

The University of Maine

DigitalCommons@UMaine

Chancellor

University of Maine System Communications

6-5-2020

Chancellor Messages_An Imperative for Change

Dannel P. Malloy

University of Maine System

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/c19_chancellor



Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#), [History Commons](#), and the [Medicine and Health Sciences Commons](#)

Repository Citation

Malloy, Dannel P., "Chancellor Messages_An Imperative for Change" (2020). *Chancellor*. 15.
https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/c19_chancellor/15

This Email is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UMaine. It has been accepted for inclusion in Chancellor by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UMaine. For more information, please contact um.library.technical.services@maine.edu.



Matthew Revitt <matthew.revitt@maine.edu>

An Imperative for Change

1 message

Chancellor Dannel Malloy <chancelloroffice@maine.edu>

Fri, Jun 5, 2020 at 5:40 PM

Reply-To: chancelloroffice@maine.edu

To: matthew.revitt@maine.edu



June 5, 2020



UMS Colleagues -

My recent communications to you have focused on our collective response to COVID-19. Today I'm writing with a different purpose.

Following the messages you've received over the last week from your university presidents, I'm writing now to affirm in the strongest possible terms the University of Maine System's condemnation of racial injustice and violence against Black Americans, as well as our commitment to examining, confronting, and ending inequities in our universities and communities wherever and against whomever they

exist. And while my thoughts today will focus on the Black experience in America, our state, and universities, I recognize that Wabanaki, Hispanic, and other minority members of our communities are too often themselves marginalized or victimized; they too matter, and they too deserve the justice I call for in what follows.

No less than COVID-19, racism is a virus, and it too is pandemic in nature. It insidiously attacks the bodies and souls of both marginalized and advantaged people. It's been with us throughout our national history. And we must work *every single day* to wipe it out.

There is no greater equalizer than public education. We must ensure equal and inclusive access to our classrooms, labs, clinics, and art and performance spaces. We must provide instruction and research and experiential learning opportunities from a foundation of racial and economic justice. Only then can we ensure that future Maine teachers, artists, scientists and engineers, nurses, bankers, lawyers, police officers, public policymakers, and civic leaders themselves can work to bend the moral arc of the universe toward social and racial justice.

Higher education is about understanding the historical context of a societal problem and having both an intellectual curiosity about and personal empathy for another person's perspective.

In that vein, we should all be humble enough to admit that, while many celebrate our nation's founding and our national claim of equal justice under law, a Black American has no cause to celebrate the fact of not being afforded full personhood in the original constitutional framework for

government, law, and citizenship. It took fully 100 years and the violent struggle of the American Civil War to finally extend the guarantees of due process, equal protection, and citizenship to Black Americans. Even then and since, despite these rights being guaranteed on paper, we have consistently fallen short of these ideals, which is so tragically apparent over the last ten days.

Even when Black Americans are not subjected to violence, discrimination, and other forms of intentional race bias, they face societal inequity at nearly every turn. Considering nothing other than the color of their skin, an average Black family has barely one-sixth the household net worth of the population as a whole, and can expect only 65 percent of the median household income. Black Americans live in poverty at a rate 76 percent greater than the national average, have less access to quality health care, and are more likely to face longer incarceration for the same crimes as their non-Black peers.

Even in UMS's universities, Black students face the prospect of retention and graduation rates lower than average, with only 64 percent of Black students continuing their higher education after the first year and only one-third graduating within six years, compared to 70 percent and 50 percent among all students, respectively.

The simple fact of obtaining a baccalaureate degree helps reduce these disparities. When a Black family's head has a college degree, the racial disparity in household net worth shrinks dramatically, and a college degree-holder regardless of race can expect to have household income 157 percent greater than the general population as a whole, and 220 percent more than someone with only a high school education.

We can take some pride that our university communities reflect a greater degree of diversity than is seen generally in Maine - the nation's whitest and oldest state. We are stronger and richer for it. In the last five years, there has been a 43 percent increase in the number of Black students, who now comprise 3 percent of our student population, nearly twice their percentage in Maine's overall population. I am heartened by these enrollment trends and what they mean for the social mobility of our students and their families.

Still, we can and must do more. To that end, I have asked our Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs to convene our universities' Chief Academic Officers to review our admissions practices and retention and completion rates. I would like our academic leaders to make recommendations to our Board of Trustees Academic & Student Affairs Committee to ensure that our admission standards do not unfairly deny admission to Black and minority students who demonstrate a capacity for success in our universities in ways that have not historically been fairly measured. And I would like to ensure that our instruction, assessment, and student support practices are free from any implicit or structural bias that contributes to racial and ethnic equity gaps in retention and graduation rates, including among our state's first people and newest Mainers.

I am also acutely aware that there are currently no Black, Wabanaki, or other racial or ethnic minority Trustees on the UMS Board, and there is little racial diversity among System and university leadership. To ensure there is no unconscious bias or barriers in our hiring, I have asked our new Chief Human Resources Officer, Carol Corcoran, to work with union leaders to conduct a diversity audit of our employment practices (including for students) and report their findings to the Board's Human Resources & Labor Relations Committee at its September meeting.

The actions our universities have undertaken to address systemic racism are laudable. Many predate the unconscionable murder of George Floyd and the disproportionate impact COVID-19 has had on Black and minority communities that together compel the country's current outcry for change. We can do more, and we can be better. And we simply must.

Public universities were born from the same beliefs of equality and access to justice through education that are at the root of our constitutional democracy. As such, we are uniquely positioned to both learn and teach genuine anti-racist views, and through them rebuild systems that are fair and just for all people, regardless of their race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic class,

disability or nationality.

I invite you to join me in humbly learning from and listening to every member of our community who has experienced injustice and intolerance. And in doing so, I challenge you to work every day to help correct it.

Sincerely,



Dannel P. Malloy
Chancellor

Office of the Chancellor
University of Maine System
[15 Estabrooke Dr.](#)
[Orono, ME 04469-5703](#)
rowenac@maine.edu



Copyright © 2020 Maine's Public Universities

Maine's Public Universities, 5703 Alumni Hall, Orono, ME 04469-5703

SafeUnsubscribe™ matthew.revitt@maine.edu

[Forward this email](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [About our service provider](#)

Sent by chancellorsoffice@maine.edu in collaboration with

Constant Contact 

Try email marketing for free today!