Dear Board of Trustees:

We are a group of community and business leaders who have come together in support of changing the name of the University of Southern Maine to the University of Maine – Portland.

Maine is in the midst of a workforce crisis, created by adverse demographic trends and exacerbated by low unemployment. We are the oldest state in the nation, the pool of high school graduates continues to shrink, and we are losing our young people to out-of-state opportunities.

These are concerning indicators for Maine’s economic prospects and for the future of our State’s higher education institutions. As business and community leaders we see the impact of this every day. It is hindering our economic growth, stifling innovation and making it increasingly difficult to keep pace with our competition regionally, nationally, and globally.

In response to these realities, we must consider solutions to increase enrollment in Maine’s universities – the incubators of our workforce. Research done by the University of Southern Maine strongly indicates that a name change will increase interest in the University among out-of-state students and to the University of Maine System as a whole. Out-of-state students increase revenue which means more money to fund scholarships, new academic programs, facility improvements, and support for Maine students; it means introducing additional young people to our great state to develop roots and contribute to our economy.

It is in that spirit and our commitment to the future vitality of Maine that we strongly support a name change for the University of Southern Maine. We respectfully ask you to support the University’s proposal and vote in favor of rebranding the institution as the University of Maine – Portland.

Sincerely,

Deanna Sherman- Dead River Company
Bill Burke- Portland Sea Dogs
Ellen Belknap- SMRT
Jon Ayers- IDEXX
Leeann Leahy- VIA
Jo-an Lantz- Geiger
Rich Peterson- MaineHealth
Jeff Sanders- MaineMed

Michael Simonds- Unum
John Chandler- BerryDunn
Steve Smith- LLBean
Bill Williamson- Bank of America
Bill Tracy- Auburn Savings Bank
Chris Joyce- Texas Instruments
Michael Bourque- MEMIC
Dayton Benway- Baker Newman Noyes