



**UMF 2020: Experience Farmington**  
**Strategic Plan for the University of Maine at Farmington**  
**August 2014**

**Approved 9/22/14 by the UMS Board of Trustees**

*Formulated through an extensive campus process coincident with University of Maine System initiatives, UMF 2020: Experience Farmington articulates campus-level goals and strategies for 2014-2020. The overarching aim of this strategic plan is to strengthen UMF's ability to realize its mission within the broader constellation of the multi-campus University of Maine System, thereupon to secure a vibrant and enduring future for its students and broader community.*

**I. Mission and Values of the University of Maine at Farmington**

**UMF Mission**

As a premier teacher education and public liberal arts college for the state of Maine, the University of Maine at Farmington prepares students for engaged citizenship, enriching professional careers, and an enduring love of learning.

**UMF Values**

Given its history since 1864 of educating teachers and its distinctive contemporary mission as a public liberal arts college, the University of Maine at Farmington (UMF) has consistently been rooted in a vigorous tradition of education in service to the public interest. In embracing this tradition, UMF seeks to graduate individuals who will live purposeful, ethical, and personally rewarding lives, and who will strengthen the social fabric of the communities they inhabit in Maine and beyond. We recognize that success depends upon our ability to preserve continued affordable access to higher education.

The university's focus is undergraduate education in a residential setting. UMF also provides limited graduate education and welcomes commuter students and continuing education opportunities where regional and statewide needs correspond with areas of academic strength in the University. Through its focus on high quality academic programs in the arts and sciences, teacher education, and selected professional fields, the University challenges students to be active citizens in a campus community that helps them find and express with confidence their own voices, teaches them the humility to seek wisdom from others, and prepares them for ongoing explorations of how knowledge can be put to use for their personal benefit and the common good.

Across our programs, academic rigor matters, as does a commitment to experience-based learning that enlivens theoretical understandings of different disciplines and the relationship of those studies to a rapidly changing world. An ethic of civic-mindedness and individual and collective duty to foster positive social change is realized through the practice of liberal learning and a recognition that innovation, collaboration, and service with community partners is fundamental to the educational enterprise.

UMF's sense of place is shaped by the aesthetic, environmental, recreational, and intellectual heritage of the western Maine region. The bounty of the landscape and the locale contributes materially to a range of academic fields at UMF, to the exciting diversity of the extra- and co-curricular life of the University, and to our reciprocal relationships in support of the important work of our neighbors in western Maine. To fulfill its complementary responsibilities to the region and to the State, the University also reaches out to national and international domains to broaden students' educational experience and assure that they are well prepared for employment and citizenship in contexts that are richly diverse and global.

## II. Strategic Plan Process and Progress

*UMF 2020* reflects months of campus dialogue, report and plan preparation, and refinement of draft concepts and strategies through campus and community processes. Prepared by the UMF President's Council, the plan is crafted to reflect and support broader directions of the University of Maine System of which UMF is a part. Referenced specifically are the University of Maine System Board of Trustees 2014 Strategic Outcomes (adopted July 2014) and two initiatives underway in August 14, the UMS Strategic Facilities Review and the Academic Portfolio Review and Integration Process. Through the life of this plan UMF anticipates its participation in these and other endeavors reshaping administrative and academic operations throughout the University of Maine System.

Analyses to support *UMF 2020* include the spring 2013 Take Stock Task Force reports (on governance, previous strategic planning, graduate education, internationalization, college structure, and schedule of courses) and numerous materials generated in winter and spring 2014, notably an Internal Scan report (Erb and Ufford et al., February 2014), External Scan report (Ploof-Davis and Yardley et al., February 2014), and UMF Retention Report (Nelson and Pederson et al., February 2014). Also channeled into campus deliberations were the results of ongoing Faculty Senate-sponsored conversations on the curriculum; surveys of students, staff, faculty, Board of Visitors members, and other community partners; and consideration of the strategic directions and brand identities of other universities in the University of Maine System. After several rounds of review at the campus level, UMF presented its draft strategic concepts to the UMS Board of Trustees at the Board's May 2014 meeting.

The current document reflects changes since May 2014, notably emphasis on UMF's position within the broader University of Maine System, explicit reference to strategic policy documents with which this plan aligns, and development of implementation documents (separate files) outlining implementation processes, phasing, and first-year cost and revenue estimates. Underway at UMF in August 2014 are reports and plans for marketing, advancement, recruitment, and retention. These plans, which are consistent with one another and aligned with *UMF 2020* and Strategic Outcomes of the UMS Board of Trustees, are on track for finalization by mid-fall 2014.

## III. UMF 2020: Four Goals and Twenty Strategies

*UMF 2020: Experience Farmington* positions itself within the University of Maine System to reinforce UMF's traditional mission and brand while deepening its commitment to experiential education and community engagement. It achieves these outcomes through four goals and twenty underlying strategies.

### Goal 1. Reinforce and Enhance UMF's Mission and Identity

*UMF will position itself within the University of Maine System as a small, increasingly selective public liberal arts college, featuring programs in teacher education, the arts and sciences, and professional studies, and serving primarily full-time, traditional-age undergraduates in a residential setting. UMF will continue to be recognized for its academic quality, small classes, close-knit community, and integrated curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular offerings.*

**Strategy 1.1** UMF will **stabilize undergraduate enrollments** from its current baseline of 1,750 FTE to approximately 1,600 FTE by FY17. As it brings enrollments to this level, it will increase selectivity by reducing acceptance rates for less well-prepared applicants, and it will increase the percentage of out-of-state students from 16% to 20% by FY20. UMF will develop a comprehensive recruitment plan in fall 2014 to support and reflect this strategy and align with the strategic directions of other UMS universities.

**Strategy 1.2** UMF will **focus its scope on programs of demonstrated quality and promise**. In coordination with the Systemwide Academic Portfolio Review and Integration Process and other UMS Administrative Reviews, UMF will assess all programs and initiatives (academic, academic support, auxiliary), ultimately focusing resources and effort on those of greatest quality, relevance, promise, and mission significance. The first round of investigation and assessment will occur in FY15 for implementation in FY16, with ongoing assessment and pursuit of cross-campus opportunities through Systemwide processes.

**Strategy 1.3** UMF will **strengthen and more broadly promote its historic and continuing strength in teacher education** (early childhood, elementary, secondary, special education, educational leadership) to reinforce its disciplinary leadership. UMF will expand its online and hybrid graduate education degrees and certificates, and pursue opportunities for faculty, students, and staff to shape state, national and international conversations in education. In coordination with review of Education programs through the Academic Portfolio Review Process, UMF's investigation of program changes will commence in FY15, with implementation of new program options in FY17 and beyond.

**Strategy 1.4** UMF will **reinforce and promote its commitment to a broad liberal arts education** for all students, regardless of major. The campus will continue to strengthen and develop its general education curriculum, with the aim of ensuring that all students graduate with foundational skills in written and spoken communication, critical reading, critical analysis, creative thinking, technological competence, information acquisition and assessment, complex problem solving, teamwork, and leadership. Development of UMF's Gen. Ed. transformation, which will coordinate with the broader UMS investigation of general education and, in particular, System Credit Transfer policies, will occur through FY16, with implementation scheduled for FY17.

**Strategy 1.5** UMF will cultivate new enrollment and revenue streams by offering **educational programming and courses to selected non-traditional student markets**, including middle-, home- and high-school students, retirees, and others seeking educational enrichment.

- Through the plan period, with implementation starting in FY16, UMF will build flexibility into schedules and programs to enable **high-achieving middle-, home-, and high-school students** to take courses at UMF during days, evenings, weekends, and seasonal periods. The University will develop **highly interactive summer programming for pre-college students** in areas such as video game development, creative writing, and field science. UMF will implement a minimum of one new summer program by summer 2015 with weekend and evening programming implemented thereafter pending demand and University capacity.
- UMF will develop **3- to 5-course industry-recognized or enrichment certificates** consistent with existing expertise and capacity at UMF. Current opportunities might include GIS, sustainability science, small business management, health information systems, computer science, and creative writing. Investigation

of options will begin in FY15, with a minimum of two new certificates developed for implementation by FY17.

- UMF will collaborate with area employers, such as the hospital, manufacturing, and service-producing organizations, to develop **tailor-made curricula and courses that meet specific regional economic needs**. Investigation of options will begin in FY15, with determination of program potential by FY16.

## Goal 2. Experience UMF

*In furtherance of UMF's mission and values and UMS Board of Trustees Strategic Outcomes, UMF will develop purposeful, immersive, experience-based curricular programs that help students make the connection between liberal arts education and rewarding and successful careers, graduate education, and civic leadership.*

**Strategy 2.1 UMF will develop and implement “Experience UMF,”** an interdisciplinary, project-based, experiential academic program that will offer UMF students and the broader UMS and regional community opportunities to engage with significant issues and problems across traditional academic boundaries. Program investigation to begin in fall 2014 with implementation of a minimum of two pilot projects by fall 2015.

- Each year, members of the UMF community will work collaboratively with one another and relevant partners on a range of multi-year projects, in areas such as social justice, sustainable communities, public art, rural prosperity, nonprofit management, documentary film, and educational reform.
- Faculty, staff, students, and community members will work together to identify themes and topics for consideration, do research, develop solutions, design programs, and monitor success. The emphasis in these collaborative projects will be on creativity, innovative thinking, cross-disciplinary (and potentially intra-System and inter-university) collaboration, and active, practical engagement with real-world issues.
- Students will have opportunities to participate in “Experience UMF” by enrolling in credit-bearing courses associated with a collaborative project, by engaging in undergraduate research, or by working with clubs or organizations allied with an ongoing project.

**Strategy 2.2** UMF will seek to have a curricular menu on which all majors at UMF **require some form of engaged, experiential learning in the junior or senior year**. Students in any program may deepen and apply the skills appropriate to their discipline in internships, undergraduate research, service learning, study abroad, summer positions, or other appropriate experiential activities determined by program faculty. Discussions are underway with projected implementation in FY16.

**Strategy 2.3** From orientation through graduation, UMF will offer **high-quality, personalized academic and career advising** in alignment with ongoing retention planning. Faculty and staff will provide opportunities for students to document the knowledge, skills and achievement they have acquired during their UMF careers by means of electronic portfolios, co-curricular transcripts, narrative evaluations, and/or other detailed assessments. UMF will increase its engagement with community partners and UMF parents and alumni to create opportunities for job shadowing, networking, and other career-building activities for students. Investigation of options will begin in fall 2014, with implementation of promising assessment and engagement opportunities starting in FY16.

**Strategy 2.4** UMF will **improve and enhance the quality of the residential college experience of its students**, through incremental renovation of athletic facilities, the Student Center, and residence halls, starting in FY15. The campus will develop new residential options, including suites and student-run cooperative housing, by FY19.

**Strategy 2.5** To reinforce its commitment to experiential education tying curriculum to career, UMF will investigate and implement where appropriate **opportunities for greater student management of selected UMF operations**. Areas for consideration include the University Store, campus coffee shops, Mantor Library, and the Fitness and Recreation Center. Development is underway in FY15, with implementation of at least one pilot project by spring 2015.

### **Goal 3. Leverage our Location**

*UMF will make its location in a vibrant small town in the culturally and recreationally rich region of Western Maine, proximate to southern Quebec, a centerpiece of its recruitment, curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular activity and its position within the University of Maine System.*

**Strategy 3.1** UMF will draw more deliberately upon the region's social, economic, political, cultural, and environmental setting to provide **place-based educational opportunities that mutually benefit UMF students and our region**. Through coursework, volunteer, internship, shared educational opportunities across the curriculum, and extra-curricular experiences, UMF will strive to be a valued regional partner in understanding, engaging in, and addressing an array of important and complex issues relevant to western and central Maine and bordering areas of Quebec. In providing a focus on opportunities for students to engage the community as mentors, volunteers, Big Brother/Big Sister-like programs, financial and wellness counseling, and other roles, the university will contribute meaningfully to the health of our region's people, institutions, businesses, and environments. Program development is underway in fall 2014 with implementation varying by project starting in spring 2015.

**Strategy 3.2** UMF will develop for its students a **UMF Passport** that **discounts and promotes off-campus extra-curricular opportunities afforded by the region's natural, recreational, and cultural bounty**. Development is underway, with identification of target partnerships and opportunities starting in fall 2014 and first-phase implementation in fall 2015.

- Strengthen existing and forge new partnerships with area recreation businesses and organizations, including ski slopes, hiking clubs, canoeing, whitewater rafting, and related enterprises, to **promote student opportunities for nearby skiing, mountain biking, trail running/hiking and other recreational pursuits**. UMF's focus on year-round outdoor activities and wellness may include an option for pre-orientation programming, including multi-day outdoor experiences, to help strengthen cohorts and provide leadership opportunities for experienced students.
- Strengthen existing and forge new partnerships with area historic, arts and cultural organizations to **promote student participation in music, theater, art, dance, living history, and related cultural pursuits**. UMF will explore opportunities for summer and pre-orientation programming to help strengthen cohorts and engage juniors and seniors in leadership development.

**Strategy 3.3** Taking advantage of its location and abundance of mountain enthusiasts, UMF will work with area stakeholders to **activate a newly designed certificate program in Mountain and Snow Sports** open to certificate

seekers and students of all majors. Development of program is underway with entry of first cohort planned for fall 2016.

**Strategy 3.4** UMF will develop options for students to earn **nationally recognized certificates** while enrolled at UMF. In concert with on-campus and regional partners, potential certificate options include coaching, youth ski programs, National Ski Patrol, Wilderness First Responder, CPR, and others. Investigation and student surveying will begin in FY15, with opportunities reflected in recruitment and marketing materials by for entering cohort in fall 2016.

#### **Goal 4. Align our Actions**

*UMF will align its operations, marketing, governance, physical planning, and financial management to wisely steward its resources in support of its campus and Systemwide mission, goals, strategies, and outcomes, and shall monitor progress annually.*

**Strategy 4.1** UMF will **reorganize structures and processes of governance, academics, fundraising, and operations** to support and jointly share responsibility for achievement of UMF's mission and goals, the UMS Board of Trustees Strategic Outcomes, and other UMS initiatives and processes. Progress is underway in fall 2014 and will be ongoing throughout the plan period.

**Strategy 4.2** UMF will develop a **campus master plan** to support the UMF mission and goals and align with policies and directions of the UMS Strategic Facilities Review underway in 2014. In crafting and carrying out the plan, UMF will identify, secure support for, and phase appropriate investments in buildings, equipment, and infrastructure. Preparation of campus-based inventories will begin in fall 2014 with additional planning actions determined in alignment with the System Strategic Facilities Review.

**Strategy 4.3** UMF will determine annually its **capital investment and fundraising priorities**. To ensure that actions and investments support achievement of UMF's and UMS's mission, goals, and strategies, it will conduct regular "alignment audits" to identify areas of inconsistency. Implementation will be vested in UMF's Planning and Budget Advisory Committee to begin assessment in FY15 and bring forth the first annual recommendations at the start of FY16.

**Strategy 4.4** UMF will **develop a marketing plan** to support its mission, goals, and strategies consistent with its differentiated position within the University of Maine System. The university will align message, medium, and market to align with the UMF recruitment plan and create greater impact from marketing investment. The plan will be completed by fall 2014, with implementation ongoing through the plan period.

**Strategy 4.5** For each plan strategy, **UMF will establish metrics and time-specific expectations to monitor progress toward goals**, regularly posting plan progress on an internal monitoring system. The monitoring system and metrics will be developed in fall 2014. At the start of each fiscal year, starting in FY16, UMF will formally assess the previous year's and overall plan performance according to plan metrics.

**Strategy 4.6** Starting in FY15, UMF will **expand cross training processes and opportunities** to provide professional development, deepen talent reserves, and align with Systemwide initiatives in Human Resources. In consultation with the University of Maine System, UMF will further develop, by FY16, a **professional development plan for staff at all ranks** to encourage appropriate growth of leadership and skills within and across disciplines. This will include more formal mentoring and expectations for staff development in all departments.