

EMBARGOED UNTIL 11 A.M. THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2007

February 15, 2007

Contact: John Diamond 949-4904

Peggy Markson 973-3245



**UNIVERSITY SYSTEM CHANCELLOR URGES LAWMAKERS TO CONTINUE THE
'PARTNERSHIP' TO CREATE JOBS AND ECONOMIC GROWTH**

AUGUSTA—University of Maine System Chancellor Terrence J. MacTaggart on Thursday appealed to legislators to continue the State's "partnership" with Maine's public universities in order to protect quality and achieve job creation and economic growth.

MacTaggart's remarks were delivered to a joint session of the Maine Legislature as part of the biennial "State of the University" address.

"We are proud of the quality and value found among our universities," MacTaggart explained. "But we have to do better. In the globally competitive economy, it is not just the educated who prevail, it is the best educated."

Citing Maine's need for an educated and skilled workforce, MacTaggart stressed the universities' role and potential in education and economic development.

"[Our] 45,000 students represent the largest higher education enterprise in the state," MacTaggart stated. "In fact, in any one semester, three out of four students enrolled in public higher education in Maine—75 percent—are enrolled in the University of Maine System.

"Last year, more than 5,000 of our students earned a college degree," he continued. "Those numbers make the University System, annually, the largest single producer of Maine's workforce."

MacTaggart also spoke of the success Maine's universities have had attracting federal investment in research and the business "spin-offs" that have resulted from university-based R&D. He credited Maine's governors and Legislature for partnering with the University System "to provide the two key ingredients necessary to bring [federal and private research funds] to Maine—'seed' money and brainpower.

"Since 1997, the State has invested \$80 million in university-based research," he explained. "Using that investment as 'match' or 'seed' money, university researchers generated an additional \$305 million in research investment right here in Maine.

"Most of that money came from federal research grants, money that otherwise would have been awarded to researchers in other states and invested in their states' economies," he noted. "Last year those dollars funded 717 full-time positions within Maine, generating employment, additional economic activity, and tax revenues for local and state coffers.

-more-

“The partnership is paying off—in jobs, economic activity, and new opportunities,” MacTaggart said. “This is welcome news at a time when plant closings and layoffs are occurring very close to home.”

Referring to the University System’s request for additional resources, MacTaggart returned to the partnership theme.

“Your investment in [the universities’] base budget...will help us attract and keep able teaching and research faculty,” he stated. “Your investment in the laboratories and classrooms—the kinds of investment outlined in our bond request—will improve quality for our students.

“In the end, it is all about Maine values and Maine’s kids. It’s about each student graduating with a first-rate degree and the tools for a successful career and a satisfying life. It is about expanding Maine’s knowledge-based economy so these graduates and their families can live and work here in Maine.”

Currently, State government provides approximately one-third of the University System’s \$600 million annual budget. The Governor’s proposed budget recommends a \$14.4 million increase in annual base funding over the next two fiscal years, along with an additional \$5 million increase in designated research funds over the same period.

Established in 1968, the University of Maine System consists of seven universities, some with multiple campuses.