



Matthew Revitt <matthew.revitt@maine.edu>

Message from the Provost

1 message

Office of Human Resources <hr-um@maine.edu>
Reply-To: Office of Human Resources <hr-um@maine.edu>
To: UM-EMPLOYEES@lists.maine.edu

Wed, Jul 8, 2020 at 11:37 AM

Good day to you all:

The University of Maine will be open for learning this fall. Faculty and staff are working now to transition student schedules that were completed in the spring to fall 2020 choices. UMaine is following federal and state health and safety guidance to maintain the well-being of our campus and support the best decisions of our faculty for delivery options in fall 2020.

In some cases, there are not enough classrooms of sufficient size to accommodate students according to social distancing guidelines, particularly for any course with more than 50 students enrolled. Those courses may still be offered face-to-face, but in a hybrid format where, for example, a proportion of students would attend on Monday, another on Wednesday, and the final third on Friday. Hybrid courses and their faculty members must then prepare to reach students in the classroom that day, as well as livestream or record the class, or prepare exercises and assignments to assist students in working with the material. Some faculty members will engage students with online options. Others may designate the course as remote, meaning that much of the course material will be delivered or discussed, remotely, by Zoom or another group meeting platform. Faculty members may then provide, some with teaching assistants, opportunities for students to meet in person for assistance, discussion groups, or coaching.

As the decision for an in-person fall term was just announced on July 1, the goal is to have course schedules somewhat settled by Aug. 1, a month in advance of the start of the fall semester. In a similar manner, UMaine is working to define procedures for advising, financial aid, and other student services to ensure the safety of our students, faculty, and staff.

In addition to course delivery options, UMaine faculty and staff also are working with the Division of Student Life to enrich the experiences for those students who can return to campus. The [Black Bear Cares initiative](#), which includes the Black Bear Pact, outlines our expectations as a community to guard the safety of the people on our campus. The UMaine Center for Student Involvement is adapting all its social programming to new delivery methods for events. Those activities include:

- Virtual, pickup, physically distanced activities, and in-person events
- Outdoor movies, paint and sip (with an in-person, and an option to pick up the kit and join via Zoom)
- Live performances for music, comedy, poetry, talent, with virtual and physically distanced options
- Student Organization Fair, virtual fraternity and sorority recruitment, and more
- Online board game nights, esports, club-sponsored events
- Student Wellness Center and Mind Spa activities and other events focused on mental health and stress relief

Academic Affairs is working to define enrichment steps for students and to include possibilities for coaching sessions with the faculty member or a TA; small group sessions with classmates; academic meet and greets within disciplines so that seniors and graduate students can share suggestions and insights for the field (by Zoom, in small groups, in person), and more opportunities.

The number for students to call for more information related to their class schedules and other academic questions is 207.581.1561. The team in Enrollment Management will connect students with the right people to provide assistance.

The bottom line: UMaine will be open for learning in fall 2020 with many options to enrich the student experience here on campus or from other locations if our students wish to learn from a distance this fall. Schedules should be finalized by the first of August and, if possible, we will work with students who want a revision, while understanding the limitations of social distancing and safety guidelines. We will be focused on making 2020–21 a positively memorable experience while emphasizing the new normal the entire world is learning to manage at this time.

Sincerely,

Faye W. Gilbert, Ph.D.
Interim Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, and
Dean of the Undergraduate School of Business
University of Maine