

FRAMEWORK AND PLAN *for Resuming On-Campus Operations* in Academic Year 2020–21

UPDATED MAY 24, 2021



UNIVERSITY OF
NEW ENGLAND

INNOVATION FOR A HEALTHIER PLANET

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND (UNE) IS PLEASED TO PRESENT THIS PLAN FOR RESUMING ON-CAMPUS OPERATIONS FOR ACADEMIC YEAR (AY) 2020-21. This plan provides important information about UNE's implementation of the framework for reopening Maine's higher education institutions, which was developed in the spring of 2020 through a partnership of all of Maine's private colleges, the University of Maine System, and the Community College System: **Sustaining Higher Education and Sustaining Maine: A Framework for Reopening Maine's Colleges and Universities in Fall 2020**. This framework served as a guiding foundation for UNE's planning efforts.

The highest priority of UNE's plan is maintaining the health and safety of the University's students, faculty, and professional staff, while recognizing that our community, like our state and nation more broadly, cannot completely eliminate risks associated with the COVID-19 virus until an effective vaccine is available. Our plan reflects the complexity of UNE as an institution and its diverse array of programs – from Humanities to Marine Science to Osteopathic Medicine. The plan is inherently flexible, allowing the University to pivot quickly in response to changing conditions in Maine, the region, the nation, and at UNE's study abroad locations. In this context, several other resources inform this plan, including, but not limited to, the national **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**, the **Maine CDC**, the **World Health Organization**, the **State of Maine Office of the Governor**, the **Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA)**, the evolving science on COVID-19, and emerging best practices in higher education.

A group of administrators, faculty, and professional staff worked diligently since April 2020 to develop this plan and remains engaged in implementing and updating it. With its array of graduate and professional programs that run throughout the calendar year, UNE welcomed back students in June on both the Biddeford and Portland campuses. Likewise, faculty with research laboratories began returning to campus in June and continued to do so throughout the summer months. The experiences of the students, faculty, and professional staff in the College of Dental Medicine, College of Osteopathic Medicine, Westbrook College of Health Professions, and the Office of Research and Scholarship allowed us to further refine this plan in preparation for the new and returning undergraduate and graduate students in fall 2020.

UNE's mission to prepare students *to thrive in a rapidly-changing world and, in so doing, to improve the health of people, communities, and our planet* could not be more relevant than today. The plan reflects this core mission and is a living document. The University continues to plan for various scenarios related to changing conditions in Maine, the region, and at UNE's study abroad locations. If restrictions continue to improve, UNE will remain vigilant in its gradual and cautious approach to relaxing any of its policies and procedures related to the pandemic. The University is also well-prepared and positioned, because of its experience in March 2020, to quickly pivot in the other direction by enhancing restrictions, including shifting again to a fully remote operations model, should that need arise. We know some of the decisions we have made may need to be revisited and revised in the future, and there are questions yet to answer. As such, we will continue to update this plan throughout the coming months to include evolving information from government agencies, the scientific literature, and the higher education community.

This version of the UNE Onward plan was published on May 24, 2021. The plan will be updated and re-published regularly. To ensure that you are referencing current information and policies, please download the most recent version of the plan at une.edu/onward.

CONTENTS

I. ACADEMIC CALENDAR AND SCHEDULE OF CLASSES	6
A. Academic Calendar 2020–21	6
B. Schedule of Classes	7
II. PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY	8
A. Social Distancing	8
B. Restrictions on Use of Campus Facilities	9
C. Cleaning and Disinfection Policies and Procedures	9
D. Personal Protective Equipment and Other Public Health Protective Measures	10
E. Accommodation Requests	12
F. Return to Campus for UNE Employees	12
G. Student and Employee Health	12
H. Reporting COVID-19 Cases	17
I. Employee and Student Travel Policy	17
J. Educating the UNE Community on COVID-19 Requirements	18
K. Commitment to the Community’s Health and Safety for Students and Employees: UNE Onward Promise	19
III. DELIVERY OF THE CURRICULUM	20
A. Instructional Delivery Plan	20
B. Experiential Learning	22
C. Study Abroad	23
D. Library Services	24
E. Technology and Instructional Support	24
IV. STUDENT LIFE	25
A. Residential Housing	25
B. On-Campus Dining	26
C. Student Support	26

V. ATHLETICS, CLUB SPORTS, AND INTRAMURALS	28
VI. RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP	30
A. Access to UNE Research Facilities	30
B. Approval Process	30
C. Off-Site Facilities Including Field Work	31
D. Situations When Social Distancing Is Not Feasible	31
E. Remote Work	31
VII. VISITORS (GUESTS) AND EVENTS – EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL	32
VIII. COMMUNICATION PLAN	33
A. Email	33
B. UNE Website	33
C. Emergency Alerts	33
D. Social Media	33
E. Signage	33
F. Departmental/Unit Updates	33
G. <i>Stall Street Journal</i>	34
H. Additional Communication Strategies	34
IX. REFLECTIONS	35

I. ACADEMIC CALENDAR AND SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

A. ACADEMIC CALENDAR 2020–21

The current plan is for the University's **academic calendar for 2020–21** for undergraduates to remain as previously published with the exceptions noted below. This calendar is subject to change depending on the course of the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. Face-to-face orientation for new undergraduate students (including residential transfer students) ordinarily scheduled in the summer months was held from Friday, August 21 to Tuesday, August 25. Orientation for commuting transfer students was held on Tuesday, August 25.
2. Face-to-face classes began as scheduled on Wednesday, August 26 and will run without interruption through Friday, November 20. In contrast to the prior published calendar, the normal schedule of classes was held on Labor Day (Monday, September 7), the Fall Break Day (Friday, October 9), and Veterans Day (Monday, November 11). Face-to-face classes and most student on-campus residency ended on Friday, November 20.
3. Following the break for Thanksgiving week, classes resumed Monday, November 30 and continued through Friday, December 4, by remote delivery only for most students. Students in some health sciences programs returned to campus following the Thanksgiving Break for clinical skills assessments that cannot be scheduled prior to the Holiday Break and that are required for progression to the next semester.

Some of the graduate and professional student programs essentially followed the undergraduate calendar for fall 2020, i.e., ending face-to-face classes on Friday, November 20 and completing the term remotely. However, other graduate and professional programs followed a different calendar due to requirements for continued clinical skills training and other experiential components. Students in each program were notified by mid-August about their specific calendar and any planned modifications to the prior published calendar.
4. Final examinations were conducted as scheduled, but by remote means only, from Monday, December 7 through Friday, December 11, and the term ended on December 11, as scheduled.
5. The spring term is currently scheduled to begin on Wednesday, January 13, 2021.

B. SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

The schedule of classes for fall 2020 and spring 2021 and related room assignments were reviewed to ensure that the public health and safety parameters outlined later in this plan could be maintained. Every effort has been made to minimize disruption in the existing schedule to students and faculty. However, a number of adjustments were needed to accommodate the additional sections required to maintain social distancing in classrooms and teaching labs, which have necessitated an approximately 40% reduction in classroom capacity overall. Students and faculty were notified well in advance of the start of classes about any alterations in their schedules that were necessary due to the modifications in classroom capacity. (See Section III. A for more information about the curriculum delivery plan and class schedule.)

Clinical practica schedules for the various health professions programs involve student placements at clinical sites across the United States. The schedules for students in these programs are coordinated and managed at the individual program level, as external program accreditation standards and regulatory body guidelines vary across state lines. The faculty and professional staff who oversee the clinical education components of the curriculum communicate directly with the students about any modifications to their practica schedules.

Again, it may be necessary to make other adjustments to class schedules over time, depending on the course of the COVID-19 pandemic.

II. PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

A. SOCIAL DISTANCING

Effective May 24, 2021, in consideration of changes in Maine law, the University eliminated physical distancing requirements for all outdoor settings. Physical distancing requirements were also eliminated for indoor settings, except in settings where people are eating or drinking and therefore would be removing their face covering – such as cafeterias and break rooms.

Previously, all campus facilities and operations had been designed to ensure compliance with the **CDC's 6-foot social distancing guideline** where possible. Ground and floor markings, placed to maintain six-foot (ft.) separation between individuals, were positioned in known congestion areas to help guide and ensure appropriate social distancing.

All classroom furniture seating had been adjusted to accommodate a 6-ft. separation between individuals. In undergraduate science teaching laboratories that have fixed furniture arrangements, maximum class sizes were set to maintain the 6-ft. distancing requirement. As noted above, class section sizes needed to be adjusted accordingly, which may have resulted in changes to students' schedules. (See Section III for more information regarding delivery of the curriculum).

Dining areas and other public seating spaces had been furnished to allow for the physical distancing requirements.

Before May 24, 2021, all students and employees were expected to remain in compliance with the maximum group size parameters outlined in the Governor's **Gradual Plan to Restart Maine's Economy**.

All University operations and shared office spaces were reviewed to limit the density of individuals to the extent possible. This was achieved through a variety of solutions including, but not limited to, remote work for all or part of the duties of some employees, flexible/staggered work scheduling, the use of plexiglass shielding as dictated by the specific student-facing needs of the department/area, and the re-purposing of small and large conference rooms to achieve social distancing targets. Zoom videoconferencing technology was used for all meetings whenever possible.

B. RESTRICTIONS ON USE OF CAMPUS FACILITIES

To the extent possible, services for students have been designed to provide flexibility for access. For example, student academic support, counseling, student access, student health, and financial aid services are all available in both face-to-face and virtual modalities, e.g. through Zoom or other online platforms. At the same time, the ability to maintain the health and safety of our community necessitates some limitations in hours of operation of some buildings, such as the libraries, the Ripich Commons, and athletic facilities, as well as the need for specific traffic flow patterns. Specifics are discussed throughout this plan and are directly communicated to UNE community members and any visitors to campus. Signage throughout the campuses also helps inform everyone about traffic flow and facility restrictions.

C. CLEANING AND DISINFECTION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

UNE follows **CDC guidelines for enhanced cleaning and disinfection practices** in all campus facilities using products that meet EPA's criteria for use against SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) and are appropriate for the particular surfaces.

Campus common areas, including common areas of the residence halls, such as restrooms, elevators, and reception areas, and other frequently touched surfaces are being cleaned at increased intervals by our Campus Services professional staff, including the use of an electrostatic sanitation system (commonly referred to as a portable misting/fogging system). Sanitation stations with equipment, supplies, product information, and usage guidelines are located in centralized areas of each building. Any member of the UNE community may request proper sanitation training through Housekeeping Services.

Employees are expected to clean and disinfect their personal work area daily. Any frequently touched areas should be cleaned with a household disinfectant or 70% alcohol cleaner. This includes computer workstations, keyboards, mouse and trackpad devices, desks, phones, door handles, and any other frequently touched areas. Sanitation stations with equipment, supplies, product information, and usage guidelines are located in centralized areas of each building. Trash receptacles have been placed in the hallways and outside office/work areas, and they are emptied by Housekeeping. Employees are also expected to regularly clean their face coverings or face shields (see Section D. 1 below for more information about face masks).

Enhanced cleaning and disinfection protocols are also being used for athletic facilities, such as the strength and conditioning, locker, and athletic training rooms. These protocols include self-service options for occupants, who are provided with equipment and materials, as well as daily deep sanitation by misting with electrostatically charged EPA registered disinfectants.

University fleet vehicles are sanitized by Facilities between uses by different drivers. Sanitization consists of cleaning of touched surfaces or misting as required. The contracted transportation companies, including the Portland Campus Shuttle and the Biddeford Campus to Biddeford Shuttle, use their sanitation protocols as approved by the state.

D. PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT AND OTHER PUBLIC HEALTH PROTECTIVE MEASURES

1. FACE COVERINGS: In consideration of the state of Maine and **CDC guidelines regarding the use of masks**, the University previously required the use of cloth face masks at all times (indoors and outdoors) with the following exceptions:

- ▶ Employees working alone in their private offices
- ▶ Students in their dorm rooms
- ▶ Employees performing work outside (landscapers, facilities management workers, etc.) who are able to maintain social distance at all times
- ▶ Community members engaging in moderate to high-intensity outdoor physical activity (e.g., running and other athletic activities) and who are able to maintain social distance at all times
- ▶ Individuals being filmed for video and photo shoots, including such projects as public relations videos and professional portraits, that are managed by University business units. In such instances, a subject's mask may be removed only while visuals are captured. All others present must meet PPE and social distancing requirements. Subjects must provide consent to film without a mask and be given the option to wear a mask or opt out of the shoot.
- ▶ Individuals with a medical condition that causes difficulty in wearing a face mask and who have been granted a formal accommodation. Among faculty, the use of a face shield for teaching in lieu of a face mask may be considered a reasonable accommodation if formally approved. (Please contact the Office of Human Resources.)
- ▶ Other approved rooms and situations. Requests for additional exceptions should be submitted to the relevant unit head (e.g., dean of students, department chair, program director, or college dean, etc.). All requests will also be reviewed by an ad hoc committee appointed by the University's senior leadership

Effective May 17, 2021, in consideration of changes in Maine law, the University removed the requirement for masking when outdoors.

The University provides a cloth face mask for all employees and students. Any additional required personal protection equipment (PPE) will also be provided by the University.

Neck gaiters, bandanas, scarves, and masks with exhalation vents are not approved face coverings.

Employees and students who are unable to wear a face covering for health or other reasons should explore their options via the reasonable accommodation request processes available through Human Resources or the Student Access Center, respectively.

2. **HAND HYGIENE:** Employees and students are expected to wash their hands (at least 20 seconds of washing with soap and water) on a regular basis throughout the day, particularly when arriving and leaving campus, after touching their face, touching communal surfaces, coughing or sneezing, or using bathroom facilities. Hand sanitizer stations are also available at multiple locations across the campuses.
3. **COUGH ETIQUETTE:** Employees and students are encouraged to cough or sneeze into their elbow or use a tissue, covering both their mouth and nose, and then immediately wash their hands as described above.
4. **TRAFFIC FLOW:** To the extent possible, designation of certain doorways as points of entry and others as points of exit are to be followed. Right-lane traffic patterns (similar to vehicular traffic) are encouraged throughout all buildings.
5. **PLEXIGLASS SHIELDING:** An inventory of high traffic transaction areas has been conducted to assess where shielding is useful, such as the Library Circulation Desk, Dining Services check-in station, and Solutions Desk at the Commons.

Security vehicles and shuttle buses have been outfitted with shielding between the driver and passenger seats to afford a greater level of protection when transporting individuals.
6. **SPECIALIZED PROTECTIVE (N95) MASKS:** Any employee or student required to wear an N95 mask (also known as an N95 respirator) is required to successfully undergo a health screening and must be fit tested by the professional staff in UNE's Department of Environmental Health prior to being authorized to use the mask.
7. **PROTECTIVE MEASURES IN THE STUDENT HEALTH CENTER, CLINICAL SKILLS LABORATORIES, AND CLINICS:** Social distancing is not feasible in the Student Health Center and certain clinical skills instructional laboratories, including the Oral Health Center and the Dental Hygiene Clinic, that require students to practice on patients, their peers, standardized patients (actors), and in the simulation environment, all with close faculty

supervision. For non-aerosol-producing clinical care and skills training (taking blood pressure, listening to heart/lung sounds, etc.), all participants (health care providers, student examiners, student examinees, and faculty) must wear surgical masks supplemented with a cloth mask, gloves, re-usable cloth gowns, white coats, or other appropriate overlay apparel. For aerosol-producing clinical care and skills training, particularly in dental medicine and dental hygiene, students and faculty must wear N95-type masks and face shields, disposable gowns or overlay apparel, and gloves. Masks, gowns, and gloves will be discarded after each aerosol-generating procedure. Face shields can be cleaned and reused, in accordance with established protocols.

E. ACCOMMODATION REQUESTS

Student requests for accommodations regarding participation in on-campus classes and other activities, face covering requirements, or other COVID-19 related requirements should be directed to the **Student Access Center**.

Employee requests for accommodations regarding on-campus work and other activities, face covering requirements, or other COVID-19 related requirements will be handled by Human Resources in consultation with the employee's supervisor.

F. RETURN TO CAMPUS FOR UNE EMPLOYEES

Many of the policies and procedures described above and throughout this overarching plan for reopening the University are also included in Phase 1 of the **Return to Campus Plan for Employees**. This plan has been shared with all University employees via email, and it is posted on the **Novel Coronavirus COVID-19 webpage**. Human Resources will continue to update UNE employees as policies and procedures evolve in the coming weeks and months.

Due to the change in the academic calendar, UNE did not observe Labor Day as an official holiday. Instead, UNE observed the Wednesday before Thanksgiving as a holiday for employees. In addition, the floating holiday typically accrued during the first pay period in October was accrued during the first pay period in September.

G. STUDENT AND EMPLOYEE HEALTH

- 1. FACILITIES:** The physical footprint and staffing of the Student Health Centers have been relocated and expanded on both campuses to accommodate the possible need to manage both suspected and confirmed cases of COVID-19, as well as to safely manage the regular and ongoing operations of student health.

2. VISITS: The **Student Health Centers** are available to students for both face-to-face visits through both walk-in and scheduled appointments, as well as visits via Zoom. The Health Centers on both campuses continue to provide a full scope of care, including acute care visits, physicals, vaccinations, and laboratory services.

3. STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY TO REPORT ILLNESS: Students who are in need of medical care should contact the Student Health Center or seek medical care at one of the local acute care facilities immediately. Those students who seek care at a facility off campus must notify the Student Health Center as well.

A student who experiences any of the symptoms described under Daily Self-Monitoring below who is in contact with a COVID-19-positive individual or who is diagnosed with COVID-19 is required to self-isolate and immediately contact the Student Health Center.

4. TESTING: In an effort to safeguard the UNE community against the threat of COVID-19 infection and transmission, we developed a 4-tiered testing program that includes initial broad-based entry testing, ongoing symptomatic testing, focused surveillance testing of asymptomatic individuals, and testing of campus wastewater. On January 25, UNE launched a new surveillance testing program, which consists of regularly scheduled, voluntary COVID-19 testing of our on-campus student and employee populations. Those employees who have been identified as having a particularly high risk of coming into contact with a COVID positive person are invited to test on a weekly basis. On-campus undergraduate and graduate students and a cross section of employees are also invited to participate in regular surveillance testing. These individuals have been randomly assigned to testing cohorts. Each of the five employee cohorts is offered COVID-19 tests every five weeks, and each of the four student cohorts is offered tests every four weeks.

It is our hope that this testing program, in conjunction with ongoing targeted surveillance testing, on-demand testing for students, and wastewater testing, will help to identify any potential outbreaks or clusters of infection among our campus populations that may guide our efforts in more targeted surveillance testing, if needed. This testing program, like the Onward plan in general, remains fluid, and we will continuously assess and readjust components of the program as necessary.

Baseline and surveillance testing, both focused and ongoing, is conducted in partnership with the Broad Institute in Cambridge, MA. Students with symptoms that might be the result of COVID infection are tested with a point-of-care system on campus. All confirmatory testing is done in partnership with MaineHealth's NorDx laboratories.

Upon return to campus for the fall 2020 semester, all undergraduate students were required to bring evidence of a negative viral test taken within 72 hours of arrival and were tested again shortly after arrival. We expanded this protocol for spring term of 2021 to include all graduate students and required that all students upload the results of their negative viral test result to Medicaat prior to arrival on campus for the term. Please note that there are two types of tests: antibody and viral. UNE requires the viral test. Information about the difference between the two types of tests may be found on the [CDC's website](#). Before the start of both the fall 2020 and spring 2021 terms, UNE encouraged students to communicate with their primary care physicians and local testing sites about test availability. We informed them that the website [get-tested-covid19.org](#) and other online resources provide lists of testing facilities based on address. We also informed them of an at-home test option that provides a fast turnaround time that is available to college students returning to campus. Because the average turnaround time for tests in some students' areas exceeded 72 hours, we encouraged those students to plan ahead and get the test sooner and then to self-quarantine until results were received. After receiving a negative result, students were required to continue to self-quarantine until they arrived on campus. This broad-based testing, first enacted for the fall term of 2020, provided critical baseline data that helped to inform our subsequent testing protocols. UNE provides ongoing testing for all students who develop respiratory or other symptoms that might reflect COVID infection.

On September 16, UNE's COVID Response Team made the decision to enhance testing protocols by offering tests, free of charge, at both campuses' Student Health Centers, to any and all on-campus students — undergraduate and graduate, residential and commuter — who found themselves in a situation in which they might have been at higher risk for contracting the virus. Students in such circumstances were encouraged to voluntarily get tested. Beginning in the spring semester of 2021, the testing sites were relocated to the Campus Center track and Ludke Hall on the Biddeford and Portland campuses, respectively. All students are encouraged to take advantage of this resource without repercussions. Students were informed that those with a mobility issue that limits their access to the track may access testing at the Student Health Center by calling to make an appointment.

If one has not already been fully vaccinated for at least 14 days or if one has not been cleared by a medical professional after being diagnosed with COVID-19 in the past 90 days, examples of such higher risk situations would include:

- Travel to any state that is not among those which are exempt from Maine's testing/quarantining requirements. Exempt states currently include New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island.

- ▶ Attending a party or other gathering, a religious service, or other social event in which social distancing or masking was not consistently maintained.
- ▶ Contact with an individual who is known or suspected to be positive for the virus, even if the level of contact does not technically qualify as “close” per CDC standards.

Students who volunteer for such testing will be granted immunity from any potential conduct violations related to the activity that puts them at increased risk. Likewise, any other individuals, identified by the volunteer(s), or others, as participating in such an event through a contact tracing process, will also be exempted from conduct violation processes in order to accurately ascertain the extent of the potential exposure. Conversely, students who do not voluntarily come forth and self-identify, and who are otherwise found through normal processes to have violated student conduct policies, will be subject to the normal conduct violation processes and consequences.

As described below, UNE encourages self-monitoring of symptoms among all members of the community, including employees. Employees showing signs of illness should seek immediate care from their health care provider.

5. EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITY TO REPORT ILLNESS: Employees who are diagnosed with COVID-19, who have any of the symptoms associated with COVID-19 (see below), or who have been in close contact with COVID-19 positive individuals are expected to contact their primary care provider, immediate supervisor, and Human Resources for guidance.

6. DAILY SELF-MONITORING BY ALL MEMBERS OF THE UNE COMMUNITY: Early detection of illness can prevent the spread of COVID-19 within the UNE community. All community members are expected to monitor their health daily. Students and employees are expected to stay home or in their dorm room if they are sick and if any of the following symptoms or circumstances apply to them:

- ▶ Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- ▶ Cough
- ▶ Temperature that exceeds 100.4 F when measured with a household thermometer
- ▶ New loss of smell or taste
- ▶ Sore throat
- ▶ Muscle pain
- ▶ Headache
- ▶ Congestion or runny nose

- ▶ Nausea or vomiting
- ▶ Diarrhea
- ▶ Anyone in their household diagnosed with COVID-19 or has exhibited COVID-19 symptoms (listed above) within the last 10 days
- ▶ Close contact (being within 6 feet for 15 or more minutes) with anyone who has a confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis or COVID-19 symptoms within the last 10 days

As noted above, students with any of these symptoms or circumstances are expected to contact the Student Health Center. Employees with any of these symptoms or circumstances are expected to contact their immediate supervisor and Human Resources.

- 7. CONTACT TRACING:** UNE will assist the Maine CDC with contact tracing to the extent feasible. Those who are symptomatic must quarantine until test results are confirmed negative before returning to on-campus classes (students) or work (employees). Those who are asymptomatic are expected to quarantine for 10 days before return to on-campus classes (students) or work (employees).

It is required that students and employees follow the CDC quarantine guidelines during a public health emergency, such as we are experiencing now with Covid-19. Those required actions are explained in specific detail with answers to various quarantine scenarios by the CDC here www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html

- 8. PLAN FOR POSITIVE CASES AND THOSE AWAITING TEST RESULTS:** Employees who have a positive COVID-19 test or who are waiting for testing results are expected to remain at home until cleared by a health professional and Human Resources to return to on-campus work. Any arrangements for remote work during quarantine should be discussed and approved with the employee's immediate supervisor and Human Resources.

Students awaiting test results must remain in their residence hall rooms. In some cases, such as when a student resides in a double room on a traditional residence hall floor (i.e. not a suite), the student may be temporarily relocated to ensure proper isolation during the waiting period. Students awaiting test results and/or who have a positive COVID-19 test who choose to return home and do not have high-risk individuals in their household may do so.

For students who must remain on campus, the first floor of East Hall (residence hall) on the Biddeford Campus has been designated as the quarantine space for residential students. Transportation of students to this quarantine location will be provided by the University. The suite features in this residence hall include kitchenettes and single bedrooms. The locations of both hallway and building entry doors allow for restrictions to access, which prevents

students not residing in that section from being able to enter. The programming of student ID cards, used for accessing residence halls, reflects this area as restricted. Only those residing on that hallway, as well as approved professional staff (e.g., Health Center, Housing, Security, Housekeeping) are provided access.

All students in quarantine are evaluated on a daily basis, including self-temperature checks and Zoom/face-to-face meetings with student health clinical staff. All students in quarantine are required to comply with all quarantine rules, which will be provided upon quarantine. Students found in violation of the established rules will be required to leave campus and will not be able to return until they are cleared by a health professional. Well students who gain or attempt to gain access to the quarantine space will also face consequences for violating the clearly posted directives regarding restrictions on this space.

Students who feel well enough to continue with classes during quarantine may participate remotely.

Students may return to regular on-campus activities and housing when they are cleared by a health professional and the Student Health Center.

9. OTHER IMMUNIZATIONS: In order to improve the overall safety of the campus, we will strongly encourage all members of the UNE community who reside or work on campus to be immunized for influenza.

10. VACCINATIONS: On May 17, 2021, UNE announced that all on-campus students and employees are required to be vaccinated by August 16, 2021. Vaccines will be offered to students who will be on campus over the summer as part of their onboarding process. Students, faculty, and professional staff were notified on DATE that they may access Johnson & Johnson and Moderna vaccines by making an appointment at the Student Health Center. The University is developing protocols for students and employees who request a medical or religious exemption and for employees to report their vaccination status.

H. REPORTING COVID-19 CASES: THE UNIVERSITY WILL NOTIFY THE MAINE CDC OF ALL REPORTABLE CASES.

I. EMPLOYEE AND STUDENT TRAVEL POLICY

1. EMPLOYEE TRAVEL: The travel policy implemented in March 2020 prohibiting non-essential domestic and international travel remains in effect until further notice. Exceptions include employees who travel regularly as part of their job (such as medical

directors) and other travel that is deemed essential. Approval for essential travel will require approval from the provost (academic areas) or the senior vice president of Finance and Administration (administrative areas).

2. Student Travel: As of the date of publication of this plan, individuals traveling to campus from areas other than Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island must satisfy one of the following conditions:
 - ▶ They have completed a negative COVID test no more than 72 hours prior to entering Maine.
 - ▶ They have arranged for a test upon arrival and to self-quarantine until the results are obtained.
 - ▶ They intend to self-quarantine for 10 days.
 - ▶ They have been fully vaccinated for COVID-19 for at least 14 days.
 - ▶ They have tested positive for COVID-19 and been cleared by a medical professional within the past 90 days.

Individuals from Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island must not have traveled to states or countries other than the specified states within 10 days of their return to campus.

All community members who have not been fully vaccinated or who have not tested positive for COVID-19 and been cleared by a medical professional within the past 90 days are advised against travel outside of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut until further notice. If such individuals do travel out of these specified states, they must follow the 10-day self-quarantine/testing guidelines outlined above upon their return to Maine. These travel requirements are subject to change based on evolving state requirements.

J. EDUCATING THE UNE COMMUNITY ON COVID-19 REQUIREMENTS

Concerted, current, and accessible education and training have been utilized to inform students, parents, and employees about requirements and expectations for resuming operations on-campus during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is important so that all members of the UNE community understand the known risks of COVID-19, understand how UNE and each member of the UNE community can help mitigate transmission and exposure, and understand UNE's requirements and expectations. All members of the UNE community were required to complete an online training program prior to return to campus.

A COVID-19 signage campaign was completed on both campuses and consists of the installation of traditional signs, as well as messaging on social media. Signage reminds the community members of the importance of their continued adherence to best practices and reinforces the training they received. Signage also informs the general public of temporarily restricted access to UNE facilities. A secondary and complementary COVID-19 signage campaign is currently underway.

K. COMMITMENT TO THE COMMUNITY'S HEALTH AND SAFETY FOR STUDENTS AND EMPLOYEES: UNE ONWARD PROMISE

UNE expects the entire community of faculty, professional staff, and students to confirm their commitment to the campus-wide COVID-19 rules of community engagement regarding social distancing, masking, enhanced hygiene, testing, symptom checking, and contact tracing. This is included as part of the online training described above. All members of the UNE community are expected to honor their commitment to the University's COVID-19 policies as they return to campus with the understanding that policies may change as regulatory or pandemic public health advisories evolve throughout the academic year.

Violations of UNE policies and protocols related to COVID-19 may subject individuals to discipline or other actions, including but not limited to removal from campus.

Please note that as of September 16, 2020, all students who have found themselves in a situation in which they might have been at higher risk for contracting the virus are encouraged to voluntarily go to one of the on-campus testing sites (BC Campus Center track or PC Ludke Hall) to be tested, free of charge. All students are encouraged to take advantage of this resource without repercussions. Students who volunteer for such testing will be granted immunity from any potential conduct violations related to the activity that puts them at increased risk. For example, students who volunteer that they have attended an off-campus gathering and who seek testing will not be punished for revealing their attendance at the gathering.

Likewise, any other individuals, identified by the volunteer(s), or others, as participating in such an event through a contact tracing process, will also be exempted from conduct violation processes in order to accurately ascertain the extent of the potential exposure.

We are taking this approach to encourage students to come forward for testing as needed, without fear of incurring conduct violations, in order to prioritize the health of our community. (See Section II.G.4. for more information about voluntary testing and for a list of examples of high risk situations.)

III. DELIVERY OF THE CURRICULUM

A. INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY PLAN

The faculty, academic professional staff, directors, department chairs, and deans of UNE's academic programs and colleges are all focused on providing a high quality, safe academic experiences for students, maximizing opportunities for face-to-face interaction to the extent feasible given the evolving nature of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with CDC and state guidance for social distancing and limits on group sizes. As noted earlier in this plan, a detailed classroom and teaching laboratory analysis has been conducted using current 6-ft. social distancing guidelines to inform revisions and updates to the current schedule of classes. Class sizes, number of sections, and time slots balance face-to-face teaching and learning with available resources.

In order to ensure that students can safely attend class while maintaining 6-ft distancing (and wearing the required face masks), classrooms seating has been adjusted accordingly. There are several consequences to this change in capacity. This results in many courses only being able to accommodate about one-half of their enrolled students on a given day. In order to balance physical and scheduling constraints, UNE moved to a "hybrid instruction" model for fall 2020 and spring 2021 for undergraduate courses, which involves a mix of face-to-face and asynchronous online learning experiences. The hybrid model is a common teaching pedagogy which has been developed over the past 20 years.

1. **STRUCTURAL MODEL:** This plan is always subject to change based on the course of the COVID-19 pandemic. The current plan for the basic structural model that UNE followed for fall term and will continue to follow for spring term is as follows:
 - ▶ Most undergraduate courses follow a Monday-Wednesday or Tuesday-Thursday schedule (except for a small number of classes that already meet once a week or have other alternative formats).
 - ▶ Each class meets in a 90-minute block (80 minutes of instruction) on this schedule, and most teaching labs meet for 3 hours (two 90-minute blocks) as usual.
 - ▶ For course sections that cannot be accommodated in a single classroom due to the reduced capacity of the rooms with 6-ft distancing (which is the majority of sections even for small classes), each course or section has been split into two sub-groups. Each sub-group meets alternately on one of the two scheduled classes, i.e., Monday or Wednesday, or Tuesday or Thursday following a similar pedagogical model. The other half of the coursework is done online using various electronic resources (recorded lectures, readings, etc.) depending on the course and faculty preference.

- Likewise, most teaching labs have been split into two sub-groups. Each sub-group meets on alternate weeks, and the sub-group that is not meeting that week does lab work online (modeling, writing reports, data analysis, recorded demonstrations, etc.).

A group of faculty worked collaboratively with UNE's Center of Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) to develop a suite of hybrid teaching and learning approaches that individual faculty were able to choose from in modeling their course structure, depending on the discipline and level of the course, the style and preferences of the instructor, and the types of learning that can be adapted to remote teaching and learning. The most popular of these models is the so-called "flipped" classroom, where students do pre-work (reading a chapter, watching a recorded lecture, or other self-directed work prior to each section of a class) for the remote portion, and then engage in active learning (discussion, group work, etc.) based on that pre-work for the face-to-face portion.

However, there are many variations on the general hybrid model, and faculty have a range of options to choose from. Workshops, online resources, communities of practice, and other support and resources for development and refinement of their teaching and learning models within this basic framework have been and continue to be available for faculty. These approaches were either already in use or were developed in summer 2020 to allow faculty time to adjust their courses to this new format. Prior to the start of the term, students were also provided with information and guidance on these models and the expectations of the faculty as they adapt, including sessions during first-year orientation, and other similar sessions for returning students.

- 2. RECORDED CLASS SESSIONS:** In anticipation that some students may be temporarily unable to participate in face-to-face class sessions (due to illness or other reason), the faculty are required to record each of their face-to-face class sessions using Zoom and to make these recordings available to all students in Blackboard, the University's learning management system. This allows absent students to keep pace with their coursework through remote methodologies. The addition of the recorded class sessions to the asynchronous online materials essentially produces a full record of the course online, allowing students to stay in synch with the course. Faculty are also encouraged to consider alternative assignments for graded class activities that students miss and cannot replicate on their own. Students attending class in the normal face-to-face/hybrid modality are also able to refer to these recorded sessions for review and reinforcement of key material as part of their regular learning.

- 3. SUPPORT FOR ONLINE LEARNING:** We also recognize that some non-residential students may not have reliable internet service, live in environments that are not conducive to study, and/or require technology support to continue the online component of their education. To address these concerns, we are continuing our computer laptop loan program and provide designated spaces on campus for students to complete the online portions of their classes. This includes several proctored study halls on each campus, as well as individual small rooms that can be reserved by students to study, take an exam, meet by Zoom privately with an advisor or counselor, and for other specific student academic needs.
- 4. GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMS:** As noted earlier in the plan, many of the graduate and professional programs already had students on campus during summer 2020 using the basic hybrid instruction delivery model described above, with the larger classes broken into a series of smaller cohorts. The instructional plan for those programs and other graduate and professional programs that began in fall 2020 (and continue into spring 2021) were refined based on the experiences in these summer programs but also involve variations of the hybrid model based on room and scheduling constraints.

B. EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING (INCLUDING CLINICAL PRACTICA, INTERNSHIPS, SERVICE LEARNING AND RESEARCH)

Clinical practica/internships continue to be coordinated and managed at the individual program level, as these experiences occur at different types of health care facilities (e.g., acute care hospitals, nursing homes, outpatient clinics) and different locations throughout Maine and the United States. The curriculum in all of UNE's health sciences programs already includes content and skills training regarding the risks associated with being a health care provider and the protective measures to prevent transmission of infectious diseases (e.g., appropriate handwashing technique and the use of personal protective equipment) prior to these clinical experiences. Current information regarding the transmission of and protective measures to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 is included in this training.

Other types of internships in non-health care environments are coordinated and managed by the central advising office of the Student Advising Center, in collaboration with the specific internship and practicum coordination that occurs at the individual program level (e.g., the College of Arts and Sciences Internship Office for credit-bearing internships, the various Westbrook College of Health Professions programs for individual clinical rotations, etc.). The faculty and professional staff are responsible for ensuring that internship sites have the necessary health and safety measures in place before students are assigned to sites.

For the time being, service learning and volunteer activities shall continue remotely. When face-to-face experiences resume, the faculty and professional staff who oversee these experiences for UNE students will be responsible for ensuring the service learning/volunteer site has in place the necessary protective measures before placing a student at that site for face-to-face activities.

Like internships, clinical practica, and service learning/volunteer experiences, student research lies at the heart of the experiential component of the UNE educational experience. Our goal has been for students to return to research activities as soon as, and to the extent that is, reasonable. Most faculty have already developed detailed plans for resuming their research activities, including plans for incorporating students where applicable. Students are required to follow all research-related policies and training guidelines. Students who are completing thesis work or who are nearing graduation will have priority for participation in research. Wherever possible, scholarly projects that can be completed remotely are encouraged in order to minimize the number of individuals in research labs. In the case of students who conduct research in facilities outside of UNE or who have affiliation with another institution, consideration of policies and procedures at the outside institution are crucial factors in decisions to approve such experiences (See Section VI for more details about UNE's plan for resuming on-campus research and scholarship).

C. STUDY ABROAD

As of the date of publication, UNE tentatively plans to move forward with all normally scheduled study-abroad programs for the 2021 fall term (academic year 2021-22). These plans are subject to change if travel and residency conditions are not optimal for educational and cultural experiences. In that case, students will take their courses on our Maine campuses.

In the best interest of our students, during academic year 2020-21, UNE's fall and spring undergraduate semester-abroad programs in Spain, France, and Morocco as well as all of UNE's short-term travel programs and the Professional Science Master's in Ocean Food Systems program in Iceland were canceled due to unexpected viral surges and travel restrictions. The undergraduate semester abroad in Iceland, however, went forward as scheduled.

As part of the Office of Global Affairs' contingency plan, all students who signed up for study-abroad programs also registered for our Maine-based courses and on-campus housing, and therefore, students who were impacted by canceled programs abroad had their educational and housing needs met on our Maine campuses.

D. LIBRARY SERVICES

The mission of Library Services is to support students on different campus locations, abroad, at clinical sites, and online. As such, the vast majority of UNE library resources and services have been and will continue to be available by remote access.

The Biddeford and Portland campus libraries began implementing a phased return to campus approach in August 2020. This includes a mix of on-campus and remote student support. The resumption of in-person library services will occur as feasible in accordance with University guidance, CDC and state guidance, and information from local, state, and national organizations governing libraries, archives, and museum spaces.

For specifics on the libraries' policies and procedures during the phased-in return to normal operations, see [**UNE Library Services Plan and Requirements To Resume On-Campus Operations**](#).

E. TECHNOLOGY AND INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT

The professional staff in UNE's Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) and Information Technology Services (ITS) created a comprehensive array of resources for faculty and students regarding remote teaching and learning in spring 2020. These resources have continually been updated since that time and are now focused on providing support for faculty to implement the curriculum delivery plan outlined in Section III. A above. Additional support has been added in the form of a self-paced course on fully online course design, a companion site on hybrid course design, and workshops and resources on forms of blended instruction. ITS and CETL continue to provide virtual group tutorials, one-on-one consultations, drop-in help desk hours, etc., on topics ranging from assessment with virtual proctoring to effective use of Zoom. These sessions include valuable lessons learned from an extensive survey of faculty, professional staff, and students after the move to remote instruction spring of 2020.

IV. STUDENT LIFE

A. RESIDENTIAL HOUSING

The current plan is to maintain the on-campus residential experience for students, consistent with health and safety priorities. This plan is subject to change depending on the course of the COVID-19 pandemic. UNE adopted a double-occupancy model of residential housing and eliminated all triple-occupancy options. Lounges in some dorms were converted to double-occupancy rooms to accommodate the need for additional beds.

Hotel space was secured in the local community to accommodate students displaced by the need to reduce density in the traditional residence halls. As is the case in the on campus facilities, the hotel is staffed by resident advisors, and an area coordinator has been assigned to conduct office hours and serve as a liaison for students residing there. Shuttle service is provided to and from campus for students residing at the hotel. As noted in Section II. G. 8 above, a quarantine space has been designated in East Hall.

1. MOVE-IN PLAN: UNE adopted a plan for fall move-in, which reflected the shared guidance of the Offices of Housing and Residential/Commuter Life, Security, Facilities, and House-keeping. The plan limited the number of people assisting with the move-in of individual students (i.e., no more than one family member or friend per student) in order to minimize the number of people in the residence halls at any given time, and it utilized assigned move-in times. Students living within a reasonable driving distance of the Biddeford Campus were provided the opportunity to travel to campus in the weeks before the start of the fall semester to drop off belongings in the residence halls. A communication was sent to residential students in July detailing this process and providing the opportunity for families to make these arrangements. The Offices of Housing and Facilities also developed a system that allowed residents to request room set-ups in advance of their moving-in, eliminating the need for staff to complete this work while students were present.

2. RESIDENCE HALL CONDUCT PLAN: The University developed a comprehensive **COVID-19 Attestation and Community Care Requirements policy** for students to set conduct expectations in the residence halls, consistent with CDC and state guidance. The policy, which is reinforced to students via a required training module in Blackboard, includes requirements and guidelines on topics ranging from social distancing in lounges to the use of shared areas such as kitchens and laundry rooms. Guests, defined for this purpose as anyone who is not a resident of a Biddeford Campus residence hall (this includes commuting UNE students), are not permitted entrance. (The only exception was during move-in, when resident students were allowed to bring one family member or friend with them for

assistance. (See Section VII. for more details on visitor policies.) Enforcement follows a tiered approach, recognizing that early offenses should be approached in the spirit of education, with only repeat or more egregious offenses warranting punitive action.

B. ON-CAMPUS DINING

The University developed policies and procedures regarding the provision of food services in alignment with state and CDC guidelines. Parkhurst, the University's dining services vendor, works with a group of faculty and UNE professional staff to provide safe access to meals and snacks for students and employees in the main dining facilities and via the various satellite retail locations on both campuses. Parkhurst is also responsible for providing meals to any students in quarantine on campus.

C. STUDENT SUPPORT

All student support services transitioned to distance interactions in spring 2020, including the Professional Advising Center (academic and career), Student Academic Success Center (SASC, tutoring, and other academic support), the Student Access Center, Student Counseling Center, Student Health Center, Registrar, and Student Financial Services. Student guides for accessing these resources are posted on each resource's website, and there is a comprehensive guide to accessing all of these resources on the UNE COVID-19 website. The majority of these services continued to be available in fall 2020 through both face-to-face and remote options and will remain so in spring 2021. For any services that cannot be delivered through remote technology, professional staff have ensured their respective office areas are arranged to maintain social distancing and other appropriate precautionary measures.

1. COUNSELING CENTER: Professional staff in the Counseling Center provide the majority of sessions with students via Zoom. Protocols have been established for students who require face-to-face consultations, and physical adjustments have been made to office spaces to remain compliant with social distancing guidelines, while maintaining client confidentiality. Policies and procedures were also developed that address emergency mental health needs of students in crisis and that require face-to-face intervention. These policies and procedures outline a response that addresses student needs while also minimizing risk to Counseling, Health Services, Security, or Housing professional staff.

2. STUDENT ACCESS CENTER: The Student Access Center is conducting the majority of appointments via Zoom and is prepared to handle student requests for accommodations related to UNE's COVID-19 policies and protocols.

3. STUDENT AFFAIRS: All functions falling under the Division of Student Affairs, including Housing, Student Engagement, Health and Wellness Education, Student Conduct, Intercultural Student Engagement, the First Year Experience, and Graduate and Professional Student Affairs also transitioned to providing remote services in spring 2020 for individual students and undergraduate/graduate clubs and organizations. Zoom, email, and telephone remain the preferred methods for communication into the spring 2021 semester. To the extent possible, programming, typically administered in person and often to large groups, is proceeding remotely and in smaller, socially-distanced groups.

4. CLUBS AND ACTIVITIES: In spring of 2020, club and organization activity, as well as the social and educational programming coordinated by Student Affairs team members, was moved to the virtual environment. Much of this activity continues to occur via the use of Zoom, minimizing the need for in-person organizational meetings. To the extent possible, in compliance with state and CDC guidelines, UNE provides on-campus shared experiences for students. However, some traditional activities that brought together hundreds of community members have been modified or eliminated for health and safety reasons.

V. ATHLETICS, CLUB SPORTS, AND INTRAMURALS

Our primary goals for all our athletics and recreation planning are to offer the highest quality of student experience possible while balancing the health and safety of our students, athletics staff, and others in our community. In addition to our own deliberations, we are guided by recommendations from governmental agencies and professional organizations, including the National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA), the state and federal Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the **National Athletic Trainers Association (NATA)**, and the **National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA)**. We also work closely with our athletic conference, the Commonwealth Coast Conference (CCC). An Athletics COVID-19 Action Team has been established consisting of the director of Athletics, UNE's medical director, the NCAA compliance coordinator, the Faculty Athletics Representative, and representatives from Recreational Sports, Athletic Training, Strength and Conditioning, and Facilities Management, to oversee policies and procedures with respect to athletics. This group continues to make recommendations to the Provost and President regarding Athletics and related sports and recreation programs.

VARSITY SPORTS: The University is engaged in discussions with the presidents, medical professionals, and athletic directors of other universities and colleges throughout Maine and those in the CCC, and is monitoring the evolving guidance from the NCAA, CDC, and other regulatory bodies noted above to inform decisions regarding the resumption of varsity sports.

On July 17, 2020 the CCC announced that it suspended intercollegiate athletic conference competition for the fall 2020 semester. UNE suspended all fall semester athletic competition, including swimming and rugby, which are not part of the CCC.

On Jan. 20, 2021 the CCC announced that it suspended conference competition for winter sports for the 2020-21 season. The cancelation of conference competition applied to contests scheduled by the league office, including the conference championship.

Please note that student athletes did not lose their National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) eligibility as a result of these decisions. However, these decisions did not affect the process of required pre-participation forms and documentation. All student-athletes were required to complete the necessary NCAA Compliance/Athletic Training/Sports Information elements prior to engaging in sport-related activities.

Also note that because preseason for fall sports was canceled, all student-athletes returned to campus with the general student population. Because winter sport competition was suspended for the fall semester, all student-athletes left campus at the same time as the general student population in November. (See **Section I. A** for more information about modifications to UNE's academic calendar for 2020-21.) Even while intercollegiate competition was not possible, our coaches and athletics staff worked hard to ensure meaningful experiences for our athletic teams, including intrasquad scrimmages.

On March 3, the CCC announced its plan to return to conference competition for the spring 2021 season, beginning on March 27. Therefore, the sports of men's lacrosse, women's lacrosse, and softball will now exclusively compete against CCC institutions for a league schedule and championship season. Women's track and field and men's golf will also have access to their respective CCC championships when the time comes.

UNE remains committed to providing our student athletes with the best possible experiences in athletics, including training and practice opportunities, that comply with institutional policy, CDC, and state of Maine executive orders regarding safety protocols. Updated safety procedures include, but are not limited to, verification of daily symptom screenings, temperature checks, and other risk mitigation strategies.

CLUB SPORTS: UNE is reviewing all return-to-sport protocols, safety guidelines, and information from governing bodies. Activities will be amended to comply with social distancing and gathering size limitations.

INTRAMURAL ACTIVITIES: Intramural sport/activity programming is being assessed for the potential for COVID-19 transmission, and scheduled offerings will be adjusted as necessary. Activities will be amended to comply with social distancing and gathering size limitations. Examples of virtual and other activities that comply with social distance recommendations may include eSports, singles tennis, cornhole, badminton, singles pickleball, one-on-one basketball games such as HORSE, free throw and 3-point competitions, punt/pass/kick competition, disc golf, billiards, air hockey, scavenger hunts, etc.

VI. RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP

As a university with a high level of education-linked research and scholarship, virtually all of which involves students, discovery and the creation and application of new knowledge are core to UNE's mission. As noted in Section III. B above, research and scholarship is integral to the student experience at UNE. In response to COVID 19, on-campus and face-to-face research operations were initially largely closed down with the exception of essential functions and COVID-19 related work, as was the case across higher education institutions.

The phased return to on-campus research is underway via a rigorous review process overseen by the University's associate provost for Research and Scholarship (APRS) and the University Research Council. Given the diversity and complexity of research conducted at the University, specific plans are being developed for each research program and reviewed for compliance to best practice guidelines, e.g., for human subjects or vertebrate animal research. Other recommendations for travel and extramural funding processes during the COVID-19 pandemic are also in development. A key component of this process is timely communication with the UNE research community and outside research partners concerning changing regulatory policies (national and state) as well as UNE plans, policies, and protocols. This communication is facilitated via the [Office of Research and Scholarship blog](#).

A. ACCESS TO UNE RESEARCH FACILITIES

Research operations are following UNE's general health and safety plans and protocols (including, but not limited to, social distancing and use of PPE). This includes activities that are occurring on campuses as well as off-site (e.g., fieldwork, research vessels, and human subjects research sites). Access to research facilities is dependent upon the specific size of the research space, the number of individuals involved in the specific research activity, and the appropriate use of PPE as determined by consultation with UNE's Department of Environmental Health and Safety (EHS). These details will be outlined by the principal investigator (PI) of each research group as part of the approval process described below.

B. APPROVAL PROCESS

There is a three-part approval process to reopen a research program through the APRS: 1) Each investigator (faculty, professional staff, student) must provide documented completion of UNE's COVID-19 training; 2) Each research team/lab must submit a Resuming Research Activity Plan, providing details specific to the type of research to be conducted; and 3) Each research group must complete a safety plan/checklist as appropriate for its research facility, in consultation with EHS.

C. OFF-SITE FACILITIES INCLUDING FIELD WORK

Research activities conducted by members of the UNE community must comply with all policies, wherever they take place. Specific guidance relating to these activities will be provided by the APRS as Best Practice Guidelines. In some cases, additional guidelines must be considered, including policies of partner institutions or clinical research sites. These details must be included for review as part of the Resuming Research Activity Plan.

D. SITUATIONS WHEN SOCIAL DISTANCING IS NOT FEASIBLE

Some of the spaces in which research is conducted are not conducive to social distancing (e.g., research vessels and small laboratories). In these situations, plans are developed, in consultation with EHS and APRS, to employ appropriate PPE to minimize risk. These details must be included in the Resuming Research Activity Plan.

E. REMOTE WORK

As an ongoing guiding principle, all scholarly work that can be conducted remotely should be done in this manner.

VII. VISITORS (GUESTS) AND EVENTS – EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL

To avoid risks of potential exposure to COVID-19, UNE restricts outside visitors on its campuses, unless they have reason to be present for official business. The general public is not allowed in campus buildings or residence halls, the libraries, fitness centers, and dining areas; to attend lectures/athletic events or similar functions, or to visit friends in residences for daytime or overnight stays. (See Section IV. A. 2 for more details on the policy regarding guests in residence halls.)

Allowable exceptions to the restriction on visitors include pre-scheduled, approved visits of students' family, admissions tours, athletics recruitment visits, contractors, and other visitors conducting essential business with the University.

Beginning May 17, 2021, the University will gradually increase the types of activities allowed on our campuses. For example, Conference services will resume scheduling events for external groups in accordance with CDC and state guidance. Conference services will consider bookings where possible to utilize low traffic areas and will schedule events during off-peak hours to reduce density in campus spaces and mitigate the risk of exposure to COVID-19 for the UNE community. Signage has been placed throughout the campuses to inform the general public of temporarily restricted access to UNE facilities.

Admissions will resume group tours with limited access to campus facilities.

Internal student serving events, such as award ceremonies, inductions into honor societies, and professional student organizations will be coordinated for the college, department, or student group by Conference Services and the Office of Communications. Many events will be virtual, requiring advanced prep, set assembly, graphic design, and videography. Many internal events will be a combination of campus-based and virtual, often requiring live stream and social media components. Requests for planning internal virtual or live streamed events may be made to the Office of Communications. Beginning May 17, 2021, the University will allow some Internal In-person events. Requests to hold such events should be made through Vice President for University Operations Alan Thibeault.

VIII. COMMUNICATION PLAN

Ongoing timely, transparent, clear, and accessible communication is critical to the success of this resumption of on-campus operations plan. In this context, our guiding principle is that we cannot over-communicate, particularly when implementing a plan of this scale, and we recognize that all stakeholders need to be “on the same page” with expectations. Communication therefore involves multiple platforms and approaches, and the University’s existing communication infrastructure to support this plan is robust.

A. EMAIL

All members of the UNE community are expected to regularly check their email for all University-related business, including the regular and ongoing updates about the pandemic.

B. UNE WEBSITE

Timely updates are posted on the [UNE COVID-19 website](#).

C. EMERGENCY ALERTS

Students, faculty, and professional staff are expected to register their phones through U-online in order to receive emergency alerts sent from UNE’s Office of Security.

D. SOCIAL MEDIA

For those community members who use social media, updates and news will be communicated through the University’s Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter accounts.

E. SIGNAGE

The use of extensive signage across the campuses has already been discussed in other parts of this plan.

F. DEPARTMENTAL/UNIT UPDATES

To ensure that communications reach intended audiences, unit supervisors are also asked to share updates with the faculty and professional staff in their respective areas.

G. STALL STREET JOURNAL

Featured in restrooms across both campuses, the *Stall Street Journal* is a remarkably effective communication tool for messages about health and wellness and will be used to communicate messaging on staying well, symptom-monitoring, the value of social distancing, etc.

H. ADDITIONAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

In addition to these venues and platforms, there are additional communication strategies to reach students and their families (as applicable).

- 1. NAVIGATE APP:** Beginning last year, all incoming undergraduate students have been strongly encouraged to download the “Navigate” communication app (a function of UNE’s Education Advisory Board subscription) to their phones, which provides a “real-time” mechanism to push notices out to students. Adoption to date has been strong among first- and second-year students.
- 2. PARENT EMAIL:** Student Affairs is in the process of updating its parent email list for undergraduates so that, when appropriate, we can share messages with families. In residence halls, resident advisors (RAs) and area coordinators (ACs) will also help to spread information to that population.
- 3. COMMUNICATIONS TO STUDENTS ABROAD:** For those students who are able to travel abroad, the Office of Global Affairs, which maintains regular contact with students traveling for semesters abroad, will serve as a significant purveyor of information to students while away. Staff in the office will also serve as a point of contact for the faculty who lead study abroad courses.
- 4. BLACKBOARD:** The University’s learning management system, Blackboard, is an additional faculty-to-student communication tool.

IX. REFLECTIONS

This plan for resumption of on-campus operations at the University of New England in fall 2020 and the continuation of on-campus operations thereafter reflects the collective and collaborative efforts of faculty, professional staff, and administrators across UNE's colleges and operational support units. We believe the underlying theme throughout this report reflects our student-centric approach to everything we do. The health and safety of our community resonates throughout this plan and, in many cases, reflects precautions that exceed CDC guidelines. We pride ourselves on our "can do" positive attitude, our innovative thinking and creative problem-solving, and the ability to pivot quickly in the face of rapidly shifting environmental and regulatory conditions. We are confident that each member of the UNE community will contribute to making our journey forward as seamless and successful as possible.