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## UMass Amherst Imposes Prison-Like Restrictions On Students

*TPUSA students at University of Massachusetts Amherst report new restrictions banning students from exercising at local gyms, and restricting their mail and from working entirely*

**PHOENIX, FEB. 18, 2020**—The University of Massachusetts Amherst has implemented new Covid-19 restrictions this semester that students are saying have crossed the line. Like all college students, those at Amherst have faced many difficult changes to their expected experience in the last year such as, remote learning, isolation due to social distancing throughout campus, loss of access to much of the campus amenities and clubs, and campus facilities.

Student organizations are being shut down by the school, despite trying to work under the changing Covid-19 guidelines. **Nick Koutouvidis, the Turning Point USA Campus Coordinator and UMass senior**, describes the current environment for all student life saying, “Not only is TPUSA failing at this school, but not a single student organization is thriving on campus. We cannot recruit, we cannot meet, we cannot travel, we cannot function. We worked hard to build creative plans based around the regulations, but the school can and has effectively halted all student life with these newest restrictions. They take our money, keep us locked in our rooms under threat of suspension, and we have no recourse.”

One UMass student, Josh Lewis, looked for an alternative to working out after the campus rec center was shut down on campus and paid for a gym membership at a nearby Planet Fitness. A few days after signing up Lewis arrived at the gym and was refused entrance at the check-in desk with the employee saying, “We’re not letting UMass students in because of the current Covid situation. They told us not to let you guys in”. Students are at a loss now that the University has called every fitness center in the area to keep students out of the gym.

**TPUSA member Joseph Stitsi commented on the negative effects**, “It has been bad for my mental health and removes one of the already few number of activities I do during times like these”

In addition to the exercise ban, limits have been placed on student’s mail received at Amherst owned dorms. They are allowed to have **1 package** delivered a week. If violated, according to a UMass Residential Service email, “continued non-compliance with this guideline will result in suspension of your ability to receive packages shipped to campus. Any mail or packages addressed to you will be returned to sender.”

In a run to one-up themselves, the latest UMass restriction has banned all students, **including those living off campus**, from working. This was documented in a recent email sent to a UMass student regarding her job in a university childcare program. Students who work for the school have been compensated but those with off-campus jobs are hung out to dry. So far no changes have been made to these campus restrictions, students have been informed that the University is monitoring the situation closely and will keep them informed.

TPUSA UMASS member, Joseph Stitsi and TPUSA UMASS Campus Coordinator, Nick Koutouvidis are available for interviews and further comment. Please direct all inquiries to Olivia Raiff [Olivia.Raiff@tpusa.com](mailto:Olivia.Raiff@tpusa.com).

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**About Turning Point USA**

*Turning Point USA is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization founded in 2012 by Charlie Kirk who was only 19 at the time. The organization's mission is to identify, educate, train, and organize students to promote the principles of freedom, free markets, and limited government. Since its founding, Turning Point USA has embarked on a mission to build the most organized, active, and powerful conservative grassroots activist network on college campuses across the country. With a presence on over 2,000 college and high school campuses across the country, Turning Point USA is the largest and fastest-growing youth organization in America.*

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