



President's Office

Letters to the UMB Community

Statement of Intent for Summer and Fall Semester

March 02, 2021

Dear UMB Community,

A year ago, I wrote to you about the first COVID-19-positive cases in Maryland and at the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB). Since that time, UMB's COVID-19 response and recovery planning has been dynamic, and each of us has had to be flexible and resilient in the face of evolving uncertainty. I thank you for your commitment to UMB's mission despite these unnerving and uncertain challenges.

UMB's planning efforts now look beyond this spring, and I am optimistic that the public health situation will allow UMB to pivot toward more in-person activities. With that in mind, I want to share our intent for the summer and the fall semester:

Starting June 1: Each school and unit will gradually increase its on-campus density in a responsible yet meaningful way.

Fall 2021 semester: UMB will strive toward a high percentage of in-person activities for each University function, consistent with each school's and unit's needs.

As our in-person presence on campus increases, we will maintain strong protective measures, such as face covering requirements and mandated physical distancing practices — even as vaccination becomes more prevalent. This virus remains dangerous, and we must continue to protect ourselves with these measures for at least the remainder of 2021.

Over the coming weeks, the deans, vice presidents, and Recovery Task Force will consider more details about our path forward. Plans and procedures for our return will be appropriate to each school and unit and consistent with guidelines from the Recovery Task Force, and those plans will be vetted and approved at the appropriate organizational level. All of these plans are contingent, of course, on the trajectory of the pandemic.

As planning continues, we will prioritize the safety of the UMB community. In addition, UMB's core values inform all strategic decision-making, and we continue to honor UMB's commitment to shared governance participation. As a family-friendly university, we also will consider how UMB's planning coincides with K-12 school reopenings, child care arrangements, and family caregiver issues — particularly during the summer.

I know that you may have many questions that remain to be answered, but in a spirit of transparency, I wanted to share with you now UMB's intention for the coming months. I will provide a further update by the end of March, even if we don't yet know all planning details by that time.

I ask for your patience and understanding as our community adjusts to new circumstances once again. In the meantime, I hope that you continue to do all that is possible to stop the spread of the virus, including getting a COVID-19 vaccine as soon as it is available to you. Stay healthy and safe.

Sincerely,

Bruce E. Jarrell, MD, FACS

President

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