

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 16, 2007

Contact: John Diamond 973-3224 (mobile 949-4904)
or Peggy Markson 973-3245



UNIVERSITY SYSTEM TRUSTEES TO MEET JAN. 21-22

AGENDA INCLUDES FUNDING FOR CLASSROOM AND LABORATORY IMPROVEMENTS

BANGOR – The University of Maine System Board of Trustees will meet Sunday and Monday, Jan. 21-22, at the System's headquarters in downtown Bangor.

Among the agenda items, Chancellor Terrence J. MacTaggart will present a capital improvements budget request which, if approved by trustees, will be submitted to the Governor for his consideration as part of his State-funded capital improvements plan. The University System request seeks approval of two capital bond requests that would be issued and retired by the State:

- \$62 million for classroom, laboratory and instructional technology renovations and improvements for Maine's seven public universities and affiliated outreach centers
- \$66 million in strategic improvements to research and development facilities at the University of Maine in Orono and the University of Southern Maine, which will enhance those universities' ability to receive federal research funds and to generate new products, technologies, and private sector job growth.

In addition, the University System is seeking a \$3 million State appropriation to acquire "next generation" high-speed broadband capacity deemed essential to university-related research and development. In addition, this type of connectivity is essential for collaboration with other research institutions in Maine and around the world. This request is also included in Gov. Baldacci's recent FY07 supplemental appropriation request.

All of the capital requests were developed through a priority-setting process to determine the areas of greatest need and urgency, MacTaggart explained.

In other business, trustees will discuss the latest report on a State-funded, university-based research and development program called the Maine Economic Improvement Fund (MEIF). MEIF provides seed and matching funds to help university researchers attract federal and private investment through grants and contracts. MEIF specifically targets seven economic sectors of importance or potential to Maine.

According to the report that MacTaggart will present to trustees, in FY07 university researchers used \$14.5 million in MEIF funds to attract an additional \$42.7 million in grants and contracts, mostly from federal sources. That combination of funds supported 717 full-time equivalent jobs in Maine during the one-year period.

The Board's January agenda also includes action and discussion on a number of other program, fiscal, and personnel matters. A full agenda may be found at http://www.maine.edu/board/meeting_agenda.php.

Established in 1968, the 34,000-student University of Maine System is the state's largest educational enterprise. It features seven universities – some with multiple campuses – located across the state, as well as 11 University College outreach centers and more than 100 interactive distance education sites. For more information, log onto www.maine.edu.

All Board meetings are open to the public. Persons with disabilities who need accommodations to attend should call Michael Sauda, assistant director of the University System Facilities Office, at 973-3337 (voice) or 973-3262 (TDD/TDY) or by e-mail at sauda@maine.edu.