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Week of August 5

Trustees,

I work best when my calendar is full. This week was exceptional in that regard, with a number of meetings taking me to Augusta, Walpole, and then Boston.

Our senior System team met for a planning session Monday in Augusta. The One University accreditation proposal we're preparing for the September Board meeting took prominence on our agenda - more on that below - and I've asked Vice Chancellor Bob Neely to document his thinking on our needs for academic coordination in that effort before his planned departure at the end of the month. Relatedly, Bob is working with The Registry (<https://www.registryinterim.com/>) to determine whether we can find capable interim VCAA leadership appropriate for our anticipated needs going forward. I've also added new voices that have not historically been included in senior team meetings, including Kim Jenkins, UMS Director of Organizational Effectiveness, and Rosa Redonnett, UMS Chief Student Affairs Officers. We will need as much input as possible, including from our faculty and students at the appropriate times, if our One University efforts are to be successful.

Later on Monday Chair Erwin and I had a meeting of the Higher Education Systems Coordinating Committee. For Trustees not yet familiar with this, the extent to which UMS cooperates and coordinates with the Maine Community College System is rightly a topic of perennial interest at the Legislature. A 2015 statute requires the UMS Chancellor and Board Chair to meet with their counterparts at MCCS at least twice yearly to discuss a number of issues, including affordability, transfer, and sharing resources, efficiencies, and best practices. We report each year to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, both in writing and in person before the committee, efforts that will be ably coordinated by Sam Warren, our Director of Governmental Affairs. Monday afternoon's meeting with the group was my second in just two months, and I'm convinced the solid foundation of cooperation that already exists between our systems will only be strengthened under my tenure as Chancellor.

Tuesday I traveled with my Chief of Staff and General Counsel Jim Thelen and UMaine President Joan Ferrini-Mundy to tour the Darling Marine Center in Walpole. Our visit was planned to coincide with the SEA (Science for Economic Impact and Application) Fellows research symposium. SEA Fellows is an undergraduate research and engagement training program that supports research related to Maine's marine economy, as well as the ecosystems and coastal communities that support it. SEA Fellows collaborate with academic researchers and marine industry professionals on topics ranging from lobster physiology and disease to the impacts of coastal water quality on shellfish growth and production. The depth and breadth of our marine-based research on display from our SEA Fellows is ample proof of the vital role UMaine plays in advancing Maine's coastal economy.

I spent the rest of the week in Boston, attending my first meeting of the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association. As the name suggests, SHEEO is the national association of the chief executives of statewide governing, policy, and coordinating boards of postsecondary education. Across a robust agenda that profiled a number of important higher education policy successes in other states, I had introductory meetings with New England Board of Higher Education leaders and found sessions on higher education in rural America and credentialing, respectively, to be particularly relevant to our work in Maine. Freelance writer Matt Krupnick, who contributes regularly to The New York Times, The

Guardian and the Hechinger Report, led a discussion with higher education leaders from South Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia on the challenges of sustaining financially viable higher education opportunities in depressed rural areas. While all aspects of the discussion were helpful, I left the session convinced that our Early College efforts in Maine put us at the forefront of efforts nationally to advance college aspirations and readiness, attainment, affordability, and opportunity.

But two other meetings I attended in Boston on the sidelines at the SHEEO conference deserve special mention, as they continued our special focus on our upcoming One University accreditation recommendations.

My System team came to Boston Wednesday so that we could all meet in person with Barbara Brittingham, whom many of you know as the President of the New England Commission of Higher Education (otherwise known as NECHE), our regional accrediting body. Our developing proposal for One University accreditation was the topic, and we discussed how we can best coordinate with NECHE in the coming months to advance that effort as seamlessly as possible. We'll look internally in the coming week, working with System Presidents to finalize a set of guiding principles that will frame our One University work. And when we have our Board proposal completed, we'll post it publicly in advance, along with the historical record of our consideration of these ideas back to 2015. I think it's fair to say, and will be obvious to all, that this effort has been a long time in the making.

Finally, Rosa Redonnett and I met Thursday with key representatives from the Lumina Foundation, which has been critical in supporting Maine's attainment efforts generally and our credentialing efforts specifically. Here too, we shared our developing thinking on One University accreditation, and if we are successful in demonstrating why our One University accreditation proposals will advance Lumina's larger goals on credentialing and attainment -- and I think we can be -- we can expect Lumina to be a ready partner in that effort too.

As I said, a busy week. Our agenda will keep moving forward.

Dan