



# UNIVERSITY of MAINE *at* AUGUSTA

## 2016-2020 STRATEGIC PLAN

REVISED 2017

### TRANSFORMING LIVES: STUDENT SUCCESS AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

#### INTRODUCTION

UMA embarked on a strategic planning process in the fall of 2014 to update its strategic plan for 2016-2020, the plan was subsequently revised in 2017. Our plan includes refocused and bold mission and vision statements, a set of key UMA values, seven measurable goals and a set of actions for achieving these goals. The strategic plan, *Transforming Lives: Student Success and Academic Achievement*, extends our commitment to our statewide mission; it extends our commitment to on-site and distance education; and it extends our commitment to telling our story of how we transform students' lives of all ages and backgrounds throughout Maine and beyond.

#### STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The process for developing our 2016-2020 strategic plan began in the fall semester of 2014 with the formation of a strategy team made up of faculty and administration. This team hosted a series of discussion forums in Augusta, Bangor and the University College Centers where the entire community was invited to participate. The first discussion forum focused on UMA's mission, vision and goals while a follow-up workshop developed a comprehensive list of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and then identified key strategies and supporting actions that could leverage strengths and opportunities as well as address threats and weaknesses. As a result of these discussions, the strategy team developed seven measurable long-term goals and three key strategies to achieve them.

In the Fall of 2017, President Wyke invited all members of the UMA community to participate in a process of re-grounding in the strategic plan in order to better define our collective vision for the future and align our limited resources behind those strategies that will help us to be most successful in fulfilling the vision. Three sets of open forums were held on the Augusta and Bangor campuses and a series of roundtable discussions took place in Augusta, Bangor and the University College Centers; the recognized governance sectors of the UMA community were invited to submit formal feedback and recommendations; and three campus-wide surveys were conducted. This document sets forth a new Vision Statement for UMA, as well as a revised Strategic Plan.

## MISSION STATEMENT

***UMA transforms the lives of students of every age and background across the State of Maine and beyond through access to high-quality distance and on-site education, excellence in student support, civic engagement, and professional and liberal arts programs.***

UMA's average student is 33 years old, and transfers in about 40 credits. UMA also has a growing population of traditional age students, which make up about 30% of our student body.

*US News and World Report* currently ranks UMA in the top 50<sup>th</sup> percentile for Best Online Bachelor's Degree and in the Top 30 for Best Online Bachelor's Degree for Veterans.

UMA is a leader in best practices for student services. Our advising and learning success teams work with academic programs to gently guide students through UMA and to prepare students for their immediate next destinations and lifelong professional pursuits.

UMA provides a broad-based liberal arts education and we are committed to a robust array of educational opportunities for all of our students. We offer students innovative ways to satisfy their general education requirements, including integrated courses with educational travel to Cuba and Haiti. Some of our classes partner with classes in Europe for real time exchange of ideas across continents. Students in a variety of fields present the results of their research and creative activity to the broader UMA community. Many students participate in internships with businesses and nonprofit organizations. Looking to the future, UMA will continue to expand opportunities for students to participate in experiential learning and engage with the broader community by employing New Ventures Maine as the civic engagement connection for our academic programs to Maine communities.

## VISION STATEMENT

***As an engaged learning community, the University of Maine at Augusta will continuously pursue innovative and best-in-class pedagogy, technology and services to enhance student learning and success. UMA is committed to delivering quality academic programs, on-site and at a distance, that prepare students to succeed as engaged citizens, professionals and leaders in enriching and advancing Maine's communities.***

With 59% of our students enrolled online or through our University College Centers, UMA is at the forefront of distance and online education in Maine, with fully online academic programs in Library and Information Services, Computer Information Systems, Cybersecurity, Business Administration, Mental Health and Human Services, Social Science, Liberal Studies, Applied Science, Public Administration and Justice Studies.

UMA also has distinctive on-site programs in Art, Architecture, Aviation, Jazz and Contemporary Music, Veterinary Technology, Dental Assisting, and Dental Hygiene.

UMA delivers our many programs throughout Maine, including the Augusta and Bangor campuses; and the Saco, Brunswick, Rockland, Ellsworth, Rumford, South Paris, Houlton and East Millinocket centers; the Hutchinson Center in Belfast and Lewiston-Auburn College.

## UMA VALUES

During UMA our original year-long Strategic Planning process in 2014-2015, the UMA community identified the following key values:

### *UMA is responsive.*

- Supporting students transferring credits and granting credit for prior learning.
- Meeting the educational and economic needs of our communities.
- Responding to student demands for different modalities of coursework.
- Fulfilling the state demand for dual enrollment credits.

### *UMA is nimble.*

- Developed a B.S. in Aviation within a year and a half of identifying the need.
- Implemented a plan to assist Verso paper mill employees to attain bachelor's degrees.
- Partnered with UMFK to deliver a Bachelor of Science in Nursing.

### *UMA is adaptable.*

- Offer abbreviated sessions for students who enroll after regular classes begin.
- Teach courses in a variety of modalities simultaneously, including video and online.
- Offer a majority of UMA courses at UC centers and sites.
- Offer Applied Science and Liberal Studies bachelor's degrees for degree completion.

### *UMA is collaborative.*

- Partner with UMPI on our Medical Laboratory Technology program.
- Partner with UMFK to deliver a B.S. in Nursing program at Augusta.
- Collaborate with UMPI and UMM to deliver education pathways for students.
- Collaborate with Maine Instrument Flight to deliver a B.S. in Aviation.

### *UMA is accessible.*

- UMA has one of the lowest tuition rates in the University of Maine System.
- UMA is proud to be accessible for students of all ages.
- UMA has a network of centers and sites and offers many programs and classes online.

## MEASURABLE LONG TERM GOALS

### 1. *Student Success.*

#### **Strengthen student success as demonstrated by course completion and graduation.**

##### Metrics

- Increase baccalaureate all student graduation rate within 6 years (150%) from 23% (2006-07 cohort) to 28%, representing a 22% improvement in the rate.
- Increase baccalaureate first-time, full-time traditional graduation rate within 6 years (150%) from 13% (2006-07 cohort, IPEDS) to 18%. (Peer group comparison is 19.5% for National, four-year, Public Offering Bachelor's and Select Associate Degrees Only with Open Admission Selectivity (ACT, 2014, Fall 2007 cohort).
- Increase five-year average course completion rate from 75% to 80%.

### 2. *Enrollment*

#### **Achieve student headcount and credit hour growth as defined by UMA's multi-year enrollment management plan.**

##### Metrics

- Growth will not dilute historical effective tuition rate (net student revenue/credit hour).

### 3. *Academic Innovation*

#### **Innovate academics through UMS and external collaborations.**

##### Metrics

- Create or revise 20% of courses annually.
- Take at least two additional UMA baccalaureate programs to a national/world audience.
- Offer at least four additional baccalaureate programs at UMA.
- Offer at least two graduate level programs (e.g., MSW, MA LCPC, MBA, MPA, MPP, MEd).

### 4. *High Quality*

#### **Demonstrate on-going quality improvement through internal and external reviews and feedback.**

##### Metrics

- Review external evaluative tools (e.g., CEQ, NSSE) and establish:
  - At least one score to improve. At least one recommendation to implement.
  - Current focus: NSSE – student engagement.
- Review internal evaluative tools (e.g., Learning Outcomes Assessments, Recent Graduate Survey) on an annual basis and establish:
  - At least one score to improve. At least one recommendation to implement.
  - Current focus: Learning outcomes by academic program.
- Increase accreditation or externally peer reviewed programs from six to nine.
- Improve percentage of full-time faculty new hires that have a Doctorate or terminal degree from 86% to over 90%.

## MEASURABLE LONG-TERM GOALS (CONTINUED)

### 5. *Stewardship of Place/ State*

**Positively impact the economic, intellectual, social and cultural vitality of our communities through cooperative exchanges, programming and volunteerism.**

#### Metrics

- Civic Engagement metric based on scaled item in NSSE.
  - Reduce the percentage of responses of ‘none’ or ‘0’ to survey questions on: “the number of courses that include a community-based project” and “the number of hours per week doing community service or volunteer work”.
- Increase by four the number of Programs requiring Service Learning and/or Internships.
- Establish a mechanism to document and report faculty, staff and student volunteer hours and contributions.
- Employee satisfaction metric.
- Use Department of Labor data to track graduates.
- Reduce UMA’s carbon footprint by 30% within five years.

### 6. *Visibility and Branding*

**Strengthen and raise awareness of UMA brand for all stakeholder groups\*, with special focus on prospective students.**

#### Metrics

- Use market research to develop a baseline in year one on brand awareness and then assess movement over the next four years.
- Use analytics to gauge effectiveness of communication and marketing efforts to increasing applications and enrollment.

#### \*Note

*Since 2006, we have identified UMA stakeholder groups as prospective students, key influencers (e.g., parents, guidance counselors, etc), current students, lapsed students, faculty/staff, alumni, senior college, friends/key decision makers (community leaders, legislators), and general public.*

### 7. *Financial Sustainability*

**Achieve and maintain financial sustainability.**

#### Metrics

- Achieve a reserve position of 0.40.
- Achieve five-year annual average net operating revenue ratio of 2-4%.

## KEY STRATEGIES

UMA's actions will be guided by three key strategies that are designed to support UMA in achieving its long-term strategic goals. These three themes address how UMA will leverage and strengthen its competitive advantages while mitigating potential threats and weaknesses.

Strategy #1. Improve Retention by Strengthening Student Success

Strategy #2. Advance Academics

Strategy #3. Cultivate Reputation and Resources

## ACTIONS SUPPORTING KEY STRATEGIES

### Strategy #1. Improve Retention by Strengthening Student Success

All Student Success initiatives will be designed under the following guiding principles:

- Integrating student support with coursework.
- Setting high expectations while also providing strong support.
- Incorporating intensive student engagement.
- Developing a student success agenda designed for scale.
- Providing targeted professional development to insure high-quality implementation of student success agenda.
- Assuring that programming responds to the needs of students engaged in distance as well as face-to-face modalities.

#### **1.1 Enhance new student on-boarding processes.**

##### 1.1.1 Refine Assessment & Placement

- Review current policies and practices.
- Expand current academic assessment testing to include testing for non-cognitive skills and other indicators that could help identify at risk students.
- Establish program specific markers and outreach to students who miss markers.

##### 1.1.2 Improve Orientation

- Develop mandatory on-line orientation.
- Continue on-site orientation programs as a complement to online new student orientation, with a focus on connection and engagement.

##### 1.1.3 Develop a summer program for Bridge Year students.

## ACTIONS SUPPORTING KEY STRATEGIES (CONTINUED)

### **1.2 Strengthen student support services and refine communication with students.**

- 1.2.1 Fully implement a student relationship management system (TargetX) to enhance communication with prospective students.
- 1.2.2 Establish and execute an integrated action plan that sharpens alignment of academic programs and student services to key “momentum points” in the student life cycle with the aim to proactively drive increased enrollment.
- 1.2.3 Develop a Cyberspace Master Plan to provide all students with digital pathways to services and support.

### **1.3 Focus on the First Year Experience**

- 1.3.1 Review current policies and best practices and develop appropriate COL 1XX course(s) focused on the development of non-cognitive student success and professional skills.
  - Teach techniques for effective learning online.

### **1.4 Explore strategies to create learning communities focused on academic program, geographies or other cohort groupings**

- 1.4.1 Create academic program specific FYE initiatives such as an introductory course and/or onboarding activity in each academic program to create cohorts including online and geographically driven cohorts.
- 1.4.2 Pilot General Education courses to courses in academic programs to create cohorts for new, transfer and returning students.
- 1.4.3 Provide increased support for faculty to participate in Learning Communities.

### **1.5 Improve Tracking/Advising**

- 1.5.1 Review current tracking/advising policies and procedures.
  - Create a role for adjunct faculty in advising.
  - Improve access to services (i.e. mobile friendly) for all students.
  - Expand support for online students.
- 1.5.2 Develop student tracking and early warning system.
  - Leverage analytics to improve processes.
  - Evaluate student tracking software.
  - Train and increase support for faculty and staff to use the system.
- 1.5.3 Integrate embedded class stewards into barrier courses.
  - Integrate student support within courses; focus on intro/gateway/barrier courses & highest enrollment courses with lowest success rates.



## ACTIONS SUPPORTING KEY STRATEGIES (CONTINUED)

- 1.5.4 Develop incentives (e.g., course discounts, bookstore gift certificate, free book) to encourage timely registration and student persistence
- 1.5.5 Ensure Timely Registration.
  - Review current policies and practices regarding registration.
  - Send personalized registration messages (recommend courses based on Degree Progress).
  - Expand opportunities for group registration through activities such as wish list events.
- 1.6 ***Expand state-wide internship program opportunities for students***
  - Partner with the New Ventures Maine, the Maine State Chamber of Commerce and others to promote state-wide opportunities.
- 1.7 ***Intensify relationships with employers to identify additional enrollment opportunities.***

### Strategy #2. Advance Academics

#### Curriculum

- 2.1 ***Complete the full re-integration of University College into UMA.***
  - 2.1.1 Increase number of courses offered onsite at the regional centers to establish and reinforce regional availability and presence.
  - 2.1.2 Expand academic support for distance and online students (e.g. VAWLT).
- 2.2 ***Develop new programs through internal and external collaboration***
  - 2.2.1 Offer new graduate level programs to meet regional and state needs.
  - 2.2.2 Encourage the development of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary programs through faculty collaboration within UMA and UMS.
  - 2.2.3 Increase pathways through expansion of credits for prior learning.
    - Strengthen promotion of credit for prior learning options and benefits.
- 2.3 ***Continuously improve existing programs.***
  - Upgrade and redesign courses to meet current best practices.
  - Review and improve annual report process to include action plan evaluation.
  - Pilot ***Academic Programs of the Future*** to align and enrich the learning experience for distance and on-site students through pedagogical design, technological platform, structured interventions, and assessment of learning outcomes; and provide faculty with incentives and support for pilot participation.



## ACTIONS SUPPORTING KEY STRATEGIES (CONTINUED)

### **2.4 Refine approach to developmental education courses.**

#### **Faculty**

### **2.5 Support faculty in adopting high impact teaching practices.**

- 2.5.1 Leverage instructional design resources.
- 2.5.2 Expand the tools and processes to assist faculty in the continuous development and improvement of their teaching skills and courses (i.e. course peer review program).
- 2.5.3 Establish annual student survey to provide feedback on advising.
- 2.5.4 Participate in College Education Quality (CEQ) project with Columbia University.
- 2.5.5 Create communities to support teaching, learning and share best practices.
- 2.5.6 Refine expectations for tenure and post-tenure.

### **2.6 Develop improved integration and support of adjunct faculty.**

- 2.6.1 Refine orientation of part-time faculty.
- 2.6.2 Establish a role for part-time faculty to participate in advising.

## **Strategy #3. Cultivate Reputation and Resources**

### **3.1 Grow the enrollment funnel.**

- 3.1.1 Accelerate UMA's Bridge Year program.
  - Grow UMA's involvement with the Bridge Year program and develop a very deliberate complement of engagement activities.
- 3.1.2 Increase partnership with Community Colleges, Adult Education sites, high schools, and employers seeking to invest in workforce development.
- 3.1.3 Provide more flexible fall and spring term enrollment options.

### **3.2 Increase resources and focus in the marketing area.**

- 3.2.1 Develop a comprehensive stakeholder segmented communications and marketing plan.

## ACTIONS SUPPORTING KEY STRATEGIES (CONTINUED)

- 3.2.2 Conduct periodic market research to measure impact of communication plan on improving brand awareness and increasing enrollment.
  - Based on market research, assess current state of UMA brand and determine future direction.
- 3.2.3 Increase targeted advertising in television, radio and print.
- 3.2.4 Increase and ensure effectiveness of online and digital marketing.
  - Improve utilization of social media.
  - Evaluate and refine website.
- 3.2.5 Execute direct recruitment marketing efforts.
  - Identify targeted segments (for example, high schools, adult learners, early college).
- 3.3 ***Complete logo and brand change for the-UMA campuses and UC centers.***
- 3.4 ***Explore and leverage new student housing options to grow signature programs such as Architecture and Aviation as well as attract out of state and international students.***
- 3.5 ***Build community connections through courses, internships and civic engagement.***
  - 3.5.1 Employ New Ventures Maine as the civic engagement connection for our academic programs to Maine communities.
- 3.6 ***Aggressively pursue grant opportunities.***
- 3.7 ***Partner with businesses and nonprofits to understand needs and expand community engagement opportunities.***
- 3.8 ***Enhance communication within the UMA community and effectively communicate our story to external stakeholders.***