

Maud S. Mandel <msm8@williams.edu>
Reply-To: msm8@williams.edu
To: WILLIAMS-ALL@listserv.williams.edu

Thu, Oct 8, 2020 at 12:59 PM

Dear students,

We write, also copying faculty and staff, with the disappointing news that our winter varsity athletes will not compete this year. The New England Small College Athletic Conference (NESCAC) has just [announced](#) a unanimous decision not to hold a competitive winter sports season, and we are therefore canceling all intercollegiate competition at Williams.

While our decision follows NESCAC's, we also considered further factors when opting not to hold competitions outside the conference schedule. A careful review of state and national data show that this is not a safe time to encourage travel or gatherings. Many experts also continue to warn that flu season could compound risks from the pandemic. We postponed the decision as long as possible in the hope that the outlook would improve, but have regrettably decided that we cannot in good faith encourage students to come back to compete. Instead, the college will continue with our original plan to end on-campus classes in November and formally reconvene at the start of spring semester.

We expect that winter sports teams will be able to conduct practices, as fall teams have done. The details and timing are yet to be determined, so the Athletics staff will share more information once it is available.

It is also too early at present to make a decision about spring sports. We will continue to track the public health situation with the conference and our peer schools, so will announce a plan once it is possible to do so with confidence.

We know many winter athletes will be sorry to lose the season. In this regard, as in so many ways, the pandemic is testing our commitments and our resilience. We look forward to a time when Williams athletes can again compete at a level of excellence worthy of our record and reputation, in a safe and healthy environment.

President Maud S. Mandel
Athletic Director Lisa Melendy