



President's Office

Letters to the UMB Community

Welcome Back

August 24, 2020

Dear UMB Community,

As we begin the fall semester at the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB), it is very strange for me to say "Welcome Back," knowing that the majority of us are not on campus together and many aren't sure when we'll see each other in person. The start of the academic year is always a special time, with new students and faculty, new relationships, and new scholarship. This year, we are faced with unprecedented challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, but also opportunities, especially within the historic anti-racist movement occurring in the United States.

As Maryland's only public health, law, and human services university and an anchor institution in Baltimore, diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) must be guiding principles to all we do at UMB. I hope that we all begin this semester with a renewed focus on how we not only strive to support DEI, but also how we can be an actively anti-racist organization.

Our patience and flexibility with each other as the semester begins is, and will be, incredibly important. My priority is the health and safety of this community. We are dealing with new and different stressors this year, including the need to take care of others, shepherd young scholars through virtual schooling, and remain healthy ourselves. The need for ongoing calls for justice and the continued brutality we see across the country also bring with them stress and trauma. I am proud of the resilience of the UMB community as we endeavor to start a new semester amid much turmoil. I also hope that you take advantage of [student counseling](#) or [Employee Assistance Program](#) resources to support you. Your perseverance, patience, determination, and gratitude continue to inspire me.

I want you to know that we've been thoughtful and deliberate in our planning for the health, safety, and well-being of our students, faculty, and staff. Telework helps us greatly reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission, and we will continue until there is a significant change in the pandemic. To help you plan, most mandatory teleworkers can anticipate to telework until at least Jan. 4, 2021. Some employees may return prior to that date to perform approved on-campus work, and, where practical, mandatory teleworkers will be provided three weeks' notice. I may extend mandatory telework beyond Jan. 4 if pandemic conditions require.

The new semester is a time to start fresh, and while this fall will look different from what we're used to, I hope you will join me in embracing the opportunities ahead of us.

Sincerely,

Bruce E. Jarrell, MD, FACS
Interim President

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