

Week of December 30, 2019

Trustees -

Happy New Year!

Though the work paced slowed over the last two holiday weeks, we've nonetheless been planning, working, and reporting on a number of matters that will drive UMS forward in 2020.

First, on reporting. With the help of too many UMS colleagues to name here, but chiefly in our Human Resources and General Services, Facilities, and Finance areas, Samantha Warren and Ryan Low led the work to prepare and submit two reports we were tasked by the Legislature to develop -- one on the use and compensation of part-time faculty at our System and the Maine Community College System, and the other on recommendations for sustainable funding for infrastructure maintenance and improvement at Maine's three public higher education institutions (UMS, MCCS, and the Maine Maritime Academy). Each report is attached for your information; you'll find two reports regarding part-time faculty, as UMS reported separately from MCCS, whereas the infrastructure funding report, as I noted for you in my last weekly update two weeks ago, represents a joint effort of not only Maine three public higher education institutions, but a number of state agencies as well. The reports will now be considered by the Legislature's joint committees on Education and Cultural Affairs and Appropriations and Financial Affairs, respectively. If you have any questions about either report, please let me know.

Our planning, always, revolves around enrollment and retention. 2020 will see our newly revitalized efforts and attention continue on both enrollment -- specifically, increasing the percentage of Maine college-bound high school graduates who start with a UMS university -- and retention, ensuring that the significant investment we make in recruiting students pays dividends in student return, progress, completion, and success. The Make the Grade initiative announced before the holidays is one such targeted effort, as is the Maine Values You media campaign more broadly. As we monitor our progress toward new applications and enrollment for Fall 2020 and beyond, we see some good trends that we can attribute to our more focused work. As of January 1, applications for first-year and transfer admission for Fall 2020 are up five percent over the same time last year. Applications from Maine students are slightly down in the same period, but our universities have extended 619 more admission offers to in-state and transfer students compared to this point last year. Perhaps most importantly, our in-state matriculation rate -- that is, the percentage of admitted applicants who accept the offer of admission -- is up four percent over last year at this time. Admittedly, it's early in the admissions cycle, and it's also too early to say with confidence that these trends will hold. Still, in the challenging demographic environment in which we are making these efforts, we must do this work to identify early positive trends so that we can redouble our efforts to ensure they continue.

Finally, to our work. My weekly updates to you here, as you know, typically look back over the last week. But here I would note the significant work coming in the next few weeks. Several of

our Board committees will meet this week, starting with tomorrow's Academic and Student Affairs committee meeting. We will have our monthly Presidents' Council meeting on Tuesday, where Interim Maine Law Dean Dmitry Bam will join us for the first time. Our unified accreditation planning continues, as we give thought to developing the action item to bring the matter finally to an authorization vote later this month.

Our focus, as always, will be to advance UMS's progress toward meeting Maine's needs for an educated citizenry with the skills and talents that will drive Maine's economy into the future. It's the right focus to remind ourselves of at the start of a new year.

Regards,
Dan