



# President's Office

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## Letters to the UMB Community

### Return to Campus Plan

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*March 31, 2021*

Dear UMB Community,

Walking to a meeting and saying hi to colleagues along the way, attending a symposium in real life without logging onto a computer and then being able to discuss it afterward over lunch with a colleague, experiencing the energy of Baltimore as it continues to reopen — these are some of the things I'm ready for.

The University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) is a special place that fosters a culture of innovation in academics, research, and entrepreneurship, and it also is a place where when folks ask how you are doing, they really want to know the answer. The UMB community thrives on being together for core in-person teaching and research and for quick conversations in hallways and on sidewalks that turn into solutions, from accessing the range of on-campus resources to our focus on the importance of interprofessional education and the ability to connect with patients and clients. This is who we are as an institution. This is how we best fulfill our mission to improve the human condition. And this is why we are returning to campus. We are better together — as long as we are together safely.

The past year has proved that the UMB community is strong, resilient, and committed to our mission. We have prioritized the health and safety of each other and our community, taken the necessary precautions to inhibit the spread of COVID-19, been leaders in responding to the pandemic, and cared for those infected with the virus and those facing its impacts. Across our seven schools, faculty, staff, and students have reassessed, adjusted, and changed activities as needed while achieving so much toward our mission despite the tough circumstances.

We have gotten to this point because of each of you. Thank you for your extraordinary efforts.

I'm excited to share our [\*Return to Campus plan\*](#). As I said in the statement of intent, each school and unit will gradually increase its on-campus density to no more than 50 percent capacity starting June 1. Then in the fall, our plan is to be back together, mostly in-person. UMB students can start planning now for on-campus housing options for the summer and fall. [\*UMB Housing\*](#) is a convenient and safe option as on-campus activity and density gradually increases.

This is exciting news for UMB. That being said, I know that there may be trepidation about returning — as well as many details to be worked out, such as issues around child care and caregiving. Please know that every decision made within the Return to Campus plan considers the health and safety of the UMB community first and is guided by public health, our vision and mission, and our core values.

The United States is experiencing reduced levels of infection compared to January as vaccines roll out locally and across the country. In fact, a majority of the UMB community reports having been vaccinated already — and even before that we did not see widespread transmission of COVID-19 on campus. In addition, the first four weeks of a mask observation study conducted in collaboration with the Maryland Department of Health and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention showed 96 percent of those on UMB's campus wore masks correctly. And we will continue to require the highest standards for health and safety.

In the coming weeks, please have conversations with your supervisor about your school's or unit's plans for returning. Also, please consider [registering for a COVID-19 vaccine at the SMC Campus Center](#) or letting us know that [you've been vaccinated](#), if you have not already.

I'm grateful to be part of such a responsible community of leaders who understand that each of us plays an important role in keeping ourselves and each other safe. It is with joy that I write today. I know that the UMB community has done so much to get us to this point, and I cannot wait to see you all safely back on campus.

Sincerely,

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

*President*

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