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Week of July 1

Trustees,

I picked up the reins -- smoothly so far, it seems -- from Jim Page this past Monday after a month of transition meetings to get myself oriented to the System and its people and plans. My utmost thanks to all those, too many to name here, who helped make my transition into the Chancellor role successful. I expect to continue sending weekend updates to you, and welcome your suggestions for how to improve our communication. I remain grateful to the Trustees for entrusting me with the leadership of the University of Maine System, where I continue my career in public service, now chiefly to advance higher education opportunity and the benefits that flow from it in Maine.

During this shortened holiday week we declared an Administrative Holiday on Friday, July 5, so that our employees could take advantage of a long weekend from the Thursday, July 4th holiday with State government subsequently doing the same. My chief tasks as my first week as Chancellor were to meet campus and community leaders in Fort Kent and Presque Isle and get briefings on campus collaboration, infrastructure and workforce bond projects, and other matters, including Aroostook County engagements with our partners at Northern Maine Community College. I applaud the many collaborations taking place between UMFK and UMPI -- that work needs to continue full speed ahead, regardless of the form our One University and accreditation efforts take in the coming months and years.

Setting foot on our northern campuses, it was immediately clear to me why the Board's priorities to increase net asset value and density are so important. At a simpler level, though, all of our efforts there and across the System must be focused on keeping our programs relevant, offered with the most strategic and efficient use of our resources, available wherever and however Maine's people need and expect them.

In the week ahead, I'll visit our Farmington campus and new President Edward Serna on Tuesday and attend a number of meetings later in the week with various people at Jackson Laboratory's Forum for Discovery. I'll report more on those efforts at next week's Board meeting.

I've enjoyed getting to know many of you during the small group lunch and dinner meetings scheduled over the last month leading up to my becoming Chancellor, and I look forward to seeing you again at the Board meeting, my first as Chancellor.

I'll close by sharing my first message to our System colleagues, which was sent the morning of my first day. No matter how right and clear our direction is as a One University System, I have no greater task than working with campus leaders to make sure that all of our faculty and staff -- the people who make the benefits of higher education possible for all Mainers -- feel engaged in and important to that effort. I hope you'll join with me in thanking them regularly.

Dan