

Greetings, Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy and the other members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee. I am Dr Michael Grillo, and I am a History of Art professor at the University of Maine. I live in the town of Penobscot. I am here to testify in support of LD 700, *An Act to Promote Student Enrollment and Degree Completion in the University of Maine System by Awarding Waivers of Tuition and Fees to Eligible Students*, presented by Senators Michael Tipping, Marianne Moore, Jill CDuson, Bruce Bickford, and Representative James Dill, whom we all thank for their efforts.

Let me start by also thanking the Legislature and Governor for its continuing tuition support for students enrolled in the Community College System, however, while simultaneously requesting equal consideration for students who pursue four-year degrees in the University of Maine System directly out of high-school. Maine needs a well educated workforce in a broad range of fields, whether in jobs for which Community Colleges prepare their students, or in the many numerous professions requiring four-year degrees or even graduate studies. Looking to support only the Community Colleges alone undermines the more encompassing needs of the state by limiting the fields in which students can rely on support to make their education possible.

While some Community College students do continue on to four-year programmes, they historically represent only around three to five percent of their students, according to the Community College's web-site. As UMS Chancellor Malloy and the MCCS President Daigler acknowledged to your Education and Cultural Affairs Committee in February, the "data demonstrate this [MCCS tuition support] initiative has contributed to a decrease in first-year in-state students enrolling at UMS." (<https://legislature.maine.gov/doc/11047>) The 546 Community College students who did go on to enrol in the UMSystem in 2023 represent only 4% of the MCCS' total student body of 14,423. While this report serves to argue for increased transfer articulations, a position which I certainly support, it also calls for better financial support for students who chose to enrol in the UMSystem for their whole undergraduate education.

LD 700 would provide the most direct means of support for university-bound students, by as its summary notes, "award[ing] waivers of tuition and fees to eligible students who are enrolled full-time at any University of Maine System campus" with allowances for other offsetting funding provided by the Federal Pell Grant and other sources of aid. While the transfer articulations being crafted open up wonderful four-year education possibilities for Community College students, they do so only in a limited number of fields not fully representative of the much more vast offerings in areas the far broader areas of study that only a comprehensive university system can offer.

The Community Colleges and the University of Maine System should serve as complements to one another to ensure that Maine offers its students educations focussed to the fullest range of careers that can ensure Maine's economic success and inviting vibrant culture for all of its citizens. For that reason, I strongly recommend passage of LD 700, *An Act to Promote Student Enrollment and Degree Completion in the University of Maine System by Awarding Waivers of Tuition and Fees to Eligible Students*.

Thank you, Dr Michael Grillo