

University of Maine System
Board of Trustees

Academic and Student Affairs Committee

August 24, 2026

Zoom Meeting

Present: Committee Members: David MacMahon, Chair; Barbara Alexander, Roger Katz, Emily Cain, Blake Sheppard, Matthew Webber & Donna Loring **Presidents:** Joseph McDonnell, Joan Ferrini-Mundy, Leigh Saufley, Ray Rice, Deb Hedeon, Jacqueline Edmondson & Jenifer Cushman **Chancellor:** Dannel Malloy **System Staff:** Jeffrey St. John, Ryan Low, Carolyn Dorsey, Jamie Ballinger, Samantha Warren, Amon Purinton, Amie Parker Heather Ball & Elizabeth Stickler **Student Representatives:** None **Faculty Representatives:** Colleen Marzilli, Heather Nunez-Olmstead, Clyde Mitchell, Tim Surrence, Michael Curran **Provosts:** Adam Tuchinsky, Alana Margeson, Gabe Paquette, Pam MacRae, Jeffrey Maine, Katherine Yardley, Adam Schmitt & Joseph Szakas **Others:** Dan Sandweiss

Members not attending: none

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

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 Executive Committee meeting went into Executive Session under the following provisions:

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

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 & Student Affairs Committee concluded the Executive Session.

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.

At this meeting, the Student Representatives did not have any items to discuss.

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.

At this meeting, the Faculty Representatives did not have any items to discuss.

Commemorative Renaming, UM

Consistent with Board policy and the recommendations of an inclusive task force, the University of Maine proposes renaming the Senator George J. Mitchell Center for Sustainability Solutions. The Center will be renamed as the University of Maine Center for Sustainability Solutions.

The renaming will additionally encompass the Senator George J. Mitchell Center for Sustainability Fund and the George J. Mitchell Peace Scholarship.

President Joan Ferrini-Mundy presented the recommendation to rename the Senator George J. Mitchell Center for Sustainability Solutions as the University of Maine Center for Sustainability Solutions. She explained that the University formed a task force after the public release of U.S. Department of Justice records concerning Jeffrey Epstein. The task force considered the applicable Board policy, reviewed public input collected from March 13 through March 27, and evaluated whether continued use of the commemorative name would compromise public trust or reflect adversely on the University. President Ferrini-Mundy reported that 74 responses were received and approximately three-quarters supported removal of the name.

President Leigh Saufley emphasized that the review was not an adjudication of legal claims and that the task force focused on institutional trust and reputation. Professor Dan Sandweiss, who chaired the task force, said the group reviewed the available materials and public comments, acknowledged Senator Mitchell's public accomplishments, and concluded that the reputational harm and concerns expressed by students supported the recommended change.

Trustees discussed the process, the University's communication with Senator Mitchell, the application of Board policy, and the importance of focusing on the institution's responsibilities. University representatives reported that Senator Mitchell or his representative had been notified during the process and that a subsequent communication had been acknowledged.

RESOLUTION

On a motion by Trustee Cain, which was seconded by Trustee Katz and approved by a roll call vote of all Trustees present, the Academic and Student Affairs Committee approved the following resolution to be forwarded to the agenda of the September 28, 2026, Board of Trustees meeting for approval:

That the Board of Trustees accepts the recommendation of the Academic and Student Affairs Committee and approves the renaming of the Senator George J. Mitchell Center for Sustainability Solutions as the University of Maine Center for Sustainability Solutions.

New Academic Program – Master of Healthcare Administration, UMPI

The University of Maine at Presque Isle (UMPI) proposes a 30-credit Master of Healthcare Administration (MHA) program scheduled to launch in fall 2026 (session 2). Designed to meet growing national and local demands for skilled healthcare leaders, the curriculum prepares graduates to manage the operational, financial, and regulatory complexities of modern healthcare systems. It stands out as the only program of its kind within the University of Maine System and will be delivered entirely through the YourPace competency-based, self-paced online modality. The program leverages existing institutional resources and a collaborative development team of full-time faculty from UMPI and the University of Maine at Fort Kent (UMFK), and is expected to be revenue positive in year one.

Provost Alana Margeson presented the proposed Master of Healthcare Administration, describing it as an online, competency-based graduate program for working professionals that builds on UMPI's YourPace undergraduate healthcare administration offering. She reported 63 students enrolled during the summer and approximately 112 students participating across fall 2025, spring 2026, and summer 2026. She cited projected national growth in medical and health services management and said the program could be offered at low cost using existing faculty and resources.

Provost Margeson described collaboration with University of Southern Maine and University of Maine at Fort Kent colleagues during development. In response to Trustee questions about potential duplication, she distinguished the proposed administrative focus—including project management, supply chain, and finance—from USM's population-health and policy focus. University representatives also discussed faculty oversight, competency-based education, marketing, and the review process used to prevent unnecessary duplication of System programs.

RESOLUTION

On a motion by Trustee Cain, which was seconded by Trustee Katz, and approved by a roll call vote of all Trustees present, the Academic and Student Affairs Committee approved the following resolution to be forwarded to the agenda of the September 28, 2026, Board of Trustees meeting for approval:

The Board of Trustees accepts the recommendation of the Academic and Student Affairs Committee and approves the Master of Healthcare Administration at the University of Maine at Presque Isle.

New Academic Program Proposal – M.S in Digital Forensics and Cyber Investigation, UMA

The University of Maine at Augusta (UMA) proposes a new Master of Science in Digital Forensics and Cyber Investigation degree, scheduled to launch in fall 2027. This 30-credit, fully online graduate degree is designed for working professionals and non-traditional students. The curriculum prepares students for leadership and executive roles in cybersecurity by embedding industry-standard certifications, such as Magnet Forensics and Forensic Tool Kit (FTK), directly into the core coursework. Ultimately, the degree aims to fulfill critical market demands while boosting UMA's overall student enrollment, retention, and workforce development. The program

leverages UMA's existing faculty and course infrastructure, requires limited additional institutional support, and is expected to be revenue positive in year one.

Provost Joseph Szakas presented the proposed master's program, citing growing cyber threats, national workforce need, and four years of program development. He described an online curriculum with practical, hands-on work aligned with industry standards and noted that UMA had hired a faculty member with experience in the Maine Computer Crimes Task Force. The program would use professional digital-forensics tools and prepare students to investigate and respond to complex cyber incidents.

Trustee Katz asked about entry requirements. Provost Szakas explained that applicants generally would be expected to have a bachelor's degree in cybersecurity or a related field or concentration, with individual preparation reviewed as appropriate.

RESOLUTION

On a motion by Trustee Cain, which was seconded by Trustee Martin, and approved by a roll call vote of all Trustees, the Academic and Student Affairs Committee approved the following resolution to be forwarded to the September 28, 2026, Board of Trustees meeting for approval:

That the Board of Trustees accepts the recommendation of the Academic and Student Affairs Committee and approves the M.S. in Digital Forensics and Cyber Security at the University of Maine at Augusta.

Academic Program Proposals Review

Vice Chancellor St. John explained that formal academic program activity is typically light at the end of August because faculty governance bodies pause while faculty are off contract. He said review work would resume after September 1 and that the proposal pipeline would be updated as campus and System governance processes continued.

2025-2026 Student Survey Results

Vice Chancellor St. John reviewed surveys administered under the System's strategic plan, including a first-year survey each December and spring surveys of graduating undergraduate, graduate, and law students. He said Systemwide response rates typically ranged from approximately 15% to 17%, but participation varied substantially by campus and was often below 10%, limiting the statistical reliability of institution-level results.

The results generally reflected positive student experiences, including belonging, faculty interaction, and use of student-support tools such as Navigate, the Research Learning Experience, and mental-health resources. Graduating undergraduates most often identified internships, career services, and professional networking as areas where they wanted additional support, and many planned to enter employment rather than graduate school immediately after graduation.

Vice Chancellor St. John said the System expected to recommend continuing or revising the first-year survey while considering whether to discontinue some locally developed graduating-student surveys in favor of established instruments such as the First Destination Survey and the National Survey of Student Engagement. Trustees Katz, Cain, and Alexander and student representative Matt Weber discussed response rates, incentives, survey fatigue, and whether surveys could be tied to course evaluations. System representatives noted contractual and legal concerns with linking survey completion to grades, degrees, or other academic outcomes.

2026-2027 ASA Work Plan

Vice Chancellor St. John reviewed the proposed 2026-2027 work plan. He said updates concerning Jobs for Maine's Graduates, credit for prior learning, and Transfer Maine had been consolidated into the State of Transfer report. The plan also included two updates on the System's 90-credit bachelor's degree initiative, anticipated in December and June. The Committee accepted the work plan as its guide for the coming year.

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