

**UNIVERSITY OF MAINE SYSTEM**  
**Academic and Student Affairs Committee**  
**February 10, 2025**  
**Zoom Meeting**

**Present: Committee Members:** David MacMahon; Chair, Trish Riley, Roger Katz, Barbara Alexander, Donna Loring, Kelly Martin, Elise Baldacci **Presidents:** Joseph McDonnell, Leigh Saufley, Ray Rice, Deb Hedeon, Jacqueline Edmondson, Jenifer Cushman, and Joan Ferrini-Mundy **Faculty Representatives:** Clyde Mitchell, Tim Surrence, Jeff Maine, Ivan Manev and Lisa Leduc. **System Staff:** Chancellor Malloy, Jeffrey St. John, Carolyn Dorsey, Ryan Low, Sam Warren, Amon Purinton, Jamie Ballinger, Elizabeth Stickler **Provosts:** Adam Tuchinsky, Kathy Yardley, Megan Walsh, and Joseph Szakas **Others Present:** Gabe Paquette, Tim Doyle, Scott Marzilli

Trustees Absent: Lisa Eames, Pender Makin, Emily Cain, Will Kemler

Trustee David MacMahon, Chair, welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order. The Clerk performed a roll call of the Committee members present.

**Student Representatives Discussion**

No student representatives were present.

**Faculty Representatives Discussion**

The Academic and Student Affairs Committee invited faculty representatives to the Board of Trustees to bring forward discussion items relevant to their university communities and the University of Maine System.

Faculty representatives engaged in discussion regarding the 90-credit degree programs. Professor Manev noted that while faculty had been aware of preliminary discussions, the final announcement came as a surprise. He emphasized that faculty are supportive and interested in submitting proposals but need more clarity on the process. Faculty expressed concerns about:

- The need for greater faculty participation in major decisions affecting academic programs
- Questions about transitioning between 90 and 120 credit programs
- Clarification needed on target audience and admission criteria
- Concerns about the "applied" designation requirement and its academic implications
- The relationship between life experience credits and degree requirements
- Interest in having written documentation explaining program parameters

**Board Approval Process Discussion:**

Vice Chancellor St. John clarified several points regarding the approval process:

- Prior to January, the system was not in a position to make definitive statements about program development
- Needed to secure trustee support before initiating formal processes
- Received approval at January board meeting to pursue pilot cohort
- Limited to no more than five programs across the system
- Programs specifically directed at adult degree completers

**Program Documentation and Parameters:**

In response to faculty requests for written guidance, Vice Chancellor St. John committed to:

- Creating a comprehensive resource page with program information
- Sharing NECHE's one-page protocol document with:
  - Trustees
  - Faculty board representatives
  - Student board representatives
- Including required program elements:
  - Clear differentiation from 120-credit programs
  - Pathway options to four-year degree completion
  - Market distinctions between 90 and 120-credit programs
  - Transparent communication about program outcomes
  - Clear identification of target audience

Professor Leduc raised specific concerns about the term "applied" being required by NECHE, noting it could have negative connotations in academia. She also provided an update on the previously approved Criminal Justice program, indicating there had not yet been outreach for collaboration between UM and UMPI faculty as committed. Vice Chancellor St. John responded specifically to the Criminal Justice program concerns:

- Acknowledged the commitment for collaboration between institutions
- Expressed appreciation for Professor Leduc's follow-up on this matter
- Committed to personally remind Provost Volin and his team of their obligation to work with UMPI criminal justice faculty
- Confirmed the requirement for a progress report due this summer
- Assured the committee he would ensure the collaborative work moves forward as promised

### **Transfer ME: University Of Maine System - Maine Community College System Partnership Update**

Dr. Heather Ball, UMS Director of Student Success and Transfer Initiatives, and Jamie Ballinger, UMS Director of Academic and Enrollment Initiatives, working closely with MCCS colleagues, have led the implementation of the Transfer ME agreement signed by Chancellor Malloy and President Daigler in July 2024. Jamie Ballinger gave a short presentation and answered questions from trustees, faculty representatives, and/or student representatives.

Key discussion points included:

Structural Improvements:

- Development of cross-system communication protocols
- Creation of dedicated staff contacts at all 14 campuses
- Implementation of shared websites with consistent information
- Enhanced training for advisors and staff

Current Status:

- 143 active articulation agreements between systems
- Program-to-program pathways versus course-by-course articulation
- Dynamic documents requiring regular updates as courses change
- 95 degree programs identified for initial direct admission offers
- Exclusion of certain programs (nursing, engineering) due to selective admission requirements

Implementation Progress:

- Launch of direct admission process

- Development of joint advising model
- Creation of "warm handoff" process between systems
- Focus on data-driven outcomes
- Plans for strategic expansion of program offerings

Trustees engaged in discussion about:

- The significant improvement in system collaboration compared to previous years
- Marketing opportunities to community college students
- Opportunities to expand articulation agreements
- Addressing place-bound student needs through online options
- The role of UMA centers in providing accessibility

### **Student Success Update: Proactive Advising and Retention Gains**

Dr. Scott Marzilli, University of Maine (UM) Associate Provost for Student Success and Innovation, led a presentation on a set of technologies and communications supporting advising and gains in retention at our universities.

Dr. Marzilli presented detailed information on the Black Bear Early Alert initiative, highlighting: Program Structure:

- Two-week and six-week alert campaigns
- 81 faculty/staff providing coordinated support
- 181 instructors participating
- Coverage of 742 students (40% of first-year class)
- Over 4,000 documented student interactions

Success Metrics:

- Record retention rate of 83.4% for 2023 cohort
- 75% of outreach directed to students with pre-enrollment risk factors
- Significant GPA improvements for vulnerable student populations
- Faculty participation increasing each semester
- Demonstrated effectiveness of early intervention model

The committee discussed the relationship between the initiative and Strategic Plan goals, opportunities for sharing best practices across campuses, and the importance of proactive support systems.

### **ASA Work Plan Report: Student Mental Health Resources Update**

Vice Chancellor St. John reviewed the status of student mental health resources within the System in keeping with the Committee's 2024-25 work plan.

Strategic Investments:

- Funding directed toward two key areas identified through:
  - Half-day retreat with chief student affairs officers
  - Mental Health Task Force report recommendations

Telehealth Services:

- Previous system-wide telehealth resource discontinued due to low utilization
- Exploring expansion of successful existing platform used by UMFH and Maine Law
- Meeting scheduled with chief student affairs officers and vendor
- Faculty governance representative included in vendor selection process
- Focus on improving marketing and student awareness

Professional Development:

- Developing comprehensive onboarding resources for faculty and staff
- Addressing various employee needs including:
  - Access to academic resources

- Healthcare information
- Housing information
- Childcare resources

#### Implementation Challenges:

- Need for consistent and effective marketing of telehealth services
- Varying university needs for faculty/staff development
- One-time funding nature requires planning for sustainable solutions
- Universities will need to evaluate long-term investment priorities
- 

#### **Discussion Item: Financial Implications of New Academic Programs**

Trustee MacMahon and Vice Chancellor St. John explained, and invited discussion about, a process for identifying the costs associated with new academic programs as well as projecting revenue for the same.

#### Context and Background:

- Discussion originated from Trustee McMahon's interest in having clearer financial implications presented
- Recognition that proposals need to balance detail with efficiency
- Acknowledgment that faculty and provosts already handle extensive information requirements

#### Key Areas for Financial Information:

- Faculty staffing needs (full-time and part-time)
- Timing of new faculty hires
- Associated hiring costs
- Instructional resource requirements
- Impact of delivery modality on costs
- Enrollment projections and timeline
- Space and facility requirements

#### Current Practice Discussion:

Trustee Alexander provided important context:

- Most program proposals historically include comprehensive financial information
- Standard practice includes discussion of:
  - Faculty requirements
  - Space needs
  - Enrollment projections
  - E&G budget impacts
- Recent deviation from this practice prompted current discussion
- Suggested reviewing past proposals as examples of appropriate detail level

#### Committee Considerations:

- Need to maintain clear separation between ASA and FFT committee responsibilities
- Recognition that some programs may not break even but serve important academic purposes
- Importance of demonstrating thorough program planning
- Value of consistent information presentation across proposals

#### Vice Chancellor St. John's Response:

- Acknowledged varying trustee perspectives on information adequacy
- Committed to working with provosts to develop consistent approach
- Emphasized need to avoid crossing committee jurisdictional lines
- Proposed focusing on planning aspects rather than detailed budgeting
- Suggested maintaining current practice with more standardized presentation

Next Steps:

- Review successful past proposals for best practices
- Develop baseline information requirements
- Consult with provosts on implementation
- Maintain focus on academic planning aspects
- Ensure information supports program quality evaluation

The committee agreed that while detailed financial information is important, it should support rather than overshadow academic program evaluation and remain within appropriate committee jurisdiction.

### **Update On 90-Credit Applied Bachelor's Degree Program**

Vice Chancellor St. John shared an update on the development of the 90-credit applied bachelor's degree programs pilot cohort and answered questions from the trustees and Board faculty representatives.

Vice Chancellor St. John outlined next steps following extensive faculty discussion:  
Communication Strategy:

- Creating comprehensive online resource page including:
  - NECHE guidance documentation
  - Regional and national context
  - Program development updates
  - Background materials
  - FAQ responses

Timeline and Process:

- Initial Chancellor communication sent January 22, 2024
- Space reserved for NECHE commission review in November 2025
- Faculty expressing concerns about timeline feasibility
- Commitment to thorough consultation process

Stakeholder Engagement:

- Meetings scheduled with:
  - Faculty governance council
  - University registrars
  - Enrollment managers
  - Individual faculty senates
  - Campus leadership teams

Approval Process Discussion:

Vice Chancellor St. John clarified the approval pathway:

- Programs will follow existing curricular development and approval processes
- No separate or different approval track will be created
- Will utilize standard intent to plan and full proposal phases
- All proposals will come through ASA Committee as with other programs
- NECHE requirements will be incorporated into proposal documentation including:
  - Clear differentiation from traditional programs
  - Specific enrollment criteria for adult degree completers
  - Pathway options to 120-credit programs
  - Market differentiation statements

Trustee Alexander raised several process questions:

- Questioned whether ASA would develop criteria for the pilot programs

- Asked about methodology to measure pilot program results
- Suggested need for written criteria to govern program development
- Recommended establishing clear assessment metrics

#### Faculty Discussion of Process:

Professor Staples noted need for additional clarification on:

- Transition pathways between 90 and 120-credit programs
- Impact on target audience definition
- Handling of life experience credits
- Maintaining academic quality standards

#### Response and Next Steps:

Vice Chancellor St. John outlined that:

- Will share NECHE protocol document with all stakeholders
- Guard rails will be built into actual program proposals
- Standard ASA review process will apply
- Assessment criteria will be incorporated into program approval documentation
- Regular updates will be provided through public board meetings

### **Informational Item: University Of Southern Maine Program Degree Name Change / M.S. In School Psychology To Ed.S (Educational Specialist) In School Psychology**

The University of Southern Maine's Master of Science in School Psychology program requested that the program degree designator be changed from the Master of Science (M.S.) to the Educational Specialist (Ed.S.) in School Psychology. This change aligns with a national trend away from the M.S. in favor of the Ed.S. degree and reflects the advanced coursework required within the program. This degree designator will align USM's degree title with national professional and market trends. No curricular modifications accompany this name change.

### **Scheduling Note For February 24, 2025 Meeting**

Vice Chancellor St. John noted the addition to the 2024-25 Academic and Student Affairs Committee calendar of a meeting devoted to tenure. The meeting will be held on Monday, February 24.

Vice Chancellor St. John provided context for the dedicated tenure meeting:

- Separate meeting allows appropriate time for tenure deliberations
- Single agenda item format maintains focus
- Executive session format reflects personnel matter sensitivity
- Advance notice helps manage attendance expectations

### **Executive Session**

On a motion by Trustee Alexander, which was seconded by Trustee Katz, and approved by a roll call vote of all Trustees present, the Academic & Student Affairs Committee agreed to go into Executive Session under the provisions of:

- 1 MRSA Section 405 6-A to discuss the evaluation of personnel and the consideration and discussion of appointments, evaluations, employment, and duties.

On a motion by Trustee Alexander, which was seconded by Trustee Katz, and approved by a roll call vote of all Trustees present, the Academic & Student Affairs Committee concluded the

Executive Session.

## **PUBLIC SESSION**

### **Tenure at Time of Hire, University of Southern Maine**

The University of Southern Maine requested that Dr. Karen Wilson be awarded tenure at the rank of Associate Professor in the Department of Environmental Science within the College of Science, Technology, and Health at the University of Southern Maine, effective September 1, 2024, in accordance with Board of Trustee Policy 310. Dr. Wilson's credentials have been reviewed by the faculty of the Department of Environmental Science at the University of Southern Maine and received their full support.

On a motion by Trustee Riley, which was seconded by Trustee Martin, and approved by a roll call vote of all Trustees present, the Academic and Student Affairs Committee approved the following resolution to be forwarded for Board of Trustee approval at the March 9-10, 2025 Board Meeting.

That the Board of Trustees accepts the recommendation of the Academic & Student Affairs Committee and approves tenure at time of hire, Associate Professor in the Department of Environmental Science with tenure to be effective September 1, 2024.

Additional information about the meeting can be found on the Board of Trustees website:  
<https://www.maine.edu/board-of-trustees/meeting-agendas-materials/academic-and-student-affairs-committee/>

Adjournment

Elizabeth Stickler, Clerk