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Diversity Education Conference at UMaine April 6-7

March 17, 2000

Media Contact: Joe Carr at (207) 581-3571

ORONO, Maine -- The University of Maine will demonstrate its commitment to bringing about greater racial and ethnic understanding and presence in the state at an April 6-7 conference. The Diversity Education Conference will examine the status, issues, opportunities and challenges of transition in a predominately white, traditionally rural state.

Conference presenters and participants will probe the reality and perception of race relations, the process and implications of change, and strategies for identifying problems and finding solutions. Candid discussion of minority experiences will emphasize the role and responsibilities of the public and private sectors and individuals in shaping opinion and advocating change in the state's business, educational and community environments.

Keynote speakers will be Jeannine Guttman, editor and vice president of the Portland Press Herald/Maine Sunday Telegram, who will set the stage for conference discussions with an overview of changing Maine demographics and diversity issues; Darlene Clark Hine of Michigan State University, an acclaimed author and historian of black women's history and contributions; and Clarence Glover, executive director of Multicultural Education in the Dallas, Tex. public schools, who will give a talk titled "Positioning Education for Global Diversity."

Planning and hosting an statewide conference on diversity is among the goals and initiatives outlined in UMaine's recent Diversity Action Plan. The College of Education and Human Development is charged with coordinating the conference. Dean Robert A. Cobb chairs the campuswide planning committee.

The conference is one way the University is emphasizing its intention to provide a clear, consistent voice and strong leadership in building understanding and encouraging change in the critical and highly complex area of racial and ethnic diversity, according to Cobb.

"As an institution and as a goal of the conference, we want to acknowledge the problems and recognize the opportunities," said Cobb. "We want to learn the reality of being a minority individual, family and consumer in Maine. And we want to scrutinize the educational, community and private sector changes that need to occur as the population shifts."

The conference, which is expected to attract K-12 educators, university-level faculty and students, community and municipal leaders, industry and business representatives, state and local policymakers and representatives of social advocacy groups, has been developed according to six goals:

- € Define the issues of race and ethnicity, and acknowledge the inherent problems and continuing challenges.
- € Provide an overview of the current status of diversity (demographics, trends, forecasts) at the state, regional and national levels.
- € Raise awareness of the presence and lack of racial and ethnic diversity in Maine and its implications.
- € Consider the reality of being a minority individual, family and consumer in Maine.
- € Probe the public and private sector changes that occur and need to take place as the population shifts or remains static.

€ Develop and acquire personal, educational and economic tools to organize and encourage a cultural transition in a traditionally rural, white state.

The conference will begin at Wells Conference Center with a welcome from UMaine President Peter S. Hoff at 3:30 p.m. on April 6. Jeannine Guttman's keynote address will follow Hoff's remarks. Darlene Clark Hine's address is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. on April 6. Clarence Glover will speak at noon on Friday, April 7. Other activities and sessions have been scheduled within three distinct strands -- K-12 Education, Post-Secondary Education and Community/Workplace.

A complete schedule is available from the UMaine Department of Public Affairs at (207) 581-3571. For [conference and registration information](#), call (207) 581-4092, or visit www.ume.maine.edu/ced-conf.diversity.html.