

University of Maine System
Board of Trustees Meeting

Zoom Meeting
February 23, 2022

Ad Hoc Committee on Strategic Planning Meeting

Present: **Committee Members:** James Erwin, Chair; Emily Cain, Mark Gardner, Trish Riley and Roger Katz. **Chancellor:** Dannel Malloy. **Staff:** Robert Placido, Ryan Low, Joan Ferrini-Mundy, Kim Jenkins, Jeff St. John and Ellen Doughty. **Guests:** Huron Consulting Team – Peter Stokes, Brenna Casey, Cathy Dove and Kate Gerbode-Grant.

Absent: James Donnelly and Lisa Eames.

Trustee Erwin, Ad Hoc Committee Chair, welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order. The Clerk performed a roll call of the Committee members present.

Trustee Erwin explained the agenda for today's meeting is a discussion with the Huron Team to solicit feedback from the Committee on the strategic planning communications strategy, information resources approach and review and analysis of the campuses' strategic plans.

Solicit Feedback from the Ad Hoc Committee on Preliminary Communication Strategy

Brenna Casey, from Huron, lead a discussion on the overall philosophy of an effective communication strategy which is an ongoing process that should be embedded in formal and informal interactions and should continue beyond the end of the strategic planning process. The three elements of a communication strategy include frequency and cadence, key messages and information resources. Frequency and cadence include regular email communications sent by the Chancellor and followed by communications from each President. Communications will direct stakeholders to the strategic planning website for additional information.

Key messages will be created for both the planning process and implementation of the strategic plan and are intended to be the talking points. The key messages for the strategic planning process could also be interpreted as guiding principles. The Huron team proposed the following messages as a starting point for the Committee's discussion:

- strive towards becoming a truly innovated public system
- be student-centric in opportunity identification, prioritization, and implementation
- base decisions on facts and the realities of the higher education market
- be bold and willing to make tough decisions in order to invest in new initiatives and ensure long-term success while also being willing to reduce effort and less protective initiatives
- enhance each university's strengths while eliminating duplication
- remain committed to supporting the flourishing of an R1 institution and enhancing its reputation for excellence in education and research
- distinguish the "system" from the "system office", both with respect to objectives and responsibilities
- leverage unified accreditation as a tool for achieving System-wide benefits and adhere to the UA guiding principles
- respect the UMS culture and support our people in all we do

Feedback from Committee members included the following comments:

Strive towards becoming a truly innovated public system

- “strive towards” does not seem to be a talking point, innovation should be a strategy around a goal; UMS wants to become more effective, more efficient and maximize innovative approaches. Possibly fewer bullet points and we have missed the efficiency discussion. There needs to be discussion around affordability and quality.

Be student-centric in opportunity identification, prioritization, and implementation

- retention should also be included because the best opportunity UMS has for growth is through retention
- UMS needs to be more than student-centric in our aspirations

Enhance each university’s strengths while eliminating duplication

- the term “eliminating duplication” is likely not the correct terminology and include identify and enhance in that statement
- soften or add to what is meant by “eliminating duplication” - instead perhaps use efficiency or collaboration

Respect the UMS culture and support our people in all we do

- not sure if respect is the correct word, instead perhaps fostering/maintaining a culture of respect and support for faculty, staff, students and administrators (instead of people)

General Comments:

- there is no reference to and expectation for collaboration and working across universities which is what could make us innovative among systems
- adding a reference that as a public higher education institution, we need to partner with the state on talent development to meet state needs
- the state has identified goals for UMS and that should be part of our strategic plan
- aging infrastructure is a major challenge for UMS
- we need to be careful not to embed in messaging any assumptions on what the strategic plan is going to be calling for; don’t assume the status quo going forward about how UMS is going to operate
- need to make a distinction between innovation as a goal - a culture of innovation should be a goal
- the messaging needs to be forward looking on where we are headed and grounded by where we’ve been
- each university’s strengths need to be maximized/acknowledged in the strategic plan
- communication is two-way and we need to address how we will listen to the stakeholders
- there are no end-state type comments addressing where we are going or what we are trying to do without being too specific and assuming outcomes; maybe this could be addressed by using value-based words - for example, sustainable, vibrant, relevant
- they were great reports about the impact of university research on the economy, businesses and industry as well as dollars leveraged

Review of Information Resources Approach

Information resources is used instead of fact-based data because it includes historic, current and projected data. Information resources is a set of analysis shared with stakeholders to ground conversations about the future. Ms. Casey explained the guidelines for use of information resources. The UMS factbook is designed as a tool to establish a baseline of commonly held knowledge about UMS to support the strategic planning process. It will act as a reference document to facilitate discussion and planning activities. The data will

create a common understanding of demographic, financial and competitive situation for UMS and will help align us on a shared, sustainable vision while providing a grounding in market context.

Ms. Casey asked the committee if the current contents of demographic and enrollment, student success and academics, economic development, and financials and personnel are appropriate and in what meetings should this information be discussed. Huron's plan was to weave in some of this content into stakeholder conversations.

Feedback from Committee members include the following comments:

- Bachelor's degree opportunities are included in the economic development section, but what about opportunities for graduate/professional programs/degrees and certificates.
- Maine occupations for bachelor's degrees seems insufficient. Is there a way to capture some of the essence of the Maine Economic Plan - what is the current and future Maine economy have in store for UMS students?
- The list included in future contents is appropriate, however, is there a place for a larger context for institutions to close state need gaps or be aspirational to move in certain directions that are measurable.
- UMS has understated our advocacy for our Cooperative Extension centers which impacts economic development.
- Research also needs to be included in economic development.
- Our ability to offer quality education is impacted due to our E&G budget limitations. We need measures for E&G activity.
- Student indebtedness at graduation and admission rates might need to be added to the section on student success and academics.
- In all of the data points the system office should be included as well as all universities.
- In the demographic and enrollment section there's a reference to out-of-state students. We need to be aware of the politics of emphasizing out-of-state students. However, on the other side of the coin, we could also be pointing that we have a much higher retention rate for out-of-state students who remain in the state for employment purposes.
- Another issue is determining if UMS can operate an institution with 500, 700 or 1000 or less students - what is the appropriate threshold.
- Under future contents, there should be a matrix for ROI for the student as well as job placement.
- We need to ensure we do not mask the cost of inflation. UMS has lost a tremendous ground over the past few years due to inflation. This needs to be balanced with efficiency.

Review and Analysis of Each University's Strategic Plan

Ms. Cathy Dove, from Huron, shared the preliminary analyses of the university's strategic plans. The Huron Team mapped a comparison of each university's strategic mission, universal values and distinct purpose of each institution. There are many similarities and common themes, however, there are meaningful differences. The Huron Team then compiled charts to compare the strategic priorities and the strategic initiatives for the campuses.

As an example, Ms. Dove discussed strategic the priority of enrollment growth as a comparison across campuses. When doing this comparison, the similarities and differences between campuses are clearly defined. Comments from Committee members included:

- What kind of enrollment? How do we balance the quality of education with who we are enrolling and do the campuses have different approaches? Should we differentiate the strengths or distinct functions of the campuses?
- Concern was raised that the current strategy the campuses are using is not effective, therefore, a change in their strategy may be needed. It is difficult to put value in the information on this chart because these strategies are not resulting in enrollment growth.
- If we purge enrollment from one campus to the other, will we succeed as a system?
- There is a degree of self-editing by the students. Not all students who apply to UMS select our larger campuses. UMS has open enrollment at most of our universities, with USM being somewhat selective and UM being more selective.
- Enrollment growth needs to be defined. For example, USM would need to recover over 700 students to be at the enrollment level from 5 years ago and UMA would need to recover over 800 full-time equivalent students to be at the enrollment level from 6 years ago. There have been assumptions of growth that have not paid off year after year. The campuses need a realistic goal of enrollment growth.
- UMS will need to define what success looks like in 5 to 10 years regarding enrollment growth.
- The challenge is that we should include growing enrollment as part of a goal, particularly because of our public mission, but we can't plan on it happening as we could have in past decades because there were fewer people to recruit. It's also about market share in Maine, in New England and nationally as well as recruitment.
- "Growth" meaning absolute growth sounds good and is aspirational but not realistic and will diverge costs from the efficiency steps that will be needed. The issue is retention is based on data. UMS is below the national average on retention.

Following the public session, the Ad Hoc Committee on Strategic Planning went into Executive Session.

Executive Session

On a motion by Trustee Gardner, which was seconded by Trustee Riley, and approved by a roll call vote of all Trustees present, the Ad Hoc Committee on Strategic Planning agreed to go into Executive Session under the provisions of:

- 1 MRSA Section 405 6-A to discuss the evaluation of personnel and the consideration and discussion of appointments, employment and duties, and
- 1 MRSA Section 405 6-C to discuss the condition, acquisition or disposition of real property or economic development if premature disclosure of the information would prejudice the competitive or bargaining position of the UMS.

On a motion by Trustee Riley, which was seconded by Trustee Gardner, and approved by a roll call vote of all Trustees present, the Ad Hoc Committee on Strategic Planning concluded the Executive Session.

Additional information about the meeting can be found on the Board of Trustees website:

<https://www.maine.edu/board-of-trustees/meeting-agendas-materials/ad-hoc-committee-on-strategic-planning/>

Adjournment

Ellen N. Doughty, Clerk