

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The Blue Sky Project

Reaffirming Public Higher Education
at Maine's Flagship University





UMaine for a **Renewed** Maine

The Blue Sky Project: Reaffirming Public Higher Education at Maine's Flagship University

The Blue Sky Vision

The University of Maine aspires to be the most distinctively student-centered and community-engaged of the American Research Universities.*

Building on our distinctive foundation of innovative teaching and research, we are committed to a dynamic culture that integrates world-class teaching, inquiry and outreach to build a prosperous future for Maine's citizens. We will invest in signature programs of excellence to foster superb academic and research programs, build strong communities on our campus and with our external partners, grow healthy economies and fulfill our mission of responsible public leadership. We will realize our vision through bold, interdisciplinary risk-taking, coupled with pragmatic problem solving.

The Blue Sky Project, an inclusive and consensus-driven strategic planning process, sets forth the University of Maine's guiding principles and key areas of distinction, shapes a bold yet pragmatic framework for innovative and entrepreneurial growth, and charts a responsible course for fiscal sustainability through 2017.

Chapter 1 provides a reflective look at the current strengths and distinctives of the University of Maine within a context of pressing challenges. Chapter 2 introduces five "Pathways to a New UMaine" that offer an inclusive and ambitious prescription for our 21st-century university. Chapter 3 provides the Blueprint: Initiation Strategies, metrics and timelines that provide the necessary accountability and directions that will ensure timely achievement of our vision.

The Plan concludes with a call to engagement, an overview of our planning process and a bibliography of background literature.

*The University of Maine is listed in *The Top American Research Universities* by The Center for Measuring University Performance at Arizona State University. Such institutions are compared by their rank on nine different indicators: Total Research, Federal Research, Endowment Assets, Annual Giving, National Academy Members, Faculty Awards, Doctorates Granted, Postdoctoral Appointees and Undergraduate Achievement (SAT/ACT range, National Merit Scholars).

We Are the University of Maine – A Catalyst for Contemporary Change in Maine

Our state faces unprecedented challenges. As presented in *Making Maine Work*, Maine's primary economic challenges include per capita income, an aging population, and the costs of remaining competitive in the areas of health insurance, energy taxes, regulations and transportation. Maine must also address the challenge to increase productivity through educated and trained workers. These acute economic issues are coupled to more widespread concerns (such as climate change and the competitive impact of globalization) that require the state's attention.

Due to the recent history of declining revenues in Maine, state appropriations to the University of Maine have also declined. This trend — at all institutions of higher education in Maine — has significantly contributed to the rising costs of higher education for Maine's citizens.

Maine must address achieving fiscal stability through new economic development and governmental efficiencies, maintaining environmental balance by preserving yet developing our unparalleled natural resources, and providing long-term opportunities for the health, welfare and prosperity of Maine citizens. In turn, the University of Maine must ensure campus fiscal sustainability through renewed entrepreneurship and philanthropy, and through its teaching, research and outreach, creatively contribute to the renewal of the state.

In order to achieve this, the University of Maine needs a better model of fiscal sustainability, better alignment of academic programs, research and service with Maine's economic development, workforce and human resource needs, better student recruitment and retention programs, better campus incentives and enrichment programs for staff and faculty, better communication strategies, better support for the arts and humanities, better support for professional development and support of graduate students, and a better commitment to campus stewardship and beautification. **The Blue Sky Plan** is designed to focus attention on, and develop a strategy to address, these improvements.



Guiding Principles and Areas of Distinction

As the flagship university of the University of Maine System's (UMS) seven campuses, the University of Maine represents nearly 50% of the UMS fiscal resources. In this role, UMaine takes seriously its responsibility to lead by example with the clear charge to align our resources with the state's needs:

- Educate more people and make sure they have the skills necessary to meet the needs of Maine's businesses.
- Drive innovation to support entrepreneurship, serve the public and support business through regional economic development efforts that help them thrive in the global economy.
- Expand the role of community and cultural centers to enhance the quality of life in Maine, and promote an engaged and insightful citizenry.

Moving forward means building on past successes and investing in our primary areas of distinction:

The Environment: Understanding, Managing and Preserving Natural Resources

Energy: Understanding and Producing Diverse Sources of Energy

Community and Culture: Understanding and Developing Quality of Place and People

Educating Leaders for Today and Tomorrow

For more information about how each of these areas is critical to UMaine's current and future success, please consult the full Blue Sky Plan.





Five Blue Sky Pathways to a New UMaine

Each Blue Sky Pathway will be fueled by responsible resource allocation, coupled with the vision and commitment to excellence by UMaine's senior leadership, faculty, staff, students and community partners. An array of targeted Initiation Strategies will guide our work, and an adaptive, evolving set of metrics will track our progress initially throughout 2012–2013, until 2017.

1. **Serving Our State: Catalyzing Maine's Revitalization**

The University of Maine will align its innovation, entrepreneurship and community outreach with the priority economic and cultural needs of Maine. Our interconnected research, teaching and service mission will be a primary engine that drives Maine's future. Our research enterprise will increase UMaine's stature and footprint, and expand "use-inspired research." We will focus on targeted growth in arenas promising returns on investment that will ultimately benefit all of our constituencies.

Following this Pathway will ensure that UMaine is a more responsive, adaptive and powerful partner, and will enable critical growth in areas, such as business development, sustainable energy development and entrepreneurship, Maine's STEM needs, regional research and economic development, P–20 education, health care and social services. In addition, it will promote the state's cultural heritage while affirming the centrality of a liberal arts education at the state's flagship university in providing critical thinking and communication skills to all professions, as well as enhancing quality of life for Maine's citizens.

2. **Securing Our Future: Ensuring Financial Sustainability**

We will take bold and innovative steps to efficiently strengthen our financial position through increasing operating revenues as an offset to operating expenditures. We will revise our organizational structure to effectively and efficiently support our academic and research agendas. This will require us to redesign and define the optimum business model of higher education for a 21st-century public research university that strategically grows new operating





revenues beyond operating expenditures to ensure fiscal sustainability. We will use data-driven decision making and bold leadership to reshape the size and quality of Maine's flagship campus enrollment and, therefore, strive to increase the university base budget to fund new campus initiatives, including strategic faculty hires, with clarity and confidence. We will sculpt the optimal balance of in-state, out-of-state and international students at the graduate and undergraduate levels to foster and sustain the most healthy and vibrant university for Maine. We will encourage colleges and other academic units to cooperatively pursue entrepreneurial avenues toward improving financial sustainability. We will enhance our research capacity and output as measured in the core areas of research expenditures, private foundation funding, intellectual property creation, and royalty income and industry-funded

research. We will realign our Advancement partners to more strategically and effectively conduct friend-raising and fundraising to achieve new revenues ensuring UMaine's fiscal stability. We will continue to increase transparency and accountability through established benchmarks and metrics.

Following this Pathway will enable UMaine to fund the excellence consistent with our vision for engagement and consistent with the strategic directions of the University of Maine System. This will require committing to entrepreneurial approaches to institutional budgeting and decision making. This, in turn, will build the necessary foundation for future investments in key academic areas, including the hiring of new faculty necessary for maintaining excellent teaching, research and outreach activities at UMaine.

3. Embracing a Culture of Excellence: Promoting Spirit, Community and Collaboration

We will refresh and reintroduce the unique UMaine brand to our many constituencies on campus and externally across the state, region, nation and the world. Our communication and outreach efforts will be thoughtful, strategic and consistent, and we will recruit key constituencies to help us advance our mission and achieve our vision. We will plan with intent to grow a culture of continuous engagement among our campus citizens and community partners. Our teaching and research enterprise will increase its stature and footprint in expanding the boundaries of knowledge as measured by interdisciplinary collaborations, publications, public dialogue and disciplinary impact. We will

continue to strategically and creatively hire world-class faculty who further these boundaries and provide the best possible education to future leaders. We will celebrate and materially reward criteria-based achievement among our faculty and staff by increasing resources for professional development, and creating a structured means for providing training and incentive opportunities. Our plan aims to reward excellence and energize our faculty and staff, who are the key to shaping UMaine's future and establishing a high-quality workplace.

Following this Pathway will result in a more engaged and interactive UMaine campus with our constituencies by creating an effective communication infrastructure to build community and streamline best practices. Also, appropriately rewarding hard-working faculty and staff and promoting morale will help us to recruit and retain the best and brightest employees to advance UMaine.

4. Transforming Lives: Strengthening the UMaine Undergraduate and Graduate Student Experience

We will promote student achievement and success through graduation, career preparation, job placement and cross-cultural enrichment. We will continue to ensure that our students are taught by appropriately qualified faculty and have a productive learning experience in the classroom. We will expand these and similar avenues of opportunity for our undergraduates, with a special emphasis on cutting-edge undergraduate research collaborations with our finest research faculty and graduate students. We will strengthen our signature Honors College, and we will improve the quality and range



of student life and learning opportunities, including new resident life strategies. We will enhance the number and quality of Graduate Research Assistantships/Fellowships available for graduate students to be able to focus on world-class research experiences. The University of Maine will advance an integrative model of excellence for graduate education in the 21st century and will foster dynamic professional training and development activities through university-wide interdisciplinary research networks.

Following this Pathway will attract top students to UMaine, and provide them with stellar support and preparation for careers or further academic achievement, as well as reinforce UMaine's academic excellence, expand opportunities for professional success and improve quality of life during their time of study at UMaine.

5. Restoring the Dream: Renewing Pride and Stewardship of Place

We will restore the dream of the land-grant mission by revitalizing the brick-and-mortar and technology infrastructure critical to our flagship campus. We will ensure funding toward ongoing campus improvement and beautification as we renew pride and renew a culture of stewardship at UMaine. Consistent with the goals of our strategic planning, we will review, revise and expand the campus master plan to align the optimum use of historic buildings with the need for new construction in support of the academic, research and outreach mission, including close monitoring of ongoing capital construction projects to ensure on-time and on-budget progress. We

will incorporate long-term planning for our off-campus locations. We will build state-of-the-art technology infrastructure for both on-campus and off-campus use, and work to ensure sound site and utility infrastructure.

Following this Pathway will signal that we value our work and value our institution with its 368 campus buildings and structures on 8,313 acres at close to \$1 billion in infrastructure and real estate, yet affirm our responsibility to maintaining and preserving our physical environment as a place of learning and discovery.

For more information about the Blue Sky Pathways and Initiation Strategies, please consult the full Blue Sky Plan.





Summary of the Five Strategic Pathways for Reaffirming Public Higher Education at Maine's Flagship University

- 1. M**aine's Renewal - Ensure UMaine teaching, research, outreach, workforce and economic development program excellence, with close alignment to Maine's priority needs.
- 2. M**oney and Management - Optimize operating efficiencies and control expenditures within a financially sustainable business model, and seek new and entrepreneurial revenue sources.
- 3. M**orale and Marketing - Invest in faculty and staff professional development, refresh the UMaine brand and improve communication among all constituencies.
- 4. M**entoring and Modeling - Promote undergraduate and graduate opportunities for student success, including value-added residential life, research fellowships, internships, effective advising and learning environments.
- 5. M**aster Plan and Maintenance - Restore and create UMaine's physical plant and technology infrastructure to ensure a vibrant place of learning and discovery.

I am not here to defend the status quo. I am here to defend this University's importance to the State of Maine and to re-emphasize the public good inherent in the mission of the public research university. I ask all to join me during our 150th anniversary in recommitting to the inherent, mutually beneficial partnership between the citizens of Maine and their University.

President Paul W. Ferguson, Inaugural Address, April 19, 2012

Blue Skies Ahead: A Call to Engagement

We are the University of Maine. We are the University *for* Maine. And we see Blue Skies Ahead. We have done some big thinking and some bold planning. Our Blue Sky Vision calls us to aspire to be a standard-setting American Research University through creatively *engaging* our students and communities with innovation. To that end, for the Blue Sky Plan to be successfully implemented, it is obvious that over the next several years, the specific implementation strategies will continue to evolve, based upon our early strategic successes — and the success of our *engagement* with the UMaine community.

President Ferguson, the President's Cabinet and the Blue Sky Implementation Leadership Team (a transition group from the Strategic

Planning Leadership Team to be formed in September 2012) will work closely with deans, directors, department chairs, alumni and donors, legislators, faculty, staff, community/business partners and students throughout the UMaine community, state, region and nation to apply greater detail to the Blue Sky Plan by reviewing and revising our fiscal model and organizational structures, investing or reinvesting in our key areas of distinction, meeting new and emerging needs, growing a UMaine culture of excellence, communicating who we are and what we do to our many constituencies and friends, and ensuring accountability to achieve our desired outcomes.

The plan will unfold with strategic leadership, constant innovation and responsible public stewardship driving everything we do. We will

regularly assess where we are and where we still need to go, and we will realign, enhance or modify elements of the Plan as needed. Our Blue Sky Implementation Project site, to be accessible through the UMaine homepage and the Office of the President's page, will feature an Annual Blue Sky Implementation Report based on our successful growth and goals we have reached or surpassed.

For more information about the Blue Sky Planning process and the Leadership Planning Team, please consult the full Blue Sky Plan.



Strategic Planning Leadership Team

Paul Ferguson, President (Chair)

Julie Hopwood, Senior Advisor to the President (Co-Chair)

Linda Silka, Director, Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center (Project Facilitator)

Kristen Andresen, University Relations, Alumni Association Board of Directors

Robin Arnold, Classified Employees Advisory Council

John Rebar, Director, University of Maine Cooperative Extension

Abigail Garthwait, Associate Professor of Education Instructional Technology (EDHD)

Ben Goodman, Undergraduate Student, BOT Student Representative

John Simpson, University of Maine Foundation Board

Dana Humphrey, Dean, College of Engineering

Brianna Hughes, Doctoral Student, BOT Graduate Student Representative

Dan Sturrup, Interim Director, Auxiliary Services

George Jacobson, Professor Emeritus, Former Director of the Climate Change Institute

Scott Johnson, Professor and Chair of Earth Sciences

Robert Rice, Professor of Wood Science, BOT Faculty Representative

Nathan Kinney, Senior Financial Economics Major, President, Senior Skulls;

Vice President for Finance, Student Government

Jan Kristo, Professor, Associate Dean (EDHD), Distinguished Maine Professor

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Laurie Lachance, President, Maine Development Foundation, UMaine Board of Visitors

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Mike Swartz, Professional Employees Advisory Council

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Howard Segal, Professor of History

James Page, Former UMaine Board of Visitors Member (resigned upon appointment as UMS Chancellor)



Photography and publication design by University of Maine Department of University Relations
Printed by University of Maine Printing Services

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