

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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UNIVERSITY SYSTEM TRUSTEES OK STATE BUDGET REQUEST

Additional Funds Would Contain Tuition Costs

AUGUSTA—The University of Maine System Board of Trustees on Monday voted to seek \$8 million in additional State funding for Fiscal Year 2009, which starts July 1, 2008.

If approved, the increase will be used to hold down student tuition costs and to protect academic quality, according to Richard L. Pattenaude, UMS chancellor.

“This increase will assure academic integrity while keeping as low as possible the financial burden on students and their families,” Pattenaude explained. “We will be working with the Governor and Legislature to explain the importance of this request.”

Earlier this year, the Maine Legislature approved a \$3.4 million increase for Fiscal Year 2009. That amount equals a 1.8 percent increase to the current \$185.7 million State appropriation.

“The 1.8 percent increase is one of the lowest increases [UMS received] in recent memory,” Pattenaude explained. “The increase we are seeking will raise our State appropriation to six percent, roughly the same percentage increase as what the State has approved for the community colleges.”

The UMS budget request will be considered by the Governor and legislators during the upcoming legislative session, which begins in January.

The Board also received a presentation on student enrollment and trends. The University System’s Fall 2007 student body consists of 33,626 full-time and part-time students. According to James H. Breece, vice chancellor of academic and student affairs, the total reflects a slight dip from last year’s near-record high fall semester enrollment. Breece reported that the University of Maine System currently enrolls 72 percent of all students enrolled in public higher education in Maine, and 56 percent of all students enrolled in Maine’s public and private universities and colleges.

In other Board business:

- Trustees heard a presentation on a variety of initiatives related to cost and energy efficiencies. The University System is undertaking a System-wide effort to contain administrative, operational, and energy costs, with those savings redirected to enhancing academic quality.
- The Board approved collective bargaining agreements with part-time faculty and with the service and maintenance employees.
- The Board approved the appointment of Dr. Thomas E. Abbott as the University of Maine at Augusta’s dean of libraries and distance learning; Dr. Robert Q. Dana as the University of Maine’s vice president of student affairs and dean of students; and Dr. Jeffrey E. Hecker, interim dean of UMaine’s College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

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Established in 1968, the University of Maine System is the state's largest educational enterprise. It has an annual enrollment of more than 44,000 students. It features seven universities – some with multiple campuses – located across the state, as well as 10 University College outreach centers, a law school, and an additional 75 interactive distance learning sites. For more information, visit www.maine.edu.