

**University of Maine System**  
**Board of Trustees**  
**Academic and Student Affairs Committee**  
**April 27, 2026**  
Zoom Meeting

**Present: Committee Members:** David MacMahon, Chair; Trish Riley, Barbara Alexander, Emily Cain, Kelly Martin, Roger Katz, & Elise Baldacci. **Presidents:** Deborah Hedeon, Joseph McDonnell, Joan Ferrini-Mundy, Leigh Saufley, Ray Rice, Jacqueline Edmondson & Jenifer Cushman. **Chancellor:** Dannel Malloy. **System Staff:** Jeffrey St. John, Carolyn Dorsey, Amon Purinton, Heather Ball, Jamie Ballinger, Amie Parker & Elizabeth Stickler. **Faculty Representatives:** Heather Nunez-Olmstead & Colleen Marzilli. **Student Representatives:** None. **Provosts:** Adam Tuchinsky, Alana Margeson, Jeffrey Maine, Katherine Yardley **Others:** Gabe Paquette.

Committee Chair David MacMahon called the Academic and Student Affairs Committee meeting to order and reminded participants to keep microphones muted when not speaking.

**Executive Session**

On a motion by Trustee Cain, which was seconded by Trustee Alexander, and approved by a roll call vote of all Trustees present, the Academic and Student Affairs Committee went into Executive Session under the following provision:

- 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 Riley, 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**

**Student Representative Discussion**

Jamie Ballinger reported that a student representative had participated in the preparatory meeting and did not identify concerns or topics to bring forward to the Committee. No student representatives were present for discussion during the public session.

**Faculty Representative Discussion**

Faculty representatives Heather Nunez-Olmstead & Colleen Marzilli were identified as present and stated that no concerns were being brought forward at that time.

### **Off-cycle Tenure Request, University of Maine at Fort Kent**

President Hedeon presented a request for off-cycle tenure and the rank of Associate Professor in Nursing at the University of Maine at Fort Kent.

### **TEXT OF PROPOSED RESOLUTION**

On a motion by Trustee Riley, which was seconded by Trustee Baldacci, and approved by a roll call vote of all Trustees present, the Academic and Student Affairs Committee approved forwarding this item to the May 17-18, 2026, Board of Trustees meeting for approval of the following resolution:

That the Board of Trustees accepts the recommendation of the Academic & Student Affairs Committee and approves off-cycle tenure, Associate Professor of Nursing at the University of Maine at Fort Kent, with tenure to be effective September 1, 2026.

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

Provost Tuchinsky presented a request for tenure at the time of hire for a faculty member joining the Muskie School of Public Service at the University of Southern Maine.

### **TEXT OF PROPOSED RESOLUTION**

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 and Student Affairs Committee approved forwarding this item to the May 17-18, 2026, Board of Trustees meeting for approval of the following resolution:

That the Board of Trustees accepts the recommendation of the Academic & Student Affairs Committee and approves tenure at time of hire, Professor of Public Policy at the University of Southern Maine, with tenure to be effective September 1, 2025.

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

Provost Paquette presented a request for tenure at the time of hire at the rank of Professor of Mathematics and Statistics at the University of Maine.

### **TEXT OF PROPOSED RESOLUTION**

On a motion by Trustee Katz, which was seconded by Trustee Alexander, and approved by a roll call vote of the Trustees voting, with one abstention from Trustee Cain, the Academic and Student Affairs Committee approved forwarding this item to the May 17-18, 2026, Board of Trustees meeting for approval of the following resolution:

That the Board of Trustees accepts the recommendation of the Academic & Student Affairs Committee and approves tenure at time of hire, Professor of Mathematics and Statistics at the University of Maine with tenure to be effective September 1, 2026.

### **New Academic Program Proposal: Ph.D. in Nursing, University of Maine**

Provost Paquette presented the proposed Ph.D. in Nursing at the University of Maine. He described the program as a research-focused doctorate that would be classified as a research doctorate by the Carnegie classification. He noted that the curriculum was designed to share coursework with existing research-focused doctoral programs at the University of Maine, including biology and molecular biology, food science and human nutrition, and education, to promote interdisciplinary scholarship and maximize institutional resources.

Provost Paquette stated that Maine continues to face a significant nursing shortage, especially in rural areas, and that only a small percentage of registered nurses in Maine hold doctoral degrees. He noted that the proposed program would be the first Ph.D. in Nursing program in northern New England and would help build a pipeline of nurse scientists and faculty capacity. He also stated that congressional funding would cover expenses for the first two years and that the Ph.D. and Doctor of Nursing Practice proposals were expected to be financially complementary over time.

In response to the question, Provost Paquette confirmed that the Ph.D. in Nursing would count toward the University of Maine's R1 doctoral production metrics.

### **TEXT OF PROPOSED RESOLUTION**

On a motion by Trustee Riley, which was seconded by Trustee Cain, and approved by a roll call vote of the Trustees voting Academic and Student Affairs Committee approved forwarding this item to the May 17-18, 2026, Board of Trustees meeting for approval of the following resolution:

That the Board of Trustees accepts the recommendation of the Academic and Student Affairs Committee and approves the Ph.D. in Nursing at the University of Maine.

### **New Academic Program Proposal: Doctor of Nursing Practice, University of Maine**

Provost Paquette presented the proposed Doctor of Nursing Practice at the University of Maine. He described the DNP as a practice-based doctorate, distinct from the research-focused Ph.D. in Nursing. He noted that the proposal involved collaboration across several University of Maine System institutions and that accreditation changes, particularly for the Family Nurse Practitioner track and the Master of Science in Nursing Leadership, supported transitioning the program to a DNP model. He stated that the program would align with national nurse practitioner faculty standards and that failure to transition could make the program obsolete and potentially jeopardize accreditation.

Trustees discussed the relationship between the Ph.D. in Nursing and the DNP, including whether the programs would help address the shortage of nursing faculty. Provost Paquette stated that the Ph.D. program was specifically designed to help build nursing faculty and research

capacity, while the DNP was primarily intended for practitioners, although it could have related benefits. He also noted that the applicant pools for the two programs were expected to be different.

### **TEXT OF PROPOSED RESOLUTION**

On a motion by Trustee Alexander, which was seconded by Trustee Cain, and approved by a roll call vote of the Trustees voting, the Academic and Student Affairs Committee approved forwarding this item to the May 17-18, 2026, Board of Trustees meeting for approval of the following resolution:

That the Board of Trustees accepts the recommendation of the Academic and Student Affairs Committee and approves the Doctor of Nursing Practice at the University of Maine.

### **Informational Item: Name Change of Women and Gender Studies to Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, University of Southern Maine**

Vice Chancellor St. John presented an informational item regarding the proposed name change of the Women and Gender Studies program at the University of Southern Maine to Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. He stated that the updated name reflects current nomenclature in the field and was supported through the academic leadership review process, including consultation with the University of Maine, where a related program is housed.

### **Academic Program Proposals Preview**

Vice Chancellor St. John presented a preview of academic program proposals in the pipeline. He stated that six programs were being previewed, with the intent to bring them forward for Committee action at the June ASA meeting and, if supported, for Board action at the July Board meeting. He noted that two programs remained under ongoing discussion.

Trustee Katz thanked Vice Chancellor St. John for the academic program preview process and emphasized that the absence of questions should not be interpreted as a lack of interest. Vice Chancellor St. John credited Jamie Ballinger and Kayla Flewelling for their work supporting the materials and process.

Vice Chancellor St. John thanked the Trustees for the discussion and acknowledged the work of presidents, provosts, deans, directors, chairs, faculty, and the systemwide faculty governance process in reviewing academic proposals.

### **Adjournment**

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/>

Kayla Flewelling for

Elizabeth Stickler, Clerk