

UNIVERSITY OF MAINE SYSTEM  
Board of Trustees Meeting

Zoom Meeting  
January 9, 2023

**Academic and Student Affairs Committee Meeting**

**Present: Committee Members:** David MacMahon; Chair, Trish Riley, Dhyvia Singaram, Beth Dobson, Kelly Martin, Barbara Alexander, and Lisa Eames. **Other Trustees:** Roger Katz and Dhivya Singaram. **Chancellor:** Dannel Malloy. **Presidents:** Jacqueline Edmondson, Joe McDonnell, Joe Szakas, Deb Hedeem, Ray Rice and Joan Ferrini-Mundy. **Faculty Representatives:** William Otto, Michael Scott, Matthew Bampton, Lisa Leduc, Dmitry Bam, and Clyde Mitchell. **Student Representatives:** Aidan Mulrooney. **System Staff:** Jeffrey St. John, Ellen Doughty, Rosa Redonnett, Paul Chan, Carolyn Dorsey, Ryan Low, and Jamie Ballinger. **Others Present:** Adam Tuchinsky, John Volin, Kathy Yardley, James Moreira, Eric Jones, and Cynthia Dean.

**Committee Members Absent:** Pender Makin and Emily Cain.

Trustee David MacMahon, Chair, welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order. The Clerk performed a roll call of the Committee members present.

**Faculty Representative Initiated Dialogue**

The Faculty Representatives to the Board of Trustees, working in conjunction with the Academic & Student Affairs (ASA) Committee Chair, selected shared courses across UMS universities and an update on the Faculty Governance Council (FGC) as the topics of focus for the January ASA Committee meeting dialogue.

UMPI Faculty Representative Dr. Lisa Leduc led a discussion with the other faculty representatives to the Board concerning shared courses across the UMS universities. Dr. Leduc stated that the following faculty representatives to the Board were also in the meeting: Dr. William Otto-UMM, Dr. Michael Scott-UM, Dr. Matthew Bampton-USM, Dr. Patrick Cheek-UMA, and Dr. Clyde Mitchell-UMF.

Dr. Leduc stated that in addition to discussing the topic of shared courses across the UMS, a portion of the discussion today would be focused on an update from the UMS Faculty Governance Council. She thanked the other Faculty Representatives to the Board for sharing their time in front of the ASA Committee with the FGC representatives. She welcomed the following members of the FGC to the committee meeting: James Moreira, UMM Associate Professor of Community Studies; Eric Jones, UMM Associate Professor of Plant Biology; and Cynthia Dean, UMA Associate Professor of Education and Coordinator of Teacher Education.

**Shared Courses/Parallel Courses**

Dr. Leduc explained that she wanted to set the stage by explaining that the shared courses topic that is to be discussed is describing parallel courses that are taught at multiple campuses, but not necessarily collaborative across campus lines, although some may be. The courses that first come to her mind are Biology, History, English, and Education. She feels that there is a need for all of these courses to be taught at each campus because they not only serve as stand alone programs but because courses like Education and Biology also serve other degree programs such as Biology supporting the Pre-med program. She explained that there weren't any programs that stood out to her as being unnecessarily duplicated at each university in the System; but that there could be opportunities for further collaboration in some programs.

Dr. Leduc stated that UMFK Faculty Representative Kennedy Rubert-Nason was unable to attend the meeting but sent her a note to state that he was unsure if UMS should discontinue or continue parallel programs but that he was concerned about the differences in curriculum in parallel programs at each university. She provided an example of how UMPI, UMFK, and UMA attempted to combine and create an associate degree in Criminal Justice, but due to unchangeable differences in the curriculum at each campus, they were not able to move forward with that collaboration.

Dr. Otto stated that when he was reviewing the data on UMS parallel programs he noticed that there are programs that could be considered parallel but are listed in different academic areas. For instance, he provided the example of how Marine Sciences is a category; however, UMM Marine Biology falls under the Biological Sciences program and at UM it falls under an Interdisciplinary Studies program. He stated that this can cause some contention for the faculty because although the academic program sounds similar or parallel, it does have variation from the other program(s). Additionally, the faculty have external pressure to offer these programs on all campuses to increase enrollment for their university. He explained that another issue is that these similarly named courses, which are located in many different categories can also cause confusion for high school students who are enrolling in a degree program, because they may not know how to differentiate which course is best for them. He explained that UMM does look at the Burning Glass data and tries to eliminate programs that are duplicative and competing for a small pool of students. He stated that even with some of these issues, he agrees with Dr. Leduc that there are certain programs that should be offered on all campuses.

Dr. Scott pointed out that a lot of times the development of programs is discussed extensively within the university faculty units and they spend a lot of time trying to play to the strength of their faculty as well as the needs of degrees that are up and coming. He explained that the faculty units also spend a lot of time looking at collaborations across campus and interdisciplinary programs. He stated that it is not always just a case of looking at duplicating programs elsewhere, but it's playing to the strength of the individual universities. He stated that the universities know their campus faculty and students, and their needs and the difficulty is working with faculty at other institutions that they really don't have a lot of connection with. He stated that it takes one or two years to develop a program using the process outlined by the System and that faculty do try to work together to develop programs that are beneficial and can work across university lines.

Dr. Bampton stated that at recent meeting with Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Jeffrey St. John there was a Legendary List of Barriers to Collaboration that was compiled by the former UMS Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Dr. Bob Neely. He explained that he asked in the meeting if Vice Chancellor St. John was comfortable sharing that with the faculty and giving a status update. Dr. Bampton explained that he had not seen it distributed yet and asked if they could take a look at the list and learn where UMS stands in terms of addressing the issues outlined in the list.

Vice Chancellor St. John explained that he spent part of the break updating it so he could bring it back to the FGC. He stated that he and several UMS senior staff members have been working on the ever-evolving list and they have actually knocked a number of the barriers off of that list and truncated it somewhat. He stated that he would make sure that Dr. Bampton and the other faculty members have the updated list in advance of the next FGC meeting. Dr. Bampton thanked Vice Chancellor St. John and explained that he feels that having the list would be very helpful and enable the faculty to focus discussions a little more, if they knew where some of those key barriers to collaboration issues now stand. Dr. Leduc explained that Dr. Bampton is not part of the FGC and neither are several other of the Faculty Representatives to the Board. Vice Chancellor St. John stated that he has begun sharing regular messages with the FGC Chair and the faculty senate and assembly presidents and that he would

be happy to add the Faculty Representative to the Board to those messages to make sure they get the updated list and the same information as the other faculty groups.

Dr. Leduc explained that if you look at the programs there's so many concentrations and the sense is that a concentration is something that doesn't go up to the System Office, it's something that a campus can pretty much do on its own. She stated that it may be an easy route to try out something new and that's maybe why universities have had this expanded portfolio of academic programs. She stated that post covid, post unified accreditation, and with declining enrollments and a budget crisis, UMS is in a "perfect storm" that could actually be useful in the sense that now there is an opportunity through the cross-linked policy and other things such as the ability to teach courses synchronously via Zoom to other campuses, for UMS to have the opportunity and ability to have more parallel programs being truly shared or collaborative than ever before.

Dr. Mitchell stated that he wanted to bring up some of the positive aspects of how unified accreditation and collaboration among the campuses. He explained that along with the shrinking student population is corresponding shrinkage in faculty. Working with other universities in the System is valuable because UMF can work with other campuses to bring in their concentrations that they specialize in, that UMF can't offer, to make them available to their students. The UMF Business Administration program is currently working with USM in this manner and have ongoing conversations in the other business programs for the same sort of initiative. Dr. Mitchell stated that he wonders what more can be done to increase communication amongst the faculty members across campus borders, because he believes getting to know more about each other would lessen some of the hesitancy in working collaboratively. He stated that some of the hesitancy also stems from the idea of repeating past failed collaboration efforts where campuses are developing their programs simultaneously and one campus's program is approved and the other is not. He stated that this can initiate a sense of competition and not collaboration, which can be hard to overcome. He explained that the declining enrollment and demographic challenges are also putting pressure on campuses and further fueling this competitive environment. He stated that he appreciates the work the System has been doing to increase communication to the faculty and he wished that program development could be more of an open process across the System, instead of a tightly guarded process at the university level.

Dr. Scott provided an example of what Dr. Mitchell just explained. He stated that in the development of the Human-centered Technology Design program that is on the agenda for approval today, they did reach out to other universities to solicit feedback. When UM was developing the program and working on the interdisciplinary aspect of the program, they reached out to USM, UMF and UMA to make sure that they were not duplicating any programs and to provide those universities an opportunity to provide feedback. They received positive feedback from USM and UMF. UMA provided some suggestions for adjustments. The difficult part of developing a collaborative program is that the faculty do not know all of the aspects of the other universities programs, so they have to base the development on their university's program. UM wanted to open the development of this program up so that they build a strong enough program, that once it is developed, started and established at UM, it can be shared collaboratively with the other universities.

Trustee Alexander asked in light of the budget and demographic challenges, as well as the obligations under the NECHE report to do more in the way of systemness to make sure all UMS universities are capable of being accredited, what should the Board do to help make this happen in a positive way. Dr. Scott suggested that maybe having the Board review the current process for establishing programs could be a good start. He stated that the Chancellor's Office may be able to provide some additional details on any issues with the program approval process and suggestions for streamlining that process.

Dr. Leduc stated that she believes the role the Board can play, especially the ASA Committee members, is to ask important questions about collaboration efforts and if the program will have any negative affects on the other universities prior to approval of any new program. She explained that collaboration creates a sense of vulnerability because another campus might put the program up first and there is fear that one program may lose enrollment due to another parallel program. She stated that there is a history of that competition across the System which gives a disincentive to collaborate.

Trustee Riley asked if it would be helpful to look at the restricting of the mission for each campus to provide clarification about each campus's areas of expertise and strength. Dr. Leduc stated one of the questions in the program intent to plan process is to identify how the program is in support of the university's mission. Additionally, if the proposed program will be a parallel program, the developing campus has to stated how they are working with the other campus and how their proposed program will not hurt the other university's program. Dr. Leduc stated that there is some overlap of mission between the universities and this is something that she sees being worked out in the strategic plan, both at the System level and then funneled down to the university level to identify the areas of strength and define each university mission from a bottom-up approach.

Trustee Katz asked if Vice Chancellor St. John would also provide the Trustees with the Barriers to Collaboration list that Dr. Bampton mentioned earlier. He asked what metrics are used to decide whether a program, such as the ones mentioned earlier like English, Biology, etc., need to be taught on every campus. He explained that he has concerns that this is really causing UMS to compete with itself. Dr. Leduc clarified that many of the needed parallel programs she described earlier are either general education courses or courses that the program serves so many other programs, it's not that much of a burden for a campus to provide it as a standalone course also. Dr. Moreira explained that investigation of whether a parallel course is needed should be determined at the campus level to ensure the needs of that campus's students are met. He believes that looking at it from a System level could be difficult because each campuses needs are so different and because there are some classes that have to be taught in person, such as labs. Each campus needs to evaluate if a course can be taught online, if the program supports other programs, and many other aspects before determining if a program is truly needed at the campus. It would be very difficult to make these types of determinations from a System level.

#### Faculty Governance Council (FGC)

The FGC was established by Chancellor Malloy in January 2020 as an assembly of the Faculty Senate/Assembly Presidents/Chairs. The Council was formed to address unique System-wide faculty governance issues and provide guidance on matters of new multi-university program proposals and initiatives that relate to the support of System-wide academic programming and unified accreditation. Dr. Leduc explained that she and Dr. Otto are members of the FGC, along with the three other members of the FGC mentioned earlier in the meeting. She stated that the ASA Committee was provided with the recently approved FGC charter in the meeting materials and that Dr. Moreira would give a brief overview of the history of the FGC and the work they have been doing.

Dr. Moreira stated that the FGC was called together for the first time in the winter of 2020, as part of the process of developing the unified accreditation initiative. He explained that it was a bit of a rocky start because they weren't sure what their mission was, and the FGC had to figure out how to move forward with this group without much System direction. He stated that this was the first time many of these faculty members had met and so the first year was really spent just getting to know each other and more about each other's campuses. He explained that the FGC tried to develop a charter early on and found it difficult because they were still struggling with what unified accreditation was and how it

would affect the campuses. Eventually after over six ratification cycles and revisions, a version of the charter was proposed and ratified by all but one campus in the summer of 2021. This version of the charter went through some additional revisions and the final version was ratified by all UMS universities in fall 2022. Since the charter ratification the FGC has finally been able to get started on some important work and they are meeting on a more frequent basis to complete this work.

Trustee Alexander asked what role the FGC plays in issues like the development of parallel programs and the development of new majors and programs. Dr. Moreira stated that the FGC believes in campus autonomy and making these decisions at the campus level. He explained that one of the reasons that the FGC charter had so many hiccups in the development was that each university has its own faculty senate and assembly and the FGC did not want to become an overarching “super senate” above the campus level. The FGC wants to be more of a conduit of information between the university faculty senate and assemblies and the System, to improve communication. The FGC feels the communication will move much more quickly this way, instead of waiting until something reaches the Board level and the Faculty Representatives to the Board brings it back to their senates and assemblies. Dr. Moreira explained that the FGC has not decided to be involved in the program approval process; however, any program that goes to the ASA Committee, will have gone to the FGC so that each campus knows what is coming forth and will have the opportunity for proactive conversations about how to collaborate. He stated that another issue is the clarification of terminology such as multi-campus program, parallel program, duplicate program and collaborative program. There is discrepancy on what each type of program means and how the FGC will interact with the program proposal based on its description. For instance, according to the current FGC charter the FGC may be informed about a single campus program, but will not be able to provide feedback on that program, whether it is a parallel program or not. This is a bit of a point of contention for the FGC because they thought they would have more of an opportunity to engage in the program approval process even if it was a single campus program, when the program had any implication of affecting another campus. Dr. Moreira stated that one positive aspect is that the FGC can speak directly to Vice Chancellor St. John if they have a concern about a specific program of any type and having that conduit for communication is appreciated.

### **Student Representatives Discussion**

Student Trustee Singaram stated that after attending her first Board of Trustees meeting in November, she feels that there should be a formal space for the Student Representatives to the Board to speak at Board meetings. She explained that she has already begun conversations with Chair of the Board, Trustee Riley to discuss how this might be accomplished. Additionally, there is a brewing idea for increased student engagement between undergraduate students and graduate students, maybe in the form of a mentorship program that is supported by the UMS faculty, staff, and other community members. She explained that there are lots of different avenues including alumni networking; graduate students explaining what graduate school is like to undergraduate students; and partnering community business partners with UMS graduate employees to form mentorships. UMF Student Representative Aidan Mulrooney agreed with Trustee Singaram on both points that she mentioned. Trustee Riley stated that the flow of communication between the Student Representatives to the Board and Trustee Singaram, who represents all UMS students in her role as a voting member of the Board, is critical to understanding the voice of the UMS students.

Trustee Alexander stated that she agreed with Trustee Riley and stated that it would be beneficial to hear what the students’ thoughts are concerning the shared courses across the UMS topic that the faculty discussed earlier in the meeting. Chair MacMahon agreed and stated that they could possibly

also provide feedback on the issue Dr. Otto raised earlier concerning course descriptions that are difficult to differentiate for students.

**New Academic Program Proposal: B.S. Human-Centered Technology Design, UM**

UM Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs & Provost John Volin provided information about the UM request to offer a Bachelor of Science in Human-Centered Technology Design. This proposed degree program focuses on applied aspects of technology and design to support human use. It is a technical program which explores ways to integrate new technologies such as artificial intelligence, augmented reality, virtual reality and the internet of things into daily use. Employment for graduates of this field is projected to increase in Maine and nationally, with expected employment growth above 16% over the next 10 years.

Trustee Alexander explained that the background information provided for this program lacked a definitive explanation as to how this program would be integrated with other UMS universities and asked for clarification concerning the exploration of this type of multi-campus integration. Additionally, she stated that the background information stated that additional funding would be needed for this program but that it did not specify where this funding would come from and asked for further information on funding sources for the program.

Provost Volin explained that the intent to plan process for this program began in December 2021 and the planning process has included many conversations with the UMS university Chief Academic Officers (CAO) to discuss integration among the other universities. While there is no direct plan as to how this integration will take place, this program has been designed to allow for this type of integration as the program develops. He also explained that the additional funding resources that were mentioned in the program proposal would be some combination of reallocating resources at the campus level.

UM Faculty Representative, Dr. Michael Scott explained that one of the options for cross-campus integration that has been discussed is a summer institute for this program. Since this is a hands-on program, the summer institute would make it possible for students from the other UMS universities to participate in the program.

Trustee Alexander thanked Provost Volin and Dr. Scott for the additional information that they provided. She explained that in order for her to feel comfortable approving this program proposal, the written proposal would need to include explicit information about the intent to integrate this program with other UMS universities (or not) and a clearer description of whether funding outside of campus resources would be needed for the program. She asked that this type of information be included in all program proposals going forward.

Chair MacMahon asked if the businesses that would hire students with a degree in the program have been consulted to make sure that the program meets industry needs and if there is an opportunity for students in the program to be involved in the high demand Esports industry. Provost Volin explained that the Program Advisory Board does work with alumni and business partners to collect data and feedback for the program. He also explained that there is a gaming design pathway that is part of this program that would translate nicely into moving into the Esports industry.

Vice Chancellor for Research & Innovation and UM President Joan Ferrini-Mundy stated that this is a very exciting program and that seven years ago when she worked for the National Science Foundation, this type of program was indicated as one of the top focus areas for the next generation of research.

She also indicated that there are a variety of options for how this program can be integrated across UMS as the program develops and those pathways are discovered.

Trustee Katz indicated that he was also concerned about the funding resources for the program and Trustee Riley indicated that she believes that the information that Trustee Alexander has asked for would be needed in order to approve the program proposal. Trustee Riley also agreed that this type of information should be included in program proposals going forward.

After discussion and consideration, the ASA Committee decided not to take action at the Committee meeting today and to remove this item from the Consent Agenda and forward the program proposal to the January Board of Trustees meeting as a full action item with the understanding that UM would provide additional information to provide further description of how other UMS universities will be invited to participate in this program from the point of approval going forward, and how UM will specifically articulate how the budget will be met to support this program prior to approval at the Board meeting.

On a motion by Trustee Alexander, which was seconded by Trustee Riley, and approved by a roll call vote of all Trustees present, the Academic and Student Affairs Committee agreed to forward this item the January 29-30, 2023 Board of Trustees meeting for further information and discussion and for the full Board to consider for approval.

### **Unified Accreditation Update**

Vice Chancellor St. John provided an update on unified accreditation. UMS' response to the NECHE evaluation team's report has come in two parts. First UMS filed a fact check response to the draft version of that report followed by a substantive response where any differences of interpretation were addressed. The draft NECHE report was received on November 15 and UMS submitted a fact check response two weeks later. Most of the corrections focused on characterizations of the unified catalog initiative including references to the Common Catalog or Single Catalog throughout. UMS asked for Unified Catalog to be the preferred descriptor and then there were a few minor errors regarding assessment. UMS received the final report in December and shared it the following day with the Trustees, university Presidents, Vice Chancellors, Faculty Governance Council (FGC) Chair, and the faculty senate and assembly presidents. A few days after that it was shared with the entire UMS community in a System-wide message from the Chancellor. UMS is submitting a more substantive response for the second half of the response to the NECHE team in the next couple of days. UMS responded principally in a couple of areas including the team's characterization of the FGC. As noted earlier in the meeting, NECHE didn't have the advantage of seeing the recently finalized and ratified FGC charter during their visit. UMS was able to present the thoughtful work that the faculty have done over the last two years to develop the FGC charter. UMS also importantly addressed an element that the team left out of its report altogether, which was the request for general approval to offer Competency-based Education (CBE) courses at UMPI. When NECHE first granted unified accreditation approval in July of 2020, they invited UMS to indicate a request for general approval of CBE courses at UMPI during the self-study process so that President Rice doesn't have to write a report to NECHE every time he wants to add a new CBE program. The NECHE team didn't respond to that in the UMS self-study or anywhere in their report, so UMS inserted it into the substantive response, upon advice from NECHE. UMS expects NECHE action on that after they've considered all aspects of the substantive response.

Chancellor Malloy, Vice Chancellor Dorsey, and Vice Chancellor St. John will meet with the full NECHE commission outside of Boston on March 2nd. It will be a 60 minute discussion of the self-

study, the evaluation visit, the team's final report, and the UMS substantive response to that report. NECHE will then send a letter to the Chancellor and to Board Chair Riley summarizing its findings and sharing guidance in areas where follow-up or improvement are needed. That letter could come as early as three or four weeks later or a couple of months later, it really depends on the volume of correspondence that NECHE staff are handling at any one point in the semester. NECHE's final action letter could come in several different forms. They could say thank you we don't need to hear from you again until your fifth year report five years from now; they could say thank you we want to hear more from you in a specific amount of time on a certain topic; or they could also follow up with what's called a focused evaluation and say we want to send a person or two a year from now to speak with you and get a report on this particular topic. All of those responses would be considered successful outcomes to this process.

Trustee Riley stated that she noticed in the NECHE final report that the report did not adequately reflect the different missions and roles of the individual universities of UMS and asked Vice Chancellor St. John if this was addressed in UMS's substantive response. Vice Chancellor St. John stated UMS did address this in the substantive response

### **Chief Academic Officers Update.**

Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Jeffrey St. John asked the Chief Academic Officers (CAOs) of the UMS universities to provide brief updates on enrollment and retention efforts at their universities.

UMA Provost and Interim President Joseph Szakas explained that UMA graduated a large class of around 90 students last May and because of that, they are shorter in enrollment this year than they were last year at this time. UMA is currently down about 1300 credits. Continuing student enrollments are down, but new admissions, transfers, and Early College enrollments are up. UMA is leveraging the System EAB program and sending out emails to all continuing student that have not enrolled yet and that is approximately 600 students. They are also targeting students with phone campaigns and other marketing strategies. UMA is mostly comprised of non-traditional students and they tend to register later than other students, so UMA does expect to have more registrations closer to the deadline. UMA is on track to hit their goal of adjusted credit hours for FY2023.

Maine School of Law Vice Dean and Provost Dmitry Bam stated that historically the Maine Law School doesn't have an issue with student retention. He believes this is due to the fact that Law School students give up their careers and put their lives on hold to attend Law school, so they are very intentional and thoughtful before enrolling. He explained that the small student body allows the staff to really get to know the students and stay connected with them. Provost Bam explained that the Law School loses one or two students per year to academic transfer or academic dismissal and other than that the students stay to completion. The Maine Law School has a very robust academic success, advising, and career services programs that makes sure students stay on track and develop the skills they need to pass the Bar examination and begin a successful career in law.

USM Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Adam Tuchinsky explained that USM hired an Enrollment Manager this summer and added retention efforts to the position title. This has helped USM concentrate efforts in these areas. USM joined in the UMS TRANSFORMS Research Learning Experience (RLE) initiative recently and there is hope this will increase retention of students as well. Like UMA, USM has used the EAB navigate program to connect with students and remind them to register for classes. 75% of students who receive these notifications are retained as compared to 48% when the students are not engaged through EAB. The USM Promise Scholarship Program has a retention rate above 90%, which is impressive as this is a vulnerable student population. USM is



developing a standing committee on retention, persistence and graduation to take a more proactive approach to the declining enrollment. This standing committee along with the Institutional Research Office are working together to collect data and gain a better understanding of retention issues and where students go when they leave UMS. Human-centered design programs are critically important to access, visualize, and understand this data. Over the last seven years 6000 students have left USM and enrolled at another institution. The good news is that close to 1000 of those students enrolled in another UMS university. 1500 enrolled at a Maine Community College but 3000 went out of state. UMS has found that double Majors are retained at 80%. Athletes and students in the arts that have robust experiential learning are also retained at a high rate.

UMF Associate Provost and Dean of Education, Health and Rehabilitation Katherine Yardley stated that this spring UMF anticipates an expected return rate of 91.1%. This is consistent over the past eight years and UMF's retention efforts are aligned to address three major sources of attrition: academic difficulties, challenges in resolving educational and occupational goals, and failure to become academically and socially connected. Academic difficulties are often impacted by financial challenges and mental health challenges so this year UMF not only incorporated a number of new initiatives but they also looked at the structural organization of how they support student success. Student affairs and enrollment management and advising have been reorganized to support student success. Oversight of career services was shifted to the director of advising so that conversations related to career options and opportunities become a natural extension of advising. In addition, the UMF Assistant Dean of Teaching, Learning and Assessment now has oversight of the student learning commons which provides academic support to undergraduate students and academic appeals. This past year UMF has worked to revise the suspension process to make sure that it's more accessible to students and they have different options for appealing. UMF has also encouraged and expanded the number of faculty working with instructional designers, so students have very clear expectations laid out for them. Other UMF retention initiatives include, increased communication between faculty and students, in-class tutors, expanded student commons hours, RLE programs, increased community integration, and increased support for mental and physical health for underinsured and uninsured students.

UM Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs & Provost John Volin explained that the overall percentage of degree seeking undergraduate retention is up 1% over last year at 87%. The largest gain was among sophomores with a 2% increase. The retention for first year students is flat at about 85%. The retention for degree seeking graduate students is at 81%, up about 2% from last year. Retention numbers for UMM are at 73%, up 2% from last year. UMM first year retention is at 77%, up 3% from last year. Like the other UMS universities, UM/UMM are both utilizing EAB navigate to improve student retention. UM will have a new Provost for Student Success start in February and they will work on increasing the usage of EAB. The Maine Business School, the College of Education & Human Development and the Honors College have all either added new or reconfigured existing administrative staff that are dedicated to first-year advising and retention. UM is launching/relaunching several other initiatives to bolster retention including the Make the Grade Initiative, Gateways to Success Initiative, and peer mentoring programs. The Maine Business School is piloting a new peer mentoring platform called Knack and this is a platform that will connect Maine business students that have done well in a course with students that are enrolled in the same course. This program will start this coming spring. UM/UMM have seen success with the RLE programs just as the other UMS universities. The RLE programs are for first-year students and have a bridge week component tied to them that helps students that participate to develop that sense of community and belonging to their campus community. UM/UMM are actively working on unenrolled students to get them registered for spring 2023.

UMPI President and Provost Ray Rice stated that UMPI is looking at just over 1000 students enrolled this spring, which is a 5% increase from last year at this time. Credit hours are a little over 10,600, which is up almost 5% from last year. This is reflective of the increase from the fall semester where UMPI saw healthy increases in both head count and credit hour generation. The majority of all of the increases are accountable to the Competency Based Education (CBE) Your Pace program. CBE increases grew over 50% since the start of the pandemic through to this past fall and now in into this spring. Completion rates in students enrolled in the CBE program are at 87% and contributed to the additional 25 graduates this year over last. CBE students are typically adult learners and complete their degree in 2 years. Enrollment of traditional students at UMPI crested just before the pandemic at about 70%. That dropped to 50% during the pandemic and has rebounded to just about 59%. UMPI has spent several years on initiatives to improve retention including through the EAB navigate. UMPI used EAB navigate extensively with four check-in periods over the course of the semester with faculty. That provided direct input and then the various efforts through UMPI Title III funded programs were initiated to address those student needs. UMPI has hired an Executive Director of Admissions and Enrollment Management who has been working very closely with the former Dean of Enrollment Management to get up to speed on the campus retention and enrollment initiatives.

### **2022-2023 Demographics, Enrollment, and Trends Update**

Vice Chancellor St. John provide brief updates on demographic challenges facing the state, and the impact those challenges have had on enrollments and national and state higher education trends. He focused his report on demographics and trends and offered to bring a fuller report on enrollment to the February ASA Committee meeting. He explained that he would have better data on the enrollment projections for the spring and fall 2023 semesters at that time.

Maine continues to have very challenging demographics. As of the end of 2021 Maine has continued to be the oldest state in the U.S with an average age of 45, which is followed closely by New Hampshire at 43.1, Vermont at 43. Connecticut and Rhode Island are also north of 40 and Massachusetts is just under that number at 39.7. By contrast, the average Texan is 35.2 years old, residents of Washington DC 34.4 and residents of Utah 31.5. As a whole, the Northeast is the oldest region in the country and Northern New England is the oldest part of that region in terms of population. Maine grew in population by more than 10 thousand residents in 2021 and added another 8 thousand in net gain in 2022. In total from the onset of covid, roughly March 2020 through the end of 2022 Maine added nearly 22 thousand residents by population. Maine ranks 42nd among the 50 states and has 1.37 million residents. Maine has the third lowest birth rate in the nation. 13 of Maine's 16 counties continue to be more than 90 percent white population. Cumberland, Androscoggin and Washington counties are just below that 90 percent threshold in terms of diversity. In terms of college participation and persistence, Maine sees a historically high percentage of secondary school students graduate at approximately 94%. Since the onset of covid, the percentage of Maine high school students who enroll in higher education in the fall semester following their high school graduation has dropped from 62% to 54%, with somewhere between 13 and 14 thousand high school graduates a year statewide. That 8% drop is significant all the way down the line for UMS enrollments.

Of students in Maine who go on to college, persistence rates are not strong for the fall cohort. About 63% of students at Maine's two-year and four-year institutions persisted to the fall of their second year and 64% of those students overall graduated within six years. About 53% of Mainers aged 25 to 64 have a post-secondary degree or credential. The cumulation of this data shows that there is a sizable population of working age Maine adults who have some number of college credits but no degree or credential.

Vice Chancellor St. John explained that in terms of trends, the most surprising trend seen state and nation wide is that of connection to campus and mental well-being playing an impactful role in a student's willingness and ability to persist to completion. Since the pandemic started, universities have seen a major uptick in how these issues have impacted students at a great level. Participation in things like research learning experiences, clubs, athletics, organizations, and other co-curricular activities help students feel more supported and connected to their campus community. UMS is looking into additional avenues for helping students develop a connection to their campus and provide the support students need to achieve completion. Another initiative UMS is focusing on is helping to convert a higher percentage of Early College students and Maine Community College students as matriculants to UMS universities. Gaining even a 2 or 3% larger population of these students would have a large impact on UMS institutional health and budget.

Trustee Alexander stated that this data should be used to inform the important work of the strategic planning process. Vice Chancellor St. John stated that he agrees and looks forward to that work.

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,  
Heather A. Massey for  
Ellen N. Doughty, Clerk