



# Office of the President

President's Biography
FY21 Budget Materials – Downloads and Feedback
Cultural Affairs Committee
Board of Visitors
Speaking Request Form
Office hours appointments
University of Maine Presidential Fellows
2021 Honorary Degree Nomination Form
Resources
Blue Sky Strategic Plan Archive

## News

- BDN interviews President Ferrini-Mundy about possible fall opening**  
Published: April 21, 2020
- UMaine, Maine MEP collaborating on production of aerosol shields to protect health care workers**  
Published: April 20, 2020
- 38 students in nursing to graduate early to address needs during pandemic**  
Published: April 16, 2020
- Media report Zillman Art Museum designated by \$1.3 million naming gift**  
Published: April 15, 2020
- UMaine Museum of Art receives naming gift**  
Published: April 15, 2020

## UMaine and UMM community health update – March 10

March 10, 2020 | [President's Messages](#)

Dear colleagues, students and community members at the University of Maine and University of Maine at Machias:

We are paying close attention to state, national and international updates on the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, and we want to inform you of decisions made by the University of Maine System. As of March 10, 2020, there is no case of coronavirus reported in Maine, but we remain vigilant and are planning according to the latest information provided by the [United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), and the [Maine Center for Disease Control](#).

UMS continues to provide regular [information updates and guidance](#) to the campuses regarding the outbreak of the coronavirus (COVID-19). We would like to draw your attention to a March 10 [news release](#) in which the University of Maine System provides updates and guidance as part of the [COVID-19 directives](#). Chancellor Dannel Malloy developed the directives with the university presidents and the dean of the Maine Law School to help limit potential exposure to coronavirus and better prepare the university to fulfill its academic mission.

In addition, on March 9 UMS provided guidance on campus events and emergency notification information. We have highlighted these updates on the UMaine [website](#), where you also will find UMaine- and UMM-specific information.

Currently, there are no plans to close campuses. University leaders have set a March 23 deadline for continuity of instruction planning.

More information about UMS directives is [online](#). They include the following:

- No decision has been made yet to discontinue in-class attendance and instruction. UMS presidents and the dean of the Maine Law School will instruct all faculty to prepare plans by March 23, 2020 for class instruction to transition to online or other distance modalities on that date or thereafter at the direction of the Chancellor, or alternatively, on or after the same date, to permit students to complete course requirements and earn full semester credit through pedagogically appropriate means other than physical presence in class. Requests for exceptions must be reviewed on a case-by-case basis with Risk Management, the involved university Provost and President (or law dean), and the Chancellor.
- Considering [CDC guidance](#) that recognizes heightened COVID-19 health risk for older persons or persons with pre-existing health conditions, older faculty or those with pre-existing health conditions who are ready to do so may transition as soon as possible to online or other instructional modalities that do not require a physical presence in class. Older staff employees or those with pre-existing health conditions who communicate a desire to work remotely should be given preference for “telecommuting” work-from-home arrangements to the extent possible. Older students or those with pre-existing health conditions may seek assistance or accommodations from their university accessibility services office.
- Until further notice:
  - All UMS-sponsored nonessential air travel is prohibited.
  - International travel is prohibited to countries with a Level 3 or 4 advisory in accordance with U.S. State Department and CDC guidelines, as described [online](#).
  - Exceptions may be granted only by the Chancellor, in consultation with the involved university President and UMS Risk Management.
  - UMS faculty, staff and students are strongly discouraged from personal travel to any domestic or international area with known COVID-19 cases or community transmission, and presidents should widely communicate this recommendation to their campus communities.
- To avoid unnecessary travel, UMS universities should encourage students to remain on campus through spring break, and broadly communicate appropriate residence hall and dining options for those who do so.

## UMaine/UMM continuity of instruction

Preparation is key to successfully managing any unexpected impacts on our living and learning environment. Even in the absence of any indication that COVID-19 is in Maine or on our campuses, now is the time for UMaine and UMM faculty to plan how they will complete the semester in their classrooms and teaching labs should the decision have to be made to complete the term with limited use of in-person classes. We encourage you to look for innovative options for coursework delivery, knowing that UMaine's [Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning](#) and other resources are here to support you. See here for guidance on [continuity of instruction](#).

The goal, consistent with UMS, is to ensure that every student is allowed to complete coursework this term. CITL is the resource to assist you in preparing to complete a class online or through distance modalities. CITL has visited UMM and will continue to provide support for UMM faculty as they also plan alternative delivery options for courses. We encourage you to also reach out to colleagues and look for ideas from other institutions as well. For questions regarding continuity of instruction, please contact the Office of the Provost or Head of Campus Office.

## Travel restrictions

Travel considerations are vital in slowing the community spread of this virus and in protecting our students, faculty and staff. CDC protocols are in place for anyone traveling to or in the U.S. UMaine, UMM and UMS follow the public health protocols of the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Maine Emergency Management Agency. We ask university community members to continue to be mindful of the latest CDC national and international [situation updates](#).

Please note the above direction: All UMS-sponsored nonessential air travel is prohibited. Complying with these directives is important for the well-being of the UMaine and UMM communities.

The goal, consistent with UMS, is to limit the potential exposure to COVID-19 and to help halt its spread. For requests for exceptions to travel restrictions in Academic Affairs, please submit your request(s) to your dean. If they approve the request, deans would then request an exception to the policy from the Provost. If approved, the Provost would request an exception from the President and Chancellor.

For those working in centers and institutes, please submit your request(s) for an exception to your director. If the request is approved, center/institute directors would make a request for an exception to the Vice President for Research (VPR) and Dean of the Graduate School. If approved, the VPR would then request an exception for travel from the President and Chancellor.

Please indicate if the request is time-sensitive, provide a rationale, and understand that consistent with UMS guidelines, nonessential, university-sponsored air travel is canceled, domestically and internationally. You also are asked to avoid personal travel to any areas with known COVID-19 cases or community transmission of the disease, if possible.

We anticipate very few exemptions to the cancellation of nonessential travel.

Thank you for working to provide options to allow students to complete this term. Thank you for canceling nonessential travel and limiting personal travel, where possible. We will complete the term by working together in the best interests of our community.

## Students encouraged to stay on campus during spring break

As noted in the UMS directive, students are being encouraged to stay on campus in the residence halls during spring break. At UMaine, residential students assigned to noncontinuous halls are being contacted by Residence Life to register if they want to opt to stay on campus for spring break. Students living in continuous halls also are being reminded to register for spring break campus housing. If there are questions, contact Residence Life, 207.581.1406. UMM students opting to stay on campus during break are asked to contact Marnie Kalner, dean of students and admissions, 207.255.1320.

## UMaine/UMM hotline and self-reporting

For members of the UMaine and UMM communities, there is a COVID-19 information line — 207.581.2681 — with campus and UMS updates, answers to frequently asked questions, and information on resources. This information line, based in the Division of Student Life, also serves the University of Maine System.

Also a note for members of the UMaine and UMM communities who have been asked to self-isolate: If you have been asked to self-isolate from a medical provider in relation to coronavirus and are awaiting test results, please voluntarily contact your campus representative Richard Young (ryoung@maine.edu; 207.356.2518) to help inform the campus community.

The health, safety and welfare of our university community members are our utmost priorities. Stay safe. We will keep you posted as information and further guidance are available.

President Joan Ferrini-Mundy  
 Faye Gilbert, Interim Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost  
 Robert Dana, UMaine Vice President for Student Life and Dean of Students  
 Dan Qualls, UMM Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs and Head of Campus

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