UMF 2020: Experience Farmington
Strategic Concepts, v3
Revised following Campus Input and Discussion
May 12, 2014

This draft document lays out strategic concepts for UMF 2020, the overarching aim of which is to strengthen the financial and operational ability of UMF to thrive in the years to come. As incorporated into Goal 4, UMF will identify success metrics and shall prepare aligned marketing, physical planning, financial, and other action plans to support the goals and strategies outlined here.

Goal 1. Reinforce and Enhance Our Market Position
UMF will position itself with the University of Maine System as a small, increasingly selective public liberal arts college, featuring programs in teacher education, professional studies, and the arts and sciences, and serving primarily full-time, traditional-age undergraduates in a residential setting. UMF will continue to be recognized for its academic quality, small classes, close-knit community, and integrated curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular offerings.

Strategy 1. UMF will stabilize its undergraduate enrollments at approximately 1,600 FTE. As it brings enrollments to this level, it will increase selectivity by reducing acceptance rates for less well-prepared applicants, and it will increase the percentage of out-of-state students from 16% to 20% by 2020.

Strategy 2. UMF will focus its scope on programs of demonstrated quality and promise. In coordination with other universities in the University of Maine System, UMF will assess its programs and initiatives, ultimately focusing resources and effort on those of greatest quality, relevance, and mission significance.

Strategy 3. UMF will strengthen and more broadly promote its historic and continuing strength in teacher education (early childhood, elementary, secondary, special education, educational leadership) to reinforce its disciplinary leadership. UMF will expand its online and hybrid graduate education degrees and certificates, and pursue opportunities for faculty, students, and staff to shape state, national and international conversations in education.
Strategy 4. UMF will reinforce and promote its commitment to a broad liberal arts education for all students, regardless of major. The campus will continue to strengthen and develop its general education curriculum, with the aim of ensuring that all students graduate with foundational skills in written and spoken communication, critical reading, critical analysis, creative thinking, technological competence, information acquisition and assessment, complex problem solving, teamwork, and leadership.

Strategy 5. UMF will cultivate new enrollment and revenue streams by offering educational programming and courses to selected non-traditional student markets, including middle-, home- and high-school students, retirees, and others seeking educational enrichment.

- Build flexibility into schedules and programs to enable high-achieving middle-, home-, and high-school students to take courses at UMF during days, evenings, weekends, and seasonal periods. Develop highly interactive summer programming for pre-college students in areas such as video game development, creative writing, and field science.

- Develop 3- to 5-course industry-recognized or enrichment certificates to take advantage of existing expertise and capacity at UMF. Current opportunities might include GIS, sustainability science, small business management, health information systems, computer science, and creative writing.

- Collaborate with area employers, such as the hospital, manufacturing, and service-producing organizations, to develop tailor-made curricula and courses that meet specific regional economic needs.

Goal 2. Experience UMF

UMF will develop purposeful, immersive, experience-based curricular programs that help students make the connection between liberal arts education and rewarding and successful careers, graduate education, and civic leadership.

Strategy 1. UMF will develop and implement “Experience UMF,” an interdisciplinary, project-based, experiential academic program that will offer UMF students at all levels opportunities to engage with significant issues and problems across traditional academic boundaries.

- Each year, members of the UMF community will work collaboratively on a range of multi-year projects, in areas such as social justice, sustainable communities, public art, rural prosperity, nonprofit management, documentary film, and educational reform.

- Faculty, staff, students, and community members will work together to identify themes and topics for consideration, do research, develop solutions, design programs, and monitor success.
The emphasis in these collaborative projects will be on creativity, innovative thinking, cross-disciplinary collaboration, and active, practical engagement with real-world issues.

○ Students will have opportunities to participate in “Experience UMF” by enrolling in credit-bearing courses associated with a collaborative project, by engaging in undergraduate research, or by working with clubs or organizations allied with an ongoing project.

Strategy 2. UMF will seek to have, by fall 2015, a curricular menu on which all majors at UMF require some form of engaged, experiential learning in the junior or senior year. Students in any program may deepen and apply the skills appropriate to their discipline in internships, undergraduate research, service learning, study abroad, summer positions, or other appropriate experiential activities determined by program faculty.

Strategy 3. From orientation through graduation and beyond, UMF will offer high-quality, personalized academic and career advising. Faculty and staff will provide opportunities for students to document the knowledge, skills and achievement they have acquired during their UMF careers by means of electronic portfolios, co-curricular transcripts, narrative evaluations, and/or other detailed assessments. UMF will also increase its engagement with community partners and UMF parents and alumni to create opportunities for job shadowing, networking, and other career-building activities for students.

Strategy 4. UMF will improve and enhance the quality of the residential college experience of its students, through incremental renovation of athletic facilities, the Student Center, and residence halls. The campus will develop new residential options, including suites and student-run cooperative housing. It will also investigate and implement where appropriate opportunities for greater student management of selected UMF operations such as the University Store, campus coffee shops, and the Fitness and Recreation Center.

Goal 3. Leverage our Location

UMF will make its location in a vibrant small town in the culturally and recreationally rich region of Western Maine, proximate to southern Quebec, a centerpiece of its recruitment, curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular activity.

Strategy 1. UMF will draw more deliberately upon the region’s social, economic, political, cultural, and environmental setting to provide place-based educational opportunities that mutually benefit UMF students and our region. Through coursework, volunteer, internship, shared educational opportunities across the curriculum, and extracurricular experiences, UMF will strive to be a valued regional partner in understanding, engaging in, and addressing an array of important and complex issues relevant to western and central Maine and bordering areas of Quebec. In providing a focus on opportunities for students to engage the community as mentors, volunteers, Big Brother/Big Sister-like
programs, financial and wellness counseling, and other roles, the university will contribute meaningfully to the health of our region’s people, institutions, businesses, and environments.

**Strategy 2.** UMF will develop for its students a UMF Passport that discounts and promotes off-campus extra-curricular opportunities afforded by the region’s natural, recreational, and cultural bounty.

- Strengthen existing and forge new partnerships with area recreation businesses and organizations, including ski slopes, hiking clubs, canoeing, whitewater rafting, and related enterprises, to promote student opportunities for nearby skiing, mountain biking, trail running/hiking and other recreational pursuits. UMF’s focus on year-round outdoor activities and wellness may include an option for pre-orientation programming, including multi-day outdoor experiences, to help strengthen cohorts and provide leadership opportunities for experienced students.

- Strengthen existing and forge new partnerships with area historic, arts and cultural organizations to promote student participation in music, theater, art, dance, living history, and related cultural pursuits. UMF will explore opportunities for summer and pre-orientation programming to help strengthen cohorts and engage juniors and seniors in leadership development.

**Strategy 3.** UMF will work with area stakeholders to activate a newly designed minor or certificate program in ski industries open to students of all majors. UMF will develop options to earn nationally recognized certificates provided by UMF and local partners, including coaching, youth ski programs, National Ski Patrol, Wilderness First Responder, CPR, and others.

**Goal 4. Align our Actions**

UMF will align its operations, marketing, governance, physical planning, and financial management to wisely steward its resources in support of its mission, goals, and strategies, and shall monitor progress annually.

**Strategy 1.** UMF will reorganize structures and processes of governance, academics, fundraising, and operations to support and jointly share responsibility for achievement of UMF’s mission, goals and strategies. UMF will annually measure its plan progress according to success measures identified for each goal and strategy.

**Strategy 2.** UMF will develop a campus master plan and capital investment/fundraising priorities to support the UMF mission, goals, and strategies. In carrying out the plan, UMF will identify, secure support for, and phase appropriate investments in buildings, equipment, and infrastructure.
Strategy 3. UMF will develop a marketing plan to support its mission, goals, and strategies. The university will align message, medium, and market to create greater impact from marketing investment. UMF will coordinate its marketing, recruitment and retention plans to yield more effective and strategic enrollment management.

Strategy 4. For each goal and strategy, UMF will establish metrics and time-specific expectations to monitor progress toward our goals. It shall conduct “alignment audits” of budgetary and other operational choices and impacts to better connect our actions with achievement of UMF’s mission, goals, and strategies.

Strategy 5. To provide professional development and deepen our talent reserves, UMF will expand cross training processes and opportunities. UMF will further develop a professional development plan for staff at all ranks to encourage appropriate growth of leadership and skills within disciplines. This will include more formal mentoring and expectations for staff development across all departments.