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PATTENAUDE PROVIDES STATUS REPORT ON UNIVERSITY SYSTEM'S EFFORTS TO ASSIST STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

BANGOR— Noting the “enormous financial strain” facing most students and their families, University of Maine System Chancellor Richard L. Pattenaude on Monday presented a status report on actions being taken to assist students and contain university costs.

Pattenaude’s status report was presented at Monday’s meeting of the University System’s Board of Trustees, which met at the University of Maine at Augusta’s Bangor campus, known as University College of Bangor. The report outlined changes being made or explored to assist students who, like other Maine residents, are facing increased energy and food costs.

The report focuses on four parts:

- operational, financial, and technological changes to support students, including an increase in student financial aid
- actions designed to reduce the university system’s operating costs, which heavily influence annual tuition rates
- actions and practices designed to conserve energy
- long-term strategies to support and enhance the financial stability of Maine’s public universities

“These are challenging economic times for the University of Maine System and we are taking steps to reduce costs and keep education affordable and accessible for Maine students,” explained Richard L. Pattenaude, chancellor of the University of Maine System. “In addition, our campuses are taking immediate actions such as providing additional online courses and increasing financial aid to students.”

Some elements of the report were shared previously at the board’s May meeting. Those included a \$15 million reduction in budget reductions; the elimination of at least 139 employee positions; and an 11 percent increase in student financial aid.

Other options being explored include providing opportunities for students to complete a baccalaureate degree in three years and expanding the number of course offerings available at the University System’s ten academic outreach centers and via ITV and web-based technologies.

The meeting was the first chaired by Lyndel J. Wishcamper of Freeport, whom trustees elected in May to a one-year term as board chair, commencing with the July meeting. Wishcamper is president of The Wishcamper Group, a Maine-based real estate investment company. He has served six years on the University System board.

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Monday's agenda also included a variety of administrative actions:

- Trustees approved the sale of a 20-acre parcel of university-owned property to the City of Old Town. Since 1989, Old Town has leased the property from the university system for use as its municipal solid waste transfer facility. Both parties recently agreed to an outright purchase of the property, which has an appraised value of \$15,000. The property is located on Gilman Falls Road in Old Town.
- Trustees also approved the purchase of a 1,286 square-foot, single-family home located adjacent to the University of Maine at Fort Kent campus. The property is being acquired for its strategic importance to the university's master plan, and will be initially used for office space. The purchase would be funded through an internal loan to UMFK.
- Board members also accepted the donation of approximately 158 acres of land in Georgetown, Maine, from the Schoener Revocable Trust. The property is protected by a conservation easement held by the Lower Kennebec Regional Land Trust but specifically permits the University of Maine to continue using the land for scientific and educational purposes.

All transactions are subject to review and approval by the university's legal counsel.

In a related matter, trustees approved a plan for the use of proceeds from any sale of Portland Hall, a residence hall of the University of Southern Maine located in downtown Portland. Under the plan, the proceeds will be used to fund capital projects including deferred maintenance, facilities renewal, and/or energy efficiencies. Part of the proceeds will be used to fund the University Commons project at USM's Portland campus. The property was originally purchased in 1989.

In other business, trustees approved a two-year extension of Pattenaude's appointment as chancellor. Board policy allows for renewal of the term each July 1. Trustees also approved the creation of a technology committee as a standing committee of the Board.

Established in 1968, the University of Maine System is the state's largest educational enterprise. It has an annual enrollment of more than 45,000 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.

Editor's note: the report referenced in this press release may be found [here](#).