UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Mary Sue Coleman
President

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Deba Dutta
Chancellor UM Flint
Office of the Chancellor
221 University Pavilion

Dear Deba,

During the past few months, you have presented to me, the executive officer group and the regents a realistic description of the financial realities facing UM Flint. Over the last seven years, enrollment has declined 25%, six-year graduation rates rank at the bottom of the 15 public universities in the state, more students are leaving the Flint area to attend other state universities and demographic trends predict that declining numbers of high school graduates in Michigan will only accelerate.

We have concluded that a minor modification to campus strategy will not adequately reverse any of these negative trends. Maintaining the status quo, or only implementing incremental adjustments to current programs and activities will not be sufficient nor sustainable. Survival of UM Flint requires a robust transformation that results in a viable financial model and a strong, attractive brand that conveys a clear and nimble institutional focus that meets the immediate career needs of students, coupled with current and future employment needs of businesses and supports the local community. Our ultimate goal is to help UM Flint emerge as an academically strong and financially viable institution that is an undisputed engine for economic growth and social mobility in the region.

You and I both believe that at times like these, great opportunities do exist, and I see that prospect now for UM Flint. We understand that the required transformation will take a significant investment. The University is prepared to make such a commitment for a plan that achieves all the objectives we seek for the institution.

Therefore, I charge you with the responsibility to develop a robust vision and thoughtful implementation plan for transforming UM Flint. More specifically,

- Develop a robust transformation vision and plan for the Flint campus that maximizes its opportunity for survival and long-term viability in a competitive higher education sector. This work will involve the identification and evaluation of options for the campus, selection of an appropriate strategy and a plan for implementation. The analysis will be supported by the recently retained Huron Consulting Group, which will provide comprehensive data and evidence-based recommendations. This internal process must be inclusive and engage faculty from all major disciplines to provide input, participate in the evaluation processes, and have a voice in the shaping of final recommendations.

- Develop and execute a comprehensive and transparent communications and engagement process to ensure the University and all interested parties are informed about the imperative, the process as it is developed and the outcomes with appropriate opportunities for providing input and feedback.

- Ensure all recommendations are data driven and based on labor and student market demand for programs. The selected programs must be aligned with projected workforce needs in Michigan.

- Complete this plan within a period of about 4 months (fall semester 2022). At the end of this study and with the approval of the President, a one-time financial investment (which will be dispersed as milestones are achieved) will be committed by the University.

As you know, President-elect Ono is also supportive of this process and committed to investing in transformational change at UM Flint. He and I look forward to regular reports about the progress of this work.

Sincerely,

Mary Sue Coleman

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President