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Strategic Enrollment & Retention Action Plan : Our Guiding Compass to Growth, Belonging, and Perseverance

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Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs & Provost

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Strategic Enrollment & Retention Action Plan: Our Guiding Compass to Growth, Belonging, and Perseverance.

1 message

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Fri, Mar 24, 2023 at 3:21 PM



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Dear Colleagues:

As I wrote last fall in [The Hechinger Report](#), higher education is at a crossroad, with an impending 2025 enrollment cliff across most states, fewer high school graduates deciding to pursue postsecondary education, and a continual decline in the perceived value of higher education among adults in the U.S., whose majority today feel that higher education is heading in the wrong direction. These challenges are compounded by the ever-increasing mental health issues among our students and persistent, significant gaps in retention and graduation rates among underrepresented groups by race and ethnicity, first-generation status, gender, and Pell status. In Maine, we have been facing many of these challenges for more than a decade and overall have beat expectations in enrollment forecasts. Unfortunately, we have yet to move the needle on our overall retention rates.

Despite these facts, today I write to you with great optimism and confidence in our road ahead. Over this academic year, we have engaged in a community-wide conversation about our enrollment and retention challenges. Several recent campus-wide initiatives have informed these conversations, including the First-Year Student Success Initiative, the UMS TRANSFORMS Student Success & Retention Initiative, and the UMaine2025 Commission.

To complement these initiatives and direct them into action, we are pleased to share with you a five-year [Strategic Enrollment & Retention Action Plan: Our Guiding Compass to Growth, Belonging, and Perseverance](#). Our University has always been committed to providing the best possible education to our students, and this action plan is one more step in our ongoing efforts to achieve that goal.

Our dedication to enhancing the student experience is at the heart of this plan. We recognize that our learners have diverse needs and come from various backgrounds. We want to ensure that every learner feels supported, valued, and empowered to succeed. This initiative will help us achieve that by fostering a sense of belonging and identity in our community, better preparing our learners for lifelong well-being and career connections, and ensuring our students can thrive, succeed, and identify support through opportunities inside and outside the classroom.

This plan is about more than just supporting our current students. It is also about attracting new learners to our campus and ensuring they have the support they need to thrive. Recognizing that the college selection process is complex and often overwhelming, we want to make it as easy and transparent as possible for prospective students to learn about our campuses, our programs, and our community. To that end, we will be revitalizing our admissions and recruitment processes for our flagship campus in Orono, our regional campus in Machias, and other statewide locations, as well as through online and continuing education. These actions reflect our strategic vision and values while maintaining our fundamental principles of access and affordability.

Finally, every good plan needs measures to assess progress toward its goals. In addition to the action plan, we are launching a new website with [Key Performance Indicators \(KPIs\)](#) to track the progress of the University of Maine and the University of Maine at Machias toward meeting the goals of our Strategic Vision & Values as well as our progress toward achieving the goals of our new Strategic Enrollment & Retention Action Plan.

In the coming weeks, we will organize the governance and structure of our action plan, including the formation of implementation teams to turn ideas into action and begin to use the measurements of the identified KPIs to assess our progress. This action plan will require our entire community's continued support and engagement to succeed. We invite you to [learn more](#) about the action plan and explore our [KPI dashboard](#), share your feedback, and to ask questions through our [feedback form](#).

Thank you for all you do, for your engagement and contribution to our vibrant community, and for being part, in any way you choose, of this new collective and ambitious action plan.

Sincerely,

John C. Volin
Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs & Provost

Learn More About...
[Strategic Enrollment & Retention Action Plan](#)
[Key Performance Indicators \(KPIs\) Dashboard](#)