

Week of November 30

Trustees,

With vast swaths of Maine and New England without power and reliable Internet or WiFi from last night's Nor'easter -- impacting not only me and my staff this morning, but USM's Gorham campus too -- of necessity today's update is just a brief mention of notable matters from this past week.

First, good news.

As part of Educate Maine's 2020 Education Symposium on Friday, I was honored to accept the 2020 Weston L. Bonney Education Leadership Award for UMS. This annual award honors an individual, group, organization, or Maine business that demonstrates leadership, commitment, and vision in ensuring that all Maine students have the opportunity to succeed. As Educate Maine noted in its own statement, in addition to the tremendous, longstanding contributions of the University of Maine System in educating the future workforce and supporting Maine's economy, the System was honored this year for being "a champion in prioritizing the health, education, and wellbeing of Maine people and communities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic." You can read more about the Symposium and UMS's honor [here](#).

And earlier in the week, we received notification of a \$297,000 grant award from the Davis Educational Foundation, which was established by Stanton and Elisabeth Davis after Mr. Davis's retirement as chairman of Shaw's Supermarkets, Inc. Our application for the grant award was titled *Creating Culture Change through Collaboration*, and the award will be used to support vision and survey work in our implementation of unified accreditation, which will in turn further support our efforts to collaboratively develop Strategic Statewide Program Plans, which are already underway.

Also, in the past week, two reports with important, interconnected recommendations for Maine's future have been released, and I briefly note each of them here for you, both for their statewide implications and because the University of Maine System was at the table for the development of each.

University of Maine at Augusta President Becky Wyke represented UMS on the Governor's Economic Recovery Committee, and a number of faculty and staff from the University of Maine and the University of Southern Maine supported the Committee's work and [report](#), including providing economic analysis to inform its priorities. Among them is investment in higher education to increase degree attainment and workforce readiness, as well as in commercially promising research and development, like that in bioproducts and clean energy ongoing at UMaine, our state's only research university.

Meanwhile, more than two dozen experts from across UMS, in fields ranging from energy to economics and from farming to fisheries to forestry, lent research-based knowledge and expert

recommendations to the Maine Climate Council through their service on its technical subcommittees. University expertise and innovation, like the UMaine floating offshore wind demonstration project that recently attracted \$100 million in new investment to the state, is a catalyst for many of the Council's recommendations to grow our economy and protect environmental and public health. Governor Mills released the climate action report, titled [Maine Won't Wait](#), on Tuesday of this past week.

Finally, COVID continues to rage around us, of course, even as we've safely transitioned to remote learning to finish the fall semester. As our state healthcare system's resources become strained again as they were at the start of the pandemic, we've again been called upon to help, first with nursing resources. To that end, I sent [a call-to-action email message](#) to nearly 2,000 members of our UMS nursing community, inviting them to express interest in ways they might volunteer to help meet state needs. I was deeply gratified to learn that, within 36 hours of my email, nearly half had read it, and more than 100 accessed the volunteer form to consider how they might help.

As the above work amply demonstrates, our community's commitment to serving the state in these trying times is laudable. And the ever-present pandemic has demonstrated like never before how UMS can meet its tripartite teaching, research, and public service mission to truly make a difference in the lives of all those who learn, live, and work in Maine.

Regards,  
Dan