



**UMS TRUSTEES APPROVE PROPOSAL TO FREEZE IN-STATE UNDERGRADUATE TUITION  
FOR TWO ADDITIONAL YEARS**

**Proposal is pending continuance of current State funding level**

PORTLAND—At a meeting held today at USM in Portland, the University of Maine System Board of Trustees unanimously approved a proposal to continue a freeze on undergraduate, in-state tuition for two upcoming fiscal years.

Earlier this year, Trustees voted to [freeze fiscal year \(FY\) 2012 tuition levels](#) for this current academic year (FY13), as part of a new set of [goals and actions](#) to move the University System quickly forward in the areas of program and workforce development, cost control, and student success.

Today's new biennial request for appropriation continues the tuition freeze for FY14 and FY15, contingent upon the State's ability to maintain its current \$176 million appropriation level for UMS education and general operations. The request also seeks continuation of the State's current level of appropriation for the Maine Economic Improvement Fund (\$14.7 million), debt service (\$3.3 million), and the Casco Bay Estuary Project (\$35,000).

Trustee Norman Fournier of Wallagrass, who chairs the board's finance committee and led the tuition discussion remarked, "This is a bold step for the University System, a step in the right direction—and we are sending a strong message to our students and all Maine citizens."

UMS Chancellor James H. Page noted, "Tuition rates are rising rapidly at public universities across the country—here in Maine we are bucking the trend by proposing what, in effect, would be a three-year freeze on in-state, undergraduate tuition. We are asking State leadership to keep our funding level; in return, we will hold tuition level."

Page added that, as part of the Trustees' goals and actions, the university presidents, System staff, and others are currently undertaking a System-wide review of administrative costs and structures which looks at several areas in the System. In upcoming months, several review teams will present recommendations to improve administrative efficiencies and services. Those savings will be reinvested in the University System's core mission critical areas of education, research and public service. Three administrative areas currently under review are information technology, human resources, and strategic procurement.

In other activities at today's meeting, Trustees:

- Authorized the Chancellor to execute collective bargaining agreements with two unions—the Universities of Maine Professional Staff Association, and the Associated Clerical, Laboratory and Technical Staff of the Universities of Maine;
- Approved a new associate of science degree in allied health program at the University of Maine at Fort Kent to help address statewide healthcare workforce needs; and,
- Approved a \$75,000 increase in expenditures at UMaine’s Bennett Hall laboratory to improve ADA accessibility for a project which is currently under way.

UMFK President Wilson Hess is leading a System-wide college credit transfer initiative and provided an update on a steering committee’s work to improve the process for students to transfer among the System’s seven universities, as well as for those students who transfer from the Maine Community College System. The initiative will help make it easier for students to maximize credits toward lower division general education requirements in baccalaureate programs.

Hess explained, “A fundamental finding from the committee’s review is that Maine needs a reliable, robust college transfer system for students navigating through the baccalaureate offerings of the University System.”

Also at the meeting, Chancellor Page announced the creation of a plan to enhance baccalaureate degree attainment and completion by Maine’s adult and non-campus based citizens who are time-bound and place-bound. Page said a committee was established to look at best practices for attracting and improving access for adult students, as well as removing barriers for them. The committee will begin its work this fall and is expected to submit a final report to Page in March 2013. Earlier this year, Trustees identified both credit transfer and adult degree completion as two major priorities in their [goals and actions](#).

Trustees also approved the names of two buildings: the “Alumni Center” for the University of Maine at Augusta building which houses the university’s alumni and advancement offices, and was formerly known as the Campus Center; and the new planetarium at UMaine in Orono, which will be called the “Emera Astronomy Center” for a twenty-year period.

Today’s meeting marked the first meeting for two Trustees who recently joined the board, [James Erwin](#) of Yarmouth and [Mark Gardner](#) of Kittery.

Trustees will meet again on November 4-5 at the University of Maine at Presque Isle campus.

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, and an additional 31 course sites. For more information, visit [www.maine.edu](http://www.maine.edu).