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Week of July 15

Trustees -

I hope you've found a variety of ways to beat the heat this weekend. I hear the Maine beaches have been popular!

Given the work that will begin in earnest from it, this past Monday's Board meeting could rightly be called momentous. Work to review and implement the Law School Report's recommendations and prepare September recommendations on accreditation alone has the potential to reorient how the law school and our universities operate cohesively as a strategically coordinated single System. We are poised to begin making decisions too long coming, and we will do so responsibly and transparently.

To that end, specifically on the law school and accreditation matters:

1. The Law School advisory committee's report was publicly posted on the Board's website on Friday. You can see it here: <http://www.maine.edu/about-the-system/board-of-trustees/meeting-agendas/ad-hoc-board-committee-law-school-advisory-committee/> (and it's attached as well). Trustee Eames, Vice Chancellor Low, and I, along with others as necessary, will be preparing recommendations for you to act on investment and governance as soon as possible to empower a new dean to be successful and more closely aligned with our One University efforts.

If you'd like to see any of the press coverage of the report that we've monitored, please contact Dan Demeritt directly.

2. I released a System-wide message Thursday afternoon -- in case you missed it, it's included here: <https://conta.cc/2Y83tOY> -- to recount our actions from Monday's Board meeting. I started by promising full transparency as we review and ultimately act on unifying our accreditations. I've asked Jim Thelen to gather all correspondence with NECHE and internal documents that relate to unifying our accreditation and make them publicly available so that our faculty, staff, students, and the general public can see the foundation for our decisions and actions to come. I pledged this transparency to our Presidents as well, who will be critical to the success of our work.

As my early impressions become better informed, I believe the initial way I can make a difference is by challenging the status quo and empowering our people to act. I've said before, the System has not lacked for ideas, reports, and discussions about its challenges. What's been missing are firm decisions and forward-moving action. I challenged our presidents this week to discuss two data points that demonstrate the danger of complacency in the face of our challenges: In nursing, with all the publicized need in Maine and our recent efforts to graduate more nurses, only one in three nursing students who we admit actually comes to one of our programs. And among college-bound Maine high school graduates, we have not improved on the percentage of those choosing a UMS campus in more than 20 years, despite our nation-leading work on affordability over the last 8 years. These numbers are unacceptable to me. We will not simply discuss these matters. I am calling for action, whatever responsibly improves these numbers.

There was more throughout the week. Trustee Erwin, Vice Chancellor Low, and I met with the Governor on Tuesday and had a productive, far-ranging dialogue. We are developing a solid relationship and I'm confident she will support our success. I had an introductory discussion about infrastructure priorities with Chip Gavin, our Chief General Services Officer. I expect to have regular discussions with him to identify new options and build momentum for improving our crumbling facilities. On Friday, Chief of Staff and General Counsel Jim Thelen and I met with Terry Sutton and Bobby Monks to discuss Maine Center Ventures matters and fundraising. I'm confident we can right-size that project to align with System priorities and capacity.

On a staff note, Vice Chancellor Bob Neely informed me and the Chief Academic Officers that he will be retiring at the end of August. His position will be critical to our forward-looking work on unifying our accreditation, among many other initiatives, so I'll be developing a succession plan in the coming weeks. Bob tells me he may be available to help us on a project basis too, which is welcome news.

All of this work will set us up for the important decisions that need to be made. I'm not afraid to make them to keep the System moving ahead.

Dan Malloy  
Chancellor