

May 8 2025

TO: Amanda Klemmer
President Faculty Senate

FR: Joan Ferrini-Mundy *Joan Ferrini-Mundy*
President

CC: Michelle Rogers, Chief of Staff
Gabriel Paquette, Senior Associate Provost and Acting Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs
Kalyn Black, Executive Assistant to the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs & Provost
William Somes, Senior Administrative Coordinator, Faculty Senate

RE: Response to Faculty Senate Motions from April 9, 2025, meeting, and received for action on April 11, 2025.

Thank you for your letter dated April 11, 2025, regarding the motions approved at the April 9, 2025 Faculty Senate meeting. After review with Senior Associate Provost and Acting Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs, Gabriel Paquette, my responses to the April 9, 2025 University of Maine Faculty Senate Motions are as follows:

Regarding SM 25007, entitled "Motion to Change the General Education Core Categories, Outcomes, and Policies."

I am pleased to support the motion, which revises the Mission of General Education ("The Core") as well as the associated categories, outcomes and policies at the University of Maine. The recommended revisions to the Core Curriculum will support students to design pathways that promote exploration, curiosity, and the pursuit of interdisciplinary opportunities without adding unnecessary burdens or delaying their progress toward degree completion. These revisions complement and support every major program, ensuring the University's Core outcomes that all of its graduates, regardless of the academic degree program pursued, are broadly educated. **The Core Curriculum**, making up about one-third of every bachelor's degree program, is designed to be flexible within the broad goals it seeks to achieve. The Core Curriculum policies include recommendations that courses be taught creatively, innovatively and with rigor. The policies include an outline of the process for reaffirming

current General Education courses and for adding new courses to the Core. In addition, every semester OIRA will provide the General Education Stewardship Committee a summary for each Core category. This summary will include assessment results for each academic unit by outcome, including disaggregation by rubric criteria. This new process will provide stewardship to monitor the General Education curriculum (Core). Senator Dee Nichols deserves special praise for his exemplary and peerless leadership of the General Education Stewardship Committee over the past two years. The reform of General Education is a true triumph of shared governance.

Regarding SM 25008, entitled “That the Faculty Senate support the recommendations of the University Catalog Task Force on the University of Maine Undergraduate Catalog Revisions.”

I support the recommendations of the University Catalog Task Force on the University of Maine Undergraduate Catalog Revisions. This resulted from a task force convened by Provost Volin and led with great skill by University Registrar Carrell and Associate Dean of ELH Sullivan. It went through a genuine shared governance process. The revision includes the addition of an Academic Glossary to define key academic terms within the Catalog. Clear comprehensive language has been added throughout multiple sections, outdated information has been updated, and the catalog was fully aligned with the current University of Maine System Academic Practice Letters. Everything was considered using a student success lens. I also support the recommendation to charge a standing committee with board representation to include Associate Deans, academic advisors, students, and staff from key areas (e.g., Admissions/EM, FA/SFS, OSR), to facilitate regular review and stewardship of the Undergraduate Catalog with a goal of continuous improvement and student success orientation. Additionally, I support the rest of the task force’s recommendations as outlined in the University Catalog Task Force’s report.

Regarding Faculty Senate SM 25009, entitled “Motion to Adopt a Revised Policies and Procedures Manual for the Program Creation and Reorganization Review Committee.”

I support the motion to allow the Program Creation and Reorganization Review Committee (PCRRC) to study and make recommendations concerning academically significant creations, reorganizations, and eliminations at the University of Maine through a process which is clear, concise, consistent, and responsive to the needs of the University. The motion represents a completion of work undertaken in AY23-24. The Senate has taken the Administration’s concerns and criticisms into account in its revisions. The result is a process document that represents a massive improvement over the existing PCRRC regulations, which were convoluted and contradictory. Senator MJ Sedlock deserves special praise for engaging with Deans and others throughout the process.

Regarding SM 25010, entitled “Motion to Reassess the Structure of UMaine's Research and Academics.”

While I fully recognize the importance of periodically reassessing the structure of University of Maine’s research and academic programs, I do not support the motion as written. The concerns raised must be taken seriously, of course. However, launching a separate external review would be duplicative: the legitimate issues raised are being examined and addressed through the four SRE Implementation Groups, in addition to the routine and ongoing evaluation of the usefulness, efficacy, and shortcomings of administrative structures that occurs as a matter of course. These are (and may be further) subject to review by existing bodies (e.g., Senate committees) and recommendations on specific points to improve operations are often adopted and implemented. There is ample precedent for administrative responsiveness to faculty concerns to justify this approach.