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Academic Affairs Fall Planning Update

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Academic Affairs Fall Planning update

1 message

UMaine Provost <umprovost@maine.edu>
Reply-To: UMaine Provost <umprovost@maine.edu>
To: UM-EMPLOYEES@lists.maine.edu

Wed, Jun 2, 2021 at 1:36 PM

Dear Colleagues:

Last week I attended an outdoor reception on campus, the first large, in-person gathering I have participated in since arriving at UMaine. It was also the first time I met in person a number of UMaine colleagues, many of whom I had spoken with frequently through Zoom. It was a strange sensation gathering in person without a mask, and an exhilarating one at the same time.

It is extraordinary to think that we have successfully navigated a full academic year through a pandemic. We've made substantial progress as a state. In Maine more than 70% of eligible adults have been vaccinated, restrictions on physical distancing have been lifted, and on our campuses masks are no longer required outdoors. As a result, UMaine staff are hard at work repositioning furniture across campus, including more than 12,000 chairs, and removing up to 20,000 COVID-19 stickers.

Our course schedule for the fall mirrors the fall 2019 schedule in terms of course modalities, which means we will resume pre-pandemic levels of face-to-face instruction. Masks will continue to be required indoors. Yet, bringing our classrooms to full capacity and resuming our many cultural activities will bring to UMaine the vitality and interactions we've so sorely missed.

Our fall enrollment for first-year students is among the largest in our history. Beginning this fall semester, we will also be starting a new tradition. As part of [UMS TRANSFORMS](#) and our Student Success and Retention initiative, we will be piloting the [Research Learning Experience](#) (RLE) program, where first-year students – as well as second-year students who started in the fall 2020 – can choose from more than 30 new University of Maine and University of Maine at Machias one-credit, tuition-free fall courses across a range of disciplines and topics. The RLE program kicks off with a residential experience for more than 600 students the week before fall classes begin.

That week will also be a moment for us to come together to begin the new year and celebrate our community after a long period of uncertainties. More details about that week will be forthcoming. Until then, I hope that this summer can be a time to reconnect and regenerate. We know the pandemic is not yet fully behind us and that it will take time to prepare, both physically and mentally, for the coming academic year. But I have witnessed the resiliency of our community and I look forward to seeing what we can accomplish together next year. I look forward to seeing you all, in person, in August.

Best wishes,
John

John C. Volin
Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost
University of Maine