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Contacts: Dan Demeritt
University of Maine System
207.621.3065
dan.demeritt@maine.edu

Helen Pelletier
Maine Community College System
207.215.4652
hpelletier@mccs.me.edu

MAINE'S 14 PUBLIC COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES SIGN FAR-REACHING TRANSFER AGREEMENT

AUGUSTA, ME— Governor Paul LePage joined leaders of the University of Maine and Maine Community College Systems today at a signing ceremony in Augusta for a comprehensive and far reaching transfer agreement that is designed to reduce college costs for Maine students and speed their time to degree completion.

The agreement, signed by University of Maine System Chancellor James Page and Maine Community College System President Derek Langhauser, will make it possible for students enrolled in any one of Maine's 14 community colleges and public universities to complete up to 35 credits of their general education requirements and transfer that block of credits, for full credit, to any of the other institutions within the two systems.

"It is not where you start, but how far you go that matters," said Chancellor Page. "With this agreement we are ensuring the same learning outcomes, same expectations, and same credit for our students across all fourteen of Maine's public colleges and universities so Maine learners can more easily and affordably progress along the path to advancement."

Until now, the transfer process between the two systems has been guided by over 150 transfer agreements between specific programs of study. These articulation agreements largely determine which credits will transfer and whether they will count towards the requirements of specific baccalaureate degree programs.

"Every year, over 750 of our students transfer to the University of Maine System," noted President Langhauser. "This agreement and other joint transfer initiatives are designed to serve the best interests of those students and to make sure they are able to get the education they need as quickly and affordably as possible. Thanks to the hard work of faculty and staff across our institutions, this agreement will help ensure that our students are prepared to be successful at each step in their educational journey."

"Improving cooperation among Maine's public universities and colleges makes sense for our students, the taxpayers who support these public institutions, and an expanding Maine economy that needs access to skilled and talented workers to continue to grow," said Maine Governor Paul LePage. "The general education transfer agreement between the university and community college systems is a good step forward in improving quality, affordability and access for Maine students."

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The new block transfer agreement builds on two other UMS/MCCS transfer initiatives designed to help ensure that students are able to earn all of the college credits and credentials to which they are entitled. The first of these is a practice known as reverse transfer that enables MCCS students who transfer to the UMS before earning a community college credential to transfer credits earned at the UMS back to the community college to complete their MCCS degree or certificate.

Another new initiative addresses how the 14 institutions award credit for prior learning and work experience. Faculty committees at both the UMS and MCCS are currently working to establish common scores and standards for portfolio and credential review so that students can carry forward prior learning credits awarded by any of the 14 institutions as they transfer between the two systems.

Both Chancellor Page and President Langhauser noted that these transfer initiatives have required significant effort on the part of faculty and administrators at both the UMS and MCCS as they work to align curriculum, develop common assessments, and implement new policies and practices at all 14 institutions. That collaboration will continue as the groups implement the new block transfer agreement (which is intended to be fully operational within both the UMS and MCCS by fall 2016), redesign courses, develop common assessment approaches, monitor progress, and create additional educational pathways in technical fields of study.

Together, the University of Maine System and the Maine Community College System enroll nearly 44,000 undergraduate students each year at fourteen institutions across the state. In one recent three year-period, 42% of MCCS graduates pursued further education. Forty percent of these graduates (1,115) did so within the University of Maine System.

For more information:

University of Maine System: <http://www.maine.edu/>

Maine Community College System: www.mccs.me.edu

Read the Memorandum of Understanding at

<http://www.mccs.me.edu/wp-content/uploads/MOU-Block-Transfer-Agreement.pdf>

Note: A number of students and graduates who have transferred between the Maine community colleges and the University of Maine System are available to answer questions about their experiences. Please contact Helen Pelletier (hpelletier@mccs.me.edu or 207-215-4652) to connect with one or more of them.

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