

## Retrievers Return Roadmap



### FALL PLANNING COORDINATING COMMITTEE REPORT TO CAMPUS

We are writing to update you on preparations for the fall semester. UMBC is beginning to transition from fully remote operations to limited on-campus activity, including some in-person classes, reduced occupancy in residence halls, and a phased return to research and creative activity. More than 150 faculty, staff, and students are planning this transition through five working groups guided by the Fall Planning Coordinating Committee:

- Academics
- Students, Health, and Well-being
- Research and Creative Achievement
- Events, Activities, and Community Engagement
- Operations

With the health and safety of the campus and our surrounding communities at the forefront, UMBC's plan to gradually re-open the campus is grounded in the best scientific information available about the COVID-19 pandemic and necessary public health precautions. Protocols for transmission prevention, symptom monitoring, and management of the inevitable COVID-19 cases that will occur in any public environment are prerequisites to implementing any level of fall return to the campus.

While our work through the pandemic takes place in varying modes and spaces, we are determined to deepen our culture of inclusive excellence and provide supportive communities for teaching and learning, student life, research and creative achievement, and community engagement. Our working groups are giving special attention to diversity, equity, and inclusion goals, with the understanding that the particular access and support we need to provide for one person or group may be different from that needed by others. And we will be requiring all students, faculty, and staff to take shared responsibility for supporting the health of our community.

It is important to note that the specific fall plans below are based on current knowledge and key assumptions about what is possible. We must all be prepared for plans to evolve as the environment changes.

Recognizing that many students and families are facing financial challenges at this time, we are pleased to announce there will be no increases in rates for tuition, fees, and room and board for the coming year, an action approved today by the University System of Maryland Board of Regents.

If you have thoughts or questions to share with the Fall Planning Coordinating Committee, please email [covid19@umbc.edu](mailto:covid19@umbc.edu) and plan to attend one of these upcoming town hall meetings.

### ACADEMICS

The [fall 2020 academic calendar](#) remains unchanged; the first day of classes is August 27. Following the Thanksgiving break, all classes will continue online only and residence halls will be closed.

Most courses will continue to meet fully online during the fall semester. Approximately 10 percent of courses will meet either in person on campus or in a hybrid format consisting of a combination of some in-person meetings and online delivery. **A list of in-person and hybrid classes scheduled this fall can be found [here](#).** Students taking a research course or research independent study (e.g., 499, 699, 799, 899 courses) should consult with their faculty mentor as to how in-person experiences (if any) will be arranged. UMBC Shady Grove students will receive additional information on their courses in the coming weeks.

Academic departments and programs identified courses for in-person or hybrid delivery with two goals in mind:

- Courses required for the major necessary to keep students on track for academic progression and degree completion, including but not limited to courses requiring special spaces or facilities, courses for students needing to complete a research or creative activity project involving in-person work, and courses in which a prototype or artistic creation must be produced in person on campus to achieve learning outcomes.
- Courses designed to build tangible connections between new students and the campus.

In addition to meeting these instructional criteria, all courses approved for in-person or hybrid delivery have passed a rigorous health and safety risk assessment review to ensure that appropriate physical distancing and sanitation measures can be, and are, implemented.

All students who return to campus will be required to sign a Retriever Community Agreement prior to returning in order to help ensure that there is a strong commitment to meet the COVID-19 health and safety response standards in effect at UMBC.

Following spring semester disruptions that required faculty to convert classes to online delivery in a matter of days, more than 250 faculty have prepared for fall online teaching with PIVOT (Planning Instructional Variety for Online Teaching) training and are continuing to work together this summer to share best practices.

The [Academic Success Center \(ASC\)](#) and the [Office for Academic and Pre-Professional Advising \(OAPA\)](#) also continue to be fully accessible virtually and have expanded their work to meet the needs of undergraduate students learning from varied locations. Services and supports provided by the ASC are available to all undergraduate students at no additional cost and include peer tutoring, supplemental instruction, peer-assisted study sessions, and academic policy support. In addition, Academic Advocates work one-on-one with students who need support navigating academic and institutional challenges that may adversely affect their persistence, progression and timely completion of degree. No matter how complex the concerns, Academic Advocates will work together with students to review their progress, present options toward graduation, map out a plan for success, and facilitate communication and connections with the appropriate campus resources.

Virtual applied learning and career development experiences will be available this fall through academic programs, the Shriver Center, the Career Center, and other offices. [The Shriver Center](#), in collaboration with our community-based partners and academic departments, will

be ready to offer a variety of safe and approved service-learning and community engagement experiences to address racial and social inequities. The Career Center is available to connect students with a wide variety of opportunities to develop their career paths. The Career Center will host a large-scale virtual career and internship fair in September and will provide numerous information sessions and programs throughout the semester, including opportunities to connect with UMBC alumni. Incoming and current students are also encouraged to participate in the Career Center's ongoing summer programming, including the Summer Career Launch Series.

To help ensure students are equipped for academic success, UMBC requires all undergraduate and graduate students to be technologically self-sufficient. Minimally, this requires students to have a reliable personal computer (preferably a laptop) and internet access. To assist students in preparing for these essential IT needs, the Division of Information Technology (DoIT) provides a wealth of resources and support. Financial aid can be used to purchase computer equipment needed to meet these requirements. Students with questions are encouraged to contact their financial aid counselor.

## **STUDENTS, HEALTH, AND WELL-BEING**

Student engagement and a sense of belonging to the campus community are vital to student success and well-being. To meet the needs of students learning and living in multiple locations this fall, Campus Life staff, campus partners, and student leaders are creating events for the fall semester that follow physical distancing guidelines and are accessible from anywhere and everywhere. In September, our annual Welcome Week will help incoming students make connections through a series of virtual and hybrid events, and Involvement Fest will provide an opportunity for students to learn about UMBC's more than 270 student organizations.

At this time, physical distancing and reduced density remain the most effective ways to reduce transmission and outbreaks of COVID-19. Residential Life is implementing this best practice, making adjustments to our physical spaces as well as to our policies and student expectations for the fall semester. In order to reduce density in our communities, only one student will be assigned per bedroom. This means that we will not be able to house all students who completed a license and deposit for the academic semester.

Residential Life staff are working with university partners, including student leaders, to identify criteria for students to be offered the opportunity to complete a new housing license for the fall semester only. (Residential Life will provide information about securing spring semester housing in mid-October.) Our goal is to make housing available to students who must be present to participate in on-campus instruction and are unable to commute. Residential Life staff will continue to work closely with academic colleagues to identify and prioritize students enrolled in in-person classes during the fall semester. Additional criteria for housing assignments will be outlined in greater detail in a communication next week from Residential Life.

Current resident students and incoming students who have applied to live on campus will receive an email the week of June 22 with additional details. Students who have licensed with Walker Avenue Apartments should expect updates and additional information by July 1.

More information on housing and health and safety expectations for students in Residential Life facilities is available [here](#).

## **RESEARCH AND CREATIVE ACHIEVEMENT**

The Research and Creative Achievement (RCA) community launched a phased return to campus effective on June 15. The RCA Exception Team has approved 145 requests from faculty labs and facilities which underwent risk assessment and a thorough review of physical distancing protocols. The approved requests will bring 128 faculty, 48 staff, 176 graduate students, and 20 undergraduate students back to campus safely. All researchers completed online COVID-19 health and safety training. During this Phase 1 mode, approximately 15 percent of the RCA community will return to campus. The experience with Phase 1 implementation and public health conditions will determine whether or when the campus transitions to Phase 2, which would permit increased activity and density.

## **EVENTS, ACTIVITIES, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The Events, Activities, and Community Engagement Working Group is developing guidance to inform how campus groups might host extracurricular, social, and athletics/recreational events and activities both on and off campus in the next academic year. This guidance will evaluate and respond to evolving health and safety conditions. Currently, the working group has developed an inventory of programmable spaces and is developing safety protocols for spaces. Given a limited number of safe spaces that can accommodate physical distancing, the group is developing a process to safely and effectively manage event requests for these spaces. The group is also working on guidance and tools for groups to host events online. Finally, a multi-phase plan is being developed to support the gradual and safe return of UMBC student athletes and to determine the conditions necessary for student athletes to resume practice and competition. The group expects to be able to share further details in July as conditions evolve.

## **OPERATIONS**

Most employees will continue to work remotely this fall. UMBC is developing a careful, multi-phase plan for return to on-campus work that will be released the week of June 22. This plan, designed to support the well-being of employees and the safety of the work environment, will address guidance for bringing limited numbers of employees back to campus. This process will include alternative work schedules, physical distancing and hygiene, safety policies, and self-monitoring of health. In addition, some departments will have specific physical distancing measures developed in consultation with Facilities Management and Environmental Safety and Health. The Department of Human Resources is available to assist supervisors, managers, and campus leaders as they work through processes for the gradual transition of employees from remote work back to campus.

## **FURTHER INFORMATION AND SUPPORT**

As the work of the Fall Planning Coordinating Committee and the five working groups continues through the summer and into the fall, we will share further information with the campus.

We know this is a time of uncertainty and stress in our community and throughout the

nation. To stay up to date with fall plans and support available for students, faculty, and staff, please visit the [Retrievers Return Roadmap website](#).

We deeply appreciate all you do for our community. We also want to make sure that you take time this summer to step away from UMBC studies and responsibilities to rest and enjoy personal pursuits—while staying home as much as possible.

*President Freeman Hrabowski and Provost Philip Rous*