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30 March 2015

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Dr. Barbara W. Brittingham, President
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
New England Association of Schools and Colleges
3 Burlington Woods Drive, Suite 100
Burlington, MA 01803-4514

The University of Maine

Re: Letter of Intent and Request for an Advisory Opinion

University of Maine
at Augusta

Dear Barbara:

University of Maine
at Farmington

University of Maine
at Fort Kent

University of Maine
at Machias

University of Maine
at Presque Isle

University of
Southern Maine

Thank you for the recent discussions concerning the future of the University of Maine System and, in particular, that of 12 March 2015 to which this letter is a follow-up. At that meeting I confirmed our intent to restructure the University System under the heading "One University for All of Maine". I will say more about what this entails presently, but the clearest pragmatic expression of our intent involves a single accreditation for the current seven campuses of the University of Maine System. I am therefore writing to request a review process by which the Commission could offer an Advisory Opinion on this matter.

As you know, the Maine System faces an unprecedented combination of economic, demographic, and competitive challenges. The most stark expression of these challenges is the structural budget gap estimated this past November to exceed \$75MM by FY2019. While we have made significant reductions and reallocations since then and have some relief in the current State budget, our best case scenario still shows a gap of more than \$40MM over that same period. External remedies are limited as State appropriations and tuition increases will likely not exceed inflationary indexes. While we are actively pursuing enrollment management strategies, the facts remain that Maine is one of two states in a demographic winter; we are midway through an estimated 10-year, 19% drop in our secondary school population. With a general population of 1.35 million, Maine simply cannot afford to maintain seven four-year universities acting as a loose confederation.

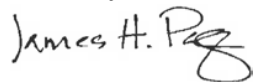
Our response to these challenges is predicated on the necessity of comprehensive change. Since 2007 we have reorganized several administrative functions, eliminated more than 900 FTE positions, and introduced a number of system-wide changes including, for example, Maine's first complete, inter-system credit transfer program. Nevertheless, our ability to meet our statewide mission in an

academically responsible and financially sustainable way can no longer be accommodated within the current operational model. This past July, the Trustees published a set of strategic outcomes for a successful and sustainable university resource, and this March I introduced the 'One University' concept as a framework to realize those outcomes.

In brief, the One University model builds on three premises. First, to meet our statewide mission we will maintain a multi-campus, mission-differentiated model. Second, recognizing that we cannot afford redundant administration, we will dramatically reduce and reform all administrative services creating, in effect, a single administrative function. Third, we are working with faculty to coordinate and integrate academic programs across the enterprise to increase innovation while leveraging student and faculty opportunities.

A major step we are taking to realize the One University model is the move to a single accreditation. We see this initiative not only as a defining outcome, but structuring our change efforts using the Commission's Accreditation Standards as an organizing framework will greatly enhance our efforts. With your permission, we will send you a more detailed presentation in time for your June Commission meeting. As we are all traversing new ground, I would also request the opportunity to meet with the Commission to discuss the plan and answer questions. We greatly appreciate your willingness to consider our efforts and look forward to working with you on what we see as a positive, transforming process for our students and the state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James H. Page". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "P" at the end.

James H. Page
Chancellor