AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

1. **NAME OF ITEM:** Presentation by the Parthenon Group of a Study for a University System Professional and Graduate Center Located in Portland

2. **INITIATED BY:** James H. Page, Chancellor

3. **BOARD INFORMATION:**

4. **BACKGROUND:**

   In the fall of 2013, Chancellor James Page and a number of academic and business supporters developed the concept of creating a professional and graduate center. The proposed center would be a model and home for entrepreneurial, multi-disciplinary business and legal programs to drive economic development statewide. As a first step to testing the concept, the Chancellor determined that a study of the need and feasibility was required.

   The Chancellor sought private funding for the study. A private foundation partner was identified and supported the study in two important ways: by providing leadership to frame the Steering Committee work, and by identifying and financially supporting the engagement of the Parthenon Group to test the core concept with the student/business/law sectors and to develop a strategic plan for further development, if warranted.

   The Parthenon Group worked with University administrators and faculty, as well as business and legal community leaders to develop its findings and recommendations. The Parthenon Group concludes, in part, that the creation of a Professional and Graduate Center in Portland is indeed a transformative concept for the University of Maine System and, based on the business/legal community’s enthusiastic endorsement of the core concept, bringing graduate business and legal education under one roof could catalyze the growth of small to medium businesses across Maine.

   Parthenon will report that the keys to successful implementation include (1) the engagement of a strong external development committee and a dedicated entrepreneurial leader for the process, (2) the development of a cutting-edge interdisciplinary curriculum actively integrated with business needs and opportunities, and (3) the development of independent space to support new programs and delivery systems.

   Chancellor Page has initiated a request for private funding to increase leadership and execution capacity as the University System continues to test and develop the concept of enhanced professional and graduate programs that drive economic development statewide. The focus will be to develop leadership to complete the planning and program development process, build essential public/private partnerships, and test the core concepts with targeted pilot offerings.

11/6/2014