

4-2000

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# CURRENTS

University of Southern Maine

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## Retention Study Issued

In 1995, USM issued a retention report which outlined major action items for the future. The most recent follow-up study was just issued.

This report indicates that, when the initial tracking of students was begun in 1985, USM's freshman-to-sophomore retention rate was more than 10 percent below the national average (70.5 percent) for public 4-year institutions. This rate held until 1994 when a series of efforts were made to improve the academic experience of our students with a focus on community building, early intervention, and expanded advising.

Today, our first-year retention rate stands at 67.9 percent compared to the 4-year public average of 71.9 percent, a significant improvement.

It has become clear we can have the most impact on a student's retention in their first year and a decision was made to focus attention on this period. Initiatives for additional improvement include:

- Project 100 — an early warning/early intervention initiative that identifies students in academic difficulty (either performance, attendance or both) at an early point in the semester. Faculty teaching 100-level classes (hence the name "Project 100") volunteer to be a part of the project. Approximately 75-80 faculty per semester (100+ sections) volunteer.

(see Study, p. 2)

## Chrysler Donates Truck; Students to Develop Solar Powered Vehicle

They're at the starting line, and getting a high-powered push from Daimler Chrysler Motors Corporation.

A couple years ago, the University of Southern Maine's solar electric boat placed third at Solar Splash '98, the world intercollegiate championship of solar boat racing held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Now they're at it again. This time with a solar powered truck. Julie Ellis, associate professor of electrical engineering at USM, is again heading the project.

(see Truck, p. 3)

Gathered to see the truck are (l-r): Shep Lee (whose dealerships donated the truck); Ron Rupp, representative of Daimler Chrysler; Prof. Julie Ellis, engineering; Don Lee of Lee Auto Malls; President Pattenaude; and student solar vehicle team members Mike Cooney and Eric Hermann. (photo: Libby Barrett)



## A New Initiative

Chancellor Terrence J. MacTaggart (left), LAC student Arlene Nason, and President Rich Pattenaude (photo below) presented a new academic initiative to a recent meeting of the USM Corporate Partners. Luisa Deprez (not shown) is the USM faculty co-chair for "Life, Work and Citizenship in the 21st Century," as this initiative is known.

MacTaggart said our competitors have programs that work to provide career-oriented programs at a time and location convenient for students in disciplines important to the student. We need to do the same...and more. This statewide UMS initiative explores and promotes the role of the liberal arts in preparing students for life and work in the new century.

(see Initiative, p. 2)



## Four All-time Records

Spring enrollment figures are the highest in USM history. Four records have been broken:

- 4,630 full time students
- 6,036.07 full-time equivalents (FTEs)
- 9,782 total enrollment
- 84,507.5 credit hours

A hearty "well done" to Admissions and others who contributed to these records.

(Study, from p. 1)

- Advising Initiatives — Experts in advising have been brought to campus. An advising handbook was devised in 1995 and is provided to all faculty and staff who advise. The Center for Teaching has sponsored several workshops in advising.

- First Year Focus — The Center also has sponsored workshops on teaching first year students and has co-sponsored national experts to discuss first year issues and initiatives on campus. The First Year Task Force issued further recommendations for enhancing the experience of first year students. The New College Design Committee incorporated these recommendations into their own recently-released report.

- Data Collection — Periodic updates of retention rates; special retention projects out of Testing and Assessment; satisfaction surveys of our students; employment surveys of our graduates; specialized surveys of majors and graduates conducted by the schools and colleges — all are part of USM's attempt to better understand and meet the needs of our students.

The various schools/colleges/departments also initiated retention efforts of their own (earlier connections with majors; special events for majors so they could connect with faculty and with each other; newsletters; etc.).

The latest report details rates on a number of factors such as full time/part time, college, major, etc.. Copies are available from the VP of Enrollment Management, Rosa Redonnett.

## "New College"

In the January Update, President Pattenau said, "New College was endorsed by the Faculty Senate but with a strong caution that we proceed slowly and that there be an implementation advisory group."

Here's the latest:

All Senates have reviewed the design recommendations and provided feedback. The implementation of the design recommendations will proceed. An advisory committee to implement the academic components of the program is being formed; work groups to review our English and Math paths (from placement tests to developmental coursework to the connections to 100-level coursework) are also being

(see College, p. 3)

## Civil Rights Awareness Days

In the continuing series of events, films, presentations:

"Chicano: Fighting for Political Power"

Wed., April 12, 7p.m., Luther Bonney Auditorium, USM Portland.

This film focuses on the emergence of Mexican American political power and the creation of a third political party, La Raza Unida (The United People) which inspired a generation of political activists and pioneered voter registration strategies that eventually led to the election of thousands of Chicanos to political office. Followed at 8 p.m. by a discussion facilitated by students.

"Drumbeat of Mother Earth"

Thurs., April 20, 7p.m., Luther Bonney Auditorium, USM Portland.

A documentary in honor of Earth Day, filmed in a collaborative effort between the Indigenous Environmental Network and Greenpeace, which depicts how Native Americans have been disproportionately affected by discriminatory environmental policies which place them at the highest risk of exposure to deadly Persistent Organic Pollutants.

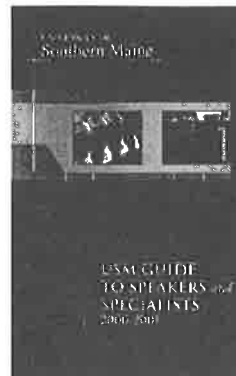
Civil Rights Awareness Days is presented by the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs. FMI, 780-4730.

(Initiative, from p. 1)

Nason, a junior at LAC, entered college as a part-time student at age 44. "When I discovered the USM Social and Behavioral Studies Program, I was ecstatic, as it fit perfectly into my plans to work with at-risk children in the educational system," she says.

She said a variety of types of students find a new place of learning at USM campuses, including LAC. "Through the efforts of the college, students learn better critical thinking skills, writing skills, and interpersonal skills -- this is the foundation that helps them accomplish their goals. I believe it to be a quality liberal arts beginning and an important facet of their degree process, with courses such as history, art, math, critical thinking, analysis, computer, writing, literature, and science that promotes learning and a thirst for learning. ...

I have never regretted my decision to go back to school. I have gained so much!" (photo: Libby Barrett)



Media Relations wishes to thank former student interns Brooke Williams and Jason Driggers, and current work-study student Heather Bryant, for their hard work in compiling this Guide.

## New Speakers Guide

The latest edition of the USM Guide to Speakers and Specialists is hot off the presses. Published by the Office of Media and Community Relations, it is designed to help organizations locate USM speakers for programs, and also for news media to identify USM experts on particular topics. The Guide is now being distributed to media and various service organizations statewide, and is also available upon request to groups.

## "Molecular Graphics ...

on your Personal Computer: For Research, Teaching and 'Cause There's Nothing Good on Cable."

That title, from a recent presentation, sums up USM chemistry professor Gale Rhodes's work to introduce high school teachers and students to macromolecular structures, a world that illuminates the inner workings of enzymes, hormones, antibodies and viruses. Prior to the advent of free, powerful molecular graphics programs online, that world was the province only of high-level research scientists.

It's now possible for high school students to be exposed to sophisticated molecular graphics that enrich the science curriculum. One of Rhodes' own tutorials <[www.usm.maine.edu/~rhodes/SPVTut](http://www.usm.maine.edu/~rhodes/SPVTut)> has had more than 20,000 visitors.

These activities, as well as others directed at students, teachers, and local researchers, make up a program Rhodes calls "The Molecular Level." See <[www.usm.maine.edu/~rhodes/MolLevel](http://www.usm.maine.edu/~rhodes/MolLevel)>





## What We're Doing

PETER J. AICHER, associate professor of classics, recently published the entry on "Vitruvius" in the "Dictionary of Literary Biography's" Rome volume. On sabbatical last fall, he gave lectures on "Mussolini's Forum" at Penn State, Bowdoin, and several American universities in Rome; his article "Mussolini's Forum and the Myth of Augustan Rome" will appear in an issue of the *Classical Bulletin* devoted to classics and modern ideologies. He also lectured on Herodotus for a Maine Humanities Council seminar on the "Roman Campagna" for the meeting of the Maine Classical League at Bates College, and on Homer's "Odyssey" at Thornton Academy.

BRUCE ANDREWS, professor of business administration and co-director/senior research associate, Center for Business and Economic Research, had another paper, "A New Approach to Goal Setting and Performance Measurement," in *INTERFACES*, the journal of the Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences.

JOHN BODEN, professor of music, MARK MANDUCA, professor of music, MIKE MILNARIK, applied music faculty, BETTY RINES, applied music faculty, and JOHN SCHNELL, professor of music, are all part of the Portland Brass Quintet, that reorganized this past summer.

SCOTT W. BROWN, professor of psychology, presented a research paper, "Timing in the Central Executive: Bidirectional Interference in Temporal Production and Random Number Generation Dual-Task Performance," at the New England Sequencing and Timing (NEST) 10th annual meeting at Yale University. USM graduate C. Tigg Frieh served as a research assistant and co-authored the paper.

KIMBERLY J. COOK, assistant professor of criminology, was invited to present a paper, "Abortion, Capital Punishment and the Politics of God's Will," at the symposium, "Religion's Role in the Administration of the Death Penalty," sponsored by William and Mary College Institute for the Bill of Rights and Cornell University's Death Penalty Project. Symposium proceedings will be published in the *William and Mary Institute for the Bill of Rights Law Journal* in December 2000. Cook was approved for a J. William Fulbright Scholarship to Australia for January through June 2001 for a project titled "Theory and Practices of Reintegrative Shaming in Australia: A Study in Comparative Criminology."

WAYNE COWART, professor of linguistics, presented a paper titled "Memory for Coordination" at the Eastern States Conference on Linguistics at the University of Connecticut last November. Another paper, titled "The Role of Non-hierarchical Memory Resources in Coordination," is scheduled for presentation at the late-March CUNY Sentence Processing Conference at the University of California, San Diego.

DEBORAH L. DAERIS, associate director of admissions, presented "High School Collaboration—A Trend for the Future," at the New England Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers meeting held in Nashua, N.H., last November.

KATHLEEN A. EARLE, assistant professor of social work, co-authored an article, "Child Abuse and Neglect in Indian Country: Policy Issues," that appeared in the centennial issue of *Families in Society*, January-February 2000. Earle was also a contributor to the editorial in the centennial issue, commenting on the state of social work at the millennium.

JOEL W. EASTMAN, professor of history, was interviewed for an article on auto safety pioneer Claire Straihte in the January issue of *Hour Detroit*, a monthly metro magazine. Eastman dedicated his book, "Styling vs. Safety," to Straihte, a Detroit plastic surgeon who developed the first padded dashboard to prevent facial injuries. He gave a lecture at Bates College, last month titled, "What Price Liberty: The Impact of War and the Military on the Maine Environment, 1607-2000," as part of a series sponsored by the Environmental Studies Department.

JAMES FRIEDMAN, professor of law, participated in the annual Student Conference on United States Affairs (SCUSA), "Beyond 2000: Leadership in an Uncertain World," held at West Point and hosted by the U.S. Department of Foreign Affairs. Friedman, an expert on terrorism and the Middle East, co-chaired a work group focusing on the role of the U.S. as a peacekeeper in a volatile world.

ROY A. GALLANT, director, Southworth Planetarium, had Part I of his two-part article, "Mosquitoes, Diamonds, and a Very Big Crater," about his last summer's expedition to Siberia's giant impact crater of Popigai, published in the February issue of *METEORITE!* Part II will appear in the May issue of the journal. The Popigai expedition marked Gallant's eighth such expedition to various Siberian meteorite impact sites. He is currently working with USM-TV in the preparation of a one-hour documentary of

his 1999 expedition.

WILLIAM F. GAYTON, professor and chair of psychology, presented the following three papers at the American College of Sports Medicine Meetings in St. Petersburg, Florida in February: "Competition and Stress," "Psychological Rehabilitation of the Injured Athlete" and "Performance Enhancement."

JOSEPH GRANGE, professor of philosophy, was honored by a symposium on his recent books, "Nature" (1997) and "The City" (1999), held in Boston during the American Philosophy Association's annual meeting. An international group of scholars responded to his paper, "Philosophy at The Millennium." At the same meeting, CONSTANTINE CAFFENTZIS, associate professor of philosophy and Honors Program, presented a paper, "The Death Penalty and the Prison Industrial Complex," for the Radical Philosophy Association. WILLIAM J. GAVIN, professor of philosophy, organized and chaired the session "Passing Dewey By: Reflections for the New Millennium." And, JULIEN MURPHY, professor of philosophy and associate dean, College of Arts and Sciences, chaired two sessions, "Issues in Identity," and "Ethics and Epistemology of the Passing."

ORLANDO DELOGU, professor of law, spoke on current takings law and litigation strategies in taking cases at the Rocky Mountain Land Use Institute's annual conference in Denver this March.

MICHAEL S. HAMILTON, associate professor of political science, is the author of six invited articles on "Suharto"; "Resisting the Dutch"; "Invasion of East Timor in 1976"; "Sukarno"; "The Afro-Asian Bandung Conference of 1955"; and "Withdrawal from the U.N." in the "Biographical Encyclopedia of Twentieth Century World Leaders" (Marshall Cavendish, Corp.). Hamilton is also co-author of an article about extinguishing coal seam fires in Indonesia, "Not Burning Down the House," in the January issue of *Public Administration Times*. He has also accepted an invitation to be a peer reviewer for the FY2000 Doctoral Dissertation Research Grant Program of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. He is principal author of "The Continuing Fire Threat in Southeast Asia," in the *American Chemical Society magazine Environmental Science & Technology*, and is author of an invited article on "Reclamation" in the "Encyclopedia of Environmental Issues."

 University of Southern Maine

### Currents

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*Address correction requested*

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