WESTPHAL SAYS FUNDING OF UNIVERSITY SYSTEM IS CRITICAL TO MAINE’S FUTURE

During the “State of the University System Address” on Feb. 15 at the State House, UMS Chancellor Joseph W. Westphal told lawmakers that the University System is committed to working as a partner with Maine policy makers to “establish the importance and value of public higher education as equal in prominence, importance, and value as any policy or program receiving State support.”

Westphal pointed to current successes of the University of Maine System—including record enrollments, record levels of faculty and staff productivity, record success in winning federally funded research grants, and increased partnerships with the public and private sectors—but stressed that Maine’s public universities will not be able to meet the future needs of the state based on the current level of revenue sources.

“All four initiatives are part of the University System’s efforts to strengthen Maine’s economy through partnerships, education, research, and public service,” Westphal told trustees. “Working individually and collectively, our universities are addressing both the challenges and the opportunities facing the people of Maine.”

Outlining the tourism initiative, Westphal recommended approval of the Center for Tourism Research and Outreach (CenTRO), a collaborative effort involving UMaine and the University of Southern Maine (USM). CenTRO will be responsible for coordinating and enhancing a wide variety of related academic programs offered by Maine’s public universities, and will provide a single point of service to academics, policy makers, and the industry for tourism-related research and outreach.

UMS ATTRACTS RECORD R&D FUNDING

Through utilization of the Maine Economic Improvement Fund (MEIF), UMaine and USM—the System’s primary research institutions—attracted a record $42.8 million in external grants and contracts in FY04. The Maine Legislature established MEIF in 1997 to help increase federal and private investment in university-based research, focusing on key areas of importance and potential to Maine.

Consider the following highlights from FY04:

- The state of Maine realized a 4-to-1 return on its $10.5 million of research and development (R&D) appropriation.
- Overall, state research dollars resulted in a total of $53.4 million being made available for R&D.
- A total of 857 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions were supported directly or indirectly through MEIF funding.

In addition to the federal and private funds received through MEIF-related grants and contracts, university researchers also received an additional $35 million for other research projects in engineering, the sciences, and the arts and humanities. The combined total of university research funds received and spent in FY04 was $88 million, which created an economic impact of approximately $180 million dollars.

The complete UMS State Funded Research Report FY04 is available at: http://www.maine.edu/ofr/md04.pdf

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MAINE’S PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

UNIVERSITY SYSTEM UNVEILS 2005 CHANCELLOR’S REPORT

The University of Maine System recently unveiled the 2005 Chancellor’s Report, a publication that provides citizens with real-life examples of how their tax dollars and tuition dollars are providing multiple benefits for the state of Maine.

“We are working harder to explain the benefits of education to key constituencies—prospective students, parents, policy makers, opinion leaders, guidance counselors, teachers, and many others,” said UMS Chancellor Joseph W. Westphal. “They need to be part of our efforts to remind future generations of Mainers of the quality, value, and importance of its university system.”

The Chancellor’s Report is part of a marketing initiative aimed at increasing awareness of and support for Maine’s public universities, and to help recognize the role they serve as partners in economic development, policy analysis, environmental stewardship, arts and cultural offerings, and much more.

The University System is working to raise aspirations of Maine high school graduates, encourage more non-traditional learners to pursue higher education, and attract more out-of-state undergraduate and graduate students to view Maine as a place to go for high-quality university education.


WESTPHAL PRAISES BALDACCI’S BOND PACKAGE

UMS Chancellor Joseph W. Westphal has praised Governor John E. Baldacci’s proposed bond package and its emphasis on university-based research and development as “a logical cornerstone of the plan.

“Governor Baldacci’s advocacy for university-based research dates back to his days in Congress,” Westphal explained. “He has been a strong and steady proponent of university research as an essential ingredient in Maine’s economic development formula.”

Baldacci’s proposal calls for $197.3 million in state borrowing, pending legislative and voter approval. Of that total, $25 million would address a number of University System needs that both the Governor and Westphal identified as essential investments:

- $12 million for biomedical research and development at the University of Maine and the University of Southern Maine;
- $6 million to help expand the University of Maine’s aquaculture research facility in Hancock County; and
- $7 million in renovation funds throughout the System’s seven universities and 11 academic outreach centers.

Speaking specifically about the proposed investment in the University System, Westphal said that all aspects of the proposed bonds for university-based projects will benefit Maine and its economy.

“The bond package recognizes the tremendous success and potential of the three-way partnership between the University System, the state, and the private sector,” Westphal stated. “Maine knows from experience that investment in university-based research produces jobs and economic growth.”

BOARD OF TRUSTEES ACTIVITIES

During its January meeting, the UMS Board of Trustees ...
TRUSTEES APPROVE TOURISM PROGRAM
(continued from page 1)

CenTRO will be aided and advised by the Maine Tourism Advisory Committee, a new advisory committee of leaders from within the tourism industry to support the University System’s initiative. CenTRO will be funded through a combination of state, University System, industry, and grants, with a first-year budget of $310,000. UMaine resource economics professor Kevin Boyle and USM public policy and management professor Charles Colgan will serve as CenTRO’s director and associate director, respectively.

“Tourism has become one of Maine’s most important industries,” Westphal explained. Citing university-sponsored research, he noted that in 2001 the state of Maine received over $344 million in tourism-related tax revenues, and that the industry in Maine paid workers $2.5 billion in wages.

UMS FUNDING CRITICAL TO STATE’S FUTURE (continued from page 1)

and Education committees. Westphal told lawmakers that the level of state support the University System receives has a direct and concrete influence on our ability to serve and satisfy Maine’s need for an educated workforce, job creation, economic growth, quality healthcare and schools, sustainable natural resources, and numerous other public objectives and purposes.

Westphal stressed that the influence of Maine’s public universities is far greater than simply providing post-secondary education. He cited a wide range of ways that the University System’s teaching, research, and outreach missions benefit Maine people educationally, economically, culturally, and individually.

The joint committee session was held to hear testimony on the Baldacci administration’s proposed biennial budget for the University System. The proposed budget increases System funding by $1 million, raising the annual appropriation to $181.1 million. UMS trustees had requested an increase to $195.2 million in FY06 and to $209.2 million in FY07. The trustees’ request would increase funds for student financial aid, expand outreach programs to support teacher-education and nursing-education, increase research and development funding, and provide compensation increases for employees.

In his presentation, Westphal emphasized that the impact of the state’s appropriation to the University System would accomplish a great deal.

“The truth is, the University System is simply the catalyst for turning those [appropriations] dollars into public benefits,” Westphal stated.