

Week of October 4

Trustees,

With Maine's third recognition of Indigenous Peoples' Day giving many a long holiday weekend, including a short fall break for our universities, I'll keep this message fairly brief.

The significant [news](#) of the week, of course, was President Cummings's announcement that he would like to step down from the USM presidency at the end of next June to return to the faculty. Before we consider what's next for USM, and as I [told](#) the USM community this week, I think it's fair to say our System owes Glenn a debt of gratitude. He took the helm at USM in 2015 as it was coming out of one of the deepest challenges any of our universities has ever faced, and in short order he built a solid leadership team and renewed USM's student-centric purpose -- a purpose that's remained to this day.

Even with the University of Maine at Augusta presidential search already underway, it bears repeating that choosing our university presidents is among the most important work that we do together. Our System's [Charter](#) gives you the responsibility to appoint our presidents on my nomination, and we'll use the time that President Cummings remains at the helm at USM to conduct a national search to choose his successor. To take advantage of the timing of your special meeting on October 27, I will bring my recommendations to you there for approving Glenn's return to the faculty and launching the search.

The pandemic remains front of mind too.

When local media [reported last week](#) about the relative success Maine's colleges and universities have had operating through the midst of the Delta variant surge, CNN picked up the story and requested more information from us. That led to CNN's own [national story](#) later this past week, noting our work to keep our university communities safe together. While we may rightly claim a measure of satisfaction for the positive attention, and even use it to our advantage in our work to recruit new students to Maine, I want to assure you that we remain steadfast in our focus and commitment to follow the science of COVID and adjust all of our pandemic protocols however necessary to give us the best chance of continuing to teach, learn, research, work, and live together safely.

The fact that 90 percent of our fall in-person population of students, faculty and staff have now confirmed their vaccination is ample testament to this commitment. Simply put, I'm inspired by the communal discipline nearly all members of the UMS community have shown to keep us safe together.

It's a nice note to leave you with, along with best wishes for a good weekend and productive week ahead.

Regards,

Dan