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Education

N.J. university asks students to stay home after Thanksgiving

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Monmouth University in West Long Branch will make nearly all courses virtual — with few exceptions — after Thanksgiving. Patti Sapone | NJ Advance Media

NEW!

By [Adam Clark | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com](#)

Enjoy your turkey. Polish off the pumpkin pie. And please stay the heck away from campus until January.

That's effectively the message Monmouth University gave some of its students Monday as COVID-19 cases surge nationwide heading into the holiday season.

The private college in West Long Branch will make nearly all courses virtual — with few exceptions — after Thanksgiving. And it has strongly encouraged students to stay home after break if they are traveling to one of the 41 states on New Jersey's [14-day quarantine list](#).

“This decision will result in reduced activity on campus... thereby helping to prevent future spread of the virus among our campus community,” Monmouth President Patrick Leahy wrote in a message to students.

The move comes as colleges nationwide are grappling with a virus that’s upended life on campuses designed for crowded lecture halls, bustling dining commons and large social gatherings.

Monmouth began the semester with fewer students on campus than usual and the majority of its courses online. But the university temporarily went to all-remote classes and postponed athletic events last month after an off-campus “super-spreader event” led to about 125 COVID-19 cases.

Though the university’s outbreak has subsided, it recognizes the risk of students traveling across the country as the number of cases grows, Leahy wrote.

“We deliberately waited until early November to make a final decision on our post-Thanksgiving plans to ensure that we had a clear understanding of the impact of COVID-19 on our campus community,” he wrote.

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Adam Clark may be reached at aclark@njadvancemedia.com. Have a news tip or a story idea about New Jersey schools? [Send it here](#).

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