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Matthew Revitt <matthew.revitt@maine.edu>

Fall 2020 Safe Return Planning Committee Update

1 message

Maine's Public Universities <chancellorsoffice@maine.edu>

Mon, Jun 1, 2020 at 4:32 PM

Reply-To: chancellorsoffice@maine.edu

To: matthew.revitt@maine.edu



June 1, 2020

Your Fall 2020 Return Planning Committee Update

Dear Colleagues,

The responsiveness and selflessness of the university community in the face of Covid-19 disruptions on operations and our individual lives have been impactful. Our planning throughout the winter, our swift action once a global pandemic was declared, and the precautions we have all been adhering to helped limit the spread of the disease in Maine and among our students, faculty, and staff.

To date we know of just three confirmed cases of infection and recovery within the university community, all resolved more than a month ago.

This focus on health and prevention did not prevent our universities from successfully fulfilling our commitment to our students in the spring semester -- 98.5% of our learners persisted through the semester and nearly 4,600 degrees were conferred in May. We have also prioritized safety while developing new and responsive ways to [serve the people of Maine](#) and contribute to the state's response to the pandemic.

In April Chancellor Malloy asked us to serve as co-chairs of the Fall 2020 Safe Return Planning Committee. He charged our group with considering all options, assessing Covid-19 guidance and developing appropriate actions and protocols that can be implemented to create the safest possible learning environment on our campuses for our students, faculty, and staff this fall.

Our committee includes representation from all the campus incident command teams and the functional areas that are most responsible for campus operations and community safety. In keeping with our commitment to do our work transparently we have been providing regular updates to the presidents and campus leaders, engaged with students and the Board of Trustees. We write today to share a summary of our May work, our goals for this month, and a list of committee participants.

Summary of May Activities

The Fall 2020 Safe Return Planning Committee has met twice weekly since the end of April, often more. We have also scheduled additional meetings for conversations with outside experts and members of our committee have participated in webinars and other discussions hosted by health and education organizations and reported back to the entire panel.

The University's Science Advisory Board chaired by President Dr. Joan Ferrini-Mundy and with UMaine Professor and Virologist Dr. Mellisa Maginnis on point has been a frequent participant in our meetings. Our university experts have been particularly helpful in assessing the state of the disease, progress and potential in terms of vaccine development and treatment, and operational protocols to reduce the spread of the disease. Likewise, a team also was assembled to look specifically at residential issues and to advise the planning team.

The planning committee regularly reviews guidance updates from civil authorities and public health officials and helps shape the university guidance we post to the University's [Public Health Advisory page](#) and the [Human Resource guidance page](#).

The committee also facilitates communication and collaboration focused on campus-specific planning. The diversity of our campuses in terms of location, size, mission, residence life, and density create unique operational challenges at each of our institutions. We are working closely across the enterprise to collectively assess and inform decision making.

Chancellor Malloy and the University of Maine System have also convened the leaders of Maine's public and private higher education institutions in a discussion about planning for the fall. Our committee is assisting the work group in its planning and contributing to the [development of a common framework for reopening](#) Maine's colleges and universities in the Fall. That document may be published as early as this week.

June Work Plan

Our work this month will focus on continuing to assist in the update of university guidance in

response to new information and protocols established by Maine civil authorities with a high priority around finalizing decisions impacting summer activities and operations and, ultimately, fall.

The team will focus on working with the University Science Advisory Board to assess vaccine and treatment developments -- as of today there are 141 Covid-19 vaccines and 223 antiviral drugs in development. We will also be developing strategies and partnerships that best position our universities to implement protocols around testing, distancing, and contact tracing and to take advantage of treatment and prevention advances.

The committee will also be working to achieve alignment between campus operational plans and the common framework for reopening Maine's colleges and universities expected in early June. With this framework in place we will be assisting efforts at the campus level to procure materials and update facilities in support of the protocols we will have in place for a safer return to campus this fall.

Committee Participants

We are extremely grateful for the expertise and care our colleagues are bringing to our meetings and planning. The following is a list of primary and additional participants by campus:

Jeremy Chubbuck, UM; Robert Norman, UM; Stewart Harvey, UM ; Brenda McAleer, UMA; Rob Marden, UMA; Tiffany Maiuri; UMF; Christine Wilson, UMF; Erin Soucy, UMFK; Brian Schaefer, UMFK; Leslie Kelly, UMFK; Robert Farris, UMM; Marnie Kaler, UMM; Barbara Blackstone, UMPI; Joseph Moir, UMPI; Jason Johnston, UMPI; Chris Lindstrom, UMS; Carol Corcoran, UMS; Dominic Barraclough, USM; David Roussel; Ronald Saindon, USM; and, Nicole Vinal Harvie, School of Law.

Any list such as this is incomplete. Our thanks to everyone involved in the effort, the numerous committees and all those continuing to do their work for the University and for its students in these challenging times.

Thank you for your attention to this update. Please be sure to monitor messages from your campus leaders and Chancellor Malloy for additional news until you hear from us again next month. If you have questions or suggestions, we invite you to contact us at UMSC19Request@maine.edu.

Sincerely,

Robert Placido
UMS Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

MF Chip Gavin

UMS Chief Facilities and Management and General Services Officer



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