



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

May 05, 2021

Dear UNE Community,

As we move closer to the end of the spring semester, concluding a successful academic year in the face of a global pandemic, I am writing with an important update to UNE's COVID-19 health and safety protocols.

After careful consideration and consultation with UNE's medical and public health experts, the COVID-19 Response Committee, legal experts, and the student, faculty, and professional staff governing bodies, **the University will require all students enrolled in classes on our campuses and all on-campus employees to be vaccinated for COVID-19 before the start of the fall 2021 semester.** We are learning more every day about the effectiveness of the COVID-19 vaccines in protecting us from serious illness, hospitalization, and death from the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus, as well as the vaccines' ability to prevent transmission of the virus to others. As vaccines become increasingly available, we can all envision how this incredible scientific advancement will allow us to return to the normal UNE activities on our campuses we all miss so much.

The University will allow for religious and medical exemptions to the policy for both students and employees, although vaccination may still be required for specific clinical and academic programs and activities. In order to protect the health and safety of the UNE community, vaccination will also be required to participate in certain voluntary activities and programs. Additional information will be forthcoming about the steps required to request an exemption from the COVID-19 vaccine requirement. Please note that those who are granted an exemption will be required to wear masks while on campus in order to help ensure a safe campus community.

These exemptions only apply to the COVID-19 vaccines. Note that a new Maine law, effective September 1, 2021, eliminates exemptions for students for the vaccines against diphtheria, measles, mumps, rubella and tetanus, which will be required.

In the coming weeks, the COVID-19 Response Committee will carefully evaluate all aspect of the UNE Onward Plan and, with guidance from the federal and Maine CDCs, will update UNE's health and safety protocols over the course of the spring and summer. While some safety measures may continue, we intend to provide a fall semester that is as close to normal as possible, with the goal of full occupancy in our classrooms, residence halls, and labs. But we can only achieve this vision if the vast majority of our community is vaccinated.

UNE is also working with the Maine CDC to hold vaccine clinics on campus for students and employees. The University will hold its first clinic for students from May 5 to May 7 on the Biddeford Campus and will invite employees to be vaccinated if extra vaccine is available.

Since the beginning of the pandemic in March of 2020, I have watched our students, faculty, and professional staff demonstrate deep commitment to their work while making incredible sacrifices. I have been especially saddened by what our students have lost, and I am eager to restore the full and vibrant experience of a UNE education as soon as possible. I encourage all students, faculty, and professional staff to take advantage of the many vaccination opportunities here in Maine or in your home state as soon as possible. Please consult the UNE Onward site for further information if you need assistance locating a vaccination site.

Thank you for all you have done to protect one another and to further our mission during this challenging time.

Sincerely,

James D. Herbert
President