



# UMB News

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## Face to Face: Returning to Campus

May 8, 2021 | By [Alex Likowski](#)

On wall calendars in offices all over the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB), it still looks like March 2020. But after what seemed to many like an endless 14 months of lockdown, the University community is almost there. In less than a month, employees will begin to return to campus in force.

Some employees have been coming to campus from time to time as their work demanded, and a good many others never stopped coming every day, because their work on campus never stopped. But a large majority of UMB faculty and staff have been teaching and working from home all this time. For everyone, the return to something akin to “normal” campus life is going to be a tricky transition.

That transition back to work on campus was the focus of the May 6, 2021, edition of *Virtual Face to Face with President Bruce Jarrell*. Joining UMB President **Bruce E. Jarrell, MD, FACS**, to help explain preparations made for a safe return as well as the guidelines and practices to ensure a safe working environment were **Juliet Dickerson, MS**, interim associate vice president for Human Resource Services; **Melissa Morland, MBA, MS**, director of Operations and Maintenance; and **Denise J. Meyer**, associate director of Environmental Services.

In March of this year, the UMB Recovery Framework was distributed to everyone on campus, providing an outline of the process. The most important points were reiterated in a letter from Jarrell on Thursday.

“UMB is fundamentally an in-person, hands-on university,” Jarrell wrote. “After over a year of vastly increased telework, we have developed a deliberate and phased process to bring folks back together on campus.”

Jarrell also explained that beginning on June 1, each UMB school or unit would be expected to begin the process of returning to about 50 percent density, meaning that at any given time as many as half of the people who work in an office will be working on campus. The target is raised to 80 percent by the start of classes in August. “Said another way,” Jarrell explained, “starting June 1 almost everybody needs to be here some of the time. [In the] fall semester almost everybody will be back on campus most of the time.”

The letter also restated a commitment to continuing a balance between work and personal needs that includes “a level of flexibility unlike what we had previously.”

Also noted were measures to clean and prepare the campus for a safe return. “At no point in the past year has UMB been identified as a major source of COVID-19 transmission — that is to say our on-campus health and safety guidelines have worked. We will continue to have high standards for health and safety regulations,” he said.

Following a discussion between Jarrell and the panelists, the group entertained numerous audience questions, ranging from the University System of Maryland requirement to be vaccinated prior to the fall semester to the amount and the nature of telework going forward.

Watch all the discussion by accessing the link at the top of this page.



*(clockwise from top left) Bruce Jarrell, Juliet Dickerson, Melissa Morland, and Denise Meyer*

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