



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

June 16, 2021

Dear UNE Community,

Thanks to your hard work and commitment, the University is moving forward into a new phase of our COVID-19 response plan. Like all of you, I am thrilled to watch our world gradually start to look more like it did before March of 2020. Incredibly effective vaccines have made it possible for us to spend time with friends and loved ones, to feel safer going to stores and restaurants, and to travel.

With COVID restrictions being lifted nationwide and in our own state, we believe it is safe to move forward with similar changes on our campuses. In doing so, we will be guided, as we have been throughout the past year, by recommendations from the federal CDC, Maine CDC, and UNE's own medical and public health experts. At the same time, we will remain vigilant as our highest priority continues to be the health and safety of the University's students, faculty, and professional staff. We also remain committed to providing timely, clear, and effective communication as we begin to relax the protocols we have all adhered to since last spring.

MASKING

With the evidence that vaccines are highly effective in preventing illness and the spread of COVID-19, effective immediately, students and employees who have uploaded their vaccine information and who are fully vaccinated no longer have to wear a mask indoors on our campuses. Those who are not yet fully vaccinated will continue to be required to wear a mask indoors. Masking for all individuals, including those who are fully vaccinated, will still be required in specific situations, such as clinical labs, with those protocols determined by academic units. Faculty who are teaching over the summer, and who wish to do so, can reach out to Student Health Services to confirm the vaccination status of the students in their individual classes.

CAMPUS REINTEGRATION

The public health crisis caused by the pandemic required us to reduce the number of people on our campuses to keep our community safe. I am excited to welcome **all employees back to campus by August 16**, with many employees returning sooner, depending on the needs of their specific units. This is the same date by which all employees and students must be fully vaccinated and when we will resume normal campus operations, including full density in classrooms and residence halls.

Those of you who were asked to pivot to remote work did so while continuing to serve the University with as much enthusiasm and commitment as you previously did from your offices, and I am grateful for your flexibility and perseverance. Over the course of the past 15 months, we have learned a great deal about remote work and the ways in which, for some positions, it can be beneficial. To that end, the Office of Human Resources will embark on a process over the next nine months to carefully evaluate all positions at UNE to determine which ones may lend themselves to hybrid or remote work opportunities. This will be an extensive process developed in collaboration with senior leaders, deans, and managers using clearly defined and transparent criteria. This measured approach is critical to ensuring that such policies are implemented equitably while keeping the needs of our students central to decision-making.

ONWARD PLAN

Throughout the pandemic, UNE has maintained the UNE **Onward Plan**, making frequent updates to reflect the evolving science and ever-changing public health guidance and mandates. In the coming days, we will launch an updated version of the UNE Onward website with streamlined information about the University's current pandemic-related protocols, including our vaccine requirements and exemptions, masking, and visitor policies. Please continue to refer to that website for ongoing updates and FAQs. We will also continue the onward@une.edu address as a central point of contact for questions you may have about the updated plan.

Thank you all again for your hard work and commitment to UNE. Your collective efforts have positioned our community well for continued success. I look forward to seeing you on our campuses this summer and fall.

Sincerely,

James D. Herbert
President