USM-North Atlantic Region Strategic Framework

A CHANGING WORLD
Over the past few years Maine has developed new and expanded trade, educational, and cultural relationships with several countries in the North Atlantic Region (i.e., Iceland, Greenland, Faroe Islands, Scotland, Ireland, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, and Atlantic Canada). While these relationships offer a solid foundation for growth now, they will be deepened and strengthened as future changing conditions present increased opportunities.

- Climate change and Arctic ice-melt initiated sea level rise are impacting the State. Maine’s research community is at the forefront of helping the world understand the effects these changes will bring.
- The Arctic ice-melt is opening new shipping lanes that are cutting distances by a third between the eastern United States, north-west Europe, and the Far East. Maine has an opportunity to become an international trade hub in the Northeast U.S. because of its proximity to the Arctic and to the North Atlantic countries; its ports in Portland, Eastport and Searsport; and the presence of Eimskip in Portland with its North Atlantic/Arctic reach.
- The Maine North Atlantic Development Office (MENADO) was established by the state to unify Maine’s efforts in strengthening economic, educational, and cultural ties with the region.

TURNING OUTWARD
The University of Southern Maine’s (USM) relevance is based on engaging its communities and the University of Maine System campuses in responding to the economic, health, and social needs of Maine citizens, businesses, industries, and communities. This relevance applies to helping strengthen the state’s competitive advantage in the North Atlantic Region, including graduating globally competent students that:

- Have a broader understanding of the world beyond their immediate environment;
- Recognize and appreciate a broad range of perspectives;
- Communicate effectively with people of varying nationalities, and ethnic, racial, and cultural backgrounds; and
- Have skills that increase their employability with a global market in mind.

It is important for USM to look outward to the larger world in order to build our students’ global competence by preparing them to live and work in a global, diverse, interconnected, interdependent, complex changing world. The emerging opportunities in the North Atlantic region offers us such a lens. Because of our partnerships with Eimskip, the New England Ocean Cluster House (NEOCH), and MENADO, Iceland became the intentional first step in our journey of turning outward toward this region.

- On September 18, 2015 President Glenn Cummings signed a partnership agreement with the NEOCH that allows faculty, staff, and students to expand their international experience and engage with innovative companies in ocean-related industries. This partnership marks the beginning of exploring new opportunities to connect USM with businesses and academic institutions in Iceland.
- From October 15-18, 2015, a USM delegation of faculty and staff visited Iceland to explore relationships with Reykjavik University, University of Iceland, the Tourism Industry, and other organizations. A MOU between USM and Reykjavik University is laying the foundation for faculty and student exchanges.
  - Resulting from that trip, eight MEIF-funded projects will allow 194 undergraduate students, 38 graduate students, 27 faculty members, and six staff members to engage with and establish long lasting partnerships with their counterparts in Iceland over the next three years.
- In the spring of 2016 USM convened the Maine North Atlantic Education Consortium to facilitate educational partnerships throughout the North Atlantic Region, and to further international learning opportunities for faculty and students, as well as education and programming around North Atlantic issues for students, scholars, and the public. The Consortium was established at MENADO’s suggestion that USM play a convening role to avoid duplication of efforts among colleges/universities and to assure collaboration and sharing of resources in the higher education community in Maine.
- A generous gift from the estate of A. Carolla Haglund ’51, will enable Honors Students to gain an international experience during their first two years at USM.
COMMUNITY NEEDS

On July 7, 2016 USM convened external stakeholders from the business, law, arts and humanities, and government communities to share with our faculty, staff, and administrators pressing needs, that if addressed, would enhance Maine’s competitive advantage in the North Atlantic region. These major needs include:

- Find ways to take full advantage of our marine resources and supply chains.
- Improve connections among modes of transportation to expand business and cultural opportunities.
- Encourage ingenuity in education and workforce development.
- Involve and support students in creative thinking, innovation and entrepreneurship.
- Find a way to express Maine’s culture and values in all products.
- Allow liberal arts to be infused into business innovation and development, and connect artists with new maritime provinces and countries to increase cross-cultural development and cultural tourism.
- Build student knowledge and skills that integrate risk management, regulatory compliance, regulatory advocacy, public policy leadership, maritime and oceans law, relationship to investments, and business.
- Attract capital investment to make Greater Portland the hub for economic activity in the North Atlantic region.
- Generate excitement to increase community support for Maine’s involvement in the North Atlantic region.

The discussions increased our understanding of the North Atlantic region and helped to identify strategic ways in which we could be a major contributor to achieving Maine’s North Atlantic strategy. The accompanying USM-North Atlantic Region Strategic Framework is the outcome of the July session, and is intended to guide institutional investments in our faculty, staff, and students who want to build on the foundation of relationships that have been established in the region.

USM’s RESPONSE TO COMMUNITY NEEDS

The USM-North Atlantic Region Strategic Framework outlines three major pillars of community engagement activities that are responsive to the community needs. The Framework takes full advantage of the collective knowledge, experience, and national and international recognition of our faculty and staff in innovations in education and workforce development, research, training, and technical assistance. The Framework also leverages our stewardship as an institution of higher education in order to educate the public and inform policies in support of strengthening Maine’s economic, educational, and cultural partnerships with North Atlantic countries.

Public Convener – As an institution embedded in the community, we will serve as a public convener to showcase the economic, education, and cultural successes in the North Atlantic region. Our role as public convener calls on us to work closely with our partners to highlight issues of concern to Maine and to help identify meaningful policies and solutions, enabling our faculty, staff, and students to further Maine’s economic growth.

Education and Workforce Development – We will continue to support faculty and staff in developing highly innovative education and workforce development programs that build our students’ global competence. Examples include but are not limited to infusing liberal arts in business innovation and development, and STEM education; infusing creative thinking, innovation, and entrepreneurship in undergraduate curricula; faculty and student exchanges/internships; cultural exchanges in the visual and performing arts and the humanities; and connecting business, investments, risk management, regulatory compliance and advocacy, public policy leadership, and maritime and oceans law.

Research, Training, Technical Assistance – USM is nationally and internationally recognized in select areas that support the state’s North Atlantic strategy. Tapping USM’s research, training, and technical assistance expertise, multidisciplinary teams of faculty, staff, and students are poised to play significant roles in strengthening the state’s competitive advantage in the North Atlantic region in critical areas, such as environment, engineering, risk management, regulatory compliance, public health, and sustainable development.

NEXT STEPS

USM will facilitate a collaborative process with internal and external stakeholders to implement the framework. For further information on the Framework please contact Dr. Terry Shehata at a.shehata@maine.edu or 288-8239.
**USM North Atlantic Region Strategic Framework**

**Goal:** Strengthen USM’s research and workforce development capacities that are responsive to the state’s strategy to capitalize on economic and cultural opportunities in the North Atlantic Region.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Needs</th>
<th>USM Major Activities</th>
<th>USM Outcomes</th>
<th>Goals Impacted</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research, Training &amp; Technical Assistance</strong></td>
<td>Strengthen currently funded Iceland Initiative projects, and support new projects in topics relevant to this Framework.</td>
<td>More faculty/staff are submitting proposals for external support.</td>
<td>MENADO GOALS:</td>
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<td>Strengthen relationships with Reykjavik University and the University of Iceland and establish/expand relationships with universities, businesses, and nonprofit and government agencies in the North Atlantic countries.</td>
<td>More faculty/staff are engaging and building long-term research collaborations with external partners.</td>
<td>Achieve continued economic growth while maintaining the region’s natural resources.</td>
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<td>Partner with the NEOCH, GPCOG, other UMS universities, and businesses to develop approaches that fully utilize our marine biota in a sustainable manner. For example, Transition scalable technologies and processes and their related workforces along the value chains to transform high value marine-related products into globally competitive enterprises.</td>
<td>More undergraduate and graduate students are engaged in externally funded research.</td>
<td>Enhance the competitiveness of the region in both domestic and international markets.</td>
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<td><strong>Education &amp; Workforce Development</strong></td>
<td>Encourage workforce development innovations spanning the K-to-Workforce Continuum that strengthen the state’s competitive advantage in the North Atlantic region. Examples include: Infuse creative thinking, innovation and entrepreneurship into undergraduate curricula. Infuse liberal arts into business development and innovation, and STEM education. Integrate risk management, regulatory compliance, regulatory advocacy, public policy leadership, maritime and oceans law, relationship to investments, and business. Support faculty and undergraduate and graduate student exchanges and internships with universities, businesses, nonprofits, and government agencies in the North Atlantic countries, in topics relevant to this Framework. Help businesses and nonprofit organizations that establish operations in Maine to succeed by learning from Maine’s past in order to take a long view towards the future. Support cultural exchanges in the visual and performing arts and the humanities.</td>
<td>More faculty and students across all colleges are engaged with school districts to help graduate students who are more prepared for post-secondary education. More students are engaged in academics, research experiences, and internships in topics relevant to this Framework. More students are retained. More students graduate with global competence credentials that align with skills requirements of Maine businesses and nonprofit agencies involved in the North Atlantic region.</td>
<td>Promote regional collaboration and partnerships.</td>
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<td>More students are entering employment in Maine upon graduation in businesses, and nonprofit agencies involved in the North Atlantic region.</td>
<td>Facilitate arts and cultural exchanges.</td>
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<td><strong>Public Sector</strong></td>
<td>Generate excitement around the North Atlantic region by highlighting economic, education, and cultural success.</td>
<td>More students are better equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to play key roles in expanding and strengthening Maine’s economy.</td>
<td>BOT GOALS:</td>
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<td>Attract capital investment to make Greater Portland the hub for economic activity related to the North Atlantic region.</td>
<td>More faculty and students across all colleges are engaged with school districts to help graduate students who are more prepared for post-secondary education.</td>
<td>Maine employer surveys show that UMS works actively with businesses to meet state workforce needs and that UMS graduates are best-prepared to fill those needs.</td>
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<td>USM retention rate will reach 72% each year (IPEDS, now 63%).</td>
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<td>MDF’S MEASURES OF GROWTH (2016):</td>
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