

University of Maine System
Board of Trustees

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

NAME OF ITEM: Establishment of the **Dr. Bernard Lown '42 Honors College Teaching Professorship**

CAMPUS PRESENTER(S): Joan Ferrini-Mundy, President, and Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation; John Volin, Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost

INITIATED BY: Roger J. Katz, Chair

BOARD INFORMATION:

BOARD ACTION: X

BOARD POLICY: 711 Named Chairs and Professorships

UNIFIED ACCREDITATION CONNECTION: N/A

UMS STRATEGIC PLAN CONNECTION:

In its Vision Statement, the UMS Strategic Plan expresses a commitment to “helping students become critical thinkers who can adapt to a changing world to solve problems with new solutions . . . pursue fulfilling careers, and lead meaningful lives.” In his life, career, and legacy, University of Maine and Honors Alumnus Dr. Bernard Lown ('42) exemplifies this vision, as does the Honors College professorship established in his name.

Dr. Lown came to the U.S. as an immigrant from Lithuania at age 14 in 1935 and went on to have an extraordinary and distinguished career as a physician and humanitarian. In 1961, he invented the first effective cardiac defibrillator; that same year, he was part of a passionate group of doctors seeking to address the risk of nuclear war. Out of that passion eventually emerged the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, a group that Dr. Lown co-founded with a Soviet cardiologist and on behalf of which Dr. Lown accepted the Nobel Peace Prize in 1985. In 2024, the U.S. mint honored Dr. Lown with the American Innovation coin for the state of Maine.

Dr. Lown often credited the University of Maine Honors program for sparking his passion for research and life-long learning. Faculty who hold the Lown Professorship are expected to have active scholarly/creative agendas that are in keeping with Dr. Lown's passion for social justice and his commitment to solving problems related to human health and the health of the planet; they will teach classes in the Honors College that foster students' engagement in these most pressing issues, foster their problem-solving skills, and nurture their desire to live lives of meaning and commitment. As such, the professorship is fully aligned with the UMS Strategic Plan.

BACKGROUND:

The Dr. Bernard Lown '42 Honors College Teaching Professorship is presented to the Board for approval. This professorship was created in the University of Maine Foundation in 2023 and will meet the minimum endowment value of \$250,000.00 needed to establish a professorship with the University of Maine by the end of June 2025. The Dr. Bernard Lown '42 Honors College Teaching Professorship is presented now, supported with a University of Maine Foundation endowment valuing \$273,017.28 as of December 2024.

The purpose of this endowed professorship is to recognize University of Maine faculty members who have demonstrated innovation in teaching and research/creative activity and to enable such faculty members to bring their expertise, passions, and practices to the Honors College community. The annual distributions from the endowment shall be used to supplement the annual salary of the individual. The balance of the income may also be allocated to provide undergraduate student support, equipment, technical and clerical assistance, travel, marketing, and other expenses including those related to the presentation of the Bernard Lown Memorial Lecture. The holder of the Dr. Bernard Lown '42 Honors College Teaching Professorship shall show a commitment to advancing the causes and understanding the real-world dimensions of peace, social justice, human health, and the health of the planet aligned with those of Dr. Lown.

An ad hoc committee shall be formed by the Dean of the Honors College and charged with the review of applications for the Dr. Bernard Lown '42 Honors College Teaching Professorship, and the committee's recommendation shall be reviewed and approved according to the University of Maine's standard policies and practices for such committees.

Nominations for the Professorship shall be recommended to the Provost and then forwarded to the President of the University of Maine. Appointments shall be for a term of two years and may be renewed according to the standard policies and practices of the University of Maine. The fund shall be administered by the Dean of the Honors College in consultation with the Provost.

TEXT OF PROPOSED RESOLUTION:

That the Finance, Facilities and Technology Committee approves the following resolution to be forwarded for Board of Trustees approval at the May 19, 2025, Board meeting.

That the Board of Trustees accepts the recommendation of the Finance, Facilities and Technology Committee, and authorizes the University of Maine System, acting through the University of Maine, to establish the Dr. Bernard Lown '42 Honors College Teaching Professorship.