UNIVERSITY OF MAINE SYSTEM
Board of Trustees Meeting
at the University of Maine System
September 19, 2011

Academic Affairs Committee Meeting


Committee Members Absent: Gregory Johnson and Tamera Grieshaber.

Trustee Medd called the meeting to order.

China Update. Dr. James Breece, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, provided an update on the China System Initiative. There are 1.3 billion Chinese residents living in China and China currently exports approximately 1.3 million students for higher education each year (the size of Maine’s population). Slightly over 100 thousand students go to the United States, mainly for graduate programs. UMS currently has about 75 Chinese students of which 50 are in graduate programs. Given the significant rise in family incomes and the one-child policy in urban China, Chinese families place great attention and focus on the success of their children and want them to attend a university.

Chinese families prefer that their children attend one of the top ten Chinese universities, which can only serve a small fraction of the demand. For those families whose students are not accepted to one of these 10 Chinese universities, the families prefer their children to attend a foreign university, notably an American university. The US Embassy in China advises that in order to have successful student recruitment efforts in China, an institution should:

- Have a presence in China – to be accessible and promote the institution
- Help students acquire a US visa
- Be cautious when using agents or when making a significant financial investment in China
- Be mindful that an institution’s reputation can quickly be tarnished in an unregulated world with internet access

In addition, there are several challenges which include that only one Maine university is globally ranked; UMS has relatively high out-of-state tuition; the recent devaluation of the US dollar; ongoing expansion of Chinese university infrastructure; and stiff competition by the United Kingdom, Australia, Japan and other US universities.

The goal of the initiative is to have between 100-200 Chinese students enrolled at the UMS universities by 2014. This will bring diversity to our student body, invigorate the academic experience, and strengthen our program offerings. The revenue from this initiative will be used to strengthen core academic programs and broaden the array of program offerings to Maine students. UMS is taking a cautious and diversified approach that consists of four main avenues for recruiting Chinese students:

1. Maine Academies: develop memorandums of understanding (MOUs) and articulation agreements with Maine academies that have Chinese students.
2. Direct marketing and recruitment: place advertisements, attend recruitment fairs; and hold student sessions in China. Only a limited number of highly selected representatives are used.
3. Chinese high schools: develop MOUs with Chinese high schools and hold student sessions.
4. Chinese universities: develop MOUs and articulation agreements for transfer options: for example, 2+1+1’s, 2+2’s, and 0.5+1 (for graduate programs) in specific disciplines.

The UMS has established a dedicated webpage for prospective Chinese students in Chinese and has held a System-wide summit for faculty and staff to prepare the universities for the arrival of Chinese students.

**Annual Academic Program Review Summary.** Dr. Breece reviewed a summary of all program reviews conducted this past academic year outlining the actions taken. The academic program review process in the UMS is an important tool for ensuring quality and academic improvements. The Board’s Academic Affairs procedures state that comprehensive program reviews should be undertaken within five years for new programs and at least every seven years for continuing programs.

Dr. Breece commented that there are several reoccurring themes which were raised by outside reviewers:
- There are strong enrollments
- Some programs lack faculty
- Streamlining the curriculum
- Improving student learning outcomes
- Expanding diversity of students and faculty
- More service learning opportunities and internships

**Academic Affairs Committee Annual Work Plan.** Dr. Breece presented the Committee Work Plan for discussion. Dr. Breece also discussed the metrics used to measure the progress of the Work Plan.

Adjournment.

Ellen Doughty for
J. Kelley Wiltbank, Clerk