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Virtual Town Hall on 2021 Commencement

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Virtual Town Hall on Commencement

University of Maine

Office of the President

Run Time: 00:55:40

<https://youtu.be/wl8vSdnVclw>

Episode Description: President Joan Ferrini-Mundy was joined by Kimberly Whitehead, Jeremy Chubbuck, Benjamin Evans, Kathleen Harding-Heber, and John Volin for a Virtual Town Hall on the topic of UMaine's 2021 Commencement plans.

The following is an unedited, machine-generated English language transcript.

00:22

everybody hello i'm joan farini mundy

00:24

the president of the university of maine

00:26

and i'm joined here by several

00:27

colleagues who i'll introduce in a

00:29

moment

00:30

but welcome to our town hall our focus

00:33

today is commencement

00:34

but we haven't uh we haven't been in

00:36

touch uh in the town hall for a bit so i

00:38

wanted to first say

00:40

um uh welcome to all thank you for

00:43

tuning in

00:44

thank you for your continued interest in

00:45

and support of the university of maine
00:47
and
00:47
our regional campus university of maine
00:49
at machias
00:50
the semester is moving along um someone
00:54
said earlier though we're not quite
00:55
close enough to the beginning
00:56
or the end yet to feel the progress
01:00
but indeed there is so much happening
01:02
here and i'm very grateful to all for
01:04
their efforts to
01:05
be back in person to the extent that we
01:08
possibly can to have our residence halls
01:10
up and running they have an incredibly
01:13
strong program of testing
01:15
underway right now where we are testing
01:18
um
01:18
about 1100 students um faculty and staff
01:22
a day which is amazing here at the
01:24
university of maine it's amazing because
01:26
of all of the logistics that it takes to
01:28
make that happen
01:29

it's amazing because it helps us safe
01:31
and monitor the course of this pandemic
01:34
but most importantly it's amazing
01:35
because of all of you who are
01:37
participating and looking out for your
01:39
community and doing your best to keep
01:41
things moving forward
01:42
i i want to particularly speak to
01:44
students and then to the class of 2021.
01:47
we know that this is this is not the
01:50
college experience that you expected
01:52
we are um well aware that this is a
01:55
challenge for
01:56
for everybody really in some way or
01:58
another i i think for all of us for the
02:00
faculty the staff for the students
02:02
particularly and
02:03
and your families and so we
02:06
uh want you to know that we're doing our
02:08
very best to hear you
02:09
to hear your concerns and to adjust as
02:12
we go
02:13

and uh what we're going to talk about
02:14
with commencement i think is one example
02:16
but
02:17
the the very best thing you can be doing
02:19
is to let us know
02:20
let your advisors let your residence
02:22
hall staff let uh
02:24
let me let the provost let let us know
02:27
of your issues and concerns and we will
02:29
continue to do our best
02:31
to be addressing them um even if we
02:33
can't get back to you immediately
02:35
trust uh trust me when i say that we are
02:38
taking up these questions
02:39
daily multiple times a day and trying to
02:42
make
02:42
this semester um as good an experience
02:45
as we possibly can and thank you for all
02:47
that you're doing to make that happen
02:49
but today we're here to talk about
02:50
commencement and
02:52
as i've indicated now in two different
02:54

communications to the campus we really
02:56
are
02:57
deeply committed to recognizing the
02:59
achievements and the accomplishments
03:01
of our undergraduate and graduate
03:02
students as they complete
03:04
their requirements here at the
03:05
university of maine and move on to
03:06
whatever is next
03:08
it's a very important part of the
03:11
culture of a university of the
03:13
of the rituals that we have in
03:14
universities to mark
03:16
commencement with great ceremony with
03:18
great
03:19
recognition and with a lot of individual
03:21
attention to the people who
03:23
have achieved these important goals so
03:25
it's it's
03:26
critical for all of us to do the very
03:28
best we can with commencement and
03:30
we we recognize that i also want to
03:33

thank you for the feedback that has come
03:34
in there's been
03:35
a considerable amount of uh
03:37
correspondence around commencement with
03:39
great ideas coming
03:40
uh and those have been feeding into our
03:42
commencement committee which itself has
03:44
also been generating
03:45
um the very best ideas they can come up
03:47
with we we are disappointed that we
03:50
cannot
03:50
have the traditional face-to-face
03:52
ceremony that
03:54
that you would know and recognize here
03:56
at the university of maine
03:58
but i'm really very optimistic that what
04:00
our committee is going to talk to you
04:01
about today
04:02
um moves us towards something that will
04:05
be memorable that will be
04:07
a recognition and that will try to
04:09
include some of the elements that we
04:11

know are vital in the face-to-face
04:12
commencement at all and
04:14
to just be very clear the reason for not
04:16
being able to do a face-to-face
04:18
commencement in the traditional way
04:20
is that the university of maine and the
04:21
universe main system comply with state
04:24
and civil
04:25
and system level guidance for gathering
04:27
sizes and for distancing and
04:29
so we we watch all of that guidance
04:32
carefully but we're a part of the team
04:34
here in the state of maine to try to uh
04:36
to beat this pandemic
04:37
by following all of that so if you have
04:40
questions during this session please
04:42
email them
04:43
to [umaine.alerts at maine.edu](mailto:umaine.alerts@maine.edu) or go
04:47
ahead and post them in the chat
04:49
i'm joined today by our provost and
04:51
members of the commencement committee
04:52
who've been instrumental
04:54

in exploring and planning for options

04:56

and i know you're eager to hear from

04:57

them

04:58

so we'll get to that very rapidly first

05:00

let me just introduce uh who's here

05:02

john vollen who is the executive vice

05:04

president for academic affairs and

05:06

provost

05:08

john wave okay uh dr kimberly whitehead

05:11

who is

05:11

vice president and uh chief of staff and

05:14

the commencement coordinator

05:16

thanks kimberly jeremy chubbick who is

05:18

the associate executive director for

05:19

maintenance and operations

05:21

um in the university of maine office for

05:24

facilities management

05:25

he is also the chief logistics officer

05:27

for commencement

05:29

um ben evans coordinator for campus

05:31

activities in the center for student

05:33

involvement hi ben

05:34

kathleen harding heber executive office

05:37

manager

05:38

of the university of maine graduate

05:39

school hi kathleen

05:41

and then margaret nagle is here with us

05:43

as well she's the senior director of

05:44

marketing and publications

05:46

um behind the scenes helping to make

05:48

sure all goes smoothly

05:50

again thank you for being here i'm i

05:53

know that the work has been

05:54

um ongoing and constant i do want to

05:57

thank this committee

05:58

um because it's a behind-the-scenes kind

06:00

of activity and yet

06:02

they are constantly monitoring what's

06:04

happening at other universities

06:06

looking to our students for their ideas

06:08

about what we can do here

06:10

and without further ado i think i'll

06:12

turn to kimberly whitehead and ask that

06:13

she

06:14

share the information about the
06:16
committee's current ideas and planning
06:18
now these are our current ideas and this
06:22
is our very best
06:23
right now but i do ask that people
06:25
recognize that we are in a pandemic
06:27
things change things get better things
06:29
get worse uh
06:31
and so this will be a situation where we
06:33
expect to have updates but here's where
06:35
we are
06:35
so kimberly thank you president for
06:39
reading mundy if we can
06:41
get our our presentation up thank you
06:44
so as the president mentioned the
06:47
commencement
06:48
committee has been meeting um
06:52
actually we we only took a short hiatus
06:54
in um
06:55
in june of 2020 because we had started
06:58
planning back
06:59
in the fall of 2019 because this
07:02

the group of people who are working on
07:04
this committee are definitely dedicated
07:06
to ensuring that
07:07
students are have an enjoyable memorable
07:10
experience
07:11
because commencement is one of the
07:12
hallmark activities
07:14
at the institution so i just want to
07:17
today we're going to talk about
07:19
our the details of our current plan as
07:21
the president mentioned so can i have
07:23
the next slide
07:26
so first i want to thank you for your
07:28
many suggestions
07:30
[Music]
07:31
we've received feedback from our campus
07:34
and community partners through a number
07:37
of mechanisms
07:38
those include the petitions that you
07:42
have
07:42
stood up the petition to have an
07:45
in-person as well as the petition to not
07:47

have an in-person commencement
07:49
um various emails we've received plans
07:51
we've received
07:52
suggestions in the suggestion box that's
07:55
on the commencement website so we thank
07:57
you
07:58
so much for those creative and
07:59
innovative ideas
08:01
and for the continuous feedback that you
08:03
have provided to us
08:04
and so the the plans that we're
08:06
presenting today
08:07
um we've attempted to explore
08:10
alternative actions
08:12
and to incorporate the great suggestions
08:14
that you have sent to us
08:17
so um first uh and the big piece of this
08:21
is um we're planning for a hybrid
08:23
commencement experience
08:25
that would include a virtual
08:27
commencement
08:28
or virtual commencement ceremonies that
08:30

will be broadcast on may 7th
08:32
for our graduate students and may 8th
08:34
for our undergraduate students
08:36
for public viewing the components of
08:40
this hybrid experience would be our
08:41
traditional commencement ceremony
08:44
with elements such as speeches music etc
08:47
as well as our student recognition week
08:51
which we celebrated um last year
08:54
that highlights and honors our faculty
08:58
and students and also incorporates
09:00
special departmental
09:02
and programmatic celebratory ceremonies
09:04
and observances
09:06
and if you recall last year each day
09:09
we released um video footage or
09:12
um opportunities for observances for our
09:16
our
09:16
community to view um next slide please
09:24
so um to incorporate an in-person
09:28
commencement experience the committee
09:30
has been
09:31

brainstorming and come up with
09:34
this the details here so
09:38
what we're planning is to allow
09:40
graduates from
09:41
may 2020 as well as may 2021 to process
09:45
or to walk across the stage to retrieve
09:48
their diplomas
09:49
to have their names announced and their
09:51
photographs taken
09:53
in a similar fashion that would happen
09:55
if we were having our traditional
09:57
commencement ceremony of course
10:01
in adherence and compliance with civil
10:03
health and safety guidance
10:05
and so i want to highlight as a part of
10:08
this
10:09
plan if we're able to execute it is that
10:12
no
10:13
audience or guest will be permitted to
10:15
view this
10:16
during the taping and so it will be
10:18
captured on video and the footage would
10:20

be incorporated
10:21
into the virtual commencement ceremony
10:23
that i mentioned
10:24
um graduates who are unable to
10:25
participate in person
10:28
will have an opportunity to participate
10:30
through an alternative virtual mechanism
10:33
and the graduate school will work with
10:35
colleges and individual graduate
10:36
programs to facilitate and provide
10:38
zoom hooding celebrations and kathleen
10:40
will speak about that later on
10:43
next slide
10:47
so to give you more details about the
10:49
logistics of how that will work i want
10:51
to turn to my colleague
10:53
jeremy chubbick who is our logistical
10:56
guru and has
10:57
um has worked the plan for us um
11:00
down to the seconds almost so jeremy
11:04
good afternoon everybody thank you for
11:06
uh for joining us this afternoon so
11:08

having been involved with many
11:10
commencements prior to this one
11:11
i think this is probably the 13th one
11:13
that i've been involved with
11:15
i can say this one is very different
11:17
than any of the previous ones
11:19
but no trust me a lot of effort has gone
11:23
into
11:23
into developing this as much as we can
11:26
to have it as in person as possible
11:28
so the this year's commencement is going
11:30
to look basically
11:31
as follows um it obviously is what
11:34
kimberly would
11:35
i now uh uh outlined earlier um there
11:38
will be a
11:38
a stage component uh
11:42
students will progress so the graduates
11:43
will be progressing to
11:45
uh the call and center of the arts from
11:48
two rooms up in the
11:50
memorial union the first room uh is
11:52

going to be the hulk

11:54

uh lobby area of the house auditorium

11:57

uh the second area will be the bangor

11:59

room those rooms will

12:01

act as um staging areas for the students

12:05

uh specific groups of students will be

12:07

uh convened at those places at very

12:10

specific times

12:12

they will uh have their regalia

12:16

uh placed then they'll they'll put the

12:17

regalia on they'll have

12:20

instructions on what to expect as they

12:21

progress to the stage

12:23

and then they'll be ushered from that

12:25

area they'll march down and progress

12:27

down along the exterior of the building

12:30

to the entrance of the cca as you can

12:33

see at the bottom of the screen

12:34

the arrow that goes in there they'll

12:37

follow the arrows and the ushered uh the

12:40

usher locations

12:41

into the cca once they reach the stage

12:45

at the stage the plan is to have a
12:49
video camera with a microphone
12:52
and the purpose of that is before the
12:55
act before the the graduate enters the
12:57
stage
12:58
accesses the stage they'll pause say
13:01
their name
13:02
that name will get transmitted to a
13:04
reader that will be in a safe location
13:06
outside that area
13:08
uh their name their name will get read
13:11
they'll access the stage as they're
13:13
accessing the stage
13:15
uh the area there that you can see with
13:17
the v will be the first videographer
13:20
the student or the graduate will pass by
13:23
the videographer who's
13:25
properly distanced pick up a diploma
13:28
cover
13:29
pause at the center of the stage at that
13:32
point a photographer will take a pic
13:34
take their picture with their diploma
13:36

cover

13:36

and then they'll egress the stage to the

13:39

right following the arrows where a

13:40

second videographer will

13:42

capture the student or the graduate

13:46

leaving the stage at that point ushers

13:48

will egress

13:50

students out of the building through a

13:52

very predetermined safe route

13:55

it's important to note that safety

13:58

safety requirements are being followed

14:01

for this

14:02

we did work with the main cdc to try to

14:05

project

14:06

what the requirements would be in may

14:08

and we were

14:10

advised that most likely what's

14:12

currently in place for

14:13

social distancing occupancy requirements

14:17

of

14:17

of buildings and whatnot will remain in

14:21

place at that point

14:23

um that we traditionally would have
14:24
commencement and so this plan without
14:27
getting into all the nitty-gritty of the
14:28
numbers i could do that if we had plenty
14:30
of time
14:32
outlines how we can accomplish uh having
14:34
folks
14:35
actually participate in an on on stage
14:37
presence
14:38
and still comply with the main cdc
14:40
requirements
14:43
that's kind of it in a nutshell kimberly
14:49
thank you jeremy so as you can see from
14:52
the
14:53
from the rendering here um the committee
14:56
has
14:56
really taken all of these suggestions
14:59
into consideration
15:01
so that we can provide an in-person
15:04
experience for you at this time i want
15:07
to um
15:08
can we go to the next slide
15:11

thanks i want to um ask my colleague ben

15:14

evans if he can talk about

15:16

um the small college gatherings that we

15:18

are also planning

15:20

as a part of this commemoration

15:24

yes hi thank you everyone um we are

15:27

really excited to offer

15:28

um some small college gatherings that

15:30

would happen on mlk plaza right after

15:32

you leave the cca

15:34

so students would walk across the stage

15:37

they would get their diploma cover and

15:39

then they would sort of follow a path

15:41

down towards mlk plaza and

15:45

here they would get to meet with their

15:46

faculty have some pictures taken

15:50

pick up some recognition from from

15:53

umaine

15:54

towards the students and potentially

15:56

even

15:57

work on signing some some banners or

16:00

some um

16:01

flags for that can be hung up in the
16:03
union or
16:04
across campus i want to know this is
16:06
something that we've had student
16:07
input on we've got students on our
16:10
commencement committee that provide
16:12
their feedback and this is a big piece
16:13
that we wanted to hear from students
16:15
about
16:16
the final piece here is that we've got a
16:19
big projector screen that we use for our
16:21
outdoor events and our outdoor movies
16:23
and
16:24
um we could run slideshows from your
16:27
your time here at umaine and this would
16:30
all be by
16:31
college so i'm really excited to
16:34
sort of bring this to life still give
16:36
you a way to have some
16:37
small gatherings um that are sort of
16:40
walk through gatherings so you can
16:42
um get your diploma cover walk through
16:45

say your goodbyes and then continue on

16:47

with your day so

16:48

i'm really excited to to see this one

16:50

come to life

16:55

can you also talk about um our website

16:57

and communications

16:59

um while you're on this slide um ben

17:02

absolutely so um everyone should go to

17:05

umaine.edu

17:07

commencement that's where all of our

17:09

latest updates are going to be

17:11

um and we always have a suggestion box

17:13

on there so if you have suggestions

17:15

about commencement if you have

17:16

suggestions about these gatherings

17:18

that is going to be the place to do it

17:20

that is just as good as writing an email

17:22

we'd rather you do that

17:24

and make sure that it doesn't get lost

17:25

in any shuffle

17:27

but all of our updates will always be on

17:28

there and that's also where we're going

17:30

to have pieces of our virtual
17:31
commencement
17:32
um be posted so that again
17:35
umaine.edu slash commencement is going
17:37
to be the place to go
17:38
um to find out everything you need to
17:40
know um and that's not just for this
17:42
year every year that's
17:44
that's the same website for commencement
17:47
thank you ben um we're also joined today
17:50
by
17:50
our colleague from the graduate school
17:53
kathleen
17:54
harding heber if she could just talk a
17:57
little bit
17:57
about the plans for for our graduate
18:01
students i mentioned earlier
18:02
in an initial slide that the graduate
18:05
school will be working with
18:06
colleagues across the campus for um for
18:09
hooding for our students
18:12
absolutely thank you kimberly um so from
18:15

the graduate school perspective we
18:16
wanted to try to mirror as closely as we
18:18
could
18:19
um with the events that will be taking
18:21
place for undergrad
18:23
um we are trying to coordinate a date
18:26
um it should be one of the fridays
18:28
probably the friday before
18:30
the filming for undergrad um when
18:32
graduate students could be filmed
18:34
crossing the stage in exactly the same
18:36
format um and again the dates and all of
18:39
that will be published as soon as we
18:40
have
18:40
final information on that there is an
18:43
option to order regalia i know that's a
18:45
question a lot of people have had
18:48
this year the bookstore was able to
18:50
offer us two options for doctoral
18:52
robes which we're happy about
18:55
one is a retainable doctoral robe it's
18:58
not quite as thick or as
18:59

plush as the rentable gown but
19:02
it is a retainable robe so you could
19:04
purchase it and keep it
19:06
and there is an option to have that with
19:08
a board or to pay an extra fee and have
19:11
a tam
19:11
that you can purchase as well so
19:14
certainly
19:14
opportunities for photos and all of that
19:18
there's also a master's gown and hood
19:20
that is uh
19:21
purchased and retainable as well so i'm
19:24
trying to
19:24
keep all of those options available for
19:26
students
19:28
doctoral robes as we've done in the past
19:30
the official umaine with the humane
19:32
crest
19:32
will be able to be rented from the
19:34
bookstore directly
19:36
but um you know like i said the
19:38
retainable option
19:39

is certainly something we were
19:41
considering as a very viable option
19:43
given the pandemic
19:44
um at this time um we are also as
19:47
kimberly mentioned
19:48
um doing uh putting together some
19:51
information about
19:53
doing some virtual hooding ceremonies by
19:55
department uh possibly having the deans
19:58
of each of the colleges attend maybe say
20:00
a few words by
20:02
by college and um we have discussed this
20:05
a little bit at grad board
20:06
and we're looking at um you know trying
20:08
to develop some manageable group sizes
20:10
so that folks could be seen
20:12
and perhaps hooded by one or two of
20:14
their
20:15
most important people in their lives in
20:17
their home um
20:19
safely distance from others and still be
20:22
viewed on the screen and recorded so
20:24

that that information would be out there
20:26
for the public to see so they could have
20:28
friends and family view that
20:31
also considering the small college
20:33
gatherings we're
20:34
trying to collect information right now
20:36
from the colleges some colleges seem
20:38
very interested in doing it
20:39
and others are a bit apprehensive so we
20:42
will
20:43
look to get more information from the
20:45
colleges directly
20:46
to see what level of involvement they
20:48
want in something like that
20:50
and again working together with
20:51
undergrad we have
20:53
definitely are able to hopefully offer
20:55
all the same things
20:56
and honor our graduate students as well
21:00
thank you thank you kathleen can we go
21:03
to the next slide please
21:07
so we need your feedback um in a number
21:11

of ways
21:12
um first in order to ascertain
21:15
the level of interest in participating
21:18
in the in-person experience that was
21:20
described
21:22
we will be administering a survey so
21:25
that we can get
21:26
a more definitive feel for the number of
21:29
students
21:30
that are willing to or and able to
21:32
participate
21:33
in that portion of the um commencement
21:36
experience and that will help
21:39
us to tighten up and to to redefine or
21:43
are planning the second piece is
21:47
also we are planning to have a
21:50
graduation pack
21:52
and we would like for you to participate
21:54
in that more information will be
21:56
available about that pack
21:58
um do you want to talk about that piece
22:00
a little bit ben
22:01

just to kind of give them a preview of
22:03
what to expect
22:04
absolutely so all of our students have
22:07
done an awesome job with the
22:08
black bear pack that we released in
22:10
august
22:12
and this is just another piece to make
22:14
sure we're protecting
22:16
the college of our hearts always so um a
22:19
big piece of this pact includes
22:21
making sure that um in order for
22:23
commencement to
22:24
be able to happen family members
22:26
unfortunately cannot come and be part
22:29
of of any of this
22:32
this pact is a reminder that you're
22:34
still held to the student conduct code
22:38
through through commencement and
22:41
really we're just going to be making it
22:42
clear um how many ways there
22:44
are for you to safely celebrate
22:46
commencement um and celebrate all the
22:49

hard work that you've put in so
22:52
you should expect something that will
22:53
look a lot like the black bear pact
22:55
just as a piece that you'll need to sign
22:58
before walking across the stage
23:01
or or participating in any of our
23:02
commencement exercises
23:06
thank you ben and thank you president
23:08
for rene mundi for allowing
23:10
us to um to share the details
23:13
and if you can um to stop the slideshow
23:16
i'm going to turn it back over to our
23:18
president
23:21
thank you very much uh kimberly and all
23:24
the questions are coming in they're good
23:26
questions we're going to to begin to
23:28
take them up in a moment
23:29
but i would first like to um to turn to
23:33
margaret nagle to see if she has
23:34
anything she'd like to add about how
23:36
we'll be communicating going forward
23:38
as i've said this is a changing um
23:40

situation and

23:41

if if there are changes that we can make

23:43

we'll be letting folks know what they

23:45

are

23:46

so uh margaret anything you'd like to

23:47

say about how we'll be doing that

23:50

thank you president for any monday um we

23:52

will continue to communicate as we have

23:54

with

23:54

students from the class of 2020 and the

23:57

class of 2021

23:59

both at the university of maine and

24:00

university of maine at machias

24:02

ben is exactly correct we will have all

24:05

our details

24:07

on the commencement website as we know

24:09

them

24:10

suggestions uh survey to participate in

24:13

and we look forward to sharing details

24:16

as soon as we can

24:18

thank you thank you

24:21

margaret also um

24:24

because in part commencement is is uh

24:26

it's a celebration of everything and and

24:29

the completion of your time here it's

24:30

also a recognition of a major academic

24:33

milestone

24:34

and so um to that end i'd like to hear

24:36

from our provost uh if he has thoughts

24:38

or observations about this as we

24:41

continue to work with this situation

24:43

well thank you very much

24:45

president freddie mundy and thank you

24:46

all again for joining us

24:49

um i actually i want to thank the

24:51

commencement committee they have worked

24:52

really hard

24:53

since last summer uh on this and under

24:56

the leadership of vice president

24:57

whitehead

24:58

as you can see um you know they they you

25:01

know

25:02

they've not given up on this and they're

25:04

you know

25:05

they're trying to honor everything that
25:07
they've been hearing and so i
25:08
i want to thank the students out there i
25:10
want to thank you for your petition
25:12
uh i want to thank you for your
25:13
thoughtful suggestions
25:15
uh and your overall care because this is
25:18
a milestone as the
25:19
as the president has said um it's a
25:21
milestone event for you
25:22
your family uh and and and hopefully you
25:25
know
25:26
you know under all the restrictions that
25:28
we have of course with the pandemic
25:30
i think uh the commencement committee
25:31
has has come up with a really wonderful
25:33
solution here
25:34
we continue to work with all the
25:36
colleges uh who also
25:38
uh are excited to try to you know do our
25:40
best to be able to honor
25:41
this day and celebrate with you so
25:45

i'll turn it back over to the president
25:48
thank you um and uh so there are
25:51
questions there are themes within the
25:52
question so i'm going to try to group
25:54
them a little bit and also alert people
25:56
one of the themes and these are really
25:58
good questions you know
26:00
we're having classes in person why can't
26:02
we get together
26:03
for a commencement in person we're
26:05
having athletics
26:06
why can't we get together these are
26:08
really reasonable questions
26:10
and in a moment i'm going to turn to
26:11
jeremy to go over a little bit in some
26:13
detail
26:14
what the guidance is about gathering
26:17
size
26:18
and what the expectations are about
26:20
distancing
26:21
and then i'll i'll tell you just a
26:23
little bit because it's been fascinating
26:25

to me to learn

26:26

that we have a group here on campus

26:28

called the emergency operations center

26:30

that is the group that manages uh is is

26:33

trained to manage any kind of

26:35

public uh emergency of any of any sort

26:38

and uh they have been

26:40

pretty much non-stop uh the group that

26:43

we look to

26:43

to give us um the latest in how to

26:46

interpret the state and civil guidance

26:48

how to

26:48

make that work on our campus and so

26:51

knowing a little bit about the numbers

26:52

and the idea of pods and the distancing

26:55

i'll turn to jeremy but before that i

26:58

want to be clear that we

26:59

through this session we are

27:01

acknowledging the petition that was

27:03

organized and that has so many

27:04

signatures

27:05

and we wanted our response to be as

27:08

timely as it could be

27:09

there was one question about well why

27:11

did we announce the virtual commencement

27:13

three months

27:14

before commencement well the planning

27:16

for this commencement is a year-round

27:18

activity we wanted to be sure that we

27:20

had some plan in place that we

27:22

could count on should the guidance not

27:24

change at all

27:25

we've since evolved that plan yes it's

27:27

virtual but it's virtual with

27:29

some other pieces added in that i think

27:31

are meant to be responsive

27:32

to the questions in the petition and to

27:34

other to other needs but with that

27:36

jeremy

27:37

just the short version because jeremy is

27:39

the expert on this he can talk about

27:41

this for hours

27:42

but a short version of what what the

27:44

constraints are

27:46

sure i'll try to be succinct with it so
27:49
we
27:49
so as a member of the eoc and and
27:51
obviously in
27:52
in the role that i have here at the
27:53
university even outside um
27:55
the commencement committee we work very
27:57
closely with the main cdc
28:00
and others on the decd and other
28:03
entities
28:04
in the state almost on a daily basis
28:07
certainly on a weekly basis
28:09
as needed to see to determine
28:13
the changing landscape of what the
28:15
requirements are and it does change
28:17
various things do change the current
28:19
guidance are the current requirements
28:22
uh from the cdc and obviously the
28:24
system's office requirements as well
28:27
are as follows uh no indoor gatherings
28:31
greater than 50 people
28:32
that includes participants and anybody
28:35

that's hosting the event
28:37
and so when we uh put together our
28:40
commencement plan
28:41
that was one of the constraints of many
28:43
that we had to build the plan
28:45
around um and then a question obviously
28:48
will come up
28:48
why didn't we plan on the outside well
28:51
there's also a limit
28:52
limitation on the number of people that
28:54
can gather on the outdoors
28:55
that limitation is one a group of 100
28:58
people
28:58
together or a group of 200 people broken
29:02
into four pieces
29:03
uh four groups of 50 uh yeah four groups
29:06
of 50 that are separated by a certain
29:08
distance
29:09
i believe the current guidance is 14
29:10
feet
29:12
that's a very challenging box to
29:15
maneuver in
29:16

um and then also i will say that another
29:19
question would come up well why
29:20
why can't you socially distance and have
29:22
it outside
29:23
um in in the summertime i did just want
29:26
to briefly uh in the
29:27
in the springtime i just did want to
29:29
briefly mention that
29:30
i didn't mention it when i did my
29:32
presentation on the logistics
29:34
we did look at that there is a concern
29:37
that
29:37
uh in the springtime main weather is
29:40
unpredictable
29:41
there's also ada concerns um that we
29:44
have to
29:44
ada compliance concerns that we have to
29:46
uh
29:48
comply with as well so i did want to get
29:49
that in as well so really the
29:51
the current getting back to the current
29:54
occupancy constraints it's 50 people
29:56

and so this plan had to be built around
29:58
a 50-person limit
30:00
at any one time and it and it complies
30:02
with that
30:06
thank you uh jeremy um
30:09
there's another question here which i
30:11
think is quite interesting what are
30:13
your backup plans if the cdc relaxes the
30:15
guidelines by may
30:19
jeremy or kimberly wish to speak to that
30:23
so we i can speak to i i hope that is
30:26
the case
30:27
i don't believe that is going to be the
30:29
case i i feel pretty confident in saying
30:31
that
30:32
and the reason why i say that is because
30:34
we consulted the cdc
30:36
um as we were putting these plants
30:38
together two weeks ago as a matter of
30:40
fact we had a conversation with the cdc
30:43
to try to predict the future and see
30:45
will there be a relaxation will the
30:47

group size go to
30:48
you know 250 let's say instead of 50 and
30:50
the answer that came back was
30:52
no there's no foreseeable plans on that
30:55
changing by the summer time
30:57
and so i hope that i'm wrong and
30:59
hopefully you know
31:00
that that won't be the case but that's
31:02
the best guidance that we were actually
31:04
given by the cdc
31:08
okay great thank you for that um
31:12
a very good and thoughtful question
31:13
about how our family is going to be
31:16
included so that we can see our children
31:18
graduate
31:19
uh because of
31:22
all that we've been explaining i believe
31:24
the answer to that is that
31:26
that you certainly will have that
31:27
virtual opportunity
31:29
um and and you will see them walk across
31:31
the stage if we're able to pull this all
31:33

off

31:34

but i'll look to kimberly to see if

31:35

there's more to say to that question

31:38

you are exactly correct uh president

31:40

ferrini mundy

31:42

families will be able to experience

31:45

their

31:46

children and loved ones students

31:49

processing across the stage via the

31:51

virtual commencement

31:53

the taped uh in-person experience will

31:55

be incorporated and will be broadcast as

31:58

mentioned earlier

31:59

on may 7th for graduate students and for

32:01

may 8th for undergraduate students

32:06

i also just want to say that there have

32:07

been lots of ideas proposed for how to

32:10

do this

32:11

including the proposal that came with

32:12

the petition and others that have come

32:14

in through the suggestions

32:16

and the commencement committee looks at

32:17

every one of those
32:19
and draws ideas from them and i think
32:21
that has influenced what we're hearing
32:22
here today in fact
32:24
but as you've heard a bit from jeremy
32:27
the constraints are quite considerable
32:28
and so what we're trying to do is find a
32:30
way to make
32:32
to make this be as as close to what we
32:35
would normally have as possible
32:37
within those constraints and and even
32:39
that is a fair bit of planning um
32:42
so that so that we can make that all
32:44
work smoothly and make that go well
32:46
um let's see so more questions
32:50
i think some of these you know if an
32:54
in-person paint night is allowed but we
32:56
can't
32:56
find out a way to safely hold an
32:58
in-person commencement
33:00
if the school can have other in-person
33:02
events like the winter carnival or
33:03

upcoming spring football games why can't

33:05

they plan this

33:06

um i i hope you're assured by this

33:08

conversation that there is

33:10

considerable planning and work going on

33:12

here this is

33:14

this is a major focus for uh for all of

33:17

us

33:17

and at the same time events that you see

33:20

there's a very rigorous process for

33:24

getting approval for those events for

33:26

having them be reviewed

33:27

by the eoc and by others sometimes even

33:31

at the office of the president's level

33:33

to be sure that they're within

33:34

compliance because we are all committed

33:36

to keeping

33:37

to keeping this campus safe and that's

33:39

the reason for this so we're

33:40

we're um if you've seen some event

33:43

happening um

33:44

you can be sure it went through our

33:46

review processes and

33:48

that we we keep an eye on these things

33:50

we we want people to be safe it's about

33:52

uh it's about the health of our

33:54

community um

33:55

[Music]

33:56

okay let me see what else we have have

33:59

you considered doing the real graduation

34:01

in the fall

34:02

now that's an interesting question

34:03

you'll recall that's what we had hoped

34:05

we could do

34:06

for the class of 20. and when we said

34:08

that we were really hopeful that this

34:10

pandemic would move in

34:12

ways that it didn't you know so um part

34:15

of what we're doing is being pretty

34:16

cautious about anything that can be

34:18

construed as a promise

34:20

but i think we are very open the more

34:22

that things

34:23

improve and get better as vaccines

34:25

really are out as we begin to see
34:27
the immunities in our communities as we
34:29
begin to
34:31
come back to some portions of what it
34:33
was like before
34:36
then all all possibilities are on the
34:38
table and i think we will visit those as
34:40
we
34:41
uh as we can see where things are headed
34:43
you know even a week ago the data in the
34:45
state of maine
34:46
looked different than they do right now
34:49
we were we were dropping in the numbers
34:50
of cases now we're sort of leveling out
34:52
in the state
34:53
it's a highly unpredictable circumstance
34:56
and so
34:57
that's a part of why we hope and
34:59
understand that you'll understand
35:01
that we're doing all that we can but
35:03
these things can change rather
35:05
rapidly why can't
35:08

graduation be held outside at the
35:10
football stadium
35:12
believe me we've looked at that and i
35:14
think we go back to what jeremy
35:16
has said we have gathering size limits
35:18
we have um
35:20
no space no ability for spectators to be
35:22
there
35:23
and uh it would be logistically quite
35:26
comparable to some of what we are trying
35:28
to do which is to have these
35:30
smaller college-based kinds of
35:32
gatherings following the walk across the
35:34
stage events
35:36
again with safe conditions and and clear
35:39
clear guidelines about what's possible
35:42
to do
35:43
let me see what else we have with no
35:46
live audience for families it's just not
35:48
the same
35:48
absolutely absolutely as you know the
35:52
the graduations of my three children
35:53

from college some of the most special
35:55
moments ever
35:56
and um it is heartbreaking that we can't
35:59
have
36:00
what we would like to have i i know that
36:03
families
36:03
will be creative and imaginative and
36:06
support their graduates and find ways to
36:08
to celebrate them um under these
36:10
conditions um
36:12
and and if we're able to pull off this
36:14
walk across the stage
36:15
at least everybody will be able to watch
36:17
that piece but i fully acknowledge and
36:20
understand this
36:21
deep frustration it's very real
36:25
um okay if necessary why not have a
36:29
graduation with only
36:30
on campus or oreno residing students
36:33
we are already all on near the campus
36:35
and many will have been tested
36:37
in part i think our survey will give us
36:39

more of a sense of exactly what these
36:40
numbers look like although it's not the
36:43
the trend and the questions we are also
36:45
hearing from people who have said they
36:46
are not comfortable
36:48
with coming to an in-person event and
36:50
want to be sure that whatever is planned
36:52
acknowledges and
36:53
accommodates their um sense of uh
36:56
of what is is needed right now for for
36:58
commencement so
36:59
we'll get more information about sort of
37:01
who is where or
37:03
the numbers um as we go and again we're
37:06
now
37:06
eight weeks out less than eight weeks
37:08
out so it's going to become
37:11
important that we settle in on some some
37:14
of these dimensions and
37:15
and move them forward anybody wish to
37:19
comment you're all
37:20
scanning the questions i i don't need to
37:21

be the only one to look at these but
37:23
um comment on on what we're hearing
37:27
but i just share too that you know
37:28
having been involved in commencement for
37:30
a long time as many of us have
37:32
i also would like to say that it's
37:34
equally heartbreaking for us as well
37:36
there are two days that we all look
37:38
forward to the most here on campus
37:40
maine hello when the students arrive and
37:42
then commencement
37:43
i mean they're that it's all about i
37:45
mean that's what we're here for and it
37:47
we completely i personally i mean i
37:49
completely share your
37:51
your frustration with it as well i mean
37:53
my i fortunately was able to see my son
37:55
graduate from college and i i'm
37:56
appreciative of that but
37:58
so i completely understand and and i i
38:01
will assure you that
38:02
those of us that are on the commencement
38:04

committee have worked hard
38:06
i left off many many details i could
38:08
talk for two hours about the minutia
38:10
that we've talked about and
38:11
have in the plan but i tried to give
38:13
like a 25 000 foot plan so you can see
38:16
what it might look like
38:17
you know at a higher level but there are
38:20
many smaller pieces
38:21
as well that will that we will be
38:23
incorporating so i just thought i'd
38:25
share that
38:27
i think the president has brought this
38:28
up and i just want to reiterate that
38:32
the fact that everything is constantly
38:33
changing in terms of this virus and
38:36
um some of you may recall but we were
38:38
working to hopefully have
38:40
a graduation ceremony for the class of
38:43
2020
38:44
in october in november in december we
38:47
tried to come up with as many
38:49

possibilities and kovid just took a turn

38:53

that

38:54

a lot of us were not expecting and so we

38:57

do

38:57

appreciate your your understanding that

39:00

it's our first time navigating this

39:01

pandemic as well

39:03

um then the nice piece about this is

39:05

that umaine isn't the only

39:07

institution facing covid and so we're

39:09

taking looking at what other

39:10

institutions are doing we're looking at

39:12

how other schools have

39:14

successfully and not successfully hosted

39:16

a commencement

39:18

and really utilizing that and talking

39:20

with our colleagues at other schools to

39:22

make sure we can bring the best possible

39:23

experience

39:25

not only for our students who've worked

39:26

hard but for our parents who have

39:29

supported their students who have paid

39:32

who have
39:32
you know really made sure that this day
39:35
could come and so
39:37
i'll be the first to say i also
39:38
understand your your frustrations and
39:41
your concerns and i hope that you
39:43
understand we are working to figure out
39:44
as many possibilities
39:46
but a traditional commencement ceremony
39:49
just doesn't look
39:50
feasible so we've got a question about
39:55
the numbers of folks who come to
39:58
graduation typically we have about 1600
40:00
students
40:01
who are commencing the undergraduates
40:04
plus the graduate students
40:06
together and then we have
40:09
um guests on the order of um of
40:12
10 of 10 000 people i went we
40:16
plan for a crowd of 12 000 here at the
40:18
university of maine when we do
40:19
commencement on in the alphond
40:21

and so that's a sense of of what the
40:23
numbers are like and even broken down by
40:26
college you know we are in the hundreds
40:28
for all of our colleges
40:30
uh including um you know just picking a
40:33
couple here
40:35
las i'm looking at numbers i think for
40:38
this year we would be at
40:39
you know 343 individuals graduating
40:43
so the idea of college level events is
40:46
is very important to pursue but even
40:48
those are big numbers
40:50
uh and logistically during the time
40:52
period that we have to pull people
40:54
together
40:55
um it would be challenging um
40:58
here is a question is there going to be
40:59
a virtual commencement for the class of
41:01
2020.
41:05
so it's a good idea i think i would say
41:09
i'll look to kimberly to answer i know
41:11
that we did the virtual recognition week
41:14

last year that had very good response
41:16
um i think our focus right now is the
41:18
class of 2021 but kimberly is there more
41:20
to add
41:21
to that point and so this is something
41:23
we've been discussing
41:25
um we did mention back when we weren't
41:28
able to have
41:30
um an in-person commencement for the
41:32
class of 2020 that
41:34
they could participate in activities
41:37
for may 2021. so when we
41:41
send out information we will be sending
41:44
information to both the class of 2020
41:46
and 2021 and so we will be able to
41:49
accommodate those students
41:51
who were not able to have a virtual
41:54
commencement for 2020
41:56
in our planning for may 2021
42:03
thank you uh here's one when is the
42:05
survey being created and sent out and
42:07
will it be sent to every graduate's
42:09

email
42:14
the same the same piece about um what
42:17
kimberly just mentioned
42:18
goes for the survey as well um i know
42:21
that we're looking to get that survey
42:22
out the door as quickly as possible
42:24
um our team meets every week and so
42:28
um we'll be we'll be discussing it this
42:30
friday to sort of talk about how we can
42:32
get a survey out the door quickly
42:34
um as you can understand we're trying to
42:38
we're trying to meet the needs of our
42:40
students and also meet the needs of
42:41
keeping our students safe and so
42:44
that will go to the email of every 2021
42:46
graduate and the email
42:48
of every 2020 graduate as well so if you
42:51
are a 2020 graduate make sure that your
42:54
current email is on file on your main
42:57
street that way we can get it to you if
42:58
you're no longer checking your main.edu
43:02
just to avoid confusion on that piece as
43:04

well the graduate school did send out a
43:06
um survey this past week with today as a
43:09
deadline for response
43:11
and it also was posted on our social
43:13
media and all of that uh just to get
43:15
some general idea of what was most
43:16
important to our graduating students as
43:18
well
43:19
[Music]
43:20
and and there is here a very specific
43:22
and i think again all of these questions
43:24
are great
43:25
thank you for them there's a very
43:26
specific one about doctoral students who
43:28
were supposed to walk in 20 or 21
43:31
and would they be able to walk in 22
43:33
which
43:34
to me seems like a very reasonable thing
43:36
to to do
43:38
and in particular people who uh who
43:40
would have been hooded and
43:41
had their doctoral robes and had the
43:42

incredible ceremony that goes with uh
43:44
receiving a doctorate
43:46
um you know that seems to be a very
43:48
reasonable kind of idea so
43:50
it's officially passed on to the
43:52
commencement committee right here and
43:53
now
43:54
and uh we'll get back on that one
43:55
quickly
43:56
[Music]
43:58
so let's see other states are planning
44:00
in person graduation with the vaccine
44:02
becoming more available and numbers
44:04
decreasing
44:04
i really think the state of maine and
44:06
the university could push
44:08
for an in-person commencement we are in
44:10
constant contact with state authorities
44:12
in maine
44:14
we're well aware of where they are what
44:16
their planning looks like we are
44:17
watching this vaccine administration
44:19

with as much
44:20
enthusiasm as you can possibly imagine
44:22
uh to see
44:23
how quickly this vaccination deployment
44:26
will really happen what groups of people
44:28
um of course as we move through the
44:30
through the age groups now um what that
44:32
will look like and that's why we keep
44:34
saying things could change but we need
44:36
to have something sound in place that's
44:38
aligned with what we at least know to be
44:40
the recommendations at this moment
44:42
um and do know that we we talk to our uh
44:45
our counterparts in the state
44:47
regularly and they're well aware of
44:49
everybody's
44:50
interest in seeing things come back to
44:52
normal and they're they're
44:54
providing great leadership in my view to
44:56
try to keep the state safe
44:58
[Music]
45:01
doesn't tuition include graduation fees
45:04

if so why are we paying for those fees

45:07

if families and students don't get the

45:08

full graduation experience

45:10

um i haven't seen that question before i

45:13

we are doing our best to provide as full

45:15

a graduation experience as we possibly

45:17

can

45:18

during these circumstances but for

45:20

whoever it was that asked the question i

45:22

invite that you contact me

45:23

directly and we'll talk more fully about

45:25

that i need more information

45:27

before i can give a good answer to that

45:31

and i love this question i like them all

45:33

but this one you know why don't you just

45:35

decide and announce that

45:36

at some safe point in time there will be

45:38

a formal ceremony for the 20 and 21

45:41

class there will be a safe point at some

45:43

time in the future so great optimism

45:45

there

45:46

that's terrific um i just remind

45:48

everybody that that's
45:50
what we sort of did last year right we
45:53
we said you know we will do our best to
45:55
have an in-person ceremony
45:57
last fall and and there was great
45:59
disappointment when we couldn't do that
46:00
and
46:01
there's still disappointment that we
46:02
can't do it now
46:04
the the principle of it sounds exactly
46:06
right to me
46:07
and of course people have a lot of
46:09
preferences and are are all around the
46:11
country and
46:12
and we want to do something that's
46:13
meaningful but um i will
46:15
i will officially say that the
46:16
commencement committee if you aren't
46:18
already which you probably are
46:20
should be looking at that consideration
46:22
uh for something that we might offer
46:24
when it's safe to do so
46:29

okay i i think we're mostly
46:33
mostly um have raised the issues that
46:36
came up in the questions
46:37
um again reminder that we still that we
46:40
have had a website where
46:42
students could make their comments that
46:43
we have absolutely reviewed the petition
46:45
and the plan with it
46:47
um that we continue to seek your input
46:49
i'll be interested in your
46:51
reactions to uh to what we've told you
46:53
today
46:54
and we'll no doubt have other
46:56
opportunities to communicate
46:58
as the coming weeks move along with this
47:00
i'm going to ask each person here to
47:02
just make brief closing comments
47:04
um if they have any and so uh we'll
47:07
start i think with
47:09
dr whitehead thank you president for
47:12
reading monday
47:13
so i want to just thank everyone for
47:16

joining us today to hear about the
47:18
planning and the details for our
47:20
commencement
47:22
as stressed earlier um we're also
47:25
disappointed that we cannot have the
47:27
traditional commencement
47:29
ceremony because i think most of the
47:30
people on the committee
47:32
are very invested in that hallmark
47:36
that hallmark experience for students
47:38
and and for us it is a favorite time of
47:40
the year
47:40
i also want to add that um
47:44
we continue to accept your suggestions
47:46
the ideas have been great
47:48
um also wanted to mention that we do
47:50
have students who are
47:51
on the commencement committee and we
47:54
have
47:54
we are very appreciative of the feedback
47:56
that they have provided to us
47:58
as well as the input and we continue to
48:00

meet with various student groups
48:02
to continue to garner their their
48:04
feedback and input
48:05
and just thank you for your patience and
48:07
for your flexibility
48:09
because it is very diff difficult to not
48:11
be able to participate
48:13
in commencement um that we all enjoyed
48:16
so much
48:17
and so just thank you for for that
48:19
flexibility
48:21
thank you and just so that people know i
48:23
think i'd like to next go to kathleen
48:25
and then ben and then jeremy and then
48:28
john
48:28
so that you're warned okay well you
48:30
don't get a lot of warning kathleen but
48:32
you'll be fine thank you president
48:34
freddie monday
48:35
um just you know wanted to reiterate
48:37
what kimberly said you know it is
48:38
something we all look forward to all
48:40

year long
48:40
and we certainly have been working
48:42
really hard at trying to figure out
48:44
options
48:44
that would work best and from the
48:46
graduate standpoint you know also trying
48:48
to figure out which
48:49
students might be interested in
48:50
participating if we hold certain
48:52
components of
48:53
of these events so um certainly respond
48:55
to our survey
48:56
if you have not already um we'd love to
48:58
have responses by the end of day today
49:00
in that graduate survey
49:02
and i know ben mentioned that he'd be
49:04
sending out one for undergrad very soon
49:06
we may send out another survey before
49:08
it's done as well we just wanted to get
49:09
some preliminary information
49:11
and we certainly appreciate all the
49:13
feedback and information that we're
49:14

getting from
49:15
from our students thank you thank you
49:19
thank you thank you everyone for coming
49:21
today i think
49:23
um everyone is saying right this piece
49:25
of how heartbreaking it is and how tough
49:26
it is for
49:28
um for everyone i want to sort of put
49:30
another piece out there that
49:31
um i should have walked for with my
49:33
master's degree may 2020 and so i truly
49:36
understand what it means to
49:37
to not have that that peace right so um
49:40
i come with that personal piece and
49:42
that's sort of been driving a lot of
49:44
these conversations that we've had
49:46
and and driving the best for our
49:49
students
49:50
um and what's what's a little tough is
49:52
that the best for our students is also
49:54
making sure they don't get covered and
49:56
making sure that they
49:57

don't take care at home to their parents
49:59
and their grandparents and their
50:00
great-grandparents and so
50:02
that's a piece that is driving um
50:05
part of our thoughts
50:07
um i understand that a virtual a virtual
50:10
ceremony
50:11
won't won't be the same right i i know
50:14
that and a lot of us know that
50:15
um there's a rush you know of excitement
50:18
and power in
50:19
you know hearing your name called
50:21
amongst your friends but
50:23
in light of it's this or nothing
50:26
we were trying to give you as much as we
50:28
can give you and so
50:30
um i just hope that you'll understand
50:32
where we're coming from
50:33
and um really do your best to
50:36
keep our community safe as well thanks
50:38
everyone
50:40
thank you ben i didn't know that about
50:42

you and
50:43
may 2020. um jeremy
50:47
uh so thank you once again as my
50:50
colleagues have said thank you for
50:51
joining us and i
50:52
i want to leave you with two thoughts my
50:54
first thought is
50:55
um i would like to very much mimic what
50:57
kimberly said that your ideas are very
50:59
important as a matter of fact
51:01
again without we don't have enough time
51:02
to go into it but many of the ideas that
51:04
came from students
51:06
and others have already been
51:07
incorporated into the plan
51:09
and again just remember that we've only
51:11
shared a high level
51:13
uh display of the plan the second i just
51:16
wanted to share
51:16
just real briefly with everybody what
51:18
all is entailed with commencement i'll
51:20
only take
51:21

10 seconds to do this like or 15. a
51:24
normal commencement year
51:26
we do have 12 000 people we plan for we
51:28
usually have
51:30
upwards of 50 or so first responders we
51:33
have another
51:33
100 or so volunteers that are all behind
51:36
the scenes making it happen
51:38
um planning starts for this typically in
51:40
september
51:41
august september time frame we meet uh
51:44
usually every other week or every third
51:46
week
51:47
in the fall time uh off into the winter
51:50
time then we
51:50
we at this time of year we're meeting
51:52
weekly or sometimes several times a week
51:54
and to get put in perspective what's
51:56
what's involved with this
51:58
um in a normal year i'll tell you the
52:00
normal year versus this year in the
52:01
normal year
52:02

facilities management alone which i'm
52:04
responsible for facilities management we
52:06
have a 20-page document
52:08
single-spaced that starts about this
52:10
time
52:11
and it's hour by hour what we have to do
52:13
to prepare for commencement and it
52:15
really it really is that
52:17
um and then also the volunteer group has
52:20
about a 15 or
52:21
20 page document that's the similar type
52:23
thing and
52:24
and so you can see if you layer these
52:26
together when you build the commencement
52:28
plan
52:29
this year has been way more challenging
52:32
and actually 2020
52:33
also was way more challenging than doing
52:35
all that work
52:36
because you're you're building a plan
52:38
around unknown
52:40
this plan that we had to build this year
52:42

is around an unknown and it's a moving
52:44
target
52:45
and so if i was to speculate our plan
52:48
this year
52:48
and facilities might be five or six
52:50
pages and you know
52:52
probably a similar level um for
52:55
for uh the other components of
52:57
commencement but
52:58
understand that that's a very
52:59
challenging thing and it's built on
53:01
creativity and the ideas that we get
53:02
from you all
53:04
and i appreciate that that we get those
53:06
ideas so anyway i just thought i'd close
53:08
my thoughts with with that to give you a
53:10
perspective about all this involved
53:14
thank you jeremy john
53:17
so uh how to wrap up with with all those
53:20
uh
53:20
great suggestions i i do consider myself
53:23
incredibly fortunate to be working with
53:24

such caring and thoughtful
53:26
uh colleagues um i do i do want to
53:28
reiterate one thing that was mentioned
53:30
once by the vice president whitehead and
53:32
by the president premium monday
53:34
and that is um those graduates who are
53:37
unable to participate in the in-person
53:39
experience for whatever
53:41
reason that may be you will have an
53:43
opportunity to participate through
53:45
you know an alternative virtual
53:47
mechanism so be on the lookout for that
53:48
too this is
53:49
this graduation is for everyone uh and
53:52
uh
53:52
and i completely agree with all my
53:54
colleagues here so thank you
54:00
there's really not much that i can add
54:02
to that i um
54:04
i too am grateful for the colleagues
54:05
that we have for the students that we
54:07
have for the families that support those
54:09

students

54:10

it's all one community and we are all

54:13

i think pointed in the same direction to

54:14

do the very best that we can

54:16

um we'll watch for change we'll

54:20

talk to jeremy about what it would look

54:22

like to to have to make changes in the

54:24

20-page single-spaced

54:26

document i mean the logistics of this

54:28

are a big consideration but i hope

54:30

you're

54:30

i hope you're um clear that that we are

54:34

we are on this we are working at it we

54:36

still um

54:37

have some possible adjustments of course

54:40

as your ideas come in

54:41

and we we're very open to hearing from

54:43

you directly

54:44

um just wanted to double check to be

54:47

sure that

54:48

um that we will actually um

54:52

link this live stream to my website so

54:54

that your enter the commencement website

54:56

so that people who aren't able to watch

54:57

this can

54:58

can see it and um again appreciate

55:02

all of all of your time all of your

55:04

great work all of what you're doing

55:06

as a part of the university of maine so

55:08

thank you and have a good afternoon

55:18

everybody

55:39

you

English (auto-generated)