

# Pathways To Careers



## UMaine and UMM Internal Request for Ideas UMS TRANSFORMS Pathways to Careers Spring 2023

Each of the universities of the University of Maine System has been invited to join in the UMS TRANSFORMS Pathways to Careers (PTC) initiative, supported by the Harold Alfond Foundation (HAF) and the Maine Jobs and Recovery Plan (MJRP).

As part of the Pathways to Careers initiative request for proposals, the University of Maine will be submitting a letter of intent outlining the projects that this institution plans to propose. We are seeking ideas from the campus community for initiatives to include. **Ideas must be submitted by February 3, 2023.**

Hands-on experiences in the workforce during college can be critical for students to set their career goals and to land their first job after graduation. The value of these experiences can vary widely, however, and without adequate support, high-impact internships may only be available to a small subset of students. As part of the Student Success & Retention activities of UMS TRANSFORMS, we invite all UMS universities to submit proposals for the Pathways to Careers (PTC) initiative describing how they will support new or expanded career exploration and student internship opportunities during a two-year pilot period. Assessment of this pilot will inform our actions in subsequent years, but funds and activities are anticipated for multiple years after this pilot period.

### **The Pathways to Careers initiative strives to increase:**

- 1. access to career-related experiences to all of our students;**
- 2. the quality of our students' career-related experiences; and**
- 3. coordination among UMS universities in our stewardship of these experiences.**

PTC provides a framework for pilots that includes internship coordination, preparation, and support, while encouraging creative approaches that build on campus strengths. The term "internship" is used to broadly capture career-relevant student experiences that occur outside of a formal course setting (see Appendix B for more detail on what types of experiences qualify). Units are encouraged to propose pilot programs that will help students from multiple disciplines explore *career fields and economic sectors* and that will increase internship opportunities by using established high-impact practices. Appendix B provides more detail on the types of pilot initiatives sought by the Student Success Initiative leadership.



## GENERAL EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL PILOT ACTIVITIES

All PTC pilots will be expected to collaborate in two system-wide efforts. The first is the new **UMS Pathways to Careers Center**, a virtual hub for information about UMS internship opportunities and resources, and an organization that coordinates system-wide collaboration among intern coordinators, career professionals, and other UMS employees who support access to, and quality of, internship experiences. The second is an **assessment of all pilot activities** to inform next steps in the initiative. (Please refer to **Appendix B: FAQ** below for further information on these two efforts.)

There will be funding available to UM/UMM for pilot initiatives. We anticipate that no single pilot initiative will receive more than \$60,000 in annual funding in calendar years 2023 & 2024. Sustainability beyond that timeframe will be the responsibility of the pilot team.

**Prior to the full proposal deadline, the Student Success Initiative leadership will host a system-wide workshop in late February to: (a) provide more information on internship best practices and present examples of their use to inform the full proposals, and (b) deepen multi-campus collaboration in any areas of shared intent identified by the NOIs.** Universities with proposed projects in similar sectors will be expected to coordinate efforts, and planning for this coordination will begin at this workshop.

## TO SUBMIT IDEAS

Please complete the following [form](#) to submit an idea for a PTC pilot.

After we receive ideas, UMaine PTC leadership will reach out to the submitting teams to brainstorm additional opportunities and to explore matchmaking with other submitting teams.

### Timeline

- PTC Virtual Town Hall - January 31, 2023, 2 pm – 3:30 pm  
Zoom link:  
<https://maine.zoom.us/j/89141830736?pwd=RTEvbS9GaGhlbzZKa2hOb3F5QW14dz09>  
Password: 692446
- UMaine Ideas Submission Deadline - February 3, 2023
- UMaine PTC leadership meets with - February 6-10, 2023
- UMaine submits its Notice of Intent (NOI) to submit a proposal — February 15, 2023
- PTC Workshop attendance – Late February, 2023
- Full project proposals and overall university cover letter, budget, & justification — March 31, 2023



To receive a calendar invitation to the virtual town hall, please contact [eden.kalyanapu@maine.edu](mailto:eden.kalyanapu@maine.edu). In addition, questions addressed to this email address will be directed to the appropriate person for reply.

## APPENDIX A: HIGH-IMPACT PRACTICES

The first **five** of the following **must be included in all internships supported in any capacity by PTC funds**. Additionally, PTC pilots that involve internship coordination with employers must include practice number **six**. UMS TRANSFORMS funds may not be used to directly support internships that fail to meet these criteria.

- 1. Tangible, Substantial, and Achievable Learning Outcomes** agreed upon beforehand;
- 2. Feedback and Assessment** from both students and employers on student performance, learning outcomes, gains, and the overall quality of the internship;
- 3. Pre-internship Training for Students** to increase the likelihood of success and to enhance student gains during the internship. These experiences might include general professionalism or career preparation training relevant to a specific job sector that will assist the student in obtaining an internship. Examples of ways to provide pre-internship training include cohort-based “bootcamps” that expose students to career fields and build skills, career preparation courses specific to a sector or job category, and internship readiness or other career preparatory micro-credentials;
- 4. Mentorship** by an employer or university staff/faculty during the internship to enhance student engagement;
- 5. Networking Opportunities** for students to gain exposure to multiple potential employers or to build networking skills;
- 6. Student Compensation** to allow students with financial constraints to forgo other paid work to participate in these career-relevant opportunities. Ideally internship employers should contribute all or a portion of this compensation to demonstrate that they have “skin in the game.” Wrap-around supports such as travel and housing to increase access to internships are also best practices for maximizing inclusivity.

Other practices to consider include:

- **Opportunities for Student Presentation** of their work, projects, and learning outcomes before a general audience;

- **Employer and/or Project Vetting** to ensure these practices are met, often with a signed agreement to make the terms clear to both the university and employer.

## APPENDIX B: Frequently Asked Questions

Below is additional information on the process and framing for the Pathways to Careers (PTC) initiative, including suggested proposal ideas, details on the UMS Pathways to Careers Center, and an outline of the assessment process to date.

### 1. How is “internship” being defined?

Career-relevant experiences take many forms in higher education and are referred to by an even longer list of names. PTC will define an “internship” as a professional learning experience with a potential employer that offers meaningful, practical work related to a student’s field of study or career interest. These experiences include, but are not limited to, internships and career-relevant student employment, co-ops, micro-internships, clinical experiences, student teaching, and apprenticeships. The work may be part-time or full-time, in the summer or during the academic year, and in-person or online. The definition includes both paid and unpaid opportunities, but PTC internships should generally require some level of financial support as an important inclusive practice and may be taken for academic credit.

### 2. What sorts of proposals are being invited?

Proposed PTC projects could include any of the following. This list is not meant to be exhaustive:

- **Internship Coordinators:** Internship Coordinators across the UMS campuses may cover one or more job sector areas, allowing them to build knowledge and trust within a professional network. We emphasize that sectors are not disciplines or academic departments. They are collections of related potential external partners, who would identify each other as related. Members of these sectors may, however, offer internships for students in a wide variety of academic programs. As one example, hospitals, health clinics, and public health non-profit organizations would all likely identify themselves as working in the sector of “healthcare,” and they have a shared professional network within which a UMS internship coordinator might develop a positive reputation for UMS students. Internships in this sector could be developed for students in any aspect of the member organizations, including those majoring in nursing, biology, communication/English, global languages, business/marketing, computer science, and many others. The North American Industry Classification System (<https://www.census.gov/naics/>) may be helpful to understand some categories used by the US, Mexico, and Canada, but internship coordinator sector assignments should

assist them in developing and stewarding employer relationships in professional networks that make sense in Maine and other nearby regions.

PTC internship coordinators will be expected to develop and steward internships in their sector(s) that are available to all UMS students, to collaborate with other coordinators across UMS who are working in the same or related job sectors, and to coordinate regularly with the career center or other career preparatory activities on their home campus. They may also be expected to help connect students at their home university to the opportunities in other job sectors developed by other coordinators across UMS. Coordinators may be staff or faculty, current university employees or new hires, and may perform these duties as part or as all of their job responsibilities. The UMS Coordinators supported through this initiative will report to the PTC Center Director for their PTC related activities. We encourage campuses to determine where their own current sector strengths may exist, and to consider the following list of potential sectors to identify areas where current opportunities align or new opportunities exist (coordination may be proposed in sectors not listed here):

- Agriculture & Food
  - Aquaculture & Marine
  - Arts & Culture
  - Biosciences & biotechnology
  - Composites & Advanced Materials
  - Construction
  - Education
  - Information Technology & Computing
  - Energy & Environmental Technologies
  - Financial Services
  - Forestry
  - Government
  - Healthcare
  - Tourism & Hospitality
  - Law
  - Natural Resources & Conservation
  - Non-Profits
  - Outdoor Recreation
  - Precision Manufacturing
  - Retail
  - Scientific & Engineering Services/Consulting
  - Other?
- **Short or low-credit courses or “bootcamps”** (potentially led by internship coordinators, above) that prepare students to apply for and become successful in internships within a certain sector or area of related sectors.

- **Online peer mentoring communities** in which students who are placed in a variety of internships meet regularly to discuss their experiences, challenges, and opportunities with a university employee (potentially an internship coordinator from option A, above) and each other, possibly as a zero- or low-credit course.
- **Scholarship or grant opportunities** for students to gain compensation or other support to allow for participation in an internship.
- **Competitive initial matching funds for external partners** to offer paid intern opportunities for UMS students.
- **Development of new micro- and other credentials of value** consonant with high-impact practices, or otherwise tailored to career pathways.
- **Annual or semiannual internship conferences** (for one or multiple universities) where students present the results from their internship to the university community, students and potential external partners learn about the diversity of internships available, and external partners present information to potential intern applicants.

### 3. What is the UMS Pathways to Careers Center?

The Maine Jobs and Recovery Plan (MJRP) has funded the creation of this Center, which will be a hub for information sharing and collaboration among internship coordinators across UMS. Through the MJRP funding, it will also support wraparound services such as housing, transportation, and other financial assistance for students with a particular emphasis on facilitating in-person internships and building new internship opportunities in businesses and organizations in remote and rural areas of the state. One of the primary goals of PTC is to develop and steward more high-impact internships with external partners for our students, which requires clear and consistent communication with these partners. Consistent, high-quality experiences benefit from repeated, positive interactions between the external partner and university representatives, and from positive recommendations of UMS through trusted professional networks to engage with our students and representatives. To encourage and facilitate these interactions, PTC will create a clear central inventory of all UMS internships as well as contact information and specific areas of expertise for all internship coordinators within the System, including existing internship coordinators already focused on specific job sectors. The overarching objective of this portion of the PTC pilot is to establish a network of coordinators who will work together to liaise with external partners in specific sectors and help the University of Maine System build more effective partnerships. Hallmarks of a successful coordinator network will be:

- higher quality and more consistently offered internships;
- increased student participation in internships (both for students overall and within groups with historical disproportionate underrepresentation in these experiences);
- increased number and diversity of available internships (e.g., diversity of academic discipline, job sector, and internship length, design, and modality);

- UMS faculty or staff, whose work is related to a given sector, know who their relevant intern coordinator is and pass along opportunities for them to develop or steward; and
- external partners know with whom to speak (or can easily find out through their professional network) if they desire to develop a new internship or would like to improve the outcomes of an existing internship for students or for their organization.

Building this network will require collaboration among UMS universities to identify coordinator expertise. Larger job sectors may have representatives on many UMS campuses, but smaller sectors may not. The internship coordination network, which will be managed by the PTC Center Director, will allow students, faculty, and staff to readily identify representatives from across the System who can lend their expertise as needed to other campuses.

#### **4. How will pilot programs be assessed?**

The system-wide assessment of the PTC pilot period will inform future actions for internship development, support, and stewardship at all UMS campuses. Assessment may entail but is not limited to student surveys, instructor surveys, administrator surveys, focus groups, interviews, and shared assessment of student performance. These sources of data may be required both for students engaged in internships or in internship preparatory experiences as well as for relevant “control” students who are not participating in the pilot activities. Assessment will be conducted by the UMS TRANSFORMS Student Success and Retention (SSR) Assessment Committee, in consultation with the UMS PTC Implementation Committee, and results will be shared with all participating universities. Particular attention will be paid to changes in student performance and progression (e.g., retention, performance in relevant successor courses, time-to-graduation), disposition and well-being, and employment following graduation. Data will also be examined for patterns within student groups of interest (e.g., first-generation, high school GPA, and socio-economic, ethnic, racial, or other demographic backgrounds).

#### **5. Are there examples of relevant work currently in place across the System?**

Universities will have different approaches to executing the shared goals of the PTC Pilot. Current examples of relevant work across UMS include:

- The [Maine Flagship Internship Program](#), which includes [Innovate for Maine](#) and the [Maine Government Summer Internship Program](#) at UMaine
- The [Maine Career Catalyst](#), a private-sector led initiative that provides professional development, social opportunities, and networking for summer interns from any college or university who are working in Maine
- Department or sector-specific intern approaches with coordinators:
- [Maine Business School](#)
- [UMaine Communication and Journalism](#)
- [Guidelines for developing a new in-person or remote internship](#) at the USM Career & Employment Hub



- [Competitive funds for external partners](#) to pay for interns at USM
- UMF [Partnership for Civic Engagement](#)
- The [UMaine Internship Guide](#) for students