

## STATEMENT

Dr. William J. Brennan, President

Maine Maritime Academy

March 18, 2013

Senator Hill, Senator Millett, Representative Rotundo, Representative MacDonald and members of the Joint Standing Committees for Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Education and Cultural Affairs:

My name is Bill Brennan, President of Maine Maritime Academy, and it is my pleasure to be here today to speak in support of the recommended level of General Fund support to Maine Maritime Academy for the 2014-2015 biennium on page A-470 as it appears in the budget document. If we can hold our state funding at current level, I can assure you that we will do our utmost to build upon the positive developments which have been realized in past years. As the Academy begins its 70<sup>th</sup> year of offering unique and important contributions to the educational opportunities available to the citizens of Maine we have much to be proud of.

The Academy specializes in marine-oriented education at the undergraduate and graduate levels, although our mission has evolved and is far broader today, with a curriculum emphasizing engineering, management, science and transportation. Students in many of our programs also receive specialized training which prepares them for careers in the U.S. Merchant Marine or the uniformed services of the United States. We offer degree programs in marine engineering operations, marine engineering technology, marine systems engineering, power engineering technology, marine transportation and several other ocean-related areas.

Our enrollment is at record levels and we are slightly beyond our maximum capacity. Although a challenge for us to administer, we are particularly mindful that this means more and more young Maine women and men are able to benefit from our unique, hands-on, educational philosophy and our reputation as one of the top undergraduate colleges of engineering in the country.

Professional placement rates for our students remain very strong – with most choosing from multiple employment opportunities in their chosen fields prior to graduation. Of particular note, our job placement rate is very high – of those students who graduated last May, in excess of 90 percent had jobs in their chosen fields within 90 days of graduation, with some of those jobs paying salaries in the six figures.

These accomplishments have not come without some sacrifice due to the financial challenges facing all public educational institutions in the State during the past few years. While the Academy's General Fund Appropriations have remained relatively unchanged for the past several bienniums, our costs have continued to increase and we have approached the point of diminishing returns in adapting our antiquated buildings to contemporary purposes.

We are appreciative that there are legislative efforts underway to help us address some of the obstacles we confront and I also appreciate that this budget proposal does reflect a restoration of funds curtailed this fiscal year. While a modest change, this adjustment will make a significant difference in mitigating some of the impact of cost escalation and ultimately will enable Maine students to enjoy both the intellectual and economic benefits of a Maine Maritime education.

Thank you for your time and consideration regarding the recommended biennial funding for the Academy. I would be happy to attempt to answer any questions you may have at this time – or, later during Committee work sessions if that is your preference.