



**University of Maine System Offers Assistance to Japanese Students Affected by Natural Disaster**  
*Maine ties to Japan utilized to communicate the initiative*

BANGOR – The University of Maine System is organizing an initiative to assist Japanese students affected by the natural disaster in that country. Chancellor Richard L. Pattenaude and his staff will be coordinating with Maine’s Congressional delegation and with Maine companies, organizations, and families with ties to Japan, as well as existing university partnerships in Japan, to communicate the initiative. Student support services and a special tuition rate are being offered, which costs less than the usual international/out-of-state rate.

“The devastation in northern Japan is beyond belief and, like people across the globe, our staff is trying to figure out what we can do,” Pattenaude explained. “We realized that there may be Maine residents who know Japanese college students who are temporarily or permanently displaced from their university studies and that’s one area where we can offer assistance: by opening our doors to those students to help them continue their university education.”

The University of Maine System is inviting any English-speaking Japanese citizen currently enrolled in a Japanese university which has postponed or terminated classes due to the nation’s natural disaster to enroll at a Maine university under a “visiting student” status for up to one year. The application process will be streamlined due to the emergency situation. A discounted tuition rate will be offered, similar to that provided to nearby Canadian provinces, which is less than the usual international rate. Students will pay the regular rates for room and board and fees. They will be mentored by University international programs officers and Japanese citizens in the UMS community.

Pattenaude added that a similar initiative was launched after Hurricane Katrina in 2005, and several students temporarily relocated to Maine during that crisis. A few students had some connection to Maine, such as friends or family, when they arrived. He is hoping that there may be similar situations where people in Maine who are from Japan or others who have friends or colleagues there, may help connect affected students with the University System.

“There are numerous Maine connections to Japan—sister-city relationships, trade partners, corporate offices, family members, and our own University international programs that can help spread the word,” Pattenaude noted. “We hope that by working with Maine people and Maine’s history of helping others in need, this effort will be of some help to that area.” System Office staff in Bangor will work with the appropriate Japanese and American government agencies to help the students, with assistance from Maine’s Congressional delegation.

Pattenaude noted that the two well-established offices of international programs at USM and UMaine will work with interested students to place them at an appropriate university within the System. USM and UMaine offer intensive English as a Second Language Programs for those students who need to enhance their language skills before participating in college courses. All of the System’s seven universities welcome international students and the Japanese students will be placed at the university that best fits their needs.

The University will provide whatever support is appropriate to assist incoming Japanese students affected by the natural disaster; this will include health and counseling.

Eleven Japanese students are currently enrolled at UMS. These affected students will be offered counseling, health assistance, and they have high speed internet access to contact family members in Japan via Skype or they may request use of the University's videoconferencing system.

Students in need of assistance or Maine residents who would like additional information are encouraged to contact: Kimberly Sinclair or Kaoru Phillips at the University of Southern Maine's Office of International Programs at 207-780-4959 or [www.usm.maine.edu/international](http://www.usm.maine.edu/international).

Established in 1968, the University of Maine System is the state's largest educational enterprise. It has an annual enrollment of more than 42,000 students and serves over 500,000 individuals annually through educational and cultural offerings. Nearly two-thirds of its alumni—approximately 120,000 people—live in Maine. The University of Maine System features seven universities—some with multiple campuses—located across the state, as well as nine University College outreach centers, a law school, and an additional 75 interactive distance learning sites. For more information, visit [www.maine.edu](http://www.maine.edu).