What Is This?

Welcome to the Start-Up, a newsletter for incoming Onward students. You will receive a few of these during the summer to help get you ready for school in the Fall and hopefully answer some questions you might have. We strongly encourage you to read the entire newsletter. It has a ton of useful information. Besides, it’s not that long, and you might as well get into practice for the many pages of reading you will do as a college student. If you have any questions after reading the newsletter, give us a call at (207) 581-2320.

I’ve been accepted to Onward: Now What?

First, congratulations. We are thrilled to have you in the Onward Program and look forward to helping you get your college degree.

Getting the acceptance letter from Onward is just the beginning. Shortly after receiving a letter from the Onward Program, you will receive a letter from the University making you a formal offer of admission for the Fall. Included in that letter will be a confirmation where you can check a box stating that you accept the offer. **It is extremely important that you send that confirmation back to the University as soon as possible.** Until you send your confirmation back, you are not a student at UMaine and can’t register for classes, receive financial aid, or apply for housing. If you’ve lost your confirmation or aren’t sure you sent it in, give us a call.

Immunizations

Maine Law requires all degree-seeking students and full-time, non-degree students born after December 31, 1956 to provide proof of immunization against TD (tetanus/diphtheria) within the last 10 years and two doses of MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) after the first birthday. If measles immunization was done prior to 1968, students must provide proof it was done with a live virus. Compliance is mandatory. Registration may be dropped if compliance is not met by the first day of classes. Records must be signed or stamped by your healthcare provider, your high school, your previous college, or your military base.

Send a photocopy of your signed immunization record with specific evidence of dosage, type of vaccine and/or immunity to: Immunization Records, Shared Processing Center, PO Box 412, Bangor, ME 04402-0412, (Fax: 207-561-3450). For more information about immunizations, visit the UMaine immunizations page at http://studentrecords.umaine.edu/records/immunizations-information/

Have You Logged Into MaineStreet?

MaineStreet is an important tool in your success as a student. It is important that you check your MaineStreet account on a regular basis, especially the To-Do List. You will need to go onto MaineStreet to accept your student loans and to fill out your loan paperwork. The sooner you do this, the more likely it will be that the funds you need will be available when you start school.

Important Dates

**Monday, August 27 - Friday, August 31**  
Orientation Week

**Wednesday, August 29 - Friday, August 31**  
Camping Trip

**Tuesday, September 4**  
Classes Begin

What If I Want to Live On Campus?

If you plan to live on campus, you should apply for housing as soon as possible. Campus housing is on a first come, first serve basis and we can’t guarantee housing will be available. You can not apply for campus housing until you have returned your confirmation card. To apply for campus housing, you will need a Login ID and password which will be sent to you by Housing Services after you send in your confirmation card. To apply for housing go to the following web site: http://www.umaine.edu/housing/

Things You Can Ignore

Onward students get the same stuff in the mail as every other incoming UMaine student. Most of it applies to you, but there are a few exceptions. Here are some things that you might feel like you need to do, but there is no need:

Summer Orientation

You may receive information about summer orientation sessions. Onward students have an orientation week in late August that takes the place of summer orientation, so there is no need to go during the summer.

The Math Placement Exam

You may receive instructions in the mail to take the Math Department’s math placement exam. Because you took the Onward placement math test, you do not need to take the Math Department’s placement exam, too. That would just be cruel.

Getting Your MaineCard and Parking Permit

Getting your MaineCard and Parking Permit is part of our orientation in the Fall. You don’t need to come to campus and get one during the summer. Gas is too expensive to make a special trip.

Sending a $150 Deposit

You do not need to send a $150 deposit in with your confirmation. This requirement is waived for Onward students.
Loans: Accept or Reject?

After you have been accepted to the University of Maine and after you have returned your confirmation, you will receive notification of your financial aid. This notification will outline for you how much financial aid you will receive and what form that aid takes. You will need to either accept or reject any loans you are offered as part of your financial aid package. You do this electronically through your MaineStreet account.

So, should you accept your student loans? Loans are sometimes necessary to pay for college. However, because they need to be paid back, having fewer loans is better than having a lot, obviously. The following information can help you decide if you should accept or reject your student loans.

Student loans are loans used to pay for college expenses, and they have a couple of advantages over regular loans. Student loans:

- do not have to be repaid until after you leave college
- do not require collateral or credit-worthiness

Student loans come in two types: Perkins and Stafford. Many students are offered both types of loans as part of their financial aid package. The best way to determine if you need to take a student loan is to do a budget for the semester. In the next issue of The Start-Up, we offer some detailed information about financial aid and budgeting your money for the semester. You’ll receive that issue in a few weeks.

When deciding on loans, remember that, as a general rule, Perkins loans are a slightly better form of a loan. So, if you are going to take loans, you probably want to take the Perkins loan first. You have a limited amount of time to decide if you want your Perkins loan or not. Typically, you have until early in the semester. Look at your budget for the semester. If you are still unsure, you can meet with a financial aid counselor during orientation week to help you decide. You’ll still have plenty of time to decide after the meeting.

Stafford loans are a different beast. If you are unsure if you need a Stafford loan or how much you will need, you can always decide later. One great thing about Stafford loans is that you can borrow the money any time during the semester. You can also borrow only part of your loan, and then borrow another part of it later in the semester if you need to. Because of that flexibility, we recommend that students don’t borrow Stafford loans until they know they need them.

Paying for college can be stressful. We’ll have more information about the costs of going to UMaine in the next issue of The Start-Up, as well as more details about financial aid so that you can better plan your budget for the coming year.

A Little About Orientation Week

Orientation starts Monday, August 27. Attending orientation is mandatory for all incoming Onward students. During orientation week you will:

- get a tour of campus
- meet your instructors
- have a chance to buy your books
- meet with a financial aid counselor
- get your Maine Card
- learn the names of your fellow Onward students
- and more . . .

We will send you more information about orientation week soon.

The Camping Trip: What to Expect

Some people love camping. For others, it is the last thing they would choose to do. For many of our students, the camping trip is the part of orientation they are most nervous about. Here’s some information about the camping trip so you will know what to expect:

The camping trip is at The YMCA Camp of Maine in Winthrop. We leave for the Y Camp Wednesday, August 29, in the afternoon and stay there Wednesday and Thursday nights. We return Friday, August 31 around noon, and then students are free until classes begin Tuesday, September 4.

Even though we call it a camping trip, it isn’t exactly roughing it. Students stay in cabins, and each student has a bunk with a mattress. Students bring their own sleeping bags or bedding. If you don’t have a sleeping bag, we often have some to loan. Students can’t bring their own tents. There are bathrooms with flush toilets and showers with private stalls. All the meals are provided, and there is even electricity.

Transportation is provided to and from the Y Camp, and students are not allowed to bring their own vehicles. The trip is for Onward students and staff only, so you may not bring your children, spouse, friends, significant others, or pets.

The camping trip, like the rest of orientation week, is mandatory for all incoming Onward students. We will send you more information about the camping trip soon, including a complete list of things you will need to bring.

Activating Your FirstClass and MaineStreet Accounts

Your acceptance letter from the Admissions Office includes information on how to activate your MaineStreet and FirstClass accounts. MaineStreet is the system at the University where you manage your financial aid, register for classes, check grades, view your bill, and much more. FirstClass is an e-mail system, which you will use extensively as a student, so activating it is important. When you activate your accounts, you will create a password for each account. Try to keep the passwords in a safe place. You will need them later. If you don’t know how to use MaineStreet and FirstClass or aren’t computer savvy, don’t worry. We will have classes throughout the semester to help you learn. If you have problems activating your account, call Eric, our computer guru, at (207) 581-2320.