



## JOINT PRESS RELEASE

### **New England Commission of Higher Education Votes To Accredit University of Maine System**

Burlington, Massachusetts -- At its meeting on June 23, 2020, the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE) voted to accredit the University of Maine System, effective July 1, 2020. The Commission's decision was based on a report submitted by the System and previous discussions with the U.S. Department of Education that the System, as established in Maine law, could be accredited as an "institution of higher education" under the federal Higher Education Act of 2008. The Commission's approval has the effect of unifying the currently separate institutional accreditations of the public universities that together make up the University of Maine System.

"I want to compliment the University of Maine System and New England Commission of Higher Education for their innovative work on the System's unified accreditation request," said Diane Jones, Principal Deputy Under Secretary at the U.S. Department of Education. "Accrediting the System's universities together will allow all of Maine's public universities to be evaluated together based on how well they share state resources in meeting standards of accreditation that establish criteria for institutional quality and higher education effectiveness. This innovative approach will reduce accreditation costs and improve accountability across an entire system."

"The Commission commends the University of Maine System and its seven universities for their deep commitment to ensuring high quality, accessible, and affordable higher education to the people of Maine," said Dr. Barbara Brittingham, President of NECHE. "The Commission looks forward to working with the System and its universities to implement their unified accreditation model successfully."

University of Maine System Board of Trustees Chair Jim Erwin stated, "I want to commend UMS Chancellor Dan Malloy for his transparent leadership to unify our universities' accreditations. NECHE's decision is the culmination of five years of work to put our universities on a path to becoming more efficient and more responsive to Maine's people and workforce needs. The Board is grateful to Chancellor Malloy, his predecessor Jim Page, and the entire UMS community and looks forward to UMS' continued transformation into a twenty-first century public higher education institution."

"With NECHE's approval now, I look forward to leading Maine's public universities in their work together to make our unified accreditation model a reality," said Dannel Malloy, Chancellor of the University of Maine System. "Our university presidents, System staff, and faculty leaders all deserve credit for imagining a future in which they share resources so that all Maine students have broader access to the rich array of academic programs we can offer together all across the state, which are so critical to graduating the workforce and civic leaders Maine needs."

With its approval, the Commission established future monitoring of the initiative, including an initial visit within six months and a comprehensive evaluation in approximately two years.

Further information can be found at:

University of Maine System: [maine.edu](http://maine.edu)

New England Commission of Higher Education: [neche.org](http://neche.org)

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