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Board of Agriculture
Annual Report to the Maine Legislature
&
Board of Trustees of the University of Maine System

November 2, 2022

Senator Jim Dill , Chair
Representative Maggie O'Neil, Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry
Legislation Information Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

Patricia (Trish) A. Riley, Chair
University of Maine System Board of Trustees
15 Estabrooke Dr.
Orono, Maine 04469

Cc: Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
Dannel Malloy, Chancellor, University of Maine System
Joan Ferrini-Mundy, President, University of Maine
Diane Rowland, Dean, College of Natural Sciences, Forestry, and Agriculture and Director, Maine Agricultural and Forest Experiment Station
Amanda Ouellette, Library Associate, Law and Legislative Reference Library

Dear Senator Dill, Representative O'Neil, Distinguished Committee Members, and Chair Riley and the Board of Trustees,

The Board of Agriculture thanks you for your support of its work in 2021. As Chair of the Board of Agriculture I am pleased to provide the Joint Standing committee of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry and the Board of Trustees with our 2021 annual report. Due to changes in staffing as well as COVID impacting meetings frequency, this report has been delayed by one year.

The charge of the Board remains as follows “The Board shall advise the Chancellor of the University of Maine System and the President of the University of Maine at Orono on matters concerning the operation and management of agricultural research conducted by the Maine Agricultural Experiment Station and university farm-based programs, including those of the University of Maine Cooperative Extension Service.”

The Board met twice in 2021, once in February and November.

At the February meeting the new Provost, John Volin was introduced and talked about the search for the Dean of the College of Natural Sciences, Forestry, and Agriculture. President Ferini-Mundy discussed her career experience with land grant institutions, and specifically spoke highly of the response of Cooperative Extension and the College of Natural Sciences, Forestry and Agriculture to the pandemic. Chancellor Malloy noted the

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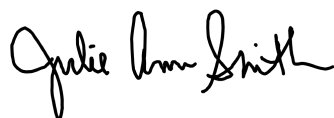
increase in research funding awarded to the University over the years as well as the importance of unified accreditation recently awarded to the University of Maine System.

The Board carried out a conversation with the Provost, President, and Chancellor around the impact the pandemic has had on student enrollment as well as off site learning approaches. Additional topics discussed included the resilience of the University to unpredictable shocks, separation of the Dean of the College of Natural Sciences, Forestry, and Agriculture and Director of the Maine Agricultural and Forest Experiment Station positions, student college readiness, the impact on the pandemic on research, and food insecurity. The interim Dean, Mario Teisl, provided an update on the proposed 6 year Campus Master Plan, and elements that impact agricultural facilities, including the Roger Clapp Greenhouses and Aroostook Research Farm. Dean Carter announced the creation of an Agricultural Engineer Professional Position in partnership with the Advanced Manufacturing Center. There were proposals for two new committees to address the capacity concerns at the University and lessons learned from COVID-19. The Board additionally nominated a new Chair, Julie Ann Smith and Vice Chair, Dale Pierson.

At the November meeting there was general discussion of providing space for the agricultural industries to have more of a voice in the meetings - to express needs and discuss budgeting. Seat vacancies were discussed, including Greenhouse and Nursery Growers Association. The majority of the meeting was used for board member Ralph Turner's presentation on the needs of agricultural industries, based on survey results. First there was the issue of various commodity groups who are not represented as official members of the Board. Second, there was a need to update the Board statute to better reflect the needs of the agricultural community. Turner's work will continue into 2022 at the Agricultural Trades Show to gather needs of the agricultural community.

The Board of Agriculture appreciates the efforts of the Legislature and of the University and University System on behalf of Maine agriculture.

Sincerely,



Julie Ann Smith
Chair