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Office of the President

Community message: May 7

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Dear University Community:

What an incredible nine months for the University of Maine, both in Orono and Machias. With Commencement this weekend, the intensity and activity at our two campuses is transforming, according to the long-standing rhythm of higher education. It is a moment for reflecting, resetting, and, maybe, reinventing.

Graduating students face a beginning, with new options, potential promise, and uncharted pathways, along with the excitement and anxiety that come with taking steps in a new direction or continuing on a well-planned trajectory. For all students who are returning in the fall, and those who are here through the summer, I hope you can use the next few months to renew, recharge and rededicate yourselves to your academic pursuits.

I have been awed by the excellence that abounds, although choose not to name names here because there is no way to be inclusive. However, one of the lessons from my first nine months that leaves me humbled and energized is this: We are a force, from our classrooms, laboratories, student organizations, residence halls, fraternities and sororities, to our field sites, university facilities, and athletic fields and venues, and throughout the greater Bangor and Washington County communities. Black Bear or Clipper, we make a difference, sustain community, take care of one another, give back, bring joy, and lead — with excellence. We address challenges and anticipate opportunities, solve problems and share ideas, invent for improvement and innovate for Maine, entertain our communities, and build teams and tools.

It has been my first time experiencing our traditions of celebrating that excellence. I have been part of honoring the accomplishments and the promise of our scholar-athletes; student researchers and scholars; student leaders; outstanding and award-winning students; faculty, staff, and community members; student performers and creators in the arts; and distinguished faculty, all achieving at stellar levels. In working side by side with so many of you this year, I am acutely aware that there are thousands of stories to be told of your endeavors. We cannot possibly report on them all, so I encourage you to share your successes with family, friends, and each other within the communities we live.

From our new student welcome days in August to our upcoming Commencements, we pass through significant community signposts — markers of our communities' commitment to inclusion, celebration, coming together, and striving for and achieving excellence. For graduates who are either leaving the area or staying in Maine, remember that you can return to your university in a few hours and we welcome your visits. For the rest of us who will remain in Orono or Machias through the summer: Though our community takes on a different scale, the excellence, the caring, and the commitment to excellence remains.

All the best.

Joan Ferrini-Mundy
President