



# President's Office

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## Letters to the UMB Community

### Spring Semester 2021

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*October 08, 2020*

Dear UMB Community:

As the leaves start to change and the air turns cooler, I know many of you are wondering about plans for next semester. The health and safety of the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) community is at the forefront of my decision-making, and we have yet to see significant change in the pandemic. In fact, experts are predicting a surge in COVID-19 cases as winter and the flu season hits. As such, you should begin to plan for the spring 2021 semester to look much like this fall.

At this point, we are planning that:

Didactic classes across all schools and programs will be virtual for the spring semester.

Interactive learning may be via remote instruction or, in some cases, where there has been prior approval and review of COVID-19 safety protocols, in-person.

Experiential learning programs, such as those approved to resume for fall 2020, will continue for spring 2021 once approved by each school.

Research activities will continue to be monitored and approved as appropriate.

Although the university is continually evaluating testing requirements, students should be prepared to submit a negative COVID-19 test result prior to returning for the spring semester.

Spring 2021 Commencement in-person activities will be evaluated in the upcoming months. It is my fervent hope that we can celebrate graduation in person, but time will tell.

The Recovery Task Force and focus area groups continue to meet and develop plans for UMB based on the [Recovery Framework](#). We are using the [situation-based planning document](#) to help inform decision-making about University operations during the COVID-19 pandemic. The situations have been sorted as conditions that may drive UMB to move between Low-Density, Moderate-Density, and Normal Operations (see [COVID-19 Status of Operation and Telework Policy](#)), based on their potential to impact in-person activities. Using this document as a framework, UMB can assess when plans might change.

For the vast majority of UMB, **telework will continue through at least March 31, 2021**. Limiting the number of people on campus is a major component to maintaining a low-transmission environment at UMB. For those currently teleworking, please talk with your supervisor about your work requirements and discuss whether a potential change is anticipated in the coming months. Even though traveling might not be an option right now, I hope you are planning to take some of your earned time off to rest and recharge.

If you are interested in learning more and asking questions about the state of the COVID-19 pandemic, today's [Virtual Face to Face](#) at 2 p.m. will feature infectious disease expert Wilbur Chen, MD, MS, professor, University of Maryland School of Medicine (UMSOM); occupational and environmental health specialist Marianne Cloeren, MD, MPH, associate professor, UMSOM; and Steven Deck, DM, MBA, director, UMB Office of Environmental Health and Safety.

While I wish we could be on campus together, our commitment to public health means that this is the best path forward for UMB right now. If there is a significant change to the pandemic, we may make some adjustments. Thank you for your flexibility and commitment to UMB. Stay healthy (don't forget a [flu shot](#)!) and safe.

Sincerely,

**Bruce E. Jarrell, MD, FACS**

President

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