



# President's Office

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## Letters to the UMB Community

### COVID-19 One Year Later

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*March 12, 2021*

Dear UMB Community,

Twelve months, long and difficult hours on the front lines caring for COVID-19 patients, countless online meetings and classes, canceled in-person events, virtual graduation, masking up and staying apart, and, most heartbreaking of all, over half a million loved ones who are no longer with us. We are marking a year with the COVID-19 pandemic that has been unlike any other.

On March 12, 2020, I wrote that the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) was implementing the second phase of our new COVID-19 policies, canceling events and in-person instruction, suspending all work-related travel, and shifting to telework where applicable. It seems almost impossible that it has been a year since that happened — it's a peculiar pandemic time warp where sometimes it feels like it was just yesterday and sometimes it feels like it was a lifetime ago.

While now is definitely not the time to pause in our precautions and safety measures, we should take a moment to pause and reflect on the year behind us. In the United States, there have been nearly 29 million cases of COVID-19 and over 530,000 lives lost to this pandemic. Here in Maryland, we've seen 389,500 cases and almost 8,000 deaths. Individually and collectively, we grieve for all those who have lost their lives and for those who have lost loved ones to this virus.

In a different way, we also grieve the loss of "normalcy" — of our kids and grandkids going to school, passing classmates and colleagues in the hallways at UMB, going out to eat in restaurants, hosting family gatherings, attending weddings and funerals, and even just shopping mask-free. The changes we've had to make have been monumental and significant.

UMB's response to this pandemic also has been monumental and significant. I cannot understate the remarkable achievement it is to be a little over a year from the first cases in the United States and already more than 78 million Americans have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. That is cause for celebration.

We also celebrate and thank the health care heroes and front-line workers who have sacrificed so much for the health and safety of others and for us here at UMB.

Marking this anniversary brings up many feelings, of pain and suffering, of triumph and opportunity. I hope that you take time to reflect and use the resources available through the [COVID-19 Coping Kit](#) as well as the [Employee Assistance Program](#) or [Student Counseling Center](#) if helpful.

UMB has and continues to play an indelible role in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic. I hope you are as proud as I am to be part of this community. I am grateful for the sacrifices you each have made, large and small, to keep yourselves and our community healthy and safe.

Sincerely,

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

*President*

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