



**UMS TRUSTEES REVIEW MAJOR INITIATIVES ON CREDIT TRANSFER; ADULT DEGREE COMPLETION;
AND AN I.T. PARTNERSHIP WITH MAINE BUSINESSES**

BANGOR – The University of Maine System Board of Trustees reviewed a variety of presentations today focused on several major [board-directed initiatives](#), including an [academic credit transfer plan](#) to make it easier for students to move among Maine’s public universities and from the community colleges.

The transfer initiative is being led by University of Maine at Fort Kent President Wilson F. Hess, who provided an update on activities currently under way and those upcoming during the next few months. Hess noted that the nature of higher education has changed and so has the behavior of students—with many students attending three or four institutions before graduating. Hess added that the universities have not adapted to keep pace with the changes and this initiative will address those challenges.

“A systematic, transformative change process is necessary to address these and other formidable challenges,” Hess explained. “What we are proposing will be a fuller package for students to easily transfer among our institutions, with fewer barriers, less cost, and less debt. Our goal is to embrace and expand existing best practices across the University System, as well as those from across the country.”

Four System-wide [credit transfer best practices](#) will be implemented to make it easier for students to move among Maine’s public universities: electronic communication tools; block transfer and general education common core courses; major (program-to-program) articulation; and adult & transfer degree completion.

Hess noted that next month the committee is also moving forward on a second part of the project which is negotiation of a credit transfer plan with the Maine Community College System. In addition, the University System will convene a System-wide workshop in the spring to develop shared general education outcomes using a common model.

As part of the meeting activities, Trustees approved the [creation of a new Bachelor of Science degree in Aviation](#) at the University of Maine at Augusta to meet a growing need for commercial aviation professionals. The program is geared toward students interested in becoming FAA-certified commercial pilots while earning a baccalaureate degree. The new aviation degree is the result of a nearly three-year collaboration between UMA and Maine Instrument Flight, an Augusta-based aviation company.

Another update presented to UMS Trustees concerned the progress of [Project Login](#), a major partnership between higher education and Maine businesses which will increase the number of computer science and information technology (IT) graduates. Labor surveys show that more than 800 job openings currently exist

in Maine for computer science and IT professionals, by comparison in 2012, the System had just over 70 graduates in these disciplines.

“This is an incredibly important project—a model of public-private partnership,” noted Chancellor James H. Page. “We’ve worked with Maine businesses to identify their needs, worked to develop a plan which is responsive to these workforce needs, and we will increase our responsiveness and ability to provide graduates in these areas.” Page added that Project Login will be used as a model for future teams to respond to other pressing workforce needs in Maine.

At the meeting, Trustees also considered and approved:

- \$3.2 million in University funds to repurpose and renovate UMaine’s [Estabrooke Hall](#) dormitory into a new “Collaborative and Active Learning Classroom” and to provide space for the Honors Program and RiSE Center;
- \$650,000 for the replacement of two [antiquated oil-fired boilers](#) at the University of Maine at Farmington’s Merrill Hall;
- The expenditure of up to \$1.55 million to install an estimated [80 geothermal wells](#) on UMF’s Mantor Green which would be used to heat Preble Hall, Thomas Auditorium, Ricker Hall, and Ricker Addition, with an estimated payback of 8-10 years compared to using heating oil; and
- Acceptance of a [gift to UMM of 200 acres of undeveloped abutting property](#) from the estate of a 1937 alum; the gift quintuples the campus area and will be initially used in field work, such as recreation management and plant biology.

Other business conducted at the meeting included several presentations on additional Trustee-directed initiatives:

- A comprehensive, System-wide plan to enhance baccalaureate [degree attainment and completion by Maine adults](#) who participate in campus-based classes or are served via distance education;
- An [outcomes-based funding model](#) for the universities; and
- A complete [redesign of University IT](#) statewide service delivery.

Complete board meeting materials may be found at:

<http://www.maine.edu/system/January282013BOTMeetingMaterials.php>.

Established in 1968, the University of Maine System is the state’s largest educational enterprise. It has an annual enrollment of more than 40,000 students and serves over 500,000 individuals annually through educational and cultural offerings. 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 eight University College outreach centers, a law school, an additional 31 course sites, and Cooperative Extension. For more information, visit www.maine.edu.