



Remarks of Gregory W. Powell

**Foundation for Maine's Community Colleges and Maine Community College System
Grant Announcement**

Falmouth, Maine

December 10, 2018

On behalf of the Harold Alfond Foundation, Trustee David Flanagan and I are delighted to be here this afternoon to congratulate Janet Mills on her election as Maine's Governor and make a special announcement.

As we have with every Maine governor who takes on the challenge of leading Maine to a better place, whatever their political stripe, we look forward to supporting and working with you in the days ahead. Congratulations, and a special thanks for your inspiring vision and support of advancing education in Maine.

The Foundation has invested in Maine's community colleges in the past with confidence and solid philanthropic returns. Since John Fitzsimmons had the vision and leadership to launch the Community College System in 2002, our community colleges have awarded over 30,000 certificates and degrees.

Today, they educate twice as many students as they did before Fitz launched the System, and they continue to be the most affordable vehicle for higher education available to our citizens. Most importantly, the System has always recognized the necessary relationship between higher education and meaningful work.

And so we are here this afternoon with gratitude for the leadership of Governor McKernan, Vice-Chair Lisa Gorman, the foundation board, Fitz, his terrific successor, Derek Langhauser, so many business and non-profit leaders of the state, and, last but not least, our state government leaders.

Harold Alfond loved committed leadership and teamwork with a winning record. And he would be hugely grateful, as his Foundation is today, for the leadership and past accomplishments of Maine's community colleges.

But at the Foundation, we see our community colleges as vital not because of their past accomplishments, but because of the enormous challenges we face today and the unique capacity of our community colleges to meet those challenges.

At the Foundation, we see across Maine and across our nation that Americans are struggling with disruptive change brought on by automation, global competition, and the transformation from an industrial to digital economy. Too many citizens are looking for opportunity, more meaningful work, and affordable ways to build their skills to meet the work force needs of today's employers.

As we survey this landscape, our view is 360 degrees. And what we see are three 60s. Three statistical 60s emblematic of our challenging times:

- First, when adjusting for income averages, until recently, 60% of working Americans have seen no increase in their real incomes since 1980.
- Second, 60% or more of America's future jobs require our citizens to have higher education in some form.
- And finally, 60% of Americans have not had the benefit of completing higher education in any form.

That 60% of our citizens are at risk of being left behind poses enormous cultural, economic, and political risk and challenges. And an enormous opportunity for Maine's community colleges to lead.

So let me say that when Derek and his team came to the Foundation and described their vision for the Community College System, we were impressed.

With Derek and his executive team, Gov. McKernan, Lisa Gorman, the board and now a terrific new Governor in Janet Mills, our Community College System is perfectly poised to move Maine forward.

And as for the vision, we are hugely impressed that these leaders have recognized that the form of higher education must change.

How?

- By constantly renewing and expanding the curricula to align with the needs of Maine employers in high demand, key industry sectors;
- By enhancing short-term training opportunities for those high-demand occupations and targeting the under-employed and young adult working population; and,
- By paving the way for credit recognition upon satisfactory completion of short-term training certifications.

So, with these and other capacity-building initiatives underway, the Foundation is honored to follow the lead of our lost friend, Sterling Koslowski, and Key Bank, as well as so many of you here today, in stepping up to support the Community College System.

Harold Alford loved to say, “Don’t tell me. Show me.” And so far I’ve been doing a whole lot of telling and not much showing.

So let me close with this.

On behalf of the Harold Alford Foundation, I am pleased to announce our grant to Maine’s community colleges in the amount of \$3.6 million.

And, Derek, here is a little showing to match the telling! [*Presents check*]

Thank you, everyone, and congratulations!