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Dannel P. Malloy

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Matthew Revitt <matthew.revitt@maine.edu>

Spring COVID Testing: Higher Numbers, Faster Results

1 message

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

Fri, Jan 8, 2021 at 4:15 PM



January 8, 2021



UMS Community –

We ushered in 2021 barely a week ago -- with hope. A vaccine is making its way into our communities, rightly to our health care and front line workers first. The pandemic *will* end. However, our lives and the ways in which our institutions function will be affected for some time to come.

Your hard work that led to a healthy and successful close to last fall's semester remains on my mind, along with tremendous gratitude for it.

And the disturbing events in Washington, D.C. earlier this week prove that one part of higher education's work has never been more important – that we must continue to engage our students in their pursuit and acceptance of truth and knowledge as directly as possible, as long as we can do so safely.

As I told you at the close of last semester, with COVID spreading more widely than in the fall, we must significantly increase our COVID testing to safely return our students and faculty to their classrooms, clinical settings, and research labs, and our staff to our campus workplaces. Thanks to the herculean efforts of our System and university testing leaders, EOC and incident commanders, and others who work with and support them, we are in a position to do so. However, it is important to remember that testing is only one part of our set of mitigation strategies of course, and we must redouble our efforts to follow our campus public health pacts, and be disciplined about wearing masks, keeping distances, washing hands, and protecting one another.

We expect to begin the Spring 2021 semester as planned on January 25, requiring those traveling from out of state to bring a negative COVID test from within 72 hours with them. We will also be testing all residential, out-of-state, and special and on-campus populations to ensure we do not introduce COVID to our university communities. This will also ensure our ability to conduct contact tracing and appropriately support isolation and quarantine of people who require such precautions.

More importantly, through a new testing partnership with a fellow institution of higher education that will be announced soon, we expect to have a mobile testing laboratory on site in Maine this month and in use early in the semester that will allow UMS staff and our testing partners to more quickly process our own COVID saliva test results from all of our universities and in much higher numbers.

Thanks to additional resources authorized by Governor Mills, we will be in a position to test and report results promptly for every member of our on-campus communities every week – a testing schedule that we believe is critical to maximizing everyone’s safety while maintaining our academic operations through the current state of the pandemic.

We will be asking, requiring and counting on your continued commitment to the now familiar pandemic protocols and testing.

With all of this, I want to be very clear about several matters that I consider to be *absolutes* in our planning and decision-making:

- *We will continue to respect and follow State of Maine civil emergency and public health guidance.*
- *We will closely monitor the incidence of COVID in and around our communities, as well as our own capacity, resources, and staffing to safely manage it.*
- *We will always make the health or safety of every member of our university community, as well as the communities in which we teach, learn, work, research, and serve, our top priority.*

As always, thank you for everything you are doing to advance our mission and keep us safe and we will continue to share important updates in a timely fashion.

Regards,



Dannel Malloy
Chancellor

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