

President's Town Hall June 16, 2020: Questions and Answers

PPE

Where is the temperature station? *UMES will be providing disposable thermometers to all staff and faculty for self monitoring and self-reporting. Infrared thermometers will be in all residence halls and departments.*

What kinds of PPE will be provided to the faculty and the students following their return? *There is a slide in the President's presentation that shows all PPE in-house currently and that on order as of today (6.16.20). All faculty, staff and students will receive two re-usable masks to be worn and washed. (Currently on order.)*

Will staff/department be provided with masks? *Every student, faculty and staff member will be provided two cloth masks. Some areas may require different kinds and/or face shields. Whichever is needed, they can be provided.*

Will everyone get the plexiglass around their desk area? *Not automatically. It can be requested via work order from Physical Plant.*

Will hand sanitizer stations be put into each office and at the entrance? *Several sanitizing stations will be on each floor of each building. Disinfecting wipes are also being made available.*

Are you going to clean and sanitize each classroom after each class session? *Sanitizing wipes and gloves will be provided for each classroom.*

Are we certain that the EPA cleaning guidelines are appropriate for laboratory environments? *I am very concerned about the possibility of unintended reactions between cleaning agents (especially those containing chlorine, bromine, chloride or bromide and residual chemicals which may be left by student error. Such unintended side reactions could have severe consequences. If certain labs have specific requirements due to chemicals used, PIs should contact Physical Plant to alert them.*

Restrooms – are one of hardest areas to keep clean. Even in normal environment we do have problem with restrooms, often lack of supplies and very dirty bathrooms afternoon every day. Now, when we actually need to disinfect those bathrooms, I believe, every hour, what measures will be taken to keep it safe? *Additional housekeeping shifts will be added and logs will be kept to make sure restrooms are clean.*

Will staff/department be provided (or permitted to purchase bottles of hand sanitizer with state budget) for their desks? *PPE will be distributed to those who need it.*

Will staff/department be provided with Lysol disinfectant spray or sanitizing wipes? *Yes, upon request.*

Who will be wiping down desks, etc. following each class? *We ask that everyone be responsible and wipe down surfaces that have been touched/used during classroom/lab time. Housekeeping will still clean all spaces daily with enhanced cleaning protocols in place. Disinfecting wipes and gloves will be available for each classroom/lab space.*

Do we know if we will have extra cleaning shifts? *Two shifts of extra cleaning will take place between 7 am and 10 pm.*

Restrooms will be checked and cleaned hourly. Cleaning checklists will be in place and logs will be kept for each area.

PHYSICAL PROTOCOLS

To have students in our current size classrooms keeping social distances, we will have to reduce session capacity at least twice for lectures, which will create a need of more faculty to teach those sections. Isn't it easier to have classes running on zoom or collaborate, and only labs and hand on classes that cannot be delivered that way – to have physically on campus?

Zoom technology is available and most classrooms will be equipped with a webcam and recording technology. Some classes may remain fully remote, while others may be hybrid on in-person following CDC guidelines.

Who will keep the stairwell and railings clean? Will there be gloves given out for people that only use the stairs? Some people need to hold onto the railing. *Housekeeping will regularly clean common areas. Gloves will be available to anyone who needs them.*

Will there be one entrance used for going in and out of a building? *Yes, in some locations signage will be used to direct people.*

Will our work shifts be split up? Will we need to be at the office 5 days a week or for the full 8 hours? *If physical distancing measures are not possible, supervisors are able to work out plans to allow for some staff to work remotely some days. This should be a written plan and pre-authorized by the vice president overseeing the area.*

Elevator usage in the buildings--will there be a limitation in the number of individuals using the elevator at a time? If yes, how will that be monitored? *New rules for elevators? Signs will be posted to remind the campus to maintain physical distancing.*

Will communal areas, like libraries, remain closed? *The library and computer labs will not be closed but physical distancing will be used. Some furniture may be removed to keep people from congregating in one location.*

TECHNOLOGY

Will IT be remote? If we need to resolve issues with our laptops/computers, software, will it be on a 1:1 basis with the IT personnel? *IT will have a campus presence serving faculty, staff and students through Plexiglass and following all protocols.*

Are there procedures in place for some administrative paperwork that requires several signatures to be processed expeditiously if we prefer to transition to an online system for most of the administrative paperwork this summer and fall? *We are explain electronic signature software licensing agreements to allow for many documents to be signed electronically, including faculty contracts.*

New academic digital technologies: All classroom technology has been assessed, upgraded and additional purchases made to aid in physical distancing in instruction for on demand recorded lectures, paperless processing and working semi-remotely:

- Eduroam – Access USM networks with UMES ID login credentials
- Expand virtualization 1
- Faculty computers 150
- Staff computers 100
- Student Chromebooks 50
- Chromebook software 50
- Document cameras 110
- Camera locks 110
- Backup classroom projectors 10
- Microsoft LifeCam 50

NEW PROCESS IN PLACE

What about parking permits? Will we have to stand in line to get them? *Parking permits are moving to an online process for payment and will be delivered via inter-office mail.*

Are there procedures in place for some administrative paperwork that requires several signatures to be processed expeditiously if we prefer to transition to an online system for most of the administrative paperwork this summer and fall? *We are using DocuSign and elloSign in some areas; we are working to expand further across campus as we work both on campus and remotely. Faculty contracts will be all processed online.*

Will the departmental, school-wide, and campus-wide meetings be held on virtual platforms? *Large meetings will need to remain on online platforms to keep to CDC guidelines and remain physically distanced. Some smaller meetings may take place in person if a large enough room is available to allow for 6 feet spacing. As always, everyone should wear masks in public areas.*

RESEARCH

When can we get back to research? *Researchers may come to work on campus as long as they follow CDC Guidelines for physical distancing, frequent handwashing and mask wearing in public locations. See "Research Return Plan" by Dr. Lakeisha Harris for details.*

What about labs where physical distancing is not possible? *Chairs and faculty are planning for a hybrid model where students attend lab in person 1 hour per week (labs are scheduled for 2 (non-majors) or 3 (majors) hours per week, so this would permit social distancing and complete the lab work through Blackboard postings or double the number of lab sessions offered to reduce enrollment.*

ACADEMIC CONSIDERATIONS

What will we do about students who are dual-enrolled at UMES and elsewhere? What about clinical rotations? What about internship/experiential learning components or student teaching?

Chairs, program directors, individual faculty members will be working together to find accommodations for courses that require interactions with external community members

K-12 school districts are still working on plans for Fall 2020; faculty may have to rely on videos if observations are required for courses; student teachers may have to continue with partial online work, as well as in-person attendance. Clinical components/intern & externships will need to be adjusted in accordance with each external site.

Most sites are continuing to be flexible as to how required experiences are achieved, but this varies from site to site.

Accrediting bodies vary with acceptance of alternative experiences. Chairs and Directors must continue to check with accreditors to ensure students will be able to use varying methods as legitimate means of achieving requirements.

Provost is working with SU Provost to arrange accommodations for different academic schedules in Fall 2020. Provost is working with Program Directors of all shared programs (UMCP, UMBC, others) to arrange for accommodations.

If students need to stay on campus (if they are in residence) after Thanksgiving, they will be able to do so. (This number is small.)

Instructors, program directors, and Academic Affairs will work with the Registrar to be as flexible as possible regarding assignments, grading, and other course-specific issues in shared programs.

Are there classroom capacity issues to maintain physical distance? Chairs and Deans have a copy of updated (6/2020) UMES classroom inventory. They will be working with their department faculty to examine where their classes are currently scheduled and compare with projected enrollments to see if space will accommodate social distancing

Provost is working with Facilities to remove chairs/desks from each classroom so that each room has physically-distanced seating capacity already in place. Where a room will not accommodate the class capacity, chairs and faculty will work with deans and building managers of all campus spaces to find alternative sites;

If another room is not possible, faculty will develop an A/B schedule – half the class attends in person, the other via distance – or consider moving to remote instruction. Stairwells will be established as either up or down to minimize student contact between classes.

Chairs are working with their department faculty to prioritize classes that need to be in-person (e.g. labs, art and music lessons, highly interactive courses) and those that are more easily accommodated by distance learning, if needed.

Are we really expecting all students to be on campus in the fall? Students are expected to be on campus for the Fall 2020. However, there are a number of mitigating circumstances:

- ADA accommodation makes it necessary to attend classes remotely*
- Family vulnerability may create a condition in which a student will remain at home but attend class remotely*
- Students who are in isolation or quarantine will attend classes remotely from their residential places of isolation or quarantine*

- *If a faculty member is teaching remotely out of necessity or the course is already scheduled to be online, students will attend class remotely.*

Some faculty plan to teach most of the lecture classes online this fall, but would like to make sure students are present for the active learning components as well as tests and exams (such an arrangement may mitigate possible infections while making sure the integrity of the assessment processes are maintained), how can we facilitate these kinds of arrangements? *All Department Chairs and their Deans met with the Provost, Vice Provost, and the Directors of the Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) and the Center for Instructional Technologies and Online Learning (CITOL) on Friday, June 12, 2020.*

We agreed that Department Chairs needed to work with faculty members to determine the best way to accommodate safety protocols (e.g. social distancing) while at the same time offer excellent learning opportunities.

Many variations (like the one above – some on ground (in-person), some online) are possible and will be acceptable, as long as each are planned for and make arrangements for appropriate contact hours, viable assessments, and so on.

The CTE and CITOL will continue to offer excellent faculty development opportunities available online and all through the summer so that faculty can create excellent learning plans that best accommodate students' learning needs, as well as students' and faculty members' safety.

Next steps of Fall 2020 academic program development for Chairs, Deans, and Faculty.

Chairs hold department meeting to explain the workings of preparation for and implementation of Fall 2020 semester. Chairs to ask faculty to take inventory of their teaching tools and work with them to contact IT, CITOL, and CTE for appropriate resolution.

Chairs work with all faculty members in department to examine spaces scheduled for class to determine that social distancing can occur within CDC guidelines (6 feet apart) and work with faculty members to create specific plans for alternative course completion if assigned space is not adequate (e.g. alternative days of attendance, new space, all remote).

Chairs and Deans will work with CITOL, CTE, and IT to ensure that all classes will be live streamed and/or recorded. All faculty should develop parallel course structure for each course that is not already fully online so that continuous instruction is ensured (e.g. hybrid or hyflex).

All faculty develop course syllabi that reflect necessary language, as per ADA and USM policies.

Chairs and faculty develop protocols, to be placed on syllabi, that explain in detail what students need to do and what faculty will do if and when a student becomes sick.

Chairs and Deans check-in with each faculty member to ensure that all of the above is complete and to help complete where necessary.

Will there be new nine-month faculty contracts to reflect the semester change dates?

New language will be inserted into all faculty contracts to address the semester shift.

As a result of Covid-19 and in the interest of the health and safety of all students, faculty, and staff, the UMES Fall 2020 Academic Calendar has been modified in order to accommodate an early conclusion prior to Thanksgiving.

Faculty academic year contracts for nine-month employees will commence on Monday, August 3, 2020 and end on May 22, 2021. Due to the earlier appointment term as set forth, this contract includes compensation of non-negotiable paid time off from December 3, 2020 through December 23, 2020 with no requirement of duties by faculty on behalf of UMES.

HUMAN RESOURCE ISSUES

What if I or someone I care for is at high risk of complications from COVID-19? *If you need special accommodations because you yourself have a documented disability, the Office of Institutional Equity will address your claim per the June 11 email sent to faculty and staff. If you require temporary accommodations for another reason, childcare issues, caregivers, etc... Please reach out to Human Resource. See also Guidance from USM on the web site www.umes.edu/RTC. Supervisors may also make arrangements for telework or flex-work schedules based on the number of staff in an area or special request.*