Reflections on 2014 | December 23, 2014

Dear Members of the University of Michigan-Flint Community:

As 2014 comes to a close and we wrap up the fall semester and look toward 2015, I would like to share with you some reflections on these last several months.

I am grateful for all the opportunities I have had this semester to meet you and become more familiar with the faculty, staff and students, and members of our community. I have spent a great deal of my time listening in order to get gain a deeper understanding of what makes UM-Flint such an outstanding and vibrant university community. In the new year, I will continue to meet formally and informally across the campus and community to continue exploring what we will do together to support and strengthen our educational mission.

We celebrated multiple achievements this fall:

- UM-Flint has again been selected as one of the best higher education institutions in the Midwest by *The Princeton Review*. In addition, *U.S. News & World Report* “Best Colleges 2015” has included the University of Michigan-Flint in three categories: Best in Midwest, Top Public Schools (Midwest), and Best Colleges for Veterans.
- A new Intercultural Center opened.
- A state of the art nursing simulation lab opened on campus.
- A portion of the renovations in the Murchie Science Building were completed.
- The new Health Navigator minor and certificate program launched.
- Heather Laube, Associate Professor of Sociology was selected for the Fulbright Scholar Exchange Program. Dr. Laube’s American Studies Award entails a four-month fellowship for teaching at the University of Graz in Austria in 2015.
- Alumnus Bobby Crim gave one of the largest individual gifts in the campus history to help support scholarships for students.
• We welcomed author Jonathan Kozol as part of the 2014 Common Read.
• Student Government President, Nakshidil Sadien, addressed the University of Michigan Board of Regents at their October meeting here in Flint.
• President Schlissel visited UM-Flint three times, as he strives to learn more about our regional comprehensive campus.
• Giving Blueday raised in excess of $20,000 in one day!

UM-Flint is deeply engaged with the community. From our foster youth initiative, MPowering My Success, earning national recognition to the Theatre Department's collaboration with community partners to create an original production about the Flint Farmer’s Market called “9 x Nourish,” there are many examples of ways our campus engages in partnership and service learning. We established a new early college at Grand Blanc High School, and the university helped the city of Flint earn a new bicycle friendly designation. Additionally I had the pleasure of seeing our campus faculty, students, and staff shine at many community events such as The Crim, Back to the Bricks, Touch-A-Truck, and the Lula Hurse Food Giveaway.

I appreciate all those who have reached out to me during my first semester. Your candid conversations and dreams for UM-Flint and our students has been helpful. From a personal perspective, the warm welcome that my partner and I have received from campus and the community has been meaningful for both of us. We are proud to be part of the energy and excitement in Flint.

We will move into the spring with the data collected and the momentum generated from fall 2014. Many of you are involved in projects across the campus that will continue moving forward. Working closely with faculty governance groups, I will pay particular attention to communicating broadly as we work together.

On a final note, I would like to share a video that has been created featuring Assistant Professor Janet Haley of the UM-Flint Theatre Department. Professor Haley is reading a poem written in the late 1950’s by UM-Flint founding faculty member, Professor Alfred Raphelson. Professor Raphelson wrote a UM-Flint version of “Twas the Night Before Christmas,” documenting our campus during its earliest days. Although some of the
references are certainly obscure, it nevertheless illustrates the enduring spirit of UM-Flint. You can see the video here: http://youtu.be/yvWPMDJg87g.

I wish you much peace and joy this holiday season, now and always. Thank you for all you do for our campus, our community, and most importantly, our students.

Kind regards,

Susan E. Borrego
Chancellor