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## USM Direction Package Comments As of 10.8.13

Direction Package Advisory Board

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USM Direction Package Comments  
As of 10.8.13

I. Statements, Suggestions & Concerns

- Disappointed that the Direction Package (DP) is what we are already doing and we are obviously not doing these things well. he was hoping we would have had a more extensive plan on how we are going to move forward
- Doesn't feel a corporate process will work for an education institution
- Would like to have more information and data available on where USM is doing well & we are not doing well so people can see and have that information to help inform their decisions
- What does regional comprehensive mean today? Faculty are interested in cross collaboration but have done this in the past without the administration backing
- Need to have design thinking added to the DP process.
- USM has some sweet spots but we are "dying". Her high school student hasn't received any material from any of the UMS campuses for recruitment.
- Seems counterintuitive that we would have a Pioneers program and committed to STEM and cut a general major of programs.
- Need to have a representative thoughtful committee within each body of the USM community to discuss their thoughts and opinions, create a report and then bring it to the administration.
- What is the current program review process? And how will that effect the changes & possible eliminations that may take place through the change process we are facing.
- Also, some small programs are needed and the administration should let the BOT know that the rule of 5/12 isn't possible.
- During previous planning processes the administration didn't have record of some of the smaller programs. How can we do a process if we do not have all the information?
- How do we meet the students where they are in the DP process?
- The administration should be leading and advocating more for the university and what we do to the legislature and community.

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I. Thrive to Survive

- Instead of surviving and thriving we should thrive to survive - which is different. we need to thrive to make students want to attend USM
- It doesn't appear the administration wants the involvement of the USM community because of the language used in the speech/text of the DP and we didn't include them in the first stage. We are only asking for feedback not asking for dialogue
- This is not a process, it is repetitive and factious - it doesn't solve any problems - how does this outline address the problems with the enrollment and the fact that students are not coming here. This seems to be a waste of time.

II. DP Oversight

- What mechanisms are in place to ensure any initiatives coming from the DP are actually put into place?
- We need to have criteria to choose which tactics will be chosen to implement. We need the USM community to help with those decisions.
- Can we distinguish between the vision part and the planning part that will take place between now and Dec. can we list how the vision will impact, or be differentiated, from the implementation plan.

### III. Planning/Future

- Who is going to be doing the planning processes, who is going to participate in that planning, when will we see the plan and how will that be implemented?
- There have been multiple opportunities of planning committees over the past 5 years at least. This process doesn't take the lengthy time for us to consider the decision we are making because they are being made so quickly. We didn't see any of the changes that came from the THEO campaign. Would like to have a guarantee that the suggestions/feedback will be taken into consideration and put into place!
- Not sure we can do this process in such a short amount of time - 2 months.

### IV. Making Changes/The Vision

- The administration has changed and it takes time for those new people to understand the new business and process
- Just like USM, students are having daily life struggles and they too need a vision. We need to change the conversation to how do we help the student find their vision? We need to change our perspective as a community to focus on the students
- We need the students to develop a student vision committee and have them develop a student vision and share it with USM. – UPDATE: Sharoo spoke with Kelsea Dunham today, 9.26.13, and Kelsea said the students are working on this and plan to have it to the administration by end of Oct. if possible.
- We need a list of all the issues facing the university and need to discuss those instead of the current DP

### V. Feedback

- What type of feedback do you want regarding the DP? the words, the process, the problems we are facing, etc.?
- We have been through planning a lot and we never succeed in implementing the plans. If we instead turn our energy from the negative comments and feedback & instead work together we would be much better off
- Ed. & human Development advisor board & alum - assign an alum to each freshmen student to provide support, ask questions, etc. , we should have more external business people involved in our classes, we need more video/online remote options, we need more internships, we have to come up with a plan on how to provide inter-collegiality between silos

- The administration needs to tell us what we Can Not talk about. So we are not talking about things we can't do anything about. We also need to know what topics we should be talking about so we are all aligned and giving feedback on the same topics.
  - Would be good to have more advertising for the DP around campus for students to get involved. The environment/venue offered today is scary for students to provide feedback in. will the feedback that is presented/provided be accessible and available for all others to see and comment upon?
  - **Open Forums:**
    - USM has already done a lot of planning and implementing. We look different now from when we did in the past. Even though the vision/mission statements are fun to play with, they don't solve the financial problems. We need more open forum options for engagement about the hard questions facing USM. Example the decision on whether or not to stop the physics major or women and gender studies programs should be discussed in open forum meetings.
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I. **Communication**

- We need to communicate more about the multiple different teaching venues we have at USM. The online format needs to have more teacher interaction and be more personable for the students
- How can USM and its faculty/staff promote USM among the 6 other campuses within GPACU campuses?
- Communication is a big challenge at USM - people just don't know what's going on. - we need a centralized location for all communication - communication should be included in the vision or mission
- Information needs to be legitimate and credible - with sources

II. **Charter**

- students' need to be included in the charter not the legislature - the language from 1865 is not appealing to USM people. and we have the language brought to the current education legislative team and have them tell us there thoughts on the charter language

III. **Strategies**

- Strategy - should include anything that is building community
- How are we to interpret the strategies to the self-study taking place in our program currently? Do we add these to our self-study? How can I identify which strategies I should be focused on for our program?
- Until our reputation in the local area changes we will not be thought of as the first institution.
- We need to use language in all documents and press that advances USM
- The negativity was passion. People love USM. We have had a lot of turnover in the past 6 years. People do not know what the expectations are now. As a faculty member they usually look at scholarship, service and teaching. The scholarship pieces are being looked at now
- The DP focuses on the State and doesn't include the national and international.

- There is confusion on where the faculty's role is to the students. The idea of faculty advising, or changing our schedules to meet the needs of students, - the students don't even know what they want!
- **Lack of Trust**
  - There is a lack of trust with administration. Many people don't feel like the administration has the dedication. People are questioning does the administration know where we, as the faculty, want to go and
  - **Student** - part of the reason we had the negative reaction was because of the way it was presented. He thinks the power point was a failure. There was no data, facts and figures (budget short falls, how long, how much). When professors didn't see the information they were looking for, they were frustrated, because they were given ambiguity.

#### IV. Graduate Students

- The associate provost was looking for some data about graduate students and wasn't able to locate it. We need to have a better source of data and need access to the data we need – the staff member said her suggestion for data has been pushed forward to the Dean and Provost and no changes have occurred.

#### V. USM – Questions to ask

- **What is USM known for?**
  - MECA for art. Northeastern their Co-op, what is USM going to be known for?
- **Budget Issues:**
  - How do you make budget cuts if you don't know what the vision is?
- **Comparative advantages:**
  - Has there been any discussion on what USM's current comparative advantages are? If so, we need to advance those pieces
  - do we have on the website data that tells where our graduate students are coming from?
- **Student Acceptance/Involvement/Perspective**
  - Who is responsible for ensuring the students who are applied and accepted and don't attend whose fault is that? We need tools and processes to help make this action, how to keep the students, this needs to be clear to all those involved.
  - We have been through this process before. We are doing much of the same. We need to instead look at this from outside of the box position. There is at least 25% of our students who have a diagnosable mental condition. We need to look at the students' perspective.
- **The Future of USM**
  - What will USM will look like in 3 years? We have to look at different degree options. We need to operationalize some of our words and tell faculty/staff how that pertains to them in their classroom. Example. Student Engagement what does that mean to the faculty and staff. How do they incorporate that into their daily work and teaching at USM?

- This is an endeavor of our intellect and our heart. I am worried that USM has lost its heart. We need to find our heart. How do we make decisions in a humane way? How do we lay people off in a more compassionate way?
- HRD 110 - this class is consistently suggested by students to have all students attend this class because they have a better understanding of who they are and what resources are available on the campus at the end of the class. This class is considered to be an Extra class and has been considered for reduction. Instead it should be known that it helps retain students and could help retention if all students were required to take it.
- The co-op program that is at North Eastern is amazing and kids are attracted to it. There should be more programs similar to ETEP but in other areas than education. Such as Tourism with AAA. We need to have students teaching at our Portland and local schools.
- **Negativity:**
  - If we talk negatively about USM in our work and our community than that is what people are going to believe. Instead, we need to speak positively and believe in ourselves instead.
- **Insights:**
  - We are asking the wrong people what we should be.
  - Instead, someone, Theo the Chancellor the BOT, someone needs to say what we are going to be and what our competitive advantages will be. We need to also look at the business side of the house and look at how we work and then make it run more like a business.
- **Costs**
  - The biggest thing that scares students away from USM is the cost. It is really hard especially for students who aren't sure they want to go to school or who are sure they can pass their classes. The overall student overhead is hard. The cost for books. The travel time for commuters is hard. the educational study is hard and not manageable - SMCC you can read the book in 15 minutes prior to class and then take the test - not much time spent for outside classroom study time is needed
- **Making It Real**
  - How to make what we are teaching real for the students and involving them more in immersive experiences or learning communities.
  - The people who graduate from USM are amazing. What this university has done for the local population needs to be recognized more. We need to tell more of the stories of our alums.
  - We need more internship options. We need to ensure our programs are a good fit for the Portland region.
- **Values**
  - Values - there is not an alignment between what the USM values are and the General Core values of our education

- Environmental and Citizenship stewardship is not included in the values even though we have 100's of faculty involved in the environmental area
  - **Strategies**
    - Strategies - Student Success and the 4 portals - doesn't include what kind of students we have coming to USM. We need to have discussions about what type of students come to USM. We need to rethink the three campuses and how we offer classes on those campuses. Students don't like to have to travel for their classes. There are few students who have classes all on one campus.
  - **Time**
    - We need to take some time to figure out why we are in the situation we are currently in. We all have to understand that if we want to continue a program/class/ etc. we will have to cut something else. So what are we going to cut? We all need to understand that there are no new resources. We have to know what we want to build and grow and where we are going to cut
  - **Resistance**
    - People don't have authority and some people don't follow the chain of command in general
    - Are there write ups in the acceptance packages sent to students that includes information about our alums to help encourage them to come to USM?
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**Attendance:**

Student: 4; Faculty: 2; Staff: 10; Alum/Community member: 1 = 17 people

- I. Chancellor's Investment
  - Is the chancellor invested in USM?
  - Is he invested in USM continuing to be a comprehensive university or as a feeder to UMaine Orono
- II. What Needs to be Done
  - If we begin to collaborate with other universities, we will lose students because they are having to begin taking classes from here and then being forced to do online and/or go to another System university
  - The problem with the model is that if student begin classes here and then have to go online or to Orono our numbers will continue to dwindle
  - We need more external support from the chancellor and president. We need them to go to the BOT and legislature and tell them we need more money
  - We need more advancement, we need advancement to find more money
  - We need to stop trash talking the place and saying that we are cutting programs. we need to stop going to the press to complain about the process or decisions being made
  - The System should recognize the fact that we are providing a critical service to the State of Maine and the Chancellor and BOT need to recognize those needs monetarily
  - The System should recognize and monetarily differentiate the university for meeting critical needs
  - We need to focus our efforts on student retention and revenue aspects

- We need to be more flexible in our academics (like Kaplan) and we need to sale our product and differentiate ourselves in the market place.

### III. Progress/Change

- There is nothing new here besides the Charter which isn't important but there is a long list of things that we are trying to do which is we are trying to be everything to everybody
- We haven't made much progress on the things we have identified over the year which handicaps us even more because of the increased economic challenges
- This process seems to be the same as the in the past, more bickering will come up again and fuel old flames, instead we need to take the components in the environment that are different and then triage three - five of those pieces. We can then come up w/several things that address those challenges and work towards that instead of trying to continuously cut and repeat the same processes as before
- How do we do this and make the cuts at the same time?
- **Comments:**
  - i. We are closer now to where we want to go, or end up, because we have done these basic pieces already – hopefully this time we can move forward and implement changes
  - ii. Student - the student along with the administration and staff are the face of the university. Students are worried about if they are going to be graduating with a degree similar to that from Kaplan or Devry. This stems from being left out of the conversation. So how do we get our voice in this discussion?
- Administration and staff need to talk to their students. All faculty should talk to their students the next two months about the DP and encourage them to go to the website and give feedback
- The administration needs to be asking the students: Why did they come, what do they like, what's going well, why are/aren't their friends coming, if we have image problems what are they, what are the blockages to coming to USM, what is their voice?

### IV. Getting Through the Process

- What is your advice to students on how they can get into the process?
  - Dave's answer: The students need to tell us what we need to do differently to include them. We will talk to Theo about changing the structure on how to get the students voice heard with the administration
- Tuesday's meetings reignited the faculty's past 5 years feelings and again feel like they have been side-stepped in the process and not included
- Student – she should have found out from the university about the possible discontinuation of her program from the university instead of from the press. there needs to be better communication
- There are a lot of post-traumatic problems and feelings from previous experiences at this university and people feel like they are seeing a lot of the same process that took place in the past. The process needs to somehow regain the trust of the institution
- We need to have positive comments in the media instead of negative ones
- We need students to understand that if they wait to register it hurts them because we can't plan classes accordingly. They need to register at priority registration

V. Comments & Concerns

- Process question - what is going to the BOT?
  - i. Dave's response: The BOT has oversight on the mission and overall direction of the university. If USM has push back on the charter that too can be presented. Theo will also present the vision and other components though those do not need approval by the BOT. We want to ensure we are in alignment with what the BOT wants the university to do, and ensure that the cuts we are making are aligned with the long term vision of USM and the mission of the System
- USM has a mission and most people are happy with it. my concern is that if we aren't getting any more funds, no more enrollment, than the DP mission/strategies that will be approved by the BOT will give ultimate authority and permission for the President to say and interpret the "mission" in any way she wants so she can then cut or eliminate any program she wishes because the mission/strategies are vague enough to include just about anything.
- The President is not doing her job or being held accountable for her job description – she is supposed to enhance enrollment, increase donor funds, meet with donors and the community and build up the university
- The President should be encouraging high school students to attend a university that has low numbers in the classroom because then the student will have more one on one time with the professor.

VI. Where do we go; what do we do

- Advancement brings in 0 dollars in three years. The president and advancement need to be advocating more with the Chancellor/BOT/and to the community and let them know that they are killing us, we need more funding, and this is what we provide the state
- We need to look more at the courses/majors that have good community - like women and gender studies and then learn from them
- Some of us are ready for the hard decisions to be made and to move forward! We need some concrete strategies/tactics to move forward and need to begin working on them
- We have to focus on the positive things our faculty/staff are doing
  - i. The attitude needs to be How can we get it done; not we can't do that.
- For advancement, we need to have a positive attitudes out there instead of the negative ones like physics
- **Possible solution** - teach two courses in the same class – an upper class and a lower class
- We are in an emergency situation. could you do a Re-Set and go to the faculty/staff again and do a re-do and let people know that you have learned a lot, and tell them where we are going to go from here

VII. Problems & Solutions

- The people at USM are fragmented - we are all over the place
- People at USM don't feel seen or heard
- We have to make the governance structure extremely clear for all involved - especially for the faculty senate and student senate
- We need to ensure the different constituents are heard and their comments are being considered and followed

- There are a lot of finger pointing to the faculty or towards the administration but we all need to be available to help solve the situation
- It is not helpful that all administrators are listed on the DP group. we need to have it split with the faculty 12/12
- Would it be helpful to breakdown the university in the profit centers to help people see where the issues are
- Will there be other open sessions on the Gorham / Lewiston campus?
- How does outcomes based funding fit into all of this?
- There are definite factions at the university and we need to find a way to get over it and work together
- We are fighting for fewer students and we need to work together to resolve these problems and figure out how to move forward as a community
- We need to not run to the press every time we are upset. we need to have better communication internally
- We need to have the president and provost understand what we do good and celebrate the good work we do in the public, we need to find a way to rally together
- We have had some insane fumbles. When we give presentations we need to be able to answer the obvious questions about the presentations being presented
- Many people keep trying and keep doing the same thing/process over and over because they care about USM and then the administration messes it up again and then we keep going back to them and asking them to do the same thing
- We don't see consequences when people mess up, instead they are being promoted or encouraged to do it again
- We need to have positive actionable to do's in the parallel process, we need to have measurable strategies, not vague ones
- The words are in the DP but there is not the depth that was expected
- **Comments:**
  - i. We are so far beyond what is in the DP, and the DP doesn't have anything in it than can be helpful in the current conversation
  - ii. I have never seen a president trash the university in the press like this ever before
  - iii. Example, we don't have the programs students want - but she did not give any proof of this
  - iv. The person who is supposed to be doing our annual fund, annual giving, building community, talking to the business leaders, is trashing the university in the press instead
  - v. Theo is saying these negative things in the press so the bot, chancellor, and legislature will see that we are/will fail for the purpose of sending all the programs to Orono
    - Everything we do for the state, business, classics, physics, etc. is already being sent to Orono
  - vi. Theo should have said something positive in the press after the physics report came out instead of saying that more cuts will be coming and that we should be scared

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## **Direction Package Feedback**

- Reputation – USM is harming its reputation, less people will want to come here
- Education – should be number 1
- Greed - The University is not a business, it should not be looking to profit
- Communication - Faculty & Staff should have been involved from the beginning. The trust has been lost. No one wants to be a number.
- Clarity – Offer concrete statements about what actions and plans you are proposing
- Looking to the future – graduate programs, students will be harmed by combining the sciences – not competitive in the job market
- Saving Face – Name change should encompass Portland as the beautiful city it is
- Align our programs physically and programmatically as much as possible with their professional communities. By not doing such we lose a sense of programmatic identity and do not capitalize on learning and professional engagement opportunities for students and thus severely limit student success. It also disallows the informal connections that can be made by simply being in the mix.
  
- Having the Arts, but most critically the Art Department in Gorham is and always has been administering a slow death. It has also been a direct affront to any belief in connecting to community. Portland wants us to be there and Gorham does not care one way or the other beyond the idea of liking the idea of plays and performances. There are many opportunities that constantly arise where the Art Department if pursued could move to Portland but USM is never seeks to position itself to allow that to happen. The reality is there is no private money willing to go to Art in Gorham. The other reality is that it would advance the interests of all, even MECA, by building creative mass. This is strategically known as Cluster Marketing. There are many that want this to happen and are in disbelief that it has not already done so. To not pursue this belies any notion of connecting to community and having student success as a priority. The greatest route to success is by connection and the biggest means to developing connections is through proximity.
  
- The Art Department should be supported and encouraged to expand into Design. There are no specific Design programs in the state of any substance that focus on 2D – 4D commercial based Design. It is an area ripe with potential and Portland is the Art and Design center of the state and in fact Northern New England. It would be a natural connector to our Art and Entrepreneurship Program. It could offer a foot print in Portland for and allow for strong system wide synergies with other system programs such as UMA/Architecture. If USM were to take a leadership role in this it would allow for a tremendous opportunity for institutional identity and advancement, community connection, economic engagement of students. It could pull in local expertise and be an area of distinction that could synthesize USM programs in Art, COM, Tech, etc. as well as with those at SMCC.

- USM student success should be gauged not on simple graduation but on a capacity to thrive by virtue of a USM education. We should look into allowing, if not requiring 15 credit minors or (certificates) in specific areas of broad career and degree applicability such as Entrepreneurship, Leadership, Teaching, Communication, and Design. These would cover major career sectors by which most if not all of USM students could enter into. While some majors might be more oriented to one or the other they would all allow for any major. These can function as and possibly take the place of clusters. They would bring in various career interests and they would have strong parent appeal. (I.E. both artists and scientists might be interested in Design one for expressive and economic purposes and the other for research methodology. Leadership might be applicable for anyone entering into public service, the nonprofit or management.) These would complement our existing degrees and add the public value of a particular career focus that they may not currently have.
- Such Minors could expand our enrollment by if they are developed in a way to be availed not only by all USM students but also by the public. They would add to our branding around student success and supporting Maine's economy. And along with our own faculty we could align ourselves with those outside of the university to teach courses as well as offering credits for programs already in the public.
- USM should allow for, and in fact encourage community learning opportunities and activities for students. These could include everything from internships to community programs such as the Institute for civic leadership to WOOFing (Working on Organic Farms) etc. There are more than one way to gain wisdom and skills in the world other than a University education. Such experiences should be non-curricular and have a reflective component. Students should be prepared for these relative to learning, creating relationships and building personal opportunities. These can be done if possible with no, or minimal tuition and possibly over seen with in our existing advisory structure. They would be an easy offering to students to make college more affordable and a way of establishing strong community connections.
- Our advertising is more than anything based on word of mouth from students and alumni back to their siblings and friends. Thus the university gains or diminishes in terms of reputation. I can attest to this through highly personal experience with my own children. While seemingly disconnected much of this has to do with course size. Thus we should look at averages rather than simply course by course numerical concerns. This does two things it creates closer student faculty relationships in the exiting years and allows for greater creativity in courses. Smaller upper level courses should be offset by a combination of larger lower level courses (we should revisit the large volume classes) and credit bearing experiences that have no faculty compensation attached. These would include Independent studies, internships etc.
- We need to incentivize progressive approaches and institutional building by allowing departments to be rewarded for creativity and effort. Chairs are extremely weak here which just increases the burden up the chain of command even though they are further from the disciplines. Our administration is very bad at delegating authority. If chairs had more budget and curricular

control. If they were trained and if they had even a smidgen of job satisfaction that comes with being able to make strategic decisions we would be much stronger across the institution.

- We should design our spaces so that faculty and students can have greater informal relationships and chance encounters. One of our greatest challenges are our physical locations. As it is a huge problem for the arts to be disconnected from our professional communities of Portland, but we have department and faculty offices located away from teaching areas. This creates an inability for students to gain those small moments that can be encouraging or enlightening and thus can grow into larger relationships and projects. It disconnects students from academic programs and thus they feel disconnected from and become less involved in the university. The little white houses are a disaster. I would say the same thing about having the President's office on the 7<sup>th</sup> floor.
- Instead of trying to compete with the already established online education programs, why don't we take a different approach and use what we are good at.
- After the students receive their content coursework through the online outlets, attract them to come to USM to get their Hands-on lab work, industry internships and experience. We already know that most of the businesses are hiring the people who have participated in internships in their own plants, etc. and that industry is looking for people who have prior experience. These are the things that the students cannot get through an online course and that we have experience in. USM already has the structures in place to run these types of programs. This way the student could get the job skills they need that are not offered by the online outlets.
- The students could either sign up to finish their 4-year degree, a master's degree or a certificate of advanced study.

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***Process Moving Forward:***

Involve all statewide stakeholders – University Senates, Departments, Administration, Students, BOV, Advisory Committees, Area High Schools, Principals and Guidance Counselors, Major Employers, Chamber of Commerce, Portland, Gorham, and Lewiston/Auburn, Economic Development Groups.

More Frequent and Open meetings.

Data – demographics, fiscal analysis of generates and loses money, exit interviews on students not returning and admitted students who don't make it, and definitions and metrics.

Recognition and integration of earlier reorganization process with an accounting of savings from that work.

Review of externalities, particularly impact on reputation.

Consistent and credible 12 month accounting system for reviewing programs.

Clear set of criteria (of weights) for decision making.

What is done at other universities relative to fiscal analysis?

Engaging faculty in process of incentivizing faculty through financial/accounting system

***Vision:***

Two dimensions – Community and Students.

Community Statement - Demonstrates responsibility to the larger community by students, faculty, and staff and didn't finish discussion of how liberal arts education and career preparation join together rather than distinct separate aspects.

Not sure what “helps its students and communities experience today and imagine tomorrow” means.

***Charter:***

The Charter on the handout is really the University of Maine System Charter.

USM has no explicit charter, although we have historically, since being defined as USM, been described as an ‘outstanding public regional comprehensive’, as we are by the website. Regional comprehensive universities are generally defined by – a balance of teaching and research; a broad definition of research appropriate to a regional comprehensive; “comprehensive” means a balance of arts, humanities, and applied sciences determined by the needs of the region; and the expertise of the faculty.

By definition, a charter comes from a state regional or national government to legitimize a university's existence.

Accordingly, we acknowledge the value of a charter and would like to see appropriate steps to create or legitimize a charter for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

***Mission:***

Mission is what the organization does.

Where did this mission in the direction package come from?

Does the current mission on the website say what we do now and what we need to do in the future?

What makes USM good is high quality, accessible and affordable!

What is mission from the current mission is: promotion of knowledge for its own sake – how to be a good participant in society – local, regional, national, and global citizen. Is there something needed that addresses future, unknown challenges?

Insert something about workforce development, career preparation, knowledge for its own sake, and cultivating creativity and critical thinking.

Leadership and participants/team leaders.

Create whole individuals, not just technical, and practical knowledge to create caring, concerned, and critical thinkers.

Local, Regional, National, and Global Citizenship.

Relationship between charter and mission.

Knowledge for its own sake will be a hard sell.

University by its nature is focused on global.

***Values:***

USM Values: Service, collaboration, creation and dissemination of knowledge

These are 3 organizing categories of values, under which fall the more specific values below. The list below should replace the list on the power-point/hand-out as it eliminates redundancies and adds values that are missing from that hand-out. There is some overlap between the values, and across the three categories of values mentioned above. If further public presentation of USM's values is called for, a Venn diagram presentation might capture that best. In addition, the values themselves might be better expressed in full sentences rather than one-word or short phrases. Time did not permit this translation at the 9/30/13 session.

Excellence in learning, teaching, research, scholarly activity and service.

Stewardship – local to global, social to environmental

Collegiality and respect

Shared governance

Collaboration

Access

Academic freedom

Integrity

Diversity

Fiscal responsibility

Civic and community engagement at the local, regional, national, and international level

Reflection

Interdisciplinarity

## *Sustainability:*

We don't know what we're doing or who we are.

The strategies listed on the four slides on the handout seem vague, like they could be dropped onto any university campus.

Where research, scholarship, and creative activity in these strategies? Are they assumed to be embedded?

We need to move several small steps forward.

What are our areas of distinctiveness?

In Muskie, Charlie's program has identified these strategies:

Link our programs to undergraduate programs.

Only program in northern New England, so use more distance approaches.

Have a specific research mission and focus on funded research.

There is a short list of challenges: MOOCs, shrinking number of nontraditional students, competition from all other universities.

Our only strategy is to build a product that people want to buy.

We are one of two graduate institutions in the state, and we also have the most competitive environment.

Programs have a sense of what they can do to meet challenges.

We also need a sense of what this university is all about.

How does what is happening at the program level fit into the university? We need to work at two levels: program and university.

Is the structure we currently have the structure we want going forward?

Do we distinguish ourselves by a certain set of disciplines?

Here are four real strategies to distinguish ourselves:

1. "Organizing ourselves as a learning community-centered university" (Pioneers, Russell Scholars, STEM, Nursing, Commuter). We wondered if there are ways we can develop learning communities at the graduate level that interact with undergraduate learning communities.
2. Combining undergraduate and graduate into accelerated programs (3+2, 4+1) and creating more articulation agreements with community colleges (2+2).
3. Engaging students in research activities and internships early in their university careers, perhaps in year one. We can do that because we have smaller courses and students have access to university professors who are experienced scholars.

4. Address whether the degrees we offer at USM to meet the needs of our community. We are prepared to accept the public university's burden to offer some more expensive programs that Kaplan will not because we'll collaborate with others to achieve this.

Process for doing this? Bottom-up planning from the program level may work. Could each program address these three questions?

As a program:

1. With whom can we align in the university and what collaborative partnerships can we explore with other universities and business/social service/medical/arts communities?
2. What other teaching modalities (distance, online) can we explore?
3. What opportunities exist for external funding?

***Process Critique:***

**Faculty Involvement** was minimal.

Is it possible to do a strategic plan simultaneously to reduce the amount of cutting we have to do? Should go hand in hand but creates morale at institute people hunkering down, hard to dream about future when concerned about existence, creates conservative thinking.

2 Stage process:

1. Make cuts on path to sustainability
2. Then strategic plan link processes together in some way: how?

ID areas to protect.

ID Strategies essential during budget cut; e.g. developing online to reach adult learners is essential, even if inefficient protect what do online, or out of state residential students so protect and incentivize Gorham Student life (e.g. building classrooms, etc.).

2 contradictory things, e.g. say need to serve adult learners but then cut things associated with or serve them.

Address **morale** issue in light of last 5 years.

How to get faculty and administration to table, ID common external enemy (e.g. SMCC, Husson, Kaplan, Southern New Hampshire).

Little trust on either side.

**Communication:** faculty should stop going outside USM to make their case and instead keep it within USM (keep problems in house), e.g. articles in Portland Press Herald, misinformation in hands of media.

Strategic plans often complex and so difficult to achieve all different aspects.

10 units/divisions each have retreat to come up with one idea to help move institute forward, then campus discussion about 10 ideas.

Come up with set of strategies through this process, then 10 groups come up with set of tactics to achieve strategies.

What are ways to improve communication on campus (in light of 3 locations)?

Dick Campbell presentation on budget is useful, perhaps use that model.

Theo blog not directly related to these processes.

Corporate analogies is note well received.

Instead of cutting from each program and have them all hurt, decide which programs are problem programs and need to be cut so other programs can continue to thrive.

By default use former strategy rather than latter.

Looking outward: process poisoned because faculty working without contract; system has shown no creativity in trying to incentivize retirements to facilitate University shrinking.

More emphasis on positive aspect needed: e.g. USM location tremendous potential for us.

How much of process will involve the system?

With respect to the Direction Package outline, what aspects do you like?	With respect to the Direction Package outline, what concerns do you have?	With respect to the Direction Package outline, what suggestions would you like to make?
Very clear and fits well with leadership and organizational processes. Hearing good things about Dave. Liked what Theo and Dave are saying this morning in roll out. Like that all the past documents were consulted.	Processes in place to respond to internal disruptive change? Non-productive participants who only criticize vs putting shoulder to the wheel... Or to handle the morale of a battered institution.	Continuous briefings as it all unfolds. Continued use of diagrams to demonstrate how programs and initiatives tie in to Package. Continue sending top administrators out to campuses to listen on the ground and help keep facts straight (limit rumors). Allow us to continue to submit feedback here so we can respond as things unfold and new understandings are developed. Include Senate reps in top administrative meetings re: all this activity. Include union reps as well. Whatever you do, keep us apprised to limit folks misconstruing.
The possibility of making what we do more effective.	That we appear to be fumbling for a direction. We are not. We have students right now who expect to receive the education they are currently paying for. We have faculty and staff in place to deliver on these promises that you've gathered, that we already know. Even though the academy is about discovery, our current and prospective students expect us to already know what we're doing. We need to act it, decide what we are passionate about doing, and just do it.	I reiterate the suggestion that I already made, which can be done by every faculty, staff and student interested in being engaged in our direction. We should get out on the internet, and in catalogs and journals and find the places that the University of Southern Maine should appear and does not, and funnel those resources to the department responsible for putting our name there. Where can we get the most bang for our buck, and be in the places where our future students will find us.
We need to change...	but no clear direction given for change...	Instead of having each department within each university create a different online course, why not have one online course for the entire UMaine system? For example, instead of USM creating an online class for Psychology 101 and UMPI creating a slightly different online version of Psychology 101, why not have the faculty work together to create a UMaine Psychology 101? Some benefits: the credits for the course would be accepted at each university within the system, individual faculty would not have to spend their own time and effort to create a class that could be a duplicate of another faculty's efforts, it avoids having 7 of the same course online, etc.  There would be no cap for the class. By hiring ONE faculty member to monitor the class (with some TA's to help with discussion, etc. you would be able to divert the individual faculty resources to live classes.
Nothing - I don't really view what we were shown as a direction - it seems to me that we all know why we are here and what needs to be done - we just need a strong leader to pull us together into groups and give us assignments to make things work. Please give us all the information necessary to make the hard decisions and let's put our research skills to good use and find best practices to see how others have handled similar problems.	Biggest concern is that our input will not be used going forward. We have been out of the loop for so long in any USM decisions, how can we believe that our ideas and concerns are truly valued?	How about putting the Senates to work - if they are truly a group of their peers - they should be an appropriate voice to pass on the ideas of the group. All USM governance documents state that the Senates should be involved in decision making - if we are going to go back to our Charter, shouldn't we also visit our governance documents and actually follow what they say as well?
While I might well agree with most of this, I have no idea why the faculty (or the administration) are being asked to do this when many of the faculty and staff are in a state of anger, conflict, hostility, fear, grumpiness, defensiveness and have much other work to do, and honestly are interested in more concrete issues. Coming after the recent referendum experience, this seems, well, hilarious.	Ummm. What is the point? The timing on this is unfortunate, even inexplicable. USM has gone through versions of this for 25 years (at least) and most recently as part of the discussions in the 4 years of pres. Botman's administration. It seems like only yesterday that we managed to pass, after a lengthy effort, a mission statement. Although the work from 2008-2012 was structural, discussion of values and visions was certainly embedded in it, including in the fights. This is just going to piss people off.	I'd suggest stopping this unless you can offer some good reason to go on.

<p>I like that we appear to be committed to taking action - a step that USM has failed to take in the myriad of former attempts at self discovery.</p>	<p>Where to start...I am concerned by the pissing contest I saw today at the 1st session. I am concerned by a faculty that is more interested in focusing on the perceived power imbalance with administration than they are in attending to the issues at hand. I am concerned by an administration that really needed to say more loudly - "we goofed" in regard to faculty exclusion in draft development. I heard it but only once and in passing. I think we all know the reality of their contribution would not have resulted in a different outcome but we need to get faculty to the table and if swallowing this pill more demonstratively gets them there than do it. I'm concerned by a climate that causes people to feel the need to videotape presentations and take snapshots of powerpoint slides as though the slides and recordings posted to the website will somehow be doctored and used as some kind of propaganda. I'm concerned that I wonder if that is what "their" plan is in taking such action. I am concerned that faculty still fail to see that education is a business and that using a business consultant to facilitate this transition is inappropriate. We need to focus on the consumer prospective; there needs to be recognition that we are selling a product. I don't know how we bridge that gap; perhaps we don't try to build a bridge but instead create a framework of values for administration and framework of values for instruction with the overlap being improved student services, increased enrollment and retention. In social work you meet the client where they are at and right now faculty are clinging to their ideals and ignoring the realities.</p> <p>I'm concerned at the toll this is taking on USM's reputation. If we continue on this course, our enrollment will decline more rapidly, our corporate partnerships will suffer and our graduates will be less likely to get jobs. We are busting our ass in the Disability office making regular daily contact with 300+students in order to retain students. We hear from parents about their concerns. To think that our hard work will be for not over this...a bunch of bruised egos is pretty infuriating. I'm concerned by the lack of detail. There is growing feeling on campus that there is a master plan. I suspect the reality is there are environmental factors and realities beyond our control that will dictate a master plan unless creativity comes to the table and without the faculty at the table, all administration can do is evaluate and initiate the options using the tangible data at hand, mitigating the fray to the largest extent possible. If this is the case - say it more clearly. Don't say you don't know what that looks like. Don't say that is what you want them to come up with. Don't be afraid to outline clearly what is going to happen if faculty don't come to the table. Much like the faculty contract - in the end the Administration will make the decisions if they choose not to come to the table.</p>	<p>Be clear in the baseline outcome expectations from the outset of conversations with faculty - faculty will have to teach more evening classes, they will have to teach online classes, they will have to conduct research and publish, they will need to develop partnerships with community entities and supervise internships/advise students. Place measures on these expectations so when time comes for review it is clear when faculty have exceeded and where they have failed.</p> <p>Stop all the open sessions and feedback and get to work. We know how people feel. We have heard the same thing for a year now. No one has contributed anything new. The attempts at inclusion are admirable but enough is enough and quite frankly, continuing to provide a venue for faculty to pontificate is not fruitful. Get behind close doors and get this done already.</p> <p>Learn to set boundaries. Children need them and adults that act like children need them more.</p>
<p>None. Same old re-hash. I know the President, Provost and all are sincere and very much respect them, but we are in deep doo doo if Tuesday was any example of where we are headed.</p>	<p>My major concerns are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Our leaders are not leading, but asking the entire USM community to lead them.</li> <li>2. USM is so in love with itself that it may not be possible for it to change enough.</li> <li>3. It will be impossible to herd the entire USM community of cats into the creation of a practical plan by Jan.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Admin (not the Community) must re-write our vision and mission statements to 3 sentences focused around Student Success, Community Engagement, and Fiscal Responsibility. If it can't be stated in that few words it's worthless.</li> <li>2. Admin must identify no more than 3 goals under each to work on.</li> <li>3. Admin must form 3 USM groups (1 per goal) to develop a SHORT list of objectives. Each must be given a very well defined, admin-created roadmap with deadlines, for their work. No arguments. The groups must look to other states for answers, not within.</li> <li>4. USM groups must forget about USM history and draw from what OTHER regions (outside New England) are doing. Then come back with FRESH plans. Otherwise we are wasting our time.... again.</li> </ol>
<p>Nothing you've said so far means anything. We already have a measure that defines student success--grades. They do an exclusive and excellent job of it.</p>	<p>WHERE ARE THE MEANINGFUL SPECIFICS ABOUT ACTIONS?</p>	<p>In reading the Work Group, I noticed there is a Chief of Staff of the Provost's office(!!!). I also noticed that the group consists almost entirely of administrators. This gives it a bias that is bad news for the decisions it makes: they'll preferentially reduce non-administrative (faculty) positions and resources which have direct impacts on USM's education over administrative positions and resources that don't. The only way to obtain the best outcome for students is to include many more of them and the faculty that serve them on the Work Group, and reduce the large plurality of administrators.</p>
<p>I like that attention has been paid to what has gone on before: that way we're not reinventing the proverbial wheel.</p>	<p>I have concerns that ideas will once more fall into the abyss of neither being formally implemented or formally rejected. It is hard to do our part to support a given initiative if we're not sure the initiative is happening. On the flip side it's a waste of time to work toward an initiative that's not happening.</p>	<p>On the concrete side I would suggest partnerships with local community adult education in the Portland area and in the Lewiston-Auburn area. Doing so would support the strategy of community engagement by having us work with these agencies. It would also support the student retention strategy by adding support options for underprepared students.</p> <p>Thank you very much!</p>
<p>I've thought about this and want to amend my earlier entirely negative response. I do like the fact that it is not going through the Faculty Senate but directly to faculty and staff. There is some potential here for response by faculty beyond that small entrenched group in the Senate. There may be people who will find this does express their vision and goals and they should have a chance to say so.</p>	<p>I do think this is really annoying to many faculty. But, perhaps, so what?</p>	<p>Short is good. Saying directly what the point is would be good.</p>

<p>That all sounds great and is like asking who likes apple pie, the hard part will be to operationalize it. Even though it was probably a good starting point, there is little if anything new there. We had better get past that point very soon or it will just be another false start. The hard part will be to actually move USM from where we are to where we need to be.</p> <p>I hope everyone can realize that we are all in this boat together and need to support each other if we are going to go where we need to go. That isn't going to be easy because a lot of mistrust has developed over the past few years.</p> <p>Good Luck to all of us</p>	<p>My concern is that we will spin our wheels on this stage for much too long and not actually get anything done. We have been here several times in the past but didn't take it much further, so it should not be a surprise that few people trust it yet.</p>	<p>See the above comments.</p>
<p>None. It was a complete waste of the time of the committee who prepared it and the audiences who suffered through it. A collection of vacuous platitudes and truisms culled from existing documents and spun to direct the course of future discussion. The summer would have been much better spent gathering actual data -- exit interviews, emails to students who were accepted but chose not to attend, market research, financial analysis, etc. for example, involving stakeholders -- faculty, staff, students, BOV, community leaders, etc. -- from the outset, or even just going fishing and waiting until people were back on campus.</p>	<p>See answer above. Process was not properly inclusive, content was devoid of information, no questions were actually answered by those onstage. The entire fiasco undermines the goal of working together for the good of the future of USM.</p>	<p>Throw it away, apologize for hideously botched rollout, and start from scratch with appropriate involvement of representatives of the broad range of stakeholders.</p>
<p>See below</p>	<p>I am wondering how one is able to give anonymous feedback when one must share one's email address and affiliation in order to leave a comment. Perhaps there is some process by which email addresses and affiliations are encrypted before comments are read, but unless this is stated very clearly on the site, people will be unlikely to share their opinions honestly. This form does not give one confidence that comments submitted could truly be anonymous. Thank you.</p>	<p>See above for my comments. Now I have found another problem with this form, which is that you cannot leave any comment unless you leave comments in all three boxes.</p>
<p>That the consultant did not talk too long, because he was an idiot. Comparing a comprehensive university to a manufacturing business is ridiculous.</p>	<p>That there was no input by faculty, that this is all a facade for a hidden agenda, that neither the President or Provost answered questions, but rather stood on stage with a condescending, pugnacious expression on their faces. That it is clear that the opinion of students and faculty are not and will not be considered as the process moves forward, that the President is close-minded regarding any productive dialogue with faculty, that no one has provided a convincing argument or data that demonstrates low enrollments can be repaired by turning students away???? That the President has done irreparable damage to USM's reputation, and that you could almost see the puppet strings suspending our disingenuous President</p>	<p>The President needs to start over and repair the relationship between the 7th floor and the faculty and then proceed with a productive dialogue. No one is arguing that things need to change, but there were numerous good ideas suggested for launching productive change from the students, staff and faculty attending the meetings. BUT the top level administrators are not interested in listening and evaluating formulas for real change. Students are turning away because there are no real resources to support students and the administrators who should be pounding the pavement to attract money, students, and legislative support to USM are apparently asleep at the wheel and have been for the 14 years that I have been at USM.</p>
<p>That you say that you are willing to listen to input from the community. My children and grandchildren have attended and attend USM largely due to finances and the extreme cost of higher education and massive debt students must incur. I, myself attend the University of Michigan and Bates College. I have always thought that USM was at least a serious educational institution but am really horrified to hear that you are cutting physics majors.</p>	<p>My major concern is with the apparent direction that The University of Maine is taking. That a state university is modeling itself after a corporate, for profit college. I believe that cutting science programs is counter productive. Is the Maine State University going to focus on training people for service jobs for supporting a service economy or is the University going to provide undergraduate and graduate degrees in the sciences? Do you plan to lower standards so far that a degree from USM is meaningless?</p>	<p>That the University move in the direction of quality education with focus on the sciences and research rather than take as your competition a watered down education for those who are not serious students. If you have to make cuts, look at administrative costs.</p>

<p>Revisiting the charter Articulation of values Synthesis of strategies</p>	<p>My concerns include the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- absence of external representation in work group in view of vision, mission &amp; values,</li> <li>- narrow interpretation of community engagement in the strategies section, and</li> <li>- nearly exclusive internal focus and emphasis on administrative considerations in the list of strategies e.g. heavy emphasis on controlling what we currently do rather than reconceptualizing our business model</li> </ul>	<p>I recognize that administrative leadership is a vital component of our reality and this process. We need more than our own perspective to find solutions - we need</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- energy and new perspectives that can be gained by actively engaging the broader community, in particular external influentials representing the largest segments of the economies of Portland and Maine (and beyond).</li> <li>- some loosening of internal structures to encourage development and testing of creative/entrepreneurial solutions suggested by the reference to adaptive leadership in the strategies list.</li> <li>- more dynamic interplay that includes tightening of structures (as well loosening). A few defined metrics and short-run focus within the control of faculty might help mitigate some of the anxiety (and whining) on campus. An example that jumps to mind is introduction of a participatory process to establish rubrics for interpreting student course evaluations and other standards that can be incorporated in faculty review processes. Perhaps this work could be organized with sub-groups formed around shared competency foci to help articulate our true strengths (and gaps/weaknesses) with an eye to better understanding our collective capacity and how we might realign resources in response to what our students/community/state express as their need. Transparency as a value is awesome - that has not been my experience with USM. And about this questionnaire - and transparency... The required "email" field, accompanied by option for anonymous "name" field, begs the question of what is done with the submitted information. I'd happily share my name/email if I thought it had limited readership. I am not interested in engaging in the faculty debate mano-mano if my comments annoy whiny faculty colleagues. Thank you all for asking for input and for guiding our craft through these turbulent waters.</li> </ul>
<p>I typed up a few notes. this seems basically a marketing document at this point. Here's what I typed up.</p> <p>Vision - 1. good; needs specifics 2. what larger community? presumptuous; what make you think the larger community wants your instruction? 3. too much a marketing slogan; how? 4. good, but needs specifics; how?</p> <p>Charter 1. good; 2. better to include commuters and nontraditional rather than emphasize; don't want to drive others away or suggest they are going to be short shrifted 3. good 4. good, but leave out 1865</p> <p>Mission - 1. fulfillment sounds too grandiose; "rewarding"? rework the sentence and tighten it up 2. too much of a laundry list; you only have 2 items, so why not split off a couple to make 4</p> <p>Values- too many? maybe organize into a few(4??) headings and elaborate a bit</p> <p>Strategies - Again, too long a list; try to organize more hierarchically into broad strategies; be prepared to support with specifics, but don't list them all here; you may be able to group items under headings.</p> <p>Internal resource management(4 geographic portals, faculty, staff, institutional data)Enhancing value of offerings(items 2,3,4,5,12)</p> <p>Strengthening ties to community(items 6,7,9,10)</p> <p>Ultimately you will need to focus on the initiatives that show the greatest promise of reward. WE DON'T HAVE TIME TO DO EVERYTHING.</p>	<p>that our energies will be so dispersed that nothing is done well.</p>	<p>see what I typed up and inserted into the first box</p>
<p>There is nothing to like or dislike: it is a series of abstract nouns and empty verbs, and so says nothing.</p> <p>By the way, one cannot be anonymous and also give an email. This is typical of the total lack of awareness in this as well as the document.</p>	<p>It means nothing and it was done in violation of the University Governance Document--in violation of almost every clause about how to create change and every statement about the responsibility of faculty and the Faculty Senate's mandated responsibilities.</p>	<p>Start over and follow legal procedures.</p>

<p>Thoughts on the Direction Package Roll-Out - While it is always important to describe and confirm values, mission, charter, etc., the University of Southern Maine is far, far along on the road in all of those areas...a concept that I did not feel was addressed, (or perhaps even understood?) as judged by the information delivered at the Direction Package Kick-Off. In my brief 5 years at USM I have been exposed to innumerable reports, strategic initiatives, missions, charters, etc. (In fact, you show many of the reports and work under your Direction Package Resources). These reports largely explain a vision and a charter and a mission, but to date have never offered a PLAN. We know that we need to align ourselves around compelling missions....we believe we have. We know we need to align ourselves around shared values....we believe we have. Etc., etc., etc. We get what's involved in organizational change, I really promise you. Therefore, we also know we need to align ourselves around compelling TACTICS and INITIATIVES. We are ready. But what and where are they? As I am sure you all know, you presented a Direction Package that offered little in the way of "direction" and much in the way of repeated platitudes and aspirations and the USM community is largely frustrated. (Also, tired, burnt-out, fed-up, etc.) Many of my colleagues and peers wonder if the Chancellor's Office fully understands what USM has been going through and what steps we have already taken to create our mission and objectives and charters and values; to compile statistics, reports, input, etc. To be honest, the Honda comparisons felt just this side of insulting and condescending.</p>	<p>If I may speak for what I believe many in the USM community expected, we anticipated a summer of strong minds and strong leadership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewing all the reports noted above and listed on your resource page</li> <li>• Reconsidering our market position, both internally and externally</li> <li>• Culling out the commonalities and workable concepts and then</li> <li>• Presenting a "plan of attack."</li> </ul> <p>I believe we then expected, this fall, to be presented with at least the beginning of a design...followed by the opportunity for many constituencies to offer input, insight, feedback, acumen, wisdom and likely angst as we hashed out a plan for the future. And in my opinion a plan means a blueprint, complete with steps for success, metrics for accountability, etc. Ending the Direction Package Outline Page with the following is disappointing:</p> <p>TACTICS/INITIATIVES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To be determined at a later date</li> </ul>	<p>So what to do?  Much bigger minds than mine need to re-group, but of all the resources presented on the Resource Page, probably the most inspiring one is the Enrollment Plan, specifically pages 34 through 105-  <a href="http://www.usm.maine.edu/sites/default/files/spp/Final%20Enrollment%20Plan%2006.1.2011.pdf">http://www.usm.maine.edu/sites/default/files/spp/Final%20Enrollment%20Plan%2006.1.2011.pdf</a>  This is a terrific example of laying out a plan- with goals, deliverables, metrics, accountability, etc.  An aside: Having said that, however, many colleagues in the group I sat with to view the "DP kick-off" pointed out that no less than 25% (5) of the entire work group is comprised of individuals directly involved in/responsible for enrollment and recruitment, yet the plan sited above has not seemingly been updated vis-à-vis sharing results. With diminishing enrollments and retention a critical issue for USM, we now hope that the groups responsible for the work will show what has been done and when, etc., and what the outcomes have been....what measureable results we have seen based on this promise of action.  It would be terrific to see the plan laid out in its chart format with fields showing the dates for achievement of the goals and what they brought to USM.  For what it's worth.....  As President Kalikow states on her homepage, "USM is an institution characterized by energy, enthusiasm, and innovation"....I firmly believe that you have many colleagues at your disposal on whom you could call to work on this plan.</p>
<p>None</p>	<p>Lack of focus.</p>	<p>Please view this from Roger Williams University.  <a href="http://www.rwu.edu/about/partnerships-initiatives/affordable-excellence">http://www.rwu.edu/about/partnerships-initiatives/affordable-excellence</a></p> <p>They have gone through what we are dealing with and settled on Affordable Excellence as their motto. Very good. Click on each area and see the now-supporting programs and services that have been developed. This could be USM.</p> <p>It presents a positive, focused image with results.</p>