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President Wyke's Message on Directive from Chancellor Malloy for Online Instruction beginning March 23



Dear UMA Community,

As I mentioned in my message yesterday, we continue to prepare our response to Covid19 (Coronavirus) and UMA has established a website, uma.edu/remote, where UMA-specific information will be posted as it becomes available.

Earlier today, Chancellor Dannel Malloy communicated a decision by the University of Maine System to pursue online instruction for all classes at all UMS universities beginning March 23. (Chancellor Malloy's complete directive is posted below.)

In many respects, the UMA Community is well equipped to meet the challenge of providing classes online and through other distance modalities having paved the way 30 years ago. That being said, efforts are currently underway to provide additional resources, support, and guidelines for all UMA faculty and staff regarding the provision of instruction and services online and through other distance modalities. These resources and guidelines will be posted on UMA's website, uma.edu/remote, in the very near future. As a starting point, UMS IT has published a [Resource Guide with University Tools for Remote Work, Teaching & Learning](#).

Chancellor Malloy's message follows:

UMS Community Members,

I committed to you in January that we would closely monitor the Coronavirus and its public health implications. I promised at the same time that we would make responsible plans to allow our students to continue their academic progress even if our normal academic operations are interrupted by public health measures that become necessary to reduce the likelihood of Coronavirus spread and disease transmission.

Our top priorities as the leaders of Maine's public university system are to advance the teaching, research, and service missions we have to our students and the people of Maine, while at the same time maintaining the health, safety, and well-being of our university communities throughout the State. The advent and spread of Coronavirus/COVID-19 in Asia and Europe and, more recently, in the United States now demands that we tip that balance heavily in favor of public health, which requires that we immediately adjust how we carry out our mission for the time being.

Maine is a safe place. We do not at present have any confirmed COVID-19 cases, although that will undoubtedly change in the near future. Our public universities are unique environments, with students from all over the country and world living, learning, and socializing in close environments. And at this particular time, on the cusp of higher education's traditional Spring Break period, during which our students leave our campuses to return home or visit destinations all over the United States and internationally, we are unable to reasonably ensure that students will not be exposed to the Coronavirus on their travels or return with it from Spring Break, unnecessarily risking the introduction and transmission of COVID-19 in our university communities and the State.

Therefore, acting to meet our responsibility to ensure the health and wellness of our university communities and the Maine communities in which we learn, work, and teach, the following decisions will be implemented as soon as possible:

1. Effective March 23, 2020, UMS universities will transition all in-class academic instruction to online or other pedagogically appropriate distance modalities that do not require in-class presence for the remainder of the Spring semester. Graduate, clinical, and similarly-situated students should be transitioned to remote work if possible. Individual universities, colleges, and departments should provide all material assistance and accommodation possible through this transition.
2. As part of UMS's public health commitment to reduce exposure and the threat of virus spread, UMS universities will notify on-campus residential students to make plans to depart campus by Sunday, March 22, with personal and educational belongings necessary to complete their semester requirements remotely. Students who have already departed campus will be given opportunities to return to collect necessary belongings at an appropriate time. Residential and meal plan options will be available for those who must remain in or return to their on-campus residence during or from Spring Break due to extenuating personal circumstances, and those students should be advised to prepare for limited on-campus activity and interaction. In order to return to their on-campus residences, students who leave Maine for Spring Break must register their travel plans and will be subject to quarantine or self-isolation measures on their return.
3. UMS universities will remain open and operational, with appropriate measures implemented (such as social distancing) to protect community health according to applicable CDC guidelines and recommendations. Employees will continue to report to work unless instructed otherwise or work-from-home accommodations are developed on a case-by-case basis. Each university should determine appropriate communication of these measures for their campus-based employees.

The above directives will be in effect until further notice and will be regularly reviewed. All previous UMS public health directives and restrictions remain in place.

As I've said previously, I know you share my concern for the welfare of our communities. We are all also committed to maintaining our students' educational progress with the least disruption possible. The actions announced here represent our best effort to balance both.

Thank you,

Dannel P. Malloy
Chancellor

This memo and other information issued by UMS is available on the [UMS Health Advisory website](#).

Updates will be provided as they become available.

Sincerely,

Rebecca M. Wyke, Ed.D.
President

COVID-19

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