

Trustees,

As you know from your own personal and work lives, and media everywhere, we're in the midst of a new normal, at least for the time being. A normal where everything that we would do over the course of a regular week is reshaped by the Coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic.

This past week -- our traditional Spring Break week -- faculty took a break from instruction and prepared for students to return this coming week, but now with the unprecedented urgency to be ready for online and remote teaching, research, and learning in all but the most exceptional cases. Our campus residence halls did not refill this weekend as they normally would. All but the most critical work that can only be done on campus is now done virtually through our data networks, and some employees are not able to work at all.

And perhaps even more importantly in the moment, our state is facing a declared public health emergency. Our public service mission requires that we help however and wherever we can, putting our vast, statewide resources and expertise to use in support of the Maine CDC, Maine Emergency Management Agency, and even our hospitals and healthcare systems. More on that in a moment. But first, with so much of significance I could report, let me briefly summarize a few important actions we took this week.

We announced a two-day delay to the resumption of classes following Spring Break; instruction will now begin on Wednesday, March 25. This will allow our faculty more time to prepare for online and remote instruction and learning, and more importantly, give all students, faculty, and staff time to adjust to the disruption we're all facing in our personal, work, and study lives and daily routines.

We also finalized the process we will follow to provide pro-rated room-and-board refunds for our students displaced from our residence halls. While there's no question that providing these refunds to our students is the right thing to do, the consequence of doing so is, at this point, the most significant financial impact of the Coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic so far. Nearly \$13 million of the estimated \$20 million impact we've initially calculated comes from providing these refunds along with the corresponding lost dining services revenue, and there is no comparable reduction in auxiliary expenses to mitigate the loss.

You can read about these actions here, <https://www.maine.edu/blog/2020/03/18/universities-resume-classes-march-25-commit-to-room-and-board-adjustments-and-rebates-for-residential-students/>, and also see attached our report to our congressional delegation this week of Coronavirus/COVID-19 impacts.

For our employees, with disruption everywhere, and some unable to work remotely or with little or no work to do with students gone from campus, we committed to keeping our entire regular workforce whole at least through April 4, even if employees are unable to work their regular schedule through that time. With federal guidance that permits it, we are also able to continue paying our federal work-study student employees even if they don't work, and we are evaluating

whether we can keep other student employees whole through April 4 as well. To be clear, this is not a long-term solution. Difficult but necessary and responsible choices are ahead of us, and I will keep you informed as we review our budget options.

We are adjusting to the new normal in obvious ways. Our regular bimonthly Board meeting this past Monday, during which we welcomed new Trustee Emily Cain, was largely virtual through Zoom technology. Board committee meetings will be held virtually going forward, with only the most critical work done in person, and even then with proper social distancing protocols. I started hosting a daily Zoom call this week with our Presidents, their leadership teams, and our System leadership staff to discuss the dynamic decisions that need to be made on an almost daily basis. It is critical to me that our universities act in unison through this crisis on all decisions of major import so that we are not distracted by claims of inequity between our campuses.

Finally, I made the point earlier that our public service mission to the State requires that we commit whatever resources we can to help public health authorities and our health care system in the pandemic fight. To that end, we hope to finalize a comprehensive agreement today with the Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) by which we will coordinate with MEMA to use our facilities, supplies, services, and even people all across the State to help wherever and whenever they are needed. Chip Gavin, our Chief General Services Officer, and Jim Thelen, my Chief of Staff and our System General Counsel, are leading this effort, with Jim in particular negotiating almost around the clock in the last 3 days with MEMA, the Governor's office, and the Attorney General's office to finalize the agreement. Chip has stood up teams to manage the requests we've fielded so far for facilities (such as our research labs, where testing could be ramped up, or empty residence halls or gymnasiums for isolation or triage purposes), supplies (such as disinfectants, sanitizers, PPE, and even toilet paper), and people (trades, IT, logistics, and of course, faculty experts in public health, epidemiology, etc.), and through the MEMA agreement we expect to sign later today, we can deploy all these resources through MEMA or even directly to our health care systems with the State of Maine's legal immunity in responding to the public health emergency. We will continue to report on these efforts as they unfold over the coming week.

I'll close with a few items of more-normal business.

With unified accreditation planning continuing, we reported to NECHE this week on the current status of multi-university academic programming through the anticipated lens of unified accreditation. This is not yet our substantive change application to NECHE for approval of unified accreditation, but rather a status report. It's attached for your information.

And finally, we will announce Fort Kent's new President Tuesday morning. Please keep this information confidential until then.

Our selected candidate, Dr. Deborah Hedeem, has strong academic administrative experience and is particularly well-suited to serve in the combined President/Provost role at UMFK. Dr.

Heddeen was very highly regarded by on and off-campus constituencies and the UMS leadership team during her campus visit in late February. I am pleased to now be announcing her UMFK presidency, to commence July 1, 2020. As a first generation student herself, Dr. Heddeen understands the importance of a student-centered campus community and she has experience in student recruitment, persistence, and success; strategic planning, accreditation and assessment; and developing instructional delivery models for students in remote and rural areas. Dr. Heddeen currently serves as provost and vice chancellor for academic and student affairs at the University of Montana Western, a peer institution of the University of Maine at Fort Kent.

I will continue to keep you updated as often as necessary as we continue to navigate through these uncharted waters.

Regards,
Dan