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Pattenaude Appoints Wyke to Senior University of Maine System Post

BANGOR—University of Maine System Chancellor Richard L. Pattenaude today said that Rebecca Wyke has agreed to join the state university system as its vice chancellor for finance and administration.

Wyke, 46, currently serves as Governor John E. Baldacci's commissioner of financial and administrative services. Her appointment requires the approval of the University of Maine System's board of trustees.

"Commissioner Wyke is one of Maine's most respected and accomplished public servants," Pattenaude stated. "As the State's top fiscal officer, Commissioner Wyke has an exceptional understanding of public finance and management as well as the university system's role as a resource and partner in education and economic development.

"It's that understanding, combined with her years of experience in government and public service, that makes her an ideal choice for this position," Pattenaude continued. "As vice chancellor for finance and administration, she will play a leading role in our ongoing efforts to enhance the university system's efficiency and effectiveness. That's going to be an important challenge, given these difficult economic times. But Becky is uniquely capable of handling this assignment.

"On top of that, we're delighted that she's an alumna of the University of Maine," he added.

Wyke assumed her current position in 2003, shortly after Baldacci was sworn in as governor. Prior to that, she served more than 12 years as a top official in Maine's office of the Secretary of State, including eight years as chief deputy secretary of state. She holds a bachelor's degree in political science and a master's degree in public administration, both awarded from the University of Maine.

"Higher education is the single most important economic development tool available to the State," Wyke stated. "I'm pleased to have the opportunity to be more involved in this critical area."

Wyke will succeed Joanne L. Yestramski, who last week announced her resignation as the university system's chief financial officer and treasurer in order to accept a similar position elsewhere. Pattenaude accepted Yestramski's resignation "with regret," adding that she "contributed greatly to the system's financial stability during her seven years as CFO." Yestramski's new employer is expected to publicly announce her appointment in the near future.

"Rebecca Wyke possesses all of the qualities and qualifications that any board of trustees would want in a chief of operations," noted Lyndel J. Wishcamper of Freeport, chair of the UMS board of trustees. "I have no doubt that her appointment will receive our board's most enthusiastic approval."

Pattenaude explained that Wyke's skill set lends itself extremely well to his efforts to streamline the system's central administration, which is based in Bangor, and reduce cost of operation throughout the system. Along with Yestramski's responsibilities for finance, treasury, facilities, and technology, Wyke will serve as the system's chief operations officer. In that role, she will oversee all System-level business, operational and administrative functions of the University of Maine System.

Pattenaude said Wyke's appointment is for an initial two-year period, to commence September 1. She will receive a \$165,000 annual salary.

Pattenaude said that the timing of Yestramski's departure made it necessary for him to identify a capable successor quickly, in light of upcoming deadlines for completing and submitting the university system's biennial budget request.

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. The university system employs more than 5,300 full- and part-time employees, and generates more than \$650 million in annual revenues.