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Joan Ferrini-Mundy

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Maine Memo — A Hearty Maine Hello!

1 message

UMaine President's Office <umaine.president@maine.edu>
Reply-To: UMaine President's Office <umaine.president@maine.edu>
To: UM-EMPLOYEES@lists.maine.edu

Fri, Aug 27, 2021 at 12:41 PM



MAINE MEMO



From Joan Ferrini-Mundy

President of the University of Maine and the University of Maine at Machias

Dear University of Maine and University of Maine Machias communities,

A Hearty Maine Hello to all who are returning to our campuses, programs, and facilities, and to all who are learning remotely with us. For many of my friends and colleagues in academia, the fall brings back memories of first-day-of-school pictures and new sharp pencils. For me, the start of the semester, with its energy and sense of possibility, also makes me consider the importance of community. Never more than during this pandemic, with all of its twists and turns, has the success of our educational institutions been more dependent on and intertwined with the strength and caring of our community.

Last year, we all pledged to align with the Black Bears Care and Clippers Care pacts. We tested, distanced, quarantined, isolated, rearranged classrooms, kept to small gathering sizes, learned Zoom, and wore face coverings. And we made it through the academic year. We did all of this to take care of one another in a daunting public health crisis and we did it well. We know members of our community faced extraordinary challenges and made significant sacrifices to care for their families, friends, loved ones, and their communities — and that made a difference that will forever shape the course of public higher education in Maine.

This academic year brings new dimensions to the pandemic. The highly contagious Delta variant sweeping across the country and Maine is daunting. Science tells us that vaccination, supported by use of face coverings indoors, and regular testing for those not vaccinated, are our very best defenses against this insidious and powerful virus. As of today, 89.7% of UMaine and 77.9% of UMaine Machias residence hall students have verified vaccinations. This is about caring for and doing what it takes to build a community.

We enter the 2021–22 academic year, back together again, with hope, excitement, and high expectations for the rewarding learning, discovery, and engagement that are what public universities are all about. Nearly 300 students have participated this week in UMaine's first-ever Bridge Week to start our Research Learning Experience (RLE) initiative. In these 30 one-credit RLEs, students are exploring subjects across the disciplines.

This summer, a giant in my field of mathematics education — Bob Moses — passed away at age 86. Bob was first and foremost a civil rights leader who did extraordinary work, including characterizing mathematics as the “new civil right.” One of my favorite quotes from Bob: “Don’t think necessarily of starting a movement. Do what you think actually needs to be done, set an example, and hope your actions will click with someone else.” That’s a definition of community.

We are UMaine and UMaine Machias. We are communities that overcome challenges, find solutions, and keep learning going. Welcome!

Joan Ferrini-Mundy
President