COVID-19 health and safety guidance

Plans and resources

Friday Futurecasts and Updates from Campus Leaders

Friday Futurecast — December 10
Published: December 10, 2021

Friday Futurecast — December 3
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Friday Futurecast — November 18
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Friday Futurecast — November 5
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Maine Memo — Faculty and Staff Community Update July 15

July 15, 2021 | Friday Futurecasts and Updates from Campus Leaders

Dear University of Maine and University of Maine at Machias faculty and staff colleagues,

We hope that the summer is providing you and yours with time for renewal and recharging, all in the fervent hope that the most challenging aspects of the pandemic are behind us.

We are just six weeks away from the start of an in-person fall semester aligned with our pre-pandemic approach. Campus activity is picking up with more of our faculty and staff here in their offices, labs and classrooms. UMaine athletes are practicing and training on campus. We are preparing to welcome the second largest class in University of Maine history, with residence halls at capacity and, currently, a waitlist. At the University of Maine at Machias, we're also anticipating welcoming nearly 20% more first-year and transfer students than last year. Soon, our classrooms, offices on campus and statewide, centers, performance and athletics venues, arts spaces and research labs will again be buzzing with the kind of activity and energy that make the start of a new academic year such a wonderful time. We will welcome new and current members of our communities, and extend special thanks to the many who have been here all along, maintaining the safety of our campuses, partnering with the public in service to the state, undertaking maintenance and paint-and-polish activities, and so much more.

Most UMaine and UMaine Machias faculty and staff have experienced remote work for the past three semesters, and what we have accomplished has been invaluable. We adopted new tools, techniques and ways of working to fulfill our missions, and we did so swiftly, creatively, and sometimes with hesitation and challenges. Some innovations represent enhancements that will inform our post-pandemic future.

So much of what we do together as a community cannot be replicated in the two-dimensional space of Zoom. A serendipitous chat in the Memorial Union or Kilburn Commons that generates a new interdisciplinary project idea; feeling re-energized after talking through a research muddle with a colleague; sitting down with a student to ease their frustration with an assignment, and gaining a better understanding of their life in the process; talking with a cluster of excited undergraduates after class; walking with some of those students back to our offices; checking in on someone who is having a tough time; feeling the buzz in the room during a colloquium, performance or presentation; joining other Black Bear fans in the stands or on the sidelines; meeting staff colleagues at lunchtime on the UMaine Machias walking paths and trails; popping in to say "Hi, how was your weekend?" This fall will bring with it not only our scheduled classes, meetings and events, but the infinite variety of informal interactions with one another that create bonds and shape a community.

We know you are wondering about any potential changes to safety measures as we head into the fall semester. The University of Maine System continues to monitor civil authority and public health guidance, and is giving careful consideration to the full spectrum of protocol options in response to the ever-changing pandemic. Because we are still in a pandemic. As of today, there are no physical distancing requirements or limitations on group sizes on campus, although masks are required indoors. Also, as of today, neither students nor employees are required to be vaccinated against COVID-19, although this policy is likely to change when a vaccination receives full approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. We continue to strongly encourage and support vaccination as the smart, responsible step that students, faculty and staff can take to help move past the pandemic and to promote personal and community health. We have public vaccination clinics scheduled on campus in August and September, and community members can record their vaccination information on our secure campus portal with their MaineStreet username and password (detailed instructions are online). This summer's COVID-19 testing on campus for unvaccinated community members with an in-person presence will continue in the fall semester. Please refer to the Together for Maine website for all COVID-19-related health and safety updates.

While specific safety measures may change in response to evolving public health guidance, we have been and will remain vigilant in protecting the health and well-being of our community. We are grateful for everyone's dedication and cooperation over these last 16 months. Together, we can look to a successful fall semester when we will work collaboratively to foster learner success, discover and innovate, and grow and advance partnerships for the betterment of all.

Joan Ferrini-Mundy
President

John Volin
Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost

Daniel Qualls
Vice President for Academic Affairs and Head of Campus

University of Maine | Orono, ME 04469 | 207.581.1865