UMS Trustees Approve Measure to Provide In-State Tuition for All Veterans & Members of the Armed Services
First University System in Northeastern U.S. to Provide this Benefit

BANGOR – The Executive Committee of the University of Maine System Trustees gave final approval Friday to a new policy that will charge in-state tuition rates to all current and former members of the U.S. Armed Forces who were honorably discharged, regardless of whether they are receiving other military educational benefits. The new tuition rate goes into effect in time for the May term and summer sessions.

Maine joins 20 other states with similar policies—and is the first university system north of Maryland to provide this benefit. Veterans of all ages are eligible.

“As our nation draws down the forces deployed to Afghanistan and also reduces the size of the armed forces in response to budget and deficit challenges, the sons and daughters who served will be returning home,” explained retired Admiral Gregory Johnson of Harpswell, vice-chair of the UMS Board of Trustees. “This provides a unique opportunity to continue what has been a long tradition by Maine’s seven public universities of facilitating access to superb and affordable educational opportunities. In addition, it’s another very important way to attract young people and families back to our great state of Maine.”

Adm. Johnson noted that postsecondary education is an important aspect of the reintegration process as veterans return to civil society. He added that similar veterans’ tuition measures are under way at the Federal and State levels, but Trustees felt it was important to put the benefits in place as soon as possible. This policy would be effective at all seven Maine universities.

Maine currently has over 130,000 military service members within its population and more are entering higher education due to the expansion of benefits for post 9/11 veterans. The original G.I. Bill, officially titled the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944, was signed into law by President Franklin D. Roosevelt and celebrates its 70th anniversary this year. It was updated in 2008 to provide enhanced educational benefits for post 9/11 veterans.

“Helping veterans get into higher education, regardless of the residency that may appear on a driver’s license, and achieve the academic credentials that will translate into future success is critical for both their futures and for the state of Maine,” added UMS Chancellor James H. Page. “Providing this benefit to current and past members of the armed forces is the right thing for all of public higher education to implement, not just here in Maine.”

With nearly 12% of the state’s population comprised of former or current military service members, today the Executive Committee of the UMS Board of Trustees also passed a Veterans’ Resolution that the board:
“...recognizes its responsibility to serve the postsecondary educational needs of our active duty and veteran population and ensure that the System universities provide a welcoming and supportive environment. It directs the System and universities to review and act on policies, practices and operating procedures to fully enable active duty and veteran students in the achievement of their higher education aspirations through proactive recruitment, enrollment, and provision of a broad range of services and supports designed to promote student success, graduation and eventual transition into the workforce.”

Established in 1968, the University of Maine System is the state’s largest educational enterprise. It has an annual enrollment of nearly 40,000 students and serves over 500,000 individuals annually through educational and cultural offerings. Two-thirds of its alumni—approximately 120,000 people—live in Maine. The University of Maine System features seven universities—some with multiple campuses—located across the state, as well as eight University College outreach centers, a law school, and an additional 31 course sites. For more information, visit www.maine.edu.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:
Interviews are available with campus contacts who work directly with members of the armed forces and veterans.