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Week of August 12

Trustees,

I'm learning quickly that I'll need to come up with a different opening for my weekly missive than to simply say "It's been a busy week." I have no doubt they all will be from here on.

Trustees Erwin and Eames and I met on Monday with Vice Chancellor Ryan Low and Chief of Staff and General Counsel Jim Thelen to review the Law School Advisory Committee's recommendations and the Law School's current financial situation with Alex Porteous, USM's Chief Business Officer. We are firming up responsible plans for investment in the Law School's future success within the University of Maine's Graduate and Professional Center consortium of law, business, and public policy programs, and we've already given Interim Dean Dmitry Bam the green light to begin the work to replace critical faculty positions, align law school pay increases for FY20 with UMS's own budgeted increases, and invest further in an Academic Success (student support) director position. We will meet weekly at least through the September Board meeting to finalize any further recommendations coming from the Advisory Committee's July report.

On Tuesday I kicked off our work with a legislatively-authorized task force to study and recommend funding models for sustainable investment in Maine's public higher education infrastructure. In addition to me and my counterparts at Maine Maritime Academy and the Maine Community Colleges System, the task force includes representatives from Maine's Bureau of General Services, the Maine Department of Education's office of School Construction, and the Finance Authority of Maine. Ryan Low and Samantha Warren will be my delegates for the task force's work. The goal of the work is to take a report and recommendations for sustainable, strategic State higher education infrastructure investment and policy to the Legislature this winter (though not necessarily a financial ask this biennium given our other priorities). Unstated throughout the work, but important to recognize, is the point that current funding mechanisms for higher education capital investment do not permit sufficient, planned, sustainable investment in our facilities -- indeed, we're falling behind every year with having to rely for our capital needs only on insufficient E&G resources, our own finite bonding capacity, and the vagaries of seeking legislative and public support for general obligation bonds every few years.

This past Wednesday was our regular Presidents' Council meeting, a monthly in-person gathering of our Presidents and senior System staff to discuss and advance the System's priorities. I inherited this meeting cycle from Chancellor Page, and I've challenged our Presidents to make our meetings -- typically 4-6 hours, including a working lunch -- productive and useful. We need more than reports at these meetings; we need critical debate and dialogue among our Presidents, and we need decisions and actions that advance our mission. Our agendas are ambitious. Before even turning to our One University accreditation proposals this week, for example, we discussed FY21 budget development pressures, work to stand up a collaborative hybrid Doctor of Physical Therapy program, System Title IX coordination and risk management, and a data-driven analysis of our retention trends (the latter of which sorely needs and is getting critical attention).

Our continued work on the One University accreditation proposal you asked me to bring to the September Board meeting was, of course, an important part of our Presidents' Council agenda this week. We are working to finalize a draft set of Guiding Principles that we will share System-wide in

advance of my Board proposal so that all of our stakeholders will understand what we hope to achieve, what benefit our students and the State can expect from it, and how we'll go about the work to implement it. I expect to share the final document with you early this coming week, after we've confirmed that NECHE, our accreditor, is on board with our thinking too.

Finally, in an event headlined by U.S. Senator Angus King, UMA President Becky Wyke, Professor Henry Felch and I participated in a ribbon-cutting ceremony Friday to officially open the Maine Cyber Range. (You can see media coverage here: <https://www.wabi.tv/content/news/UMaine-Augusta-opens-state-of-the-art-Maine-Cyber-Range-547698821.html>) In partnership with Cyberbit, a leading provider of hyper-realistic cyber range platforms, UMA's Maine Cyber Range will be used not only to give students real-world experience learning how to identify and respond to live cyber attacks, but will also serve as a state-of-the-art training and simulation center for IT security professionals in business and government to mimic their own IT networks in the Range and test for vulnerabilities and learn how best to respond.

As Senator King soberly noted in his comments at the program, sophisticated cyber attacks are a reality of our times, and our nation is only just now awakening to the threats. It's not hyperbole to say the Maine Cyber Range is a critical new asset for our nation's security.

But it's more than that.

UMA's Cybersecurity degree program is the only program in Maine designated a National Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense by the U.S. National Security Agency and Department of Homeland Security, which serves as the de facto accreditation standard in Cyber Security. With the Maine Cyber Range open now -- the only one of its kind in all of New England, by the way -- UMA is serving the UMS mission of offering market-relevant programs that will drive the Maine economy in the future. Our Cyber Security degree holders will enter a Maine job market expected to see more than 20% growth over the next decade, with nationally competitive salaries nearly two-thirds higher than the state average. This means that our graduates won't face the gravitational pull of higher salaries outside the state, making it more likely they'll stay and work and raise families in Maine.

The UMA Cyber Security program and Maine Cyber Range are a singular example of success, showing innovation and market-relevant solutions to respond to the sobering realities of cyber threats. In the whole environment in which UMS carries out its mission, there are many other by-now well-known sobering realities -- challenging demographics, a shrinking workforce, and disruptive competition in higher education among them. My goal will always be to challenge us to find the kind of innovation in our response to these larger realities that UMA's Cyber Security program and Cyber Range demonstrate in that field.

Our work continues.

Regards,
Dan