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Week of July 22

Trustees -

I continued my journeys to our campuses this week, spending Tuesday with University of Maine at Augusta President Becky Wyke and a number of her staff, students and faculty for tours around Augusta to see UMA's aviation and architecture programs, New Ventures Maine, and, with the UMA Board of Visitors, the campus's new student housing facility at Stevens Commons in Hallowell, which will be ready for its first residents early next month. I particularly enjoyed hearing from Brandy Finck, UMA's Associate Vice President for Admissions, on the campus's enrollment work to close its multi-year budget gap ahead of schedule, as well as nursing student Abby Deschaine, who described a several-year journey from high school to St. Joseph's College to a UMA nursing wait list to finally beginning her studies toward a nursing degree that she's very passionate about. Abby's experience bears out my thinking that we must significantly invigorate our work to reach students early and often, even in high school, as they think about where to affordably pursue the degrees that Maine needs to build its future workforce.

Hearing of Abby's experience also helps to crystallize my thinking more generally on our need to focus on the basics: Admitting students, retaining them, and graduating them. I will be pushing a number of new efforts with our Presidents and their teams and our System staff to be more proactive with our work to help more Maine students start, stay, and finish at our universities. I will highlight these efforts in more detail for you in the coming weeks and months.

Midweek I met in Portland with Greg Powell, Chairman of the Alford Foundation Board of Trustees. Of course we discussed the Alford Foundation's focal interest in the continued successful development of the Maine Center's combination of graduate business, law, and public policy programs in conjunction with Maine Center Ventures's outreach to the business and professional communities in Maine. But Greg and I also had a broader discussion about better defining UMS's global long-term needs and priorities and how further Alford investment could advance UMS and the State. My conversation with Greg was informed by meetings I had earlier in the week with Bob Dumont, a Maine Center Ventures fundraising consultant, and Michael Weber, Dean of the UMaine Graduate School of Business, both about rightsizing a planned Maine Center fundraising drive. As we plan for further Alford investment, we'll be giving renewed attention to properly coordinating all fundraising across the System.

Our labor team informs me that we're nearing agreement with AFUM for a new faculty contract. Although there is tentative agreement on compensation, a few issues remain to settle the contract completely. I hope to report a settlement next week, which we would bring to the Board for approval soon thereafter.

Finally, you may remember a brief update ... at our July 15th Board meeting regarding the University of Maine's Maine Aqua Ventus project. ... On Friday, UMaine showcased both the Aqua Ventus project and the University's Advanced Structures and Composites Center (ASCC) for Daniel Simmons, the Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, U.S. Senators Angus King and Susan Collins, and Dan Burgess, the Director of the Governor's Energy Office, and a number of others. The event brought well-deserved attention not only to the project and Professor Habib Dagher and his offshore wind design team, but also to the many faculty, staff, and students who carry on the work and research that give the ASCC its signature status and drive so many

important aspects of the Maine economy. I was honored to join UMaine President Joan Ferrini-Mundy in welcoming our distinguished guests.

With that, I bid you a pleasant weekend as I look ahead both to a coming grandchild and more decisions and actions that serve our students and State.

Dan