

UNIVERSITY OF MAINE SYSTEM
Board of Trustees Meeting

Held Via Zoom
July 13, 2026

Present:

Trustees: Roger Katz, Chair; Elise Baldacci, Vice Chair, Barbara Alexander, Emily Cain, Chris Gordon, Patrick Flood, Donna Loring, Kelly Martin, David MacMahon, Michael Michaud (Zoom), Trish Riley, John Moore, Blake Shepherd, Matthew Webber, and Richard Rosen. Absent: Pender Makin and Heather Johnson. Chancellor: Dannel Malloy. University Presidents: Leigh Saufley, Jenifer Cushman, Joan Ferrini-Mundy, Ray Rice, Joseph McDonnell, Deborah Hedeon, Jacqueline Edmondson. Faculty Representatives: Adam Schmitt, Michael Curran, Heather Nunez-Olmstead. Student Representatives: Isabella Bouchard, Scot Parlin, System Staff: Carolyn Dorsey, Amon Purinton, Ryan Low, Jeff St. John, Robert Placido, Ryan Whitlock, Amie Parker, Elizabeth Stickler.

Monday, July 13, 2026

EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a motion, which was seconded 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, 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.
- 1 MRSA Section 405 6-E to consult with its attorney concerning legal rights and duties of the university.

The annotated agenda shows that the executive session included welcome remarks from Chair Katz and introductions of new Trustees Chris Gordon, Richard Rosen, Blake Shepherd, and Matthew Webber; a Board-only discussion of chair priorities, education session ideas, and the union letter regarding the Chancellor's reappointment; discussion with Chancellor Malloy

concerning the University of Maine at Augusta President faculty letter and response; the Decision Criteria Work Group update; the UMS Online Education Coordination Strategy discussion; a THOR update; review of an exception to Board Policy 406 concerning emeritus status; discussion of a commemorative renaming of the Mitchell Center; an AI RFP update and the union letter regarding AI; discussion of Maine's recipient of the federal AI grant; proposed Boards of Visitors appointments; a federal actions update; a Human Resources and Labor Relations bargaining update; a Hutchinson Center update; and an update on systemwide marketing.

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

PUBLIC MEETING

Chair Roger Katz reconvened the public meeting at the University of Maine and noted that the meeting was being livestreamed to YouTube with closed captioning. He stated that Trustee Michael Michaud was participating by technology and would be counted toward the quorum. Chair Katz welcomed the Board and the public, thanked former Chair Patricia "Trish" Riley for her years of service to the Board and the University of Maine System, and welcomed new Trustees Chris Gordon, Richard Rosen, Blake Shepherd, and Matthew Webber to their first public Board meeting.

Citizen Comment

Chair Katz announced that there were no public comments in person or online.

Chair's Report

Chair Katz deferred his Association of Governing Boards conference update to a later meeting and invited the Presidents' Round-Robin reports. After the round-robin, he reviewed the FY2027 standing committee assignments and reminded Trustees that most of the Board's work occurs at the committee level.

President's Round-Robin

The Presidents provided campus updates focused on summer enrollment, graduation, academic momentum, fundraising, and student success.

President Ray Rice reported that the University of Maine at Presque Isle experienced 44% growth between summer session one and summer session two and served more students in the summer term than in the prior spring term. He also reported that UMPI held a virtual graduation on June 6 for more than 800 graduates, primarily from the YourPace program, and that the university plans to hold three such ceremonies annually.

Dean Leigh Saufley reported that Maine Law graduated 87 J.D. students and one LL.M. student in the Class of 2026, with 56% of the class coming from Maine and 19% identifying as first-generation college students. She also reported a new 3+3 agreement with the College of the Atlantic, a 116% increase in unrestricted giving in fiscal year 2026 over fiscal year 2025, and completion of fundraising for a \$500,000 endowed professorship honoring Professor Marty Rogoff.

President Jacqueline Edmondson reported that the University of Southern Maine's Occupational Therapy bachelor's program had received pre-accreditation status with no noted suggestions, areas of concern, or non-compliance findings from the self-study review. She thanked Professor Sarah Grinder for leading that work and noted the strong institutional progress reflected in end-of-year data.

President Joseph McDonnell reported that the University of Maine at Farmington had filled several long-standing leadership vacancies, including positions in the provost's office, education, student life, and major gifts. He highlighted strong enrollment and licensure results in UMF's in-person master's program in counseling psychology, including the addition of a part-time option. He also described community forums convened by UMF on health and pre-K-12 education and said future forums would address aging in place and tourism, hospitality, and outdoor recreation in western Maine.

President Jenifer Cushman reported that the University of Maine at Augusta was launching a 90-credit Bachelor of Science in Applied Public Administration for working adults seeking careers in public service, municipal leadership, nonprofit work, and state government. She highlighted 100% licensure-exam pass rates and job offers before graduation for UMA's allied dental graduates, along with strong outcomes in veterinary technology. She also reported successful accreditation reviews across several programs, national accreditation of UMA's early college program, and federal approval of its prison education program, which will expand access to Pell Grants for incarcerated students. President Cushman also described a visit by Montenegro's Chief of Defense and Maine Adjutant General Diane Dunn that showcased UMA's cybersecurity, nursing simulation, aviation, unmanned aircraft systems, virtual-reality training, and veterans-support programs.

President Deborah Hedeon reported that the University of Maine at Fort Kent had expanded summer activities in response to student feedback, including kayaking, pickleball, hiking, and trips to Acadia National Park and Baxter State Park. She said the activities were helping students remain engaged in the campus community as summer enrollment increased. She also reported that UMFK would participate in Fort Kent's July 31 celebration of America's 250th anniversary and that the campus was preparing to welcome students for the fall semester.

President Joan Ferrini-Mundy introduced Bear, the University of Maine Police Department's new comfort canine, accompanied by his handler, Sergeant Jamey Dover. Sergeant Dover explained that Bear was being trained to support mental-health calls, victim advocacy, and members of the campus community having a difficult day. Chair Katz presented Bear with a certificate recognizing him as an honorary member of the Board of Trustees. President Ferrini-Mundy thanked Sergeant Dover, Student Life, and the University of Maine Police Department for developing the program and said Bear was already having a positive effect on campus well-being.

President Ferrini-Mundy also reported on a busy summer at the University of Maine, including construction and infrastructure work and progress toward completion of the GEM and Sustainable Agriculture Workforce and Innovation Center facilities. She highlighted educator conferences, youth music and engineering programs, the Cohen Leadership Institute, and new-student orientation attended by approximately 1,100 students and 2,000 guests. She noted national recognition for the Ferland Engineering Education and Design Center, a new graduate-school dean, a campus-store partnership with L.L.Bean, and the Innovate for Maine Fellows program, which placed 41 students from 13 colleges and universities with 47 Maine companies.

Faculty Representatives to the Board of Trustees

President Hedeon introduced Dr. Michael Curran, Associate Professor of Business at the University of Maine at Fort Kent, as UMFK's new faculty representative and thanked outgoing representative Libin Louis for his service. President Edmondson introduced Dr. Adam Schmitt, Associate Professor of Teacher Education and History and Undergraduate Teacher Education Chair at the University of Southern Maine, as USM's new faculty representative and thanked outgoing representative Joe Staples for his contributions.

On a motion by Trustee Martin, which was seconded by Trustee Cain, and approved by all Trustees present, the Board of Trustees approved the appointment of the Faculty Representatives to the Board of Trustees as presented.

Student representatives who were present also introduced themselves to the Board during the meeting.

Consent Agenda

Before the vote, Chair Katz explained that the Board would use the consent agenda more broadly to free time for deeper policy conversations, educational sessions, and discussion of significant strategic issues, while preserving the ability of any Trustee or President to remove an item for separate discussion.

On a motion by Trustee Baldacci, which was seconded by Trustee Cain, and approved by all Trustees present, the Board of Trustees approved the Consent Agenda items: Acceptance of the Minutes, confirmation of Boards of Visitors appointments, the items forwarded from the June 22, 2026 Academic and Student Affairs Committee, and the items forwarded from the June 24, 2026 Finance, Facilities and Technology Committee. The Consent Agenda items were Tabs 3 through 10 in the meeting materials, including the M.S. in Athletic Administration at UMFK, the B.S. in Art Education at UMF, the A.A. in Agricultural Science and Agribusiness at UMPI, the A.A. in Business at UMPI, the Abromson HVAC Replacement project at USM, and the request to establish the Zillman Bequest as a Board-designated endowment at UMPI.

Chancellor's Report

Chancellor Malloy reported that the System continued to make progress against Maine's demographic headwinds and emphasized the importance of campus modernization and continued public and private investment in Maine's public universities. He said that the System was moving relatively rapidly compared with peer institutions and remained focused on its role in helping Maine grow the workforce it needs.

Vice Chancellor Jeff St. John then provided an enrollment update. He reported that, as of the prior Friday, summer-fall active matriculations were up 2,368 students year over year, a 33% increase, with 1.6% growth even when YourPace was excluded. He said in-state first-year matriculations were up 6%, or 153 students, despite the 2026 graduating class being the smallest Maine high school class since recordkeeping began in 1980. He noted double-digit in-state matriculation growth at UMFK, significant growth at UMPI outside Maine through YourPace, and systemwide resilience despite the declining regional and national college-enrollment environment. He added that fall 2026 total enrollment was down about 1.5% in mid-July, but said the figure was too early to read definitively because admissions teams were still working through melt, late transfers, graduate enrollment timing, and the remaining YourPace session counts.

ACTION ITEMS

Exception to Board Policy 406 Emeritus Status, UMF

President McDonnell presented an exception to Board Policy 406 concerning emeritus status for a retiring University of Maine at Farmington faculty member who had served for more than 20 years in a historic split-line appointment shared with a spouse. He explained that the faculty member's service had been excellent, but the arrangement left the employee short of the policy's 15-year full-time threshold.

On a motion by Trustee Flood, which was seconded by Trustee Cain, and approved by all Trustees present, the Board of Trustees approved the exception to Policy 406 Emeritus Status as recommended by the Chancellor.

Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs Report

Vice Chancellor St. John reported that the Maine Trust for Local News, through philanthropic support, would provide digital access to Maine-based news for all enrolled students beginning in fall 2026. He said the initiative would support civic education and might later expand into First Amendment and free-speech programming in partnership with the universities.

A.S. in THOR, UMPI

President Rice presented the proposed Associate of Science in Tourism, Hospitality, and Outdoor Recreation at the University of Maine at Presque Isle. He said the 60-credit program was developed over more than two years by faculty from across the System, would be delivered through the competency-based YourPace platform, and is believed to be the first two-year THOR-related degree offered in a competency-based format.

Trustee Alexander emphasized that her support depended on the resolution's commitment to create and submit for approval a principally in-person, systemwide THOR program with hybrid and online elements during fiscal year 2026-2027. Trustee Riley similarly stated that the Board's understanding was that the competency-based version would serve older students and would not compete with the intended systemwide in-person program.

On a motion by Trustee Riley, which was seconded by Trustee Cain, and approved by all Trustees present, the Board of Trustees accepted the recommendation of the Academic and Student Affairs Committee and approved the A.S. in THOR at the University of Maine at Presque Isle as part of an ongoing coordinated plan to create and submit for approval a principally in-person systemwide THOR program with hybrid/online elements during fiscal year 2026-2027.

B.S. in THOR, UMPI

President Rice then presented the proposed Bachelor of Science in Tourism, Hospitality, and Outdoor Recreation at UMPI. He said the bachelor's program had been developed under the leadership of Dr. Tracy Michaud to create a stackable pathway from the associate degree into a four-year competency-based option for people already working in the field. In response to Board questions, he explained that the YourPace platform generally requires students to be at least 20 years old or to have completed an associate degree, and that this THOR pathway would be aimed

at students age 22 and older so that it would not compete with the planned in-person undergraduate pathway.

On a motion by Trustee Cain, which was seconded by Trustee Martin, and approved by all Trustees present, the Board of Trustees accepted the recommendation of the Academic and Student Affairs Committee and approved the B.S. in THOR at the University of Maine at Presque Isle as part of an ongoing coordinated plan to create and submit for approval a principally in-person systemwide THOR program with hybrid/online elements during fiscal year 2026-2027.

Vice Chancellor for Finance and Strategic AI Integration Report

Vice Chancellor Ryan Low reported the May investment results for the System's funds and shared preliminary June estimates. He said the Managed Investment Pool had a May market value of \$435 million and gained 2.9% for the month and 11.8% fiscal year to date, with an estimated 0.4% loss in June. He reported that the Pension Fund had a May market value of \$14.9 million and gained 1.2% for the month and 5.7% fiscal year to date, with an estimated 0.3% June loss. He also reported that the Operating Fund had a May market value of \$265 million, gained 1.0% for the month and 7.4% fiscal year to date, and generated \$15.2 million net of fees through May, approximately \$12.4 million above the annual budget assumption.

Vice Chancellor Low then provided an update on the OpenAI ChatGPT Edu contract. He reported that the System issued a publicly advertised RFP in February 2026, received responses from 12 vendors, advanced four finalists, and ranked ChatGPT Education first. He said the two-year licensing contract was executed on June 30, 2026 for \$1.387 million, with pricing that covers the models, infrastructure, and support, and that the three other finalist proposals each exceeded \$2 million for the same period. He said the agreement will provide basic enterprise-grade AI access to roughly 5,600 faculty and staff and more than 25,000 students across the System's universities.

Vice Chancellor Low emphasized that the initial two-year term will be used to assess adoption and return on investment before any optional renewals are pursued, that the year-one cost is being funded entirely from one-time investment income rather than recurring operating budgets or a student fee, and that use of the tool will be voluntary through single sign-on rather than automatically activated accounts. He said implementation would proceed as a phased rollout beginning with staff, then faculty, and then students, accompanied by training and support resources. Trustee MacMahon asked whether the System should use the availability of the tool as part of its recruitment message to prospective students, and Chair Katz asked whether the System was among the first public university systems in the Northeast to move in this direction. Vice Chancellor Low agreed that the tool could be a differentiator and said the System was among the early adopters in the region.

Date of the Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for September 27-28, 2026 at the University of Maine at Presque Isle.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Katz declared the meeting adjourned and reminded Trustees to remain for photographs.

Flagged for Verification

- Confirm the full Present block against the Clerk's record, including all University Presidents, Faculty Representatives, Student Representatives, System Staff, and guests.
- Confirm the formal mover, seconder, and vote language for the motions entering and concluding Executive Session; the public captions begin after the reconvened public meeting.
- Confirm the names, institutions, and class years of the student representatives who introduced themselves during the public session if those details should appear in the final minutes.
- Confirm roll-call language, abstentions, and any recusals for the faculty-representative resolution, Consent Agenda, emeritus-status exception, and the A.S. and B.S. in THOR resolutions.
- Several names are rendered phonetically in the captions, including Katz/Kates, Michaud/Mishu, Presque Isle/Prescal, and Baldacci/Badachi; confirm final spellings against the official record.