

“These cuts will lead to significant tuition increases and course reductions,” he stated. “That will make it harder for our students to attend a university and complete their education. That, in turn, will negatively affect Maine’s economy, given the importance of a highly educated workforce to move Maine forward in the 21st century.”

Pattenaude noted that for more than a year, the University System has been actively engaged in cutting administrative and operating budgets to protect academic quality and affordability in light of rising costs such as energy and healthcare. Under this effort, called “Facing the Challenge,” the University System is planning \$5 million of cuts over three years to balance its budget, based on the State’s previously approved FY09 appropriation. Pattenaude said if the State adopts the cut it’s now proposing, the university system would need to cut millions more—something that would severely and negatively affect academic quality and affordability.

“The proposed cut in the University System’s state appropriation represents the most serious financial threat since the early 1990’s,” he said. “Back then, cuts in the University System’s appropriation led to years of enrollment losses, faculty departures, deferred maintenance, and poor employee morale. The cuts also led to significant increases in tuition rates, imposed out of necessity to protect academic quality. The budget cut we’re facing now poses the same threat.

“We are in the education and economic development business,” Pattenaude continued. “More than any other public agency or institution, the University of Maine System can help Maine improve its financial situation. We cannot allow our academic quality, our success in research and development, and our service to students and taxpayers to falter at a time when we are needed more than ever.”

In addition to discussing the proposed budget cuts, trustees also dealt with the following items:

- approved the recommendation of Dr. Selma Botman as the next president of the University of Southern Maine, effective July 1
- authorized the administrative and operational transfer of University College, the System’s set of academic outreach and distance education centers, from the System’s central office to the University of Maine at Augusta
- received an update on campus finances and new oversight procedures
- approved tenure recommendations for 28 faculty members
- hosted a presentation and workshop by Dr. Vincent Tinto of Syracuse University, a widely respected authority on advancing student success
- authorized the renaming of the University of Maine’s Maine Center for the Arts as the Richard R. and Ann A. Collins Center for the Arts; and the naming of UMaine’s Student innovation Center as the Bion and Dorain Foster Student Innovation Center
- approved the last of six collective bargaining agreements for the current budget year
- received presentations and reports dealing with student enrollment, capital improvements, and acceptance of gifts

The Board also adopted a resolution expressing appreciation to Richard J. Randall, who recently completed nearly 40 years of service to the University of Maine at Augusta, most recently as UMA’s president.

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.