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Matthew Revitt <matthew.revitt@maine.edu>

On Track for Spring Semester 2021

1 message

Maine's Public Universities <chancellorsoffice@maine.edu>
Reply-To: chancellorsoffice@maine.edu
To: matthew.revitt@maine.edu

Tue, Dec 22, 2020 at 9:58 AM



December 22, 2020



UMS Community -

With the Fall 2020 semester now finished, I think we can pause and say *we did it*.

With your resilience, flexibility, and commitment to the health and safety of our university communities, you adjusted to mask-wearing, hybrid in-person and remote instruction, research, and work to finish exams last week and bring a successful end to one of the most unusual semesters in our history.

I hope you will take the break between our semesters for some well-deserved and health-conscious rest and holiday enjoyment.

As you do, I want you to know that we are already working hard to be on track to make your return to our campuses in later January for the Spring 2021 semester as successful as our fall *Together for Maine* return to campus.

Science tells us – and our successful fall semester proves – that continued asymptomatic testing is key to returning safely to our campuses and, along with mask-wearing, hand-washing, and social distancing, to staying safe as we learn, teach, research, and work together on campus.

I want you to know already that we plan to do the same for your return for the Spring 2021 semester. I also want you to know that, given the pandemic's ongoing spread, more testing will be necessary for us to stay safe together in our classrooms and labs and on our campuses starting in late January.

We'll be testing upon our return to campus, just as we did in the fall. And to stay safe together after we return, we'll need more regular testing for everyone who learns and works on campus. As you know, COVID-19 is far more prevalent in our communities, state, and region than it was when we returned in the fall, and it's likely to remain so through the spring.

Our fall experience shows us that, if we can return safely to our campuses, we can stay safe, or perhaps even safer, than the communities surrounding us by regularly testing our in-person population and isolating the cases we find apart from our communities. These are the simple public health science facts and realities of the pandemic, and we know how to respond to them. I know that doing more testing will mean an even greater commitment and effort from our dedicated university testing leaders and staff, as well as additional operational capacity to support the expansion of testing – including the possibility of offering our students the chance to help in the effort. I'm grateful for everyone's willingness to develop these plans for our safe return in the spring.

We are fortunate to have received just over \$8.1 million from the State of Maine to reimburse us for our fall COVID testing and PPE expenses through the pandemic to date. We will be using those resources to significantly expand our Spring

semester testing and related efforts to ensure we can keep our university communities safe through whatever in-person teaching, learning, and work we can prudently manage until the vaccines turn the course of the pandemic.

We were together for Maine this fall, and we're planning to be on track for the coming spring. I know it will be hard work, but the benefits of being together safely to teach and learn, research, and work far outweigh the cost and effort.

Best wishes for a healthy and safe holiday break. I look forward to seeing you back on our campuses this coming spring.

Sincerely,



Dannel P. Malloy
Chancellor

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