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Ms. Trish Riley  
University of Maine System  
Board of Trustee Office  
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Dear Trish,

As we discussed recently, I have been contacted by students at the University of Maine who oppose the University's plan to demolish Crossland Hall, home of the University's Franco-American Centre, and replace it with a parking lot. I more than share the student's concerns. They are vital and compelling.

Crossland Hall is of historic importance as the oldest building on campus, originally a farmhouse that predates the University by many years (it was built in 1833). The Franco-American Centre is an historic institution that since the 1970s has led in the recognition of the centrality of Franco-American communities for Maine people. The University proposes that the demolition of Crossland Hall will create 200 new parking spaces near expanded sport facilities, but that figure seems wildly inflated; a more realistic assessment suggests that the demolition will create no more than 20 new spaces at a cost of 500,000 dollars. The University claims that maintenance of Crossland will cost 10 million dollars, but that figure too seems wildly inflated and based on a formula that is irrelevant in this case. A flawed proposal, which is likely to cause historical damage and undermines an essential commitment to Franco-Americans and Maine's future, is a proposal that badly needs to be reassessed. That reassessment should be the responsibility of the University of Maine System's Board of Trustees. Given the stakes, any plan to demolish Crossland and pave a new parking lot should be postponed while that reassessment occurs. I strongly believe that the BOT should appoint a committee with that mandate and with a year to propose a new, more responsible plan. As part of this mandate, I also believe that the BOT committee study and propose a coordinated future for all Franco-American programs throughout the University of Maine System.

When Crossland Hall was deeded to the University, it was stipulated as a condition of ownership that that the building be used for educational purposes. I am attaching a copy of the deed dated March 26, 1866 which contains the language *subject only to the following conditions in that in case the location of said college shall be changed from Orono, or be subsequently abandoned or ease to be used for the purposes contemplated the act establishing said college, Then and in such an event said farms shall revert to be and become the absolute property of the town of Orono.* Clearly a small parking lot does not meet this

stipulation. The Franco-American Centre does. In addition to teaching and research, the mission of the Franco-American Centre includes outreach to all Maine communities (Franco-Americans are among the largest, perhaps *the* largest demographic population in the State). It also includes in-reach by those communities, access to *their* University. The University's plan for Crossland Hall does not explicitly propose the elimination of the Centre, but it does propose its removal to a previously condemned building with inadequate facilities in a far less accessible area of the campus. Past efforts have been directed toward reduced funding and reduced staffing. They have failed because they have been resisted by bipartisan leadership in the State. I will not recount all of this difficult history here, but it has been characterized by broken promises that have only been kept because State leadership has repeatedly insisted. It is time for a new chapter and a better future. The BOT study and reassessment can and should assure that.

In the 1970s the Franco-American Centre was created by students who won the support of the UMaine president at the time. Now students in the hundreds and their elected representatives are working to assure the Centre's future and I am attaching a copy of the petition which has been signed by 1500 students, faculty and supporters. In doing so, they are also creating a future for all Franco-American Programs throughout the University of Maine System. This work is essential not only for Franco-Americans but for all Maine people.

Sincerely,



Severin M. Beliveau

CC:

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one equally convenient in the substituted by granite. Also, the right to use the shore & bank of the River to its middle line for the purpose of boating, & doing all other acts necessary for the working of said Boom as heretofore exercised & enjoyed, free from interference by grantee. The foregoing described parcels being the same conveyed to the two inhabitants of Orono aforesaid, by said Samuel, Wm. H. & Ann E. White, by deed, dated March 24 1866 & to which reference may be made, & known as "the Daniel White Farm".

11 The following described tracts or parcels of land situate on the westerly side of Marsh Island, as called, in said Orono, viz: Lots numbered One and Two, per plan of Orono & marked upon said Plan "H. Longfellow's" subsequently owned & occupied by John Woodard & by him sold to Nathan Frost & also known as the Frost Farm, containing not less than One Hundred & ninety acres, said lots are situate between the White Farm on the southerly side & lot No. 3, owned & occupied by J. Graves, on the northerly side - Easterly, by the line marked as "St. Baton" & "St. John's" westerly, said lots are bounded the whole width by the Stillwater River.

Reserving the Boom, Piers & all the privileges & appurtenances belonging thereto - Reserving the same premises conveyed to the inhabitants of the Town of Orono by Nathan Frost, by deed, dated March 20 1866 & to which reference may be had.

Said Tracts or parcels of land comprise the White and Woodard or Frost Farms, as called, situate in Orono and contain in the whole Three Hundred and Fifty Acres of land, more or less and said Farms are hereby conveyed to "the Trustees of the State College of Agriculture and the Mechanic Arts" in accordance with the vote of the said inhabitants of Orono, unanimously given, subject only to the following conditions, viz: That in case the location of said College shall be changed from Orono, or be subsequently abandoned, or cease to be used for the purposes contemplated by the Act establishing said College - Then and in such an event, said Farms shall revert to & be and become the absolute property of the Town of Orono."

## Exhibit B.

### The Petition

The University of Maine has decided to destroy Crossland Hall, a Tier One historic building on campus and the home of the Franco-American Centre, to make a larger capacity parking lot. This building was constructed in 1833 and serves a critical role in Franco-American cultural education, language revitalization, genealogical research, and historical preservation. Though they have been promised to be moved to two other buildings on campus in the following years, these locations on the outskirts are inaccessible to students, staff, and key members of the community alike. Additionally, the proposed permanent building is home to another key institution on campus—the Spruce Budworm Research Laboratory—which combats the most damaging species to Maine and North American forests and provides a portion of their revenue to the university. The lab has not been given another location, and relocation would not only come at great expense but also disrupt their critical research. Given these detrimental impacts, the university's plans are clearly rushed and do not take into consideration the deep history of Crossland Hall and the vital importance of the Spruce Budworm Research Lab.

The rash plans for Crossland Hall's destruction not only threaten the only surviving farmhouse predating the university's founding, the historic home of the first professor on campus, and the infirmary that nursed World War II veterans back to health in the late 1940's. This ill-conceived plan also endangers the Franco American Centre, which has called Crossland Hall home for decades. The Centre is a beacon of light for the Franco-Americans of our nation. Through harmful legislation, their language was systematically suppressed, their culture forcefully stripped away, and their contributions to the nation forgotten. Maine has an intimate connection with these peoples, and our state has the highest representation of Franco-Americans in the nation at roughly 40% of Mainers having Franco-American heritage. The survival of the Franco-American Centre and Crossland Hall are intimately linked. By destroying Crossland Hall, the University of Maine is relegating the Franco-American Centre, a key resource nationwide, to a swift demise.

We students and community members who have been touched by the hospitality of the Franco-American Centre and who have found solace in Crossland Hall do not agree with the university's decision to demolish the historic building. Thus, we decided to share this message through the present petition. They plan to carry out their destruction over the course of winter break beginning on December 20th, so we need to act fast. We urge you to sign this petition and show the University of Maine, local legislators, and the broader state that we will not let Maine culture and heritage, including that of our Franco-American neighbors, be destroyed.