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2015 President's Messages

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Office of the President

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Holiday Message from President Hunter

December 11, 2015 [President's Messages](#)

With the close of 2015, I want to take this opportunity to share some reflections on this benchmark year in University of Maine history.

As part of UMaine's 150th anniversary celebration, we spent the past 12 months reflecting on our legacy as the state's land grant university, and how that history informs our future. We celebrated with important events that included Women in Leadership Week in March, the University of Maine Museum of Art's "With Ties to Maine" exhibition that opened in June, the Darling Marine Center's 50th anniversary events in August, the Collins Center for the Arts' 30th anniversary season, and Open University Day in October. These and our many other 150th activities provided valuable opportunities for the UMaine community, our constituents and partners statewide, and alumni worldwide to take particular pride in UMaine's leadership — past, present and future.

I must also extend sincere thanks on behalf of the UMaine community to Dana Humphrey, dean of the College of Engineering who chaired the 150th Anniversary Implementation Committee. We all benefited from his leadership, vision, creativity, organizational skills and unquenchable enthusiasm that made this anniversary year such a success.

In the immediate future, we wish all our students success during finals week and look forward to welcoming more than 800 of them for the three-week Online Winter Session, beginning Dec. 28. The new Winter Session now allows UMaine students to take classes year-round. It is part of UMaine's Think 30 initiative, aimed at helping students complete 30 credits per year so they can graduate in four years, saving money and reducing debt.

Such initiatives are integral to the retention and graduation action plan led by Provost Jeff Hecker and key to UMaine's five-year strategic plan. So, too, are UMaine's Signature and Emerging Areas of Excellence. The Signature Areas are those in which UMaine has achieved national and international distinction. The Emerging Areas are those with the potential to reach the next level of excellence. Together, they epitomize UMaine's distinctiveness, and will inform institutional fundraising goals and strategies going forward.

The Signature and Emerging Areas are among the many initiatives at Maine's flagship university that define tomorrow — the apropos theme of this year's student recruitment campaign. Through UMaine teaching, research and scholarship, community engagement and outreach, our faculty, staff and students work daily to turn knowledge into solutions that benefit the state today and into the future. We're now in the next student recruitment cycle and inviting prospective Black Bears to not only join us in our mission, but also to define their own tomorrows at UMaine, where the student experience is like no other in Maine.

Our new scholarship programs for entering students reaffirm UMaine's commitment to making higher education affordable for Maine students, and attracting the best and the brightest — future leaders, engaged citizens and tomorrow's workforce. In particular, the Maine Match and Flagship Match scholarships focus on keeping and bringing students to UMaine who would otherwise enroll at our top competitors — other New England land grant institutions.

Among my hopes for 2016 is that the spirit of UMaine's 150th anniversary celebration stays with you. From our prospective and current students, and long-time collaborators and community partners to UMaine employees, retirees and alumni, all of us can take pride in UMaine's leadership role in defining tomorrow.

I encourage you to keep informed about UMaine's distinctiveness and points of pride. Two important resources: the websites of [UMaine news](#), complete with student and alumni success stories and the [Office of Innovation and Economic Development](#).

All the best to you and yours in this holiday season, and in the coming new year.

Susan J. Hunter, Ph.D.

President

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