

UNIVERSITY OF MAINE SYSTEM
Board of Trustees Meeting

University of Maine at Augusta
March 15-16, 2026

Present: Trustees: Trish Riley, Chair; Lisa Eames, Vice Chair; Barbara Alexander (Zoom), Patrick Flood, Emily Cain, Pender Makin, Donna Loring, Heather Johnson, Roger Katz, David MacMahon (Zoom), Kelly Martin, Elise Baldacci, Riley Worth, John Moore, Michael Michaud. Chancellor: Dannel Malloy. University Presidents: Leigh Saufley, Joan Ferrini-Mundy, Ray Rice, Jenifer Cushman, Joseph McDonnell, Deborah Hedeon and Jacqueline Edmondson. Faculty Representatives: Colleen Marzilli, Tim Surette, Clyde Mitchell, William Otto, Libin Thaikkattil Louis, Heather Nunez, and Joe Staples. Student Representatives: Camille Alipalo, Michelle Dionne, Griffin Goins, Grace Hills, Jadah-Lee James. System Staff: Ryan Low, Jeff St. John, Tracy Elliott, Sam Warren, Gretchen Catlin, Amon Purinton, Carolyn Dorsey, Amie Parker, Ryan Whitlock, Robert Placido, Miriam White, Seth Goodall, Crawford Cleveland and Elizabeth Stickler

Sunday, March 15, 2026

EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a motion by Trustee Michaud which was seconded by Trustee Cain, and approved by all Trustees present and by roll call vote, the Board of Trustees meeting went into Executive Session under the following provisions:

- 1 MRSA Section 405 6-A to discuss the evaluation of personnel and the consideration and discussion of appointments, evaluations, employment and duties. •
- 1 MRSA Section 405 6-C to discuss the condition, acquisition or disposition of real property or economic development if premature disclosure of the information would prejudice the competitive or bargaining position of the UMS.
- 1 MRSA Section 405 6-D to discuss planning for negotiations and communications with AFUM, UMPSA, ACSUM, Police, PATFA, and Service and Maintenance Units.

On a motion by Trustee Eames, which was seconded by Trustee Cain, and approved by all Trustees present and by roll call vote, the Board of Trustees concluded the Executive Session.

Monday, March 16, 2026

EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a motion by Trustee Eames, which was seconded by Trustee Cain, and approved by all Trustees present, the Board of Trustees meeting went into Executive Session under the following provisions:

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

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- 1 MRSA Section 405 6-C to discuss the condition, acquisition or disposition of real property or economic development if premature disclosure of the information would prejudice the competitive or bargaining position of the UMS.
- 1 MRSA Section 405 6-D to discuss planning for negotiations and communications with AFUM, UMPSA, ACSUM, Police, PATFA, and Service and Maintenance Units.
- 1 MRSA Section 405 6-E to consult with its attorney concerning legal rights and duties of the university.

On a motion by Trustee Michaud, which was seconded by Trustee Cain, and approved by all Trustees present, the Board of Trustees concluded the Executive Session.

PUBLIC MEETING

Trustee Riley, Chair, called the public meeting back to order and welcomed everyone. She thanked President Cushman and the staff at University of Maine at Augusta for hosting the meeting.

Citizen Comment

Public Comment is a time regularly set aside for comments from the public. The following individuals spoke during the Public Comment period:

Handley Hall at UMA:

Lisa Botshon – Professor of English University of Maine at Augusta

Peter Precourt - Professor of Art and Faculty Senate President, University of Maine at Augusta

Amy Rahn – Associate Professor of Art History

Patrick Hansford – Architecture Program Coordinator, University of Maine at Augusta

Jessie Carroll - On behalf of the Board of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) Maine Chapter

Carter Skemp - Assistant Professor of Architecture, University of Maine at Augusta

Eric Stark - Professor of Architecture

Joanna Shaw - Board member, AIA Maine

Following citizen comment, Faculty Representative Tim Surrette offered brief remarks thanking colleagues for their advocacy during spring break and underscoring that physical spaces are integral to academic programs, particularly for art and architecture.

Chair Riley thanked all speakers for their comments and noted that no proposal regarding Handley Hall was currently before the Board, but that the input was appreciated.

UMA PRESENTATION

President Cushman introduced a presentation on the University of Maine at Augusta's emerging technology initiatives, noting UMA's long history in distance learning and the institution's commitment to leveraging artificial intelligence and extended reality as embedded priorities in its newly revised strategic plan. She noted that the Board had the opportunity the previous evening to visit UMA's new Capital Center for nursing and cybersecurity workforce development.

provided an overview of UMA's three strategic initiatives in support of its next five-year strategic plan: artificial intelligence, student transfer, and neurodiversity. He described generative AI as a transformative general-purpose technology comparable in impact to the invention of electricity or the internet, and highlighted UMA's receipt of a \$400,000 Davis Educational Foundation grant to help integrate AI and virtual reality into its curriculum.

BJ Kitchen, Executive Director of Academic Services and Chair of UMA's AI Committee, presented on the pedagogical value of AI, virtual reality (VR), and extended reality (XR) in teaching and learning. He emphasized that AI is a tool, not a goal, and that its value depends on whether it strengthens student learning. He noted key pedagogical applications including expanding formative feedback, differentiating instruction, and supporting active learning. He described VR and XR as especially powerful when students need structured, repeatable, hands-on learning experiences, citing a 2023 aviation maintenance study from Southern Illinois University in which students trained in VR demonstrated measurably stronger real-world performance than those trained through instructional video alone. Mr. Kitchen also highlighted the upcoming Faculty Institute, marking its 35th year, with a theme of "Teaching with Humanity," and noted UMA's plans to incorporate AI tools into accessibility compliance with new Title II digital accessibility requirements.

Dave Glidden, Aircraft Maintenance Technician School Assistant Program Manager, presenting via Zoom from Brunswick, provided a demonstration of VR training in use at the Aviation Maintenance Technician program. He described the use of VR headsets issued to students as part of their tuition, enabling individual and group training across approximately 85 modules, with instructors able to monitor student progress in real time. He noted the VR training supplements hands-on lab work, reduces material costs and safety risks, and supports students learning from remote locations.

Greg Jeler, Aviation Program Coordinator, described the use of VR and AI in pilot instruction, emphasizing a philosophy of stewardship and value-added training. He shared two case studies illustrating how combining VR practice with AI-generated individualized lesson plans had helped students achieve solo flight milestones more efficiently and at significantly lower cost than traditional training methods. He noted that the aviation program's private pilot retention rate of 80% compares favorably to a general aviation retention rate of 30%, and that the program has set target hours to solo and for full certification well below industry averages. He highlighted a new high-fidelity simulator with VR integration that is expected to further enhance student outcomes.

Provost Szakas concluded the UMA presentation by noting that these efforts reflect UMA's commitment to innovation, accessibility, and workforce impact for the state of Maine.

CHAIR'S REPORT

PRESIDENT'S ROUND-ROBIN

Chair Riley asked the Presidents to provide brief updates on what's new and exciting on their campuses. President McDonnell, University of Maine at Farmington, reported that both the men's and women's basketball teams won the North Atlantic Conference championship, with all student athletes from Maine. He also highlighted a recent campus lecture by Dr. John Hagen, President of the Climate Commons, on the science of communicating scientific findings to non-scientific audiences, and the importance of combining scientific expertise with interpersonal skills and the art of persuasion.

President Rice, University of Maine at Presque Isle, noted that UMPI was the runner-up to UMF in men's basketball and congratulated UMF on the championship. He reported that UMPI is projecting 1,541 graduates this year, compared to approximately 200 five years ago, with 538 marching at commencement and 94 receiving graduate degrees. He highlighted research by Dr. Chen Wang, recently published in the Geological Society of America Bulletin, on rare earth element deposits at Pennington Mountain. He also noted a visit by distinguished lecturer Mel Allen, retired editor of Yankee Magazine, and a campus performance of Hamlet by Shakespeare and Company.

President Saufley, Maine School of Law, reported that Maine Law students won the award for best brief at the Bryant Moore Civil Rights Moot Court Competition at Howard University and also won the best petitioner's brief at the McGee National Civil Rights Competition. She noted that Maine Law now has over 300 applicants on its waiting list, that the business and law clinic is off to a strong start, and that the school has received a congressionally directed spending award to launch a criminal justice clinic beginning in January 2027. She also announced that Maine Law received its largest gift ever from the estate of Dr. Ed David, a 1987 graduate, and that the advancement program is growing with a new team in place.

President Ferrini-Mundy, University of Maine and University of Maine at Machias, reported on several athletic achievements, including the field hockey team's 3.89 GPA, the highest among Division I field hockey programs nationally. She highlighted the GEM building's ahead-of-schedule progress and described the building's design as integrating student learning and research. She noted that planning has begun for a \$45 million congressionally directed spending award for a health and life sciences complex. She also highlighted a UMaine undergraduate honors student's public-facing PFAS policy visualization map, and a collaboration between UMaine, UMF, and the nonprofit Maine Youth Thriving to support early career educators through a Thrive Foundations retreat. She noted a UMaine alumna, Morgan Stoic, recently appeared on the Forbes 30 Under 30 list for her work on human performance in space at NASA's Johnson Space Center.

President Cushman, University of Maine at Augusta, reported that the first cohort of the Aviation Maintenance Technology program will graduate in May, with a 100% FAA airframe certification pass rate among those who have tested. She announced a new joint Bachelor of Science in Medical Laboratory Science in partnership with UMPI, designed to address critical health care workforce shortages in Maine. She also announced that groundbreaking for a new 60-bed residence hall — to be named Margaret Semor Moral Hall in honor of the first woman to earn a civil engineering degree from the University of Maine — will take place on April 16th. She reported that UMA's men's and women's basketball teams both had strong seasons, with the men finishing seventh and the women finishing third at the USCAA National Tournament. She noted that the university has achieved a 342% increase in student athletes over five years and recently received exploratory status with the NCAA.

President Hedeem, University of Maine at Fort Kent, reported that UMFK received the 2026 Community Partner Award from Fort Kent Community High School and the 2025 Community Partner Award from the Greater Fort Kent Area Chamber of Commerce. She noted that the baseball team is competing in Florida and that the track and field team has been practicing at the University of Maine's indoor track facility, for which she thanked President Ferrini-Mundy.

President Edmondson, University of Southern Maine, reported that USM's women's basketball team advanced to the NCAA Sweet 16, that wrestler Jake Craig placed fourth nationally and is a three-time All-

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American, and that the women's indoor track and field team won the LEC championship for the sixth consecutive year, with Zoe Barnes winning the national shot put title. She noted that USM has 279 student athletes with a 3.0 GPA or higher, the largest number in the program's 37-year history. She highlighted USM's Forum on American Democracy series and USM's recognition as the 250th All-Steinway School, presenting at the Steinway conference in New York. She reported on a renewed partnership with UIT, the Arctic University in Tromsø, Norway.

Confirmation of Student Representative to the Board of Trustees

To create an environment for interaction between Faculty and Student Representatives, the Trustees and System administration, the Trustees have provided opportunities for participation in the meetings of the committees of the Board.

One faculty member and one undergraduate student from each of the seven universities and one graduate student from the University of Southern Maine, one graduate student from the University of Maine, and one graduate student from the Maine Law School will be appointed by the Board as non-voting representatives to the Board of Trustees and invited to participate as non-voting members on the standing committees.

Normally, the representative is expected to complete a two-year term; therefore, it is expected that the minimum term of service by Faculty and Student Representatives to the Board be two years. The nominations will be forwarded through the Presidents or Dean of the Law School to the Chancellor for submission to the Board for Trustee approval.

President Hedeem introduced Jadah-Lee James, a sophomore in nursing at the University of Maine at Fort Kent and a native of St. Elizabeth, Jamaica. President Hedeem described Ms. James as a student athlete competing in sprints and long jump on the university's track and field team, a resident assistant, a student government executive, and a member of the student activities board. She noted that Ms. James brings a global perspective to campus and is committed to advocating for student voices and strengthening communication between students and university leadership.

The following nomination is recommended by the campus:

Student Representative

Jadah-Lee James, UMFK - Appointed for a 2-year term – March 2026-March 2028

TEXT OF PROPOSED RESOLUTION:

That the Board of Trustees approves the appointment of the Student Representative to the Board of Trustees as presented.

On a motion by Trustee Martin, which was seconded by Trustee Makin, and approved by all Trustees present and by roll call vote, the Board of Trustees approved the appointment of Jadah-Lee James as Student Representative to the Board of Trustees.

Approval of FY2028 Board and Committee Meeting Calendar

Chair Riley presented the FY2028 Board and Committee Meeting Calendar, noting that efforts had been made to eliminate scheduling conflicts.

TEXT OF PROPOSED RESOLUTION:

That the Board of Trustees approves the Board of Trustees meeting calendar for FY2028, as presented. On a motion by Trustee Johnson, which was seconded by Trustee Martin, and approved by all Trustees present and by roll call vote, the Board of Trustees approved the FY2028 Board and Committee Meeting Calendar.

Redlined Board Policies – First Read

Trustee Alexander presented proposed changes to several Board policies in the 300 series for first reading. She noted that a few items require additional work and coordination with policies in the 600 series, and that any input or questions from Board members or other interested parties should be submitted prior to the May meeting, at which time the policies will be brought forward for action. The policies presented for first reading were:

Board Policy 307 – Admission or Readmission of Students Policy: proposed for elimination, as system leadership confirmed the underlying question this policy addresses is no longer relevant.

Board Policy 308 – Accreditation Policy: proposed amendment to remove language regarding the submission of the unified accreditation policy to the New England Commission for Higher Education (NECHE) and replace it with language reflecting the subsequent authorization of the policy's implementation.

Board Policy 309 – Organization and Establishment of Major Units: proposed amendments to clarify the distinction between reorganizations requiring Board approval and internal reorganizations that require notification to the Chancellor but do not require Board action.

Board Policy 311 – Intra-System Student Exchange: proposed updates to reference the unified catalog initiative and reflect improvements made in this area.

Board Policy 312 – University Professor: proposed amendment to add a reference to the Maine School of Law.

Chair Riley thanked Trustee Alexander and the policy committee for their continued work on the policy review, noting the importance of keeping Board policies current.

CONSENT AGENDA

On a motion by Trustee Eames, which was seconded by Trustee Martin, and approved by all Trustees by roll call vote, the Board of Trustees approved the Consent Agenda items.

Acceptance of Minutes

Level-3 Direct Current Fast Chargers Land Lease Authorization, UMPI and UMFK

CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

Chancellor Malloy provided an update on several areas of system-wide progress.

On enrollment, Chancellor Malloy reported that the system currently has 2,878 actively matriculated students for the upcoming summer and fall terms — a figure representing more than 1,000 additional students compared to the same point in 2023. He described this as a strong indicator of forward momentum and attributed the results to the concerted efforts of presidents, vice chancellors, and campus staff.

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Chancellor Malloy praised the collaborative culture among university presidents and vice chancellors, noting that the system's collective direction and shared purpose are contributing significantly to institutional progress. He specifically acknowledged student trustee efforts to amplify the student voice at the Board level and expressed anticipation for continued work in that area.

He also noted that the system is approaching the end of the semester and entering the home stretch toward commencement ceremonies, which he described as among the most meaningful milestones across the universities.

He congratulated University of Maine women's basketball player Paityn Smith on being named America East Player of the Year.

VICE CHANCELLOR FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION REPORT

Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation Joan Ferrini-Mundy provided an update across four areas: new federal funding opportunities, congressionally directed spending wins in fiscal year 2026, the system's research ecosystem, and a spotlight on the University of Maine at Augusta's research portfolio.

Federal Funding Landscape

Vice Chancellor Ferrini-Mundy noted that the federal government's research funding agenda for FY2026 and FY2027 is becoming more defined, with two emerging areas of particular opportunity for the system. The first is Workforce Pell, where she and Vice Chancellor St. John co-chair a task force examining how UMS students might access workforce Pell funding, in collaboration with the Maine Department of Education, the Maine Community College System, and the State Workforce Board. The second is the U.S. Department of Energy's GENESIS mission — AI for Science — which has identified 26 challenges spanning science, engineering, and AI. System leadership has attended a related summit and is actively exploring alignment with these federal priorities.

Congressionally Directed Spending — FY2026

Vice Chancellor Ferrini-Mundy reported that the system secured \$61.3 million in congressionally directed spending for FY2026, with deep gratitude to Senator Collins, Senator King, Congresswoman Pingree, and Congressman Golden. She described the projects funded across the system, all with a strong workforce and economic development focus:

Maine Law received funding for a pilot criminal justice clinic. The University of Maine at Fort Kent received funding for a computer training facility to support computer science and computer systems administration students. The University of Maine at Farmington received funding for renovations to a health care training center to support workforce partnerships with local hospitals and providers. The University of Maine at Presque Isle received funding to expand critical health profession programs in exercise science, medical laboratory technology, nursing, and physical therapist assistant programs. The University of Maine at Machias received funding to renovate the Reynolds Center to create a dedicated space for early college students. The University of Maine and the University of Southern Maine will share funding to modernize laboratories at the Maine College of Engineering and Computing. The University of Maine also received two awards related to the Forest Health Facility, including equipment and temperature controls for the spruce budworm processing lab. A \$5 million earmark for the Darling Marine Center will support expansion of the Gulf of Maine Ocean Observing System and the American Lobster Settlement Index. Additional funding was awarded in support of the New England Indigenous Archaeology and Heritage Science Center to enable record digitization.

Trustees discussed the sustainability of ongoing federally funded initiatives, with particular focus on the criminal justice clinic at Maine Law. President Saufley confirmed that the pilot project is structured as a three-year initiative, with a planned glide path to transition the clinic into the E&G budget prior to the conclusion of federal funding, consistent with the approach used for the business and law clinic.

Research Ecosystem and UMA Research Portfolio

Vice Chancellor Ferrini-Mundy highlighted the engagement of undergraduate students in research as a distinguishing characteristic of the UMS research enterprise, enabled in part by the Harold Alford Foundation-funded TRANSFORMS project and its focus on Research Learning Experiences. She noted that since the launch of RLEs at UMF in 2022-23, student participation has tripled — from 131 students in 12 courses to 465 students across 25 courses.

President Cushman introduced Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences Pam McRae, who presented on UMA's growing applied research portfolio. Dean McRae highlighted research activity across the cybersecurity program, including projects focused on critical infrastructure protection and cyber-secure smart manufacturing, supported by the Maine Economic Improvement Fund, NIST's RAMP program, and congressionally directed spending that funded the Capital Center cyber range. She noted the nursing program's national conference engagement and peer-reviewed publications, and UMA's continued participation in the Envision Resilience collaborative design program alongside universities including Cornell and the University of Michigan. She described UMA's biomedical research activities and funding from the Davis Family Foundation for the prison education reentry program. Dean McRae concluded by emphasizing UMA's commitment to expanding its culture of research, broadening the range of faculty engaged in scholarship, and increasing externally funded projects.

VICE CHANCELLOR FOR FINANCE AND STRATEGIC AI INTERGRATION REPORT

Vice Chancellor for Finance and Strategic AI Integration Ryan Low provided updates on investment performance, the FY2026 budget forecast, the FY2027 budget development timeline, and an enterprise AI initiative.

Investment Update

Vice Chancellor Low reported the following investment results through January 2026, noting that market volatility in early March had affected more recent performance:

The Managed Investment Pool had a January market value of \$418 million, with a gain of 1.9% for the month and 7.1% fiscal year to date. Preliminary estimates indicated an additional 1% gain in February but a loss of approximately 2.5% in the first week of March.

The Pension Fund had a January market value of \$15.6 million, with a gain of 0.9% for the month and 3.5% fiscal year to date. Preliminary estimates indicated an additional 1% gain in February and a loss of approximately 1.6% in the first week of March.

The Operating Fund had a January market value of \$322 million, with a gain of 1% for the month and 5% fiscal year to date, resulting in a net return of \$8.7 million — exceeding the \$2.8 million annual budget by \$5.9 million. Preliminary estimates indicated a positive return of approximately 6% in February, though Vice Chancellor Low cautioned that early March losses were expected to offset much of that gain.

FY2026 Budget Forecast

Vice Chancellor Low presented the second budget forecast of the fiscal year, noting that campuses submit three forecasts annually. He reviewed each campus as follows:

The University of Maine had originally projected a \$2.1 million E&G deficit to be resolved through a reserve transfer. That gap grew to approximately \$7 million at the November forecast, driven by lower-than-projected enrollment. Through a combination of compensation and benefit savings from attrition, reassessment of financial aid allocations, and identification of eligible expenses and external funding, the campus has brought the gap back to approximately \$2.1 million. Auxiliary operations remain relatively stable.

The University of Maine at Augusta is tracking a modest E&G position, with an auxiliary gap that has grown from \$255,000 in the original budget to approximately \$837,000, driven by lower-than-expected enrollment in the Augusta and Bangor residential options and Sodexo staffing-related cost increases. The University of Maine at Farmington continues to track approximately a \$600,000 E&G gap, consistent with expectations, while the auxiliary side has returned to budget.

The University of Maine at Fort Kent showed a notably positive E&G position, forecasting a seven-figure surplus — an outcome Vice Chancellor Low described as unprecedented in his experience with the UMFK budget. The auxiliary side presents ongoing challenges, largely offsetting the E&G gain. The University of Maine at Presque Isle continues to show a strong E&G surplus, though originally projected near \$4 million, the figure has been adjusted to approximately \$3 million due to rapid enrollment growth outpacing staffing capacity. The auxiliary side presents challenges consistent with those seen at other smaller campuses. Vice Chancellor Low noted that UMPI is planning to consolidate from three residence halls to two in FY2027 to address the auxiliary challenge.

The University of Southern Maine showed continued positive E&G movement, with a \$400,000 improvement in this forecast, potentially resulting in a modest surplus at year end. The auxiliary side has returned to a near-balanced position.

Maine Law is tracking at approximately \$19,000 surplus, a reduction from the \$275,000 surplus projected in November. Vice Chancellor Low noted this reflects a shift of fundraising dollars to the foundation as Maine Law confirmed its path to a balanced budget, and not any erosion of credit hours or tuition revenue.

FY2027 Budget Development Timeline

Vice Chancellor Low described the FY2027 budget development timeline. Campus budget presentations to the system office were completed in early March, with a first internal review held on March 9th and 10th. Revised campus budget presentations will be made to the Finance, Facilities and Technology Committee on March 25th — an all-day session open to all Trustees and streamed on YouTube. An FFT budget work session is scheduled for April 15th to address specific questions including an analysis of online versus on-campus program economics. The FFT Committee will vote on the proposed budget at the April 29th meeting, with a vote by the full Board of Trustees anticipated at the May meeting. Trustees discussed the complexity and rigor of the budget process, acknowledging the difficult decisions campuses face in developing balanced budgets while continuing to invest in growth and program quality. Trustees commended the presidents and Vice Chancellor Low's team for the quality and transparency of the budget process.

Chair Riley and FFT Chair Katz both offered substantive comments on the rigor and complexity of the budget process. Chair Riley noted that having the opportunity to sit with Vice Chancellor Low at the early stages of campus budget presentations gives trustees an appreciation for how challenging the work is and the difficult decisions campuses must make. She specifically commended all presidents for the quality of their budget presentations. FFT Chair Katz echoed these remarks, noting the system is in very capable hands with respect to budget planning, and encouraged all trustees — both FFT members and others — to attend the March 25th all-day budget presentation, describing it as the best opportunity to ask questions and influence details before the budget is finalized.

Enterprise Generative AI Initiative

Vice Chancellor Low provided an update on the system's enterprise generative AI initiative. He noted that the system issued a Request for Proposals for an enterprise generative AI service on February 25th, with a submission deadline of March 27th. The RFP prioritizes privacy, security, accessibility, intellectual property protection, institutional data control, and safeguards around data retention and training. The goal is a single, systemwide AI tool available to all faculty, staff, and students.

Vice Chancellor Low described a significant shift in the AI services market since the system's AI Task Force completed its work, noting that per-user pricing has declined substantially — potentially to the range of \$2 to \$4 per user — compared to earlier estimates. He noted that the system anticipates receiving vendor presentations in early April, with an announcement targeted by June 1st and a July 1st start date. Trustees engaged in discussion about the AI initiative. One trustee requested that future AI briefings include periodic updates on the capabilities of leading AI models and their projected impact on student career paths and academic programs, noting that many trustees may not use the most advanced AI tools in their own work. Vice Chancellor Low agreed, noting that a "state of AI" report — similar to the annual IT report — is in development.

One trustee offered substantive comments on the enterprise AI RFP, expressing enthusiasm about the declining per-user pricing and requesting that future AI briefings for trustees include periodic updates on the capabilities of leading AI models and their projected impact on student careers and academic programs. The trustee noted that many board members may not use the most advanced AI tools in their daily work and would benefit from understanding what these tools can do in the context of program decisions, tenure, and other areas of board oversight. Vice Chancellor Low agreed, noting that a "state of AI" report is in development.

Reimbursement Resolution, Equipment – Master Lease Agreement Financing

Tracy Elliott, Executive Director of Finance & Controller, presented the reimbursement resolution for capital equipment financing under the system's master lease agreement with Bank of America. She explained that the resolution ensures expenditures are eligible for tax-exempt reimbursement financing and allows for aggregate financings of up to \$1.5 million. Individual equipment projects of \$500,000 or more will continue to be brought forward for separate Board approval. The resolution also allows the system to reimburse itself for expenditures made up to 60 days prior to the Board's approval.

TEXT OF PROPOSED RESOLUTION:

That the Board of Trustees accepts the recommendation of the Finance, Facilities, & Technology Committee and declares official intent for System reimbursement from the proceeds of tax-exempt obligations for certain capital expenditures funded by the System prior to the issuance of such tax-exempt obligations.

On a motion by Trustee Cain, which was seconded by Trustee Worth, and approved by all Trustees present and by roll call vote, the Board of Trustees approved the resolution.

Series 2012 and 2015 Revenue Bond Refunding Resolution

Tracy Elliott presented the revenue bond refunding resolution, which provides authority to refinance the 2012 and 2015 revenue bond series as part of the system's planned spring bond issuance. She noted that the underwriter had estimated potential interest savings of \$700,000 to \$800,000, depending on market conditions at the time of issuance. The refunding would not increase overall system debt but would lower borrowing costs on the bonds being replaced. The resolution authorizes an aggregate refunding amount not to exceed \$35 million.

TEXT OF PROPOSED RESOLUTION:

That the Board of Trustees accepts the recommendation of the Finance, Facilities, & Technology Committee and declares official intent for the System to issue revenue bonds in an aggregate amount not to exceed \$35,000,000 to refund certain prior revenue bonds.

On a motion by Trustee Katz, which was seconded by Trustee Worth, and approved by all Trustees present and by roll call vote, the Board of Trustees approved the resolution.

Energy Savings Performance Contract (ESPC), Financing, Project and Reimbursement Resolution Authorization, UMPI

Tracy Elliott presented the ESPC financing resolution for the University of Maine at Presque Isle. She explained that the financing will be executed through Bank of America under an energy addendum to the existing master lease agreement, with rates already locked in and a target closing date of April 7th. The 20-year financing is projected to generate approximately \$7 million in energy savings and avoided maintenance costs, with an additional \$40,000 in utility incentives. The total financing will not exceed \$4,070,000.

TEXT OF PROPOSED RESOLUTION:

That the Board of Trustees accepts the recommendation of the Finance, Facilities, and Technology Committee, and approves the Financing, ESPC, Project and Reimbursement of Project Expenditures resolutions to authorize the University of Maine System, acting through the University of Maine at Presque Isle, to fund an ESPC project implementing energy conservation and infrastructure improvements across campus, including lighting, water conservation, building envelope measures, thermal destratification, kitchen ventilation controls, and HVAC and controls upgrades with a project total of up to \$4,065,000, using financing with a maximum principal amount of debt of \$4,070,000.

On a motion by Trustee Worth, which was seconded by Trustee Cain, and approved by all Trustees present and by roll call vote, the Board of Trustees approved the resolution.

VICE CHANCELLOR FOR ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS REPORT

Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs Jeffrey St. John provided updates on fall 2026 enrollment, direct admissions, the YourPace enrollment data reporting transition, and the status of the 90-credit hour program approvals.

Enrollment Update

Vice Chancellor St. John reported that completed applications are up across the system, with growth continuing even when the significant increase in Fort Kent applications is accounted for. Active matriculated students — those who have confirmed their intent to enroll and have not subsequently withdrawn — stand at over 2,800, representing a double-digit year-over-year increase. He noted that as of the previous Friday's data, approximately half of universities were up year-over-year on active matriculated students, while the other half were slightly down but within single digits. He emphasized the May meeting will provide a much clearer picture of final summer and fall enrollment.

President Hedeem, when asked, noted that while UMFK's application numbers are approximately three times the typical volume, the matriculated figures are tracking similarly to the prior year. She expressed measured optimism while indicating the university is proceeding carefully and will await the October census to assess whether recent enrollment strategies are producing durable results.

Vice Chancellor St. John also noted that the system continues to expand its direct admissions program to additional high schools in Maine, including private high schools, with the support of the Chancellor, and anticipates growth in the direct admissions pool in coming years.

Trustees asked about the percentage of Maine high schools currently engaged with the direct admissions program. Vice Chancellor St. John indicated he would provide both the number and percentage to trustees following the meeting.

A separate analysis was noted indicating that selective private colleges, both in-state and out-of-state, are increasingly recruiting top Maine students who would previously have been more likely to enroll at UMaine or USM. This trend, combined with the ongoing decline in Maine high school graduates, was identified as a continuing competitive challenge for the system.

YourPace Enrollment Reporting

Vice Chancellor St. John announced that future enrollment reports will retire the "AP" or "Maine Online" designation and transition to "YourPace" as the standard label for competency-based enrollment data, reflecting the program's current branding and increasing recognition.

90-Credit Hour Program Update

Vice Chancellor St. John reported that three of five 90-credit programs submitted for NECHE approval received approval in November 2025. The remaining two programs — one at UMPI and one at UMaine Machias — were deferred by NECHE pending additional information, which was submitted in February 2026. Both programs are on NECHE's agenda for the April 23-24 meeting. Vice Chancellor St. John expressed a fair to strong degree of confidence in approval at that meeting, and acknowledged the Chancellor's direct advocacy on behalf of these programs at both the NECHE annual meeting and an ACE meeting in Washington, D.C.

Vote to Approve University of Maine System 2026 Tenure Nominations

Vice Chancellor St. John presented 33 tenure cases from across the University of Maine System, representing faculty at all universities except University of Maine at Machias. He described the cases as strong and impressive, and stated that the slate was thoroughly reviewed and discussed at the Academic

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and Student Affairs Committee. He recommended unreservedly the approval of all tenure candidates on behalf of the presidents and Chancellor.

After Vice Chancellor St. John presented the slate of 33 tenure candidates, Chair Riley noted that while the current round does not include any sitting faculty representatives on the Board (as was the case the prior year), the group represents an amazing collection of people. She described the slate as reflecting the extraordinary talent the system is fortunate to attract and retain across its universities. She also indicated that the tenure recipients will be identified in the minutes.

TEXT OF PROPOSED RESOLUTION:

That the Board of Trustees accepts the recommendations for tenure submitted by the universities of the University of Maine System. Approvals will take effect September 1, 2026 for faculty with academic-year appointments and on July 1, 2026, for faculty with fiscal-year appointments.

On a motion by Trustee Johnson, which was seconded by Trustee Martin, and approved by all Trustees present and by roll call vote, the Board of Trustees approved the 2026 Tenure Nominations. Congratulations were extended to all tenure recipients.

USM College of Nursing and Health Professions

President Edmondson presented the proposal to establish a College of Nursing and Health Professions at the University of Southern Maine. She described the origins of the proposal in a visioning process that began in late 2024, convening a committee of faculty, administration, and partners from MaineHealth, Mercy Hospital, and MaineGeneral. She noted the process was guided by Lois Skillings, a distinguished USM alumna and nursing practitioner, and was supported by donor John Goldsworth.

One trustee asked whether the proposal was budget neutral.

President Edmondson explained that the committee recommended establishing a college with a dedicated dean in order to strengthen institutional leadership within Maine and at the national level, and to bolster the research activities of what would become the new college. She noted that the financial impact is approximately \$10,000 above the current associate dean position, and that the existing associate dean position will be eliminated. The structure of the college will be reviewed following the hiring of a dean.

TEXT OF PROPOSED RESOLUTION:

That the Board of Trustees approves the formation of the College of Nursing and Health Professions at the University of Southern Maine to strengthen the university's capacity to educate and prepare health care professionals, support interdisciplinary learning, expand research and partnership opportunities, and advance the University of Maine System's efforts to address Maine's critical and growing health care workforce needs.

On a motion by Trustee Martin, which was seconded by Trustee Worth, and approved by all Trustees present and by roll call vote, the Board of Trustees approved the formation of the College of Nursing and Health Professions at the University of Southern Maine.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Board of Trustees Meeting
March 15-16, 2026

President Saufley announced on behalf of the Mitchell Naming Review Task Force that public comment will be accepted through 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 24, 2026. Members of the public wishing to submit comments may do so at umaine.edu/president, under the "Messages" dropdown.

Chair Riley acknowledged the impending conclusion of Trustee Eames' nine-year term on the Board. Chair Riley noted that a formal celebration had been planned for the May meeting, but since Trustee Eames will be joining by ZOOM, she wanted to recognize Trustee Eames' extraordinary service and wonderful work as vice chair, her role as a mentor to new trustees, and her exemplary commitment to the University of Maine System throughout her tenure as both trustee and vice chair. A standing ovation followed

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Board of Trustees will be held at the University of Maine at Fort Kent on May 17-18, 2026.

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

Adjournment
Elizabeth Stickler, Clerk

University of Maine System Candidates for Tenure and Promotion 2026

The University of Maine

Barron, Jonathan - Tenure, already holds the rank of Professor, English

*Charney, Noah - Promoted to the rank of Associate Professor with Tenure, Wildlife, Fisheries, and Conservation Biology

*Cuba, Melissa - Promoted to the rank of Associate Professor with Tenure, Special Education Darling,

Katherine Weatherford - Promoted to the rank of Associate Professor with Tenure, Health Science

Fanning, Philip - Promoted to the rank of Associate Professor with Tenure, Agricultural Entomology Gillon,

Kathleen - Promoted to the rank of Associate Professor with Tenure, Higher Education

*Kerr, Lisa - Tenure, already holds the rank of Professor, Fisheries

Malacarne, Jonathan - Promoted to the rank of Associate Professor with Tenure, Agricultural Economics Moss,

Gilbert - Promoted to the rank of Associate Professor with Tenure, Mathematics

Patel, Neel - Promoted to the rank of Associate Professor with Tenure, Mathematics Peterson,

Franziska - Promoted to the rank of Associate Professor with Tenure, Mathematics Puhlman, Daniel -

Promoted to the rank of Associate Professor with Tenure, Family Studies

Puhlman, Jane - Promoted to the rank of Associate Professor with Tenure, Communication Sciences Ranasinghe,

Nimesha - Promoted to the rank of Associate Professor with Tenure, Spatial Informatics

*Riccardi, Jessica Salley - Promoted to the rank of Associate Professor with Tenure, Communication Sciences

Richlin, Johanna Bard - Promoted to the rank of Associate Professor with Tenure, Anthropology Wang, Jane -

Promoted to the rank of Associate Professor with Tenure, Mathematics

University of Maine School of Law

Bloomberg, Scott - Promoted to the rank of Professor with Tenure, Law

University of Maine Fort Kent

Curran, Michael - Tenure, already holds the rank of Associate Professor, Business

Lavoie, Lisa - Promoted to the rank of Associate Professor with Tenure, Behavioral Science

University of Maine at Augusta

Bellaire, Erin - Promoted to the rank of Associate Professor with Tenure, Nursing Heald, Lisa -

Board of Trustees Meeting

March 15-16, 2026

Promoted to the rank of Associate Professor with Tenure, Nursing

University of Maine at Farmington

Grandchamp, Stephen - Promoted to the rank of Associate Professor with Tenure, Literature and Digital Humanities

University of Maine at Presque Isle

Simpson, Richard - Tenure, already holds the rank of Associate Professor, English

University of Southern Maine

Alegbeleye, Ibukun - Promoted to the rank of Associate Professor with Tenure, Leadership and Organizational Studies

Eaton, Scott - Promoted to the rank of Associate Professor with Tenure, Mechanical Engineering Eberly,

Brandon - Promoted to the rank of Associate Professor with Tenure, Physics Giamportone, Kimberly -

Promoted to the rank of Associate Professor with Tenure, Social Work

Lasley, Joseph - Promoted to the rank of Associate Professor with Tenure, Leadership and Organizational Studies

Madden, Meredith - Promoted to the rank of Associate Professor with Tenure, Athletic Training Malhotra,

Ragini Saira - Promoted to the rank of Associate Professor with Tenure, Sociology Miller, Catherine -

Promoted to the rank of Associate Professor with Tenure, Microbiology Wilkinson, Sarah - Promoted to

the rank of Associate Professor with Tenure, Special Education

University of Maine at Machias

No Tenure Nominations for 2026