

Week of January 25

Trustees,

COVID, as you well know, is ever-present in our ongoing work. We've conducted [more than 10,000 tests](#) of returning residential and out-of-state students and other special populations in the latter part of January to begin the Spring semester on time this past Monday. As of Friday, we were [managing 63 known active cases of COVID](#), 35 of whom are residential students. We've [expanded our wastewater testing](#) for increased surveillance of fully 97 percent of our expected student residential population this spring, and, [as we reported earlier this month](#), we're ready to begin weekly testing tomorrow for all faculty, staff, and students expected to have in-person interaction for class or work.

Now, in the weeks ahead, and as you may have seen [reported at the end of the week](#), more than 250 nursing students from the University of Maine, the Universities of Maine at Fort Kent and Presque Isle, and the University of Southern Maine will be volunteering to help end the pandemic by participating in Maine's COVID-19 vaccination deployment. The volunteer opportunities have been created through nursing program innovations and public health and education partnerships across the state. You can see [our own public statement from this past Thursday](#) for further details about this critical effort and profiles of some of our nursing students involved in the effort.

I continue to be deeply gratified for the effort and resilience displayed throughout our UMS communities both to come back together safely for the Spring semester and to serve the State in the ongoing pandemic fight.

With our students and faculty back in class and the new Legislature in session, as well as ongoing effort to matriculate next fall's class, there is so much more to report.

As the 130th Legislature began its work this past week, I and a number of System and university administrators and faculty joined several committee meetings to introduce ourselves and talk about the ways our universities are serving students and the state and can be a unique resource to the Legislature in its own work.

Trustees will recall I stepped away from Monday's Board meeting in the morning to update the Education & Cultural Affairs Committee on the System's statewide leadership in response to the pandemic and its overwhelming financial impact on our universities and the System as a whole. Later, UMaine President Joan Ferrini-Mundy joined me to brief the Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business (IDEA) Committee on our talent development and innovation efforts in support of the state's economic recovery and long-term growth. I highlighted the historic \$240 million Harold Alfond Foundation investment as a reflection of our centrality to Maine's success, and President Ferrini-Mundy talked about the role of the long flat-funded State-supported Maine Economic Improvement Fund in driving innovation and providing

real-world research learning opportunities that prepare students for both the developing knowledge as well as Maine's heritage industries.

At the same time, a team of six UMaine faculty/staff were meeting with the Marine Resources Committee to share ways the university has helped coastal businesses and communities weather COVID and continues to partner to develop resilient, sustainable seafood systems and communities, including through research, workforce development, and direct technical assistance.

Also this week several UMaine representatives, including Cooperative Extension Dean Hannah Carter and Food Science Innovation Coordinator Rob Dumais, participated in a briefing to the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee, and Maine Law Dean Leigh Saufley, who as you may recall hosted a Law School for Legislators event earlier this month that was attended by more than 100 legislators and staff, provided the Judiciary Committee a reintroduction to Maine Law, highlighting its collaborations with other UMS universities and efforts to advance access to justice, including through the Cumberland Legal Aid Clinic, through which law students provide 14,000 hours of pro bono service each year.

Finally, Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration Ryan Low provided testimony to the Appropriations and Education Committees in support of the \$2.5 million supplemental appropriation proposed by Governor Mills to support early college, which is needed largely due to an explosion in UMS early college enrollment during the pandemic, which has exhausted the existing FY21 appropriation to the support this essential offering to Maine students and their high schools.

As you well appreciate, it's critical that we remain fully engaged with the Legislature and the Governor. The University of Maine System, in all that our universities contribute to the educational, civic and economic well-being of the state, is Maine's most critical asset to advance knowledge and expand the human capital needed for its future success. We have no choice but to work every day to ensure the Legislature and Governor view us in the same light.

We need to make the same point to Maine families and businesses too. As part of our [On Track for College](#) promotional efforts, the presidents and I are inviting local education and employment leaders to participate in regional student success and workforce discussions. This past Tuesday UMFK President Deb Hedeon and UMPI President Ray Rice and I met virtually with about thirty university stakeholders from across Aroostook County to talk about our work to support graduating high school students, the opportunities we have to strengthen student success and pathways to careers through the Harold Alfond Foundation gift, and the resources available on our campuses to connect students to internships and Maine career opportunities. My sincere thanks to Trustees Doak, Martin, and Collins for joining and contributing to our Aroostook County discussion.

I welcome Trustee participation in our upcoming sessions. Our next such discussion will be this Tuesday, February 2, at 2:30 p.m., focused on Cumberland County. Please contact Rowena in

my office, Ellen in the Board office, or Dan Demeritt if you would like an invitation to this or any of the upcoming discussions listed [on this schedule](#).

I'll close this weekend's report with some well-deserved attention for Maine Law and its high-caliber faculty and students.

In recognition of the respect with which our law faculty are regarded in the Maine legal community, Maine Law's Dean of Experiential Education, Deirdre Smith (who, in 2019, co-chaired the Committee to Advise on the Future of the Law School and, in 2020, served on the search committee that brought Leigh Saufley to the Maine Law Deanship) was recently invited by U.S. Senator Angus King and Representatives Jared Golden and Chellie Pingree to join the 11-person committee that will be making recommendations to President Biden on who should serve as the next United States Attorney for Maine. The appointment demonstrates a great trust in Professor Smith's wisdom and judgment.

And Maine Law's students just proved they can compete with the best in the world. The Helsinki Information Law Moot Court Competition, now in its third year, was hosted recently by the University of Helsinki. The competition is open to students from around the world, and is aimed at helping law students delve deeper into the world of information law. Competing students have to solve a legal problem, first entering written submissions and then competing in oral rounds. It gathers together people and students from around the world to explore topics including data protection, access to documents, governmental surveillance and more.

The writing portion of the competition, which required students to submit two 5,000-word memos, ended November 15, 2020. The oral argument portion of the competition, which is by invitation only, was held this past Monday. Maine Law was one of just seven student teams -- and the only student team from a U.S. law school -- invited to participate in the oral rounds, with the other six teams coming from European universities.

Dean Saufley reports that Maine Law's teams did extraordinarily well. The student team of Nathan Moore and Dale Rappaneau was selected to participate in the final round of arguments, and they finished second internationally. Chris Knight and Griffin McShane won the competition award for best oral arguments, while Nathan and Dale won the International Association of Privacy Professionals finalist awards for their oral arguments. In addition to the talents and work ethic of these terrific students, the success of the Maine Law teams is a testament to the breadth, depth, and strength of Maine Law's Information Privacy Law Program, and the impressive work of the leading faculty, Peter Guffin, the Program Director, and one of Maine Law's newest professors, Scott Bloomberg.

In closing now, and as a reminder of the times we're in, I turn back to the pandemic to again recognize the effort of literally hundreds in our UMS community to have us ready, starting tomorrow, to commence weekly testing of the entire population of the UMS community who will have in-person class or work experiences this semester. We're optimistic for the success of the effort, and I can think of no better way to give you a sense of how we will pull it all off together

than with [this video](#) produced by the University of Southern Maine, starring USM Dean of Students Rodney Mondor. I hope you'll take three minutes to watch it now, and in doing so, I suspect you'll feel the same measure of pride that I do in how we're all working together to make our Spring semester as safe as possible.

I hope you have a good week ahead.

Regards,
Dan