

Maine Educational Opportunity Association

42nd Annual Conference

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Maine's Students



Senator Inn & Spa
Augusta, ME
January 8-10, 2025

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The MEEOA Executive Committee and Conference Committee would like to thank the following organizations for their partnership in developing our conference. Please see their advertisements in this program.



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Ashlee Fecteau: President Elect

Ginny Fowles-Ward:
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Vacant: Secretary

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Vacant: First-Gen Day Chair:

Teri Mann: Alumni Chair

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Brad O'Brien: Fact Book Chair

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Vacant: Maine Leadership Institute
(MELI).

Casey Henderson: Technology Chair

Want to help us fill some of these vacancies? Consider joining the MEEOA Board today!

Welcome to MEEOA Con 2025!

We're so glad that you're here with us! When planning this year's conference, we wanted to choose a theme that showcased the incredible impact that TRIO and GEAR UP staff have on Maine's students. As college access professionals, we all "Go the Distance" for our students every day in numerous ways. Whether you work with middle schoolers, high schoolers, college students, or adult learners, your work matters and makes a difference in your students' lives. With all of the political uncertainty that we are set to face over the next four years, our work is now more important than ever.

We want to thank some folks who helped us make this conference possible! First, we'd like to thank our MEEOA President, Michelle Richards, for her help with the conference planning process, as well as handling the conference registration payments. Next, we'd like to thank Ginny Ward for all of her support and advice throughout the conference planning process. We'd also like to thank Casey Henderson, who updated the MEEOA website for us and handled electronic registrations. We'd also like to thank Noelle Dubai, who secured thousands of dollars in conference sponsorships. We'd also like to thank Ashlee Fecteau for all of her help with the silent auction, nametags, and advice throughout the conference planning process. A big thank you as well to our conference keynote speaker, Randy Schroeder! Lastly, we'd like to thank Teri Mann for planning out the Alumni Awards ceremony. We couldn't have done this without you all!

We'd also like to thank our conference sponsors GEAR UP, UMA, and CMCC, as well as our coffee break sponsors, Worthington Scholars, KVCC, and UMF Johnson Scholars. Lastly, we'd like to thank the Senator Inn and Spa for allowing us to host our event here!

We hope that you all have a wonderful experience attending sessions, networking, and being around other folks who understand first-hand the important work that you do.

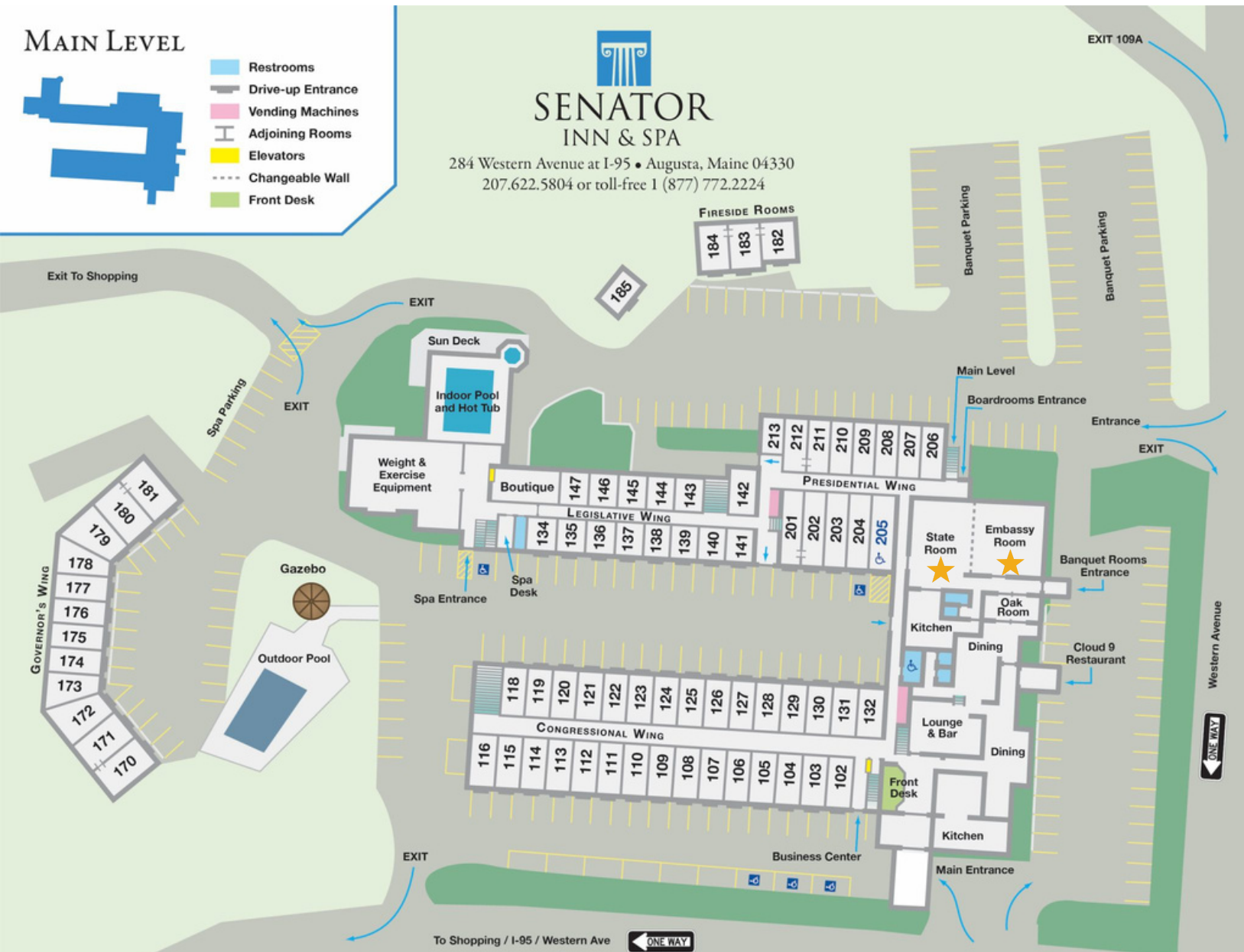
Here's to a wonderful conference!

Your Conference Chairs
Abby Waceken & Sue Caron



Senator Inn & Spa Map

Main Level



★ = room where sessions will held

Senator Inn & Spa Map

Lower + Upper Levels

LOWER LEVEL

-  Restrooms
-  Drive-up Entrance
-  Vending Machines
-  Adjoining Rooms
-  Elevators
-  Changeable Wall
-  Front Desk

UPPER LEVEL



★ = room where sessions will held

An aerial photograph of the Central Maine Community College campus during sunset. The sun is low on the left, casting a warm glow over the scene. In the foreground, there's a large green soccer field with a red base for a baseball field. Several buildings, parking lots filled with cars, and a winding road are visible. The background shows a body of water and distant hills.

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MEEOA Con 2025 Schedule

Time	Session	Location:
	<u>Wednesday, January 8</u>	Senator Inn & Spa
1:00pm-4:00pm	<u>Pre-Conference:</u> Compassion Fatigue and Resilience Strategies: Vicarious Trauma 101 - Maine Youth Thriving	State/Embassy Room
	<u>Thursday, January 9</u>	
8:15am-9:15am	Check in & Registration	Senator Inn & Spa
9:15am-9:30am	Opening remarks and welcome	State/Embassy Room
9:30am-10:30am	Keynote: Randy Schroeder	State/Embassy Room
10:30am-10:45am	Coffee Break: Sponsored by KVCC	State/Embassy Room
10:45am-11:45am	Breakout Session 1: 1. Post-College Success and the Involvement Gap: Who's Doing What on Campus, and Why it Matters - Kristen Case (Mitchell Scholars) 2. Cultivating Youth Matterring - Maine Youth Thriving 3. Attendance Basics & Trends in ME - Count ME In	1. State/Embassy Room 2. Board Room 3. Cabinet Room
11:45-12:45pm	Lunch	State/Embassy Room
1:00pm-2:00pm	Breakout Session 2: 1. Making Connections: Fostering Peer-to-Peer Relationships in Educational Settings - Count ME In 2. What You Need to Know About the FAFSA - FAME 3. Canva/Marketing Roundtable	1. State/Embassy Room 2. Board Room 3. Cabinet Room
2:00-2:15pm	Coffee Break: Sponsored by Worthington Scholars	State/Embassy Room

2:30pm-3:30pm	Breakout Session 3: 1. Mental Health Conversation - NAMI Maine 2. Worthington Scholars info session 3. Bridging Opportunities: Upward Bound & Early College Collaboration - Kari Suderley, Seth Ordway, & Rusty Brown	1. State/Embassy Room 2. Board Room 3. Cabinet Room
3:30pm-5:30pm	Wellness Break (spa, shopping, socializing, napping, hotel bar)	
5:30pm	President's Welcome Cocktail (half) Hour	State/Embassy Room
6:00pm-8:30pm	Banquet & Awards	State/Embassy Room
8:30pm	Raffle Drawings, Silent Auction Ends	State/Embassy Room
9:00pm-11:00pm	Hospitality!	TBA
	<u>Friday, January 10</u>	
8:30am	Breakfast Starts	State/Embassy Room
9:00am-9:45am	Plenary - COE Update (Jen Rudolph)	State/Embassy Room
9:45am-10:15am	Plenary - NEOA Update (Yara Zoccarato)	State/Embassy Room
10:30am-11:30am	State Meeting	State/Embassy Room
11:30pm	Conference Ends	

Potential Options for Wellness Time

1. Visiting the Senator Inn Spa

(Free for hotel guests, non-guests can get a day pass for \$24):

- Swimming in the saltwater pool + hot tub
- Visiting the sauna or steam room
- Working out at the fitness center

2. Going shopping:

- Walking distance: Target, Goodwill, Five Guys, Starbucks
- Short drive (<5 minutes): Michael's, Best Buy, Petco, Ocean State Job Lot, Hobby Lobby, Harbor Freight Tools, Hannaford

3. Napping or relaxing in your room

4. Socializing & networking with colleagues

5. Visiting the on-site Cloud 9 restaurant/lounge for an appetizer/cocktail

Pre-Conference: January 8

Compassion Fatigue and Resilience Strategies: Vicarious Trauma 101



Meg LeMay, PhD

Director of Education & Engagement

Those working in systems that support stressed and vulnerable individuals, families, and communities are at additional risk for vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue, and burnout. While this has been true historically, our environments and pressures have made this risk more acute as we continue to work through pandemic-related impacts—staff shortages, social isolation, and risks in our own families.

Research confirms that we encounter a cost of caring in our roles as professionals in public health organizations, community organizations, schools, and mental and behavioral health settings. Working with those who face challenges has always necessitated building individual and organizational resilience. Still, more than ever, it is reaching a critical impasse, and we need opportunities to build and practice skills in recognizing and responding to vicarious trauma.

MyT's programming on vicarious trauma includes opportunities for staff to identify stress impact, develop strategies that promote wholeness and resilience, and reconnect with the "why" of our work with individuals, families, and communities. This experiential training intends to help participants identify how stress shows up for them, understand acute and chronic stress, and develop personal and professional resilience strategies to buffer against the impact of exposure. There will be opportunities for reflection and practice strategies throughout the session.

Workshop Descriptions

Session 1:

1. Cultivating Youth Mattering

Meg LeMay, PhD

Director of Education & Engagement, Maine Youth Thriving

In the 2023 Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey (MIYHS), 46% of middle and 50% of high school students did not feel they mattered in their community. The rate of youth anxiety, depression, and feelings of loneliness in Maine has reached crisis levels. Mattering and social connectedness are protective factors that reduce the likelihood of poor mental health and other risks such as suicide and substance use.

Participants will leave with a grounding in the science of mattering and social connectedness, learn about statewide data, and understand how cultivating mattering is a primary prevention strategy and reduces loneliness that may lead to suicidal feelings. Lastly, participants will be able to identify evidence strategies that build resilience and hear about statewide efforts to build connectedness.

Learning Objectives

1. Ground participants in the science of mattering
2. Understand state and local data on mattering and protect
3. Learn ways to engage and cultivate mattering in youth

Workshop Descriptions

Session 1:

2. Post-College Success and the Involvement Gap: Who's Doing What on Campus, and Why it Matters

Kristen Case, PhD

Scholar Research and Grants Manager, Mitchell Scholars

Data from the Mitchell Institute's annual survey of Scholars and Alumni show a strong correlation between campus engagement and early post-graduation success, particularly in the areas of mentorship, leadership, honors, and extracurricular activities and athletics. The survey results also echo national studies in finding that Scholars with lower household incomes are less involved on their campuses than their higher income peers. How can offices and organizations that support lower-income students help close the involvement gap and encourage all students to participate in the kinds of college experiences we know correlate to post-graduation success?

3. Attendance Basics & Trends in ME

Jessica Anderson

Executive Director, Count ME In

This session offers an in-depth look at student attendance trends in Maine, using key state-specific data to highlight the scope and impact of chronic absenteeism. Attendees will explore the primary reasons students miss school, including socio-economic factors, mental health challenges, and systemic barriers. Drawing from evidence-based research, the session outlines effective interventions, such as personalized outreach, community partnerships, and proactive support systems, that can improve attendance and student engagement. Practical examples and success stories from Maine schools and colleges will illustrate actionable strategies for educators to implement. Join us to uncover innovative solutions and collaborate on fostering consistent, equitable attendance for all students.

Workshop Descriptions

Session 2:

1. Canva/Marketing Roundtable

Jasmine Olivares

Program Counselor, Upward Bound at the University of Maine

Are you looking for program marketing inspiration? Are you interested in sharing your knowledge of Canva with others, or learning more about Canva? If so, this is the session for you! This collaborative, unstructured session will give participants a chance to work together and create using Canva, a graphic design website that is excellent for creating program brochures, newsletters, social media posts, and so much more! Participants are encouraged to bring their computers/tablets and projects that they're currently working on, or projects that they would like to share with others.

2. What You Need to Know About the FAFSA

Mila Tappan

College Access and Outreach Manager, Finance Authority of Maine (FAME)

In this session we'll start by talking about how things are going with the rollout of the 2025-26 FAFSA. Next, we'll focus on the FAFSA questions and process that generate the most issues and review how students with challenging situations should complete the FAFSA. Resources and tools to support you and your students will also be shared!

Workshop Descriptions

Session 2:

3. Making Connections: Fostering Peer-to-Peer Relationships in Educational Settings

Jessica Anderson

Executive Director, Count ME In

Aubrie Howard

Family Engagement Coordinator, GEAR UP Maine RISE

This interactive workshop invites high school and college educators to explore creative strategies for strengthening peer-to-peer connections among students. Participants will engage in hands-on activities that model effective practices for small group and classroom settings, emphasizing collaboration, empathy, and communication. Through shared experiences and discussions, attendees will also connect with peers to exchange ideas and insights. The session provides practical tools and replicable activities designed to build trust, inclusivity, and a sense of belonging in student communities. Leave with a set list of ideas to enhance peer interactions and create supportive learning environments.



Johnson Scholars is a TRIO Student Support Services program at the University of Maine at Farmington.



Workshop Descriptions

Session 3:

1. Worthington Scholars Information Session

Whitney Lytle, PhD

Director of Scholar Advocacy, Worthington Scholars

Emily Pratt

Marketing & Executive Assistant, Worthington Scholars

The Worthington Scholarship Foundation (WSF) began in 2010 with the goal of increasing college access to graduating Maine seniors by reducing the financial burden of higher education. The foundation has grown significantly over the last 14 years, having committed approximately \$45 million in scholarships and providing a personal scholar advocacy program. In the spring of 2024, WSF awarded approximately 815 scholarships for Maine high schools seniors to attend one of our partnered Maine colleges. Whitney Lytle and Emily Pratt from WSF will be discussing the scholarship including an overview of the foundation, the benefits of receiving the scholarship, eligibility, and their active collaboration with 24 partnered colleges. Lastly, as the WSF application opened on January 1, a walkthrough of the new application will be offered.

2. Mental Health Conversation with NAMI Maine

Libby Wright, LSW

Director of Youth Education, NAMI Maine

This program is a 1-hour interactive presentation that provides an accessible overview of youth mental health including building strengths and resiliency, signs and symptoms that someone may be struggling, tips for starting supportive conversations, and resources to utilize for additional support. This program incorporates elements of Youth Mental Health First Aid, Teen Mental Health First Aid, and Sources of Strength which are all evidence-based programs that we provide.

Workshop Descriptions

Session 3:

3. Bridging Opportunities: Upward Bound & Early College Collaboration

Kari Suderley

Director of Early College Programs, University of Maine

Seth Ordway

Early College Counselor, University of Maine

Rusty Brown

Director Upward Bound at the University of Maine

Discover how the University of Maine Upward Bound and Early College programs have joined forces to create a shared vision to empower high school students to succeed in both academic and personal development. This presentation will explore the intentionality and outcomes of the collaboration, which provides students with access to college-level coursework, mentorship, and support services tailored to their needs. Learn how this partnership raises aspirations, fosters smoother transitions from high school to higher education, addresses equity and access challenges, and prepares students for future success in college and beyond. Attendees will gain insights into collaborative program opportunities, best practices for supporting underrepresented students, and strategies for creating impactful student experiences.

MEEOA Alumni Rising Star Award Recipient



Jot Harrington

From a young age Jot loved learning, and a transformative summer at Bowdoin's Upward Bound program at 16 opened new possibilities. Growing up in a large family with limited resources, her parents, despite their hard work, couldn't help her navigate higher education. However, with the guidance of mentors from Upward Bound, she became the second in her family to earn a college degree.

Jot graduated from Stonehill College in 2016 with a degree in Sociology and American Studies and a minor in Gender Studies. Afterward, she spent a year with Americorps at the Tree Street Youth Center in Lewiston. Her connection with Upward Bound remained strong, and in 2017, she returned to the program as an Academic Counselor, where she helped create college readiness curricula and led health & wellness teams.

Driven by a desire to help others, she pursued nursing during the pandemic, earning her RN in 2022. After working in the Emergency Department, she transitioned to Labor & Delivery in 2024. Jot quickly realized that education was key in nursing, whether explaining procedures to patients or mentoring new nurses. She plans to pursue advanced nursing education to teach the next generation of nurses, continuing the cycle of mentorship they experienced through Upward Bound.

MEEOA Alumni Rising Star Award Recipient



Brad Burton

Bradley Burden is a non-traditional, first-generation college student from a low-income background. His journey has involved overcoming homelessness, having a child at 19, struggling with drugs and incarceration, and eventually turning his life around. After working in car sales, a commission-based job, the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic left him uncertain of his next steps. Realizing he lacked education and stable work experience, Bradley decided to pursue higher education to become more employable.

Over the past few years, Bradley has become deeply involved in TRIO programs, having participated in three different ones, and he now works as a peer mentor for two separate schools. He is passionate about TRIO because of the opportunities it provides to individuals who may not have many chances otherwise. With a strong belief in the power of education, Bradley wants to advocate for the program and spread awareness of just how much programs like these can help people.

MEEOA Alumni Achiever Award Recipient



Matthew Leavitt

Matthew Leavitt's life was profoundly shaped by his experience with Upward Bound, which began in 2001 when he joined as a sophomore in high school. He grew up in Millinocket, Maine, with a family that struggled with mental health and substance abuse. However, after witnessing his brother's positive experiences with Upward Bound, Matthew was drawn to the program, hoping to find the connection and support he needed.

Upward Bound provided not only academic assistance but also emotional and social support, exposing Matthew to diverse perspectives and helping him develop a sense of purpose. The program gave him a safe space to confront his struggles, find strength in his voice, and build resilience. He went on to graduate college with both a Master's in Fine Arts and a Master's in Higher Education, and his connection with Upward Bound remained strong throughout his academic career. He worked for the program as a student, counselor, and staff member, eventually creating a documentary about its impact.

Matthew works for the Maine Department of Education, where he serves as a Web and Technology Coordinator, creating materials to support educators statewide. He lives in Windham, Maine, with his partner and daughter, and continues to carry the lessons of Upward Bound, believing that everyone deserves access to opportunities that can change their lives.

MEEOA Alumni Achiever Award Recipient



Matthew Theriault

Matthew attributes much of his success and personal growth to the UMPI Upward Bound program which he credits with changing and even saving his life. Coming from a military family, he was heavily encouraged to consider the military after high school, but his chronic health issues disqualified him from enlistment. Upward Bound, however, opened his eyes to other possibilities, particularly college, and provided the tools and confidence to succeed academically.

UB provided not just academic support but also emotional and social growth, fostering a sense of acceptance and belonging. This led Matthew to pursue social work, a field aligned with his desire to help others overcome barriers. After earning a Bachelor's degree in Social Work, he worked in various roles, including as a counselor at Upward Bound, and later as a social worker in diverse settings, from a charter school in Delaware to a substance abuse clinic in Maryland.

Matthew recently earned a Master's degree in Social Work and now works as a school social worker in Maryland, focusing on supporting high school students as they transition to post-secondary education. Reflecting on his journey, he believes that TRIO/Upward Bound programs truly save lives. Matthew is committed to passing on the lessons they learned to the next generation of students.

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MEEOA Member Programs

BOWDOIN COLLEGE

Upward Bound
Ginny Ward
vfowles@bowdoin.edu

UNIVERSITY OF MAINE AT AUGUSTA

Student Support Services
Anastasia Lima
anastasia.lima@maine.edu

CENTRAL MAINE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Student Support Services
Terry Charlton
tcharlton@cmcc.edu

UNIVERSITY OF MAINE AT FARMINGTON

Upward Bound
Student Support Services
Lynn Ploof-Davis
lynnp@maine.edu

EASTERN MAINE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Student Support Services
Michael Schwabenbauer
mschwabenbauer@emcc.edu

UNIVERSITY OF MAINE AT FORT KENT

Student Support Services
Susan Dubay
susan.dubay@maine.edu

KENNEBEC VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Student Support Services
Lisa Black
lblack@kvcc.me.edu

UNIVERSITY OF MAINE AT PRESQUE ISLE

Student Support Services
Mary Kate Barbosa
mary.barbosa@maine.edu

NORTHERN MAINE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Student Support Services
Johna Lovely
jlovely@maineccc.edu

Educational Talent Search
Upward Bound
Carol McGlinn
carol.mcglinn@maine.edu

SOUTHERN MAINE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Student Support Services
Katherine Lualdi
klualdi@smccme.edu

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MAINE

Student Support Services
Teresa Plummer
teresa.plummer@maine.edu

THOMAS COLLEGE

Student Support Services
Lexie Hinnners-Mucci
lexie.hinnnersmucci@thomas.edu

Upward Bound
Veteran's Upward Bound
Alyssa West
alyssa.west@maine.edu

UNIVERSITY OF MAINE Educational Opportunity Center

Educational Talent Search
Karen Keim
kkeim@maine.edu

WASHINGTON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Student Support Services
Kieve Leeman
kleeman@wccc.me.edu

Student Support Services

Eric Chapman
echapman@maine.edu

SYNTIRO

GEAR UP

Debbie Gilmer
debbie@syntiro.org

Upward Bound
Upward Bound Math-Science

Rusty Brown
rusty.brown@maine.edu

MEEOA Past Presidents



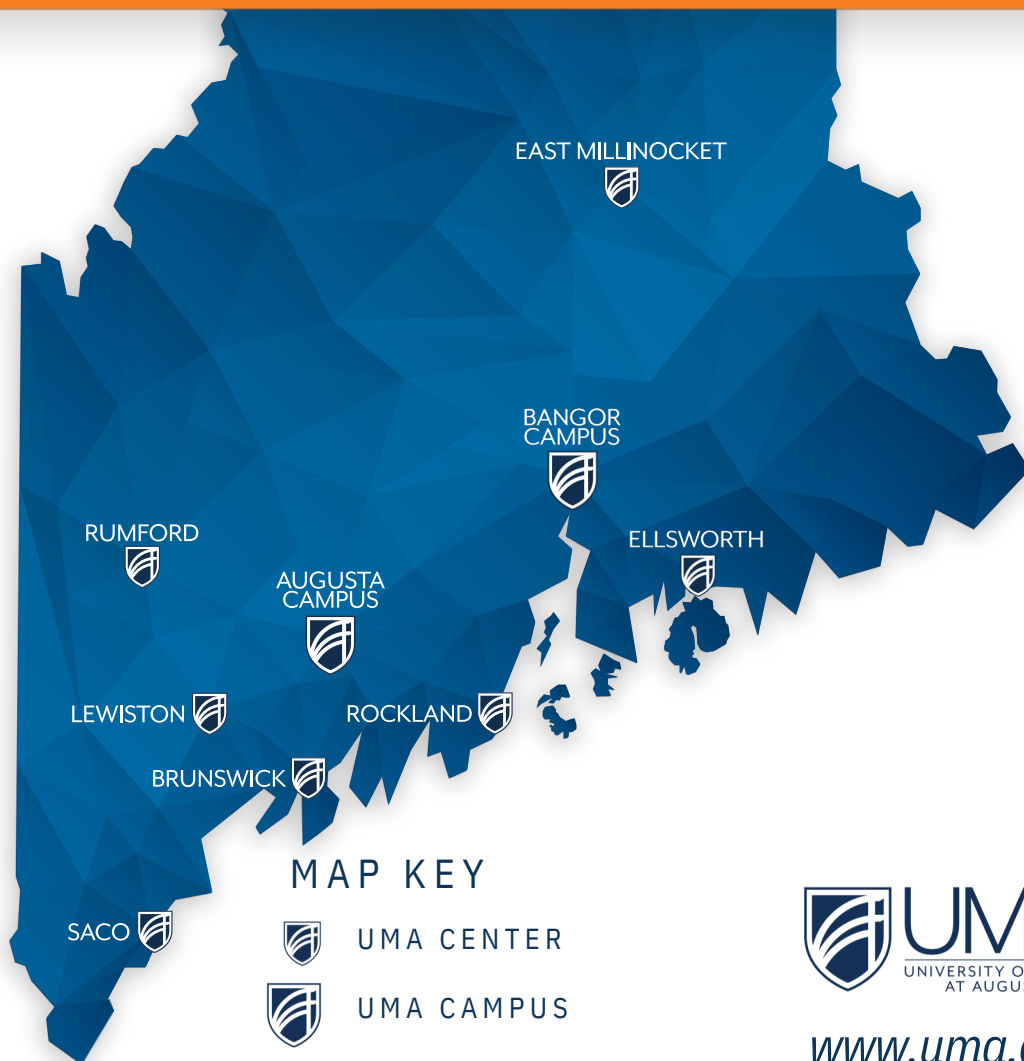
1984-1985 - Jerry Ellis (UM SSS)
1985-1986 - Ludger Duplessis (Bowdoin UB)
1986-1987 - Claire Nelson (UMF SSS)
1987-1988 - Dave Megquier (UM EOC and ETS)
1988-1989 - Scott Bradley (Bowdoin UB)
1989-1990 - Lynn Ploof-Davis (UMF UB)
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1991-1992 -
1992-1993 - Jane Kimball Foley (UM ETS)
1993-1994 -
1994-1995 -
1995-1996 -
1996-1997 - Jane Kimball-Foley (UM ETS)
1996-1997 - Carol Brush
1997-1998 - Judy Look (UMaine ETS)
1998-1999 - Maureen Ferriter (UM SSS)
1999-2000 - Dave Megquier (UM EOC and ETS)
2000-2001 - Johannah Burdin (USM UB)
2001-2002 - Michelle Melanson (Bowdoin UB)
2002-2003 - Sara Henry (UM SSS)
2003-2004 - Teresa Smith (KVCC SSS)
2004-2005 - Ginny Fowles-Ward (Bowdoin UB)

2005-2006 - Faith Erhardt (UM UB)
2006-2007 - Danette Madore (UMPI UB)
2007-2008 - Steve Visco (UM EOC and ETS)
2008-2009 - Linda Rottmann (UM SSS)
2009-2010 - Sarah Sockalexis (UM ETS)
2010-2011 - Laurie Davis (USM SSS and UB)
2011-2012 - Jess Berry (UMF UB)
2012-2013 - Shawn Graham (UMFK SSS)
2013-2014 - Chris Turner (USM UB)
2014-2015 - Kelly Ilseman (UM UBMS)
2015-2016 - Teri Mann (UM EOC)
2016-2017 - Laurie Davis (USM SSS and UB)
2017-2018 - Dori Fellman (Syntiro GEAR UP)
2018-2019 - Mary Kate Barbosa (UMPI SSS)
2019-2020 - Steve Visco (UM ETS and EOC)
2020-2021 - Mary Sinclair (UMF UB)
2021-2022 - Samantha Prosser (USM UB)
2022-2023 - Terry Charlton (CMCC SSS)
2023-2024 - Ginny Fowles-Ward (Bowdoin UB)
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