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Academic Affairs Update

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Academic Affairs update: Thursday, June 4, 2020

1 message

UMaine Provost <umprovost@maine.edu>
Reply-To: UMaine Provost <umprovost@maine.edu>
To: UM-EMPLOYEES@lists.maine.edu

Thu, Jun 4, 2020 at 9:30 AM

Good Day to you all:

It is June and it seems the changes continue to march on at a rapid pace. Several groups continue their planning work for fall with the safety of our faculty, staff, and community in mind. I hope you all are finding time to pause and rest as you also prepare to re-engage our students in learning this fall.

Thank you for your submissions to the **Define Tomorrow initiative**. We have received over 250 ideas that include short-term steps we can easily take to ideas that will need a longer-term view. The Steering Committee has met, begun to review the list, and discussed how to involve people. Some ideas can easily be implemented by respective units, others will need further development, and some will need to include more formal processes. By June 15, you will receive the list of ideas submitted, in an abbreviated format, so that you can be sure yours is included and so that you can add additional thoughts. We will conclude the acceptance of new ideas for this round of Define Tomorrow now with the thought that there may be a second round in the fall or spring. The key focus for Define Tomorrow is to work together to improve our path forward. Thank you for submitting ideas in that spirit. I look forward to the discussions we will have around this work.

On behalf of all of you, I express sincere **appreciation to Dr. Susan Gardner** for her leadership of the Rising Tide Center. Her contributions to enhance our awareness of diversity, equity, and inclusion have made a lasting impact on our campus culture. Her activities to provide training and development, discuss best practices, improve our search, hiring, and supervisory practices, and her proactive support for all individuals on this campus are fundamental steps she encouraged us to take to improve our community. Her leadership of these activities included the acquisition of major grants and countless hours provided in support of others. As you return to the faculty and new leadership in that regard, we all thank you, Dr. Gardner, for making UMaine a better space for our faculty, staff, and students.

We searched for a director of the **Rising Tide Center and received no applications**. So, the Rising Tide Center will pause for a brief time to refine the expectations of leadership for this critical component of Academic Affairs. The deans, staff in the Office of the Provost, Human Resources, and members of the Provost Advisory Council on Equity (PACE) will continue to offer guidance on the activities and issues of greatest importance to us. The areas of concern for diversity, equity, and inclusion are also being discussed as part of the President's Cabinet as central issues to our community.

At this point in our nation's history we have an obligation to **say more, do more, and rest less** in reducing sources of discrimination and intolerance. At this point in the history of UMaine, I hope we all will work together as advocates to plan and implement activities that help us connect with our students and with our communities. We must do better and we will.

Thank you for all you are doing to enrich our efforts for fall, enhance the Summer Start courses, develop alternative delivery modalities and exercises, and support each other during this unusual time. This is a very **special place with extraordinary people**. Wishing you all the very best as the summer warmth begins.