



April 7, 2014

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*Supporting and promoting
Maine's collecting institutions*

Theodora Kalikow, President
University of Southern Maine
Office of the President
707 Law Building
Portland, Maine 04104

Dear President Kalikow,

The Association of Maine Archives and Museums (MAM), the state's only membership organization dedicated to "supporting and promoting Maine's collecting institutions," is adding its voice to those that have already expressed dismay over the University of Southern Maine's decision to terminate the American and New England Studies master's program. As representatives of our field—including museums, historical societies, libraries, archives, other cultural organizations, and those who provide services for them—we feel that the ANES program is important for the health of both our industry and the state's economy.

At MAM we have a mounting concern that we must do more to attract, train, and empower the next generation of leaders for our field. ANES has long been the only museum studies/public history graduate program in the state, and while we certainly wish there were more, it alone has done a remarkable job of turning out dedicated, capable young scholars with tangible and employable skills. The vast majority of MAM's member institutions—which range from the Portland Museum of Art and the Abbe Museum to the all-volunteer Pittston Literary and Historical Society and others—have had an ANES graduate as a staff member, intern, volunteer, or trustee. In my professional and personal experience (I took two ANES courses as a special student in 1999 and 2000), the ANES program is a model of what USM should be striving to achieve with the idea of a "metropolitan university." If you share the often-expressed concern that our talented young people must leave Maine to find opportunities, then the elimination of this unique graduate program, and the resulting migration of our best and brightest to Boston in order to attend analogous programs, is emphatically a step in the wrong direction.

If, like we often do at MAM, you are battling a misconception that museums and other cultural organizations do not contribute valuably to the state's economy, and that for that reason they do not represent practical or viable career tracks or business models, I urge you to visit MaineMuseums.org/About and take a look at our Economic Impact Statement, which summarizes the positive impact of our member institutions throughout the state. In short, our members—many staffed by graduates of ANES—employ hundreds, generate millions in revenue, and attract millions of visitors to Maine. To eliminate the ANES program would be to sever an artery that feeds not only Maine's museum and archive community, but also its tourism industry. We urge you to work with the University of Maine system and the state to reconsider this short-sighted act and restore the American and New England Studies master's program

Sincerely,

Jessica Skwire Routhier, President
Maine Archives and Museums