

University of Maine System Board of Trustees

Operating Principles

Mission for the University of Maine System

The University of Maine System unites seven distinctive public universities in the common purposes of providing first-rate higher education at reasonable cost in order to improve the quality of life for the citizens of Maine. The System, through its Universities, carries out the traditional tripartite mission -- teaching, research, and public service. As a System, it extends its mission as a major resource for the State, linking economic growth, the education of its people, and the application of research and scholarship.

The University of Maine System Board of Trustees, in consultation with the Chancellor, is the governing and planning body of the University System responsible for developing and maintaining a cohesive structure of public higher education in the State of Maine. As such, the Board has final authority over all matters within its jurisdiction, including all educational, public service, and research policies, as well as personnel and financial policies. The Board provides leadership on higher education policy within the System and the State, is committed to strengthening the unique characteristics of each University's mission, and advocates aggressively for adequate resources to support the System and its universities.

Role of the Board of Trustees

The Board makes policy for the System and oversees the implementation of its policies. It provides leadership within the System and the State and is committed to strengthening post secondary education, the unique characteristics of each University, and the System as a whole. The Board advocates aggressively for resources to support the System and is responsible and accountable for the stewardship of those resources. It is responsible for hiring the Chancellor and plays a central role in the hiring of campus Presidents. It is the role of the Board to represent the entire state and all constituents. The Board is committed to inclusive, student centered decision making. The Board seeks and values input from all of its constituents both internal and external.

Guidelines for Effective Board Participation

- The Board acts as one to exercise the authority it has to develop policy for the University of Maine System and to carry out its duties. The duly elected Chair and Vice Chair of the Board and the Committee Chairs who serve as the Executive Committee of the Board organize the work of the Board and represent the Board, as required.
- The Board uses and respects an inclusive process and develops consensus collectively. On major policy decisions – hiring a chancellor or president, approving the budget or a tuition increase, altering a university mission, for example – we act only after a thorough process has been followed. All Trustees are represented in our deliberations and all views are respected.
- The Chair and Vice Chair of the Board are elected annually and Committee Chairs are appointed annually by the Chair. The Chair and Vice Chair may serve up to 4 one year terms. Questions, ideas and concerns are channeled through the Board Chair, the appropriate Committee Chair and/or the Chancellor. The Board is responsible for the Chancellor's annual evaluation which is conducted by the Board Chair and is reflective of member's input.
- The Chancellor, senior staff and presidents assist the Board of Trustees in making major policy decisions, carrying out System policies and leading the System and the Universities for the benefit of the people of Maine. The Board maintains a respectful, candid working relationship with these individuals.
- Committee Chairs interact regularly with the staff member assigned to their Committee. They are expected to set the annual agenda for their Committee in consultation with the staff member assigned to the Committee and the Board Chair. Individual Trustees with questions, concerns and requests for

actions for staff direct those questions, concerns and requests for action through the Chancellor. Trustees do not typically act independently.

- The Board Chair is the spokesperson for the Board and the Chancellor is the spokesperson for the System. Trustees are expected to represent the Board to the larger community at university functions such as commencement exercises but they do not represent or speak for the Board to the general public. The Chair and the Chancellor make all formal statements to the media and respond to journalists' questions regarding Board actions and policies.
- The Board of Trustees act in accordance with Maine's open meeting and open records laws as well as its own bylaws when conducting its business. Trustees must usually be physically present to have their votes counted. However, a Trustee who cannot be in physical attendance at a meeting of the Board may participate and vote by telephone, Polycom or other similar interactive technology where the Chair has determined on the record that the physical presence of the non-attending Trustee is prevented by an exceptional occasion which makes it inadvisable or impossible to attend the meeting. Trustees may participate in Board committee meetings by telephone, PolyCom or other similar interactive technology. The Trustees act in accordance with principles of openness at all times including when using the phone, email or other means of communication.
- Trusteeship requires a substantial commitment. Trustees read all materials in advance, come to meetings prepared, and make every effort to attend all Board meetings and the meetings of Committees to which they have been assigned. Trustees make the commitment necessary to be effective Board members and respect the commitment they have made when making decisions about the use of their time.
- Trustees will strictly comply with the Conflict of Interest policy of the Board and be cognizant of any potential conflicts that may arise. They understand that the appearance of conflict of interest is as significant as actual conflict of interest.

Expectations of Board Members

- Be accountable for governance, policy-making, and making decisions that are the responsibility of the Board of Trustees
- Understand and respect the public's need for trust in office holders. Avoid conflict of interest concerns; both real conflict and the possibility of perceived conflict.
- Understand UMS finances
- Be informed
- Engage in respectful inquiry and participation
- Support Board decisions after they've been made
- Be accountable in the hiring and performance feedback re: Chancellor (to Chair of the Board)
- Understand key challenges of academic and student affairs
- Attend all meetings and retreats (absences are exceptions not the norm)
- Understand public meeting law requirements
- Participate in committees as assigned
- Be forthright with concerns. Concerns should be brought forward as they arise to the Board Chair, the Chancellor or the appropriate committee chair
- Represent the Board at Commencements
- Advocate for higher education with the public and elected officials in coordination with and awareness of the Chair, Chancellor, and System Senior Staff
- Be aware of and attend significant events such as the Chancellor's biennial address to the Legislature whenever possible
- Assist as requested by the Chancellor or the Chair on legislative relations