

January 15, 2021

Dear UMass Community,

With the start of the Spring Semester a little more than two weeks away, I want to take this opportunity to update you on the preparations we are making to ensure the health and wellbeing of every member of our campus community. With the pandemic intensifying, we are taking nothing for granted as we build upon the extensive COVID-mitigation measures we developed this past fall. By establishing one of the largest virus-testing operations in the state, implementing extensive contact tracing, following rigorous quarantine and isolation protocols, and adopting comprehensive mask and social distancing practices, we were able to limit the spread of the virus among our campus community at levels significantly below that of the state. I am confident that, through vigilance and collective effort, we can achieve similar results for the upcoming semester.

I also want to assure you that at every step of the way we will adhere to, or exceed, applicable federal, state, and local COVID-related guidelines, while also incorporating customized approaches to support our unique considerations as a university. A listing of some of the measures we are undertaking to protect our community can be found below. More detailed information can also be found at www.umass.edu/spring.

As we finalize our preparations for another semester in the midst of this global pandemic, I want to express to all of you my deep appreciation and admiration. I thank our students who remain focused on their academic progress despite the obstacles before them, our nursing and public health students who have given so much of their time and effort to help operate our testing center, our staff who manage to keep the university running through all this uncertainty, and our faculty, whose commitment to serve our students is nothing short of inspirational.

While we look forward to welcoming more students on campus for Spring Semester, I want to reiterate that whether you are engaging with the campus in-person or from afar, you are a critical member of our community. Your resourcefulness and resiliency during the pandemic clearly demonstrate that the extraordinary spirit of this university is not limited by location.

Once again, thank you everyone. Stay safe. Be healthy. GO UMASS!

Sincerely,

Chancellor Kumble R. Subbaswamy

CAMPUS COVID-MITIGATION MEASURES

- **Ongoing Asymptomatic Testing:** All undergraduate students residing on the Amherst campus, the Mount Ida campus, or off campus in the Amherst area, will be required to undergo testing twice a week throughout the Spring Semester. These testing requirements also apply to graduate students coming to campus. All other graduate students are strongly encouraged to test twice a week. To support a smooth testing process for all members of our community, including our dedicated nursing and public health students who are helping to administer the tests, all asymptomatic testing is now by appointment only for UMass students, faculty and staff. The online portal for scheduling testing appointments will be available starting next Tuesday, Jan. 19. Students are reminded they must stay up-to-date on testing to participate in face-to-face classes or events.
- **Protocols for Students Coming to the Amherst Area and the Mount Ida Campus:** All students, whether living on campus or off campus, are required to follow travel and [quarantine protocols](#). Specifically, a COVID-19 test is required for all students upon arrival. Students will then limit interactions with other individuals. On day four after their arrival, they will get a second test and continue with limited interactions until receiving a second negative test. Upon receipt of a second negative test result, students may participate in face-to-face classes, campus activities and research activities. [Please view additional information about the on-campus move-in process.](#)
- **Campus Life:** Virtual activities will continue throughout the Spring Semester for all students. Events and programming sponsored by residence hall staff, student organizations and campus departments will be delivered using in-person, virtual and hybrid formats as public health metrics allow.
- **The Interim Pandemic Policy for Students:** Students who will be living on campus or in the Amherst area must adhere to the [Interim Pandemic Policy](#). This policy, developed by students and staff and reviewed by the Student Government Association and the Graduate Student Senate, outlines expectations for the Spring Semester. For off campus students, it is important to remember to maintain social distancing, avoid gathering, and be a respectful member of the community. We are all in this effort together.
- **Faculty and Staff Travel Protocols:** To return to campus after out-of-state travel, faculty and staff who are designated as essential/on-site employees must adhere to one of the two options below. Please see the [Update on University Travel](#) for additional information, including recommendations related to personal travel.

Option 1: Get a COVID-19 test upon arrival in the Commonwealth and limit all interactions. Get a second test on day four. Continue to limit all interactions until receiving a second negative test. Upon receipt of a second negative test result, you may return to work on campus.

Option 2: Quarantine for 10 days from the date of arrival in Massachusetts. If you choose this option, please be advised the university does not provide travel-related quarantine accommodations.

- **Campus Facilities and Classroom Protocol:** Public health guidelines, social distancing, and cleaning protocols are in place for facilities being used during Spring Semester. Access to campus facilities is restricted to only UMass faculty, staff, students and designated visitors. The occupancy of classrooms has been modified to maintain social distancing, including assigned seating where appropriate. Classrooms and study spaces have diagrams depicting the reduced seating capacity for each space, including designated areas for instructors and required space between students to ensure appropriate social distancing. Signs are posted to explain appropriate ways to enter and exit, as well as reminders about preventive health practices. All faculty/instructors teaching face-to-face courses will be provided with masks. Face shields will also be provided to those needing them. Cleaning supplies will be placed directly in face-to-face classrooms, and include disinfectant, sanitizer in bottles, sanitizing wipes, packets of disposable masks, tissues and paper towels. Sanitizing stations are also in place at main entrances.

Research and creative activities should be conducted remotely as much as possible. Since many important activities cannot be entirely remote, laboratories, studios, field stations, libraries and other facilities for research and creative activities have been gradually reopening. The process has been successful from a health and safety viewpoint.

- **Monitoring Risk Levels:** To inform decision making throughout the Spring Semester, the university has developed a system of Operational Postures to monitor levels of risk. Factors driving a change in the risk level include the number of positive cases and trends; state and federal guidance; and our capacity for contact tracing, quarantine and isolation.
- **Massachusetts Vaccine Plan:** As part of Governor Charlie Baker's statewide COVID-19 vaccination plan, the campus has been established as a vaccine clinic for first responders. Eligibility to receive a vaccine is determined by the Baker-Polito Administration's COVID-19 Vaccine Advisory Group. Supporting the efforts of the Baker Administration during this public health crisis is consistent with our mission and our role as the public flagship campus of the Commonwealth. We understand members of the campus community are eager to learn when the vaccine will be more widely available to various populations. As the state continues to set allocation and prioritization guidelines, we will keep the community informed of all related developments.

- **COVID-19 Resources for Spring 2021:** Comprehensive, updated information on all of the topics covered in this email is available at the [Spring 2021](#) COVID-19 website.

[University of Massachusetts Amherst](#)