



January 16, 2015

Governor Paul LePage
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Dear Governor LePage:

I write concerning the “forced” resignation of Maine Community College System President John Fitzsimmons. While I acknowledge your many powers as governor, including appointment of the Maine Community College System trustees, the threat that you issued to them if they did not remove Fitzsimmons from his post -- “they’re certainly going to feel the wrath” – appeared more vindictive than constructive.

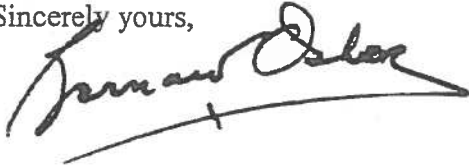
Those of us committed to Maine have been greatly impressed with President Fitzsimmons’ leadership of the System. The Osher Foundation supported his initiative to upgrade the Maine Technical Colleges into a full-fledged community college system with grants totaling \$8 million. The people of Maine benefited greatly from Fitzsimmons’ determined approach and from the professional and respectful relationship he enjoyed with Governors King and Baldacci.

In 2007, President Fitzsimmons approached us for additional funding for scholarships. We provided an outright grant of \$1.5 million and pledged an additional \$1.5 million if the System raised \$1.5 million from other sources. We further promised a “topping off” grant of \$500,000 should the MCCS match be accomplished within a 12-month period, thereby making possible an augmentation of \$5 million to the System’s scholarship pool. Despite growing difficulties both in the Maine and national economies, an unperturbed John Fitzsimmons criss-crossed the State in search of matching commitments with a sense of urgency. Within 10 months of the challenge, he had completed the required fundraising and thereby enriched the MCCS scholarship fund with the \$500,000 *lagniappe*. His more recent creation of the Foundation for MCCS, whose trustees include some of Maine’s most admired citizens, has brought an additional \$26 million to the System for support of scholarships, new academic programs, and state-of-the-art instructional equipment and technology.

Our foundation supports more than 250 colleges and universities in the U.S., including endowed scholarship funds at every public institution of higher education and nearly every private institution in the State of Maine (including your alma maters, Husson University and the University of Maine). Of the many chancellors and presidents with whom we deal,

John Fitzsimmons has always been a star, consistently demonstrating high performance and wise stewardship. We greatly regret his resignation and the intemperate manner in which it was achieved.

Sincerely yours,



Cc: Robert Clark, Chair, Maine Community College System Board of Trustees
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