# UNIVERSITY OF
# SOUTHERN MAINE

University of Southern Maine

## USM Digital Commons

Direction Package                                                       Institutional Memory

10-2013

# Direction Package Meeting Notes

Direction Package Advisory Board

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## Ready to Move On

- We need to resolve problems quickly – or we will lose more students. Do we need a faculty member at each campus teaching the same thing? Is Google Hangout an option to expand our ability to offer the same class to more students?
- The words are fabulous in mission, charter, vision, value however student success seems to be centered around money. Are we supposed to be helping people to prepare for jobs, good citizens in the community? How can I connect my position as an employee of USM to the Vision, Values, Mission, Charter, etc.?
- When will the changes take place?
- Process needs to move along. Start implementing now.

## We've Been Through This Before

- **Frustrations:**
  - Frustrating when part of the community stalls the process which does not seem to be realistic about moving the University forward.
  - Frustrating that people have been working on this stuff for years.

## Communication

- Employees In some offices insulated and only paying attention to what affect their area. Not always sure how to become engaged with other departments.
- Clarification what is behind direction package - it is enrollment problem – how do we make it more attractive to students - with dorms, student life, education – good living conditions?
- Traumatic to witness layoffs as a new employee without the understanding behind.
- **President's message**:
  - Continuing state of emergency. Afraid for jobs is not the message we want to send. Thrive rather than survive is a more positive approach. Why is there no transition period – no announcement about layoffs coming down the pike. The abruptness has added to the lack of being able to create community.
- **Response:**
  - Communication of the downsizing message is having an impact on those who remain and we need to be aware. People asking if there are going to be layoffs this week. Grieving process.
  - The President saying we should all be afraid for our jobs creates negative energy. A more positive approach would be to say that as we face these financial challenges now is the time to be innovative and make yourself essential by making every effort to make improvements. Be creative in our thinking and speak with one another and the outside world with good attitudes and thoughts sending positive messages about USM.

- **The Issue With Gorham:**
  - What about Gorham?  We package it up and present it as a traditional residential campus and the first thing we do is put them on a bus to Portland.  And then we wonder why we can't keep them in the doors.  On-line is the way of the world, but people still want to come to the University for the residential experience.  We need to create a sense of community in Gorham residential life.
- **Relationship Building/Cooperation**
  - Are we using Mainestreet to its fullest capacity?
  - How can we foster better relationships with students to minimize their frustration in getting answers related to money matters. Money sees be to the center of stress for most students. Students need to understand when they have to pay – can't just carry it over to next semester. How do we connect student and parent together in working relationship with the University staff to navigate financial aid issues and enrollment issues. ?  Increased staff training would help people navigate the system and strengthens the relationships with students and staff and staff with each other.
  - Academic cooperation and simplicity would help students' access USM courses and programs more satisfactorily.
  - It would better service to students if 100 level courses were coordinated so that course materials made a section transfer more seamless.  Simplify things for freshman.  Easier to navigate through Mainestreet.
  - Our language is very specific- what we say is being heard in a different way.  We use specific terms and acronyms - students are scared and homesick – and they have to learn a whole different way of reacting with each other and the people who are working with them.  Information overload.
  - Need to have an understanding that students are experiencing life is outside the University and how can we best meet their needs.

## Data

- How do successful educational organizations do it?  With Incentives, education?  What about Benchmarking?  Is it excellence in education that attracts the students?  What is the main attraction.  We need to look at peer institutions that have been successful with their model and replicate that rather than reinvent the wheel.  How do we compare with our peers with regard to financial aid packages, student life, facilities.  We need to have long term vision.  We can spend it now or spend it later.
- Students admitted but not enrolled – what is being done to see why that happens?  Initial interest – what happens?  Looked at through student loan clearing house – we can see where many do end up enrolling.
- Surveys done of those who leave USM without graduation and follow up to see if we can bring them back.
- USM is often not the first choice school – back up or safety school  - UMAINE gets most of the students who apply and don't come here.

## The Process

- Feels like we are reacting rather acting.

# Charter

- Is the charter fixed by legislation or do we have some say?  Can we change items in charter or add?

# USM's Vision

- Sense of community – seems like Gorham is in a vacuum.  It is clear that Farmington a college town - the town embraces the students.  We need to take opportunities to promote what USM does.
- Recognize the unique identities of the campuses and the communities -  where they are located and take advantage of the assets.
- **Painting a Clearer Picture**
    - Vision translates into a distinct or virtual image.
    - The Honda example provided a picture in one's mind what it looks like.  USM's vision does not paint a clear picture.  Is the vision that USM is a cultural center for Southern Maine, a professional development opportunity and there are students in every business in Portland, students participating in the City Government in sustainability – what do we see?
    - What do the faculty see as a vision – a concrete focus would change our conversation.  We need institutional identity.  Description so vague – open for too many interpretation.  We can't be everything for everyone and deliver a quality education.
    - Northeastern is known for its coop program, Farmington is known for its teaching program, UMaine is known for Engineering and USM is known for its?
    - We need a wow statement!
    - Who are we? Should we consider moving very quickly into on-line classes?  How would students interact with other students and faculty?  Where would students go for tutoring and how would that be done. Can we create community service and internships to accompany the on-line education so students have a practical experience while participating in on-line instruction?.  The impact could be challenging.
    - How do we define blended course?  On line and live or on-line live chat meeting time or polycom? Space for blended courses tie up classrooms even when not in use.  The student needs to know why type of course before choosing.
    - How do we identify ourselves; are we a 4-year degree school?  Are we going to offer Associates Degrees?  Are we going to focus on doctorate degrees?

# Values

- USM needs to feel like THE Place to Work!
- Customer service needs to be part of values and mission.
- We do a horrible job at educating our people.  Customer service – needs to be world class – how do they want to be treated?
- How do we provide world class customer service and empower students so that we challenge them to learn all at the same time? We need to have resources at our fingertips to provide the best service to our students and to one another.
- **Adding Value with Activities:**

- o USM has to have value to add to the communities in which we exist. Lewiston does a great job – Lewiston embraces LAC. Gorham does not appear to be a college town. Nothing open in evenings in Gorham.
  - o Activities are in Portland – they need to come to Portland to have fun – part of the value of an education is the social life – family you become part of while at college. Gorham once boomed in dorms – Gorham is lost – focus – reengineered to bring a positive impact on the Gorham campus.
  - o LAC leadership program – contact with the community – presentation service learning. They reach out to the community.
- **What the Client Wants & How to Get it:**
  - o Give thoughtful consideration to what has value to the client.
  - o Need to have a shared understanding of what good client service is, between providing service and the people being served.
  - o Collaboration should be number 1. This is where we work – we want it to be successful. Feel deflated at times – need cheerleading.

# Mission

- Customer service needs to be part of values and mission.
- What does our accreditation require – value to the name of degree to student. Careful while considering combining degrees with a focus in a certain area.
- **Defining Our Mission:**
  - o Mission seems vague. How you are going to do it. The Honda example of making the best small engines rather than making the most engines is sometimes difficult to compare to the education because it is not in the form of a tangible product. However the analogy is helpful

# Strategies/Tactics

- Students complain that there is nothing to do in Gorham. Form a committee to stimulate the development of businesses in the area to make it more attractive for students to stay in Gorham rather than travel to Portland.
- **Reaching Out:**
  - o Reaching out to the community to encourage startup businesses that thrive in a college town. Encourage students coming out of our programs to start those businesses. This has been successful in other college towns.
  - o Is there a committee responsible for developing relationships with local businesses to expand internships?
- **Scholarships:**
  - o Are they strictly offered to students already admitted? There are colleges that offer scholarships to high school uniors which entice them to look at the school which would not have been on their radar.
- **Transportation:**
  - o It would be great if Metro expanded to Gorham.
  - o USM is operating a shuttle bus pilot program on October 4th. Shuttle will transport students from Gorham to Portland coming back and returning to Gorham at 11:00 p.m. Portland has cultural opportunities – First Friday art walk– recreational. If successful – more community events.

- **New efforts** – Faculty to contact students after they have been admitted
  - There are benefits to using our facilities to host outside events. They can provide opportunities to support operations and create synergies within USM and the extended community. In order to take advantage of these opportunities – form a Quick Response Team to evaluate the feasibility of USM hosting events. Is our pricing competitive? Can we manage our space more efficiently?
  - What other events could be host to gain exposure that are also lucrative?
  - Hosting athletic events presents opportunities to reach out to high school students.
  - What about student athletes coaching Special Skills Sessions or volunteering to ref a game - this would be a great community service opportunity and to make connections with high school students.
  - What about lighting on our fields to increase opportunities for renting field use and gaining exposure?
- **Using Technology to Our Advantage:**
  - Creating an online version of occupational health and safety course – more online in courses and programs – developing the course is a challenge – education for the designing of the course. Concern about money upfront – teacher needs to be certified to training. Contacted OTI – not attracted to on-line – from a safety stand point – needs hands on.
  - MOOCS came up as a topic
  - Once we have established a good online program, the maintenance not so expensive.
- **Real-World Experience**
  - Scheduling classes on Fridays better prepares the student for the real world where most people work on Friday.
  - Coop – internships need to grow. – positive press about USM. Rehab our reputation to shine noting that we are a good school and we are going to get better. Customers need to know this is a good place to be.
- **Convenience:**
  - Faculty switch campuses rather than students traveling between the campuses. We need customer service training.
  - Can we be the second half of the 2-year degree coming from SMCC?
- **Gorham:**
  - Gorham was known for Music. Appears to be doing well. And Art program in Gorham. Creates an arts program that reaches out community. Music departments seems to do a great job of connecting with the community. Formal connections with high schools.
- **Portland:**
  - What about dorms in Portland? Will it cause residential students from Gorham to leave and that campus will die. Gorham has the strength of music and athletic programs. Too expensive to live in Portland. Should a student be able to complete their degree on one campus? What about the faculty traveling back and forth rather than the students?
- **Scheduling/Programs:**
  - Planning the schedule. Used the wish list. Students need to register by a certain time so that planning is thoughtful. Rules for planning to make them more cost effective and provide us a better opportunity to meet the students' needs.
  - Summer schedule is dictated more by when a faculty member wants to teach rather than what works for students. Schedule has to work for students – but there need to be constraints.

- o If we are a comprehensive university – do we need physics?  Does it make sense to restructure within the sciences – concentration of physics, chemistry – focus changes to give the opportunities – Science degree – with certificates in certain areas – different concentrations.
- o At Farmington a ski program was turned into an outdoor recreation program.
- **Beating Out the Competition**
  - o We need to think about having our nitch rather than competing against our schools within our system for the same students.
  - o If we focus on a few things – for example put the savings of cutting a program and reallocate the resources toward those we choose to keep.
  - o Our competitors are offering on-line at all times of the day – not just picking courses - need a plan for delivery of online programs.
  - o If our focus is a School of Business – we need to get out to community and businesses in Portland, Gorham and Lewiston; then those businesses would be have positive feedback to the community and the press about USM.
  - o If we have a few really quality programs that "are hard to get into" - students are attracted to that.
  - o If we say we are jewel of business 1– how is it delivered and does it meet the needs – robust on line program as well as classroom.
  - o Utilization of technologies between three campuses would help us work toward better service as defined by the customer while developing greater efficiencies. Gorham is designed to be residential – other campuses are commuter.
  - o **Extras:**
    - ▪ Do we have a parent booster club?  Newsletter, calendar?  Involve family in students' education.  People feel like they want to support something when they feel a part of it.
    - ▪ What about endowments?  Do we have resource, such as a company, in the community to cheer on USM?
- **Naming Conventions:**
  - o Naming conventions could be more descriptive. What does student success mean? Everyone should be part of student success.  We need a clear definition.
  - o Students are confused by the word advisor; which one do we mean, their financial aid advisor, academic advisor or some other advisor
  - o Would be less overwhelming to students if they looked at their financial plan by the year as opposed to 4 or 5 years at a time, a flexible plan.  Maybe they could live in the dorms some years but not others.  This could help with retention and provide options that allow students to address changing real world needs.  This approach may also help with out of state students who register for more than 15 credits and realize they can't afford it.
- **Support:**
  - o How can we help support a process that empowers students to use the tools to access the information we provide them?  It is better service if students and parents are able to navigate the system rather than calling with the same questions over and over.
- **The Necessary Changes:**
  - o Having three physical campuses no longer seems sustainable. Some students do not know that LAC exists and they live in that area.
  - o Use technology to stream classes with one faculty member.
  - o More continuity is needed in course numbering across all of USM.
  - o Work with more closely with LAC - be sure to align with all of USM

- Streamline who the student needs to talk to map their plan. Distinguish differences for full time in relationship to a graduation time line and full time for financial aid resources.
- More blended classes – strictly on-line sometimes does not provide the personal experience. Fee structure for blended course is the same as live course.
- Scheduling needs to be student-centered. Evening and weekend classes help the non-traditional students complete degrees. Even traditional- aged students are often working full time and take classes.
- Course descriptions on Mainestreet – vague- click on a link for more information about classes – course descriptions and syllabi more accessible.
- Orientation should involve traveling from Portland to Gorham and vice versa to acclimate students to both campuses and create more of a sense of community.
- What about limiting enrollment – stop putting pressure on admissions officer and faculty to attract more students – focus more on the full time student attraction 1– leaving plenty of options for the commuters – modify courses to the students who we do have – allow people who work here to think creatively.

## Misc.

- Retention versus enrollment – are both a problem or just enrollment?
- Does the fact that were are a split campus affect enrollment?
- Some local school students have received nothing by way of marketing from USM.
- Is there a way to make the nursing program profitable? What about specialized programs? What programs generate most income with least amount of cost?
- Do we need a parking garage in Gorham to allow for more events – need to invest to generate revenue.
- Leadership institute – how do we view things – location, quality of education, outside activities, safety on or off campus, (Philadelphia – high crime – but they come regardless) What is attracting them?
- Looking at Vision Charter Mission Values Strategies – how cost effectively can we produce our product to deliver to our students. No one talks about money – it is vital to the conversation – everyone needs to know about what is going on with money. No one seems to know until a crisis hits. Balance what we offer that is going to help the student make more money, enrich their lives, and maybe get a better job. Cannot just limit the outcome to what someone makes for a salary. Customer service is very important. Value has to make sense to the student.
- If you ask colleges and divisions 1– each college will want to be the best of whatever their college is.
- 1984 – a group went around to all the schools and USM should not expand Sciences and graduate programs– then in 2000 another study – offer sciences and graduate programs – maybe we don't have the resources to sustain these programs.