

Dannel Malloy  
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Week of September 30

Trustees,

While every week includes some travel between our campuses, I was back on the road north Monday for my third trip to the County in as many months on the job. Our northern colleagues told me that we arrived just in time for peak fall color, and judging by the stunning panoramas I saw on Routes 1 and 11, I'd say they were right.

This particular trip north had special significance to our work ahead.

With your charge from the September Board meeting to start engaging the campuses on my Unified Accreditation recommendation, several members of my team (Jim Thelen, Chief of Staff and General Counsel; Kay Kimball, Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs; Ryan Low, Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration; and Rosa Redonnett, Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Success and Credential Attainment) and I visited UMPI and UMFK on Monday and Tuesday. At each campus, we had lunch with 7-8 faculty members, a session with the Board of Visitors and President, and an open campus "town hall-like" forum.

We found receptive audiences in each meeting. Faculty, staff, and BOV members asked good and honest questions -- questions about competition between the campuses, the need for better communication, and how our academic programs across the state might evolve in a unified accreditation structure. I have growing confidence that starting our unified accreditation work by declaring a set of Guiding Principles was the right thing to do, as several campus members cited them approvingly.

I led a similarly robust discussion with the University of Maine Board of Visitors on Thursday afternoon. President Ferrini-Mundy had invited Jim Thelen and me to sit in with UMaine's BOV on a session specially devoted to accreditation, given the university's currently ongoing 10-year reaccreditation. Jim reprised his September Board presentation on the historical consideration of System-level accreditation, and I fielded questions from BOV members and campus leaders. Questions arose around our Guiding Principle that we propose to maintain separate campus data reporting to the US Department of Education, impact on program-level accreditations, and the institutional accreditation status of UMaine following a transition to unified accreditation.

I'm glad we have this campus engagement charge from the Board. It demonstrates your commitment to building a unified accreditation implementation plan from the ground up, so to speak, and the campus input we'll gather over the next few weeks will be critical to presenting a viable unified accreditation plan to you in November.

Our Fort Kent visit Tuesday served another purpose as well. Following your action in September to approve the UMFK presidential profile, I met with the UMFK presidential search committee Tuesday morning on campus to give them their official charge. While the Chancellor charge in person is somewhat ceremonial, selecting the right president for the Board to hire to lead one of our campuses is among the most important responsibilities I fulfill as Chancellor. Like your charge sending me to the campuses to discuss unified accreditation, my charge to the search committee demonstrates the serious

commitment we have to finding the right executive and academic leader to carry on UMFK's important mission in the St. John Valley, Aroostook County, and state.

On Wednesday I helped kick off a luncheon in Portland that UMS hosted to re-introduce ourselves to local high school counselors. We need to do a better job telling our affordability and accessibility stories to the people in the best position to influence Maine's high school graduates on their college choices. The media campaign Dan Demeritt previewed for you at your recent meeting in Fort Kent is an important new effort toward this end, and more active engagement with our high schools, as we did at this Portland high school counselor event, is another. UMS hosted another counselor session in Bangor at the end of the week, and we'll be doing similar sessions in Presque Isle and Augusta later this month.

I chaired a meeting of the Maine Center Ventures Board of Directors on Wednesday evening. For newer Trustees, and as a refresher for longer-serving Trustees who don't regularly work on MCV matters, a reminder that Maine Center Ventures is a non-profit entity incorporated by the UMS Board to serve as a liaison between the business and employer communities and the graduate programs that together form the [University of Maine Graduate & Professional Center](#), often referred to simply as the Maine Center. MCV's related purposes are to coordinate business incubation, executive education, and fundraising for the Maine Center as well. Funding for the Maine Center and Maine Center Ventures in the first few years of existence is driven largely by a \$7.5 million gift from the Harold Alfond Foundation, paid in stages as UMS, the Maine Center's consortium of programs, and MCV meet certain curricular and development benchmarks. Key on MCV's agenda at present is the need to right-size and coordinate its fundraising ideas that we hope will eventually lead to a new building at USM to house Maine Center programs and work. I'm increasingly confident that my recent work with MCV CEO Terry Sutton, who reports to me as Chancellor, has MCV on a good course to serve the academic programs and universities who lead the Maine Center.

I closed the week with a meeting in Portland with the Chair and Board Clerk, along with Jim Thelen and our Vice Chancellors Ryan Low and Robert Placido, to prepare for our upcoming Board retreat. With the Chair's general interest in discussing what we want UMS to be in 2025, we're giving new attention to the KPIs we already track to make sure we have a clear understanding of where we are and how we're doing today. Finances are important, and we track those well. Enrollment and retention are even more important to track, as they are mission-critical elements that we simply must improve if all of our campuses are to survive and thrive.

The work we're doing now is of the steady, in-the-trenches variety that's necessary to the success of the Board's most important priorities. We have a good team in place to carry it on.

Regards,  
Dan