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Maine Higher Education Entrepreneurship Faculty Forum Aims to Jumpstart Students to Develop Maine Enterprises

Portland, Maine: Faculty colleagues from the UMaine System, the Maine Community College System and Maine's private Institutions of Higher Education, along with distinguished entrepreneurship facilitators from around the country, will gather to explore entrepreneurship in the classroom during the **2004 Maine Higher Education Entrepreneurship Faculty Forum**. According to conference organizers, the forum is being arranged to encourage quality of both the content and the process of teaching entrepreneurship in Maine. Its goal is to cultivate an interested cadre of capable entrepreneurship educators who understand the importance of combining theory and practice in teaching, as to help young Mainers be prepared to engage in entrepreneurial careers throughout their home state.

The conference is being held June 9, 10 and 11 at the Sunday River Resort in Bethel, and has been partially funded under a grant from the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation through the University of Southern Maine's (USM) and the University of Maine's (UMaine) Schools of Business. Maine Small Business Development Centers (Maine SBDC), headquartered at USM, is coordinating the event.

Dr. Valarie Lamont, Director of the USM Center for Entrepreneurship, and Dr. Nory Jones, Assistant Professor at the UMaine School of Business, will host the forum. Speakers include entrepreneurs, investors, faculty, and foundation leaders. To a considerable extent, core programming will be facilitated by Dr. Minet Sshindehutte, Entrepreneurship Assistant Professor at the Thomas C. Page Center for Entrepreneurship – Miami University, Ohio. Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc., through Maine MEP, is providing partial conference participation scholarships to qualified Maine faculty under its United States Department of Labor (DOL) H-1B Grant.

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Topics include: Accelerating Entrepreneurship in Education; the Environment of Entrepreneurship; Elements of Entrepreneurship Curriculum and Pedagogical Tools; Classroom Strategies and Classroom Dynamics for Teaching Entrepreneurship; Integrating Entrepreneurship into the Maine System; and the documentary film “Startup.com” as a case study. Entrepreneur Karem Durdag, Chief Operating Officer for Biode – a sensor technology company, will make a keynote address entitled, “Starting a Business in Maine, the Ultimate Reality Drama.”

John Massaua, State Director for the Maine SBDC, points out that perhaps the President of India, Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, best sums up the purpose of the conference in some of his recent comments, when he said, “Educational systems should highlight the importance of entrepreneurship and prepare students right throughout their college education to get oriented towards setting up an enterprise which will provide them creativity, freedom, and ability to generate wealth.” Building on that theme for Maine, the conference tagline is, “Developing Maine students into entrepreneurial-minded men and women.”

About Maine Small Business Development Centers: *Maine Small Business Development Centers (Maine SBDC) and its tech-focus group, Maine Small Business & Technology Development Centers (Maine SBTDC) provide comprehensive business management assistance, training, resource and information services to Maine’s micro, small and technology-based business communities. Business assistance is provided at no cost to business owners by professional certified business counselors who meet rigorous education and business experience standards.*

Maine SBDC/SBTDC is a partnership program of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) in association with the SBA/SBDC, Maine Department of Economic and Community Development (Maine DECD), the University of Southern Maine (USM), and leading economic and/or community development hosting organizations, including the Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments (AVCOG), Coastal Enterprises, Inc. (CEI), Eastern Maine Development Corporation (EMDC), and the Northern Maine Development Commission (NMDC); with support from the Maine Technology Institute (MTI), the University of Maine (UMaine), and other contractors, allies and stakeholders.

Accredited by the Association of Small Business Development Centers (ASBDC) and administered by USM’s School of Business, Maine SBDC/SBTDC operates a network of 11 service centers and 25 outreach offices located conveniently throughout the state.

Maine SBDC/SBTDC’s mission is to engage itself and others in development activities that contribute to the improvement of the economic climate for and the success of micro, small, and technology-based businesses in the State of Maine. Its focus is to assist in the creation, growth and maintenance of viable small businesses and the jobs these businesses provide. Maine SBDC/SBTDC serves those seeking assistance who are willing and able to build, sustain, and/or expand their business.

More information about the Maine SBDC/SBTDC can be found at www.mainesbdc.org.