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## Chancellor Messages\_Still In This Together

Dannel P. Malloy

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Matthew Revitt &lt;matthew.revitt@maine.edu&gt;

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## Still In This Together

1 message

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**Chancellor Dannel Malloy** <chancelloroffice@maine.edu>  
Reply-To: chancelloroffice@maine.edu  
To: matthew.revitt@maine.edu

Fri, Nov 13, 2020 at 10:40 AM



### November 13, 2020



Members of the UMS Community:

We're still in this together.

The *Together for Maine* initiative brought us safely back to our university campuses this fall to teach and learn, research and serve, and protect each other and our communities. We've stayed safe together because you've shown leadership and respect for everyone's health and safety by wearing masks, washing your hands, keeping social distance, limiting your travel and social interactions, and not letting your guard down.

It's not been easy. It's not the experience we wish we could have. But we've done it to keep everyone safe.

Even now, with COVID spreading more widely around the state and country, our campuses continue to be among the safest places to be. In today's *Together for Maine* Daily Briefing, we are reporting just six known, active cases of infection among our residential student population. We have other cases among our employee and off-campus student populations, and we've worked with the Maine CDC in all cases to ensure that we prevent further transmission.

We will shortly celebrate Thanksgiving. Many in our community will travel around and beyond Maine. That much travel, and your interaction with different people in communities all around the United States, would pose a grave risk of spreading COVID back in Maine on our campuses if we all returned back together after a few days off for the holiday. That's why the fall semester will be finished remotely after Thanksgiving.

#### **Limiting Exposure to Community Transmission**

This week we have posted new guidance to the [Together for Maine website](#) that will help us maintain in-person instruction through November 25 and prioritize essential functions such as research and community health. In [a public announcement](#) earlier in the week, we previewed our plans to limit campus-based activity and interactions in response to the growing threat of community transmission. The guidance we have posted provides additional details and important context for your awareness.

#### **Safe Departure Testing**

We are expanding our final round of asymptomatic testing to provide safe departure and travel testing to the residence hall, out-of-state, and other groups of students who participated in our arrival testing at the start of the semester. We hope this testing will allow these members of our communities to leave for the holidays with a negative test in hand.

We will also be conducting the final round of our required random testing to find and isolate any COVID cases among students, faculty, and staff participating in on-campus activities. Students and employees selected for testing will hear from their universities directly. Because of the importance this testing continues to have for everyone's safety, participation continues to be required if selected.

I hope that all members of our community, and especially our students, maintain the high level of public health discipline necessary to get through these last two weeks together. A positive COVID test now would lead to an isolation order from the Maine CDC that would preclude travel and keep you here over Thanksgiving. While we are prepared to support and house students over the break if necessary, we want you home with your families. Therefore, for these next two weeks, I hope you'll make fewer and shorter trips off campus or around town. I hope you'll keep your personal interactions to a very small and select group whom you know to be healthy. And I hope you'll keep washing your hands, social distancing, and wearing face masks.

### Looking Ahead to Next Semester

We're already making plans to be back together this coming winter and spring. To do so safely, and to stay safe, we'll need the same kind of discipline and compliance with our COVID health and safety protocols that you've shown through this fall semester.

For the same reason we won't return after Thanksgiving in two weeks, we've adjusted the Spring 2021 academic calendar to start a week late on [January 25](#) and not have a traditional Spring Break week off. Leaving the relative safety of our university campuses and traveling anywhere around the country or world while the virus is likely to still be spreading among us would create an unreasonable risk that we'll bring the virus back to our campuses.

Just as has been the case this fall, students who travel away from our campuses next spring will be required to follow all state and university public health and student conduct standards, including any quarantine restrictions and testing requirements. And just as has been the case this fall, any student whose travel or conduct next spring threatens the public health or safety of their fellow students and campus community will face disciplinary actions under the Student Conduct Code, which could include suspension or expulsion.

Let me return to the positive. You've done this safely so far. Take great pride in how you've helped Maine's public universities have one of the safest in-person fall semesters in higher education anywhere in the United States.

As our time together in person this fall draws to a close, remember that we've come this far together. Please continue to do all you can to keep yourself and our communities safe.

Sincerely,



Chancellor  
University of Maine System

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