



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

July 10, 2020

Dear UNE Community,

In early May, I wrote to inform you of UNE's plan to resume on-campus operations and to welcome students back for the fall 2020 semester. We made this commitment early because we wanted our students to know that we were dedicated to the work of bringing them back to the campuses they love to get the world-class education in which they have invested. We also wanted to give ourselves as much time as possible to make the myriad adjustments needed to ensure that our campuses will be as safe as possible. Our mission, to provide our students with the tools to thrive in a rapidly changing world, could not be more relevant than it is today. As such, I am pleased to present **the University's plan for resuming on-campus operations for Academic Year 2020-21**.

This plan, known as UNE Onward, is a living document. It is designed to evolve as circumstances around the novel coronavirus pandemic change and will be updated regularly. It expands on a state-wide framework for opening Maine's higher education institutions: **Sustaining Higher Education and Sustaining Maine: A Framework for Reopening Maine's Colleges and Universities in Fall 2020**. This framework document, developed in collaboration with all of Maine's private colleges, the University of Maine System, and the community college system, was created with guidance from leading health experts at the state and national levels, relevant governmental agencies, and UNE's own exceptional scientists, health care professionals, and public health experts.

UNE's plan is informed by several other resources, 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 developing science on COVID-19, and emerging best practices in higher education. Some of the policies and practices we are implementing are more stringent than those recommended by the aforementioned agencies, out of an abundance of caution for our community.

UNE's plan makes clear that our highest priority is maintaining the health and safety of our students, faculty, and professional staff. In order to mitigate spread of the coronavirus and to foster a sense of safety for all members of the UNE community, we have committed to a four-tiered testing program

that will include initial broad-based entry testing of all undergraduate students, ongoing symptomatic testing, focused surveillance testing of certain asymptomatic individuals, and testing of wastewater emerging from each residence hall.

Additionally, all undergraduate students will be required to bring evidence of a negative COVID-19 test taken within 72 hours of their arrival to campus and will be tested again shortly thereafter. This testing strategy is made possible through partnerships with the Broad Institute in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and MaineHealth's NorDx Laboratories.

To facilitate safe instruction of courses, UNE will be moving to a "hybrid instruction" model for fall 2020 for undergraduate courses, involving a mix of face-to-face and asynchronous online learning experiences.

While we have developed comprehensive plans to reduce the threats posed by the virus as much as possible, we must recognize that conditions in Maine, the region, and the nation continue to evolve and that our community cannot completely eliminate risks associated with the virus until an effective vaccine is available. Our institution, with its diverse array of programs that draw students from all walks of life, cannot completely isolate itself from the larger world. This being the case, UNE's plan is designed to be flexible to changing circumstances, allowing us to quickly pivot as needed.

The University has already found success in welcoming graduate and professional students back to our campuses this summer in both Portland and Biddeford. Likewise, faculty with research laboratories began returning to campus in June and will continue to do so throughout the summer months. What we have learned from the successful experiences of 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, as well as various administrative offices, will allow us to further refine this plan in advance of the new and returning undergraduate and graduate students in fall 2020.

This plan is the culmination of work performed by a group of administrators, faculty, and professional staff who have been working diligently since early April. The group remains engaged in updating and implementing the plan as we move forward toward our further resumption of additional operations in the fall.

We know some of the decisions we have made may need to be revisited and revised in the future and that there are questions yet to answer. We will continue to update this plan throughout the summer months and beyond, consistent with the evolving information from government agencies, the scientific literature, the higher education community, and the shifting conditions in our surrounding communities.

I encourage you to review the UNE Onward plan in its entirety at une.edu/onward.

May you all be well, and I look forward to seeing you this fall.

Sincerely,

James D. Herbert
President