



Office of the President

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President's Message to the Community: Sept. 19

September 19, 2016 [President's Messages](#)

We are off to a successful start of the academic year, thanks to the leadership of our faculty and staff. From the amazing Welcome Weekend for our largest incoming class in the university's history and the participation of more than 2,200 students in the Day of Service, to the smooth transition for our returning undergraduate and graduate students, I again thank UMaine community members for their dedication to our student-centered approach.

September is such an exciting time for community engagement. The Mall was packed for the Campus Activities & Student Engagement (CASE) Fair earlier this month, and the Division of Student Life is lining up a terrific schedule for [Family & Friends Weekend](#), Sept. 23–25, which also includes the football home opener.

Alumni from the classes of 1951, 1956, 1966, 1971 and Senior Alumni — those who have reached the 50th anniversary of their graduation — were on campus last week. Reunion activities included a celebration of the legacy of Lyle Jenness, for whom our chemical and biological engineering building is named.

This past weekend, Capitol Steps took the stage as part of the Gala at the Collins Center for the Arts. The event was a smashing success, thanks to the hard work and dedication of countless UMaine community members, both those in the footlights and those behind the scenes.

Coming up, I hope to see you at the Graduate School Picnic Sept. 20 and at breakfast for the President's Fall Welcome Sept. 22. Also this week is the opening of a particularly exciting international exhibition at the University of Maine Museum of Art featuring the works of nine New Brunswick artists.

The possibilities for engagement are too numerous to mention in full, but let me add one new way to get out and enjoy all our campus has to offer. Four self-guided walking tours focusing on gardens, outdoor sculptures, the historic district and other distinctive sights of the campus landscape are now available. The self-guided walking tours are illustrated on a website (umaine.edu/sights) that is designed to be compatible with mobile devices. My thanks to the two principal researchers on the project — UMaine community members Marisue and John Pickering — for their talent and passion for our campus that is, truly, a remarkable state resource.

As the Provost mentioned in his [annual report](#), we are moving into the fifth year of the university's strategic plan, which has been a guidepost for several important initiatives, including the identification of UMaine's Signature and Emerging Areas of Excellence, the sharpened focus on student retention and graduation, improved Enrollment Management operations, consistency in portraying the UMaine brand and others. Looking beyond the current plan, it is time, once again, to reflect on who we are and who we want to be as an institution. The evolving state and national higher education pictures provide the context for this self-reflection.

In the coming academic year, I will lead the UMaine community in a dialogue about our future, and we'll start that discussion at the President's Fall Welcome.

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