

Division of LifeLong Learning
Strategic Vision and Values
Executive Summary

The following summarizes the feedback received from 6 major functional area within the Division of Lifelong Learning: CITL, UMaineOnline, College Success Programs, Conferences and Institutes, Hutchinson Center,/Early College, Operations (Summer/Winter Session) (see attached). The senior team also convened for 3 hours on February 8 to review the area comments and determine our highest priority feedback to the Provost.

Fostering Learner Success (Suggested amendment in **bold**)

*The university is a community committed to fostering learning opportunities for all of its members. We celebrate **diversity and inclusivity** and are committed to creating a safe and respectful environment within which all learners can flourish. We **commit to learning experiences that are rigorous, impactful, and of the highest quality virtually and face-to face** in the classroom, laboratory, studio, field, and community as well as the spaces within which students live, work, and socialize. We create academic and co-curricular pathways for success and assure that our students are prepared for successful careers and rich lives. Our faculty and staff are life-long learners and we are committed to their professional development over the span of their careers. **Our community embraces 21st century learners and we are committed to supporting learning success.***

In general, DLL members believed the value statements were too broad (could be claimed by most universities) and wanting to appease too many internal and external constituent groups to the point that they were not as meaningful. They also noted that there was not enough *genuine* emphasis on the expanded view of who our learners are, how today's learners *access* our education (e.g. online, off-campus), nor acknowledgment that the needs vary greatly across the spectrum of learners we want to embrace. Online students, transfer students, older adults, international students, low income students, first-gen students, students with disabilities, and underrepresented minorities are all examples of students who have needs that differ from that of the "typical" college student.

The value statements also lacked emphasis on the caliber of our faculty to engage in high quality teaching to all types of learners (traditional, adult, online) and instill the value of lifelong learning in our students. Although the statement suggests that faculty are lifelong learners and we are committed to their professional development, there are no real incentives in place to support faculty as lifelong learning with regard to their teaching. The university needs to view teaching as a cultivated skill that needs continued nurturing so as to respond to the evolving needs of today and tomorrow's learners.

There were also a lot of comments on the "aspirational" nature of the statements and some skepticism about whether our stated values are truly reflected in how we resource around those values. The verb tense in the statements suggest an existing state at the university which, in some cases, is not yet present (for ex. the suggestion that we "celebrate diversity" does not seem wholly genuine). Creating a vision to achieve our values will be an articulation of where we prioritize our funding and resources.

2. Creating and Innovating for Maine and Beyond (Suggested amendment in bold)

*At the core of the university's mission is the creation of new knowledge. As Maine's Land and Sea Grant University the **faculty, staff and students** are committed to creating **and disseminating** knowledge that is **both applied and theoretical**, as well as that impacts the **educational**, social, cultural, and economic well-being of the state, and beyond. Our community encompasses **researchers, educators, artists, designers, makers, and discoverers** working in and across a **vast** range of contexts.*

In general, this statement should speak to the creation of new knowledge and the *dissemination* of that knowledge.

The word “innovation” should also suggest innovation in *pedagogy*, including innovating the curriculum (e.g. expanding both teaching methodologies and options for access (e.g. accelerated terms throughout the year). By adding the words “faculty, staff and students” it suggests that we all work to create meaningful change, and by adding the word “educational” it suggests the impact we have on teaching and learning across the time spectrum.

As it is currently written, the statement suggests that we are only committed to knowledge that has an immediate impact; the statement should also include the notion that we value *pure knowledge*, or said differently, knowledge that is both applied and theoretical. By modifying the final sentence slightly, it encompasses the notions of discovery and creation that is both applied and not.

3. Growing and Stewarding Partnerships (Suggested amendment in bold)

*As a public institution, the university partners with other entities in fulfilling its teaching, research, and service/outreach missions. These partnerships leverage the university's and its collaborators' assets to advance the **educational**, cultural, economic, and civic interests of Maine communities [**even when a direct impact on the university's mission is not obvious.**] In this way, we serve as **conscientious** stewards of the resources entrusted to us by the people of Maine, and by our many partners in **education, science, the arts, industry, commerce, state and local government.***

The statement focuses primarily on partnerships and perhaps does not adequately emphasize “outreach” or the notion of “service” (which may not always be construed in terms of partnerships). For example, many programs at the university, such as C&I and Cooperative Extension (e.g. 4-H, youth camps), provide direct outreach and service to the state that is not through partnerships. Is this value too narrowly stated?

We inserted the word “educational” to reflect that we partner with K-12 schools and have plans to partner more systematically with industry in professional development.

We propose deleting the words “*even when a direct impact on the university's mission is not obvious*” as it doesn't seem necessary.

We moved the word “arts” into the middle of the final sentence so it doesn't seem like an afterthought.