

University of Maine System
Board of Trustees Meeting

Zoom Meeting
August 29, 2022

Strategic Planning Committee Meeting

Present: **Committee Members:** Emily Cain, Chair; James Donnelly, Donna Loring, Barbara Alexander and Trish Riley. **Other Trustees:** Roger Katz. **Non-Voting Committee Members:** Michael Scott, Aidan Mulrooney, Jeremy Chubbuck, Ray Rice and William Otto. **Chancellor:** Dannel Malloy. **Staff:** Robert Placido, Ryan Low, Joan Ferrini-Mundy, Jeffrey St. John, Carolyn Dorsey and Ellen Doughty. **Guests:** Huron Consulting Team – Peter Stokes, Brenna Casey and Cathy Dove.

Absent: Lisa Eames.

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

Welcome and Opening Remarks from Committee Chair

Trustee Cain explained that this is the first meeting of the standing Board committee for Strategic Planning. This Committee is continuing the work started by the Ad Hoc Committee on Strategic Planning which began its work in October 2021. She stated that Committee membership includes Trustees along with representatives from other key stakeholder groups – faculty, students, staff and presidents and she thanked the non-voting committee members for agreeing to serve on the Committee.

Trustee Cain explained there will be no action taken at this meeting. The meeting focus is getting alignment on the Committee's role. Members of the Huron team, our strategic planning consultants, joined the meeting and will provide an update on the work that has been accomplished so far as well as next steps. Attendees introduced themselves and shared one thing that they are proud of about UMS.

Transition from Ad Hoc Committee to Standing Committee

Board Chair Riley provided background on the transition of the Ad Hoc Committee on Strategic Planning to a standing Board committee. The initial Ad Hoc Committee was a small committee of Trustees with the support of the Chancellor and System staff. The development of a strategic plan is overdue but timely because we are in a period of extraordinary change. The strategic plan should be thought of to define the future of UMS with quality, affordability, costs and efficiency. The strategic plan is a vehicle to engage all our communities and it is important that the Strategic Planning Committee has been expanded to include representatives from the stakeholder groups. The Huron Team has and will continue to assist UMS through the process, and they understand the strategic plan is a tool and not a panacea. Each campus strategic plan has been reviewed and has formulated the baseline for the UMS plan. Our approach in the strategic plan is to embrace our System of universities and develop a path to strengthen the entire System by working collaboratively and efficiently.

Trustee Cain explained that this Committee will have regularly scheduled meetings prior to each Board meeting, which will be in alignment with the other Board standing committees. Many of the Trustee members of this Committee crossover to other Board Committees, which is an important and deliberate perspective.

UMS Strategic Planning Process Update

Peter Stokes, Managing Director of Huron Consulting Group, explained the goal is to discuss next steps but also bring everyone up to date on the prior activities by retrace our steps to provide an orientation for the new members of the Committee and a reminder for those who have been previously part of the process.

The word “System” means a few things – the System Office, the individual universities and all functioning as one organism. Those three notions of systemness need to be kept in mind. As the needs for the State of Maine evolve, so should the University of Maine System. As the largest provider of higher education in the state, it is critical that the System leverage their combined assets to respond to the changing needs of the state to support a thriving economy and higher education system. System strategic planning aims to:

- Establish a vision and set of priorities that respond to the current and future economic and community development need and aspirations of the state that account for the distinct contribution of each university and unites the system on broad objectives and outcomes
- Enable collaborative, creative thinking across diverse stakeholder groups (e.g., Board, Presidents, faculty, staff, students, alumni) in the system that requires imagination and a willingness to develop transformative ideas for a new era
- Provide a lens through which universities see themselves as channels to serve diverse learner audiences in service of statewide needs supported by optimizing system-wide assets to deliver tailored academic programs
- Foster an opportunity for the system and its universities - both together and independently - to reflect and consider how to deliver the highest quality postsecondary education to support the personal and professional aspirations of learners
- Result in cultural alignment, team unification, system-wide partnership, and ultimately, a commitment from all system stakeholders to achieve the vision collectively

An important aspect of system strategic planning is defining and communicating the role of the System Office. There are different kinds of benefits of engaging in strategic planning. The plan will inform decisions, resource allocation, prioritization of effort and investment of time, money and people. It is important to make a distinction between outputs and outcomes. Outputs are the plan and a road map for execution, which are vital deliverable during this collaboration. Diverse outcomes are also important, such as cultural benefits, communication opportunities across the System, broad participation and a model of leadership, commitment and stewardship. The design and execution of the process is critical to gain the appropriate outputs and outcomes. The priorities that are articulated need to focus on matters of great relevance to Maine citizens, to the universities and all the faculty, staff and students that are engage with the universities. There are risks on inaction with worsening financial pressures, increased competition and encroachment from competitors.

Mr. Stokes explained that a philosophical principle that is important is a distinction between the near-term horizon (one, two or three years) and a long-term horizon (years five, seven and ten). With a pretty high degree of confidence, a prediction can be made on what 2022 through 2024 will look like. How the environment will look in 2030, 2032 or 2033 is more difficult because there is not data available. Instead, thinking must be speculative with scenario planning with a different kind of information and experiences to anticipate what might evolve. Through the strategic planning process, there will be a simultaneous focus on the present forward planning as well as consideration of future scenarios, which means to work from the future back by leveraging the core capabilities of the System to succeed a decade from now.

Strategic Plans are commonly structured around the following elements, and the content of a plan can be populated by addressing key questions associated with each element.

- Mission, Vision and Values: What is the enduring mission or purpose of UMS? Towards what end(s) should effort and resources be directed? What are the values that inform UMS's mission and vision?
- Emerging Priorities: What key areas of activity will help UMS realize our vision?
- Opportunity Statement – “the way”: Taking both the UMS's current strengths and the future market environment into consideration, why should UMS focus on this area?
- Proposed Goals – “the what”: What outcome is UMS trying to achieve?
- Initiatives – “the how”: What are the specific actions that will help UMS accomplish its goals?
- Measures and Enablers of Success: How will UMS know it has succeeded? What role can the UMS Office play in enabling system-wide strategic priorities?

To explain the progression of a strategic priority through to outcomes, Mr. Stokes used an example of a strategic priority – student experience and success – and outlined possible initiatives and measures of outcomes. An issue was raised about the development of incentives and possibly penalties for the inability to achieve goals and objectives to provide a means of assuring to hold people accountable. Mr. Stokes responded by stating measuring progress is part of accountability to realize the goals that have been defined. The resources that are allocated to goal attainment and an array of different things can be incentives as well as consequences for missing goals and timelines.

Ms. Dove, from Huron, explained the strategic planning timeline and next steps. This process began in the winter of 2022 with initiating the project and building a shared knowledge base. During the spring and summer of 2022, the blueprint for future state was developed. For summer and fall 2022 the focus will be walking the future back and begin drafting the plan. The draft plan will continue through winter of 2022 and the socialization of the plan will begin in the spring of 2023 and continue through fall of 2023. The next steps will include Huron returning to each university community to continue the dialogue and engagement with broad stakeholder groups. The continued dialogue will identify the priorities, themes and initiatives that the stakeholders see as important.

Ms. Dove asked for input from the Committee if they had any comments or suggestions for Huron for the fall campus visits. She explained that the fall visits will be just the Huron team to continue to get more open dialogue. Committee members shared comments around the importance of a better outcome when people believe and feel they were part of the process and have faith in a process that has been as transparent as possible. It was suggested that there should be separate sessions for the faculty and staff because the staff may feel uncomfortable raising issues, or the faculty may dominate the conversations. Another comment focused on the importance of truly listening and knowing that the System is taking the feedback seriously. Ms. Dove explained that during the visits, Huron will start the follow up process and will confirm hearing the feedback with a town hall session at the end of the visit where Huron will share back what was expressed. Through the entire process Huron captures the input to reflect about what they heard. Not every comment will make it into the strategic plan, but the general themes do reflect the feedback received. Ms. Dove reminded everyone that there is a website that permits people to provide input and people will see in the outcome their input. It was suggested that Huron frame their visits around what a System strategic plan for a system of universities means because there are so many planning efforts underway at the campuses that the particulars of a System plan will not necessarily be familiar to people. The information Huron receives that is not relevant to system strategic planning but specific to the campus should be shared with the campus so that input can feed into ongoing campus strategic planning work.

Huron will continue their engagement with the Strategic Planning Working Group, President's Council, this Committee and the Board. Three specific topics will be the foundation of the engagement with the President's Council this fall. These topics reaffirm the current realities in the data, define System

stewardship, envision the path toward sustainability, and drive to consensus on transformative opportunities for the System's future.

Brenna Casey, from Huron, asked for Committee feedback on the themes that have been developed. The information for the preliminary goals has been taken from the internal data analysis and external scans of future higher education market trends (the Data Book), internal and external stakeholder engagement, and feedback from the Trustees and the Strategic Planning Working Group. Ms. Casey displayed the UMS Strategic Planning website and the location of the Data Book and the feedback form on the website. It was suggested that the location of the feedback form be more prominent and clear.

Ms. Casey summarized some of the themes received by internal and external stakeholders. There was some level of alignment among all of the stakeholders which include the strengths, challenges, strategic priorities and the role of the System Office. Huron developed an illustrative taxonomy of priorities and goals. Priorities are defined as key areas of activity to help UMS realize their vision and goals which are the outcome UMS is trying to achieve. Ms. Casey asked for the Committee's reaction to the emerging list of goals by priority area which is the summary so far for internal and external stakeholder engagement, the implications coming from the Data Book and feedback from the three UMS governing groups.

Committee Feedback

It was suggested that this Committee have a meeting specifically to discuss the priority areas and goals. Another comment was that the priority areas and goals will need to continue to be refined as Huron gathers more input from the fall visits. Ms. Casey stated that they would like to use these emerging goals as talking points for the fall visits as demonstration that they have heard what people have shared. It was asked that external stakeholder engagement include the tribal representative in the legislature as well as the Permanent Commission on the Status of Racial, Indigenous and Maine Tribal Populations.

The priority areas are high level, it was asked if there will be subcategories within the priority areas. Ms. Casey responded that the priority areas are very high level, and the goals would be paired with initiatives or tactics underneath each goal that would be more granular as well as indicating what success look like. The financial sustainability priority was raised because the goals maybe to narrow. UMS already has leading edge financial management activities so efficiency measure may want to be considered.

A Committee member asked for clarity if this is a Board initiative or a System initiative. Board Chair Riley responded that the Board at a high level charged the Chancellor and his team with implementing a strategic plan. This Committee advises and make recommendations. This will be a System plan that the Chancellor and his team will develop with the Committee's review and comment. Chancellor Malloy stated he agreed with Chair Riley's comments and there is no desire to control the content. The content needs to flow from the discussions. One of the charges was to make sure we were not dictating a result. The Board will play a significant role in the strategic plan that is produced and endorsed.

A Committee member raised concern that the Board will be in a very public and high-level position with respect to talking about the financial situation, the reforms, the long-term justification for the public support for UMS. Therefore, one would presume that the System Office leading a System Strategic Plan has institutional self-interest involved. If the Board is going to oversee deciding if this is the plan, then the Board needs to take more responsibility for promoting what this plan is, for introducing the plan process to the stakeholders, and elevating the responsibility and ultimate content to the Board level. Committee Chair Cain responded that the Board's obligation is to ensure, not just the outcome or result, but that the process is engaging. Board members have been very engaged in the process from the beginning, including the

development of the Data Book. There is also a Board Policy that articulates how strategic planning should be handled. Having a strategic plan assists with the focus of the Board strategic priorities. Originally, the Board assumed it would be a Board driven process but soon discovered that a much more collaborative process was necessary for success.

The Chancellor shared that each university is accustomed to producing, on a five-year cycle, their own strategic plans. At the Board's request the campus strategic plan was not brought forward for Board approval until the System Strategic Plan finalized. For the System's perspective, we are looking for a way to have this constellations of universities to work together for the good of all. There is a legal commitment to maintaining universities where they are current located. However, there are very big challenges to maintaining that commitment unless there is cooperation and collaboration and ways of thinking are changed. Hopefully, this strategic plan will be a road forward with the result of helping all campuses.

Board Chair Riley commented that this process is a major effort, significant change is needed and that change needs to be done thoughtfully. We all need to be engaged in the process. She is very sensitive to not overburden the campuses. Broad engagement is critical to producing a succinct, successful strategic plan that is endorsed by all stakeholders in the UMS community.

Closing Remarks from Committee Chair

Trustee Cain asked Committee members to share the link to the Data Book and the feedback form to others to encourage broad participation. She encouraged Committee member to reach out to her with feedback in response to issues that should be added to future meeting agendas. There will be regular strategic plan updates at Board meetings.

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