Academic and Student Affairs Committees Meeting


Committee Members Absent: Tyler Hadyniak.

Trustee Johnson, Chair, called the meeting to order.

Credit Transfer Steering Committee Update. President Wilson Hess, Chair of the Credit Transfer Steering Committee (CTSC), and Ms. Rosa Redonnett, Chief Student Affairs Officer, presented an update on the Credit Transfer Steering Committee. The first charge assigned to the Credit Transfer Steering Committee was to develop a transfer system (intra-system) for Maine’s public institutions. The implementation phase will begin in the near future and will be coordinated with the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. A comprehensive website for potential and current students is being developed to assist with transferring credits. This web portal will officially launch following the September 23, 2013 Board of Trustees meeting.

The Adult Baccalaureate Completion/Distance Education (ABCDE) Committee, the Credit Transfer Steering Committee, and the Academic and Student Affairs Committee will need to work closely together to coordinate Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) component of the transfer of credits as well as the concierge service for credit transfer and adult learning.

Ms. Redonnett talked about Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) component of the credit transfer process. PLA is a term used to describe learning gained outside a traditional academic environment and is learning and knowledge students acquire while living their lives: working, participating in employer training programs, serving in the military, studying independently, volunteering or doing community service, and studying open source courseware. It is the evaluation and assessment of an individual’s life learning for college credit, certification, or advanced standing toward further education or training. Ms. Redonnett explained that through a grant received by the Maine Employers Initiative, a workshop related to Prior Learning Assessment will be held on Friday, September 27. This workshop will be a good opportunity for faculty and staff to learn more about PLA, national trends, best practices and connect with colleagues working on enhancing and expanding their PLA activities.

Chancellor Page commented that the UMS will be working to develop a comprehensive inter-system transfer of credits with the Maine Community College System. President Hess stated that he hopes everyone with an oversight role in the Credit Transfer process will continue to encourage urgency and engagement to meet the very aggressive deadlines that have been established for the Credit Transfer project.
UMFK Program Suspension. President Wilson Hess explained the program suspension at UMFK. UMFK has been engaged in the process of revitalizing academic programs through program expansion, repositioning, or restructuring. As a result of this process, a recommendation was made to suspend the Electronic Commerce program at UMFK. Faculty layoffs are not anticipated as a result of this program suspension and review. Currently only one student is enrolled in this program and the student can be easily accommodated.

International Student Recruitment Strategies Discussion. Chancellor Page explained that the UMS requires a comprehensive, System-wide approach to international student recruitment. There is an enormous globalization of education underway, with the United States enjoying a significant influx of students from around the world looking to take advantage of our educational system. While there will likely be a reduction of students coming here in the long-run as many countries build their educational infrastructure, it is widely held that the UMS will likely enjoy this advantage for a considerable period. Therefore, there is a need to look at international recruitment not necessarily as a permanent add to our base, but as an opportunity to build educational opportunities with a potentially strong financial upside in the early stages and more and deeper foreign engagements and partnerships in the longer-term.

UMS is neither large enough to become a national leader in international student recruitment, nor is the UMS soon enough to the game to obtain a major market share. Nevertheless the UMS should take advantage of this opportunity for at least the following reasons:

1. Foreign students represent an important supplement to our (challenging) student demographics and, depending on the financial model, a significant opportunity to supplement revenue.
2. Engaging foreign students builds valuable relationships between them and our students, campuses, businesses, and communities that are increasingly important in a global economy.
3. Having foreign students on our campuses is our best way currently to increase student diversity, again, an important outcome for our students and state.

In the summer of 2012, the System determined the need for a conscious, data-driven approach to this issue. Responding to some immediate opportunities, last fall UM, USM and the System Office assessed a number of professional recruitment organizations and, in March 2013, executed a contract with Study Group. Because of the operational commitments this engagement entailed, and to avoid inefficiencies coming from uncoordinated efforts, all other initiatives with the exception of some small, ongoing campus-based ones were put on hold until the Presidents’ Council and the Board have had a chance to do this strategic assessment.

The UMS has three major approaches which are as follows.

A. Centralized Strategy. The core of this approach is to centralize international planning, marketing and recruitment efforts at the System level, with globalization central to each campus’s mission.
B. Campus-Based Agent Strategy. This strategy involves partnering with an established recruitment organization to deliver students to specified campuses. This strategy is now in play as per our partnership with Study Group.
C. Local, campus-based initiatives. Every campus has some number of local initiatives underway. While the UMS does not have a cost-benefit analysis of each campus’s efforts, these initiatives do not individually or jointly constitute a strategy.
Each approach could be pursued independently of the others, however, they are all compatible with one another; i.e., taking one approach does not exclude another, although they would have to be very closely coordinated.

**Centralized Strategy**

Last August, Chancellor Page tasked President Selma Botman to develop a multi-year plan for pursuing international student recruitment. President Botman’s report titled *A Five-Year Plan to Recruit International Students to the UMS Campuses Report* was submitted to the Chancellor and the report’s recommendations for a Centralized Strategy outlined in the report are as follows:

The System Office should consider appointing a central-office administrator, such as a Director for Global Education, who would act on behalf of the campuses and assume those responsibilities that campuses do not have the human or material resources to carry out. Campuses have very limited recruitment budgets, and there are no dedicated international recruitment officers. As a result, most activity to date has fallen into the category of what the field calls “armchair recruiting.” The Director should have a support staffer who would help manage the office, the agents working with the University, and who would be responsive to the campuses. The Director would also work closely with the University of Maine General Counsel and the Chief Financial Officer.

Global education should not be seen only as a commodity to be bought and sold. More essentially, it should be seen as part of the state’s export strategy. While the State of Maine has universities, the State does not have an educational export plan. While an export strategy is usually thought of in business terms of goods and services, there is every reason to extend this classification to higher education whereby the State’s university exports instructional services to non-nationals. This is consistent with the idea of globalizing the campuses and adopting a model of education that is without borders. Just as goods are produced locally and sold globally, education is delivered locally to students from around the globe. Given the substantial and documented interest in American learning, education should be seen as part of the global service economy. With commitment and perseverance, Maine can develop into an education-based economy. This would bring increased prominence to the State and much needed resources to the University.

This would require rethinking the University’s value proposition to include globalization as a core advantage. It would also hinge on adopting a comprehensive, centralized approach to global recruitment that includes recruitment through agents registered and vetted through the American International Recruitment Council, along with centralized marketing, financial, and legal services.

In the report, President Botman estimated the annual costs of $300,000 for the UMS to establish a System-level office for global recruitment.

**Campus-Based Agent Strategy**

Chancellor Page explained that the UMaine and the University of Southern Maine have established International Study Centers and have contracted with Study Group to provide the partnership to recruit international students.

Ms. Janet Waldron, Senior Vice President for Administration & Finance at UMaine, stated that the contract negotiations with Study Group are underway but the negotiations have been a lengthy
process which has resulted in delaying the overall timeline. However, some international students will be on the UMaine campus this fall. The international students will enroll in the UMaine and USM via two different tracks. One track is a direct recruit into the academic programs and the second track is the recruitment into the International Study Center to provide English language support. Ms. Waldron explained that the following UMS staff members have been appointed to work with Study Group: Karen Boucias, Director of International Admissions, will be the Senior Liaison Officer and Lu Zeph, Associate Provost and Dean of Lifelong Learning, will be the Academic Liaison Officer from UMaine and Dahlia Lynn, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education, will be the Senior Liaison Office from USM.

Local, campus-based initiatives
Chancellor Page explained that local, campus based efforts will continue at the pace directed by the Presidents. He will work with the campuses to develop the return on investment for these efforts to determine if the local efforts will continue.

Chancellor Page stated that the UMS has a high level pilot project underway with the International Study Centers at UMaine and USM and he is now seeking input from the Academic and Student Affairs Committee, the Presidents, and the CAO’s how the UMS should proceed with a Centralized International Recruitment Strategy. The options are:
1. Move forward based on the recommendations presented in the President Botman report,
2. Delay the Centralized Strategy until a later date, or

Chancellor Page explained that if the UMS decides to move forward this fall with a Centralized Strategy then the UMS will need to become fully committed to the Global Recruitment Strategy. If the agreement is to delay the development on a Centralized Strategy for a year then the UMS will learn from the recruitment efforts of Study Group but the UMS will be another year behind in the competitive market place.

Feedback on the Centralized Global Recruitment Strategy
• Trustee Johnson stated that he is in favor of moving forward with the Centralized Strategy as rapidly as possible.

• Professor Kim-Anne Perkins stated she fully supports moving forward with the Centralized Strategy and offered the following points:
  o The UMS needs to develop a niche to set ourselves apart from the other institutions that also have a global recruitment strategy.
  o UMS currently has a growing number of international students enrolled and how will these students’ needs be addressed and will they be able to benefit from the services offered by Study Group?
  o Suggested that the campuses offer a “Summer Institute” for adult learners.
  o Bringing in a cohort of 3 or 4 international students together has been more effective and resulted in quicker integration than individual recruiting.
  o She commented that not all international students require an intensive ESL program; therefore, it should be an optional component of the recruitment strategy.
  o Some of the parents of the Chinese students who are currently enrolled at UMPI have questioned why their students are not getting the same discounted tuition rate as the Canadian students.
• Trustee Newsom agreed with moving forward with the strategy and voiced a concern about ensuring the international students have the support services and tools necessary to move to Maine and be successful students.

• Trustee Medd stated she was in favor of moving forward and commented that the private higher education institutions in Maine already have many international students.

• Trustee Collins stated he feels the UMS should move forward with an aggressive plan and asked if the Executive Director’s Office would be filled with current staff members. Chancellor Page clarified the creation of the System-level Global Education Office would be an addition of one or two FTE positions.

• Mr. Shawn Staples, Student Representative from UMA feels this is a great opportunity for the UMS and agrees with moving forward with the recruitment strategy.

• Ms. Irene Levesque-Rowe, Student Representative from UMFK, stated she was in favor of proceeding with the strategy.

• Based on his experience overseas, President Wilson Hess stressed the importance of using the agent approach in the Asian market because that is just the way student recruitment is handled in that country. He also commented that there will be infrastructure costs and a more robust ESL program would be required and these are not included in the financial cost estimates from the Botman Report. He feels that the UMS will need to have a full commitment of time, energy and resources in order for the Global Recruitment Strategy to be successful; it cannot be a halfhearted approach. He is very supportive of diversifying our campuses.

Discussion of Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Office and Priorities. Trustee Johnson stated that as of September 1, 2013 Dr. Susan Hunter will be the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (VCAA). Dr. Hunter has been coordinating the Chief Academic Officers over the past year. Chancellor Page stated that if anyone has comments on the VCAA job description those can be emailed to him. There will be two operational charters developed for the Office of the VCAA. The first will be to articulate the standard operating procedures to include the Vice Chancellor’s role and the freedom of authority. The second series of charters will be focused on specific academic issues and priorities.

Dr. Hunter stated she is excited about the opportunity to serve the UMS as the VCAA and asked for thoughts and comments from the Committee. Professor Perkins commented that it is critical for the UMS to invest in a faculty workforce management and replacement plan. The UMS has an aging faculty and many will qualify for retirement within the next five to seven years which will impact entire programs. Trustee Medd commented that she would like to ensure Dr. Hunter has the ability to have creative flexibly to decide on the changing priorities. Dr. Hunter commented that she feels she needs to be in the job for a period of time before all of the priorities are totally defined and established. She is currently scheduling campus visits and encouraged all of the Chief Academic Officers to also visit the other campuses to gain a greater understanding of the academic needs and landscape for each campus.
On the topic of succession planning, the Chancellor commented that he will be working with the Board of Trustees to develop a retention analysis and emergency succession plan for the Office of the Chancellor.

Adjournment

Ellen Doughty for
J. Kelley Wiltbank, Clerk