



**TASK FORCE ON UNIVERSITY OF MAINE SYSTEM STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE
POSTS ITS DRAFT REPORT**

Task Force Seeking Public Comment on Draft Prior to Preparing its Final Report

BANGOR—A special task force charged by University of Maine System Chancellor Richard L. Pattenau to identify and explore a range of options related to the university system's structure and governance today posted its draft report on the Internet.

The draft set of recommendations was provided to Pattenau Tuesday morning. The draft report may be found at www.maine.edu/UMSTaskForceDraftReport.

Appointed by Pattenau in February, the task force is one of three working groups created through a trustee-approved initiative called "New Challenges, New Directions." The initiative's objective is to identify more than \$42 million in cost-savings or new revenues over the next four years.

The task force consists of representatives of faculty, staff, students, and administrators as well as individuals from outside UMS with expertise in education, business, government, and not-for-profit organizations. David T. Flanagan of Manchester, a former chair of the UMS Board of Trustees and the retired CEO of Central Maine Power Co., chairs the 12-person committee.

Commenting on the draft recommendations, Pattenau said that "it looks like we are getting what we were looking for—hard-hitting and candid ideas on how to make a good university system even better during a very challenging time in our history."

Among the recommendations, the task force emphasizes the need for UMS to develop and institute a "public agenda" which would help Maine "transform itself economically and demographically in the future." The report says that UMS must establish "measurable benchmarks of performance and the buy-in of key constituencies in the state" in order to accomplish this goal successfully.

The draft recommendations also call for UMS to "act as a union [of universities] and not as a confederation." Recognizing the value of differentiating campus missions, this recommended approach would improve the coordination of distance-education opportunities; make credit transfers easier; and work toward more program integration among universities and the Community College System.

The task force also recommends that System-wide Services, the centrally based common operational functions that serve all universities and campuses, be restructured to implement new opportunities for economies of scale and to ensure greater accountability through performance measures.

The draft report recommends using state funds and tuition revenue more strategically, tying some portion of those allocations to each university based upon access, quality, and research and development goals.

“Tuesday’s posting of the task force’s draft report is the next step in the feedback-gathering process,” Pattenaude said. “Leading up to this, the task force held numerous meetings, several public hearings, and received input from hundreds of individuals. It’s been a very inclusive process, and we expect it to continue to be right through its conclusion.”

The task force is seeking public reaction to the draft report as part of the next stage of the process: revising and submitting the report to Pattenaude and the UMS Board of Trustees for presentation at the July 13 Board meeting in Bangor. The task force’s deadline for submitting feedback (through taskforce@maine.edu) is Mon., June 29 at 4:30 p.m.

In addition, two related reports also will be presented to the Board on July 13: the report of Pattenaude’s ad hoc committee on administrative, student, and financial services; and a similar committee report on academic programs and services. All three reports will be made available to the public via the UMS website (www.maine.edu) in advance of the Board’s September 14 meeting.

“By design, the charge issued to the task force and the ad hoc committees included overlapping elements and areas of responsibility,” Pattenaude explained. “Once all three final reports have been submitted, posted, and presented to the Board, the presidents and I will begin the process of melding them. Our mission will be to meet the objectives of ‘New Challenges, New Directions’—to ensure the quality, affordability, and financial sustainability of Maine’s public universities.”

According to the work plan adopted earlier this year, the combined report to be prepared by Pattenaude and the university presidents will be completed and released, in draft form, early in the Fall semester, followed by another round of campus and public input opportunities. Subsequently, the final report will be presented to the Board for discussion and action at its November 16 meeting in Bangor.

Established in 1968, the University of Maine System is the state’s largest educational enterprise. 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. With an annual enrollment of nearly 45,000 students, it educates 68 percent of all students enrolled in Maine’s public universities, community colleges and Maine Maritime Academy. Its student population represents 48 percent of all students enrolled in Maine’s public and private postsecondary institutions combined. For more information, visit www.maine.edu.