Return to Campus

Plans and resources

UMS Return to Campus Guide for Faculty, Staff, and Student Employees (PDF)

Black Bears Care Plan (PDF)

The Framework for Reopening Maine's Colleges and Universities in Fall 2020 (PDF)

Friday Futurecasts and Provost Messages

COVID-19 Community Update from President Ferrini-Mundy — August 22

Published: August 23, 2020

Friday Futurecast — August 21

Published: August 21, 2020

Friday Futurecast — August 14

Published: August 14, 2020

Virtual Information Sessions for UMaine and UMM employees — August 10 and August 4

Published: August 11, 2020

Friday Futurecast — August 7

Published: August 7, 2020

Friday Futurecast — June 12

Health and safety update for university community members

June 12, 2020 | Friday Futurecasts and Updates from Campus Leaders

Dear members of the University of Maine and University of Maine at Machias communities,

This is the first of a weekly update that you will receive from me each Friday, providing details about our fall planning, and COVID-19-related health and safety protocols at the University of Maine and the University of Maine at Machias. We will provide as much timely information as possible and share insights into our planning as we prepare for all members of our university communities to return safely to our campuses, offices, and buildings statewide.

For several months now, we have been actively preparing for the safe return of members of the UMaine and UMM communities — faculty, staff, students, and visitors — following the most up-to-date federal and state health and safety guidance. That guidance has and continues to evolve, and we are watching Maine data. We will be working with the Chancellor's Office, Governor's Office, our local communities and other partners as we finalize plans for how we can safely bring our students back to our campuses.

We have a new Return to Campus website where we will post the latest information for students, faculty, and staff as it becomes available. Like the UMaine and UMM COVID-19 website, this Return to Campus site will be a go-to resource, complete with a phone number and email address where you can request more information. For instance, the Faculty and Staff section includes details on the health and safety measures that you will see in our buildings as part of our focus on the well-being of our community. My Friday Futurecast memos will provide the latest updates.

The University of Maine System position on fall safe return is this: Maine's public universities will be ready to begin the fall semester with safe face-to-face instruction and work, and hybrid remote learning alternatives for any at-risk members of our communities, all under the state health and safety guidelines in place at the end of August.

The faculty and staff of UMaine and UMM have been remarkable over the last few months in responding to and conquering the many challenges that we all faced, and our students have been patient, resilient and persistent. I remain confident in our collective ability to effectively meet the needs of all our campus and university constituents. As noted, plans are well underway to put measures in place to provide as safe an environment as we are able. We know that working on campus will be different for all us, and our new meaning of "normal" will continue to unfold. As with our students, we will endeavor to meet the needs of faculty and staff where they are, while delivering an excellent campus-based experience. We will strive to afford flexibility in approaches to schedules, work locations and work process so that you are able to continue to attend to your professional and personal needs.

Last week, the "Framework for Reopening Maine's Colleges and Universities in Fall 2020" was released. The framework includes six guiding principles for resuming in-person, on-campus experiences and other learning modes; flexibility, responsiveness, empathy and science; high-quality learning in the pandemic context; continuing our missions for Maine; partnering to address health, including testing; and transparent and continuing communication. We expect a University of Maine System Safe Return plan this month.

Watch weekly for the Friday Futurecast.

Sincerely,

Joan Ferrini-Mundy

This week's updates:

In-person, on-campus experiences and other learning modes

- Faculty and staff are preparing for teaching in four modes: hybrid, remote, in-person and online. Students who cannot return to campus or who become exposed to COVID-19 will be able to make progress in their academic programs this fall.
- IT is upgrading 33 UMaine classrooms this summer and 14 in the fall to facilitate livestreaming and recording classes, and connecting with classes by Zoom. UMM's two primary lecture halls, Science and Torrey, will have six summer upgrades and three winter break upgrades.

Flexibility, responsiveness, empathy and science

- We have more than 18 hard-working planning groups at UMaine and UMM focused on the many essential areas and aspects of our universities — from fall academic scheduling and Fogler Library to cultural attractions and athletics events.
- The Scientific Advisory Board stays fully abreast of fast-breaking scientific and medical developments about the COVID-19 pandemic. Its members are watching vaccine development, diagnostic and serology testing, antiviral treatments, transmission mitigation, and contact tracing, and advising planning groups.

High-quality learning in the pandemic context

- The new Summer Start classes provide 16 options to make progress on Gen Ed requirements and offer six one semester-hour courses for college success, innovation engineering, biology, chemistry, mathematics and physics to hone skills.
- Faculty are working this summer on innovations and new flexibilities in offering their courses remotely and online, especially lab courses. See the May 28 UMaine Provost and UMM VPAA message for details.
- A UMaine Retention Committee is exploring a university-wide communication strategy to ensure that every incoming and returning student has a personal contact this summer.
- A Learner Success Committee is identifying low-cost options to improve services and support retention for the fall in the following areas: academic support services, faculty support and development, financial aid, first-generation students, first-year success courses, living-learning communities, and optimizing the use of Navigate.

Continuing our missions for Maine

- UMaine faculty, staff and students have been essential in helping the state of Maine during the pandemic, and that work will continue in the fall. Assistant professor Andrew Crawley in the UMaine School of Economics and six graduate students are working with the State Economist's Office to develop forecasts for how much COVID-19 will affect Maine's economy.
- A full list of our service to the state initiatives is online.
- Our research mission generally has been on hold, but we are restarting; see the most recent UMaine research guidance.

Partnering to address health

- Two reusable cloth face coverings will be made available to each UMaine and UMM employee on return to campus. Colleges and departments can use the online COVID-19 Essential Supplies Request Form to order as-needed supplies, such as hand sanitizer, cloth face coverings, disposable surgical face masks, clear hygiene barriers and social distancing floor signs. In addition to two university-issued face coverings, every employee returning to work will receive a back-to-campus kit containing a personal-size bottle of hand sanitizer, cardholder for mobile phone and touchless door opener. The kits and face-coverings are available by using the same essential supplies request form.
- The Student Wellness Office and UMaine's Public Health Committee are creating a public health campaign and campus signage on COVID-19 precautions. Plan to have your face coverings when you come to our campuses, and offices and facilities statewide.
- Bodwell Center for Service and Volunteerism continues to work with Good Shepherd Food Bank to keep the Black Bear Exchange stocked. Student Life team members are facilitating drive-thru pickups and deliveries according to health and safety protocols.
- New Balance Student Recreation Center has submitted plans to reopen in July. Stay tuned for more news on this.

Transparent and continuing communication

- Check out our New Student Orientation website — the first of a three-phase virtual orientation plan rolling out in the coming weeks.
- The Graduate School's orientation program, including TA orientation, will be online. Updates will be made on the Graduate Student Orientation site.
- The First-Year and Transfer Center is developing multiple plans for Maine Hello, including a weeklong move-in.
- Reminder: The new Return to Campus website is where we will post the latest information for students, faculty, and staff as it becomes available.

Welcome back — and welcome — to the University of Maine and University of Maine at Machias. We look forward to reuniting our university communities.