

University of Maine System
Board of Trustees

Academic and Student Affairs Committee

February 9, 2026

Zoom Meeting

Present: Committee Members: David MacMahon, Chair; Trish Riley, Barbara Alexander, Emily Cain, Kelly Martin & Donna Loring **Presidents:** Joseph McDonnell, Joan Ferrini-Mundy, Leigh Saufley, Ray Rice, Deb Hedeem, Jacqueline Edmondson & Jenifer Cushman **Chancellor:** Dannel Malloy **System Staff:** Jeffrey St. John, Ryan Low, Carolyn Dorsey, Jamie Ballinger, Heather Ball, Crawford Cleveland & Elizabeth Stickler **Student Representatives:** Isabella Bouchard, Meesh Dionne **Faculty Representatives:** Timothy Surette, Heather Nunez-Olmstead, Clyde Mitchell & Sara Henry. **Provosts:** Alana Margeson, Kathy Yardley, Gabe Paquette, Jeffrey Maine & Megan Walsh **Others:**

Members not attending: Riley Worth, Lisa Eames

Committee Chair MacMahon called the ASA Committee meeting to order and thanked everyone for participating. The clerk took the roll of committee members present.

Student Representative Discussion

The Academic and Student Affairs Committee invited student representatives to the Board of Trustees to bring forward discussion items relevant to their university communities and the University of Maine System. The student representatives acknowledged this opportunity and did not have any current items to present or discuss with the committee.

Faculty 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. The faculty representatives did not have any items to bring to the committee at this meeting.

Academic Program Proposal Review

The session focused on two proposed doctoral level nursing programs, emphasizing the structured academic program proposal review involving the intent to plan, full proposal, and lifecycle stages. These programs aim to advance the R1 mission of the University of Maine and address nursing shortages in the region.

The first program discussed was the proposal of a PhD in Nursing at the University of Maine, creating a post-MSN-to-PhD pathway to address national and state shortages of nurse educators. Maine currently lacks a PhD program in Nursing, which limits the state's capacity to prepare faculty who meet accreditation standards and to cultivate nurse scientists needed for health innovation. The proposed program will be the state's first and only research-focused doctoral nursing program.

The curriculum in this program is designed to be delivered in a flexible, hybrid format to accommodate working professionals and offers full-time (3-4 years) and part-time (5-7 years) progress options.

The program is a collaborative effort across UMS, complementing existing programs at other UMS institutions and drawing support for healthcare organizations including PCHC, St. Joseph's Hospital, MaineHealth, and Northern Light Health. Start-up funding for the PhD in Nursing will be partially covered by a congressionally directed PhD earmark secured by Senator Collins. This funding will cover expenses for years one and two of the programs and may be extended to cover a portion of year three. E&G funds will be utilized to cover expenses after year three.

The second program discussed was a Doctor of Nursing Practice at the University of Maine; the School of Nursing proposes to launch this concentration in Family Nurse Practitioner (DNP-FNP). The DNP-FNP will transition the University of Maine's existing FNP track from a Master of Science in Nursing Leadership degree to a DNP degree. The transition is driven by changing national standards and professional recommendations, including the American Association of Colleges of Nursing 2021 Essentials and the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties (NONPF) advocating for the DNP as the entry-level degree for nurse practitioners.

This program will be delivered as a hybrid program. Over 50% of the courses will be offered online while other courses will use a hybrid design to facilitate the learning of technical skills. The program is a collaborative effort across the system, complementing existing DNP programs at other UMS institutions and drawing support from healthcare organizations including PCHP, St. Joseph's Hospital, MaineHealth, and Northern Light Health.

Vice Chancellor St. John also discussed a few programs that are nearing completion that are typically awaiting the addition of further evidence of efforts to collaborate, and/or placement on a future ASA agenda alongside another program or programs from the same university. Those programs include the following:

BS Art Education, UMPI
MS Healthcare Admin, UMPI
AS THOR, UMPI/Multi-university
BS THOR, UMPI/Multi-university

There is also an intent to plan document included in the materials that outlines another seven programs that are anticipated to begin development once university provosts and the Vice Chancellor determine the opportunities for collaboration and concerns about competition.

Trustees appreciated the structured approach in facilitating informed discussions, with a commitment made to address further questions regarding alignment and funding in the next meeting.

ASA Work Plan Item: State of Transfer Report

Vice Chancellor St. John and Jamie Ballinger, Director of Academic Affairs Planning and Communication, presented a detailed transfer report (provided in the materials) that highlighted strategic goals, enrollment efforts, and the new Unified Catalog course search function as a recruitment tool. The report noted the trend of students transferring with over 60 credits without a credential, increasing non-linear transfer pathways, and successful retention efforts. Students are drawn to adult degree completion pathways, facilitated by community college articulations. Focus remains on enhancing collaboration with community colleges, updating residency requirements for degree completion, and tracking student transfers through the Pathways program. Low transfer-out rates reflect successful retention, while IPEDS data help track less favorable outcomes for students transferring multiple times. National collaborations further enhance student transfer and retention.

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

Kayla Flewelling for
Elizabeth Stickler, Clerk