



## **2021-2025 STRATEGIC PLAN**

**DRAFT, March 3, 2021**

### **INTRODUCTION**

UMA embarked on a strategic planning process in the spring of 2020 to update its strategic plan for 2021-2025. Our plan reaffirms the mission and vision statements and updates the UMA values, measurable long-term goals and key strategies for achieving these goals. The strategic plan reasserts our commitment to our statewide mission; it reasserts our commitment to quality onsite and distance education; and it reasserts our commitment to telling our story of how we transform students' lives of all ages and backgrounds throughout Maine and beyond. The plan also expands on our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion and seeks to ensure UMA affords an inclusive environment that engenders a sense of belonging for all members of our community.

### **STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS**

The process for developing our 2021-2025 strategic plan began in the spring semester of 2020. President Wyke invited the entire UMA community to participate in a series of round-table discussions at the Augusta and Bangor campuses and at each UMA Center. Additionally, UMA's shared governance partners were invited to conduct their own round-table discussions. Members of the UMA community were also asked to offer input through a university-wide survey. The major themes emerging from these efforts have been incorporated into this draft plan through a revised set of UMA values, measurable long-term goals, and key strategies.

This plan builds on the re-grounding efforts of Vision 2.0 conducted in the Fall of 2017. It emphasizes a continued focus on retention, completion, and lowering student default rates, as well as proactive student advising and navigational supports. The plan also emphasizes the importance of experiential learning and civic engagement in student career development. Additionally, the plan strives for continuous improvement in the offering of remote services for our growing population of distance students.

### **ACHIEVEMENTS 2016 - 2020**

Over the past five years UMA has made great progress in implementing the 2016-2020 Strategic Plan. New baccalaureate degrees were launched in pre-licensure Nursing, Data Science, Elementary Education, and Secondary Education. We pioneered our first micro-credentials in "resilience", "initiative" and "critical thinking". We also introduced our first graduate programs, a Master of Science in Cybersecurity and a graduate certificate in Substance Use Disorders.

UMA welcomed students to our first residential living community at the historic Stevens Commons, opened a new Dental Clinic in Lewiston to support the expansion of the Dental

Assisting program, re-established the Maine Community Policing Institute, and unveiled the Maine Cyber Range. We also celebrated 30 years of distance education and 40 years of serving adults in transition through New Ventures Maine.

Our early college program expanded from 380 students in Fall 2016 to 795 in Fall 2020. UMA also expanded its reach beyond Maine, increasing our out-of-state student population from 3.2% of enrollment in Fall 2016 to 8% in Fall 2020.

UMA stood up the President's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council to support strategic initiatives, partnerships, advocacy, innovation, and educational programs to create, sustain, and enrich our institutional commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. UMA's student population is increasingly diverse with 12% of students identifying with a community of color today, versus 8% in 2016. This shift underscores the need to ensure UMA is a productive and inclusive environment for all students, faculty, staff, and visitors.

Plans are currently underway to expand our prison education program to the Department of Corrections' Bolduc and Mountain View facilities and we will soon open the Doris Buffett Higher Education Center at the Maine State Prison. Additionally, the recently announced Andrew Mellon Foundation grant will underwrite a director, as well as expanded technology for the program. Other plans in progress include a new graduate certificate in Trauma-Informed Emergency Management, the only credential of its kind in Maine. As well as fulfilling the FAA Part 141 Private Pilot License requirements to support our military and veteran students in Aviation.

## **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 29 years old, and transfers in about 53 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 100 for Best Online Bachelor's Degree and for Best Online Bachelor's Degree for Veterans. UMA is also in the top 50 for Best Online Bachelor's Degree Business Administration.

UMA is a leader in best practices for student services. Our advising and learning success teams work with academic programs to 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 achieve general education competencies, 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 engage with faculty in scholarly research and creative activity. Many students participate in internships with businesses and nonprofit organizations and UMA's New Ventures Maine program links students with a continuum of student engagement activities statewide.

## 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 communities in Maine and beyond.*

With 75% of our credit hours offered online or through UMA Centers, UMA is at the forefront of flexible distance education in Maine through multiple modalities, with many fully online academic program options.

UMA delivers academic programs throughout Maine, including at the Augusta and Bangor campuses; at the UMA Centers in Brunswick, East Millinocket, Ellsworth, Houlton, Lewiston, Rockland, Rumford, Saco, and at thirty-two receive sites across Maine.

## UMA VALUES

As the youngest university in the University of Maine System, UMA is proud of our capacity to adapt to changing markets and demographic trends and needs, and to ensure sustainability and efficient responses to emerging educational and societal needs. Examples of UMA values in action are demonstrated below.

### *UMA is inclusive.*

- Establishing the President's Council on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and a Cabinet-endorsed statement affirming UMA's commitment to the principles of inclusivity.
- Creating the Equity and Inclusion Scholarship to provide financial support rising student leaders from diverse backgrounds.
- Renovating space to create welcome centers, student lounges, and prayer and meditation rooms on both the Augusta and Bangor campuses.
- Continuing our longstanding support for veterans and military students, helping to ensure access to full benefits and dedicated study and gathering spaces.
- Enrolling students where they are, across the life span, from Early College to Senior College, recognizing that students of all ages have the capacity and desire to learn.
- Expanding our nationally recognized prisoner education program in Maine's correctional centers.

### *UMA is responsive and student-centered.*

- Supporting a majority of transfer students and granting credit for prior learning.
- Meeting the educational and economic needs of our communities.
- Responding to student demands for different modalities of coursework.
- Creating online degree programs in Education aimed at working adults and second career students.
- Piloting self-directed placement in English and Math for entering students, reducing a barrier to enrollment.
- Fulfilling the state demand for Early College opportunities while establishing pipelines for programs such as Architecture, Cybersecurity, and Aviation.

*UMA is nimble.*

- Establishing UMA's first-ever graduate level programs in Cybersecurity, Substance Use Disorders, and Trauma-Informed Emergency Management.
- Funding technology investments in professional degree programs to ensure highest quality and accreditation, including Nursing, Dental Health, Cybersecurity, and Aviation.
- Opening the first-ever residence halls in UMA's history, launching a successful residential life program under a highly qualified community manager.
- Securing a UMS Adult Learner Grant to partner with Adult Education to offer a free self-paced health sciences chemistry course for pre-nursing students.

*UMA is adaptable.*

- Offering seven-week and ten-week courses for students who enroll after regular classes begin.
- Teaching courses in a variety of emerging modalities (e.g., hyflex) allowing students to choose the course delivery format that works best for them.
- Offering a majority of all UMA programs at UMA centers and sites.
- Offering Applied Science and Liberal Studies bachelor's degrees for degree completion.
- Offering an individualized bachelor's degree program in Interdisciplinary Studies.

*UMA is collaborative.*

- Partnering with UMPI and MaineGeneral on a Medical Laboratory Technology program.
- Partnering with UMF to deliver a Bachelor of Science in Nursing with an on campus residential option.
- Collaborating with USM to deliver a fully online Master's in Cybersecurity.
- Partnering with UMaine to offer the Foundations program, resulting in the first ever UMS reverse transfer degrees.
- Collaborating with UMaine, as its strongest partner, in establishing the Maine Engineering Pathways Program.

*UMA is accessible.*

- Launching the Pine Tree State Pledge, the most inclusive tuition promise program in the UMS, available to both first-year and transfer students.
- Offering one of the lowest tuition rates in the University of Maine System.
- Providing a high quality Early College program aligned with NACEP standards.
- Offering once-a-week and evening live courses to make it easier for working adults to obtain their degree.
- Leveraging UMA's nationally ranked online programs to attract students beyond Maine.

## 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 Strengthen Student Success
- Strategy #2 Advance Academics
- Strategy #3 Enhance Marketing and Recruitment
- Strategy #4 Cultivate Reputation and Resources
- Strategy #5 Foster Inclusion

## ACTIONS SUPPORTING KEY STRATEGIES

### Strategy #1. Strengthen 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 and intrusive advising to encourage persistence.
- Developing a student success and retention agenda designed for scale.
- Providing targeted professional development to insure high-quality implementation of student success and retention 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 Continue to work with self-placement.
  - Establish program specific markers and outreach to students who miss markers, working with EAB.
- 1.1.2 Improve Orientation Completion Rates.
  - Provide a focused path for 1<sup>st</sup> time students.
  - Develop mandatory on-line orientation with incentives.
  - Continue on-site orientation programs as a complement to online new student orientation, with a focus on connection and engagement that includes non-cognitive skills, using incentives.
  - Refresher requirement at appropriate intervals.
  - Maintain and enhance academic modules.
- 1.1.3 Develop pathways from Early College to matriculated programs.

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

- 1.2.1 Continue to leverage a student relationship management system (TargetX) to enhance communication with prospective students and further develop communication with current students leveraging existing tools (email

marketing and text messaging).

- 1.2.2 Establish and execute an integrated action plan that sharpens alignment of academic programs and student services to key “momentum points” using EAB, in the student life cycle with the aim to proactively drive increased enrollment.
- 1.2.3 Further develop a Virtual Services Master Plan to provide all students with robust online access to services and support.
- 1.2.4 Expand capacity (open source materials, 1<sup>st</sup> year books, e-book rentals) to meet the library and course material needs of students, with special focus on late admits and distance students.

### **1.3 *Explore strategies to create learning communities.***

- 1.3.1 As part of *Academic Programs of the Future*, explore faculty-driven academic program specific entry-year experience initiatives.
- 1.3.2 Expand the incorporation of cross-functional learning commons into our campus libraries.

### **1.4 *Improve Tracking/Advising through the EAB Application.***

- 1.4.1 Review current tracking/advising policies and procedures.
  - Improve access to services (i.e. mobile friendly) for all students.
  - Expand support for distance and online students.
  - Expand outreach to all students using Advising and Center staff.
- 1.4.2 Develop student tracking and early warning system.
  - Leverage analytics to improve processes.
  - Expand the use of EAB for more student support/outreach efforts.
  - Provide support for faculty and staff in the EAB application.
- 1.4.3 Evaluate and refine the process of embedded class stewards into barrier courses.
  - Integrate student support within courses; focus on intro/gateway/barrier courses & highest enrollment courses with lowest success rates.
- 1.4.4 Develop incentives (e.g., course discounts, bookstore gift certificate, free book) to encourage timely registration and student persistence.
- 1.4.5 Ensure Timely Registration.
  - Review current policies and practices regarding registration.
  - Send personalized registration messages (recommend courses based on Degree Progress).
  - Conduct focused program-specific outreach campaigns to current students to address barriers to re-registration and improve retention and progress towards completion.
  - Establish a regular schedule of communication by program liaisons and

- academic coordinators with students during the registration period.
- Enhance the mentorship role of faculty.

**1.5 Engage with external partners for student learning and success opportunities.**

- Partner with the New Ventures Maine, the Maine State Chamber of Commerce and other partners to promote state-wide enrollment opportunities and internships.

**Strategy #2. Advance Academics**

**2.1 Promote UMA's statewide mission through its Centers and online offerings.**

- 2.1.1 Increase number of courses offered onsite at the regional centers to establish and reinforce regional availability and presence.
- 2.1.2 Increase the number of cohort programs available at our regional centers (for example, Nursing and Dental).
- 2.1.3 Expand academic support for distance and online students (e.g. VAWLT, virtual academic writing and library tutor).
- 2.1.4 Increase resources to support the student experience (student success hubs: tech hub, support hub, etc.)

**Curriculum**

**2.2 Develop new programs through internal and external collaboration.**

- 2.2.1 Explore additional 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 in keeping with the spirit of unified accreditation.
- 2.2.3 Increase pathways through expansion of credits for prior learning.
  - Strengthen promotion of credit for prior learning options and benefits.
- 2.2.4 Work to convert graduate certificates to graduate-level credentials.

**2.3 Continuously improve existing programs.**

- Upgrade and redesign courses to meet current best practices and ensure ADA compliance.
- Improve retention by strengthening student engagement with academic programs.
- Explore opportunities to evolve the academic program curricula to engage students with faculty in research, discovery, creativity and innovation.
- Enhance global citizenship, by exploring opportunities for students to learn about the emerging world community and their role in it.
- Review and improve annual report process to include action plan evaluation.
- Refine *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 participation.

**2.4 *Assess and Refine Current Developmental Activities for underprepared students.***

**Faculty**

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

- 2.5.1 Leverage instructional design resources through the Faculty Development Center.
- 2.5.2 Establish annual student survey to provide feedback on advising.
- 2.5.3 Create communities to support teaching, learning and share best practices.
- 2.5.4 Refine expectations for tenure and post-tenure.
- 2.5.5 Explore additional opportunities for faculty scholarship, creative works, and research.

**Strategy #3. Enhance Marketing and Recruitment**

**3.1 *Expand Enrollment.***

- 3.1.1 Continue to grow undergraduate and graduate enrollment in established academic programs, and cultivate admission to new and emerging programs.
- 3.1.2 Identify and sustain collaborations with UMS sister institutions, such as the UMA/USM MS in Cybersecurity program, UMaine/USM Engineering Pathways program, UMaine/UMA Foundations Program, UMA/UMF Nursing Collaboration, and UMA/UMPI Med Lab Tech collaborations.
- 3.1.3 As a statewide institution, position UMA to be an educational gateway for improved employment opportunities to Mainers regardless of location.
- 3.1.4. Expand Early College opportunities through existing and new high school partnerships and home schooling organizations.

**3.2 *Targeted Recruitment Opportunities.***

- 3.2.1 Expand segmented communication strategies and increase outreach to specific populations including recent high school graduates, returning adults, and diverse populations such as Maine Native American communities and New Mainers.
- 3.2.2 Continue to encourage housing as an option for cohort programs in Augusta (Aviation, Architecture, and Nursing) and explore new student housing to grow cohort programs in Bangor (Veterinary Technology and Dental Health).

- 3.2.3 In collaboration with UMS sister institutions, continue to host system-wide recruitment activities such as On Track for College and graduate school information sessions.

### **3.3 *Strengthen and Expand Current Enrollment Partnerships.***

- 3.3.1 In collaboration with Academic Affairs, update existing articulation agreements with the Maine Community College System campuses and pursue new agreements in an effort to channel transfer enrollment growth for UMA academic programs.
- 3.3.2 Expand existing partnerships with Jobs for Maine Grads, Maine GearUp, and other TRiO programs.
- 3.3.3 With funding from the Mellon Foundation grant, fully integrate UMA's Prison Education Partnership (PEP) program with Maine Department of Corrections, and explore the potential to expand the PEP program at Maine's County Jails.

### **3.4 *Marketing Efforts and Research.***

- 3.4.1 Position UMA website as the recruitment front door, by focusing website to attract students (new and transfer).
- 3.4.2 Conduct targeted traditional and digital marketing campaigns using geo-targeting, geo-fencing, consumer databases, student search lists, and other data-driven tools to segment audiences and prospective students.
- 3.4.3 Conduct program marketing to promote new programs and re-introduce existing programs to potential students.
- 3.4.4 Improve collection and utilization of metrics for tracking marketing and recruitment efforts such as impressions, click-through rates, open rates, and time on pages/sites.
- 3.4.5 Utilize engagement technology to interact with prospective students, including TargetX CRM, texting, chatbot, and video-rich emails and social media posts.
- 3.4.6 Continue use of paid media in radio, TV, streaming devices, Internet search, and print media to promote UMA as an affordable, accessible, and high quality statewide higher education provider, as well as to support specific programs and initiatives.

## **Strategy #4. Cultivate Reputation and Resources**

- 4.1 *Continue to pursue partnerships within the community at all UMA locations (campuses and centers), including businesses, nonprofit organizations, government entities, and chambers of commerce.***

- 4.2 *Renew alumni outreach and relationships; seek advocacy and testimonials to support UMA's mission, specific programs, and initiatives.*
- 4.3 *Seek resources to develop a plan to identify and pursue grant proposals in support of strategic goals and initiatives.*
- 4.4 *Continue to engage UMA advisory groups – Board of Visitors and Bangor Advisory Council – and explore ways to increase participation in civic engagement activities and career services resources.*
- 4.5 *Maintain and foster a culture of shared governance and continuous improvement through discussions and engagement with students, faculty and staff.*
- 4.6 *External and internal communications.*
  - 4.6.1 Continue internal communication with the UMA community through open forums, newsletters, and social media outlets.
  - 4.6.2 Continue UMA Director's meeting to enhance communication with departments.
  - 4.6.3 Continue external outreach sharing UMA stories, achievements, and events with the media, stakeholders, and the public via social media, press releases, and publications.
  - 4.6.4 Explore the creation of a UMA Annual Report to inform and engage all external and internal groups and constituents.

## **Strategy #5. Foster Inclusion**

[Placeholder for DEI Strategic Plan]