Chair’s Report: Chair Jerry Cayer welcomed new BoV members Ed Cervone and David Levesque. He referred members to the roster of BoV members, asked them to review the roles and responsibilities of the BoV, and recognized various contributions that board members had made. November 6 is the date of the BoV and UMS Board of Trustees’ summit. All members are invited. The next UMF BoV meeting is October 30. Chancellor Page will be visiting the campus on October 19; BoV members are invited to attend a mid-day open session.

President’s Report: President Foster gave an excerpt from her presentation The Difference a Year Makes regarding important changes in the past year and UMF’s role as a team player in the UMS. The good news is the increase in new students this fall, bringing the head count to above 2000 for the first time in some years. First to second year retention rate is about 75 percent, very high in the UMS. Re finances: graduate and undergraduate credit hours exceed what we budgeted for, meaning that revenue will be roughly $400K more than budgeted for fall this year, which will be used to help close last year’s budget gap. The goal now is to consistently bring in entering classes of at least 540 with another 55 new entrants in Spring. In the past 3 years UMF was “in crisis,” but the new class’s boost has brought us up to an improved “constrained” mode. The current focus is on student success—especially retention, degree completion, and post-graduation outcomes. A campus master plan will be created for campus facilities. UMF will continue to implement the strategic plan. President Foster invited the Board to The Public Classroom presentations by newer faculty, scheduled throughout the academic year.

Discussion Items – Continued Business:

At the request of some BoV members, President Foster provided passed out information on tuition increases and financial sustainability. Until recent years, tuition increased annually; in the past few years, it has been flat. There has been a $6.2M accumulated budget gap in the past three years. Had tuition been increased at 4% annually during those three years, the gap would have been about half that much. But tuition alone won’t close the gap. We need to think about fundraising, state funding, growing enrollment, etc. in order to meet budget.

President Foster explained that the construction on campus is due to the installation of underground pipes to transmit hot water to heat buildings from the biomass plant being constructed. Ultimately, the campus will be using nearly 90% non-fossil fuels for its heating and cooling needs.

Chair Cayer brought up the idea of a Council on External Communications: educating the community about significant changes at UMF. He asked the Board to discuss the real purpose of the BoV, suggesting that we consider having a committee structure.
Discussion ensued about the Board’s role and if there were ways we could be “agents of change” for UMF in some helpful way, supporting needed changes. Some goals could be to support Kate in whatever ways she finds most valuable; to advise or contribute to existing functions, as long as roles and communication are clear; to give advisory support or pose questions to the president; to participate in a council on external communications; to bring ideas for new partnerships; or to be part of a task force on an issue such as the future of the University store or how external funding could be successfully secured. The Board could help identify potential new members. Jerry Cayer mentioned the different ways in which the BoVs at the seven campuses operate and asked us to consider how we can be most effective.

Chair Cayer requested that Board members send him an email saying how we are currently engaged with UMF.