

Aug. 25, 2021

Good afternoon,

With the semester almost ready to begin, I wanted to provide you with some updates,

Busy Weekend. I am looking forward to most of our students returning to campus this weekend and to classes beginning on Monday. We've had many of our student-athletes return over the past two weeks as well as student leaders and students involved with Residence Life. Please say hello to our students as they come to campus, especially our new Bobcats coming to campus for the first time.

Compliance with the USM Mandate. Thank you to the university community for complying with the USM mandate. All of our continuing staff and faculty have either uploaded vaccine information or have an approved exemption. We still have a small group of students (approximately 2%) that have not submitted the required information that they need to be able to return to campus. Thank you to the staff who are following up with those students.

I am encouraged that the percentage of students and employees who are *fully vaccinated* is above 83%, with others soon to be fully vaccinated. I personally hope it continues to increase. (Anyone with an approved exemption is required to participate in the testing protocol.) While we will continue the masking requirement indoors because of community transmission, the science tells us being vaccinated is the solution for defeating this virus.

Please remember that masks are required to be worn on campus while inside in the presence of others, regardless of your vaccination status.

Education and Health Sciences Building. I'm pleased to report that the new E&HS building continues to be on schedule and budget. The only cautionary note is that we are continuing to monitor the delivery schedule of building supplies. Over the next several weeks you should see the steel going up for the sky bridges connecting it to the Lane Center and the PE center.

Zach Shattuck. One of our alums, Zach Shattuck '18, is competing in the Paralympics ongoing right now in Tokyo. You can get updates on Zach's swimming events at from Frostburg Sports at frostburgsports.com or at [this link](#). His first race is today. It's exciting to have a Marylander and Bobcat competitor!

Major General Rob Edmonson. Speaking of alums, Maj. Gen. Rob Edmonson '91 recently assumed command of the U.S. Army Communications – Electronics Command at Aberdeen Proving Ground. Dean Boyce Williams and I were fortunate to attend the event earlier this month and had the opportunity to meet with Rob, his family and several classmates who were in attendance. Congratulations to General Edmonson, who is a regular at Bobcat Homecomings!

Please continue to be safe and I ask everyone to continue to be tolerant and sensitive to all during these difficult times.

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