



UMS TRUSTEES APPROVE PLAN TO ENHANCE ADULT DEGREE COMPLETION
Thirty-eight percent of current UMS students are adults age twenty-five or older

BANGOR—University of Maine System Trustees today [approved recommendations](#) from the Adult Baccalaureate Completion/Distance Education (ABCDE) Committee. The group was charged with developing a comprehensive, System-wide plan to enhance baccalaureate degree completion by Maine's adult citizens.

University of Maine at Augusta President Allyson Handley, who served on the committee, told Trustees in a presentation, "There are some 200,000 adults living in Maine who have completed some college, but who have not completed their degrees. They may have attended a UMS campus, or another college in or outside of Maine. Attaining a degree is not only critical to the students' future but also critical to the future of Maine's economy and meeting our state's workforce needs."

Adult students—those age 25 or older—currently represent 38% of the nearly 40,000 students who annually attend the seven University of Maine System institutions located across the state. Those with the largest adult populations are the University of Maine at Augusta and the University of Southern Maine.

"College graduates tend to have higher incomes, are more active in their communities, less likely to need public assistance or be incarcerated—and most importantly, they tend to pass positive values on higher education onto their children," noted UMS Trustee Bonnie Newsom, who served on the ABCDE committee. "It's our job to facilitate access for these folks and minimize the institutional barriers that are interfering with their ability to complete their degree."

Key findings of the ABCDE committee's report show that non-traditional students usually work full- or part-time, have family responsibilities, and have limited ability to relocate to pursue education. Adult students are best served by flexible educational formats; easy transferability of credits; the ability to earn credit for prior learning; having a wide variety of online academic programs to choose from; and a "concierge"—or single point of contact—for student support.

One major barrier for adult students is the financial barrier to returning to school. "The University of Maine System is working to develop a plan to direct increased funding to a needs-based scholarship for adults looking to complete their degrees," explained Chancellor James H. Page. "We feel strongly that a scholarship program focused on this population can have a significant impact on Maine's skills gap."

In other activities today, Trustees:

- Approved a final draft of the [Human Resources Administrative Review](#) recommendations;
- Made modifications to the [Board's committee structure](#) by combining the Academic Affairs & Student Affairs Committees into one committee, and also combining the Finance/Facilities Committee with the Technology Committee into one committee; and,
- Reappointed for a two-year term UMFK Professor Raymond Albert as a faculty representative to the Board of Trustees.

During the meeting, Chancellor Page presented Trustees with a resolution in memory of P. James Dowe, a well known community leader, who served on the UMS board for ten years from 2000-2010.

The next meeting of UMS Trustees will take place on Monday, September 23.

Established in 1968, the University of Maine System is the state's largest educational enterprise. It has an annual enrollment of nearly 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.