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University of Maine System

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For Everyone

University of Maine System group gathering limits and campuses spring 2021 general operations (04/02/2021) -

University instruction and operations have continued throughout the pandemic and they are continuing today, often in new and different ways, as well as in-person during the spring 2021 semester, to promote both safety and the ability of students, faculty and staff to be together.

The University continues to support substantial remote working by employees, is encouraging employees to be on campus only when necessary or substantially advantageous for academic purposes, including in-person instruction, or other job duties.

This is not a change in underlying University guidance regarding remote working. Employees should continue to coordinate with their supervisor regarding their in-person or remote work plans and needs to ensure alignment with department staffing plans and to ensure that safety protocols and supplies are in place. This is not a complete return to either fully remote or fully on campus work. Rather, the University of Maine System seeks to ensure that employees who need to be on campus to provide in-person instruction or for other reasons can and, in fact, should be on campus. At the same time, employees who do not need to be on campus for these or other reasons and who can effectively work remotely are asked to do so.

The University of Maine System currently has various overall special provisions in place regarding its general operations and in-person activities, including:

- **Maintain 6-foot Physical Distancing at all Times:** The University will continue to follow physical distancing guidelines issued by civil authorities that include maintaining 6 feet between individual at indoor and outdoor events even as the groups size limits generally may be increasing as described here.
- **General group size limits:** In-person group gathering on campus or for University business are limited to not more than 50 persons through April 4, 2021. *Effective April 5, 2021, the Universities of the system may selectively increase their indoor gathering limit to mirror the increases of civil authorities in Maine. Even after April 5, each University may further limit group gatherings on campus or for any specific University event or gathering as circumstances may warrant.*

Effective April 5, each University may allow up to 50% of permitted occupancy, 5 persons per 1,000 sq. ft., or 50 persons, whichever is greatest and allows for 6-foot physical distancing. This is currently expected to be the maximum indoor gathering limit through Commencement and until May 23, 2021, in keeping with the directives of civil of authorities.

Effective April 5, regarding outdoor gatherings, any outdoor gathering taking place at a facility or event that is subject to a permitted occupancy limit may be allowed an occupancy as great 75% of that permitted occupancy and allows for 6-foot physical distancing. This is currently expected to be the outdoor gathering limit through Commencement and until May 23, 2021, in keeping with the directives of civil of authorities.

Importantly, all such gatherings must also be conducted in a manner consistent with the further guidance of civil authorities such as those which still require physical distancing and face coverings, and the specific checklist when applicable of the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development.

- **In-person instruction group size limits:** In-person classes are a special circumstance and continue to be limited to no more than 30 people being present at any one time for the spring semester, unless a special allowance has been or s provided by the respective University's leadership. Face coverings and physical distancing continue to be part of the protocol. This in-person size limit should not be confused with a limit on the enrollment size of a class. Rather, the limit is regarding how many individuals can be physically present at any one time for a particular class, not how many individuals can be enrolled in the class. The overwhelming majority of University of Maine System classes already are far smaller than this size limit. Those which are larger will assume an alternative instruction format to ensure any in-person instruction can adhere to the class size limit and the physical distancing, face covering and other pandemic protocols.
- **Community spaces and facilities such as libraries, museums, gyms, retail stores, computer labs, and study hall:** These spaces – especially the extent they are available to the general public – may see additional activity under the new group gathering limits when they take effect, but they also may continue to be curtailed and they especially may be curtailed regarding access by the general public through the spring semester based on the determinations of each university. It is suggested that visitors check in advance to ensure their business can be conducted.
- **Public access to campus:** Beyond a general request to avoid campus unless an individual has bona fide business to conduct, members of the public are alerted that each University may be curtailing access to various facilities, such as fitness facilities, bookstores, libraries and so forth. Any member of the public who must come to campus or who has an appointment scheduled on campus is encouraged to confirm in advance with the campus they are visiting that they will be able to carry out the purpose of their visit before making the trip. University dining facilities are not be open to the public at this time.

The response to COVID-19 continues to be a rapidly evolving situation even at this stage of the pandemic and this guidance is subject to change. Interested individuals and organizations are encouraged to check Together for Maine routinely for updates. Employees and students in particular are encouraged to check the relevant sections of the web site for information particular to their needs.

(Last reviewed/updated: 04/02/2021)

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