

## Plan for UMSOP's Fall 2020 Semester

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June 11, 2020

Dear faculty, staff, and students,

The last three months have undoubtedly impacted us all in significant ways, changing the way we work, learn, and navigate the world. While I know it hasn't been easy and without bumps in the road, I am proud of how the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy (UMSOP) community adapted to the virtual environment in our efforts to keep us all healthy and safe.

Given the ongoing nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, the changes we have experienced are likely to be part of our daily lives for a while. Therefore, I have made the decision - consistent with guidance from [University of Maryland, Baltimore's \(UMB\) Recovery Framework](#) - **that academic programming for the fall semester will be delivered virtually** for our PharmD, PhD, and MS programs.

This decision comes after weeks of lengthy discussions with School and UMB leaders and careful consideration of many factors. Pandemic infection rates are starting to decline, and some colleges and universities are optimistically planning to open in the fall. However, scientists are fully expecting a second wave of COVID-19 in the late fall and into the winter. In addition, the March shutdown and mid-term disruption of the spring semester was incredibly difficult on everyone's emotional wellbeing and our students' academic success. It is therefore in the best interest of our School community to prepare now so that we experience minimal disruption during the second wave. I believe that the continuation of virtual academic delivery for the fall is the best and most equitable decision to ensure the health and safety of our UMSOP community, to assist in mitigating the spread of COVID-19, and to minimize disruption during the anticipated second wave.

Our faculty have begun to evaluate our curriculums, our delivery methods, and our academic schedules in order to create a carefully and thoughtfully planned approach for each of our programs for the fall. Unlike the spring semester, when we had to pivot to virtual learning in a matter of days, we have the benefit of the summer break to be more strategic, programmatic, and deliberate in our approach to the virtual learning environment. Because of the time needed to work out the myriad details, we don't yet

have all of the specifics for each of our academic programs, but below is a high-level overview of our plans.

### **PharmD Program**

- Courses will be a hybrid of synchronous (Webex) and new asynchronous (Mediasite) lectures, case closures, etc.
- Abilities Lab is developing virtual activities that meet the course's required outcomes.
- Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs) will be offered synchronously via virtual technology.
- Exams and quizzes will not be scheduled before 10 a.m. to ensure equity across time zones.
- Assessments will be constructed making use of best practices for assessments in online environments.
- Courses will be delivered on a regular schedule with a limit on the total time of synchronous classes each day.
- As connectivity cannot be guaranteed, all synchronous sessions will be recorded for accessibility.
- Experiential learning rotations scheduled for this summer will take place and will begin as follows:
  - Introductory Pharmacy Practice Experience (IPPE) 300 (Community) rotations begin on June 15.
  - IPPE 307 (Health-System) rotations and Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experiences (APPE) begin on June 22.
  - More information will be forthcoming before the Fall semester begins about IPPE 100 rotations that are scheduled for the end of August.
- A detailed schedule for the fall semester will be shared by the end of July.

### **PhD and MS in PHSR**

- Classes will be delivered virtually.
- Students are encouraged to contact their Graduate Program Director if they need additional guidance or have questions.

### **PhD and MS in PSC**

- Classes will be delivered virtually.
- Limited in-person laboratory-based research is permitted under UMB's phased research recovery plan.
- Students are encouraged to contact their Graduate Program Director if they need additional guidance or have questions.

### **Online MS Programs**

- Classes for our online MS and certificate programs continue their usual format. Individual program directors can be contacted for answers to questions students may have.

### **Faculty and Staff**

- Per UMB, faculty and staff will continue with episodic telework (remote) through the summer. A decision has not yet been made on telework for the fall

but will be communicated by UMB when the decision has been made. Discussion points include a phased-in return with enhanced protocols to keep everyone safe.

While many of the details regarding virtual delivery are still being worked out, I wanted to share this announcement now - particularly with our students, both returning and incoming - because we recognize that you have questions and need to make plans. As we work to update the FAQ section of our [COVID-19 website](#) to reflect our plans for the fall, please use our [FAQ submission form](#) to send us any questions you may have. Answers will be posted as soon as they are known.

I again offer my thanks and sincere gratitude to every member of our School community for their flexibility, adaptability, creativity, and understanding over the last three months and moving forward.

In the spirit of expertise, influence, and impact,

*Natalie D. Eddington*

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