

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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# 122nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

## FIRST SPECIAL SESSION-2005

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Legislative Document

No. 1661

S.P. 615

In Senate, May 5, 2005

### An Act To Streamline Higher Education in Maine

---

Reference to the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joy J. O'Brien".

JOY J. O'BRIEN  
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator MITCHELL of Kennebec.  
Cosponsored by Representative NORTON of Bangor and  
Senators: MARTIN of Aroostook, RAYE of Washington, TURNER of Cumberland,  
Representatives: DAVIS of Falmouth, FINCH of Fairfield.

2 Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

4 PART A

6 Sec. A-1. 20-A MRSA c. 408 is enacted to read:

8 CHAPTER 408

10 STATE SYSTEM OF PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION

12 §10601. State system of public higher education

14 1. Establishment. There is established a state system of  
16 public higher education, referred to in this chapter as "the  
18 state system," that consists of:

20 A. The University of Maine System and each of its  
22 universities;

24 B. The Maine Community College System and each of its  
26 colleges;

28 C. The Maine Maritime Academy; and

30 D. The Board of Regents of Higher Education and its related  
32 units as established pursuant to this chapter.

34 As used in this chapter, "constituent units" means those units  
36 described in paragraphs A to C.

38 §10602. Board of Regents of Higher Education established

40 The Board of Regents of Higher Education, referred to in  
42 this chapter as "the board of regents," is established as the  
44 central policy-making authority for the state system and to  
46 provide a permanent voice in support of public higher education,  
48 to create a statewide vision for public higher education and to  
50 develop, maintain and evaluate implementation of a long-term plan  
for public higher education in the State.

1. Membership; appointments. The board of regents is  
organized as set out in this section and consists of 16 members.

A. Ten members are appointed by the Governor, subject to  
review by the joint standing committee of the Legislature  
having jurisdiction over education matters and to  
confirmation by the Legislature, with 5 from the First  
Congressional District and 5 from the Second Congressional  
District.

2           B. Three members are appointed by the President of the  
3           Senate and 3 members are appointed by the Speaker of the  
4           House.

5           In appointing members to the board of regents, the appointing  
6           authorities shall give proper consideration to achieving  
7           statewide geographical representation and gender equity. The  
8           members of the board of regents may not be employed by or be  
9           members of a board of trustees for any higher education  
10           institution in the State, public or private, nor may they be  
11           employed as classified or unclassified employees of the State or  
12           hold elected state office.

13           2. Terms. Members appointed to the board of regents serve  
14           5-year terms, except the terms of the initially appointed members  
15           must be staggered: Six of the initial appointees serve for one  
16           year, 5 serve for 2 years and 5 serve for 3 years. Members may  
17           serve a maximum of 2 terms, except that an individual appointed  
18           to fill an unexpired term of 3 years or less is eligible for  
19           appointment to 2 full terms.

20           3. Vacancies. Vacancies on the board of regents are filled  
21           for the unexpired term only. A member serves until a successor  
22           has been appointed and qualified.

23           4. Chair; officers. The Governor shall appoint the initial  
24           chair of the board of regents, who serves for a term of 2 years.  
25           Thereafter, the board of regents shall elect from its membership  
26           a chair, who serves for a term to be designated by the board of  
27           regents. A chair may not serve more than 2 consecutive terms.  
28           The board of regents shall elect from its members a vice-chair  
29           and such other officers it considers necessary. A vacancy among  
30           the officers must be filled within 30 days following the  
31           occurrence of the vacancy in the same manner as the original  
32           selection.

33           5. Public meetings and records. The board of regents is  
34           deemed to be a public agency within the meaning of Title 1,  
35           chapter 13, subchapter 1. The financial books and other records  
36           of the board of regents are public records and the meetings of  
37           the board of regents are public proceedings within the meaning of  
38           Title 1, chapter 13, subchapter 1.

39           6. Bylaws. The board of regents shall establish bylaws to  
40           govern its procedures and shall appoint such committees and  
41           advisory boards as may be convenient or necessary in the  
42           transaction of its business.

43           7. Quorum. Nine members of the board of regents  
44           constitutes a quorum.

2           8. Compensation. Members of the board of regents are not  
3 entitled to compensation for their services, but may be  
4 reimbursed for travel and other expenses incurred in the  
5 performance of their official duties.

6           §10603. Duties of board of regents; statewide policies

7           1. Establishment of statewide policies for higher  
8 education. The board of regents shall establish statewide  
9 policies and guidelines for the state system, including  
10 establishing statewide policies and guidelines to:

11           A. Develop a master plan for higher education and  
12 postsecondary education consistent with the goals in  
13 subsection 2;

14           B. Review and approve mission statements for the  
15 constituent units and mission statements for the individual  
16 institutions and branches of the constituent units;

17           C. Prepare and present to the Governor and the Legislature  
18 consolidated operating and capital expenditure budgets for  
19 the state system;

20           D. Establish statewide tuition and student fee policies and  
21 guidelines;

22           E. Establish statewide student financial aid policies and  
23 guidelines;

24           F. Monitor and evaluate institutional effectiveness and  
25 viability in accordance with criteria established by the  
26 board of regents;

27           G. Merge or close institutions in accordance with criteria  
28 established by the board of regents except that:

29                   (1) A recommended merger or closing requires a 2/3 vote  
30 of the board of regents; and

31                   (2) Notice of the recommended merger or closing must be  
32 sent to the joint standing committee of the Legislature  
33 having jurisdiction over education matters;

34           H. Review and approve any recommendations for the  
35 establishment of new academic programs submitted to the  
36 board of regents by the constituent unit boards of trustees,  
37 and, in consultation with the affected constituent units,  
38 provide for the initiation, consolidation or termination of

2 academic programs. The board of regents shall notify the  
3 board of trustees affected by the proposed termination of an  
4 academic program. Within 90 days of receipt of such notice,  
5 the trustees shall accept or reject the termination proposal  
6 and shall notify the board of regents of its action. If the  
7 termination proposal is rejected by the trustees, the board  
8 of regents may override the rejection by a 2/3 vote;

9  
10 I. Develop criteria to ensure acceptable quality in  
11 programs and institutions and enforce standards through  
12 licensing and accreditation;

13  
14 J. Review and make recommendations on plans received from  
15 the constituent unit boards of trustees for the continuing  
16 development and maximum utilization of the State's public  
17 higher education resources;

18 K. Appoint advisory committees to assist in defining and  
19 suggesting solutions for the problems and needs of higher  
20 education;

21  
22 L. Establish an advisory council for higher education with  
23 representatives from public and private institutions to  
24 study methods and proposals for coordinating efforts of all  
25 such institutions in providing a stimulating and enriched  
26 educational environment for the citizens of the State,  
27 including measures to improve educational opportunities  
28 through alternative and nontraditional approaches such as  
29 external degrees and credit by examination;

30  
31 M. Coordinate programs and services throughout public  
32 higher education and between public and independent  
33 institutions, including procedures to evaluate the impact on  
34 independent institutions of higher education of proposals  
35 affecting public institutions of higher education;

36  
37 N. Make or enter into contracts, leases or other agreements  
38 in connection with its responsibilities under this chapter,  
39 except that all acquisitions of real estate by lease or  
40 otherwise are subject to the provisions of Title 5, Part 4;

41  
42 O. Prepare and present to the Governor and the Legislature  
43 legislative proposals affecting public higher education,  
44 including proposals that use programs and facilities of  
45 independent institutions of higher education;

46  
47 P. Develop and maintain a central higher education  
48 information system and establish definitions and data  
49 requirements for the state system;

50

2           Q. Undertake such studies and other activities as will best  
3           serve the higher educational interests of the State; and

4           R. Establish criteria for priority higher education  
5           facilities projects.

6  
7           2. Establishment of goals for higher education. Within the  
8           limits of authorized appropriations and authorized expenditures  
9           of other funds, the board of regents shall establish policies of  
10           the state system that are consistent with the following goals:

11           A. Ensuring that no qualified person be denied the  
12           opportunity for higher education on the basis of age, sex,  
13           ethnic background or social, physical or economic condition;

14  
15           B. Protecting academic freedom;

16  
17           C. Providing opportunities for education and training  
18           related to the economic, cultural and educational  
19           development of the State;

20  
21           D. Ensuring the fullest possible use of available resources  
22           in public and private institutions of higher education;

23  
24           E. Maintaining standards of quality ensuring a position of  
25           national leadership for state institutions of higher  
26           education;

27  
28           F. Applying the resources of higher education to the  
29           problems of society; and

30  
31           G. Fostering flexibility in the policies and institutions  
32           of higher education to enable the state system to respond to  
33           changes in the economy, society, technology and student  
34           interests. The board of regents shall review recent studies  
35           of the need for higher education services, with special  
36           attention to those completed pursuant to legislative action,  
37           and shall initiate additional programs or services through  
38           one or more of the constituent units to meet such needs.

39  
40           3. Reports. The board of regents shall request and  
41           receive, or be provided electronic access to, data, reports and  
42           other information from the constituent units of the state system  
43           necessary for the board to carry out its responsibilities  
44           pursuant to this chapter.

45           **§10604. Higher Education Coordinating Council established;**  
46           **chair; public meetings and records**  
47  
48

2        The Higher Education Coordinating Council, referred to in  
3 this chapter as "the coordinating council," is established as an  
4 advisory council to the board of regents to assist the board of  
5 regents in performing its statutory duties. The coordinating  
6 council is composed of the chairs of the boards of trustees and  
7 the chief executive officers of each constituent unit of the  
8 state system and the chair of the board and the chief executive  
9 officer of the Finance Authority of Maine. The coordinating  
10 council shall elect from its membership a chair who serves for a  
11 term to be designated by the coordinating council. A chair may  
12 not serve more than 2 consecutive terms. The coordinating council  
13 is a board or commission of a public agency within the meaning of  
14 Title 1, chapter 13, subchapter 1, the records of the  
15 coordinating council are public records and the meetings of  
16 coordinating council are public proceedings.

17        1. Duties. The coordinating council shall:

18        A. Identify, examine and implement savings in  
19 administrative functions carried out by the state system,  
20 including, but not limited to, methods to simplify  
21 procedures and reduce duplication in the administrative  
22 functions of each constituent unit; and

23        B. Develop accountability measures for each constituent  
24 unit and each public institution of higher education in  
25 accordance with the provisions of subsection 2.

26        2. Accountability measures; reports. The accountability  
27 measures developed by the coordinating council pursuant to  
28 subsection 1, paragraph B must be used by the board of regents  
29 and the board of trustees of each constituent unit in assessing  
30 the progress of each constituent unit of the state system as  
31 follows.

32        A. Accountability measures developed for each constituent  
33 unit include the goals of:

34            (1) Ensuring access to and affordability of higher  
35 education;

36            (2) Enhancing student learning and promoting academic  
37 excellence;

38            (3) Promoting the economic development of the State to  
39 help business and industry sustain strong economic  
40 growth;

41            (4) Joining with elementary and secondary schools to  
42 improve teaching and learning at all education levels;



2                   (5) Responding to the needs and problems of the State  
3                   and society; and

4  
5                   (6) Ensuring the efficient use of resources.

6  
7                   The coordinating council shall develop an implementation  
8                   plan for use of the accountability measures.

10                  B. In developing the accountability measures pursuant to  
11                  subsection 1, the coordinating council shall also consider  
12                  graduation rates, student retention rates, tuition and fees,  
13                  student financial need and available aid, trends in  
14                  enrollment and the percentage of incoming students who are  
15                  state residents, data on graduates by academic program,  
16                  faculty productivity and any other factor that it considers  
17                  relevant in providing the board of regents with a greater  
18                  degree of accountability in the state system. In  
19                  considering faculty productivity measures, the council shall  
20                  consult with the advisory committee established under  
21                  section 10605.

22                  C. The coordinating council shall submit the accountability  
23                  measures developed pursuant to subsection 1 and the  
24                  implementation plan as provided in paragraph A for use of  
25                  the accountability measures to the board of regents for the  
26                  board's review and approval. Once the measures and  
27                  implementation plan are approved, each constituent unit  
28                  shall provide the data to the board of regents that is  
29                  necessary for purposes of applying the measures.

32                  D. The chair of the coordinating council, on behalf of the  
33                  board of regents, shall report to the joint standing  
34                  committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over  
35                  education matters on the accountability measures and the  
36                  implementation plan developed pursuant to this section by  
37                  February 1, 2008. The report must include recommendations:

38                                 (1) For any statutory changes needed for purposes of  
39                                 assessing the constituent units based on the  
40                                 accountability measures;

41                                 (2) To clarify and streamline planning and  
42                                 accountability reporting requirements of the  
43                                 constituent units;

44                                 (3) Concerning goals, actions to achieve such goals and  
45                                 analysis of performance; and  
46  
47  
48

2                   (4) For options to revise budgeting policies and  
3                   programs to meet accountability goals and measures as  
4                   outlined in paragraphs A and B.

5  
6                   E. The coordinating council shall develop an accountability  
7                   report prototype. Upon review and approval by the board of  
8                   regents, the chair of the board of regents shall submit the  
9                   report prototype to the joint standing committee of the  
10                   Legislature having jurisdiction over education matters by  
11                   October 1, 2007. The report prototype must include  
12                   accountability measures developed and approved under this  
13                   subsection for which data collection mechanisms exist as  
14                   determined by the chair of the board of regents.

15  
16                   F. Each constituent unit of the state system shall submit  
17                   to the chair of the board of regents its first  
18                   accountability report by January 1, 2008. The chair of the  
19                   coordinating council shall compile and consolidate the  
20                   reports on behalf of the chair of the board of regents. The  
21                   chair of the board of regents shall submit an accountability  
22                   report that covers the state system of higher education and  
23                   each constituent unit and public institution of higher  
24                   education to the joint standing committee of the Legislature  
25                   having jurisdiction over education by February 1, 2008. The  
26                   report must include baseline data for the accountability  
27                   measures developed under this section for which data  
28                   collection mechanisms exist and comparable peer data, as  
29                   determined by the chair of the board of regents, after  
30                   consultation with the coordinating council and upon review  
31                   and approval by the board of regents. The report must also  
32                   include a timeline for the collection of data and reporting  
33                   of the remaining accountability measures and for the  
34                   identification of performance improvement targets.

35  
36                   G. Each constituent unit of the state system shall submit  
37                   an accountability report to the chair of the board of  
38                   regents by January 1st. The chair of the board of regents  
39                   shall compile the reports and shall submit a consolidated  
40                   accountability report for the state system to the joint  
41                   standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction  
42                   over education matters by February 1st. The report must  
43                   contain accountability measures for each constituent unit  
44                   and public institution of higher education pursuant to  
45                   subsection 1. The report must include updated baseline and  
46                   peer comparison data, performance improvement targets for  
47                   each measure and other information as determined by the  
48                   chair of the board of regents.

49                   **§10605. Advisory committee to board of regents established;**  
50                   **membership; duties**

2           The advisory committee to the board of regents, referred to  
3 in this chapter as "the advisory committee," is established as an  
4 advisory body to the board of regents to assist the board of  
5 regents in performing its statutory duties.

6  
7           1. Membership. The advisory committee is organized as set  
8 out in this section and consists of 12 members as follows:

9           A. One member from each of the boards of trustees of the  
10 constituent units of the state system;

11           B. One member from the administrative staff of each of the  
12 constituent units;

13           C. One member from the faculty representing each of the  
14 constituent units; and

15           D. One student from each of the constituent units.

16  
17           2. Appointments. The members of the advisory committee and  
18 alternates for those members must be appointed by the constituent  
19 units they are to represent, in accordance with procedures  
20 established by the respective boards of trustees. The alternate  
21 members of the advisory committee may serve in the absence of the  
22 regularly appointed member.

23           3. Chair; officers; public meetings and records. The  
24 advisory committee shall, on a rotating basis among its members,  
25 elect its own chair and secretary and such other officers as it  
26 considers necessary, to serve for a term of 2 years. The  
27 advisory committee is a board or commission of a public agency  
28 within the meaning of Title 1, chapter 13, subchapter 1, the  
29 records of the advisory committee are public records and the  
30 meetings of the advisory committee are public proceedings within  
31 the meaning of Title 1, chapter 13.

32           4. Meetings. The advisory committee shall meet at least  
33 twice annually with the board of regents. Agendas must be  
34 prepared for such meetings and must be distributed by the board  
35 of regents prior to the meetings and consist of matters  
36 recommended for inclusion by the chair of the board of regents  
37 and the advisory committee. The meetings must be chaired by the  
38 chair of the board of regents and the advisory committee members  
39 have the right to participate in all discussions and  
40 deliberations, but do not have the right to vote at such meetings.

41  
42           §10606. Priority higher education facility project review  
43 committee established; membership; duties

2 A committee to review priority higher education facility  
3 projects, referred to in this chapter as "the facility project  
4 review committee," is established as an advisory body to the  
5 board of regents to assist the board of regents in performing its  
6 statutory duties.

7 **1. Membership.** The facility project review committee is  
8 organized as set out in this section and includes the Treasurer  
9 of State, the Director of the Bureau of General Services within  
10 the Department of Administrative and Financial Services and the  
11 Chief Executive Officer of the Finance Authority of Maine, or  
12 their designees. The Director of the Bureau of General Services  
13 or the director's designee shall serve as chair.

14 **2. Prioritization of higher education facility projects.**  
15 On or before October 1, 2008, and annually thereafter, each  
16 constituent unit may submit to the facility project review  
17 committee a list of proposed priority higher education facility  
18 projects ranked in order of priority. Within 60 days following  
19 the submission, the facility project review committee shall  
20 review all such lists and approve the proposed projects as  
21 priority higher education facility projects unless a project  
22 description is not substantially complete or a project fails to  
23 conform to the criteria for a priority higher education facility  
24 project established by the board of regents. On or before  
25 January 15th and July 15th, annually, the facility project review  
26 committee shall report to the joint standing committee of the  
27 Legislature having jurisdiction over education matters and the  
28 joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction  
29 over appropriations and financial affairs on the status of  
30 priority higher education facility projects.

31 **3. Review of implementation of priority higher education**  
32 **facility project procedures.** On or before December 31, 2010, the  
33 joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction  
34 over education matters, in consultation with the joint standing  
35 committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over  
36 appropriations and financial affairs, shall review the  
37 implementation of priority higher education facility project  
38 procedures and the status of such projects and recommend whether  
39 to continue, expand or discontinue and repeal the procedures for  
40 priority higher education facility projects established pursuant  
41 to this section.

42 **Sec. A-2. Effective date.** This Part takes effect July 1, 2007.  
43

44  
45 **PART B**  
46  
47  
48

2           **Sec. B-1. Transition.** Notwithstanding the Maine Revised  
3 Statutes, Title 20-A, chapter 411, Title 20-A, chapter 431 and  
4 Private and Special Law 1941, chapter 37, as amended, the  
5 following provisions apply to the realignment of the duties and  
6 responsibilities of the Chancellor and the Board of Trustees of  
7 the University of Maine System, the President and the Board of  
8 Trustees of the Maine Community College System and the President  
9 and the Board of Trustees of the Maine Maritime Academy with the  
10 provisions of Title 20-A, chapter 408, which establishes the  
11 authority of the Board of Regents of Higher Education as the  
12 central policy-making authority for the state system of public  
13 higher education.

14           1. The University of Maine System, the Maine Community  
15 College System and the Maine Maritime Academy as created and  
16 established by law are incorporated into the state system of  
17 public higher education. Upon the effective date of Part A of  
18 this Act, all references to, responsibilities of and authority  
19 conferred upon the governing boards and policy-making authorities  
20 of the University of Maine System, the Maine Community College  
21 System and the Maine Maritime Academy, and those entities'  
22 predecessors, throughout the Maine Revised Statutes and Private  
23 and Special Laws are deemed to refer to and vest in the Board of  
24 Regents of Higher Education created by this Act, as the successor  
25 entity. The Board of Regents of Higher Education is the  
26 successor in every way to the powers, duties and functions as  
27 assigned in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A, chapter 408  
28 as they pertain to the governance and coordination of the state  
29 system of public higher education established under this Act.

30           2. All policies and procedures established by the Chancellor  
31 and the Board of Trustees of the University of Maine System, the  
32 President and the Board of Trustees of the Maine Community  
33 College System and the President and the Board of Trustees of the  
34 Maine Maritime Academy, as they pertain to the duties of the  
35 Board of Regents of Higher Education and its related units as set  
36 forth in this Act, in effect on the effective date of this Act  
37 remain in effect until rescinded, revised or amended.

38           3. The Chancellor of the University of Maine System, the  
39 President of the Maine Community College System and the President  
40 of the Maine Maritime Academy, together with the chairs of their  
41 respective governing boards, shall collaborate and develop a plan  
42 to align and consolidate the governance and coordination  
43 functions of their respective governing boards with the  
44 provisions set forth in Part A of this Act. By January 31, 2006,  
45 the Chancellor of the University of Maine System shall submit a  
46 report, including recommendations and any necessary legislation,  
47 to the Governor and the Joint Standing Committee on Education and  
48 Cultural Affairs regarding the plan required under this section.  
49  
50

2 Following receipt and review of the report, the Joint Standing  
Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs may report out  
4 legislation to the 122nd Legislature.

6 **Sec. B-2. Legislation; schedule.** Under the direction of the joint  
standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over  
8 education matters, staff from the Office of Policy and Legal  
Analysis and the Office of the Revisor of Statutes shall review  
10 those parts of the Maine Revised Statutes and relevant Private  
and Special Laws governing the University of Maine System, the  
12 Maine Community College System, the Maine Maritime Academy and  
the State Board of Education. The purpose of the review is to  
develop legislation to align and consolidate existing law in the  
14 Maine Revised Statutes and relevant Private and Special Laws  
necessary to update the provisions proposed in Part A and to  
16 correct any errors and inconsistencies in law that result from  
this Act. By November 30, 2006, the joint standing committee of  
18 the Legislature having jurisdiction over education matters shall  
agree on the format and organization of the relevant provision of  
20 the Maine Revised Statutes and relevant Private and Special  
Laws. By November 30, 2007, the joint standing committee of the  
22 Legislature having jurisdiction over education matters shall  
submit the legislation developed pursuant to this section to the  
24 First Regular Session of the 123rd Legislature.

26 **Sec. B-3. Interim meetings; authorized.** The Joint Standing  
Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs is authorized to meet  
28 as needed, but at least 3 times, during the 2005 legislative  
interim to carry out its responsibilities to oversee planning,  
30 service delivery and implementation issues related to the  
establishment of the Board of Regents of Higher Education as the  
32 central policy-making authority for the state system of public  
higher education. At these meetings, the Chancellor of the  
34 University of Maine System shall brief the joint standing  
committee on planning issues, progress, challenges and the  
36 timeline for implementation. The joint standing committee shall  
provide opportunities for trustees, faculty members,  
38 administrators, campus personnel, students, alumni, community  
officials and members of the public to speak to the committee.  
40 The joint standing committee may submit legislation to the Second  
Regular Session of the 122nd Legislature based on these meetings.

42 **Sec. B-4. Advisory working groups.** During the period from July  
44 2005 to December 2006, the Chancellor of the University of Maine  
System shall convene advisory working groups to consider  
46 strategic planning, program delivery and implementation issues  
related to the establishment of the state system of public higher  
48 education. The Chancellor of the University of Maine System  
shall collaborate with the President of the Maine Community  
50 College System and the President of the Maine Maritime Academy in

2 convening and conducting the work of the advisory working  
3 groups. The advisory working groups shall review the issues  
4 identified in this Part. The advisory working groups must  
5 include broad representation from trustees, faculty members,  
6 administrators, campus personnel, students, alumni, community  
officials and members of the public.

8       **Sec. B-5. Budget.** The Department of Administrative and  
9 Financial Services, Bureau of the Budget shall work with the  
10 Chancellor of the University of Maine System, the President of  
11 the Maine Community College System and the President of the Maine  
12 Maritime Academy, together with the chairs of their respective  
13 governing boards, with regard to the duties transferred to the  
14 Board of Regents of Higher Education as the central policy-making  
15 authority for the state system of public higher education as set  
16 forth in this Act in order to develop recommendations for a  
17 proposed operating budget for the Board of Regents of Higher  
18 Education that must be provided through funds appropriated by the  
19 Legislature.

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## SUMMARY

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25       This bill establishes a centralized system of governance and  
26 coordination for public higher education and reorganizes the  
27 system for public higher education in Maine by creating the Board  
28 of Regents of Higher Education, which is established as the  
29 central policy-making authority for public higher education in  
30 the State. The bill further establishes a coordinating council  
31 and an advisory committee to assist the board of regents in  
32 fulfilling its policy-making role of coordinating the programs  
33 and resources of the University of Maine System and its  
34 universities, the Maine Community College System and its colleges  
35 and the Maine Maritime Academy. The bill also establishes  
36 transition provisions to review and propose legislative revisions  
37 to the charters and relevant statutes of the University of Maine  
38 System, the Maine Community College System and the Maine Maritime  
39 Academy to align the governance structures of these entities with  
40 the board of regents as the central policy-making authority for  
41 the state system of higher education. The bill further directs  
42 the Chancellor of the University of Maine System, the President  
43 of the Maine Community College System and the President of the  
44 Maine Maritime Academy, and the respective chairs of their boards  
45 of trustees, to work with the Joint Standing Committee on  
46 Education and Cultural Affairs to address a number of transition  
47 provisions. Finally, the bill establishes July 1, 2007 as the  
48 effective date for implementing these governance and coordination  
changes.