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Direction Package Meeting Notes

University of Southern Maine

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Directions Package Meeting Notes

- Vision
 - Should change the tense of the vision to say that we intend “to transform” instead of “transforms” – the language of a vision statement should be aspirational.
 - The statement that “Teaches responsibility to community” – does this mean civic engagement? Does this mean the campus itself? The Community at large?
 - We are trying to prepare students for jobs that we don’t even know what they are yet
- Charter
 - Is our focus on other modes of instruction/ commuters? We need maximum emphasis on the campuses, including the online campus
 - We would really like to promote the increase of our online courses.
- Mission
 - I don’t think we are looking to change the mission, but perhaps more revisiting it to get better understanding.
 - There is the feeling that we keep relooking at the mission for USM, but do we ever follow-through and make the changes that get suggested?
- Values
 - We should attempt to have a quick statement of values... but also have the longer list. It is great to have just a quick statement that summarizes what USM holds to be the key values.
 - What is difference between responsible fiscal stewardship v. responsible stewardship of USM?
 - Is the difference a matter of appropriations v. sustaining planning?
 - This should be clarified in the values statements, as they have been lumped together in conversations during the past few years.
 - Stewardship of external constituents is also a piece of this.
 - Important to note that we are not just concerned with financials, but want to sustain the university on all levels
 - The Values list is very scattered; could be better reflected in a more concise manner. The list is great, but it is not all happening at USM.

- Strategies
 - We need to give Academic credit for previous experience
 - We do this, but it is not an easy process for students. Not sure that we do this well
 - We need to better advertise that we offer this service
 - Strengthen select programs
 - Need to think about what the demands in the community are, and not only what students are asking after, while also keeping in mind that importance of what students are asking for.
 - Would be interesting to see what is being asked about the most v. which programs are we graduating the most students
 - Would be interested in learning more of the process regarding how they are going to make the choice about what select programs make the cut
 - Need to look ahead – what are the possibilities for our alumni 50 years from now? How can we best prepare them?
 - Managing resources/costs
 - Could we change this to say that we will continue to manage our resources responsibly? We do not want to put out a document that states we are not currently being responsible.
 - There needs to be more conversations between campuses, including joint programming.
 - We like that staff are being included in this directions package process, not just faculty.
 - We should visit with the community colleges and talk with their students about how they can turn their certificate into a 4-year degree at USM.
 - We should really expand on our internships. How can we make them more accessible to our students? How do we entice local businesses to look at our students as a top-notch resource?
- Other comments

- We talk about aligning goals/priorities – do we have a mechanism to determine goals & priorities? If so, what is that process?
- How does our faculty add to the value of the region through their work/ research?
- We need to make sure that we are keeping our programs affordable.
- We want to see more of an effort to maintain career tracking. We should grow our leadership from internal employees, not always hire from outside institutions
- USM’s focus should celebrate the positives that are happening every day, not just focus on how to “fix” the situation which complains the loudest.
- How can we promote stories of how giving to USM is beneficial to the donor? Tell stories of why our donors feel that USM is a good investment?
- **We need to make USM the University of Choice for Southern Maine. Aim to be a top choice for all of northern New England!**
 - We should also aim to the workplace of choice for the region.
Happy employees make for a better student experience.
- Marketing to a declining group of students needs to include expanding to include the internet, other parts of New England, older students, non-traditional groups. Make sure tuition makes sense.
- Current budget cuts have not been strategic – Example: When professors retire, don’t just fail to fill that specific positions; instead, think about overall department goals.
- USM needs to develop an identity that makes us different than the other options for students. That identity should stay the same over time. Link to strengths: Tourism, entrepreneurship (hubs of new businesses started by USM students/alumni)
- What should the USM student look like? One goal should be that our students aspire to:
 - Be a strong student with aspirations of being a strong member of the community
 - Be professional
 - Have more opportunities for internships
 - Have exposure to the professional work in their fields
 - We need to expose high school students, guidance counselors and teachers to the great facilities at USM.
- How does LAC compete with the community colleges?
 - Presence in the high schools

- Presence at the community colleges themselves
- Scholarships for community college students to move on at USM
- Need to see some simpler activities within the bureaucracy
- Widespread perception that USM is failing; also that the faculty is running the show
- Has to be a sense of substantive change – has to be:
 - Dramatic
 - Edgy
 - Innovative
 - Compelling
- We've created a Seven-Sister monster and it has to be tamed.
- Build on our connection to the Southern Maine business community
 - Some excellent partnerships (Portsmouth Naval Shipyard)
 - How about Maine Medical Center? UNUM? WEX?
 - More adjunct professors (instructors who are practitioners in their field)
 - USM's expansion is critical to the business community
- Need more activities for students and alumni:
 - Enhance life for students in Gorham (ex: late bus to Portland)
 - Lighting the athletic fields in Gorham
 - Look for town leadership to provide additional town activities
 - Move more cultural activities from Gorham to Portland (especially for alums)
- There is a great deal of caring, concern and commitment to USM. That being said:
 - USM is not a mature institution
 - USM needs to tell us what it wants to be when it grows up
 - What USM decides should lead to a focused identity
 - 21st century university idea is a failure; trying to be all things is not a possibility
- USM should connect to a group of metropolitan universities [Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities?] to help with shared issues and strategic goals befitting a diverse student body.
 - Make USM a go-to place for economic growth
 - Deep partnerships with the business community

- Stable leadership – including Board of Trustees, Chancellor
- Would not recognize UMS as a system – it is a failure. Example: Muskie is the only deliverer of public affairs education in the state
- Unless we correct the basic system, we will continue to spiral down
- Make Portland the go-to place north of Boston
- Think of success versus the competition; find ways to collaborate with other schools
- Top points:
 - Transition at the top and constant strategic planning wears out boards and the community. “Our areas of excellence are eroding.”
 - Do a tough SWOT analysis of strengths and weaknesses. Ask the outside community, too. Ask students, alums, businesses, etc. Assign an alum to every 12th grade student applicant, to ask questions, help, to follow-up (this is done elsewhere). USM is often the last/back-up school considered.
 - Engage dynamic hub of Portland/metro. Make president’s council-level person who is the chief interface with Portland’s younger, entrepreneur, downtown, start-up, and political world. Make USM known and vital to this dynamic city/region.
 - How can USM collaborate with UNE, SMCC, MECA, Salt Institute, St. Joseph’s, and Kaplan, to make Portland a destination city for students? Suggestion, “We could use a statewide articulation agreement.”
 - There should be a sense that the city and USM are one and the same.
- Demographics of Maine are ‘old.’ We need to bring young people here.
- USM needs a growth plan – and a five year plan to get there. This plan should be designed in concert with the faculty, but not driven by the faculty.
- People should believe that they are better and the community is better because of USM.
- Students should know that they can come to USM to pursue certain specialties, and these should be driven by the economics of the region.
- USM needs to produce competent and innovative graduates with a spirit of innovation, ambition and a thirst for learning.
- What not to do: Don’t go thin – we can’t be all things to all people
- Engage employers through consistent outreach

- USM has a responsibility, but so do employers. The business community needs to support USM, not just financially. Businesses should make clear the expectation that their employees are prepared well (from USM).
- Muskie's report on the future direction of the school is comprehensive, and people should read it. Three major points:
 - More interdisciplinary programs; more certificate programs
 - Pricing is important to growth.
 - Don't discourage non-Maine students
 - Less top-down leadership
 - Decentralize profit/loss – down to Dean level
- Do market research about what it takes to get students interested in USM
- Encourage board members to put their constituencies to work – let them know how special USM is.
- Work with guidance counselors. Are they pushing kids with good grades to USM? Mine did not in 1998
- Why doesn't the workgroup include students, board members, business partners, local legislator??
- Don't teach similar course in different schools. Ex. Muskie and Business
- Use more adjuncts and people working in the field they teach.
- May consider more residential focus in Portland. Gorham is not cool for college kids.
- Online certificates? Looking for one now and can't find one in Maine.
- Pay professors market rates. Need more nursing, no more business? Than pay the nurses more money.
- Alumni events, reunions, dinners, better gym membership etc... To keep them engaged.
- External events: don't make me use USM catering. Offer space free whenever possible for non-profits. Move arts events to Portland.
- Include basic business skills class in core curriculum at least for liberal arts degrees.
- Offer more affordable out of state tuition for low enrolled programs.
- I suggest you change the Strategies statement, "the second point.....Value students' previous experience (e.g. PLA ,Transfer Credit), change it to read

“Value students' knowledge acquired through previous experience
(e.g.PLA,Transfer Credit)”

- There is a group of students with no representation (graduate) - are you reaching them?
- Alumni should be included in the Direction Package process moving forward
- A direct plea for Grad Student input should be done and an event should be held in Portland or in the evening so graduate students can participate
 - Maybe Graduate Student Liaisons should be involved including the Grad Rep to Board of Trustees
 - Adobe Collect might be utilized to help spread the word
- So much information coming from so many people - how are people going to make these tough decisions? Someone just needs to step up to the plate and make a decision - we know it won't please everyone, but I think the band-aid needs to come off and the sooner the better. Stop asking everyone what they want, what they need.
- So few people involved in the initial formation that we need to explore further. This is transformative change - doesn't feel like there has been a ton of stakeholder involvement. May find ourselves in a situation with few choices and we can't write our own future, however, what we are going to look like needs input. Will be better with solutions that are proposed if more people have input.
- The more people that understand what is going on the better.
- Many people are saying - just do it!
- Nothing seems to get resolved; ever.
- It is our understanding that the Chancellor will not move forward with Pres Search until this process is complete - this seems backwards. Worried that we will finally pull together with a great idea and then a new president will come in with their own agenda.
 - Comment - Think about what kind of candidates you would get right now. Need to plan first.
 - Comment - A plan makes sense, but some people could see this time in our history as a great challenge.
 - Comment: After going to Fac Senate Meeting, agrees with Bob's statement concerning the Chancellor. This seems to be the information that faculty are

getting about attracting more Presidents to apply if we are secure financially. Also concerned about negative PR out there.

- Comment - In terms of timeline for Pres Search - seems like it will make the search process take even more time if we have to wait for us to get our direction finalized.
- Are there a lot of comments coming in about the Direction Package?
 - Glad to see a positive spin on a lot of the comments.