An Investment In Maine’s Future
UMS FY20-21 Biennial Budget Request

The FY 20-21 State budget includes new funding to expand the University of Maine System’s capacity to address critical state workforce needs while lowering student debt.

The increased investment for Maine’s public universities proposed by Governor Mills and supported by the Education Committee includes a 3 percent increase to the University’s base funding (E&G) in each year of the budget resulting in an additional $5.7 million in FY20 for Maine students and an additional $11.5 million in FY21, as well as targeted investments to expand early college and advance adult degree completion.

Investing in Maine's public postsecondary schools is the best way to reduce student debt. Despite appropriation increases that have averaged just 1.4 percent annually over the past five years, the University has reduced the inflation-adjusted cost of tuition in that same time period and driven the debt of its graduates 30 percent below the national average.

The increases proposed in the Governor’s budget allow the University to further advance college affordability for Maine families with the greatest need without compromising student services and supports. If its budget request is fully funded, the University will make a historic $93.3 million available in direct aid for its students in the coming academic year.

Record Investment In Rural Campuses, Communities: A small portion of new monies would be used to begin removal of 300,000 square feet of vacant, under-utilized or poor condition space to reduce operations and maintenance costs. The remaining funds would be distributed directly to campuses using a new, dynamic peer-based funding formula that in this coming fiscal year, results in record State support for our five small campuses in Augusta, Farmington, Fort Kent, Machias and Presque Isle.

$3.1M To Expand Early College & Decrease Student Debt: Early college programs allow Maine high school students to earn college credit at little or no cost to their families by taking University-level courses on our campuses or at their local high school. Early College students are more likely to graduate from high school, apply and be admitted to college, and complete their degree on-time and with less debt. The proposed $3.1 million investment over the biennium will further expand early college, currently in 129 Maine high schools; provide stipends and professional development for high school teachers delivering early college courses; and support students of promise as they transition to college and the workforce including through scholarships.

$4.1M To Help More Maine Adults Complete Their Degrees: 200,000 Maine adults have some college credit but no degree. The proposed $4.1 million investment over the biennium will be used to develop flexible adult credentials and courses to accommodate working adults’ schedules as well as pilot a small debt forgiveness program to remove financial barriers so more adults can return to school to realize their full potential – and earning power – while meeting the growing needs of Maine employers for workers with a four-year or advanced degree.

“Being at the University has allowed for me to be a role model to my six children and to show them it is never too late to learn or to follow your dreams. Your support of the funding proposed for the University of Maine System in the Governor’s budget, including investments in strengthening college completion services and supports for adults like me, will help others realize their incredible potential.”
- Samantha Brown, Navy Veteran and UMA Class of 2019

“The University’s efforts to keep costs down for tuition-paying students and for the taxpayer, while expanding access affordably, is impressive. There is no greater return on our investment than increasing appropriations for the University of Maine System and the need to invest in it for the future workforce that they develop, has never been greater.”
- Kennebec Savings Bank President/CEO Andrew Silsby

“Our workforce challenge is the defining issue of our time. The funding recommendations for the University System will make college an affordable option for more Maine people while also bringing more talent to our state to grow our economy and our communities.”
- Educate Maine Executive Director Ed Cervone

“Maine’s economic success is tied to educational attainment, and investment in the University System is the public’s best investment in Maine. No other institution has the statewide responsibility to advance all Maine citizens, businesses, and communities, and no other institution is better positioned, when adequately resourced, to prepare our state to meet its demographic challenges and realize its economic potential for the benefit of all Maine people.”
- Chancellor James Page