

University of Maine System  
Board of Trustees Meeting

Zoom Meeting  
June 25, 2025

**Strategic Planning Committee Meeting**

**Present: Committee Members:** Emily Cain, Chair; Barbara Alexander, John Moore, & Riley Worth. **Other Trustees: Presidents:** Joan Ferrini-Mundy, Joseph McDonnell & Leigh Saufley, **Chancellor:** Dannel Malloy **System Staff:** Jeffrey St. John, Carolyn Dosey, Heather Ball, Amon Purinton, Lisa Landry & Elizabeth Sticker **Others:** Jason Charland

**Committee Members Absent:**

Trustee Cain, Committee Chair, welcomed everyone, provided opening remarks as this committee has not met in several months as the system and other committees have been diligently working towards completing initiatives and goals of the Strategic Plan, and called the meeting to order. The Clerk performed a roll call of the Committee members present.

Chair Cain asked if the Chancellor would also like to add any additional remarks. The Chancellor noted that the execution of commitments under the strategic plan have been ongoing, noting that some of the larger accomplishments, including heightened student enrollment and modernized strategies for incoming classes are all credit to the strategic plan's structure and initiatives, and that these commitments have been met by a diligent effort across the system.

**Overall Status of 2023-2028 UMS Strategic Plan**

Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs, Jeffrey St. John, overviewed the plan's architecture, with some emphasis on overviewing the five commitments with action and goals tracked by a robust KPI tracking model developed by robust AI-assistance and maintained by Director of Student Success & Transfer Initiatives, Heather Ball. Under these five broad commitments are actions and specific goals aimed at operationalizing these actions and fulfilling commitments, which the plan tracks comprehensively. The presentation continued to outline goals that have been completed, are complete yet ongoing and those that have been started and are in progress, with great emphasis on the statistic that over 80% of all goals in the strategic plan being in process and ongoing at the time of this presentation.

Committee members sought clarity on the strategic plan's goal percentage breakdown, the evaluation of education and work metrics and the risks of the current climate of higher education being raised, with some emphasis in the importance of recursive evaluation of metrics and goal language throughout the life of the plan.

Committee members also expressed the need for further conversation and question regarding goal completing and the data around the success and evolution of those goals. Concerns were raised about identifying risks and barriers to achieving strategic plan goals and asked that a dedicated fall meeting take place to address potential changes at the half-life of the plan, which is

scheduled to take place on October 29, 2025, particularly when considering the continuation of the system's 'Unified Accreditation' under NECHE.

The committee then discussed and explored how unseen factors, such as AI and federal actions, have now shaped strategic planning. Expansion projects and adult education alignment present opportunities, through challenges remain. There are significant goals for increasing online program offerings and ambitious enrollment and retention targets within the strategic plan. Recent developments like the expansion of YourPace to Farmington and Fort Kent are expected to drive enrollment growth, though exact growth rates remain uncertain. Unexpected alignment between adult degree completion initiatives and the development of 90-credit degree programs have also created unforeseen opportunities to fulfill goals within the Strategic Plan. Unknown funding opportunities were also discussed, to include UMS Transforms opportunities and continued support from the Alford Fund continue to bring success and open up opportunities and supporting commitments in the Strategic Plan. However recent state and federal action do introduce uncertainties and potential risks that need to be monitored as the unfold, influencing strategic planning challenges.

Plans are underway to have discussions with leads across different commitments to address how various factors may impact each goal in the Strategic Plan before the October meeting.

### **Review of Actions and Goals Assigned to the Strategic Planning Committee**

Trustee Cain and Vice Chancellors St. John and Dorsey will review the status of goals assigned to the Strategic Planning Committee under Commitments 1 through 5 of the Plan, and outline adjustments to those goals. In addition, they will address a set of goals under Commitment 5 assigned to the Board and implemented by the four vice chancellors, the provosts, and others.

Heather Ball shared a very comprehensive spreadsheet that serves as the holding system and tracking for all strategic plan goals, which highlights some goals on hold due to external influences and showing adaptability and readiness for change as it comes.

As noted in this spreadsheet, about 80% of the goals are completed or ongoing with the Strategic Plan. This spreadsheet reflects other tracking mechanisms that are used by all the Vice Chancellors as each office continues to be embedded within committee work the process of achieving initiatives of the Strategic Plan.

Some goals on hold that were noted are related to climate change and diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) due to pending federal level developments. Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation and President Ferrini-Mundy explained that climate change goals are delayed due to the current federal administration's focus, issues with funding resources, and the strategy of marketing these initiatives being reconsidered and restructured.

Discussion around Commitment 4 highlighted the need to adapt DEI strategies to align with federal changes, maintaining dedication with navigating legal and funding challenges.

Trustees did express concern over these delays in plan implementation due to obligations under the state law that must be met despite federal level changes, with emphasis that the system

should not lessen its commitment to DEI. Dialogue indicated ongoing challenges due to federal policy changes, which could threaten substantial funding (estimated between 50 and 200 million dollars). Important contributions by General Counsel Amon Purinton helped to reframe the need to understand the language and action requirements that the federal government was highlighting in the executive orders that have been issued and needing to align appropriately with those to remain in compliance, which would take patient and tactical adjustments to ensure compliance with both state laws without changing strategic language. This will be continued to be monitored and followed over the following months.

### **Next Steps**

Further discussions revolved around risks and planning, proposing the October 29, 2025, committee meeting to assess adjustments in strategic goals. Barriers related to unified accreditation, the development of AI use, IT needs and suggestions for improved planning were noted.

Additional information about the meeting can be found on the Board of Trustees website:  
[Strategic Planning Committee Meeting Materials - University of Maine System](#)

Adjournment

Kayla Flewelling for  
Elizabeth Stickler, Clerk