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University of Maine System

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Matthew Revitt <matthew.revitt@maine.edu>

We'll Be Ready For Fall

1 message

Chancellor Dannel Malloy <chancelloroffice@maine.edu>

Tue, Apr 21, 2020 at 10:09 AM

Reply-To: chancelloroffice@maine.edu

To: matthew.revitt@maine.edu



April 21, 2020



UMS Colleagues,

I don't need to tell you that nearly everything we do now is influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic. We're a month in to a near-worldwide quarantine that required us here in Maine to empty our classrooms and residence halls prematurely, leaving us to manage remote learning, instruction, and work -- and even research, clinics, and art where possible -- as best we can. We made the health and safety of our communities our top priority, as we should. The goodwill displayed by our students, faculty, and staff has been the brightest spot in these challenging times, and I want to thank you again for your dedication to our students and universities.

You know what's happening nationally. Americans have banded together to stay home and stay safe. And yet there's a yearning for a return to normalcy -- to class, to work, to our public spaces. The national conversation in higher education now includes the inevitable question: *Will we come back in the fall?*

I am ready to say we will.

Maine and its public universities have been a national leader in responding to and managing the health, community, and educational impacts of COVID-19. Beyond learning how to support our students in the current remote instruction environment and all faculty and staff with remote work or

appropriate leave options, Maine's universities have worked closely with state and public health partners to respond to the crisis. And now we're ready to say that we're going to be a leader in planning for a safe return to our campuses this fall too.

You'll see [media reports today](#) that I've launched the Fall 2020 Safe Return Planning Committee so that our Presidents and I can welcome students, faculty, staff and the public back to our campuses in the fall safely. The Fall 2020 Safe Return Planning Committee will balance our eagerness to return to normal with student, faculty and staff, and community health, and we'll be working closely and transparently with our state public health leaders and UMS scientists to ensure that we do. If health concerns preclude learning, working, and gathering in close proximity, Maine's public universities will continue their work to serve students with a mix of either socially distanced classroom experiences or other high-quality instructional delivery options and accommodations that promote learning and academic progress at whatever distance is necessary.

When we began our work at the end of January to prepare responsibly for possible impacts of the Coronavirus, we did not then know how dramatically the pandemic would change our lives and work. But we did have a clear purpose. By balancing both health and academic progress -- continuity of instruction, we called it -- we could best serve our students while preserving the health and safety of our universities and the State of Maine as a whole. That's what makes us a leader in this effort. That remains our purpose, and it will continue to serve as our guidepost when we return together in the fall.

Thank you for everything you're doing to ensure that we continue to serve our students and communities in this way.

Sincerely,



Dannel P. Malloy
Chancellor

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