

Regional Campus Task Force  
Group 6: Growth Strategies for UMM  
Summary of Plan and Timeline for Implementation of the Plan  
August 12, 2021

The Group 6 subcommittee has met six times over the past three months to discuss growth strategies for the UMM campus. We agree that a focus on the distinctiveness of the UMM campus, the needs of the region, as well as leveraging UMM's unique assets, including people, environment and community should be central to the strategic efforts to grow enrollments and bring more awareness and recognition to the UMM campus and to the region. A strong branding and comprehensive marketing strategy that identifies UMM as UMaine's regional campus, emphasizing the small college and hands-on experiential opportunities, are key to supporting programmatic initiatives and growth efforts over the next several years.

Although there are a number of initiatives we considered that are underway (such as the new EGIS program), the group identified a need to focus recommendations around a subset of all of the available initiatives. Given the limited resources for investing in new initiatives, we spent the time in our recent meetings looking at what has already been done and thinking through the opportunities with the highest potential return on investment. While work remains to find data to support our intuitions, we have focused on two time periods for our recommendations: within the next 24 months and 3-4 years. Group 6 recommends prioritizing the following initiatives over the next several years:

**A. Developing the following Academic Programs (yrs 1-2)**

**1. Nursing**

This is a critical area of need in Maine as is well recognized. A new BSN curriculum to support nursing student transfers from UMM to UM has already been approved, and a UM/UMM Nursing Pathway proposal has been developed. The Pathway would support further opportunities for students to pursue Nursing, and is expected to enroll 30 students per year, with 20 students transferring into the UM program.

*Timeline: Begin enrolling students into the Pathway program at UMM in Fall 2022*

**2. Conservation Law**

This program also meets a critical need area and would respond to the [game warden shortage](#) in Maine. The loss of Unity College's in-person program provides an opportunity for UMM to become a top Conservation Law Program in Maine and the U.S. UMM already has an [Associate of Science in Conservation Law and Outdoor Management](#) that could be developed into a Bachelor's degree, and would be a unique offering within the University of Maine System. The region is an ideal location (woods, mountains, lakes, rivers, ocean) to train future outdoor leaders and stewards to protect our natural resources and the people who recreate outdoors and is home to federal, state, county, and municipal law enforcement agencies that could be leveraged as partners.

UMM also has a [Conservation Law Early College Career Pathway](#) which could create a stackable program into the associate and then bachelors degree.

*Timeline: Launch stackable curriculum by Fall 2022.*

### **3. Coastal Year**

This program builds on the distinctiveness of the UMM location. Existing science programs are built on experiential learning, with much of the hands-on learning in the field. UMM is rather distinctive in having students in the field by the end of their first week of study in their first year, aligning well with the Research Learning Experience initiative. The Coastal Year would use the current curriculum at UMM, leveraging field-based activities and optimizing enrollments in classes. It is anticipated that, with a strong marketing campaign promoting this unique opportunity through UM's coastal campus, enrollments would grow from both in-state and out-of-state students.

*Timeline: Develop marketing materials by early fall 2021 that can be distributed to prospective students for Fall 2022.*

### **B. Developing Stackable Credentials, from Early College Pathways through Associate Degrees, Bachelor Degrees and beyond. (yrs 1-2)**

Among the population in Maine less than 38% of ME high school graduates go on to college. Given that an increasing number of traditional aged students are looking for microcredentials, developing stackable credentials leading into the associate's degree and bachelor's degree (as appropriate), would be an attractive option for many students who are reticent about committing to a four-year program from the start. UMM already has 14 Early College pathways as a strategy for getting more students into the admission pipeline. In partnership with UM, these pathways are now heavily promoted state-wide and have experienced growing numbers this past year. The small campus environment, coupled with success in some early college experiences can give students the confidence they need to be successful in college. Stackable credentials can also allow non-traditional students the opportunity to pursue a college degree in stages as they are working.

Creating more stackable credentials is important as this is a growing trend in higher education; students want to be met where they are. UMM's Early College Certificates could become workforce development certificates that are marketed statewide to both adults and early college students as a starting point for their education.

*Timeline: Develop a plan for stackable credentialing in 2-3 UMM programs this Fall 2021.*

### **C. DownEast Rural Health Collaborative (yrs 3-4)**

The DownEast Rural Health Collaborative could be a signature UM initiative. This proposed self-sustaining institute based at UMM would conduct groundbreaking, collaborative research on rural health and well-being that directly benefits the Downeast Region and contributes to

knowledge and change in rural health nationally. This group would attract competitive grant funding to support world-class knowledge creation and become a destination of choice for students and faculty working in this area. This could be a nationally distinctive offering focused on rural health.

Rural health is in crisis with a need to develop new models for operating (<https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2020/01/31/rural-americas-health-crisis-seizes-states-attention>). Building on the efforts of the proposed Nursing program, the Collaborative would facilitate and create synergies for the development of world-class education and research opportunities. There is substantial funding at the state and federal level which can be attracted by UMM by leveraging new data and interdisciplinary approaches. UMM's environment is perfect for such a program:

- a. It is already located in a rural county and is the regional campus for Maine's flagship campus.
- b. Students are likely to travel to participate in a program such as this, especially if there are graduate student opportunities developed.
- c. There are dedicated local professionals in this subject area who would be willing to advise us on program development and support the implementation.

The shorter-term initiatives identified above are already well underway and this group suggests identifying key performance indicators and mechanisms for gathering timely information to assess whether the efforts remain on track and deliver on the identified promise. For the DownEast Rural Health Institute Collaborative, additional assessment is needed in identifying areas of greatest need in Maine, New England, and throughout the U.S. to focus grant identification and to inform program development.

WORKING DOCUMENT - PRE-DECISIONAL