, students are only allowed to count one Skills Development experience toward their total CLIPS requirements and that experience must be tied to involvement in a recognized organization or EMU course.

The requirement did not previously have a determined amount of work time required for completion. CLIPS experiences now require a minimum of 20 hours of work associated with them. CLIPS requirements that have already been completed or pre-approved will still count as completed whether or not they meet this new guideline.

Waldroop said the CLIPS change gives her pause, because students have other commitments that could interfere with fulfilling the requirement.

“I believe the idea is good in theory — it definitely allows you to apply your requirements in real world situations while also getting hands on with what you choose. However, realistically speaking, I’m not sure if a full 20 hours could truly be applied to CLIPS

learning,” Waldroop said. “Most students, such as myself, work more than one job to afford tuition or housing while also having to focus on classes and put the necessary hours into them. This takes a good chunk of your week and weekend, and students deserve to also have time for themselves to enjoy their social life.”

Waldroop said the new requirements are an improvement, but she hopes to see continuous evaluation of the system.

“Things slip under the radar pretty easily, and I believe students will not prioritize [the] CLIPS 20 hours as the Honors College might hope they will, which would leave many to fall behind on their honors graduation requirements,” she said. “I believe it’s still better than our former system, but I believe the CLIPS section will be best if it’s continuously reviewed and revised.”

Malendowski said the Honors College would often receive questions on what counts as enough work for a CLIPS requirement because there were no specific guidelines. The requirement has not changed much, as most CLIPS experiences are things that would take students 20 hours or more to complete. The new requirement is just putting a numerical value on that amount of time. Students with questions or concerns about what counts as too little, enough or too much for a CLIPS experience can fill out the pre-approval form to make sure.

“We have really leaned into a ‘designed by you’ mindset which means we want everything you are doing to be beneficial for you, so that you can really take those CLIPS experiences and mold them to what you need post-graduation,” Malendowski said.

Fall semester kicks off with changes to campus parking

Sam Peterson
News Reporter

Six months after Eastern Michigan University’s Department of Public Safety took over management of campus parking, the results are visible in freshly repaved lots and new reserved space-signage.

DPS assumed responsibility for what is now called Eagle Parking January 30, ending a long-standing arrangement in which the university’s parking operations were run by an outside contractor, LAZ. EMU Police Chief Matt Lige said the transition team has been smaller than the staff LAZ maintained, but more efficient; accomplishing in six months what he called a significant amount of foundational work, while acknowledging there is still more to do.

This handoff wasn’t just administrative. For over a decade, frustrated students, staff and visitors who ran into parking problems with LAZ called DPS directly, even though the department had no authority over parking decisions at the time.

“My office was often the subject of

anger,” Lige said. “It’s nice [now] that all parking related issues fall under the umbrella. I’m ultimately responsible for it. But the feedback, the collaboration, the conversations that are happening, are very productive.”

Lige said the department’s goals will start with regaining the trust of students and community.

“It affects the image,” Lige said of the earlier system’s shortcomings. “It did more damage than it was productive.”

Reduced parking cost

Lige said, in addition, that the parking prices are being reduced.

“We reduced the standard commuter and resident parking permits 5% from \$223 to \$210. 5% may not seem like a lot, but 5% reduction is significant in the scheme of things,” Lige said.

Lige also said the university has created a more affordable option.

“We created an option called the Green Lot option, which is one of our parking lots right here,” Lige said, “We’re offering that as a parking option for commuters or resident students for \$175. You park in this lot; that is the only lot you can park in.”

Lige said that while the Green Lot may be a hike from main campus, its cost, arguably, outweighs the extra time you’ll spend walking.

“Yes, you have got a little bit of a walk, but you get a substantially reduced permit cost,” he said.

Parking permits can be purchased online.

Improved infrastructure

A major piece of the recent work has been physical: resurfacing, regrading and re-striping lots across campus, some of which hadn’t been updated in years. Winter salting and plowing gradually wears paint off asphalt, and after enough seasons, faded lines make it difficult to tell where a parking space is.

One of the largest initiatives, Chief Lige said, covered roughly 1,400 spaces in a single lot — splitting between residential and commuter parking. Crosswalks in several areas have been redone as well. DPS also did away with the coin-operated meters in favor of QR-code payment.

Students will now be able to reserve designated parking lots. This is something that hasn’t be an opportunity



Eastern Michigan University Community Engagement Officer Andrea Elliott (left) and Police Chief Matthew Lige inform students of new changes to parking at the Feb. 4 Campus Parking Listening Session in Downing Hall. Bea Dingman / The Eastern

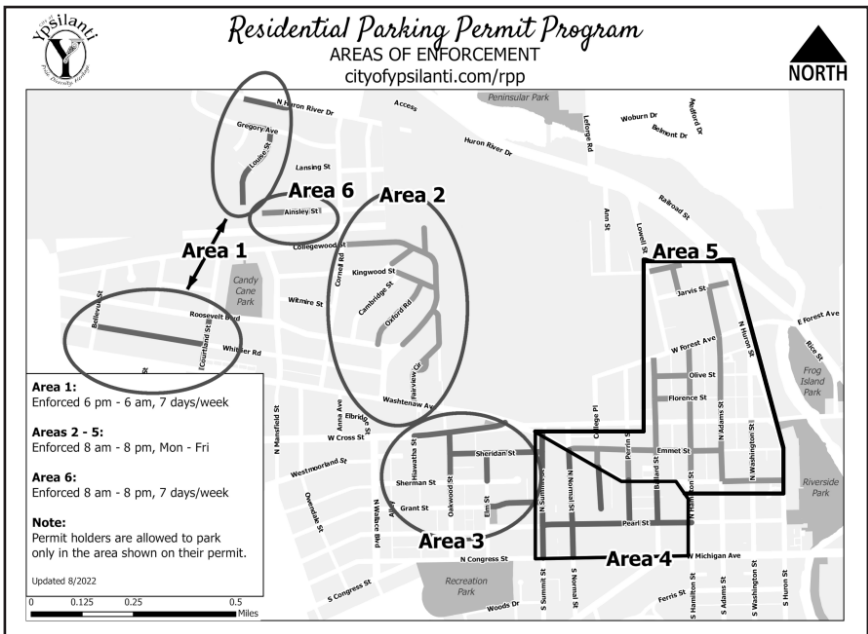
“When you weigh who benefits the most from it ... the commuters need the space,” Chief Lige said.

New signage and reclassified lots are expected to be completed before students return this fall. DPS says it will continue evaluating the parking situation as the transition continues.

at EMU in the past.

Several lots, Chief Lige said, have been reclassified based on who uses them most. A lot near Downing Hall that was previously split between staff and commuter parking has been converted into a dedicated commuter lot after feedback from residents. A separate lot, once shared by staff and commuters, has been repurposed to exclusively commuters.

Ypsilanti City parking permit renewal approaches



Map of the locations residents can use parking permits at in Ypsilanti. Courtesy of City of Ypsilanti

Lelaina MacDonald
News Reporter

Ypsilanti residents who have a residential parking permit can now renew or apply for one until Sept. 30.

The residential parking permit allows residents to park on any street marked with permit parking signs within their zone. Streets included are marked with signs stating the hours of enforcement and the hours of enforcement are different in each area.

In order to renew a residential parking permit, the applicant must have proof of residency (driver’s license, lease or utility bill), current vehicle registration and a current driver’s license, the City of Ypsilanti website says. The same applies for those who are purchasing a parking permit for the

first time.

A new permit fee is \$45, a permit renewal is \$30 and an additional visitor pass is \$30. The permit is a sticker that is meant to be placed in the bottom driver’s side corner of the windshield of a person’s car. Motorcycles can receive parking permits, too, as long as it is visibly displayed.

“There is no limit on the amount of residential permits that can be issued per address,” the website states. “But only two visitors’ passes may be issued per address. The first one is free.”

A visitor pass card should be placed on the driver’s side dashboard.

Each residential address can have two visitor passes. For the purposes of the visitor passes, each unit in a multi-unit property is considered a different address.

Visitor permits may not be used in

place of a residential pass by residents.

“All existing parking citations must be paid before a permit can be issued, even for renewals,” the website states.

Paper applications can be mailed or dropped off to City Hall at 1 S. Huron St., Ypsilanti. Permits can also be purchased online.

The City of Ypsilanti website says that inquiries or requests regarding parking during special events, such as estate sales, athletic events or block parties, must be made at least one week in advance either by email to parkingticketappeals@cityofypsilanti.com or by dropping it off in writing at City Hall. These requests are evaluated on a case-by-case basis and an events permit or other permit may also be required.

What to know about disability resources, accommodations at EMU

Allie Beecher
Copy desk chief

Eastern Michigan University offers students a multitude of resources, including tutoring, career coaching and even childcare. One important resource with which new students may not be familiar is the Disability Resource Center, or DRC, which provides academic, housing and dining accommodations to students with disabilities.

The DRC and accommodations provided
Located in Room 250 of the Student Center, the DRC is the main EMU resource for students with disabilities. Elizabeth Shawl, the center's interim director, explained that its purpose is to ensure that students have access to the accommodations they need in the higher education setting.
The DRC offers accommodations tailored to each individual student's needs. As long as accommodation requests are reasonable, the staff at the DRC will do their best to implement them.
"We take all of the accommodations individually into consideration, and so we don't have a laundry list of accommodations that we provide to students," Shawl said. "Some of our more common accommodations are extended time for testing or a reduced-distraction environment, but ... it really depends on the student's disability and the impact of their disability, so we choose to have those individual conversations to ensure that the accommodations are individual for the student."
Sarah Garlinger, an incoming first-year master's degree student at EMU who also attended EMU as an undergraduate, said that the DRC has been helpful and supportive throughout her time at the university.
"I love that we have that resource on campus, and they are super great about accommodating students as much as possible," she said.
There are some accommodations that the DRC cannot provide because they would be impossible, unreasonable or outside of the center's scope to provide, Shawl said. For example, the DRC cannot provide accommodations to change the mode of a class (such as whether it is in person or online); that is up to individual professors. Some other accommodations the DRC cannot provide are unlimited absences, unlimited test time, extensive tardies, reduced course loads or personal assistants.

How to get accommodations
New students beginning the process of requesting accommodations should go to the DRC website and click the green "New Student Intake" box on the homepage. From there, students will complete an intake form and upload their documentation. Then, the DRC staff will review the information and set up a time to meet with the student, Shawl said.
She added that students need to be registered for classes to receive accommodations through the DRC, but there is no minimum number of credit hours for which they must be registered.
There is no deadline for requesting accommodations, but Shawl recommended starting early so students can get their accommodations in place in time for class to begin.

How to renew or change accommodations
Students must renew their academic accommodations each semester, the DRC website says. To do that, they can visit the "Returning Students" tab on the DRC website and log into their portal using the Accommodate Login Link. They will be able to access the portal by entering their single sign-on username and password.
It is important that students sign up for classes before renewing their accommodations, since their accommodations are tied to the specific classes they take. The professor of each course in which the student is enrolled will receive an Academic Letter of Accommodation, or LOA, that explains what the student needs.
Housing and Dining Letters of Accommodation remain in place for the full academic year and do not need to be renewed each semester. To get new housing or dining accommodations, students should email DRC@emich.edu.
If students need to add new accommodations at any point during the semester, they can email the DRC at drc@emich.edu.
Partnership with Disability Revolution Club, upcoming events
The DRC often collaborates on events with the Disability Revolution Club, a student organization focused on supporting and advocating for students with disabilities. Shawl, who serves as the club's adviser, explained that there are several such events coming up in the fall 2026 semester. For example, the DRC will be at EagleFest with the Disability Revolution Club on Sept. 9, 2026, and both organizations will participate in a Together Walk for suicide prevention on Sept. 10.
"I really try to support [the Disability Revolution Club] from a distance, but also try to collaborate on things to make sure our office is



The Disability Revolution Club tabled at EagleFest in the Student Center ballroom on August 27th 2024. *Max Taylor / The Eastern Echo*

connecting with students that are part of that organization and encouraging students to participate in that group if that's something they're interested in," Shawl said.
From a student's perspective, Garlinger has found the DRC to be welcoming and open to working with her.
"I would say the biggest thing would be, don't be afraid," she said. "The faculty over at the DRC are the most amazing faculty, and they truly do care about their student population. ... The worst thing that they can do is say no, but odds are, they're going to work with you, and they're going to find a way that might not necessarily be fully what you had in mind, but it'll still allow you to be accommodated in some way, shape or form."

For more information
The DRC operates from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Students can visit the DRC's office in Room 250 of the Student Center, contact the center by phone at 734-487-2470, or email the center at drc@emich.edu.
Shawl also said that the DRC will be tabling on the first floor of the Student Center every Wednesday throughout the fall semester from noon to 2 p.m. for students who have questions.

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Summer memories: May-August in Ypsi



With Lady Sunshine and The X Band playing in the background, James and Michelle Henry dance at the University Bank Commerce Center on June 20 to celebrate Juneteenth. *Courtney Prielipp / The Eastern Echo*



An attendee enjoys Ypsilanti's Annual Juneteenth Celebration on Friday June 19. *Lee Hammock / The Eastern Echo*



From left, Princess Amazonite (Eurydice), Princess Jasper (Bea Wallace), Prince Lapis (August Jones), Prince Quartzite (Aden Kuhn), and Temperance Blackstone (Kakign Crechisk) are all part of the royal court at the Michigan Renaissance Festival 2026 in Holly, Michigan. *Courtney Prielipp / The Eastern Echo*



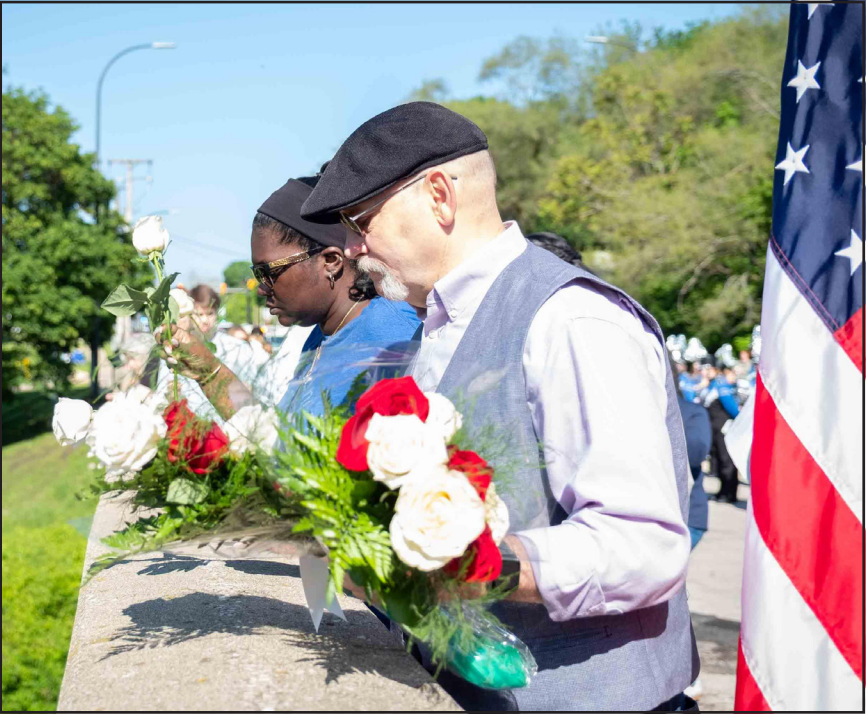
From left, Bella McQuigg, Gavin Miller, Cassandra Wilson, Matthew McFarlin, and Levi Greunke represented students in the Communications, Media and Theatre Arts program on May 16. During story time, they sang "Be the Hero" by Fish and "The New World" by Songs From the New World. *Courtney Prielipp / The Eastern Echo*



Black Pride Ypsi organizers celebrate with a cake during Black Pride Ypsi's Y2K Cookout at Growing Hope Market in Downtown Ypsilanti, June 28. *Lee Hammock / The Eastern Echo*



Eastern Michigan University President Brendan Kelly greets onlookers as he rides in the Ypsilanti Fourth of July parade, July 4. *Laleh Walker / The Eastern Echo*



Mayor Nicole Brown and Mayor Pro-Tem Steve Wilcoxon toss flowers into the Huron River to honor fallen U.S. Navy, Marines, and Coast Guard soldiers during the Memorial Day procession on May 25. *Courtney Prielipp / The Eastern Echo*



Pease Auditorium sets the stage for the second annual TEDxYpsilanti event, June 26. *Laura Meriweather / The Eastern Echo*