Metropolitan University Steering Group - Meeting Notes CMHS
Discussion Meeting – June 19

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Metropolitan University Steering Group
University of Southern Maine

Meeting Notes
CMHS Discussion Meeting – June 19, 8:30-10:30 a.m.
Lee Community Hall, Wishcamper Center

Present: Richard Barringer (Chair), Jack Kartz (Facilitator), Emma Gelsinger (Recorder), David Swardlick, Glenn Cummings, Cathy Fallon


Part I: Welcome, Charge to MUSG, Introductions

• Welcome and Comment – Joe McDonnell, Cathy Fallona, Glenn Cummings, David Swardlick
  o Public higher education is going through some serious issues nationwide and in Maine; Maine faces particular challenges with demographics and out of state tuition
  o As part of this transformation a recommendation has been made for USM to align itself with the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities

• Charge to MUSG - What the MUSG is doing and is not doing: Dick Barringer, Chair MUSG (see attached powerpoint). Q&A, comments:
  o Are there going to be forums for all USM colleges and campuses to discuss how we can proceed together?
  o The best way to add value to what we’re already doing is to increase communication and collaboration
  o We need to build on the collaborations we already have
  o We are not doing a good enough job educating the public about what we’re now doing in the community
  o Does the MUSG have any official affiliation with the Title III grant?
- Not officially but through committee members
  - Introduction of Facilitator - Jack Kartez, Professor, Muskie School of Public Service
  - Self-Introductions - Identify most important hope or stake today
    - See Appendix I for notes

Part II: Key Indicators of Success for the MU in 5 years for LAC Community, Students and/or College (See Appendix II for notes)

Major themes that came out of the Key Indicators discussion

- This truly needs to be a paradigm shift in the culture of USM and we need to change our behavior as a university. If this turns out to simply be a rebranding of USM, it will fail.
- An emphasis needs to be placed on communicating with the community about their needs and being able to respond to these quickly
- People want to do things but the university does not support them
- USM and its graduates are recognized as important to the region's economic life by stakeholders outside the university but the relationship is undeveloped.
- Overall, people seem to echo things we have heard in previous meetings and provided good insights:
  - There are engaged things being done or that could be done, but the university does not support or recognize it
  - We need a comprehensive structure for measuring and evaluating the community engagement of the university
  - USM needs to structure itself for innovation and to co-discover community needs

Part III: Next Steps and Accountability

- Emma, Dick and Jack will send meeting notes out to MUSG and those at the CMHS Outreach meeting asap
- MUSG will work over the summer with other MU institutions on best practices
- The MUSG will consider a university-wide convocation to discuss the MU concept at USM
- We will publish all working papers and drafts on the website, and invite comments, at www.usm.maine.edu/musteeringgroup
- Our goal is to finish laying out these implementation steps by the end of the summer so we can work on getting this going in fall
Appendix I: Notes on Introductions

- I hope that the university can stabilize so concepts like this can move forward; but it seems like there needs to be a solid fiscal foundation first
- I believe we can do a much better job of integrating campuses, especially LAC
- I hope the university will become the lead learner for the educators in the area, and make the necessary changes that is required in the field right now
- Strengthening community partnerships - this has to be dynamic where we respond to needs and community members know more about USM
- Creating a linkage between the university and the schools – I’m very hopeful about the systematic approach
- Mutual benefit to the community members and USM
- There's a lot of great work already being done and I would love to see the same amount of work internally building our own community here at USM
- Establish more connectivity with the programs offered at USM - our business thrives on an educated workforce
- Systematically extend our programs to other communities in the state
- The content and types of problems that should be solved by an urban university - I’d like to see us thinking about how we can be solving those problems
- We rely greatly on the UMS for educated graduates and interns, and the university needs to stabilize for the long term
- Creating this systematic view and positive cultures is very exciting for me
- Our program has had long standing relationships with the community and our students fill an important need in the state in regards to mental health services
- The lack of cohesion among faculty is a problem; when there is communication between faculty we are able to do some really important things. Faculty are going to have to think and behave differently
- I hope to learn more about these ideas and what it means to be a MU
- We’re uniquely situated to build on the relationships that we already have
- Our job is helping everybody around us – I think we do this and we run into all sorts of challenges finding relationships with faculty and administration; I’m here looking for partnerships
- I was thrilled to see that part of the MU is college access and grants – the health of USM and SMCC is vital to rebuild and work on our partnerships; USM is well positioned to help us and meet our needs
- We need to remember that students from an entire region come here, we need to support the entire region
- Everybody here has things that they're doing that are relative to this and all of us will have to give something up to accomplish this – we have to remember that
- I hear potential students talking about USM as a fallback instead of a first choice
- It would be great to see stories and profiles of what we’re already doing come together in a positive way and coming up with themes or clusters of activities to do
- Hoping we will be able to get out of our own way of being a traditional university and turn to how we can work together; we have an incredible creative community around us
- I don’t think the USM story is being told, we are not engaging with alumni enough – there is a lot of potential here
- I would like to take all the things I’m hearing today and get that directly to the community and to students
- We’re a house divided, I hope we can have a shared vision in the future
- It’s really difficult to find peers in our age group because most professionals our age are leaving
- I’m very invested in USM – I’d like to see it become dynamic and student’s first choice
- We’re in a great position to do joint degrees, professional development and attract people to the area
- My area of scholarship revolves around community engagement – understanding the challenges is just as important as understanding the successes; it takes a lot of muscle and resources to shift a paradigm and this can’t just be a rebranding
- Community is the real name of my college – it’s all about community, trust, respect, and communication both externally and internally
- The business school mission says that we are all about research, teaching and service; I hope to see how to systematically incorporate that into our program
- To break down barriers between colleges and campuses and figure out how to have speed and agility so that we can keep up with the changes happening
- I’m looking for us to be less bound by process and less averse to risk and recognize that this is a place where we teach and explore ideas – in order to be innovative we have to give up some tools that hold us back
- We are metropolitan by place, but we should compare ourselves against the best in MU’s
- I’m looking forward to finding ways to make the successes here relatable to the community in Maine so that everyone understands we all have a stake in public higher education
- I get frustrated when my workforce comes from UNH and not USM – I’m very happy to hear what’s going on and I want to be sure not to lose the regional emphasis
- I left the state after I started at USM because I wasn’t connected to USM or the community – we haven’t had a lot of flow from USM into our workforce
- It’s really easy for me to see how to do community engagement with my business school students but how do we do that with younger students and honor students?
- I’m very invested and interested and have a lot of experience building systems of change
- I agree with people who say that USM does not brand itself well, it seems strange that we don’t sell the experience you can have here in this region
- I look forward to getting out of this room and finding out more from other people in the community about their needs
- I’ve contracted with 4 of the universities on the CUMU list because we either didn’t have the capacity here or I didn’t know about the capacity
- We’ve been doing our work a long time with little recognition and support from USM
- We all acknowledge that USM does the work of the MU but I don’t think we understand what it’s really going to take to make this change
- It’s important to get people to buy that we are a MU and that MU is a good thing for Maine
- My biggest concern is how we interact with people who we consider “diverse” – we don’t support students like that enough
- USM has struggled with its identity since it began – we should sell MU in that we are embracing the region and each of us is responsible for telling the story

Appendix II: Notes on Key Indicators provided by Attendees

- I worked with 2 of the CUMU and they were very responsive to the needs of the community, where the community defined what they needed; they were important partners in relationships that have real economic and development impacts
- If this is going to be developed for self-improvement for USM only, it is going to fail – we have health problems and economic development problems they desperately need us to step up as a university
- Harvard business school case study about Austin, TX – points to critical role that the university has in the community
- Austin still has a huge divide between the community and the university; created one of the more segregated communities
- Community engagement requires a certain investment of time and how we define the community; we need to look at pedagogy and tenure and promotion standards
- What does community mean? What does it mean to allow failure?
- I hope that a series of metrics are created so that we can actually measure progress so that we’re all driving to same goals from different angles
- We need to recognize that there are national and global standards that are driving professional disciplines – even if students don’t stay here they need to be able to address professional challenges anywhere they go
- I’m cautious as we tread those waters of community engagement - the time commitment on the part of faculty is immense and you can do a lot of damage with relationships by sending out floods of untrained students
- We need to have guidelines for service learning for both faculty and students
- We need to recognize the boundaries: the university's job is to learn new things and share what we’ve learned with others - there is a distinction between a university with a mission and a large consulting company with untrained staff

**The real engagement is in the mutual learning**

- There’s lots of different ways to engage (e.x. faculty and students sitting on committee) – just being a part of the community is a huge value
- Expertise and resources that already exist in the community especially with early field experiences – collaborate with them to help students shape and define their learning
- If you are a collaborative group, decisions are going to be messy – the university cannot control all of the decisions being made; we need to know what the standards are because structures have not been clarified yet
- Community partners are often on the front lines and their time is at a premium and their time is not always valued – *I wonder how we can promote those partners for their leadership to emphasize their value?*
- We need to recognize our partners and what they do

- Students in USM in the high school pipeline all have very different aspirations; we need to recognize the diversity of our students
- When working with low income students, just being there and giving that access and exposure is crucial – we need to personalize our education – fit is what attracts students
- We do have a high impact education grant looking at retention etc.
- *We need a very participatory model that builds credibility; we can’t just be sending students out to agencies to say we are engaging*
- Metrics being used at other universities are being looked at by MUSG
- Part of the problem is that we don’t understand the specific needs – once we do, we can understand the capacity and then we can develop the measures
- The measures have to be responsive to the needs of the community
  - *Asking broadly about community needs can raise expectations and overwhelm the university – we need to adopt a focus and form platform partnerships*
  
- Creating a sense of expectation for the community can be dangerous especially in the financial state we are in
- Some don’t know what you can offer when you ask what the need is, and so they don’t even know where that conversation begins
- Maybe it’s about asking where the opportunities for growth are and what they see as opportunities for USM to help
- *We have all these needs we want to address and the mental capacity but remember that these activities are also meant to make the university sustainable (return on investment)*
  
- *We need to build an enterprise that can sustain itself*
- Community members also enjoy helping us – the human component of giving is very powerful
- If you sit with groups of excited young people what you hear is “we can do this, we can do that” – you don’t have to be quite so careful with big ideas
- The existing processes of this university are detrimental to creative people here