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Subject: My first meeting with the Faculty Senate Executive Committee

Dear Colleagues:

On August 1, I had my first meeting with the Faculty Senate Executive Committee along with Martha Freeman. I appreciate that Senate President Jerry Lasala reached out both to me and the Executive Committee members during a Maine summer--and that so many attended.

We came to our first agreement: The seventh-floor authors' wall of newly-published faculty books will be reinstated. Learning from and celebrating accomplishments can help as we change with the times.

And we reached a second agreement: We all dislike unnecessary red-tape. I asked each Executive Committee member to share with me their five most painful red-tape experiences. We agree we must streamline at USM.

We had a candid and useful discussion of the challenges facing USM. I reiterated the mandate I have:

- Balance the budget
- Find efficiencies
- Promote growth
- Improve collaboration
- Create a stable, financially sustainable environment for the selection of a new

President

I saw in the meeting that we have common interests: To save as many jobs as possible and to invest for future growth. I heard loud and clear that faculty are tired of being asked to analyze, strategize, and recommend in endless cycles of planning and seeking direction. I won't burden staff and faculty with process that takes us nowhere. It's an imposition and we don't have time to waste. It's time to decide and act.

We talked about my leadership strategy:

- Get the best fact-based thinking from all who care to contribute
- Quantify our deficit and make plans for addressing potentially even greater shortfalls
- Focus on program offerings that comport with our Metropolitan University vision and eliminate or restructure programs with low potential
- Save as many jobs as we can, consistent with our resources, through a strategy of promoting growth, finding efficiencies, reducing costs, and advocating for increases in public investment in our university system
- Increase revenue

We discussed the significant role faculty could have in our growth strategy. I believe we can increase revenue through faculty participation in recruiting, retention, career services, and online offerings.

My style in facing challenges is to be inclusive and respectful, decisive and timely. Best practices and facts underlie my decisions. I told the Faculty Senators I'd welcome their participation in a constructive partnership.

The Faculty Senate Executive Committee told me we need USM leaders who care about the institution. I completely agree. They provided me with characteristics they want to see in the management team for USM: Visible, listeners, collaborative, interpersonal skills, trustworthy, academic credentials in the relevant positions to complement my public and professional background. These characteristics, along with knowledge of current resources and financial constraints, and a willingness to change and be fair-minded and fact-based, are what I want, too.

My first Faculty Senate Executive Committee meeting ended with our agreement to meet and consult again soon. I want and need the advice of the Faculty Senate, as I want and need the advice of all who care about USM. I'll be working with our internal and external communities, seeking your counsel and sharing my own.

We need to work together to save this university by transforming it.

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