

Spring 2021

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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 Updates from Campus Leaders

- Friday Futurecast – December 18
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Friday Futurecast – September 4

Health and safety update for university community members

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Welcome to this week's Friday Futurecast.

These updates are archived on the UMaine [Return to Campus website](#). The University of Maine at Machias also has a [Return to Campus website](#).

Message from President Joan Ferrini-Mundy:

Dear members of the UMaine and UMM communities,

As we conclude our first week of classes for the fall 2020 semester, I wish to thank you all. Thank you faculty for your careful planning and your flexibility in meeting students where they are to keep learning going. Thank you staff for the incredible efforts to have us ready to begin our semester safely, and for all that you do make the teaching, research and public engagement missions thrive. This weekend we celebrate Labor Day, a holiday on which we annually recognize the contributions of all who work across the country. Thank you to all who work at UMaine and UMM.

And finally, to our students — thank you for choosing UMaine and UMM and for doing everything to keep yourselves and your communities safe. More than 6,500 of you have participated in testing, revealing eight positive cases, and enabling us to track contacts and isolate and quarantine to keep the pandemic contained. You are taking seriously our requirements about face coverings, distancing, gatherings and off-campus expectations. We know that you want to be here and you are doing your part to make sure that is possible.

Enjoy the weekend; make smart choices and stay safe.

Sincerely,

Joan Ferrini-Mundy

Partnering to address health

- Phase three asymptomatic testing begins at UMaine in mid-September and will continue throughout the semester. [As announced by the University of Maine System](#) in August and [outlined on the UMS Together for Maine website](#), the ongoing surveillance testing will consist of individual testing as well as wastewater monitoring at UMaine. UMaine's on-campus testing approximately every 10 days will include a random sampling of a pool of individuals — approximately 10% of the population — who are engaged in in-person activities this fall. Examples of in-person cohorts include faculty teaching at least one face-to-face class, research faculty, staff working on campus, and undergraduate and graduate students living or coming to campus. The tests are offered at no cost to employees and students. Approximately 1,000 members of the UMaine community currently are expected to be tested in each 10-day cycle on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. The PCR diagnostic test, the same used for students in phases one and two, will be administered at Alford Arena under the UMS ConvenientMD/Jackson Laboratory partnership. UMaine community members will receive an email with their testing dates and times. Test results will be available by logging into the ConvenientMD Patient Results Portal. For questions pertaining to phase three testing, write to um.covidtesting@maine.edu. As with all things in this pandemic, the phase three details are subject to change. Gratitude is expressed to everyone in the UMaine community for the work you are doing to keep each other safe, including your continued participation in asymptomatic testing.
- The daily screening app #CampusClear is being used on University of Maine System campuses. The free app provides a daily symptoms check and guidance based on responses. The goal is to help community members make informed decisions about their participation in on-campus activities. #CampusClear is an educational tool and is not intended to be medically diagnostic. The data collected through the app will only be used by the university to monitor the potential spread of COVID-19-related symptoms in the campus population. #CampusClear is available on both the App Store and Google Play.
- Please note the newest signage at our campus entrances as part of the Black Bears Care public health campaign: "Sick? Please stay home."
- Human Resources has a [Welcome to Fall Semester website](#) with resources for employees.
- UMaine co-hosted a virtual town with the leaders of Orono and Old Town on Sept. 2. A recording is [online](#). Continue to look for community well-being updates this fall.

Transparent and continuing communication

- As part of our commitment to community well-being and to help ensure the health and safety of UMaine researchers during the pandemic, the Office of the Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School has developed an app to track faculty, staff and students working on approved research and scholarly activities. UMSpaceSafe documents research space use and generates a secure database for rapid COVID-19 contact tracking. [More information is online](#).
- Given the many changes introduced this fall due to pandemic, UMaine is seeking student feedback on how the semester is going. With the help of the Office of Institutional Research/Assessment and Enrollment Management, we are introducing a series of short weekly surveys. Each is designed to take no longer than two minutes and will focus on a specific aspect of the UMaine student experience. Students will receive notification of the surveys by text or email.
- UMaine's Emergency Operations Center alerts colleges about students with self-reported symptoms as follows: The Division of Student Life care management team contacts colleges and also advises students to contact faculty of their in-person classes. Notification indicates if a student is in quarantine or isolation. Colleges are not responsible for contacting a symptomatic student's instructors and are advised against doing so. If a student is positive, the associate dean will be notified and students will advise faculty at their discretion. If a student contacts Student Life, Student Life will provide notifications.

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

- Our fall 2020 plans to return to campus have been impacted by ongoing limits on large gatherings due to the pandemic. Those health and safety restrictions are now requiring UMaine and UMM to reconsider plans for holding 2020 Commencement ceremonies this fall. We continue to be mindful of the need to balance the health and well-being of our community with the recognition of our students' academic aspirations and achievements. We understand and share the disappointment of our graduating students and their thousands of family members, friends, colleagues and other supporters who were looking forward to the traditional in-person commencement this fall. The university Commencement Committees will now turn their attention to May 2021 to explore ceremonies at the end of the spring semester to help ensure that our 2020 graduating students receive the recognition and celebration of their achievements they so deserve, while also making preparations to celebrate and recognize our May 2021 graduates.
- Student Life's Center for Student Involvement has an online [list of activities planned for the holiday weekend](#). Information about UMM activities is on the [student engagement website](#).

Flexibility, responsiveness, empathy, and science

- Today, UMM will complete its second phase of asymptomatic COVID-19 screening. UMaine's phase two testing concludes Tuesday.
- Our return to campus planning included extensive analysis of our classrooms for face-to-face instruction. That involved rearranging furniture and adding signage to lecture hall seating to ensure occupants remain at least 6 feet apart, and equipping the rooms with PPE. It is critical that all room setups remain as they were configured at the start of the fall semester in accordance with health and safety guidance, including the need to maintain social distancing.

High-quality learning in the pandemic context

- At UMM, faculty teaching environmental and biological science courses have successfully transitioned most lab courses to a blended model, preserving the hands-on and field-based focus of these programs while adhering to health and safety guidelines. Among the many field experiences planned for the semester, students in two courses will have an opportunity to participate in a whale watching trip this month.
- Our fall 2020 website now includes links to webpages highlighting our innovations in [teaching](#) and COVID-19 [research and innovation](#) during the pandemic. Among the stories: [Innovative course delivery last spring by professor Susan Brawley and teaching assistant Kyle Capistrant-Fossa in SMS 373 – Marine and Freshwater Algae](#) — one of the 10 winning entries in the #TeachAlgae contest of the Psychological Society of America.

Continuing our missions for Maine

- University of Maine Cooperative Extension's 4-H Learning Centers will play a pivotal role in the education plans of K-12 schools in Maine communities this fall by providing venues for vibrant outdoor learning, and experiential STEM and outdoor education lessons that add depth to standard grade-level curriculum. A story is [online](#).

