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2-24-2021

## 2021 UMaine Commencement Updates

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*University of Maine*

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### Repository Citation

Ferrini-Mundy, Joan, "2021 UMaine Commencement Updates" (2021). *General University of Maine Publications*. 1598.

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## News

**\$92.4 million in MEIF investments drive UMaine research to record heights**

Published: March 3, 2021

**WVII talks with Ferrini-Mundy about vaccine education campaign for employees**

Published: March 3, 2021

## Update on UMaine and UMM Commencement ceremonies – February 10

February 10, 2021 | [Commencement](#), [President's Messages](#)

Dear University of Maine and University of Maine at Machias 2020 graduates and upcoming spring 2021 graduates-to-be — both undergraduates and graduate students.

I hope that all of you are doing well. As we have all witnessed, these past 11 months of the pandemic have taken a toll worldwide. And for each of you, there also is a personal toll. We understand that Commencement serves as the capstone event of your time at UMaine or UMM — a time to celebrate your achievements with family and friends after years of hard work. To those who would have participated in Commencement ceremonies last May, I hope that the Recognition Week we held at UMaine and the virtual Recognition Ceremony at UMM provided some opportunity for you to experience our congratulations and pride in your accomplishments. We also recognize and understand the significance of participating in an in-person Commencement ceremony.

And, to those whose graduation is coming up in May 2021, we know that the uncertainty of everything, including this semester and what circumstances will be like in May, adds a layer of stress and anxiety as you prepare to conclude your degree work in the coming weeks. You will have experienced as much as three semesters of your college career in pandemic modes, requiring major adjustments in everything from what it means to take a class, to where and how you will live, to personal and family challenges.

In September, we noted our intention to honor both our 2020 and 2021 graduates with in-person Commencement ceremonies this spring if health and safety guidance allows. But since then, as the pandemic has unfolded and continues here in Maine and beyond, it has become clear that we will not be able to safely gather for these celebrations in the way we had hoped. And I share your disappointment.

On both campuses, Commencement Committees are now planning virtual ceremonies to honor and recognize the hard work, dedication, achievements and perseverance of our UMaine and UMM undergraduate and graduate students during this particularly

## Press Herald op-ed cites Ferrini-Mundy recommendations for building state's STEM workforce

Published: March 3, 2021

## President speaks with News Center about Commencement 2021

Published: February 26, 2021

## UMaine Collins Center for the Arts receives Innovation of the Year Award

Published: February 24, 2021

challenging time. We want to hear from you as that planning continues. On the Commencement websites, you can share your ideas and suggestions for what we can do, under the conditions we all face for observing safety and health protocols, to make your Commencement recognition as memorable and meaningful as we can possibly manage. As updates become available, we will post them on the UMaine Commencement [website](#) and UMM Commencement [website](#).

Thank you for your understanding and congratulations on your achievements. I look forward to hearing your ideas and to congratulating each of you in some way this May.

Sincerely,

Joan Ferrini-Mundy  
President

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## UMaine Commencement update – February 25

Dear UMaine undergraduate and graduate students:

Following my Feb. 10 [memo](#) about spring 2021 Commencement to the UMaine and UMM communities, we received many recommendations and ideas for alternative recognition events from students, parents and community members. We are aware of the petition to have some form of a 2021 in-person event, and the Commencement Committee, which includes student representatives, is discussing the ideas and issues with members of the 2021 Class Council.

Currently, state of Maine requirements and university system guidance, in accordance with the best national advice about beating the pandemic, do not allow for indoor gatherings beyond 50 people. And the restrictions on outdoor gatherings limit group sizes to no more than 100 individuals, with restrictions, and, in some specific circumstances, up to 200 with restrictions. Assuming this guidance remains in place, there is no feasible way and no sufficiently large venue to simultaneously accommodate the approximately 12,000 people who typically attend the UMaine Commencement in Alford Arena.

Suggestions for alternative recognition activities to celebrate our graduates' accomplishments can be submitted [online](#).

Commencement is about two months away and the Commencement Committee, which has met regularly since July 2020, is looking at multiple options. Planning is well underway for smaller college-based gatherings and celebrations, for virtual components, and for novel ways to celebrate and recognize our graduates. For example, we are actively exploring a plan to record and photograph graduates walking across a stage as their names are read — all arriving by appointment, and following health and safety protocol, and without an audience. That recording would be available as part of our virtual ceremony for the Graduate School on May 7 and for UMaine undergraduates on May 8.

When details of our plans are available, you will find them on the UMaine Commencement website. We also will have a [virtual town hall](#) on our Commencement plans at 3 p.m., March 3.

If civil, health and safety guidance changes, and if planning can be redirected to a more traditional Commencement in-person event, I assure you that we will do our best, in consultation with many, to adjust accordingly. At this time, for us to guarantee a full face-to-face ceremony is not possible, and would not be responsible given the circumstances of the pandemic.

We are committed to recognizing the achievements of our undergraduate and graduate students, and look forward to collaborating to offer the best Commencement recognition possible during this challenging time.

Sincerely,

## Commencement updates

UMaine Commencement Update – February 25

Update on UMaine and UMM Commencement ceremonies – February 10



Suggestion Form



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