

For Release Monday, April 2 at 1 p.m. Contact: John Diamond 973-3224
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JOSEPH WOOD TO SERVE AS USM'S INTERIM PRESIDENT

Appointment Takes Effect July 1

BANGOR—University of Maine System Chancellor Terrence J. MacTaggart today named Joseph S. Wood as interim president of the University of Southern Maine, beginning July 1.

Wood, 60, currently serves as USM's provost and vice president of academic affairs. He will take over for current USM president Richard L. Pattenauade, whom university system trustees recently appointed to serve as chancellor when MacTaggart completes his term in office on June 30.

"Before making the decision, [System Board chair] Meg Weston talked extensively with USM faculty, staff, and students about the qualities that the interim president should have," MacTaggart explained. "We also spoke with members of USM's board of visitors and others from the community.

"Based on those discussions, we concluded that Dr. Wood is the right person to serve as interim president," MacTaggart explained. "His knowledge of USM, the community, and the issues ahead will serve the university and region very well.

"Dr. Wood has President Pattenauade's strong support," MacTaggart added. "Their longstanding working relationship will be extremely important as the transitions are made this summer," MacTaggart added.

The search for Pattenauade's long-term successor is expected to begin sometime after the fall semester begins, MacTaggart explained. That process will be conducted at the University System level, and will involve a search committee made up of trustees, representatives of USM's faculty, students, and staff; and community representatives.

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"I look forward to the challenge of helping to ensure a constructive transition as USM prepares for its next president," said Wood. "USM has faculty, staff and community volunteers of extraordinary quality and commitment. My goal is to focus our efforts so that we do not lose momentum on initiatives which will broaden support for, and appreciation of, this university's excellence in teaching, scholarship and service to Maine communities."

Wood joined USM in July of 2000 after serving as vice provost for academic affairs and professor of geography at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia. In his 13 years at George Mason, he chaired a task force to develop a strategic plan credited with helping the three-campus institution respond to community needs and contribute to regional development.

Wood, who holds a Ph.D. from The Pennsylvania State University, a master's from the University of Vermont and an A.B. from Middlebury College, also was founding chair of George Mason's Department of Geography and Earth Systems Science. Wood also was a faculty member at the University of Nebraska at Omaha and a visiting professor of geography at South China Normal University. He teaches and writes about the American cultural landscape, American suburbs, and East and Southeast Asia, where he served in the Army as a combat engineer.

Wood is a member of the City of Portland's Creative Economy Steering Committee and the Maine Philanthropy Center Board. He serves as board president of the Maine-based Center for Prevention of Hate Violence.

Wood currently resides in Cumberland with his wife, Diane.