

University of Maine
DISTANCE EDUCATION/OUTREACH CENTERS
Strategic Planning Committee Report

May 5, 2006



*A Report charged by the Provost
as part of the University of Maine's 2006-2011 Strategic Plan*

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University of Maine

DISTANCE EDUCATION/OUTREACH CENTERS

Strategic Planning Committee Report

The University of Maine exists to serve everyone in the State of Maine. As a land grant/sea grant university and Maine's flagship institution of higher education, UMaine's mandate extends statewide. The University meets this mandate in many ways, prime among which is its substantial attention to distance education and network of outreach centers. Always important, distance education will grow still more useful in the coming years as so many aspects of our lives become increasingly location-independent. This report examines the strategic role of UMaine's distance education and outreach assets in the next half decade and beyond.

What does *distance* education encompass? The New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) – our University's accrediting body – offers this definition in its *Policy Statement for the Accreditation of Academic Degree and Certificate Programs Offered Through Distance Education*:

Distance education is defined, for the purposes of accreditation review, as a formal educational process in which the majority of the instruction occurs when student and instructor are not in the same place. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous. Distance education may employ correspondence study, or audio, video, computer or other communications technologies.

The NEASC definition works well for our purposes because the committee was given the following charge as stated in UMaine's response to the University of Maine System's Strategic Plan (*University of Maine Strategic Direction #8 – Evolve the System Structure – Campus Committee Interim Report*, May 20, 2005, p. 5):

The University of Maine will likely have additional Outreach Centers assigned to us (joining the Hutchinson Center) at the start of the next fiscal year. In addition, the University will assume primary responsibility for outreach throughout the state. The primary charge to this committee is to *consider every facet of distance education, how it can be improved upon to serve the students/citizens of Maine, and how the Hutchinson Center and other outreach centers can be optimally utilized in this regard.*

An outcome of the University of Maine System (UMS) strategic planning process is that University College (UC) retains administrative management of all UMS sites and centers. University College sites and centers employ a campus-neutral set of UMS employees who represent all seven institutions equitably, with the resources and expertise necessary to provide a high level of specialized student support services throughout the UMS distance education

program. Thus, this committee did not examine outreach center alignment alternatives. Instead, the Committee's charge encompasses addressing and recommending the following (*University of Maine Strategic Direction #8 . . . Campus Committee Interim Report*, p. 7):

1. options for creative use of technology and outreach centers to deliver current curricula (graduate, undergraduate, other) throughout the state (and with considerations of national and international distribution);
2. ways to enhance the use and role of outreach centers and distance education to raise the visibility and impact of UMaine programs throughout the state (and beyond where feasible);
3. creative uses of distance education in both existing forms and in potential forms and avenues in the future;
4. creative ways to use distance education in the delivery of undergraduate, graduate, professional, and certificate education throughout the state;
5. a process to integrate distance education and the outreach centers into the University of Maine in a holistic manner; and
6. issues that naturally arise as this task force commences its work.

Taken together, these six mandates direct the committee to articulate concrete recommendations for fostering creative, integrated, expanded use of distance education and outreach centers in Maine's higher education, now and in future.

This report and its recommendations are organized around nine dimensions critical for UMaine's distance education: mission and purpose, technology, course and program offerings, faculty and faculty development programs, student and helpline services, outreach centers and extension offices, the Frederick E. Hutchinson Center, the Fogler Library (as it relates to distance education), and funding. The report covers each dimension in terms of background and contribution to the mission, how the committee envisions that the University will operate with respect to that dimension, and a set of strategic recommendations – spelled out in terms of key goals and supporting actions – for achieving that vision.

Strategic planning and higher education are both about shaping the future in a positive way – and distance education is fundamental to achieving the University of Maine's longstanding mission of helping people throughout the State understand and shape the future they choose. Consequently, *mission* is where this report's discussion begins.

Mission and Purpose

The University has an extensive mission to serve the people of Maine. The purpose of UMaine's distance education and its constellation of outreach centers is to serve as vital tools for achieving that mission. Given the expanding role of higher education and the increasing accessibility of information and communications technologies, the past is an inadequate blueprint for distance education.

The vision this section considers for distance education recognizes the healthy blurring of distance (i.e., location-independent) and traditional education, the opportunities technology advancements can offer, and the expanding and essential role of distance education in fulfilling the University's mission.

MISSION AND PURPOSE BACKGROUND

“What is the University's mission?” As "the University of Maine has statewide responsibility for those educational, research, and public service programs associated with its designation as Maine's land grant university and sea grant college . . . it is committed to . . . the dissemination of knowledge to improve the lives of its students and Maine citizens in their full social, economic, and cultural diversity." This current broad, statewide mission encompasses graduate and undergraduate programs for students in residence as well as educational outreach and continuing education programs and services for nonresident students throughout Maine and beyond.

Since 1989, the offering of University of Maine courses and programs through interactive technologies has been one vehicle for the University to fulfill its educational outreach mission. When the Annenberg Foundation, the U.S. Department of Commerce and the State of Maine funded the extensive statewide infrastructure to support the University of Maine System's statewide Interactive Television (ITV) programs, the University of Maine began inauspiciously by offering two televised distance education courses each semester through its Continuing Education Division (CED), serving approximately 100 students at numerous sites and centers throughout the state during that inaugural year. In the 16 intervening years and two University strategic planning initiatives later (*Bearworks 2.0* and *Defining the Black Bear Experience in the 21st Century*), the University of Maine now serves over 8,000 students annually in approximately 275 courses offered in both synchronous and asynchronous delivery modes ranging from traditionally scheduled televised and videoconferenced courses to those offered live over the Internet through video-streaming technologies coupled with archived options. Courses and programs are offered at both the undergraduate and graduate level including a growing number of credit-bearing certificate programs. For the University of Maine, distance education is a natural outgrowth of its traditional continuing education and public service mission – a mission dedicated to serving all of Maine's citizens throughout the academic year and summer. Distance education offerings now account for approximately nine percent of the total credit hours generated annually, a phenomenon that can be attributed, in part, to fulfilling the goals established in prior University of Maine strategic planning efforts.

For example, *Bearworks 2.0* (1998, p. 6) called for "expanding its arsenal of approaches to teaching and learning, considering a wide variety of possibilities in an attempt to make learning at the University even more effective and adaptable to different learning situations and different learning styles." This blueprint for the future emphasized that "availability of the technology necessary for learning, research and communication is a fundamental part of a full-service university . . . and access to that technology, on campus and through remote connection, must be a priority for the University."

And, in *Defining the Black Bear Experience in the 21st Century* (2000, p. 3), key goal #3 recognized the importance of distance education in strengthening graduate education by

developing greater distance education and certification program opportunities to meet market demand and by aligning program delivery methods with changing state demographics. Expanding graduate programs in clearly defined areas of academic/professional strength and striving for a total graduate enrollment increase to 2,500 students in 3-5 years were deemed achievable, particularly with the utilization of distance technologies. Additionally, key goal #4 (p. 3) called for redefining the public service mission of the University. To become "an 'engaged university,' anticipating and supporting the needs of the continuum of learners in Maine, from the youngest to oldest citizens, the plan called for aggressively implementing distance learning technologies, both as an effective and efficient means of pursuing the university's statewide mission," to include "the unique and vital role of Cooperative Extension throughout the state." The plan predicted that "access to University credit and noncredit educational opportunities for Maine citizens will increase by 25 percent, keeping in mind that the state's fastest-growing age category – 45-64 – is also the age group most likely to experience career changes." Furthermore, key goal #7 (p. 4) called for making the University's infrastructure and its research and teaching facilities second to none among Maine public institutions and emphasized the need to ensure the sufficiency of campus facilities and infrastructure essential to offering world-class, technology-based academic programs by allocating sufficient funds to address this commitment.

In the proposed statewide organizational model for the University of Maine under the University of Maine System's Strategic Plan (2005-2006), strengthening and positioning UM for significant enhancement is a major goal. Recognizing its historic record of statewide outreach and a service presence and infrastructure in all 16 counties, the current charge to UM is "to sharpen its focus and achieve excellence in all aspects of its mission," employing "the best distance education technologies to make UMaine's upper-level and graduate courses available nationwide, with special emphasis on accessibility within Maine."

MISSION AND PURPOSE VISION

- UMaine significantly expands distance education course and program offerings at both the undergraduate and graduate levels to include more online certificate and degree programs developed in response to specific state and professional needs;
- UMaine increases its support staff to meet the growing opportunities and demand from faculty and students;
- UMaine invests in new technologies and classrooms that provide transparent access and efficiency;
- UMaine extends its reach in more deliberate ways beyond Maine, taking advantage of New England's bucolic attributes to attract new groups of students in blended distance programs (online and on-campus, e.g., weekend and summer);
- UMaine includes more extensive noncredit distance education programs offered through the University's Cooperative Extension county offices;
- UMaine increases the number of University partnerships (both internal and external to Maine, including international partners) capitalizing on the diversity of curricular and research opportunities; and
- UMaine offers the content of credit-bearing courses in noncredit formats to Maine citizens at reduced cost.

MISSION AND PURPOSE RECOMMENDATIONS

	GOAL	ACTION
(1)	Establish a national reputation in distance education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Feature marketing-niche, online programs that capitalize on UM's strengths and location. b. Develop state-of-the-art electronic and traditional marketing strategies that promote niche programs.
(2)	Take advantage of the globalization movement by becoming an international leader in location-independent learning and teaching.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Form partnerships with appropriate international universities to collaborate on distance education and on-site educational programming and research.
(3)	Increase distance education enrollments, by 2010 generating 25% or more of total enrollment through distance education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Offer a robust slate of distance education programs at all levels of UM's tripartite teaching, research and service mission. b. Use distance-delivered courses and programs to promote individualized instruction and learning. c. Embrace statewide Cooperative Extension Office as an integral part of credit and noncredit distance education courses and programming. d. Capitalize on the regional locations of UMS Centers and Sites, the Hutchinson and Darling Centers, and other appropriate off-campus locations for on-site live instruction supporting blended and hybrid courses.
(4)	Ensure the visibility of UM's baccalaureate and graduate distance education mission.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Provide leadership through the proposed UMS Distance Learning Council.

Technology

Diversity is a good thing when it comes to people, investment portfolios, and distance education options. Only a few decades ago, an institution's information technology – important though it was – was largely a backroom operation handled by technical specialists. As equipment became slimmer, less costly, and more versatile, “info tech” moved into the front office and, often, into

the classroom – there, tethered by cables, the ungainly gadgets were used hands-on by an ever greater range of workers, faculty, and students.

Now, a confluence of trends in high-performance, miniaturization, wireless communication, and affordability have made information management and communication portable, personal, and ubiquitous. These trends have major implications for the diverse assortment of technologies undergirding distance education.

TECHNOLOGY BACKGROUND

Since 1989, the University of Maine has capitalized on the University of Maine System's technology infrastructure. Figure 1 depicts the extensive network currently in place among the UMS campuses, Outreach Centers and Sites, the Maine Schools and Library Network (MSLN), Maine Department of Education Distance Learning Network, State of Maine Government, several Research Institutions, Cooperative Extension offices, and other educational and nonprofit entities. Core technologies have included ITV (one-way video with return audio via IP Telephony), videoconferencing (e.g., British Telecom, PolyCom, and ATM), course management systems (e.g., Blackboard, WebCT, and FirstClass), and online video streaming options. All forms of these technologies are currently being used to deliver courses from the UM campus to locations in Maine and worldwide including direct delivery to desktops in students' homes. Computer clusters and distance designated classrooms throughout the UMS and on the UM campus also provide students with numerous access options. UMaine students can access UMaine courses and/or meetings/events at any one of the numerous centers and sites depicted in Figure 1. The UM campus currently has 12 videoconference-enabled classrooms and designated sites that allow for direct delivery to and from virtually any location in the world with compatible technologies. Both the Hutchinson Center and Darling Center are fully connected to UMS and campus supported networks, facilitating tailored programming to either location. Additionally, the campus has two designated ITV classrooms, located in Shibles and Barrows Halls; currently Room 126 in Barrows Hall is used exclusively for videostreaming purposes. A UMS production access grid on the UM campus (University of Maine System Network – UNET) operates over Internet 2 and provides a multipoint full presence multimedia environment; the grid can support large scale distributed meetings, seminars, and collaborative work sessions.

TECHNOLOGY VISION

- UMaine takes advantage of low-cost WiFi (wireless fidelity) video-enabled devices and wearable audio/visual communication interfaces thus offering the potential for students to have increased accessibility to courses and programs in which they are enrolled regardless of where the students are located worldwide;
- UMaine keeps pace with the increased accessibility of on-demand course content delivered via streaming media due to statewide coverage of high-speed broadband, wireless networks and ever-decreasing cost of computers;
- UMaine course content accommodates as many media devices as possible (e.g. iPods);

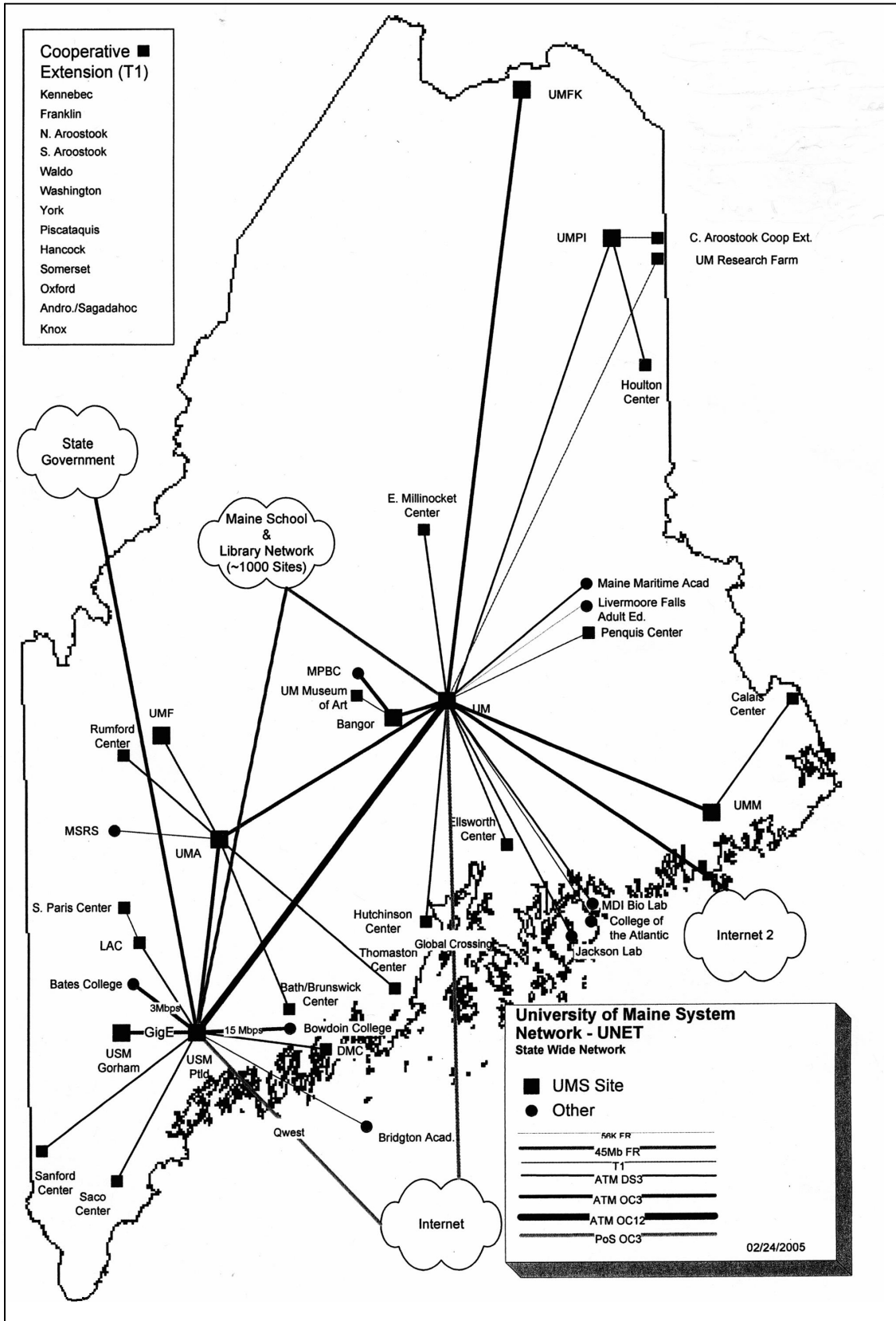


FIGURE 1: Maine Map – Distance Education Technology Infrastructure and UMS Center & Sites

- UMaine delivers all programming to centers asynchronously, world wide, via central digital archiving and Internet delivery; and
- UMaine limits its use of physical media (DVDs, CDs, VCRs, etc.) because of their economic and environmental inefficiency.

TECHNOLOGY RECOMMENDATIONS

	GOAL	ACTION
(1)	Increase funding for distance learning technology.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Increase the former Technology Fee (now part of the Unified Fee). b. Dedicate a portion of ITV classroom upgrade funding (\$600,000 – to be allocated across UMS) to create more videostreaming-enabled classrooms.
(2)	Make distance learning more easily accessible for faculty.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Equip faculty with appropriate distance education and multi-media production software. b. Provide a one-stop contact point for faculty and administrators for course arrangement and ad hoc technology resource access. c. Offer more flexible videoconference scheduling opportunities. d. Accommodate faculty with disabilities with effective learning/teaching technologies.
(3)	Make distance learning more easily accessible for students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Provide face-to-face student advising contact through Web-cams. b. Broaden literacy in the State with noncredit courses. c. Secure a designated cable channel for broadcasting an array of premier courses. d. Include current semester syllabi with video interviews of faculty describing their specific course(s) and professional field. e. Accommodate students with disabilities with effective learning/teaching technologies.
(4)	Make distance learning more easily accessible for technicians.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Centralize all video-enabled classroom signals to allow for more efficient archiving. b. Create a centrally located Information Technology (IT) Center that would include high-tech classrooms capable of videostreaming courses live on the Internet.
(5)	Assist State to expand student access to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Join UMS in an effort to promote statewide expansion of broadband access.

broadband connectivity statewide.	b. Offer technical and administrative expertise/support where practical.
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Course/Program Offerings

In a way, distance education is merely a delivery system – in fact, a variety of them. Consequently, technologies involved in distance education are a means rather than an end for delivering courses and other program offerings. The “content” aspect of distance education must be at least as robust as the delivery systems themselves, which means that availability, appropriateness, variety, value to students, and content quality are essential characteristics. With adequate planning, support, incentives, and creativity, the University’s distance-available offerings will continue to broaden and strengthen across all of these characteristics.

UMaine already leads most counterpart institutions in distance education. As this section describes, the trend can accelerate for everyone’s benefit as the decade advances.

COURSE/PROGRAM OFFERINGS BACKGROUND

With the offering of faculty development grants (\$1,500/per faculty grant), the Continuing and Distance Education Division has been able to substantially increase the number of courses and programs over its 16-year history to the current level of 270 courses offered annually, i.e., approximately 90 per semester including Summer Session. The courses offered are designed as part of degree or certificate programs or as stand alone courses meeting general education, major, minor, and elective requirements applicable to virtually all University degree programs. Their enrollments currently represent approximately nine percent of the University’s annual total credit hours generated (i.e., 270,558) with increasing interest on the part of faculty and departments to consider new distance delivered offerings. The Continuing and Distance Education technical staff provides one-on-one assistance in the development of courses as well as support services to faculty and students during the semesters in which the courses are offered.

To date, graduate degree programs offered either online and/or in combination with televised and videoconferenced elements include Masters in Electrical and Computer Engineering and Graduate Certificate Programs in Child and Family Services, Information Systems, and Healthcare Administration; at the undergraduate level, Bachelor of University Studies and RN to BSN Nursing Degree Program and Undergraduate Certificate Programs in Classical Studies, GPS-GAP (Global Positioning System-Geodesy and Application Program) and Maine Studies. Discussions are being held with faculty who oversee the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies and Master of Arts in English degree programs to offer them online, and many other examples of individual course and certificate program ideas are being considered. A few courses are offered for academic credit with a noncredit option. These include the nine sequenced one-credit graduate courses offered in the GPS-GAP Certificate Program and three options in the Mechanical Engineering Technology program (e.g., Power Transmission and Control for Certification). Delivering noncredit courses and programs through distance education opens

significant opportunities for the University. The Committee contends that the Cooperative Extension Division, Corporate Affiliate Program and the Corporate and Organizational Learning Services units could substantially increase their programming and therefore "reach" by becoming significantly more aggressive in the developing and delivering such programs throughout the state.

COURSE/PROGRAM OFFERINGS VISION

- UMaine becomes the State's leader in the delivery of baccalaureate and graduate courses and programs online with substantial increases in the number of degree and credit-bearing certificate programs, tailored to the needs of the state;
- UMaine serves as the institutional repository for public use of all archived elements of the University's distance education, cultural, and events' programming; and
- UMaine becomes an international leader in selected niche programs through combining distance education delivery with on-campus, in-Maine learning/teaching elements.

COURSE/PROGRAM OFFERINGS RECOMMENDATIONS

	GOAL	ACTION
(1)	Increase the number and enhance the content of graduate courses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Use iSight, I-Chat or Access Grid and Internet 2. b. Offer joint courses with faculty from across the UMS and with universities around the country and around the world. c. Visit lectures offered elsewhere. d. Set up discussion groups with other labs and research groups. e. Develop more distance delivered graduate degree programs marketed to alumni. f. Provide to each graduate department a compact mobile technology unit that does not require staff support. g. Convert all credit bearing courses that appropriately lend themselves to being delivered in modules through distance education and market to specialized professional segments. h. Mount distance courses that lead to certification, licensure and/or professional registration (e.g., teachers, health professionals, surveyors, accountants, etc.).
(2)	Increase the number and enhance the content of undergraduate courses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Offer general education requirements via distance technologies at the baccalaureate level and market as the first two years of a BA or BS degree as an alternative to associate degree programs available

		<p>through other UMS campuses and/or the community college system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Augment community college offerings. c. Incorporate the classical classroom lecturing spontaneity and convenience into asynchronous delivered courses. d. Give special attention to the development of laboratory courses offered in bundled formats (e.g., two per week, back-to-back, over seven weeks) with elements of labs offered online, thus becoming more efficient in the use of space and instructional time. Creating embedded calendars within the traditional semester would accommodate this model of scheduling (e.g., five 3-week schedules with students taking one compressed course per 3-week session). e. Mount distance courses that lead to certification, licensure and/or professional registration (e.g., teachers, health professionals, surveyors, accountants, etc.).
(3)	Increase the number of noncredit courses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Mount distance courses that lead to certification, licensure and/or professional registration (e.g., teachers, health professionals, surveyors, accountants, etc.). b. Offer noncredit options at reduced tuition rates (as "registration fees") for alumni, and all interested citizens of Maine and beyond.
(4)	Deliver partial-day seminars and workshops.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Offer short-term enrichment programs through Cooperative Extension. b. Offer Corporate Affiliate executive seminars. c. Offer Corporate and Organizational Learning Services supervisory and HR management certificate programs.
(5)	Increase access to distance education technology for innovative offerings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Archive University events (e.g., Cohen Lectures, Commencement speakers, debates, etc.). b. Archive examples of student and faculty research projects, Innovation Center's products, and best practices related to new media and their adoption into the teaching/learning environment. c. Work with Fogler Library to arrange access to archived materials. d. Provide for public and alumni access selected faculty, staff, students and administrators'

		interviews regarding University of Maine activities. e. Encourage the collaboration of campuses in their joint delivery utilizing distance technologies.
(6)	Assure Flagship status in Distance Learning.	a. Offer maximum flexibility for students enrolled in asynchronous courses in terms of course requirements and course completion. b. Offer consistently the best distance education available system-wide; including graduate, undergraduate, and noncredit courses and certificate and enrichment programs. c. Offer, by 2015, at least 50% of the University of Maine curricula through state of the art distance technologies.

Faculty and Faculty Development Programs

Good technology and excellent course offerings are essential ingredients for effective distance education – but not enough. Engaged, capable faculty are every bit as fundamental. UMaine has a growing cadre of innovative faculty who use distance components to augment their traditionally-structured courses and who make a variety of their courses – and a few of their programs – available as distance offerings.

The discussion in this section explores improved support for faculty using distance techniques, ways of helping faculty develop such skills, and initiatives for expanding faculty and program-level participation.

FACULTY AND FACULTY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS BACKGROUND

Currently, the University of Maine does not mandate the delivery of any course or program via distance education. Rather, UMaine’s approach has been to allow its distance education offerings to evolve through faculty and/or departmental initiative as well as through the proactive work of the professional staff at the Continuing and Distance Education department. In either case, often professional associations – particularly those related to the professional schools – will work in collaboration with University faculty and staff to strategically plan new program and course offerings. Thus, all faculty members who offer distance education courses do so voluntarily, usually for additional compensation but sometimes as part of a regular teaching load assignment.

In most cases faculty members offering a distance education course also teach the same course live, often doing both in the same semester, sometimes literally simultaneously. Faculty members have discovered that typically students actively engaged in a distance education course

do as well or better on standard methods of evaluation as their conventionally taught counterparts. No instructor who has adopted distance education techniques has discontinued them because of dissatisfaction with student achievement. A University Distance Education Advisory Committee (DEAC), in existence for well over a decade, encouraging faculty involvement in distance teaching, reviewing and awarding faculty development grants under the DEAC grant program (\$10,000 per year), and advising the Continuing and Distance Education staff on matters pertaining to pedagogy, technology related instructional issues and programming. All colleges are represented on the DEAC as is the Center for Teaching Excellence and the Information Technology Faculty Development Office. Grant recipients are required to present their work at an annual DEAC Faculty Forum with new grant recipients present to learn from their colleagues' respective course development experiences.

FACULTY AND FACULTY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS VISION

- UMaine sufficiently trains individual faculty members engaged in distance education to independently administer all aspects of his/her course;
- UMaine utilizes electronic video conference (MSN Messenger plus WebCam), email and telephone to make a professor's own office into a virtual interactive classroom; and
- UMaine faculty routinely apply Internet capabilities and distance technologies across the breadth of their professional work.

FACULTY AND FACULTY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS RECOMMENDATIONS

	GOALS	ACTIONS
(1)	Provide faculty support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Provide extensive course-development and course-launching training from both the Faculty Development Center and the Distance Education Division. b. Provide teaching assistants and/or reader/ graders, faculty peer mentoring, and an annual distance education faculty forum day. c. Introduce faculty to new strategies of teaching: e.g., personal cameras for their laptop computers for real time images to be broadcast at their desk, use of the access grid, satellite radio, Internet 2, sharing live resources on the Internet, 'topic oriented' blogging, and personalization techniques in distributed e-learning environments. d. Provide training and support for Web-based data collection, data-set sharing, and research needs.
(2)	Increase faculty participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Offer joint or team-taught courses and selected programs. b. Encourage partially retired faculty and those with

		<p>limited disabilities to participate in distance education.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. Involve retired faculty still having the passion for teaching and learning. d. Encourage departmental examination of promotion and tenure criteria to recognize and reward innovative uses of technology in teaching, research and service. e. Increase the number of DEAC grants awarded annually to 50 (@ \$50,000 for the next five years resulting in approximately 250 more courses). f. Establish incentives to programs, departments, and colleges (e.g., through revenue sharing models, program marketing assistance). g. Increase the activities of faculty technology development programs by an order of magnitude. h. Include the expectation that in all new faculty contracts their instructional responsibilities may include teaching courses that incorporate distance technologies for state, national, and/or international delivery. i. Encourage faculty to explore the possibilities of teaching courses in languages other than English for students understanding those languages thus enabling students to select their language of choice when registering for their course. j. Consider accumulative compensation schedules to minimize course cancellations and maximize student accommodation.
(3)	Increase departmental participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Encourage each college and respective departments to develop distance education plans in the context of niche markets and statewide need for both undergraduate and graduate programs options. Such plans would include proposed program format (e.g., certificate, minor, degree, etc.), types of technologies and classroom requirements for delivery, targeted audiences (e.g., K-12 teachers, employees of Maine Department of Transportation, etc.), sequencing and timetable for course offerings (e.g., six courses offered annually for three years designed to accommodate cohorts of part-time students). b. Give special attention to the development of laboratory courses offered in bundled formats (e.g., two per week, back to back, over seven

		<p>weeks) with elements of labs offered online, thus becoming more efficient in the use of space and instructional time. Creating embedded calendars within the traditional semester would accommodate this model of scheduling (e.g., five, 3-week schedules with students taking one compressed course per three week session).</p>
(4)	Increase campus participation.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Review and adopt recommendations of the 2003 Information Technology Commission pertaining to faculty and staff development (e.g., the IT Council should oversee collaboration between the IT Faculty Development Center, the Continuing and Distance Education, and Center for Teaching Excellence to enhance faculty and staff professional development opportunities especially in the support of asynchronous and synchronous delivered courses). b. Reconstitute the Distance Education Advisory Committee to include broad campus representation and external representation appointed by the Provost with rotating fixed-length appointments of its members. Membership would include representation from the five colleges, Cooperative Extension, Lifelong Learning, Information Technology, Center for Teaching Excellence, Fogler Library, and a UMS Outreach Center. The Committee's charge would be reviewed and redefined to address institutional matters related to distance education and would complement the UMS proposed Distance Learning Advisory Council as described in the Strategic Direction #3 Report. c. Provide review and guidance by the IT Council regarding procurement and use of course management tools and software.

Student and HelpLine Services

Just as good distance education involves adequate faculty development and support; it also involves comprehensive support for students. The University already provides fine basic support, ranging from helplines to downloadable software to online services.

In other words, we have a good starting point.

Student needs and expectations will continue to grow, of course, and so will opportunities. This section explores what UMaine can do over the next five years to continue making distance education more convenient and effective for everyone interested in tapping the potential of location-independent learning.

STUDENT AND HELPLINE SERVICES BACKGROUND

UMaine's Continuing and Distance Education HelpLine Services provide five components to the Online Technical Support Services: respond to student and faculty questions by email, make and keep telephone and face-to-face appointments, create and maintain course Welcome Pages displayed on the Web with important specific course information, assist faculty in course preparation by adding students to each online class, support faculty through maintaining exams and current class lists upon request, and follow up with students and faculty during the semester to address problem resolution.

The Online Technical Support staff assists students and faculty with their online courses from 8:30 AM to 7:30 PM with limited online help on the weekends. A professional employee staffs the office, overseeing the day-to-day operation and four work-study students.

All online services fall under the umbrella of delivering good customer service. At the beginning of each semester, CED staff present an orientation for distance students over ITV, responding to student questions during broadcast time. In the Online Technical Support office, careful training is given to new staff through an orientation process and subsequent review. New technicians are evaluated on their knowledge, and additional support is given to maintain the expected standard. Also, an online survey is sent out to those students who had contacted the Online Support Office within the first few weeks of the new semester. Students are asked to evaluate the response time, effectiveness of the technical advice, and technician courtesy. A telephone number is provided so that students may contact an administrator if they desire, and a space is provided for their comments.

The Online Support staff reviews creative ways to help students and most recently is collaborating with the Information Technology department's Help Center regarding customer service response software. In addition, contact with System Center directors produces valuable feedback regarding student needs. Through these shared experiences with other offices on campus and through the system, the scope of the online support continues to grow.

STUDENT AND HELPLINE SERVICES VISION

- UMaine offers enhanced technical and academic support to students locally, regionally and globally twenty four hours a day; and
- UMaine includes admission, course registration, academic advising, technical support and billing information.

STUDENT AND HELPLINE SERVICES RECOMMENDATIONS

	GOALS	ACTIONS
(1)	Increase current level of helpline services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Conduct online surveys routinely of students enrolled in distance courses to determine level of satisfaction and identify unmet needs.
(2)	Ensure easy access to all UMaine distance education courses and programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Direct students via Website directions to course descriptions, course sections, course syllabi, faculty video interviews, and registration procedures.
(3)	Ensure easy access to faculty and advisors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Encourage faculty and advisors to respond to student inquiries within 24 hours. b. Assign distance education students a Continuing Education Division / Summer Session (CED/SS) advocate to address problems accessing faculty members and advisors. c. Limit distance education faculty and advisors to those who are student centered. d. Provide face-to-face student advising contact through Web-cams.
(4)	Ensure comprehensive student support services equivalent to all on-campus services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Create e-campus coordinator position to oversee, facilitate and ensure comparable comprehensive student support services. b. Develop and promulgate orientation aids for students unfamiliar with UMaine's online services and with the students' attendant responsibilities. c. Maintain and promote mechanisms for online security.
(5)	Work collaboratively with UC Outreach and UMS Centers,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Create a Center Group and identify common goals to ensure

Hutchinson Center and all new "outreach centers."	collaboration. b. Provide support for Centers that is comparable to on-campus support.
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Outreach Centers and Extension Offices

Outreach centers and extension offices range from modest facilities to remote-site campuses as extensive as the Hutchinson Center in Belfast. Throughout the State of Maine, these “learning oases” enable distant students to enjoy richer access to University resources. The centers also serve as important hubs for social contact among students and between students and faculty.

In the future, outreach centers and extension offices continue their strategic distance-education roles – first, by offering services better and, second, by being better served themselves.

OUTREACH CENTERS AND EXTENSION OFFICES BACKGROUND

An outcome of the UMS Strategic Planning Process is that University College will retain administrative management of all UMS sites and centers. University College sites and centers employ a campus-neutral set of UMS employees who represent all seven institutions equitably, with the resources and expertise necessary to provide a high level of specialized student support services throughout the UMS distance education program. Thus, this committee did not address that part of its charge.

The eleven University of Maine System Outreach Centers remain a vital facet of distance education because Centers provide the personal contact necessary for regionally based students. Additionally, they serve as a location for broadband access for students who do not have an Internet provider and they accommodate the delivery of regional options of courses offered through videoconferencing. Providing access to counseling, mentoring, tutoring, and access to career opportunities (internships, etc.) must be a priority to guarantee individual success. What will change is the ability to extend all of these types of services to the individual anywhere and anytime. Using centers to augment individual connections with the institution will only increase retention and good outcomes. For example, technology such as personal videoconferencing could be used to reach out to students for advising, making counseling just "one click away." These types of services will humanize the new access to programming and lead to better outcomes for students.

OUTREACH CENTERS AND EXTENSION OFFICES VISION

- UMaine delivers and produces content from an individual faculty member’s scale;
- UMaine centers and traditional venues become "social centers" as well as being "technology centers"; and

- UMaine students and faculty carry the technology with them rather than going to an exclusive location for the technology.

OUTREACH CENTERS AND EXTENSION OFFICES RECOMMENDATIONS

	GOALS	ACTIONS
(1)	Increase the number of "outreach centers."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Use existing Cooperative Extension locations and other facilities as catalysts for UMaine to partner with other organizations throughout the State (e.g., retirement facilities, hospitals and town and State government offices and agencies).
(2)	Increase the services of "outreach centers."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Salvage, repair and recycle quality phased-out computers from campus units for use at all outreach centers. b. Encourage more simulcasting of courses between the campus and the Hutchinson Center, particularly at the graduate level. c. Integrate student-centered support services into UMaine's HelpLine and other campus services provided to "distance" students' outreach centers. d. Feature and promote the relevant subjects in that Center's geographic area (e.g., the Franco American Studies program might tailor courses and/or programs to communities with significant Franco-American populations such as Biddeford, Lewiston and Rumford).

Frederick E. Hutchinson Center

The preceding discussion applies to all Outreach Centers, including the Frederick E. Hutchinson Center. The Hutchinson Center, however, has a unique genesis and scale. For these reasons, this report section focuses exclusively on the Hutchinson Center and its distance education/outreach role.

HUTCHINSON CENTER BACKGROUND

The Frederick E. Hutchinson Center, an exemplary model for educational outreach in the twenty-first century, holds as its mission providing high quality undergraduate, graduate and

professional development education, as well as cultural opportunities, in a supportive and flexible environment for the people of the region. Opened in the fall of 2000, the Center has grown steadily in its breadth of contributions to educational aspiration and economic development within the mid-coast. It is now a significant and beloved Belfast educational presence actively and collaboratively engaged in meeting the needs of the region it serves.

Constructed in 1999 through the generosity of MBNA and maintained through a strong partnership between MBNA and the University of Maine, the facility contains 19,100 square feet, including a 4,000 square foot Atrium and 15,100 square feet of classroom space. To prepare for growth, the original plans included a 15,000 square foot mirror-image classroom expansion. Consequently, the well-maintained and attractive grounds have been designed to include the expansion and space for additional parking on site.

Approximately 200 courses per semester are offered at the University of Maine Fred Hutchinson Center (FHC) by onsite faculty, video conferencing, the Internet and ITV. Each semester, more than 1,000 enrollees progress in several undergraduate, graduate or professional development programs. Additionally, nearly 500 senior citizens from over 50 Maine communities participate in the second largest Senior College program in the state. Another 14,000 citizens are served each year through a vibrant Conference Services program. Most weeks of the year the Center operates seven days per week, serving the public over 80 hours per week. Currently, the Hutchinson Center provides educational access and high quality educational opportunities to the citizens of the region through University of Maine offerings in general education, undergraduate programs in psychology, business, and university studies and graduate programs in business, social work, special education, and information systems. These opportunities, and others through the University of Maine System, are made possible through live and mixed delivery course offerings, high-speed-state-of-the-art technology, and the teaching and learning scholarship of a distinguished University of Maine faculty. Future undergraduate and graduate offerings in the fields of tourism, allied health, and educational leadership are anticipated.

The University of Maine Hutchinson Center has demonstrated the capacity to effect change. With support and vision, it will continue to make an even greater contribution to enhancing the public good for people of all ages within our region and throughout the state of Maine. Its focus on access, convenience, quality, customer-service, and technology-assisted teaching and learning meets the needs of adult learners. The Hutchinson Center has both the track record and the entrepreneurial inclination to be the beta site for a set of educational partnerships and executive education enterprises.

HUTCHINSON CENTER VISION

- UMaine raises the visibility and stature of the University of Maine Hutchinson Center within the region;
- UMaine develops educational partnerships to foster economic development within the region;
- UMaine increases the programmatic and delivery option mix at the Hutchinson Center and/or in University of Maine Hutchinson Center educational outreach sites;

- UMaine increases course persistence and program/degree completion from fall 2006 baseline;
- UMaine extends the reach of the Hutchinson Center through a Phase II Expansion;
- UMaine financially supports part-time learners;
- UMaine serves 1,000 new regional students and thousands of students throughout the State in an expanded learning environment distinguished by innovative – and, often, community-requested – program delivery and services such as health profession, early childhood, education, social service, and tourism/hospitality programs;
- UMaine provides within driving distance a learning experience of such value that it provides options and opportunity for undergraduate students and delivers graduate education that prepares professionals with the highest possible skill levels in their disciplines; and
- UMaine develops and implements graduate, undergraduate, and professional certification outreach initiatives and public-private economic development partnerships as envisioned and supported by the University’s land grant and sea grant mission.

HUTCHINSON CENTER RECOMMENDATIONS

	GOAL	ACTION
(1)	Increase access for regional citizens and for citizens throughout Maine.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Introduce additional professional certification and recertification programs social work [Fall 2007], accounting [Fall 2007], real estate [Fall 2008]. b. Introduce a set of new undergraduate options (contingent upon laboratories): social work [Spring 2006], tourism [Fall 2006], Black Bear Bridge program [Fall 2006], educational leadership [Fall 2006], pre-pharmacy [Fall 2009], pre-dentistry [Fall 2009], pre-medicine [Fall 2009], and pre-engineering [Fall 2009]. c. Introduce a set of new undergraduate degree offerings: social work [Fall 2007], new media/art/business [Fall 2007], nursing (in cooperation with UMA) [Fall 2008], early childhood [Fall 2008], and elementary education [Fall 2008]. d. Introduce a set of new graduate degree offerings: Masters in Educational Leadership [Fall 2007], Masters of Science in Teaching [Fall 2007], Masters in Clinical Psychology [Fall 2009], Masters in Nursing (MSN) [Fall

		2008], and Ed.D. in Education Leadership (in cooperation with UMS) [Fall 2007]. e. Build campus partnerships and networks to strengthen the organizational infrastructure [Fall 2006-Fall 2011].
(2)	Create incentives to foster collaboration and joint enterprise with the colleges.	a. Name and award educational outreach endowed chairs to be awarded as joint appointments between the Colleges and the Fred Hutchinson Center [Fall 2007-Fall 2011]. b. Provide rotating stipends to the Colleges for stimulating programmatic initiatives at the Fred Hutchinson Center [Fall 2007-Fall 2011].
(3)	Increase the capacity of the Hutchinson Center to offer a range of educational options in the allied health and education arenas.	a. Raise 2 million dollars toward the cost of a 4 million dollar facilities (2 laboratories, 1 distance education facility for simulcasting, student/faculty meeting space, and additional technology-rich classrooms) to open Fall 2009 [Spring 2006-Spring 2008]. b. Raise 1 million dollars to endow the Center [Fall 2008-Fall 2011].
(4)	Reduce barriers to educational attainment.	a. Raise \$10,000 - \$20,000 per year for part-time student scholarships through a Fall fund drive to replenish and grow the annual scholarship [December 2006-December 2011].
(5)	Reduce first-year to second-year attrition by 25% against Fall 06-Fall 07 baseline.	a. Introduce electronic registration communication via email [Spring 2006]. b. Create student tracking system [Spring 2006]. c. Develop/implement electronic advising records [Spring 2006 and ongoing]. d. Construct two-year/three-year schedule for degree-program offerings [Fall 2006]. e. Seek grant-funded support for Black Bear Bridge program [Summer 2006]. f. Assess and revise academic support

		strategies, i.e., tutoring, peer teaching, developmental and sequenced course offerings [Fall 2007-Fall 2011].
(6)	Raise the visibility and stature of the Hutchinson Center within the Region.	a. Increase the number and size of educational conferences offered and hosted by the Center once the extension is constructed [Fall 2009-Fall 2011].
(7)	Increase University of Maine's capacity to stimulate economic development within the state.	a. Participate actively in creating and supporting regional initiatives such as Many Flags, the Mid-coast Leadership Academy, the Hutchinson business breakfast forum, and other emerging partnership venues [Spring 2006-Fall 2011].

Fogler Library

The Fogler Library's strategic plan and the Distance Education/Outreach Centers' strategic plan are companion documents contributing to the University of Maine's comprehensive strategic plan. But library resources have become such an important component of distance education that, in a number of instances, to talk about one is to talk about both. For this reason, the portions of the Library's plan that intertwine extensively with distance education are included in both documents.

FOGLER LIBRARY BACKGROUND

The mission of Fogler Library is to identify and provide the information and library resources needed by members of the University community in their study, teaching, research, public service, and professional development; to instruct and assist in the use of library resources and services; to share in the development and implementation of the University's educational and research programs; to cooperate with other libraries in meeting the information needs of the people of Maine; to provide leadership in the development and delivery of library services in Maine; and to participate in state, regional, and national professional library activities. The Library is to be the single doctoral/research library within the University of Maine System and is the foundation of the library consortium of the UMS libraries.

Fogler Library currently provides services and resources that support students and faculty in the off campus programs. Fogler Library purchases or partners with other libraries to purchase electronic resources that are available to users outside the campus. It currently offers more than 200 databases, made available through University of Maine, UMS, and Maine State Library funds. Fogler also makes available databases created on campus, including the Electronic

Theses and Dissertations; the William S. Cohen Archives; the Maine Music Box; Windows on Maine; and Maine's Science, Technology and Business Portal. Via the Ask-A-Librarian service, the reference staffs answer questions and research needs by virtual or e-mail reference. The reference staffs also maintain a liaison relationship with departments to respond to their needs as much as possible. Fogler's collection development is closely linked to courses that are offered.

- Intellectual Center – The Library is a focal point for academic activities at the University of Maine. It provides an environment for the exchange of ideas that is rich in information resources and technologies with programming that extends to the broader public community;
- Service – The Library staff strives to provide exceptional service. It continually evaluates, modifies, and enhances services to meet the evolving needs of our users;
- Collections – The Library collects, preserves, and makes accessible information resources in both traditional and evolving formats that support current educational and research interests of the University of Maine community;
- Education and Outreach – The Library staff teaches users how to find, search, and evaluate information resources that support their needs. The staff provides instruction to groups and individuals, and creates educational materials that support independent learning and a variety of learning styles. Library staff reach out to interested communities to inform them about Library services and resources;
- Collaboration – The Library brings together learning communities in an environment conducive to group efforts for the creation of new resources advancing the mission of the academy. The Library collaborates with other University of Maine departments to ensure that research conducted at the University is preserved and accessible for future use; and
- Statewide Responsibilities – The Library provides leadership within the UMS and State for technological developments, collections, and services.

FOGLER LIBRARY VISION

- Fogler Library cooperates and collaborates among libraries within and outside the state in order to provide more access and services and attempt to maintain costs;
- Fogler Library provides resources necessary for research expansion throughout the system (i.e. the Graduate School of Biomedical Science);
- Fogler Library makes available ever rapidly changing new technologies for library users;
- Fogler Library funds the increasing costs for both print and electronic materials;
- Fogler Library employs staff having appropriate technological skills and copyright, electronic licensing, and privacy issues expertise; and
- Fogler Library increases staffing as new services are offered and collections are digitized for wider access.

FOGLER LIBRARY RECOMMENDATIONS

	GOALS	ACTIONS
(1)	Provide the collections (both	a. Increase in base funding by \$1

	<p>purchased and created) and services needed to meet the needs of the UM community, the System, and the State.</p>	<p>million for acquisitions for each of five years to compensate for past and current materials inflation, and then index the materials budget according to annual inflation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Index the Library's budget to inflation through a funding formula that allows it to maintain current library journal subscriptions (an estimate additional annual expenditure of \$2.6 million) and also to grow as the university grows. c. Provide a 10% share of the UM facilities bond money to the library, a significant but decreasing portion: Year 1: \$3 million; Year 2: \$2.5 million; Year 3: \$2 million; Year 4: \$1.75 million; Year 5: \$1.5 million. d. Obtain 4% of indirect cost recovery, over the 2004 baseline, from all UM grants and contracts, so that by 2010, the library would be getting the equivalent 2% of all indirect costs (the average for academic libraries in the U.S.). e. Increase staffing to accomplish projects and provide services by adding eight professional staff and four support staff who will create databases, manage purchased online resources, provide more instruction to users, manage the "last copy" center, and provide research assistance to the state.
(2)	<p>Increase space for beyond a 30-year growth in collections, carrels for faculty and graduate students, group study rooms, space for expansion of services and technology, and up-to-date space for staff and is redesigned with an HVAC system for user comfort and preservation of materials.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Expand and upgrade the annex to provide space for Special Collections, government documents, and other materials by installing compact shelving. (This was estimated to cost approximately \$1 million in February 2006). b. Create a "last copy" center, to be managed by Fogler Library, that

		<p>provides space for materials from the other UMS libraries as well as from all other libraries in the State.</p> <p>c. Build 96,000 square foot addition to Fogler Library and upgrade existing library to meet ADA, HVAC and workspace needs. (This was estimated to cost approximately \$50 million in 2004).</p>
(3)	Continue to develop, search out, and maintain collaborative and consortial arrangements that will help preserve and expand journal subscriptions and other collections.	<p>a. Develop an effective and collaborative UMS Library system consortium.</p> <p>b. Expand the Statewide digital library with the Maine State Library and with Maine Info Net.</p> <p>c. Join and participate in as many consortiums as possible or feasible, including the EPSCoR Science Information Group.</p> <p>d. Monitor and explore initiatives such as open-source to determine the benefit to the user and the impact on the library.</p> <p>e. Explore ways to acquire material for users via collaborative collection development, lending and borrowing in digital format, and joint ownership.</p> <p>f. Serve as a leading voice for the UMS and the State in advocating appropriate federal copyright legislative policy.</p>
(4)	Earn recognition as the research library and as the Science, Technology, and Business Library for the State.	<p>a. Design and initiate a comprehensive public relations program, focused on the various users groups within the State, which highlights the resources, services, and areas of excellence.</p> <p>b. Improve communications, both internal and external, to promote the collections and services available.</p> <p>c. Highlight those collections that are</p>

		<p>unique to the State and are of particular interest to users: Patent and Trademark Collection; Canadian Collection; the William S. Cohen Archives; Electronic Theses and Dissertations; and the State of Maine Collection.</p>
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Funding

Distance education is an investment whose returns people tabulate in many ways: tuition and related fees, increased earnings potential for students, long-term economic development for the State and its communities. People also reckon their return on investment in terms of intellectual enrichment, extended and more egalitarian access to higher education, and better quality of life for many Mainers.

The financial dimension of distance education is complicated – full of opportunities as well as challenges. Consequently, many recommended initiatives in this strategic plan have revenue implications on both sides of the ledger. This report section explores current and anticipated funding streams. It also explores cost implications for the report’s recommended goals and actions.

FUNDING BACKGROUND

Direct and indirect sources of funding that support the University of Maine's distance education programming include the following: the professional and technical resources of the University of Maine System's University College Outreach staff and services, as well as UNET's professional and technical support services; the University of Maine's Information Technology Division; and the Continuing and Distance Education Division and Summer Session, which has E&G (Educational and General) budgets specifically related to distance education programming activities. The first three sources are considered indirect funding sources because the services and expenses associated with the delivery of UMaine distance education courses borne by their respective budgets is generally unknown, i.e., they provide system-wide or campus-wide services for distance education courses whose expenses are not directly tied to UMaine distance education programming or budgets per se.

Since its inception in 1989, financial support for the University of Maine's Distance Education courses and programs has come primarily from tuition revenue generated from its activity, although the Continuing and Distance Education Division has received two significant institutional financial allocations to support upgrades in its technical equipment and purchase of servers to handle the increasing use of digitized and archived courses. In the beginning, the University of Maine System supported distance education programming by providing \$4,000 of funding per course which subsidized the instructional costs associated with their delivery.

Tuition revenue generated by UMS campuses distance education programming activity essentially supported ITV, including the regional UMS Centers and Sites. Over the years, numerous funding formulas have been employed to help fund the statewide ITV system. With substantial funding from the Annenberg Foundation, Federal Department of Commerce, and the Maine State Legislature, UMS began its ITV programming with an extensive fiber and ITFS infrastructure established throughout the state i.e., at all UMS campuses, UMS Centers, selected high schools, community colleges, and other strategic locations.

UMaine mounted its programming through its Continuing and Distance Education Division and Summer Session as one of its major outreach missions serving students statewide and beyond. As the University of Maine at Augusta (at the time "The Community College of Maine") provided the leadership for its development and delivery, the University of Maine developed a collaborative working relationship with UMA's leadership and professional staff. Through subsequent reorganizations, UMaine now enjoys a supportive and collaborative partnership with both University College Outreach and UNET, which together comprise the student support services at Centers and Sites for distance students and the technical infrastructure throughout the state. Additionally, UMaine's IT Division works with UNET in the technical support of the campus' distance education programming and provides faculty development programs designed to assist faculty in the incorporation of technology into their teaching strategies.

UNET's technical infrastructure continues to serve the state and campuses in the delivery of courses and programs, although there is now less dependence on ITFS. With the development of broadband statewide and the growth of online delivered courses via the Internet, the UMS IT Policy and Planning Committee is reviewing the technical support and capability of its current operation with improvements and upgrades planned for existing ITV classrooms. This Committee is also investigating the various course management systems currently employed by the campuses – namely Blackboard and WebCT – with respect to their costs, preferences by faculty, and perceived duplication of options.

As the result of the evolving reorganizations of UMA, the statewide administration of the outreach centers and UNET, the method of financial support for distance education has been significantly altered. While in the early years all tuition generated by courses offered was collected centrally and \$4,000 payments per course were distributed to the campuses, UMS now operates with all tuition generated being directed to the campuses from which the courses originate (10% reserved for bad debt) coupled with direct semester payments by campuses to UMS based on numbers of sites that receive courses and numbers of students enrolled at each site. For UMaine this amounts to approximately \$18,000 each semester (current rate of \$99 per site and \$25 per student enrolled). Tuition revenues generated statewide are meant to complement the base dollars allocated to both University College Outreach and UNET.

UMaine's Information Technology division supports WebCT and FirstClass and all elements related to their use in UMaine courses including those supported and marketed as distance courses. The UMS University College Outreach also supports the campus distance education courses and programs offered in Shibles Hall, Barrows Hall, and Chadbourne Hall with technical support staff in ITV and selected videoconferencing classrooms. The costs borne by IT, UNET

and UC Outreach in support of UMaine's distance education programs has not been tracked, but their support is integral and essential for the University's delivery of courses.

Most helpline queries surrounding distance education courses are handled by the Continuing and Distance Education HelpLine services, which are staffed by professional, classified and work study students who are trained in the various course management systems and assist faculty and students with technical aspects of the courses' delivery. IT Helpline Services works with the CED/SS Helpline Services offices when needed and the two staffs meet periodically to ensure consistency of service when appropriate. The costs associated with the CED HelpLine services are reflected in CED's E&G Budgets.

For CED/SS the annual operating expenses associated with its centralized distance education responsibilities approximates \$1.1 million, which includes faculty salaries, instructional support personnel, professional and classified staff salaries, UMS site/student charges, equipment, supplies, and other typical operating expenses. With approximately 25,000 distance education course credit hours generated annually, the total revenue generated annually is approximately \$3 million.

FUNDING VISION

- UMaine supports its distance education programs by maintaining and investing in state-of-the-art technologies to warrant its national and international reputation;
- UMaine garners \$100,000 annually in UMS funding, associated with Strategic Direction #3 recommendation of new Program Development Funds;
- UMaine upgrades campus classrooms as videostreaming enabled, thus increasing distance education broadcasting capability to the world;
- UMaine increases number of faculty/course development grants 50-fold;
- UMaine implements revenue sharing (incentivized budgeting) to departments and colleges in support of their collaborative initiatives with CED/SS; and
- UMaine establishes tuition rates for distance education courses and programs that are fair, competitive, and based on a stable, accountable financial framework.

FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

	GOALS	ACTIONS
(1)	Invest \$150,000 annually in distance education technologies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Dedicate direct portion of Tech Fee \$ generated through UMaine unified fee into CED/SS budget perhaps based on % of credit hours generated through distance programming activity. b. Establish separate distance education course fee to support distance education technology and

		programming.
(2)	Develop campus proposals in response to UMS RFP for new programs.	a. Use departmental needs assessment strategy to mount comprehensive distance education program options.
(3)	Seek significant portion of UMS IT Policy and Planning Committee's \$600,000 to upgrade ITV classrooms.	a. Designate at least two classrooms (80+ seats each) to become strictly videostreaming enabled.
(4)	Increase faculty development program.	a. Allocate \$50,000 annually for faculty development grants over five years to support the conversion of 250 traditionally offered courses to those offered through distance technologies.
(5)	Implement relevant recommendations of the University of Maine Commission Report on Incentivized Budgeting.	a. Dedicate portion of tuition revenue generated by distance courses to incentivized budgeting.
(6)	Establish fair and competitive tuition rates for distance courses.	a. Support UMS approach to review current nonresident tuition rates for students enrolled in distance education courses and programs.

Conclusion: A Direct Asset for All People of Maine

In preparing the recommendations laid out in this report, the University's Distance Education/Outreach Center Strategic Planning Committee has been guided by the Chancellor's direction, in his September 13, 2005, letter to the UMS Strategic Direction #3 Committee Chair, for "developing a new vision for distance education that goes beyond technological considerations and status quo operations. . . , [taking] a broader, more dynamic look at the academic, cultural, and institutional future of distance education in Maine. . . ." What we found – and what these recommendations reflect – is that UMaine's distance education capacity is a critical asset for many sets of stakeholders:

- *Students.* Students and would-be students who, because of geography or personal circumstances, cannot readily attend on-campus courses; also, students who simply enjoy the convenience and learning environments available through outreach centers and distance-based offerings.
- *Faculty.* Faculty whose specialties and depth of knowledge cannot be readily replicated at other institutions, as well as faculty whose professional pursuits in teaching, research, and service encourage tapping resources beyond traditional academic boundaries.

- *Academic programs.* Degree and non-degree academic programs (such as niche programs) that, through distance education, can be made available throughout the State and beyond.
- *Educators beyond UMaine.* High schools, community colleges, and other education institutions whose programs UMaine's distance education can augment.
- *Communities, organizations statewide, and the State of Maine itself.* These entities – along with the people associated with them – for whom the University helps provide essential social, environmental, economic, and scientific support, both directly and indirectly, now and for generations into the future.

All benefit from distance education, extrinsically as well as intrinsically – from personal growth to workforce professionalization, from extension services to economic development. The University's distance education and outreach centers are crucial tools for making these contributions happen today. The University should not, will not, and cannot evolve only into a virtual/distance education existence. But distance education will become of major importance as the need grows for lifelong higher learning.

This report, the University's strategic plan for distance education, supports each of the eight goals in the University's overall strategic plan, "*UMaine LEADS: The University of Maine Strategic Plan 2006-2011.*" In particular, the distance education strategic plan is crucial for LEADS goals 1 ("Become a top choice for highly qualified undergraduate and graduate students"), 3 ("Strengthen our essential partnership with, and accountability to, the communities and people of Maine by ensuring that UMaine is an institution that meets their educational, economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations."), 4 ("Increase our critical role in the economy and well being of the State of Maine."), and 8 ("Excel among peer institutions in quality of life measures.").

Correspondingly, this report on distance education supports and advances the University's strategic planning report for the Fogler Library, portions of which are integral to our distance education report; for the report on scholarship, research, and creative activity; and for the report on graduate research, education, and scholarship. The report on graduate education, for example, recommends that UMaine engage, where appropriate, "in delivering quality distance education at the graduate level . . . to the community." The graduate education report (*Graduate Research, Education, and Scholarship at the University of Maine: Challenges and Opportunities for the 21st Century*, draft of April 24, 2006, p. 5) recognizes that the University has already "made exceptional progress in establishing both the market and the high quality standards" our faculty expects, and "applauds [these] efforts and successes."

The graduate education report (p. 32) observes that "this style of education is particularly suited to part-time students attempting to improve their economic and educational status." Enlarge the phrase, "part-time students," to read, "the people of Maine." This is what higher education is about and the University's mission articulates. Through UMaine's vital distance education activities and outreach centers, the opportunities are incredible now and becoming more so as we advance into the next decade. Laying out that vision is what this strategic planning report and its recommendations are meant to achieve.

Distance Education/Outreach Centers Strategic Planning Committee Membership List

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Appendices

- I. Maine Map – Distance Education Technology Infrastructure/UMS Center & Sites
- II. University of Maine Strategic Direction #8 – Evolve the System Structure – Campus Committee Interim Report (May 20, 2005)
- III. New England Association of Schools and Colleges Commission on Institutions of Higher Education – <http://www.neasc.org>
- IV. Best Practices for Electronically Offered Degree and Certificate Programs – http://www.neasc.org/cihe/best_practices_electronically_offered_degree.htm
- V. Policy on the Review of Electronically Offered Degree Programs – http://www.neasc.org/cihe/policy_electronically_offered_degree.htm
- VI. Guidelines for Preparing Reports on Existing Academic Programming Offered Through Distance Education – http://www.neasc.org/cihe/guidelines_reports_distance_education.htm
- VII. University of Maine Report on Existing Academic Programming Offered Through Distance Education (August 14, 2002)
- VIII. University of Maine Five-Year Accreditation Update (Prepared for The Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges) (October, 2003)
- IX. Distance Learning Technologies PowerPoint Presentation (UNET) (June 23, 2005)
- X. UM Continuing & Distance Education PowerPoint Presentation (June 23, 2005)
- XI. Maine Universities' Distance Education Programs PowerPoint Presentation (University College Outreach) (June 23, 2005)
- XII. University College: A Network of Services PowerPoint Presentation (Ellsworth Center) (June 23, 2005)
- XIII. University of Maine Commission on Information Technology Report (2004) – which included recommendations for distance education issues <http://dll.umaine.edu/cd>
- XIV. Overview of the University of Maine's Center for Teaching Excellence
- XV. Description of Information Technology's Faculty Development Center
- XVI. Digital Library Document
- XVII. LibQual Document
- XVIII. Continuing and Distance Education Enrollment Data
- XIX. University of Maine Fall 2004 On-line and ITV Student Questionnaire, Continuing and Distance Education
- XX. Listing of UMaine's Video Conference Enabled Rooms
- XXI. UMS Strategic Direction #3 Distance Education Committee Interim Report #2 (December 2005)
- XXII. UMS Course Management System (CMS) Task Force January 2006 Interim Report
- XXIII. University of Maine Distance Education/Outreach Centers Strategic Planning Committee Progress Report (September 16, 2005)
- XXIV. University of Maine Distance Education/Outreach Centers Strategic Planning Committee PowerPoint Presentation/Report (November 21, 2005)