



**UNIVERSITY SYSTEM TRUSTEES APPROVE REVISED LONG-TERM PLAN
Initiative Designed to Reduce Costs, Maintain Affordability,
And Address Maine's Educational and Economic Needs**

BANGOR—The University of Maine System Board of Trustees on Monday unanimously approved a long-term plan designed to maintain affordability, reduce operating costs, and provide greater focus and emphasis on addressing the state's educational and economic interests.

The Board's vote authorizes the System Chancellor to lead Maine's seven public universities in implementing and/or further developing dozens of actions contained in a report entitled, "The University of Maine System and the Future of Maine." Reflecting public input, the document adopted Monday was a slightly modified version of the draft report presented in September to the Board, students, and employees, and the general public.

The report is the product of the System's "New Challenges, New Directions" initiative, which Chancellor Richard L. Pattenaude launched in January with Board approval. At the time, Pattenaude reported that the university system would face a \$42.8 million budget shortfall by 2013 unless UMS adopted "a new business model" based on reducing costs, increasing use of technology for certain administrative and educational functions, and greater focus and prioritization.

"I believe we have produced a plan that meets the goals we set," Pattenaude said Monday. "It will lead the University of Maine System into the future with greater efficiency, effectiveness, and impact. Everyone involved should be proud. But now the hard work of implementation begins.

"This plan has been many months in the making," Pattenaude added. "It has included hundreds of hours of input, review, and feedback from the universities, stakeholders, experts, policy makers, and members of the public from all corners of Maine. Drafts of this plan have been revised and re-presented to all interested parties in order to provide ample opportunities for questions and critique. We feel very good about the transparency and openness of the process."

"This is a crucial moment for the University of Maine System, given our financial challenges," said Lyndel J. Wishcamper, Board chair. "The chancellor and presidents will provide the leadership to build stronger universities and a more efficient university system. As they proceed, they will have the full backing of the trustees to make the difficult decisions."

When Pattenaude launched the initiative in January, he told trustees that the plan needed to address three interrelated goals: 1) to serve Maine’s changing and evolving knowledge, research, public service, and educational needs; 2) to keep the cost of baccalaureate and graduate education affordable; and 3) to implement efficiencies, organizational changes, and further economies of scale to bring spending in line with available resources.

In keeping with those goals, the plan adopted on Monday adds or elevates certain items as priorities to be pursued immediately. According to Pattenaude, these items are being emphasized “to accelerate needed changes pertaining to financial concerns as well as new needs and opportunities.” They include:

- Having universities identify degrees to be offered through the option of a compressed three-year program of study for completing a baccalaureate degree;
- Doubling the number of students enrolled in online programs as a way to help address the needs of all students, particularly time-bound and place-bound students;
- Increasing the number of graduates from allied health professions programs by 20 percent to address the pressing need in Maine for professionals in these fields;
- Conducting a comprehensive study of markets, strategic pricing, and financial aid to improve access and affordability;
- Increasing statewide delivery of professional programs, particularly at the graduate level;
- Creating a System-wide program on alternative energy education and research.

Pattenaude said that these priorities “will broaden access to higher education and, through outreach to prospective students, will increase enrollments at our seven universities.” He said that if universities need additional resources for these priorities, it will come from reallocation, new tuition revenues, private sources, grants, and a centrally managed strategic investment fund.

“The purpose of the strategic investment fund is to provide financial support to the universities themselves in order to advance the programs, services, and operations that are related to the strategic directions,” Pattenaude explained.

“It is important to remember that this plan is intended to address our university system's immediate and long-term challenges,” he continued. “For that reason, the plan balances the dual necessities of cost reductions and strategic investments. Both are essential to achieve the university system's goals as approved by the trustees and as stated in the plan.”

Pattenaude said he is confident that the plan adopted Monday will help the university system achieve those goals.

“The document presented today builds on the advice and concerns we heard during the many public comment sessions we held around the state,” he stated. “It presents a plan that capitalizes on the contributions and expertise of the dozens of individuals who worked on this project. I am grateful to them, and to all of the stakeholders and concerned members of the public who participated in this process. And now we must move forward with speed and determination to make the changes and improvements called for.”

The final version of the plan may be viewed at www.maine.edu/UMSNCD.

In other Board action Monday, trustees received updates on finances, enrollments, facilities, and personnel matters.

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.