



CHANCELLOR UPDATES UNIVERSITY TRUSTEES ON PROGRESS OF SYSTEM-WIDE INITIATIVE
Distance education credit hours up 18% over last year

BANGOR—University of Maine System Board of Trustees received an update today from Chancellor Richard L. Pattenauade on the progress and next steps of the “New Challenges, New Directions” initiative which was approved by Trustees in November.

“There has been a great effort and enormous progress made in implementing the plan’s recommendations,” Pattenauade explained. “With more than fifty major initiatives outlined in the action plan, it is hard to focus on just one or two. We are seeing progress on all fronts—from shutting down our mainframe as we move to Internet-based computing, to sketching out the first concepts for a common calendar for our universities.

“In addition, our nursing program leadership is forging a System-wide effort to expand our capacity and they are drafting a plan to help us meet the state’s need for additional nurses. Similarly, President Kennedy is leading a new sustainable energy task force to help us advance alternative—or ‘green’—energy education and research.”

Pattenauade added that the System is in the beginning stages of doing a comprehensive study of tuition, financial aid, and markets—which will help create a new framework for affordability and the strategic use of tuition and student aid policy.

“The energy directed at moving this initiative forward by the universities and the System Office has been very inspiring, given the challenges we face,” he concluded.

In other activities at the meeting, Vice Chancellor James Breece presented several reports related to academic and student affairs, including a report on distance education—which has seen a 14% increase in students and more than 18% increase in credit hours over the previous year. “Distance education meets the needs of students who are bound by time or geographic location—particularly the adult students,” Breece noted. “It gives them flexibility and allows them to more easily balance work, child care, and other priorities.”

Trustees also:

- Accepted the donation of the Gannett Building located at 331 Water Street in downtown Augusta to be used as studio and classrooms for the University of Maine at Augusta’s Art and Architecture programs;
- Approved the creation of a new graduate academic program at UMaine—a Master of Arts in Global Policy from the School of Policy and International Affairs;

- Received a presentation on annual degrees conferred—Maine’s public universities awarded 5,389 degrees during the 2008-09 year, bringing the total degrees conferred since the System’s creation in 1968 to 183,047;
- Approved the appointment of Mirna Kolbowski as chief financial officer at the University of Maine at Augusta;
- Received an update on two tentative collective bargaining agreements from Chancellor Pattenau and, authorized him to execute the agreement with Teamsters Local Union #340 - Police Unit and, upon receiving notice that it has been ratified, to execute the agreement with Associated Faculties of the University of Maine System (AFUM/MEA/NEA);
- Were presented with the Maine Economic Improvement Fund 2009 annual report on university research and development.

Established in 1968, the University of Maine System is the state’s largest educational enterprise. It has an annual enrollment of more than 42,000 students and serves over 500,000 individuals annually through educational and cultural offerings. The University of Maine System features seven universities – some with multiple campuses – located across the state, as well as nine University College outreach centers, a law school, and an additional 75 interactive distance learning sites. For more information, visit www.maine.edu.