

COST AND EFFECTIVENESS

Undergraduate tuition and fees in Maine have grown rapidly in recent years, with an increased percentage of spending going to administration. Meanwhile, graduation rates remain very low.

COST AND EFFECTIVENESS

Trends in undergraduate tuition and fees	F
Undergraduate tuition and fees as a percentage of median household income	F
First-year retention rates for first-time, full-time freshmen	P
Baccalaureate graduation rates for first-time, full-time freshmen	F
Instructional vs. administrative spending	P
Ratio of new programs to closed programs	F
Performance as a criterion for funding	I

SYSTEM GRADE: F

FOUNDED IN 1995, ACTA IS A NATIONAL EDUCATION NON-PROFIT dedicated to academic freedom, academic excellence, and accountability in higher education. This report card is one of a series of publications on higher education designed to provide independent analysis for education leaders, policymakers, and trustees.

The Maine Heritage Policy Center is a non-profit research and educational organization that formulates public policy solutions for Maine concerning the economy and taxation, education, health care, and open government based on the principles of free enterprise and limited government.



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Made in Maine

A State Report Card on Public Higher Education

Executive Summary

MADE IN MAINE: A STATE REPORT CARD ON PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION takes a close look at the four-year public colleges and universities in Maine, offering a Pass or Fail grade in four key areas of the public's interest: what students are learning; whether the marketplace of ideas is vibrant; how the universities are governed; and what a college education costs.

At this pivotal time for Maine's taxpayer-supported universities, our report card finds that while they are run in a generally transparent manner, they have real challenges to address in raising academic standards, increasing graduation rates, and controlling rising tuition costs.

PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION IN MAINE

General Education	F
Intellectual Diversity	F
Governance	
Board Structure and Transparency of Operations	P
Board Accomplishments	F
Cost and Effectiveness	F

GENERAL EDUCATION

Maine's public universities have solid requirements in composition and natural science. However, large numbers of students can graduate without a strong base of knowledge in mathematics, literature, foreign language, U.S. government or history, and economics.

GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS BY INSTITUTION

Institution	Gov/						
	Comp	Lit	Lang	Hist	Econ	Math	Sci
University of Maine-Augusta	√	√					√
University of Maine-Farmington	√						√
University of Maine-Fort Kent	√					√	√
University of Maine-Machias	√						√
University of Maine-Orono	√					√	√
University of Maine-Presque Isle	√						√
University of Southern Maine	√						√
	P	F	F	F	F	F	P

SYSTEM GRADE: F

INTELLECTUAL DIVERSITY

Survey results and several campus speech codes suggest that institutions within the University of Maine System are not delivering on well-advertised commitments to academic freedom and expression.

KEY INDICATORS OF INTELLECTUAL DIVERSITY

Offering Different Perspectives, Competing Ideas, and Alternative Claims of Truth	F
Teaching Students to Think Critically	F
Providing a Safe Learning Environment for Students	P
Ensuring Professional Responsibility in the Classroom	F

SYSTEM GRADE: F

GOVERNANCE

Board Structure and Transparency of Operations

The board is generally well structured, operates transparently, and meets regularly—though there is room for improvement in attendance and committee initiative.

BOARD STRUCTURE AND TRANSPARENCY OF OPERATIONS

Names and contact information of board members publicly available and easily accessible	P
Board meets frequently	P
Board members attend regularly	P
Effective board size	P
Periodic review of bylaws and/or policies	P
Pre-service training and/or professional development	P
Transparency of board activities and actions	P
Functioning committee structure	F
Executive Committees	F
Involvement in presidential search committees	I
Renewal of presidential contracts based on regular evaluation	P
Development of a long-range plan	I

SYSTEM GRADE: P

Board Accomplishments

The board has had a limited role in strategic planning or oversight of academic affairs and needs to be more proactive in controlling spending and advancing academic excellence.

BOARD ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Actions to improve academic quality	F
Actions to assess student learning	F
Actions to control costs and increase efficiency	F
Avoiding the rubber stamp	F

SYSTEM GRADE: F