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## UM Re-emphasizes Commitment to Racial and Cultural Diversity

Maine Perspective

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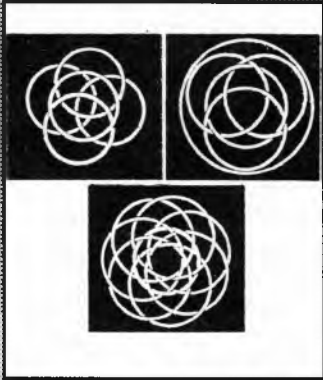
# Maine Perspective

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MARCH 1, 1991

## In Perspective



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Centerpiece**



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## UM Re-emphasizes Commitment to Racial and Cultural Diversity

The University of Maine continues and re-emphasizes its commitment to promote awareness and appreciation of racial and cultural diversity in a state where minorities are sorely underrepresented.

A university is a microcosm of a diverse world enriched by cultural, ethnic, religious and racial differences, University of Maine President Dale Lick points out. As a community of individuals of varying and often conflicting views and values, a university also reflects the reality and strife of society, and is not immune from intolerance and violent behavior, he says.

Several recent incidents - on and off campus - have made it clear that the University of Maine's concerted efforts over the past five years to address and resolve problems stemming from misconception, prejudice and discrimination must be strengthened, according to Lick.

In his Feb. 19 letter to the University community, Lick appealed for a recommitment to the basic values upon which a university must be predicated: mutual respect, a valuing of personal and intellectual differences, and a sensitivity toward intercultural communication.

"We wish to clearly state that acts of verbal and physical violence based on racial, ethnic, religious and cultural hatred of any kind have no place in the University and will not be tolerated."

The University recognizes its obligation to renew its efforts to provide and promote an atmosphere where individual differences are valued and respected, and an environment where all students feel welcomed, assured and secure, the President says.

Lick's response to resolutions enacted by the UM Student Senate in the wake of a Feb. 18 attack on two black students in Orono commends the Student Government for its sensitivity to the needs of the com-

munity and its commitment to help deal effectively with racism, intolerance and misunderstanding.

His response addresses the Student Senate's five recommendations for presidential action and outlines preliminary steps for each. In addition, the University's evolving action plan extends beyond the recommendations and provides the framework for new and expanded initiatives.

In recommitting its strong stand on promoting non-violence and racial tolerance, the University also has taken a new look at its comprehensive efforts toward pluralism, which span all areas of campus life and programs. Some highlights include:

**Council on Pluralism.** Formulated in fall 1990, this campuswide council is beginning its efforts to coordinate, report and make recommendations on pluralism issues, concerns and initiatives, and ensures these values have constructive impact on University decision-making.

**Initiatives.** Following a University of Maine System systemwide retreat on pluralism, UM held two major campus-based pluralism forums regarding pluralism in 1989 and 1990.

**Recruiting and Programming.** Established the position of minority recruiter in the Admissions Office in 1988 and a Multicultural Programs division of Student Services in 1989.

**Enrollment.** Increased minority enrollment from 180 in fall 1985 to 320 in fall 1990, an increase of 78 percent. International students nearly quadrupled from 137 in 1985 to 525 in 1990. These students bring the cultures of 82 countries to the UM campus.

**Faculty and Staff.** Increased minority faculty and staff from 47 in 1985-86 to 79 in 1989-90.

*continued on page 2*

# President Announces Action Plan for More Pluralistic Campus

*Editor's Note: Feb. 26, University of Maine President Dale Lick held a news conference to announce the University of Maine's Action Plan, designed to expand efforts that encourage increased pluralism on campus. The Action Plan is outlined below.*

## University of Maine Plan for a More Pluralistic Campus

**Education and Awareness.** In addition to on-going programs, more recently highlighted by the Civil Rights Awareness Week and Black History Month, the campus will expand its programs further, including:

**The Office of Multicultural Programs** has invited and will pursue internationally recognized black leaders to come to the campus to speak and discuss racism and related issues. They include a civil rights leader, a black history and African-American literature scholar, and a political activist and educator.

**The Executive Assistant** to the President has met and talked with representatives of the Anti-Defamation League, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and the Community Relations Service of the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice to discuss additional programming for promoting diversity and cultural tolerance.

**The Council on Pluralism** is awaiting a proposal from the Anti-Defamation

League for a campuswide anti-prejudice training program series, "A Campus of Difference." The Council will then meet with the Anti-Defamation League and the NAACP to discuss the program proposals and funding for implementing the series by the end of the spring semester, if possible.

**The Council on Pluralism** will develop a comprehensive campus plan for racial and cultural education to be presented to the President by the end of the 1991 fall semester. The council is also charged with working with community groups to explore ways to enhance multicultural understanding in surrounding areas.

**Multicultural curriculum revision.** Consistent with the recommendations of the Presidential Commission on Undergraduate Education, the Faculty Senate is developing a general education curriculum which will contain a multicultural dimension. The President has requested that the Vice President for Academic Affairs work with the Deans' Council and the Faculty Senate to consider specific proposals for curricular revisions intended to heighten awareness of racial, ethnic, religious and cultural diversity. In addition, the Vice President for Academic Affairs is in the process of establishing a grant program with funds being made available to faculty to engage in course development and revision to incorporate issues of multicultural diversity.

**Recruitment and retention of minority faculty and staff.** A plan for increased recruitment and retention is being revised, under the direction of the President, and will be the No. 1 agenda item at the March meetings of the Vice Presidents and Executive Council.

**New student orientation.** A racism and multicultural program will be developed and incorporated into the orientation sessions for all first-year students. It will be developed under the direction of the Vice President for Student Affairs, working with New Student Programs and Multicultural Affairs, and will be available for fall 1991 orientation.

**Residential Life.** Emphasis on racism as part of training for Residential Life staff will be expanded to be fully implemented by the 1991-92 academic year. Resident directors are meeting with the African American Student Association to discuss specific issues that should be addressed in both staff training and educational programs. The task is under the direction of the Vice President for Student Affairs and the Director of Residential Life.

## Commitment to Diversity *continued from page 1*

**International Programs.** Established an Office of International Programs in 1990 to strengthen coordination and expand international activities and contacts.

**Activities and Training.** Made a concerted and coordinated effort by many campus departments and units to provide programs and services to help minority and international students succeed academically and personally.

**Awareness Education.** Designed and implemented programs specifically to meet the needs of a diverse student population and to foster a climate that encourages and respects cultural differences.

**Minority Scholarships.** Created 20 four-year scholarships each year. Scholarships have been awarded in 1989 and 1990.

**Campuswide Cooperation.** Administration, the Office of Equal Opportunity and academic colleges and departments work together to ensure pluralism is a priority in policy and practice, and a reality in curriculum development and in the classroom.

**Residential Life.** Established diversity as a programming theme in 1988 and offers training to staff and a variety of programs on understanding, encouraging and responding to cultural diversity.

### Maine Perspective

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