

Feb. 19, 2021

Dear Campus Community,

For the past two weeks our campus has been in a High-Risk operational posture following a surge of positive COVID-19 cases. Consequently, severe restrictions were imposed to reduce the spread of the virus. These restrictions have moderated the initial surge. This improved public health outlook provides us the opportunity—anchored in a commitment to continue to strictly follow public health protocols—to lower our operational posture from High to Elevated. Our determination to lower the campus operational posture to Elevated, which was made in consultation with the state Department of Public Health, means that a number of public health-related restrictions will remain in place, but others, such as the suspension of in-person instruction, will be lifted on Monday, February 22.

Here are the specifics of the shift to an Elevated operational posture, effective Monday, February 22:

- In-person classes resume, but only for students in compliance with their twice-weekly testing requirement. [Students must display a green Campus Health Hub checkmark](#) to get access to in-person classes.
- Students out of compliance with the testing protocol lose access to their fully remote courses. Access to Moodle and Blackboard will be curtailed.
- Employment restrictions lifted for students who are in compliance with twice-weekly testing requirement. Students employed in on-campus jobs should consult with their supervisor on the re-opening date of their work and must present a Campus Health Hub green checkmark to their supervisor in order to return to work. Students employed off-campus might wish to use the green checkmark to assure their employers of their health status and commitment to public health obligations.
- Du Bois Library restores onsite services, including curbside pick-up and Interlibrary Loan scanning.
- Athletics: All programs resume competition and practice. No home competitions until mid-March. Teams will maintain assigned social bubbles.
- Dining: Grab 'n' Go continues. All guests will be asked to show their Campus Health Hub green checkmark upon entry into a dining location. Seated dining will only resume if and when the public health situation improves further.

- Campus building access restricted. Where necessary, monitors who check for green checkmark certification might be posted.
- Student Union will open if the public health outlook continues to improve and will strictly adhere to COVID-19 capacity limits. Only students with Campus Health Hub green checkmark will be allowed entry. Masking, social distancing, and avoiding unauthorized gatherings should be strictly observed.
- No unauthorized student gatherings of any size permitted. Our analysis has shown that small gatherings where masking and social distancing were not strictly followed were a significant cause of the recent COVID surge. It is imperative that you restrict your contacts and socialization to your own social bubble.
- Visitors or guests are not allowed on campus, including in residence halls.
- For ongoing updates and details on the university's COVID-19 response including [testing results](#), frequently asked questions, and support for students and employees, please visit www.umass.edu/spring.

For the great majority of our campus community who follow the required public health practices, I extend my thanks. To others who disregard these protocols, I want to make clear that we expect, and will actively verify compliance. Since Jan. 1, a total of 578 UMass students were referred to the university's conduct office, and sanctions have included suspension and removal from university housing. I know none of us wants to see another surge in COVID cases; accordingly, our efforts in holding students accountable will increase going forward.

Fundamental requirements of wearing a mask in public places, observing social distancing, and avoiding unauthorized student gatherings outside your own social bubble will remain in effect. Another vital requirement is that all students must remain in compliance with university testing protocols. All undergraduate students residing on campus or off campus in the Amherst area are required to undergo testing twice a week. These testing requirements also apply to graduate students coming to campus. All other graduate students are strongly encouraged to test twice a week. [Testing is by appointment only](#). As stated above, for students required to test, falling out of compliance will lead to denial of access to face-to-face and online classes, the university LMS (learning management system, such as Blackboard Learn and Moodle) as well as access to campus facilities and dining services.

Contact tracing is another critical component in keeping our community safe. Answering the call from UMass Public Health Team or Massachusetts Department of Public Health contact tracers is a way for individuals to do their part to protect us all and help stop the spread. Contact tracers, some of whom are your peers, are judgement-free and will keep your information confidential.

We stand at a critical juncture of the spring semester. Having navigated an arduous two weeks, we must embrace our collective responsibility, comply with public health protocols and seize this promising but fragile opportunity to gradually resume more normal campus operations. If conditions continue to improve, other aspects of campus life could return in a phased manner, including in-person dining, access to the Recreation Center, and hosting a guest in a residence hall. Other universities of our size in the region have managed to operate without uncontrolled surges and outbreaks. We can do it, too.

Together, we have made considerable, hard-earned progress during the past two weeks. Let us continue on the path to recovery.

Sincerely,

Chancellor Kumble R. Subbaswamy

[University of Massachusetts Amherst](#)