



October 26, 2021

Mr. Dannel P. Malloy  
Chancellor  
University of Maine System  
267 Estabrooke Hall, 15 Estabrooke Drive  
Orono, ME 04469

Dear Chancellor Malloy:

I am pleased to inform you that at its meeting on September 23, 2021, the New England Commission of Higher Education considered the proposal regarding the contractual arrangement between the University of Maine System's Farmington (UMF) campus and Seguinland Institute to offer UMF academic credit for courses taught at Seguinland submitted by University of Maine System and took the following action:

that the substantive change proposal regarding the contractual arrangement between the University of Maine System's Farmington campus and Seguinland Institute (SI) be accepted and the credit-bearing courses taught at Seguinland be encompassed in the System's accreditation with an effective date of September 23, 2021;

that the comprehensive evaluation scheduled for Fall 2022 be confirmed; that, in addition to the information included in all self-studies, as well as the matters specified in our letters of July 17, 2020, November 6, 2020, and May 25, 2021, the Fall 2022 self-study provide an update on the contractual arrangement between the University of Maine System's Farmington campus and Seguinland Institute with particular emphasis on UMF's success in:

- 1) achieving the financial and enrollment goals set for the program;
- 2) strengthening its agreement with Seguinland Institute with attention to ensuring that academic resources and student services are sufficient and appropriate to support the program;
- 3) evaluating the effectiveness of the program with attention to assessing student learning outcomes and using the results to make improvements.

The Commission gives the following reasons for its action.

The Commission accepted the report submitted by the University of Maine System and confirmed inclusion of courses offered through a contractual arrangement between the Farmington campus and Seguinland Institute within

the System's accreditation because the report provided evidence that the arrangement is being implemented in a manner consistent with Commission standards and policies.

We appreciate receiving the University of Maine System's clear and candid proposal that outlines the contractual arrangement that was established in June 2020 between the System's campus in Farmington, Maine and Seguinland Institute in Georgetown, Maine. To date, five "Topics of Religion" courses (two in Fall 2020; three in Spring 2021) have been delivered to 13 students (8 UMF students) through this arrangement, and we understand that SI plans to host three credit-bearing academic programs per year for college students: a nine-week fall semester program (The Good Life Gap Semester), a three-week May term (The Good Life May Term), and a one-week summer program exclusively for incoming UMF freshmen (First Year Fusion: The Good Life Section). According to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) included with the report, students who take for-credit courses at Seguinland Institute will register for such courses at UMF and receive their credits through UMF, and SI faculty assigned to teach in the program will be vetted by UMF academic administrators. We note in the MOU that UMF will receive \$100 per student credit hour, and, to date, UMF has generated about \$17,000 in revenue through this arrangement. The report further assures that the planning, approval, and evaluation of courses at SI follow the same processes as at UMF, and the Associate Provost and Dean of Arts and Sciences oversees the partnership with SI and serves as the primary point of contact with the SI Director.

The comprehensive evaluation of the University of Maine System in Fall 2022 is confirmed. In addition to the information provided in all self-studies and the matters specified in our letters of July 17, 2020, November 6, 2020, and May 25, 2021, we look forward, in Fall 2022, to learning of the continued successful implementation of the contractual arrangement between UMF and Seguinland Institute and to receiving information about three matters related to our standards on *Students*, *Institutional Resources*, and *Educational Effectiveness*.

While we are gratified to learn that the contractual arrangement supports UMF's mission and 2021 Strategic Plan initiative to strengthen the student learning experience, the report did not include projected financial and enrollment goals set for the duration of the contract which, according to the MOU, is five years (through 2025). The self-study prepared in advance of the Fall 2022 comprehensive evaluation will provide an opportunity to include this information as guided by our standards on *Students* and *Institutional Resources*:

Consistent with its mission, the institution sets and achieves realistic goals to enroll students who are broadly representative of the population the institution wishes to serve ... (*Students*, Statement of the Standard).

The institution's multi-year financial planning is realistic and reflects the capacity of the institution to depend on identified sources of revenue and ensure the advancement of educational quality and services for students (7.6).

Similarly, the academic and student services provided to students who take credit-bearing courses through SI were not specified in the report. We note that UMF is in the process of "revising and strengthening" its agreement with SI and we look forward, through the Fall 2022 self-study, to an update on this matter as evidence that UMF "recognizes the variations in services that are appropriate for residential students, at the main campus, at off-campus locations, and for distance education programs as well as the differences in circumstances and goals of students pursuing degrees" (5.9).

Finally, we understand from the report that as part of UMF's annual review process, "Seguinland faculty and UMF will carefully evaluate artifacts and measures of assessment to determine how best to apply them toward the continuous improvement of individual courses and the academic

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program as a whole.” We also note positively that “UMF will further work with SI to develop an alumni database that can be used to measure student outcomes at intervals after matriculation.” In keeping with our standard on *Educational Effectiveness*, we look forward, in the Fall 2022 self-study, to receiving an update on UMF’s success in evaluating the effectiveness of the program with emphasis on assessing student learning outcomes and using the results to make improvements:

The results of assessment and quantitative measures of student success are a demonstrable factor in the institution’s efforts to improve the curriculum and learning opportunities and results for students (8.8).

The Commission expressed appreciation for the report prepared by the University of Maine System and hopes its preparation has contributed to institutional improvement. It appreciates your cooperation in the effort to provide public assurance of the quality of higher education.

You are encouraged to share this letter with all of the institution’s constituencies. It is Commission policy to inform the chairperson of the System’s governing board of action on its accreditation status. In a few days we will be sending a copy of this letter to Mark Gardner. The System is free to release information about the evaluation and the Commission’s action to others, in accordance with the enclosed policy on Public Disclosure of Information about Affiliated Institutions.

If you have any questions about the Commission’s action, please contact Lawrence M. Schall, President of the Commission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "George Tetler".

George W. Tetler

GWT/sjp

Enclosure: Public Disclosure of Information about Affiliated Institutions

cc: Mark Gardner