

# Strategic Plan | 2016-2020

# University of Maine at Augusta



AUGUSTA · BANGOR · ONLINE · CENTERS STATEWIDE



## **2016-2020 STRATEGIC PLAN**

### **A MAINE LEADER IN DISTANCE AND ONLINE EDUCATION**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

UMA embarked on a strategic planning process in the fall of 2014 because UMA's current strategic plan, *Transforming Lives: Educating our Students to be Global Citizens*, expires in 2016. In addition, our Board of Trustees recently requested strategic plans from all seven campuses. UMA's Vice President for Finance and Administration, Tim Brokaw, led a steering committee composed of faculty and administration through a nearly academic year long process to develop a strategic plan for 2016-2020. 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. This new strategic plan, *Transforming Lives: Student Success and Academic Achievement*, extends our commitment to our statewide mission; it extends our commitment to distance and online education; and it extends our commitment to telling our story 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 University College Centers where the entire community was invited to participate. The first discussion forum focused on UMA's vision, mission 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 & opportunities as well as address threats & weaknesses. As a result of these discussions, the strategy team developed seven measurable long-term goals and three key strategies to achieve them. Faculty Senate and our Board of Visitors has been kept apprised of our progress. The strategic planning team has been meeting weekly since the beginning of January in order to refine and develop goals, actions and write the final plan.

#### **TIMELINE**

##### October-December 2014

- Host community forums to solicit feedback on UMA's vision, mission and goals.
- Host follow-up community forums to solicit feedback on UMA's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats as well as identify potential strategies and actions.

## TIMELINE (CONTINUED)

### January-February 2015

- Refine mission statement and develop vision statement.
- Develop key long-term goals and supporting metrics of success.
- Further development and refinement of key strategies and actions.

### March-April 2015

- Prioritize actions and select strategic initiatives for near-term focus.
- Write plan and review.
- Submit plan to Faculty Senate, Board of Visitors and Board of Trustees.

### May 2015

- Board of Trustees review of strategic plan submission.

## VISION STATEMENT

***The University of Maine at Augusta (UMA) will become Maine State University, a recognized national leader in distance education. Through innovation and collaboration, we will deliver undergraduate and graduate programs, on-site and at a distance, that prepare our students to succeed as engaged citizens, professionals and leaders.***

With over 1700 students and nearly 60% of the total University of Maine System headcount of students exclusively taking distance education classes, UMA has been at the forefront of distance and online education.

UMA's has the following distinctive on-site programs: Architecture, Aviation, Jazz and Contemporary Music, Veterinary Technology, Dental Assisting and Hygiene.

UMA has a solid record of collaboration among the other UMS institutions. Examples include the BSN collaboration with UMFK; Medical Laboratory Technician (UMPI); Education Certification Pathways with UMM and UMPI; Advanced standing with our Public Administration program and USM's Master's degree in Public Policy. Our research indicates that the Central Maine Region would benefit by partnering with existing Masters of Business Administration and a Masters of Education degrees offered by other UMS institutions.

UMA's existing statewide mandate provides for our many programs throughout the great State of Maine, including, Augusta, Bangor, Saco, Brunswick, Rockland, Ellsworth, Rumford, South Paris and Millinocket campuses. Through our close ties to University College, we recommend a name change to better recognize our statewide mission.

## 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, excellent student support and civic engagement, and innovative professional and liberal arts programs.*

UMA's average student is 33 years old, and we have a solid population of traditional students.

UMA has the following degrees fully online and available throughout the state, nation and world: Library and Information Services, Computer Information Systems, Business Administration, Mental Health and Human Services, Social Science, Liberal Studies, Applied Science, Public Administration and Justice Studies. *US News and World Report* currently ranks UMA #1 throughout the state, and #40 in the Nation for best online bachelors programs.

UMA has been a leader in best practices for student services. Our concierge model gently guides our new and transfer students towards academic success. The average student enrolling at UMA brings with them about 40 credits.

UMA continues to expand opportunities for civic engagement. Examples include:

- UMA Architecture worked with Gardiner to develop downtown building designs.
- UMA Dental hosts a reduced price dental clinic in Bangor.
- Our community garden produced almost 2,000 pounds of food for charity last year.
- UMA's Vet Tech program provides spaying and neutering services for animals.
- UMA's Social Science program hosted an Augusta's mayoral debates in 2014.
- The Maine Campus Compact has recognized UMA's Art program in its commitment to civic engagement with the Presidential Campus Leadership Award in 2014.

UMA provides a broad based liberal arts education for all our students. We offer students innovative ways to satisfy their general education requirements, including integrated courses with educational travel to Cuba and Guatemala. 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. We are committed to a robust array of educational opportunities for all of our students.

## UMA VALUES

Throughout UMA's NEASC self-study and our year-long Strategic Planning process, the UMA community identified the following key values:

*UMA is responsive.*

- UMA has responded to students transferring credits and crediting prior learning.
- UMA has responded to the educational and economic needs of our communities.
- UMA has responded to student demands for different modalities of coursework.
- UMA has responded to the state demand for dual enrollment credits.

## UMA VALUES (CONTINUED)

### *UMA is nimble.*

- UMA developed a B.S. in aviation within a year and a half of identifying the need.
- UMA developed a plan for Verso paper mill employees to get their bachelor's degrees rapidly.
- UMA partnered with UMFK to deliver a nursing degree.

### *UMA is adaptable.*

- UMA created abbreviated sessions for students who enroll after regular classes begin.
- UMA faculty often teach a single course in a variety of modalities including video and online.
- UMA works with University College to deliver the majority of courses at UC sites and centers.
- UMA offers Applied Science and Liberal Studies bachelor's degrees for degree completion.

### *UMA is collaborative.*

- UMA has collaborated with UMPI on our Medical Laboratory Technology program.
- UMA is collaborating with UMFK on their B.S. in Nursing program.
- UMA is collaborating with UMPI and UMM to deliver education pathways for students.
- UMA has collaborated 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, 4-Year, Public Offering Bachelor's and Select Associate Degrees Only with Open Admission Selectivity (ACT, 2014, Fall 2007 cohort).
- Increase 5 year average course completion rate from 75% to 80%.

## MEASURABLE LONG-TERM GOALS (CONTINUED)

### 2. *Enrollment*

**Achieve student headcount of 6,700 (average annual credits of 95,000).**

#### Metrics

- Average annual credits will grow to and maintain at 95,000. 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 2 additional UMA baccalaureate programs to a national/world audience.
- Offer at least 4 additional baccalaureate programs at UMA.
- Offer at least 2 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 1 score to improve. At least 1 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 1 score to improve. At least 1 recommendation to implement.
  - Current focus: Learning outcomes by academic program.
- Increase accreditation or externally peer reviewed programs from 6 to 9.
- Improve percentage of full-time faculty new hires that have their Doctorate or terminal degree from 86% to over 90%.

### 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 4 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.
- Implement Employer Survey to assess workplace preparedness of UMA’s graduates.
- Reduce UMA’s carbon footprint by 30% within five years.

## MEASURABLE LONG-TERM GOALS (CONTINUED)

### 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 1 on brand awareness and then assess movement over the next 4 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 5-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 with the following guiding principles in mind:

- 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.
- Require that students testing into developmental courses begin taking those courses prior to completing 15 credit hours and continue to enroll in them until they have passed all required developmental courses.

##### 1.1.2 Improve Orientation

- Develop mandatory on-line orientation.
- Develop and test incentives for students to attend live, on-campus orientation. Consider making attendance mandatory for students who take the bulk of their courses in face-to-face modality.

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

- Focus on at risk students to help improve academic skills and orient to campus prior to the start of academic year.

#### **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 all student services to key “momentum points” in the student life cycle with the aim to proactively drive increased enrollment.

## ACTIONS SUPPORTING KEY STRATEGIES (CONTINUED)

### Strategy #1. Improve Retention by Strengthening Student Success (continued)

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

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

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

- 1.4.1 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.
- Formalize role of 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.
- Refine processes for student academic goal setting.
  - 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 class stewards into barrier courses.
- Integrate student support within courses; focus on intro/gateway/barrier courses & highest enrollment courses with lowest success rates.
- 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.

## ACTIONS SUPPORTING KEY STRATEGIES (CONTINUED)

### Strategy #1. Improve Retention by Strengthening Student Success (continued)

- 1.6** *Expand internship program opportunities for students state-wide.*
- Partner with the Maine State Chamber of Commerce to promote state-wide opportunities.
- 1.7** *Intensify relationships with employers to identify additional enrollment opportunities.*

### Strategy #2. Advance Academics

#### Curriculum

- 2.1** *Enhance collaboration and integration of University College and online infrastructure with UMA.*
- 2.1.1 Increase number of courses offered onsite to establish and reinforce regional availability and presence.
  - 2.1.2 Expand academic support for online students (e.g. Vault).
- 2.2** *Develop new programs through internal and external collaboration*
- 2.2.1 Offer new graduate level programs.
  - 2.2.2 Encourage the development of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary programs through faculty collaboration within UMA and UMS.
  - 2.2.3 Increase degree pathways through expansion of credit for prior learning.
    - Strengthen promotion of credit for prior learning options and benefits.
- 2.3** *Continuously improve existing programs.*
- Upgrade and redesign courses to reflect current best practices.
  - Review and improve annual report process to include action plan evaluation.
- 2.4** *Refine approach to developmental education.*

## **Strategy #2. Advance Academics**

### **Faculty**

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

- 2.6.1 Leverage instructional design resources.
- 2.6.2 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).
- 2.6.3 Establish annual student survey to provide feedback on advising.
- 2.6.4 Participate in College Education Quality (CEQ) project with Columbia University.
- 2.6.5 Create professional communities to support teaching, learning and share best practices.
- 2.6.6 Refine expectations for tenure and post-tenure.

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

- 2.7.1 Refine orientation of part-time faculty.
- 2.7.2 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 Grow UMA's Bridge Year program.
  - Increase UMA's involvement with the Bridge Year program and develop a very deliberate complement of engagement activities.
- 3.1.2 Deepen partnerships with Community Colleges.
- 3.1.4 Provide more flexible fall and spring term enrollment options.

### **Strategy #3. Cultivate Reputation and Resources (continued)**

- 3.2 *Increase resources and focus in the marketing area.***
  - 3.2.1 Develop a comprehensive stakeholder segmented communications and marketing plan.
  - 3.2.2 Conduct periodic market research to measure impact of communication 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 traditional advertising in television, radio and print.
  - 3.2.4 Increase effectiveness of online and digital marketing.
    - Improve utilization of social media.
    - Evaluate and refine website.
  - 3.2.5 Institute regular direct marketing efforts.
    - Identify targeted segments (for example, students who take PSAT exam).
- 3.3 *Complete comprehensive name and brand change to “Maine State University” to reflect our statewide mission and worldwide reach.***
- 3.4 *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.***
- 3.6 *Aggressively pursue grant opportunities.***
- 3.7 *Solicit additional feedback from employers in the community through enhanced surveys.***

## INCREMENTAL FUNDING FOR STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

In near-term support of the strategic plan, UMA is utilizing \$1.6 million in reserves over the next two years (Fiscal 2016-2017) to support key high priority strategic initiatives.

Incremental Funding for Strategic Initiatives (\$000's)	2 Year		
	FY16	FY17	Total
Bridge Year Program	97	96	193
Embedded Class Steward	87	85	172
Student Housing	38		38
Strengthen Student Support Services	100	350	450
Refine Developmental Education	77	77	154
Increased Marketing & Advertising	300	39	339
Financial Incentives for Student Persistence	50	50	100
Increase Enrollment Resources	62	61	123
<b>Total</b>	<b>811</b>	<b>758</b>	<b>1,569</b>

### Initiative Descriptions

<b><i>Bridge Year Program</i></b>	This is a concerted outreach to all UMA's current Bridge Year Students (approximately 100 now, but growing to 300 over the next couple of years) to help them identify as UMA students and encourage them to enroll in a UMA program after graduation. This will strengthen our enrollments as well as attract a student that has already completed up to 30 credit hours with no student loan debt. It is a student whom we already have a strong relationship with and will make us more attractive to. It will move us towards our enrollment goal of 95,000 credit hours as well as our student success goal.
<b><i>Embedded Class Steward</i></b>	This initiative targets course completion by identifying courses with lower than average completion rates and providing faculty members with an embedded assistant trained to identify struggling students and act as a first line of help. Most student success monitoring initiatives rely on faculty to enter data into software which triggers an intervention. This strategy provides faculty with a support person to directly identify and handle these issues. This model is expected to generate more interventions and earlier interventions.
<b><i>Student Housing</i></b>	UMA will collaborate with a private developer to design, build and operate new on-campus student housing (for up to approximately 70 beds) in Augusta. Initiative funding is to support any necessary legal or consulting costs for the initial design and development of the project.
<b><i>Strengthen Student Support Services</i></b>	This initiative will use multiple communication strategies (e.g., mobile application, call center) at more than 100 administrative momentum points (e.g., FASFA Income Verification, Class Registration, Graduation Application) throughout a students' life cycle at UMA (i.e., Inquiry - Graduation) to encourage forward movement. Each communication interaction and strategy is personalized and contextualized. An integrated action plan is being developed with Full Measure.

## INCREMENTAL FUNDING FOR STRATEGIC INITIATIVES (CONTINUED)

### Initiative Descriptions (continued)

***Refine  
Developmental  
Education***

Many students who apply for admissions to UMA lack college level math, reading and writing skills. Students take placement exams; many test into developmental courses. This means students must take a semester to two (or three) to improve their skills so they can move into college level courses. Students take developmental courses and earn no credit, even though they pay full tuition for them. We are proposing developing and implementing a number of pathways in which students can learn, progress, and move into their degree programs. UMA will invest more resources into developmental education. This initiative, based on national research and best practices, will improve student learning and student retention.

***Increased  
Marketing and  
Advertising***

Expand and strengthen UMA's marketing presence, with a specific goal of increasing application numbers. This initiative will lengthen and/or increase TV and radio advertising. Additionally, online/digital marketing would run year-round, with stronger buys when registration is open. UMA would also create direct mail campaigns that target adult students. As with other forms of advertising, direct mail is a useful branding mechanism that is capable of reaching targeted households with our brand message.

***Financial  
Incentives for  
Student  
Persistence  
and Promoting  
New  
Enrollment***

UMA has over 140 students in Outcomes Based Funding Disciplines (OBF) who have earned more than 100 credit hours, but are not continuing (i.e. aren't currently registered for courses). Financial issues prevent many students from completing their degree. Providing financial incentives to encourage persistence and helping these students complete their degree is the goal of this initiative. Based upon OBF parameters, encouraging more graduates, especially in the STEM fields, will result in an increased share of the state funding allocation. This initiative will also help our graduation rate, hopefully increase earning potential and eventually lower outstanding student debt.

To promote new enrollment, UMA will pilot a "Pay it Forward Incentive" which involves placing a certificate for a free 3-credit class in diploma binders for graduates to give to a friend or family member to start/restart their education. At commencement, graduates will be asked graduates to pay forward the encouragement they received to go to UMA.

***Increased  
Enrollment  
Resources***

Add a position to Enrollment Services which will be focused on recruiting efforts at both the high school and Community College level.

**UMA STRATEGIC PLAN CROSS-REFERENCE TO UMS STRATEGIC OUTCOMES**

<b>UMS Strategic Outcomes</b>	<b>Linkage to UMA Strategic Plan</b>	
	<b>Goals</b>	<b>Key Actions</b>
<b>EDUCATION</b>		
Strategic Integration #1	Vision and Mission	Overall Plan
Strategic Integration #2	Financial Sustainability	
Strategic Integration #3	Financial Sustainability	
Strategic Integration #4	High Quality Academic Innovation Financial Sustainability Enrollment	2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4
Financial Sustainability #1	Enrollment Visibility and Branding Student Success	3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4  1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4
Financial Sustainability #2	Financial Sustainability Visibility and Branding Student Success	3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4  1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4
Financial Sustainability #3	<b>System/Board-Level</b>	
Education #1	Academic Innovation	2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 3.1, 3.4
Education #2	Student Success	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5
Education #3	Student Success High Quality	1.5, 2.3
Education #4	<b>Board-Level</b>	
Education #5	High Quality	2.3
Education #6	Academic Innovation	2.1, 2.6, 2.7
Education #7	Student Success Stewardship of Place/State	2.3, 3.2
Education #8	Student Success	3.6, 3.2
<b>RESEARCH AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</b>		
R&D #1	Academic Innovation	3.6
R&D #2	Stewardship of Place/State	n/a
R&D #3	Stewardship of Place/State	3.5
R&D #4	Stewardship of Place/State	n/a
<b>PUBLIC SERVICE</b>		
Public Service #1	Stewardship of Place/State	3.5
Public Service #2	Stewardship of Place/State	3.5
Public Service #3	Stewardship of Place/State	3.5