



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

323 State Street
Augusta, ME 04330

February 13, 2015

Dear MCCS Employees,

As I close out my career as your System President today, I wanted to write to thank you for all the wonderful things you do to make this system so special. Being part of this system and working with such a talented group of people has been the joy of my life. Every day we touch the lives of over 18,000 Maine people trying to improve their opportunities for a more prosperous future for themselves and their families. It has been your hard work and commitment that has built this system into a true Maine success story. While we all have sacrificed much on this journey we can take pride in knowing that at the end of the day someone's life is a little better because of what we've done.

Over the last month, I have received hundreds of cards, letters and emails from individuals all across Maine - and beyond - sharing their strong belief in our mission and recognizing how much we have accomplished for the people of Maine. The communications came from former governors, current and former legislators, business leaders, current and former colleagues and students. I deeply appreciate the kind words and thoughtfulness of their correspondence. In particular, a letter from Melodie Bowden reminded me how much what we do matters and how appreciative our students are for what we do. Melodie attended Eastern Maine Technical College (EMTC) and graduated in 1992. I got to know her during one of my visits to the college. Melodie went on to have a very successful career and happy life, which she attributes to her experience at EMTC. Melodie is just one of the nearly 65,000 graduates I have had the privilege of seeing over the last 25 years.

When I started in 1990 we had six technical colleges and enrolled 3,300 students. I couldn't have imagined that in 2015 we would have seven community colleges, two satellite campuses, five off-campus centers and over 18,000 students. I deeply appreciate the support I have received over the years from nearly a hundred different trustees, sixteen presidents, twenty system office staff, college leadership teams, administrators, support staff and the best faculty in the state. I am also profoundly appreciative of the support of the directors of our statewide Foundation who have raised \$26M for our colleges in the first five years. The Foundation was created by Leon and Lisa Gorman and has been ably led by its Chair, Governor McKernan, Vice Chair Lisa Gorman and Directors Elaine Rosen, Daniel Wathen, Sterling Kozlowski, Lawrence Wold, Richard Petersen, Robert Kump and Carol Epstein.

I would be remiss if I didn't express my appreciation to Derek Langhauser for his willingness to step in as your Interim President. With your support, he will do an outstanding job leading this system until my permanent replacement comes on board next January.

I will always be proud of my association with this system and will continue to be a lifelong advocate for you, your mission and the students you serve.

With respect and gratitude,
John Fitzsimmons