



*Associated Faculties of the Universities of Maine*

12/28/2022

Dear Colleagues,

A quick note as we prepare to reflect on the past and look forward to a New Year.

We have executed a continuation of the Covid MOU, which is attached. You may continue requiring masking in your classrooms/labs if you wish.

We have many serious issues with UMS yet there is reason for hope as UMS has indicated their intent to work with us in a more collaborative manner than in the recent past.

Some ongoing issues that still need to be resolved include overreach by System General Council office interfering in HR issues for which they are unsuited along with the failure of administration to reign in their inappropriate actions. More details later as we seek to resolve these issues in a collaborative manner, which requires UMS acknowledging these failures.

(From the September 2022 Update): Over the summer the AFUM NT negotiated with UMS on Distance Education Past Practice (DEPP). We were unable to reach agreement, had two days of mediation that failed to make significant progress and we are now preparing to go through Fact Finding and Interest Arbitration. The differences between us are fundamental; UMS seeks to take money from faculty while they continue to do the work and we seek to protect those that benefit from DEPP and provide some equity to our members who cannot benefit from DEPP.

A reminder that we have serious rights to freedom of speech. You may recall the Board adopting a policy on political speech a few years ago. This policy largely does not apply to faculty members as we are virtually never authorized to speak for the University (nor should we represent that we speak for the University). Only a fool, or someone will ill-intent, would consider that we do when we appropriately append our affiliation onto some public communication in which we speak with some professional knowledge. I had learned from a newspaper article that a System official had told some nursing faculty that they should not speak using their professional knowledge. Such restraint was inappropriate and if any one suggests that you or your unit not speak on an issue in your professional competence please contact AFUM at once.

As the year draws to a close I want to thank all AFUM members, and especially the AFUM leaders and NT members who give so much to make us all better. I give my personal thanks to Lydia and Sherri, AFUM's awesome Vice Presidents, who took on a lot of tasks in order to provide me more time to focus on my sabbatical work in the Fall semester. Continuing thanks to Lisa Neuman who has taken on web control task in addition to all else that she does.

In Continuing Solidarity.

Jim