

July 30, 2020

To the campus community,

The University System of Maryland (USM) recently announced its expectations with regard to COVID-19 testing of students and all employees as the semester begins, along with other guidelines as we return for the fall semester (Read it at [this link](#)).

While the plans we have in place are compliant with most of these expectations, the requirement for COVID testing of all students and employees with the beginning of the semester is a major revision to our plan.

We have known for some time that we faced challenges regarding widespread testing, as our region still has no ongoing COVID testing sites for those without a doctor's order. USM is aware of this issue, and we are in the process of working with the School of Medicine at the University of Maryland Baltimore to set up large-scale testing for our students and employees with a relatively quick turnaround for results.

We will provide more information about this process by next week's midweek update, if not before.

In addition, as you may have seen in local media, we are finalizing plans for ongoing surveillance testing of those without symptoms that will occur throughout the semester. This testing will be handled by an outside vendor. Test samples will be collected on campus with logistical support from FSU and funded by Allegany County.

The tests for asymptomatic people will be provided free of charge to students and employees, both the tests at the beginning of the semester and the surveillance testing during the semester.

USM is taking this action, decided at this late date, in response to the recent upward trend in COVID cases. The chancellor is aware of the challenges we face with our semester beginning Aug. 17, as well as our location, which offers fewer COVID testing and related resources and personnel.

As I stated in my message yesterday, we are being driven by what is best for the health and safety of our community and by our mission to provide the best educational experience we can to our students. I am confident our campus recovery team will be able to work with the USM to find solutions to these challenges to keep us on track for our Aug. 17 start of classes.

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