

August 9, 2021

Executive Summary of University of Maine at Machias Rebranding Campaign

The need to address University of Maine at Machias branding has grown in urgency. The co-branding approach instituted at the start of the primary partnership in 2016 caused confusion for students and other constituents, particularly affecting enrollment management and financial aid areas. As a result, the past year and a half was spent collaboratively developing a proposal for rebranding UMaine Machias to address the concerns for clear marketing and communication. That effort was led by the communication leads at UMaine Machias and UMaine, with a proposal shared with President Joan Ferrini-Mundy and Head of Campus Dan Qualls beginning in fall 2020. Rebranding concepts were finalized in March 2021.

That same month, President Ferrini-Mundy established the University of Maine/University of Maine at Machias Regional Campus Task Force and [charged](#) it with reviewing progress in the strategic areas and creating realistic, accelerated timelines and implementation steps for completion of the transition as a regional campus. Major elements are expected to be fully planned or in place by fall 2021, and all elements completed by the end of July 2022.

While the task force has collective responsibility for progress toward these deadlines, working groups are primarily topically focused. Working Group 5 focused on stakeholder relations, including rebranding, marketing and communications. Task force members expressed eagerness to have the new branding publicly announced and implemented, even as a revised mission statement is under development.

The May 27, 2021 meeting of the Task Force was dedicated to review of the proposed brand standards for the University of Maine at Machias. At the end of the hour-long discussion, the members present voted (15 in favor, 1 abstaining) to recommend to President Ferrini-Mundy that the brand standards as drafted be adopted to better reflect the connection between the two universities — the University of Maine and its regional campus at the University of Maine at Machias — and the goals of UMS unified accreditation.

In July, the proposed UMaine Machias brand standards were shared as part of two separate meetings with members of the UMaine Machias Board of Visitors (BOV), members of the Washington County legislative delegation and members of the Board of Trustees Executive Committee. In addition, the PowerPoint presentation created to update the BOV on the work of the Task Force, including the branding proposal, was shared with UMaine Machias employees in a July 30 email from Task Force chair Emily Haddad and head of campus Dan Qualls.

A phased rollout of the rebrand is recommended in the coming academic year to meet immediate marketing and communication needs wherever possible, and to demonstrate efficient and effective resource stewardship. Ultimately, the rebrand will reflect the quality, value and stature of UMaine Machias as a regional UMaine campus. Elements of an institution-wide

rebranding effort range from student recruitment marketing, campus signage and website to branded clothing, letterhead and editorial style. A communication plan includes messaging on and off campus, starting this fall, even if physical evidence of the rebrand is not readily seen on campus until spring.

What follows is a draft strategy for communicating the need, goal and implementation of the rebrand, and a dynamic list of areas to be addressed in the campaign and approximate time frames. Also included: a list of top talking points.

Top talking points

- Since the introduction of the primary partnership by the UMS Board of Trustees in 2016, the UMaine and UMaine Machias communication leads have collaborated to coordinate appropriate messaging to internal and external constituents. When efforts to co-brand, particularly in student recruitment efforts, resulted in confusion/mixed results, the communication leads began a concerted effort over the past year and a half to design brand standards that more accurately represent the increasing integration of the two universities and better serve constituents, particularly students.
- A working proposal of UMaine Machias brand standards had evolved by late spring 2021 at about the same time that the University of Maine/University of Maine at Machias Regional Campus Task Force was appointed. Brand development and implementation quickly was identified as an urgent priority for the Task Force, which fast-tracked its recommendation and introduction to key external stakeholders.
- Urgency for a rebrand included the need to refine the UMaine/UMaine Machias relationship in student recruitment marketing, and the 2020 decision related to the single UMaine OPEID/FAFSA ID for both universities.
- The rebrand of UMaine Machias needs to reflect the distinction and contributions of UMaine Machias, establishing a regional campus of UMaine, serving students with affordable, high-quality educational opportunities in Down East Maine and Washington County, and reflecting the potential benefits to both universities.
- It is important to recognize the relevance of the UMaine Machias brand — past, present and future — to students, employees, alumni and the community. Inherently, rebranding campaigns can elicit both a sense of loss for the past and anticipation. As part of a rebranding campaign, the legacy brand must be honored and the next generation identity must provide advancement and positioning for the future.
- For student recruitment and institutional marketing purposes, the rebrand is fundamental to enhanced promotional opportunities.

Communication timeline

2018–spring 2021 — UMaine and UMaine Machias communication leads work with university senior leadership and enrollment management leads to meet institutional

marketing and communication needs by evolving from co-branding to rebranding. Rebranding concepts moved to senior leadership in fall 2020.

March 2021 — University of Maine/University of Maine at Machias Regional Campus Task Force appointed, with branding and communication priorities assigned to Working Group 5. That working group and others identify UMaine Machias branding as an urgent need.

May 2021 — Task Force meeting that includes a review of the proposed UMaine Machias brand standards concludes in a vote (15 in favor, 1 abstaining) to expedite the rebranding proposal for consideration by leadership. Revised draft of mission statement expected for possible inclusion in the final Task Force report.

July 2021 — Proposed brand standards were shared with the UMS Board of Trustees Executive Committee, UMaine Machias Board of Visitors, Washington County legislative delegation and UMaine Machias employees (Haddad/Qualls email July 30).

August 2021 — Head of Campus Qualls launches regular column in Machias Valley News Observer, which includes introduction of upcoming rebranding effort.

September–October 2021 — Town hall(s)/listening session(s) to preview the implementation of the rebranding campaign, answering questions and responding to university community members' needs, including students and alumni. These are expected to include discussion of mascot and student club identity, and any community partnerships now incorporating the existing UMaine Machias brand.

Fall 2021 — Enrollment Management and Financial Aid marketing for 2022 class incorporates rebrand. Soft launch of rebranding on campus includes implementation of the new brand on the UMaine Machias website and elsewhere online (IT, Bursar, etc.), letterhead and other institutional materials, etc. Finalized UMaine Machias mission and vision statements by January 2022.

Spring 2022 — Installation of bilingual UMaine Machias signage campuswide, pole banners and posting of full brand standards style guide.

Fall 2022 — Incoming class that has been recruited with rebranded materials joins fully rebranded campus community.

Implementation strategy

Full brand style guide/branding and marketing support — An institutional online resource, including **editorial style guide, typography, colors, branded digital and print templates, ads, T-shirts, etc.** The UMaine Machias communication lead, with support from Marketing and Communications designers, provides support for brand use.

Updated mission and vision statements — Finalized by January 2022.

Website — Rebrand will include new logo and improved content mapping to meet constituents' needs and reflect institutional priorities. Examples include distinct enrollment management web pages; integration of UMaine and UMaine Machias news.

Branded apparel — Licensing of brand (both UMaine and UMaine Machias) approved by Marketing and Communications, with UMaine Machias apparel orders coordinated by University Bookstore.

IT/Bursar's Office — Use of UMaine Machias logos.

Enrollment Management and Financial Aid — Build out of UMaine Machias brand standards to ensure best marketing and communication to students.

Letterhead, business cards, email sigs — Branding guidance available in the full style guide, with infrastructure support provided by UMaine Machias communication lead, Marketing and Communications designers, UMaine Printing Services. Footer for primary letterhead expected to note: Maine's Land Grant, Sea Grant, and Space Grant University with a Regional Campus in Machias.

Campus signage — An informal Facilities Management inventory of existing signage has been conducted. Head of Campus has the lead in securing bilingual translations. Plan for construction and installation in the spring, including required budget for implementation, forthcoming.

UMaine/UMaine Machias editorial content — Both universities help define each other in editorial content, ranging from a university overview for the academic catalogs to primary institutional publications such as UMaine Today magazine.

Event basics — Rebranded supplies for event use range from pull-up banners to table coverings and banners.

Parking passes, MaineCards — Coordination will be needed with respective offices and with implementation of brand style guide for MaineCards, parking passes, etc.