

Week of September 14

Trustees,

I'd like to start by recognizing the passing of Associate Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, an indisputable champion for gender equity through her long and distinguished career as a lawyer and jurist. Her death is an appropriate occasion to take stock of the gender equity in our own workforce.

That women and men equally comprise our university and System administration, faculty, and presidential ranks, and that women outnumber men among our hourly (54% to 46%) and salaried (60% to 40%) workforce, can no doubt, in some measure, be traced to the pioneering work that Justice Ginsburg did throughout her legal career to call out and break down historical bias against women in the workplace. But her legacy demands that we acknowledge where we have work left to do too. While women make up 48 percent of our System-wide full-time faculty (and exceed the number of male faculty at UMA (57% to 43%), UMF (61% to 39%), and USM (55% to 45%)), overall only 43 percent of our female faculty have attained tenure, while 60 percent of our male faculty have achieved that rank. And we need to have appropriate talent acquisition, employee development, and succession planning strategies in place to ensure that women are appropriately represented in our most senior System administration too.

We can always improve, and constantly striving to do so is an appropriate way to honor Justice Ginsburg and all who came before her to advance gender equity in the workplace.

As we finished our third week of fall semester classes, I note that no week's work is inconsequential when we are carrying on teaching, learning, research, and work through the ongoing pandemic. And while how we are managing in the pandemic remains an important matter on which to report to you each week, I also want to cover more traditional matters related to our universities' work, calling out both challenges and success.

Let me turn to some successes.

UMPI [announced this past Monday](#) that it was one of only 42 higher education institutions in the United States to be named to the Honor Roll among institutions named to the [2020 Great Colleges to Work For® program](#). The program, managed by ModernThink LLC, a strategic human capital consulting firm, is regarded as one of the largest and most respected workplace recognition programs in the country, recognizing higher education institutions that get top ratings from their faculty and staff regarding workplace practices and policies.

Released this week in a special insert in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, the results are based on a survey of 221 participating two-year and four-year colleges and universities. UMPI is the first university in the System and Maine as a whole to receive this recognition, and joins [just three other universities in all of New England](#) -- Endicott College (in Massachusetts), Quinnipiac University (in Connecticut), and Southern New Hampshire University -- on this year's list, and

notably with special citation in the highest number of recognition categories, including Collaborative Governance, Confidence in Senior Leadership, Job Satisfaction, Respect and Appreciation, Teaching Environment (Faculty Only), and Work/Life Balance (among others).

The attached report, released along with the announcement of UMPI's selection, highlights the value of *Great Colleges* work across the System as a whole, with reflections from not only UMPI President Ray Rice and our *Great Colleges* point person Megan Clough (UMS Director of Learning and Organizational Development), but also from UMA President Becky Wyke and USM President Glenn Cummings, respectively, about how they each used insights gleaned from *Great Colleges* data to better inform their own strategic priorities. And I'd be remiss to not acknowledge that this year's *Great Colleges* recognition demonstrates our success in advancing one of the Board's [2016 Priority Outcomes: University Workforce Engagement](#).

We can rightly be proud of this recognition, and I particularly want to thank Megan Clough and Ray Rice for their work to achieve it.

Several of our universities released statements about their recognition this week in *U.S. News and World Report's* 2021 Best Colleges list. All of our System universities are recognized in various categories, with UMaine considered among national university peers, USM among regional university peers in the North, and our remaining universities among regional college peers in the North. Among the various recognitions for our universities in this year's annual ranking, UMF and UMPI stood out as top regional public colleges in the North, and UMF in particular was cited as a best college for veterans and a best value overall.

All of our universities received recognition in their peer categories for advancing social mobility, a measure of how well an institution does enrolling and graduating economically disadvantaged students (those with Pell grants whose adjusted gross family incomes are under \$50,000). UMF, USM, and UMaine were each noted in the top half of their peer categories, with UMF securing a spot in the top ten percent of similarly situated institutions.

UMF was separately cited in the top ten of a Top Bachelor's Colleges list compiled by *Washington Monthly* of nearly 250 public and private bachelor's colleges in the U.S., as well as a 2020 *Money's* Best College for Your Money with this year's rankings placing special emphasis on affordability.

All of this attention demonstrates the value our System universities bring to our students and their families and the State of Maine. I hope you'll join me in congratulating our presidents and their teams for these signal accomplishments.

Considering that you'll be turning your attention to the reading and preparation necessary for next Monday's Board meeting, I'll address a challenge here as I close -- the challenge of complacency.

First, regarding our work in the pandemic thus far, it's an understatement to say we cannot become complacent. It's true that we've been successful three weeks into the semester. As I write this morning, we have no known cases of COVID in our university communities. We are beginning our Phase 3 random sample and administratively directed testing program, which will continue through Thanksgiving. We are working through process and logistical challenges to ensure that members of our university community with on-campus responsibilities and interactions can be tested without undue burden, and if there are COVID cases to be found, we want to find them and manage them. *We cannot become complacent just because there's been no virus spread so far.* I will direct every effort I can as Chancellor to ensure that we do not let our guard down and risk public health by continuing our operations as we have so far.

Second, and finally, regarding our work to improve our academic programs overall, I intend to continue driving the efficiencies and collaboration that are possible and, indeed, necessary in unified accreditation. As you saw from our public statement on Thursday, we are fortunate to have largely been spared the worst of the cuts to our appropriation that might have occurred through the State's curtailment process. Along with seemingly stable enrollment this fall, we now reasonably expect to bring you a final updated budget for FY21 that does not require any immediate or dramatic cuts to programs or people. But that doesn't mean we can become complacent about the need to fundamentally change how we work together across the System to share our resources and find further efficiencies as we make better academic programming accessible everywhere in the state.

For as much as we've accomplished in my time as Chancellor, there is even more to do, and we need to maintain the sense of urgency that has provided the momentum for our success to date.

Have a good week.

Regards,  
Dan