



The University of Maine / University of Maine at Machias Primary Partnership Recommendations and Background January 2017

On Monday, January 30, 2017, University of Maine President Susan J. Hunter and University of Maine at Machias President Sue Huseman jointly presented recommendations to the University of Maine System Board of Trustees for a new governance relationship between the institutions that, if approved, would take effect July 1, 2017.

PLANNING FOR A PARTNERSHIP

Launched in [March 2016](#) after eight months of data gathering, input, and analysis by the University of Maine System, the Primary Partnership brought together academic and administrative leaders from the University of Maine and the University of Maine at Machias to discuss how collaboration and cooperation could create opportunities for students at both institutions as well as the communities and economic enterprises they serve. More critically, recognizing that the University of Maine at Machias was then not financially viable given enrollment declines due to the region's challenging demographics, the following goals were set for the Primary Partnership:

- To preserve and build on the University of Maine at Machias's self-identified mission-differentiated vision as a coastal campus anchored in Downeast Maine;
- To increase the University of Maine at Machias's positive impact on the students, communities, and industries it serves; and,
- To establish a model for the University of Maine at Machias's relationship with the University of Maine that is financially responsible and brings stability and investment to the Machias campus and region.

The Machias campus's challenges put at risk its [coastal mission](#) to educate students, provide responsive service to the Downeast Region, and help create economic opportunity for Washington county and coastal communities. But by linking the Machias coastal mission with the University of Maine's statewide land and sea grant missions, advancements made under the One University Initiative make it possible to share the scale, expertise and reach needed to implement the Machias coastal mission.

The [\\$5 million investment announced recently for the Downeast Region](#) to build capacity in marine resource research and education is an example of the kind of investment a revitalized Machias campus could attract to the Downeast region.

THE PROPOSED STRUCTURE FOR THE PARTNERSHIP

On January 30, 2017 the Primary Partnership Structure and Governance Task Team, which includes campus and community leaders from both UMaine and the University of Maine at Machias, as well as the University of Maine System Chancellor's Office, presented its consensus recommendations at the University of Maine System Board of Trustee meeting. The presentation will be followed by a campus and community engagement process to discuss the recommendations. The Board will act on the final recommendations at its March 26-27 meeting.

The recommendations call for Machias to become a regional campus of the University of Maine, while maintaining the University of Maine at Machias name, its distinct, regionally-focused mission, unique degree programs that serve the region's interests, and its own community-focused Board of Visitors to support the Machias campus and its local leadership. Developed to comport with the University of Maine System Charter as well as state law, the plan establishes a structure that facilitates intercampus collaboration while remaining responsive to regional needs. Elements include:

- Campus Leadership: As proposed, Machias will be led by a campus-based Executive Dean with oversight of the Machias-based academic programming and day-to-day campus operations. The Executive Dean will report to the President of the University of Maine and serve on the UMaine Cabinet as well as the UMaine Provost Council and Deans' Council. The recommended structure is expected to foster synergies in administrative coordination and shared access to programs and services for students on both campuses consistent with One University objectives. Machias is expected to retain its NEASC accreditation, but through the University of Maine once the governance change takes effect;
- Local Academic Programs Sustained: The University of Maine at Machias will continue to offer robust academic programs that serve the needs of the Downeast region's students and businesses. Students will be able to start and complete four-year degrees at the Machias campus while gaining access and new pathways to baccalaureate and advanced degree programs from the Orono campus; and,
- Sustaining Small Campus Student Life: Students in Machias will continue to benefit from the services and support of a small, close-knit campus community and the opportunity to participate in small school intercollegiate athletics. Advising, financial aid, student life, and other professionals will continue to be available on the Machias campus serving students in coordination with UMaine staff in Orono.

PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION

As proposed to the Board, the consensus recommendations envision a July 1, 2017 effective date for the governance relationship change between the institutions, which coincides with the start of the University of Maine System 2018 Fiscal Year. Over the next two fiscal years the finances and budget for the Machias campus will be reported separately to provide greater transparency and opportunities for assessment of the new partnership.

The proposed budget for the Machias campus for the upcoming fiscal year is expected to be in balance within existing resources and commitments through campus-based initiatives and administrative savings attributable to the newly-proposed governance structure. This fiscal stability allows the campus to proceed with searches

for several faculty members who will serve in existing programs at Machias.

Additional university system resources have been identified and pledged to cover transitional costs during the implementation phase of the partnership.

It is expected that an interim Executive Dean for the Machias campus will be named later this Spring in consultation with campus and community leaders. The search for a full-time Executive Dean will be scheduled at a time to be determined based on campus needs and will be organized to include input from stakeholders on campus and in the community.

It is expected that the UMS Board of Trustees will continue to hold meetings on the Machias campus and with the Machias Board of Visitors as part of its ongoing rotation among the campuses of the University of Maine System.

THE PROMISE OF PARTNERSHIP

Campus-led explorations of opportunities for research, scholarship, and service have identified new pathways to success for students and researchers while identifying programmatic and administrative collaborations that achieve savings and improve service through shared scale and expertise. While final decisions on implementation are still to come, examples of potential opportunities that may be explored further include:

- Transfer Programs: Programmatic teams are recommending curricula be aligned so that students can start at one university and transfer to the other after one or two years and complete the degree program at the other in three or two additional years. Most, but not all, of these so-called 1+3 and 2+2 programs involve students beginning their studies at UMM and completing them at UMaine;
- Fast-Track Pathways to Advanced Degrees: Some teams identified ways that curricula could be aligned so that students completing a four-year degree program at UMM could move directly into a master's program at UMaine and complete the program in one year;
- Shared Courses: Some teams identified courses that could be shared by programs at both universities. Most of these courses would be offered online or through another distance technology; however, some would be offered in May term or summer sessions; and,
- Graduate Student Teaching: There are opportunities for UMaine graduate students to teach at UMM. The teaching experience would help round out the students' professional training and would provide UMM with instructors who could add breadth and depth to the curricula of some of their programs.