AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

1. NAME OF ITEM: Providing an in-state tuition rate to military dependents using a GI Bill.

2. INITIATED BY: Gregory G. Johnson, Vice Chair, Board of Trustees

3. BOARD INFORMATION: BOARD ACTION: X

4. BACKGROUND:

The Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act (also known as the Choice Act) was signed into law in August 2014. There were two sections of this law pertaining to the GI Bill. The first, 701, expanded the Fry Scholarship to include spouses of service members who died in the line of duty. The second, 702, requires VA to disapprove programs of education at public schools (the law does not apply to private and for profit schools) if the schools do not offer in-state tuition to qualifying Veterans and dependents. In the case of the UMS, this would potentially impact 600-1000 students (both veterans and dependents)

Board action in 2014 (attached) already addresses the section pertaining to all current and former members of the US Armed Forces who were honorably discharged, regardless of whether or not they are receiving benefits.

Board action is required related to veterans’ dependents in order to prevent disapproval of several hundred academic programs throughout all UMS campuses prior to the July 1, 2015 deadline. The fiscal impact throughout UMS is negligible as all campuses have reported less than 30 total current GI Bill students/veterans dependents that would be affected by the proposed Board Policy. UMS is positioned to leverage this new requirement as a tool to increase new enrollments by implementing a policy that is clear, concise, easy to administer, and easy to market.

For the Committee’s further information, the text of the veterans’ resolution, the Board policy pertaining the veterans’ tuition and an update on current veterans’ enrollment is attached.

5. TEXT OF PROPOSED RESOLUTION:

That the Academic and Student Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees recommends that the University of Maine System charge in-state tuition rates for terms starting after the end of the spring semester, 2015, to all military dependents using a GI Bill. Further, that once the in-state tuition rate is applied to the eligible individual, it shall remain in effect until the individual completes their academic program, even after GI Bill benefits have been exhausted, transferred, or are otherwise expired, and directs that this be included within the consent agenda for the January 2015 meeting of the Board of Trustees.

1/5/15