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## Harold Alfond Foundation Investing \$240 Million to Bring Transformative Change to the University of Maine System

University of Maine System

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# Harold Alfond Foundation Investing \$240 Million to Bring Transformative Change to the University of Maine System

7  
OCT 2020

## UMS News

Press Releases

Strategic Priorities

*8th largest gift ever to an institution of public higher education follows the University of Maine System's first-in-the-nation transition to a unified accreditation*

Orono, Maine — The Harold Alfond Foundation's [historic investment in Maine and its people](#) includes a \$240 million commitment to the University of Maine System to bring transformative change to the state's largest educational, research, innovation and talent development asset.

The Alfond investment in the University of Maine System is the largest ever to a public institution of higher education in New England and the [8th largest gift](#) ever made to a U.S. institution of public higher education.

This commitment is a display of tremendous confidence in the faculty, staff and students of the University of Maine System. Collaboratively, UMS will build on strong foundations already in place at its universities and take effectiveness to new levels by implementing creative, innovative ideas and programs to serve the students and people of Maine.

The Harold Alfond Foundation's \$240 million commitment over the next 12 years recognizes how the University of Maine System's first-in-the-nation unified accreditation, [approved in June](#) by the New England Commission on Higher Education, provides new opportunities for faculty development, student support and innovative collaborative degree programs to advance Maine's economy and workforce in partnership with the public and private sectors.

"The University of Maine System is rising to meet the challenges of our state in a very big way. Through the initiatives we are supporting, it is perfectly poised to set new standards for how public higher education serves students and at the same time partners with employers in the pursuit of economic development and opportunity," said Greg Powell, Chairman of the Harold Alfond Foundation.

"It needs resources to do that and so we are betting big on its success and urging others to join us," said Powell. "Our investment in the University System is the largest single gift in the history of the Foundation and deservedly so. The System and its universities have a terrific leadership team and that leadership is setting an exciting strategic direction that commits our state's largest education and workforce development asset to student success, partnership and greater prosperity for the people of Maine."

The University of Maine System will leverage the Harold Alfond Foundation's transformative gift to secure an additional \$170 million in matching funds over the next 10 years from private, state and federal sources, resulting in \$410 million total investment in Maine's public university system.

"Maine is receiving a transformative, unprecedented investment in its people and its future from the Harold Alfond Foundation," said Chancellor Dannel Malloy. "And it comes at a time when we need optimism and an affirmation that we work best when we work together. Through the work to achieve unified accreditation for our universities and, more recently, to bring our students back to Maine in one of the safest fall reopenings in the country, we have remained focused on both the success, and public health and safety of our students, faculty and staff, and the Maine communities where they learn, teach and engage in research.

"We are extremely grateful for the Harold Alfond Foundation's commitment to Maine's public universities," Malloy said. "We're ready to use these generous investments and the matching dollars they leverage to transform our academic collaborations and facilities, provide resources to faculty for development and innovation, support student success and provide scholarships, and work with state and global partners to accelerate workforce and economic opportunities for Maine. All of this honors the Harold Alfond Foundation's 70-year legacy of service and generosity."

"The Board of Trustees is incredibly appreciative of the Harold Alfond Foundation's support for and confidence in the steps we have taken to provide Maine's public universities with the leadership and strategic direction necessary for them to become an accessible, affordable, and responsive 21st-century leaders in education, research and workforce development," said James Erwin, Chair of the UMS Board of Trustees.

## Media Contacts

University of Maine System,  
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Trustees:

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## Campus-specific info:

[UMaine](#) (Orono)  
[UMA](#) (Augusta)  
[UMF](#) (Farmington)  
[UMFK](#) (Fort Kent)  
[UMM](#) (Machias)  
[UMPI](#) (Presque Isle)  
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“Given the right educational and experiential learning opportunities, Maine students and workers can compete with anyone in the world,” Erwin said. “With the Alford Foundation’s historic partnership, we have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to become the high-performing statewide institution of public higher education Maine families, employers and community leaders need to overcome the state’s demographic and skills-gap challenges, and to participate fully in the rapidly changing knowledge economy.”

### Harold Alford Foundation \$240 Million Investment

The Harold Alford Foundation’s investment in the University of Maine System will be focused in four areas:

- \$55 million for the Maine Graduate and Professional Center — Supporting scholarships, integrated program development across business, law, public policy and graduate engineering; and a state-of-the-art building on the University of Southern Maine’s Portland campus to house the Maine Center programs and Maine Law, and to serve as a center for collaboration and engagement to help attract and strengthen the Maine economy.
- \$75 million for a multi-university Maine College of Engineering, Computing and Information Science to be cooperatively led by the University of Maine — Providing additional undergraduate engineering programs at the University of Southern Maine, UMaine graduate engineering programs offered in Portland, expanded pathways into the statewide college from all UMS universities, new opportunities for shared programs, interdisciplinary structures and partnerships, and further renovations to UMaine’s engineering education infrastructure alongside the [Ferland Engineering Education and Design Center](#) currently under construction.
- \$20 million for student success and retention — Funding for three programs to be piloted at UMaine and expanded across the University of Maine System that include research learning opportunities for first- and second-year undergraduate students, a gateway to success initiative to expand learning assistance and curricular redesign to reduce failure rates and improve retention in “gateway” STEM courses, and a pathways-to-careers program to expand access to credit-bearing internships and other experiential learning opportunities System-wide.
- \$90 million for athletic facilities at the University of Maine and the well-being of Maine people — Providing support to maintain excellence in the state’s only Division I athletics program, advance gender equity, and provide a preferred destination for high school sports championships, large academic fairs and competitions, and community events. All of the university’s students and people from throughout Maine will be able to use the state-of-the-art athletic and convening venues at the state’s flagship university in Orono.

University of Maine System universities will be sharing additional details on these initiatives, including facility renderings and master plan updates, program expansions, new partnerships, faculty hires and other innovations in future announcements, and through engagements with university, community and industry stakeholders.

### UMS TRANSFORMS

With the Harold Alford Foundation’s historic commitment to transformative change in public higher education, the University of Maine System will shortly announce how the initiatives will be developed, beginning with discussions about the opportunities with interested faculty, staff and students. In the initial stages of this work, termed UMS TRANSFORMS, university and System leaders will be convening information sessions and open forums, identifying individuals interested in participating and establishing an implementation structure. University community input, continued conversation with the Harold Alford Foundation, and engagement with other grantees and state partners will help to define outcomes and measures of success for the initial stages of the initiatives.

### University Leaders Respond to the Harold Alford Foundation’s Investment

#### University of Maine President Joan Ferrini-Mundy

*We are deeply grateful to the Harold Alford Foundation for providing this extraordinary opportunity for transformation at the University of Maine and across the University of Maine System. This investment will have a far-reaching impact throughout Maine and well beyond. The UMS and other initiatives announced today will enable the development of talent that will serve Maine for decades to come, grow the environments that foster innovation and entrepreneurship, and renew infrastructure for research and education.*

*The investments in Black Bear athletics are an investment in Maine. They will strengthen and solidify the state’s only Division I athletics program and ensure gender equity. UMaine will have the facilities to be able to welcome schools and organizations from across Maine for athletic competitions and championships, and other statewide initiatives ranging from STEM to the arts.*

*The Alford Foundation’s vision and leadership give us opportunities unlike any we have ever had to emphasize student success and retention; expand engineering, computing and information science education statewide at the undergraduate and graduate levels, in partnerships with K-12, higher education, and the public and private sectors; and help drive economic recovery and growth in Maine through the integration of business, law and public policy. I thank the Alford Foundation for its confidence in our capabilities and potential to use this gift of unprecedented magnitude to transform our institutions and our state.*

#### University of Southern Maine President Glenn Cummings

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*The Harold Alford Foundation has our community's deepest gratitude for this historic gift to Maine's flagship university, to the entire University of Maine System and to the University of Southern Maine.*

*The Foundation's commitment will have a transformative and lasting impact on Maine students. The gift will allow our universities to add even greater value to our state's workforce and will strengthen our graduates' contributions to their communities. It's especially wonderful to see the Foundation's commitment to build new facilities for the Maine Graduate and Professional Center on USM's Portland Campus and provide USM students with expanded scholarships. The Foundation's investment will strengthen the Center's ability to marshal programs in law, business, policy and public health to grow Maine's economy. We will all gain from the Center's ongoing service to Maine's businesses and civic, legal and nonprofit organizations.*

*On behalf of the USM community, I thank the Harold Alford Foundation for their confidence in our ability to realize the full potential of their investment and the magnitude of their generosity.*

#### **University of Maine School of Law Dean Leigh Sauffley**

*On behalf of the students – current and future – of Maine Law and the Graduate and Professional Center, we send our deepest gratitude to the Harold Alford Foundation, not just for the extraordinary generosity demonstrated through this transformative grant, but also for the vision and support for collaborative and cross-disciplinary education. The interplay of business, law, science, engineering, and policy has never been more important in Maine and this country. The work already made possible through prior generosity of the Foundation has demonstrated the critical importance of educating the next generation of Maine's business leaders, lawyers, policy makers, scientists and engineers across multiple disciplines, and this extraordinary gift will advance the reframing of graduate education in a way that will add immense value to Maine for generations to come.*

#### **University of Maine Athletic Director Ken Ralph**

*Words cannot adequately convey our appreciation for the generosity of the Harold Alford Foundation. This gift to the University of Maine System and to Black Bear Athletics once again shows how the Board of the Harold Alford Foundation continues to honor Mr. Alford's passion for excellence in education and athletics. This grant will allow us to upgrade our facilities to improve the competitiveness of our Division I teams, advance our stated commitment to gender equity in our athletics programs, as well as create a destination for youth club programs and high school championship level events, cementing Orono as the premier destination in Maine for sports while drawing countless youth to our campus to enjoy the thrill of competing.*

*This grant will allow us to build out some new facilities and upgrade existing facilities. The full execution of our plan will positively impact all 17 of our varsity programs while also providing better facilities for our on-campus recreational sports. The spectator experience will also be enhanced so people can more easily make the decision to come to campus to cheer on their Black Bears.*

*Since the mid-'70s when Harold Alford made a gift which would become Alford Arena, the Alford family has positively impacted generations of athletes in Orono. This new grant will allow us to enhance the Alford legacy with the University of Maine and the Black Bears. We are humbled by the generosity shown by the Harold Alford Foundation and will work hard every day to live up to the expectations Harold Alford had for the university and its athletic department.*

#### **Media Resources**

[Video with](#) UMaine President Joan Ferrini-Mundy

[Link to UMS Logo](#) and [UMS Style Guide](#) — scroll to bottom for links to logos for the universities

Chancellor Malloy [Bio](#), [Portrait Photo](#) and [Safe Return Photo](#):

Chancellor Malloy speaks with USM student Nathan Henry, a Business Marketing Major from Brewer, Maine, moving into his residence hall at the start of the Fall 2020 semester.

#### **About the University of Maine System**

Established in 1968, the University of Maine System (UMS) unites six distinctive public universities, comprising 10 campuses and numerous centers, in the common purpose of providing quality higher education while delivering on its traditional tripartite mission of teaching, research, and public service.

A comprehensive public institution of higher education, UMS serves more than 30,000 students annually and is supported by the efforts of more than 2,000 full-time and part-time faculty, more than 3,000 regular full-time and part-time staff, and a complement of part-time temporary (adjunct) faculty.

Reaching more than 500,000 people annually through educational and cultural offerings, the University of Maine System also benefits from more than two-thirds of its alumni population residing within the state; more than 123,000 individuals.

The System consists of six universities: The University of Maine (UMaine), including its regional campus the University of Maine at Machias (UMM); the University of Maine at Augusta (UMA); the University of Maine at Farmington (UMF); the University of Maine at Fort Kent (UMFK), the University of Maine at Presque Isle (UMPI); and the University of Southern Maine

(USM). The System also includes the University of Maine School of Law and the University of Maine Graduate and Professional Center.

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## **Harold Alfond Foundation Invests \$500 Million in Maine and its People**

*Partners with Eight Institutions Transforming the State's Future*

**PORTAND, ME, October 6, 2020** – The Harold Alfond Foundation today announced more than \$500 million dollars of new grant investments in Maine people and institutions to help grow the state's workforce and economy and support quality health care. These new investments build on the Foundation's long-standing commitment to provide opportunity for the people of Maine to thrive from birth through career.

“Our state faces unprecedented challenges,” said Greg Powell, Chairman of the Harold Alfond Foundation. “In the face of these challenges, we still see a bright, prosperous future for the people of Maine. Today's grants are to vital, high-performing Maine institutions who will help build that future.”

Governor Janet Mills praised the investment. “I am grateful to the Harold Alfond Foundation for their partnership in making our long term goal of welcoming all innovators home to Maine a reality. By bringing together higher education institutions, research institutions, community organizations and business leaders, this initiative will fuel new opportunities for Maine people and diversify and expand our economy at a critical moment in our state's history.”

Receiving commitments ranging between \$5 million and \$240 million each, the grant recipients are innovators in education, skill-building, research and job creation. Supporting the goals of Maine's 10-year Economic Development Strategy, the selected institutions will help enhance the skills of the state workforce, promote innovation and entrepreneurial solutions, and strengthen the state's infrastructure.

The grant recipients are the University of Maine System, The Roux Institute at Northeastern University, the University of New England, Thomas College, FocusMaine, Colby College, Waterville Creates!, and The Jackson Laboratory:

- **The University of Maine System (UMS):** to support transformative change at Maine's public universities by launching a cutting edge, multi-university ‘College of Engineering, Computing, and Information Science,’ creating new programs supporting student retention and success; further developing the Maine Graduate and Professional Center, integrating law, business, and public and health policy; and enhancing athletic facilities at UMaine, home to the state's only Division I athletic program. In aggregate, the UMS grant represents a strategic, long-term effort to strengthen the capacity of Maine's public universities to meet the state's most pressing higher education, workforce and economic needs.

- **The Roux Institute at Northeastern University:** to support scholarships, graduate education programming, and research capabilities for Maine residents in the fields of AI, computer and data science, digital engineering, and the advanced life sciences and medicine. The grant is designed to spur innovation, build talent, and drive economic growth in Portland and the State of Maine.
- **The University of New England (UNE):** to support the establishment of the Institute for Interprofessional Education and Practice and construction of a new facility for the relocation of the UNE College of Osteopathic Medicine from Biddeford to Portland. UNE is Maine’s largest health care educator and home to Maine’s only medical school and Northern New England’s only dental college. It is a national leader in team-based health care education with expertise in digital health and treating rural and aging populations. This project will unify medical students with students studying to be nurses, dentists, physician assistants, pharmacists, and other health care professionals on its Portland Campus. It will also enable the acceleration of high-growth undergraduate programs on the University’s Biddeford campus. In so doing, the grant will help grow and strengthen Maine’s workforce.
- **Thomas College:** to support the College’s sustained excellence and growth through the launch of new academic programs in leading-edge fields, enhanced student retention programs, expanded affordability initiatives, and a deepening of academic and employer community partnerships through the Harold Alfond Institute for Business Innovation.
- **FocusMaine:** to expand statewide programmatic efforts to accelerate high-quality job growth in three of Maine’s most globally competitive and high-growth fields—the life sciences, aquaculture, and agriculture—with a focus on skills and talent development.
- **Colby College:** to support the economic revitalization of Waterville through the coordinated redevelopment of multiple Main Street buildings and the construction of a state-of-the-art athletic and recreation center. The Foundation’s support of Colby furthers a long-standing funding relationship: Harold Alfond made his first ever major gift in 1955 to Colby, to build the Alfond Ice Arena on the College’s campus.
- **Waterville Creates!:** to support the organization’s partnerships with Colby College in the construction of the Paul J. Schupf Center for the Arts on Main Street, as well as the operations of Waterville Creates!, the leader of arts and cultural programming in the city. This effort, along with those of Colby in Waterville more generally, is designed to help attract students and families to a vibrant Central Maine.
- **The Jackson Laboratory (JAX):** to further the scope of the Maine Cancer Genomics Initiative, increasing patient access to genomic therapies and clinical trials, and creating new digital tools to enable quick dissemination of learnings and genetic services in rural settings. The JAX grant, along with the Foundation’s ongoing support of the MaineHealth Cancer Care Network, a program of MaineHealth and MaineGeneral Health, in partnership with JAX, puts Maine on the cutting edge of leading cancer research and patient care.

“The Harold Alfond Foundation strategically selected these programs, each of which expands access to higher education and builds a pipeline of talent in key areas well-poised for economic growth in Maine, such as biotech, engineering, healthcare and IT,” said Dana Connors, President of the Maine State Chamber of Commerce. “Each of these institutions play a critical role in strengthening Maine’s future. The value of these investments and their impact on the success of Maine’s economy and people cannot be overstated.”

### **Investing in the Future Through Teamwork**

The key to Maine’s future is a high-quality education system. Much of the funding announced today is focused on higher education, and with institutions creating and delivering innovative academic programs to meet the state’s pressing workforce needs and opportunities.

“Our goal is to make long-lasting, positive change, not only by direct investment in institutions leading the way, but also by attracting continued and sustained support from government and business leaders in the state, the northeast corridor and across the country,” Powell commented. “That is absolutely critical to help Mainers continue to cope with the effects of the pandemic today and build their economy and communities for the future.”

“In true Harold Alfond fashion, these grants require teamwork and partnership between and among the grantee institutions and the people of Maine,” added Powell. “We are challenging our partners and state government to join us in this effort, to have ‘skin in the game’.” In this spirit, all eight grantees have committed to contributing their own funds or raising new funds from the community. “We know Maine will rise to the challenge,” said Powell.

### **Responding to the Challenge**

These investments help tackle the long-term challenges to economic prosperity that Maine faces, including a shrinking workforce that needs the skills required for today’s modern STEM-based economy. The coronavirus pandemic has only exacerbated these challenges and underscored the need for collaboration across the state.

The pandemic has given new significance to the work of all Foundation grantee institutions, each working to help Maine and its residents rebuild today and thrive in the future. In response to the crisis, the Harold Alfond Foundation joined other Maine funders in supporting short-term, emergency needs of the state’s charitable institutions on the frontlines, such as the Good Shephard Food Bank and Full Plates, Full Potential, among others. The Foundation also modified existing grant agreements to help grantees, like Jobs for Maine’s Graduates and the Alfond Youth and Community Center, deal with pandemic-related stress. Modifications included accelerating payments or reallocating grant funding to pressing needs.

### **Building on a Legacy**

Since its founding in 1950, the Harold Alfond Foundation has furthered the philanthropic legacy of Harold Alfond, the founder of Dexter Shoe Company and a longtime supporter of Maine’s communities and people. That legacy includes an emphasis on three broad giving areas still the focus today: education, healthcare, and youth and community development.

The Foundation's focus remains grounded in the values of its founder, said Powell. "Harold always promoted innovation and entrepreneurial thinking, often in the face of great risk," he added. "He started his first shoe company in the midst of World War II, always willing to venture out and start something new, even in unsettled and unpredictable times."

Throughout its 70 years of giving, the Foundation has sustained its founder's values and commitment to the people of Maine through several signature grant programs. These include the **Harold Alfond College Challenge** (now also known to Maine families as MyAlfondGrant), which awards a \$500 grant to every Maine resident baby to catalyze savings for post-secondary education; the **Alfond Leaders Student Debt Reduction Program**, which incentivizes high-quality STEM workers to live and work in Maine through the promise of student debt repayment (of 50% of an individual's student debt, up to \$60,000 per person); and the Waterville, Maine-based **Alfond Youth and Community Center**, the nation's only combined Boys and Girls Club and YMCA.

Major grants have also been awarded to the **Maine Community College System**, including, most recently, support of its initiative to design and deliver new short-term, non-credit programs to underemployed and unemployed adult learners; and **MaineGeneral Health**, including funding to construct the Alfond Center for Health and Harold Alfond Center for Cancer Care in Augusta, Maine and the Thayer Center for Health in Waterville, Maine.

Historically, education grants have often supported athletic causes, in recognition of Harold Alfond's love of sports and appreciation for the positive values athletics instill in young people. Colby College and the University of Maine have been major recipients of these athletic grants and, consistent with this history, their athletic programs and facilities continue to be of significant interest to the Foundation today.

To learn more about the Harold Alfond Foundation, visit: <https://www.haroldalfondfoundation.org/>.

### **Related Upcoming Announcements from the Grant Recipients**

In the coming weeks, each grant recipient will be making detailed announcements regarding their Harold Alfond Foundation funded programs, including funding amounts, goals and more:

On October 7:

- FocusMaine, contact: Angie Helton, [angie@nediaassociates.com](mailto:angie@nediaassociates.com)
- University of Maine, contact: Dan Demeritt, [dan.demeritt@maine.edu](mailto:dan.demeritt@maine.edu)

On October 8:

- Jackson Labs, contact: Maggie Moore, [Maggie.moore@jax.org](mailto:Maggie.moore@jax.org)
- The Roux Institute, contact: Renata Nyul, [r.nyul@northeastern.org](mailto:r.nyul@northeastern.org)

The week of October 12<sup>th</sup>:

- University of New England on October 13, contact: Sarah Delage, [sdelage@une.edu](mailto:sdelage@une.edu)
- Thomas College on October 14, contact: [Mackenzie.rileyyoung@thomas.edu](mailto:Mackenzie.rileyyoung@thomas.edu)
- Colby College on October 15, contact: Ruth Jackson, [rjackson@colby.edu](mailto:rjackson@colby.edu)