

What the hell is happening at the University of Maine?

- Budget cuts, UMaine is in the tank
- Sodexo
- Maine Day
- Low enrollment numbers
- Engineering building
- Closing of Oaks and Wells

University of Maine Student Government Senator, Policy and Procedure Chair, and Vice President Candidate, Keegan Tripp

★ UMaine low enrollment numbers

UMaine has a high acceptance rate, essentially you breathe and you're accepted into UMaine, but low graduation rates as people will come here, come to party, then realize college isn't for them and leave

And despite the high acceptance rate (96% as of February 2023), UMaine enrollment numbers keep dropping, undergraduate enrollment is down by 5.64% and undergrad enrollment has dropped in total by 13.4% since January 2019

You'd think UMaine having an R1 Research status that would give it more of a competitive edge as a good school to come to for students, yet numbers keep dropping and UMaine is still unrecognized as a "prestigious" school (like were kinda the runt of the litter, last pick)

- What's driving students away from attending UMaine? Location? Prestige?

UMaine is at great risk, as their budget is already down the drain, and they continue cutting funding to programs and on campus services, could the budget cuts be contributing to the low enrollment? As they continue to take away services to students, the campus in turn is losing its charm and appeal

<https://www.newscentermaine.com/article/news/education/umaine-orono-welcomes-students-back-amid-enrollment-decline-education/97-fb19c37d-79ec-4333-8a85-ba1154cdc3b7>

According to NewsCenter Maine the undergraduate student body in the U.S. is 9.4% smaller prior to the pandemic, could this be a new trend of young adults understanding a college degree isn't worth what it used to be?

How could UMaine rebrand themselves? First they need to figure out the budgeting issue.

Given all this relief and grant money during covid, nobody came back the second semester, so they lost all this money, lost all this relief, just poor money management

Governor Mills proposal of free community college could be affected numbers, as now Maine students are going to community college first and going to transfer in

Northeastern University moving to Portland, giving competition to UMaine as its a big engineering school, so that's why UMaine is trying to increase enrollment of engineering students

<https://www.mainepublic.org/business-and-economy/2023-01-13/university-of-maine-faces-15-million-budget-shortfall-as-enrollment-plummets>

<https://www.mainepublic.org/maine/2022-10-19/enrollment-is-up-at-maines-community-colleges-this-fall>

<http://coronavirus.maine.gov/governor/mills/news/governor-mills-promotes-free-community-college-eastern-maine-community-college-bangor-2022-05>

<https://www.mccs.me.edu/freecollege/>

<https://www.mainepublic.org/maine/2022-08-01/with-free-tuition-for-many-community-colleges-in-maine-are-seeing-a-big-increase-in-applications>

<https://mainecampus.com/2022/09/the-impact-of-wells-dining-closing-and-the-universitys-lack-of-transparency/>

UMaine Lawsuits:

- <https://www.pressherald.com/2021/05/12/university-system-settles-lawsuit-over-handling-of-sexual-misconduct-allegations/>
- \$45,000 in 2019 for sexual misconduct
- <https://umaine.edu/news/blog/2021/12/08/maddaus-discusses-lawsuit-potentially-impacting-school-choice-with-press-herald/>
- <https://www.sunjournal.com/2020/09/26/umaine-students-sue-for-refunds-over-coronavirus-shutdown/>

- Maine Day 2023 update email
- <https://umaine.edu/president/maine-day-task-force/maine-day-task-force-report/>

Grace: Maine Day, Deep dive on task force report

Ask about “In your campaign do you have any plans/course of action with bringing back dining facilities like Wells that were very beloved to the UMaine community?”

“Topic on a lot of student’s minds recently is what is Maine Day 2023 going to look like?”

On November 16th 2022, The University of Maine’s President Office sent an email to the UMaine community announcing a partnership with Sodexo. Sodexo is essentially a food service and management company that will oversee future dining hall operations at UMaine. To quote the email the sent out they stated:

“Dear UMaine community members,

To expand UMaine’s multifaceted dining services on campus, including enhancements to residential and retail options for students and concessions for athletics patrons, the University of Maine is entering into a partnership with Sodexo, a nationally recognized food service provider now serving the other University of Maine System universities.

UMaine’s partnership with Sodexo will be shaped with broad campus community input. The terms of a final agreement with Sodexo will be negotiated by both parties during the spring semester. The priority will be

service to our students and the campus, and protecting the rights and needs of current employees in Dining Services.

UMaine Dining's 21 non-represented management and supervisory employees will be offered the opportunity to transition to Sodexo on Jan. 1, 2023. Full transition of the 91 represented UMaine Dining Services salaried and hourly employees who opt to transition to Sodexo will occur by July 1. All employees will be offered commensurate positions with Sodexo.

The decision to outsource UMaine dining services follows a formal review of University of Maine Dining Services, conducted by an independent consulting firm to identify opportunities to optimize value and expand food service. Sodexo has committed to significant investments in UMaine over the next four years, including capital improvements to our residential and retail dining facilities, and catering and concessions venues.

Entering this partnership with Sodexo will modernize our dining facilities, address the recent staffing shortage, and greatly expand student access to dining venues. Sodexo has assured the continuation of high-quality products and services, access to much greater national purchasing power, and management of pressures on the workforce, all of which will positively impact the overall financial viability of campus dining.

Sodexo already provides food service to the other six universities in the University of Maine System, including UMaine's regional campus, the University of Maine at Machias. The company also serves many universities nationwide.

With your input, UMaine also will have a partnership with Sodexo that will elevate the student dining experience in campus retail opportunities, and modernize the dining venues. If you have questions, please send them to umaine.alerts@maine.edu."

Sodexo is going to largely impact a lot of employees on campus, specifically those working in dining services:

- They can decide to sign the contract and be part of Sodexo, or move on with no further help from UMaine with that transition because they were technically not fired and gave the employees a choice to stay on.
- Beginning July 1, 2023, Sodexo will expand UMaine's multifaceted dining services on campus, including enhancements in residential and retail options for students, and concessions for athletics patrons. It also will help address UMaine Dining's recent staffing shortage.

[press release](#).

<https://mainecampus.com/2022/09/the-new-engineering-building-a-price-to-pay-for-beauty/>

Do we see UMaine becoming an engineering school, how would the other colleges on campus feel about potential budget cuts or cutting of programs?

- UMaine has a variety of specific degrees that I think help them in giving them an "edge" or a reason for students to come here, specifically zoology/marine science in Rose's experience, would UMaine transitioning to specialize in Engineering draw students away from wanting to come here?
- UMO needs to create competition between USM and Northeastern, who are expanding a lot in Portland, and they need to give students a reason for wanting to come to nowhere Maine
- If there is such an emphasis on engineering, how do students in other colleges fit into UMaine without feeling like they matter less because they don't draw in sponsors and big donations, is this an issue that you hope to tackle to help the issue of UMaine spirit?