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Dannel Malloy

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Matthew Revitt <matthew.revitt@maine.edu>

We're Staying Ahead of the Pandemic

1 message

Chancellor Dannel Malloy <chancelloroffice@maine.edu>
Reply-To: chancelloroffice@maine.edu
To: matthew.revitt@maine.edu

Fri, Mar 25, 2022 at 3:26 PM



March 25, 2022



UMS Colleagues,

The COVID-19 pandemic has been with us for just over two years now. From the beginning, we prepared, we monitored, and we developed and adopted science and public health-based protocols for personal and facility-based hygiene, social distancing, testing, isolation and quarantine, and vaccinations. Though we had to be online and apart early in the pandemic, we came back together as soon as we could do so safely, and we've stayed together safely ever since, continuing to adjust our protocols in line with our evolving understanding of the pandemic and how to control COVID and its spread.

I want to be clear about why we've had one of the most successful pandemic experiences in higher education in the country -- because of you. Your discipline to science-based COVID protocols. Your face-covering compliance. Your testing compliance. Your high vaccination and booster rates. Mostly, it's been your discipline and concern for your own health and that of our campus communities. We've stayed safe together through the pandemic because of you.

And there are countless others to thank -- our Science Advisory Board, our Incident Command teams at the System level and each of our universities, our Safe Return teams, our Residential Advisory Board, our asymptomatic testing teams, our care teams for isolation and quarantine, and many others. They all worked together to make it safe for us to be together.

Today we [announced](#) that, effective tomorrow, we are relaxing our face covering mandate for non-classroom indoor spaces. This is another important step forward that is possible because our vaccination rates are so high and our testing positivity and case occurrence rates are so low. To be sure, there are important exceptions: face coverings continue to be required in all classrooms, research spaces and instructional areas unless the requirement is waived by a faculty member. UMS also will require face coverings for public events in its facilities that welcome 75 or more persons, unless proof of COVID-19 vaccination or a negative test result is required. And all UMS event organizers have the option to require face coverings if circumstances suggest that doing so is prudent.

Our universities will be communicating more campus-based information, and our general pandemic guidance for employees has been updated today [here](#).

Under current US CDC guidance, Maine's declining case rates throughout the state and our own low testing positivity following Spring Break together make it possible for us to take this positive step forward in the pandemic. I believe this is a responsible decision for UMS at present. And perhaps it's a welcome one. But I want to be clear that we will still monitor the pandemic and community transmission, and if case rates and community transmission increase, we may have to re-impose face-covering requirements more broadly again. We will do whatever is necessary to keep our campus communities safe.

We've learned a great deal about how to work flexibly and safely together through these last two years. I hope we'll carry forward the best of what we've learned about remote work and teaching and learning, even as we've revelled in the

benefits of returning slowly and more fully to our pre-pandemic experiences. There's more to learn ahead, no doubt, and perhaps more adjustments will be necessary to continue teaching, learning, working, and researching safely together.

We will make them together.

Thanks again for your hard work, and let's stay together safely.

Regards,



Chancellor
University of Maine System

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