



Office of the President

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President's Message to the Community: June 7

June 7, 2016 [President's Messages](#)

This is such a great season to be at UMaine and in Maine. For many faculty and students, this is high season for fieldwork, research, scholarly outreach and creative activities. And Summer University is in full swing.

Our academic year culminated with two great Commencement ceremonies on May 14, highlighted by an outstanding address by UMaine alumna and honorary degree recipient Ambassador Pamela White. Her address received standing ovations from the record number of graduates and guests in attendance at Alford Arena. If you haven't heard Ambassador White's address, want to hear it again or share it as others have done, videos from the 214th Commencement ceremonies are [online](#).

Speaking of Commencement, I want to thank the countless number of UMaine community members who make that day such a success. As all of us know, getting undergraduate and graduate degree candidates ready for graduation begins with outstanding faculty teaching and mentoring, and staff in offices campuswide supporting student success. A hardworking Commencement Committee, led by Amber Thompson, mobilized hundreds of employees and volunteers to ensure that the event — one of the largest in Maine — was a special occasion. From the dedicated Facilities Management crews and UMaine PD officers to the Auxiliary Services, Student Records, Graduate School and Athletics staffs, we thank you for your expertise and dedication.

I look forward to presiding over the next Commencement ceremonies with my appointment extension through June 30, 2018, which was announced at the end of May by Chancellor James Page. It's an honor to be president of such a great university, working as a team with the UMaine community. Linking the vision and purpose of Maine's only public research university with that of our public- and private-sector partners benefits the people of Maine. By collaborating with leaders statewide who value UMaine's distinctions, we can help move Maine forward.

One of those important statewide partnerships garnered some exciting news for the state of Maine on May 27. It was announced that the Department of Energy elevated New England Aqua Ventus I, Maine's floating offshore wind energy demonstration project designed by a world-class University of Maine-led consortium, from "alternate" to full "onboard" status.

The announcement means that Aqua Ventus will now be one of up to three leading projects that are each eligible for up to \$39.9 million in additional funding over three years — \$13.3 million each year — for the construction phase of the project, pending the achievement of DOE benchmarks.

I want to congratulate and thank Habib Dagher, executive director of the Advanced Structures and Composites Center, for his leadership and vision in this initiative, and his incredibly talented team, and our key partners — Cianbro and Emera. We look forward to the potential this project holds for Maine.

In other updates, we held the final UMaine FY17 budget presentation June 2, recapping the yearlong series of forums and presenting our final numbers on our balanced budget. Also provided: the Unified Budget Recommendations overview and a multi-year financial analysis review for FY17–FY21. Video and print materials from this budget session and all the other forums this past academic year are available [online](#).

Regarding the primary partnership between UMaine and the University of Maine at Machias: Planning teams have begun their work focused on both administrative and academic collaboration, and on institutional organization. Later this month, 10 academic teams that correspond to the University of Maine at Machias degree programs will have initial meetings. The discussions concerning administrative efficiencies, enrollment growth and enhancing academic opportunities for students and faculty at both campuses will continue for the next eight months, with plans for a November presentation to the Board of Trustees.

This month, our community will welcome members of our record-high incoming class for [Summer Orientation](#), June 17–20 and June 24–27. Again, as we saw for Commencement, members of the UMaine community will turn out to make this annual multiday event a success — and for that, I thank you.

Also in June, our community will welcome 25 young African leaders to campus to participate in the Mandela Washington Fellowship program. Beginning June 22, they will spend six weeks with us in an Institute on Public Management, gaining classroom and experiential training in such areas as economic and workforce development; financial management in public and nonprofit organizations; and environmental policy management. Our thanks to Vice President for Research Carol Kim, Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center Director Jonathan Rubin and Office of Sustainability Director Dan Dixon for their leadership in this effort.

UMaine is one of 37 institutions nationwide participating in this program, sponsored by the U.S. State Department. The Fellowship provides these outstanding young leaders with the opportunity to hone their skills at a U.S. institution of higher education, with support for professional development after they return home. They'll also learn about UMaine and Maine, and I urge you to be a part of their experience here. Details about the program on campus are [online](#).

And as we enter the summer months ahead, I hope you have an opportunity to take advantage of all Maine has to offer. Thank you.

[Top](#)