

Report to the
Faculty, Administration, Trustees, Students

of the

UNIVERSITY OF MAINE AT AUGUSTA

by

An evaluation team representing the
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
of the
New England Association of Schools and Colleges

Prepared after review of the institution's
self-study report and a visit to the
campus, April 15-18, 2007

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This report represents the views of the evaluation team as interpreted by the Team Chairperson. The report goes directly to the University before being considered by the Commission. It is a confidential document prepared as an educational service for the benefit of the institution. All comments in the report are made in good faith, in an effort to assist the University of Maine at Augusta. This report is based solely on an educational evaluation of the institution and of the manner in which it appears to be carrying out its educational objectives.

INTRODUCTION

Representing the NEASC Commission on Institutions of Higher Education, a team of eight colleagues from New England and the Middle States accompanied by an observer from the World Bank visited the University of Maine at Augusta (UMA) during the period of April 15-18, 2007.

Prior to the scheduled campus visit, the University prepared and submitted a comprehensive self-study document, addressing each of the CIHE accreditation standards. The self-study process involved all segments of the University community and—by all accounts—was marked by openness and widespread participation over an extended period. During the team visit, interviews were held with the executive administrators of the University; other administrative personnel; deans and other academic and non-academic unit heads; significant numbers of faculty, professional staff, and students; personnel from the University of Maine System administration; community representatives; and several members of the Board of Visitors. The team found everyone to be gracious, forthcoming, thoughtful, and fully engaged in the self-evaluation process and resulting accreditation visit. The full engagement demonstrated by every participant in the interview process was especially helpful to the team in bringing the University's accomplishments and challenges into clearer focus. For this, the team is very appreciative.

Through the campus visit (including a one-day visit to the branch campus at Bangor), review of documentary evidence, and confirming interviews, the team concluded that the UMA Self-Study represented an accurate description of the institution as it existed at the time of the visit.

Accreditation visits have the potential to be beneficial on at least two levels. On one hand, visiting teams play the role of surveyors or judges. In this light, the team assessed UMA against the eleven accreditation standards of the NEASC Commission on Institutions of Higher Education. On the basis of those standards, the team deliberated and made careful judgments about institutional effectiveness. On the other hand, team members also participate in the campus visit as supportive colleagues, eager to help an institution improve and develop its potential. In the following report, the team makes many suggestions and describes concerns in order to help UMA as it addresses the challenge of continuous improvement. The team has made these observations in its effort to assist the University, and hopes that they will be taken in that spirit. They are not intended as panaceas or detailed prescriptions for action. The team expects that the institution will exercise its own judgment, and does note that policies of the NEASC/CIHE permit extensive opportunities to respond to this report.

After a rain-soaked but incredibly hospitable several-day visit to the University, the team departed with an appreciation for the UMA mission and with a high-level of admiration for the dedicated, hard-working members of the university community who work collegially to realize that mission.

The narrative that follows comprises a discussion of how and to what extent the University complies with each of the Commission's eleven Standards for Accreditation. These are

followed by the conclusions of the visiting team regarding institution-wide strengths, concerns, and collegial suggestions.

STANDARD ONE – MISSION AND PURPOSES

The University has a well-articulated Mission and accompanying Statement of Purposes, and has a demonstrated history of periodic review of said mission. The most recent review of these guiding statements began in 2003; however, work on that project was stopped some five months later when the University of Maine System took action to incorporate the UMA campus as a component unit of the University of Southern Maine. The decision to merge these two institutions was reversed in 2006 whereupon the UMA Mission and Purposes Committee resumed work to develop a revised mission statement that reflected the institution's expanded authority as a baccalaureate-oriented university. Interviews with administrators, faculty/staff, and members of the Board of Visitors confirmed wide participation in the deliberations that led to the revision of the Mission and the delineation of institutional purposes. The Board of Trustees of the University of Maine System approved the new Mission in July 2006, and the new Mission and revised Statement of Purpose was then first published in the 2006-07 University Catalog.

The University's mission—both in its formal form and, even more widely, in informal language—is widely known, understood, and supported among University personnel, students, and the wider community population. Members of the visiting team repeatedly found that the Mission both inspires and challenges faculty and staff. The commitment of local community leaders to the University's mission as a baccalaureate institution is impressive and appears to be a source of pride and loyalty.

Strengths

- The University's Mission is clear and quite appropriate for its character, tradition, and history of service to the region in which it is located.
- The Mission is widely understood and supported by personnel both on- and off-campus.

STANDARD TWO – PLANNING AND EVALUATION

UMA has clearly identified its mission as the regional baccalaureate-granting institution for Central Maine and developed a strategic plan consistent with this mission. UMA's recent planning process continued a process begun in 2001. The 2001 planning resulted in a Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP) which was intended to be the basis for a college strategic plan to cover 2004-2009. However, progress in planning came to a halt when the Board of Trustees of the University of Maine System (UMS) issued a statewide plan calling for the merger of UMA with the University of Southern Maine. In 2005, in response to vigorous objections to the Board's strategic plan, the Governor created a Task Force on Higher Education in the Kennebec Valley. Its recommendation, issued in 2005, led to a reversal of the merger.

Although the CDP was created with widespread input and lengthy discussion, conditions required that the current UMA Strategic Plan be quickly developed and finalized. A

document draft was prepared by lead administrators and was then presented for faculty review, comment, revision at a series of faculty retreats before being transmitted for consideration at the system-level.

The mission in the current plan differs from UMA's founding mission. UMA began as an evening, continuing education division of the University of Maine at Orono, began to offer associate degrees almost immediately, was approved by the BOT with a community college mission in 1974, and offered its first baccalaureate degree the following year. In 1986 UMA was designated "the Community College of Maine," although it granted both associate's and baccalaureate degrees. In fact, it has evolved as a hybrid institution. With the recent transformation of Maine's technical colleges to comprehensive community colleges, the shift to greater focus on baccalaureate degrees was desirable and that, consistent with the 2007-2011 plan, is being accomplished. (Prior to 1998 UMA offered 3 baccalaureate degrees; presently it offers 19. Between 1996 and 2005 bachelors' candidates moved from 37% to 51% of UMA's productivity.) One aspect of the mission has not changed: It is clear from speaking with campus representatives, including members of the Board of Visitors, alumni, faculty and staff, and from a review of planning documents, that a commitment to open access and to serving students with multiple challenges continues.

UMA has also been a state- and nation-wide leader in distance education. Serving the distant, place bound student has been fundamental in the way that UMA fulfilled its mission. A national leader in interactive TV instruction, UMA continues to emphasize distance education in its plan. UMA sees distance education as consistent with its access mission, its service to nontraditional students.

Other planning processes complement the strategic plan. For instance, in a parallel process, the Technology Advisory Committee developed a technology plan for UMA. Recognizing that new degree programs will be essential, it recommends that IT resources be funded consistently with program cost data and potential for program growth. Thus new data collection needs emerged from the technology planning process. Other action steps in the Technology Plan confirm an appropriate alignment with strategic plan priorities. The development of infrastructure to support more asynchronous Web courses is recommended as a response to increasing demand for web-based courses resulting in, for example, the loss of 600 registrations in spring 2006 to web-based courses taken by UMA students from other colleges. Similarly, the Technology Plan argues for technology tools adequate to support faculty research, a goal consistent with the new emphasis on becoming a baccalaureate institute. The Technology Plan itself and its prominence in the process reflect the strategic plan's vision statement with UMA's determination to remain a leader in distance education in Maine and to continue to serve place-bound students.

Institutional decision-making was not clearly related to planning priorities in the past. Administrators and faculty agree that in the past the budget process was not transparent. However, the process for connecting planning with spending has just been revised so that in future years all increased funding requests should be heard by a larger and more inclusive group and the relationship of decision to priorities should be obvious.

The UMA Strategic Plan notes includes the identification of several external factors which may impact the success of the plan; it also identifies those longer term goals that were not

incorporated because it was believed that there would be insufficient financial resources to support them.

The UMA Strategic Plan calls for assessment to be embedded throughout the institution. This goal aligns with UMS Strategic Direction 6, establishing performance measures to ensure public accountability. Much progress has been made at UMA. All departments will be expected to undertake self-assessment. All are expected to articulate goals, measures of those goals, benchmarks which can be established and then surpassed. Every academic program and support unit (such as Learning Support Services) has written program “charters” which consist of mission statement plus objectives (learning or administrative objectives). “Maps” are then developed which identify strategies to meet these objectives and experiences (such as courses) in which these objectives can be achieved. Assessment plans identify means of measuring the achievement of these objectives, both qualitatively and quantitatively.

This process is most clearly established for academic programs. One senior faculty on full-time release is assisting program coordinators in writing learning objectives. The college catalogue now lists learning outcomes or course objectives for all programs. The review of academic programs has been redesigned to focus on achievement and assessment of learning objectives. To ensure continuing attention to assessment program coordinators have begun to complete reports annually. These identify assessment strategies chosen, implemented, the results, and changes resulting (if any). External perspectives are included in the assessment strategies that may be selected: employer surveys, results of licensure exams, juried portfolios or performances (for the visual and performing arts) among them. Again, this senior faculty is helping program coordinators work with the new system.

Program reports outside of academic programs include, for example, Disability Services, situated within Learning Support Services. The assessment strategy chosen was a survey of 168 students with disabilities who received accommodations during Fall 2006. The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) will be administered for the first time this year, another assessment tool, with national validation, that faculty and staff expect to highlight opportunities to improve student engagement.

Strengths

- The academic program review process has been redesigned to focus on learning outcomes and their assessment. Support is provided to familiarize faculty with this new process. A change in the budgeting process is expected (or hoped) to connect program review recommendations, when supported by evidence, with additional resources.
- Non-academic units will be reviewed in a parallel process.
- The UMA Strategic Plan is clear, comprehensive, detailed. It establishes a role for UMA that should assure its continued importance for Central Maine. This mission is particularly important given the changed organization of higher education in Maine.

Concern

- The roles of the faculty, of College Deans, of program coordinators, of the Faculty Senate in planning, policy, resource allocation, program decisions are evolving. Because these processes are changing, they are less clearly delineated than necessary.

STANDARD THREE – ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE

As a member institution of the University of Maine System (UMS), the University of Maine at Augusta (UMA) is organized and governed by the UMS Board of Trustees. As such, UMA has exhibited evidence to demonstrate it is in compliance with the System's policies and procedures, is an active member institution contributing more than 12% of the system enrollment while focusing on the improvement of educational quality and student access to higher education in Maine. The Board has acknowledged this contribution and the revised mission of the institution by supporting the reconfiguration of UMA and the University College at Bangor as a single baccalaureate institution within the University of Maine system.

The organization and governance of UMA is led by the university administration working with the various constituent groups on campus including the faculty, professional employees, classified employees and students. The faculty governance structures, policies and procedures are being revised to address the new mission of the institution, the two campus configuration, the newly developed strategic plan (2007-2011) and the need for UMA to focus on developing into a four year, baccalaureate granting institution. As a result, many of the policies and procedures, as well as structures related to governance, are being considered for revision. For example, the Faculty Handbook is being updated, the Faculty Senate Constitution revised, a new purpose for the President's Advisory Council implemented, and new committees and their by-laws are being created (i.e., core general education, academic planning and policy, assessment processes).

In addition, the Faculty Senate is currently reviewing its own standing and functional position within the institution. This work will reflect the results of a recently conducted faculty evaluation of the Senate as well as the report of an ad hoc committee on Principles of University Governance. The issues of governance are at the most basic level including the nature of an academic unit vs. college and an appropriate understanding of shared governance for the campus.

Other constituent groups in the institution (i.e., Professional Employees, Classified Staff and Student Government) have Handbooks and/or constitutions and by-laws that sufficiently provide guidelines for governance within the constituent group and provides the organization with a collaborative means to engage individuals in the life of the university. All groups, including the students, are represented on university committees as appropriate and are offered the opportunity to participate in discussions on the university's direction. In fact, the self-study indicates that "...the engagement of the UMA community and its constituents in [the fight for UMA's autonomy] ultimately strengthened the institution..." (page20). The energy on the campus exhibited during the NEASC visit certainly supported this assessment.

A significant outcome to the strategic plan process is the intended transformation of the President's Advisory Council from a vehicle for campus communication to a reliable and consistent advisory group to the administration for the purpose of implementation of the strategic plan. In addition, external community groups (such as the Board of Visitors) provide a significant opportunities for communication and also appear to generate a high level of support for UMA in Augusta.

Strengths

- Resolution of the question of the system-wide campus organization, and the support of the University of Maine System Board of Trustees and the Chancellor for an autonomous University of Maine at Augusta.
- The Board of Visitors as a local advocacy group and opinion leader for UMA in the Augusta community.
- The development of a President's Advisory Group to recommend and oversee implementation of the institution's new strategic plan with the potential to influence strategic initiatives on campus.
- The involvement of student leaders and other constituency groups besides faculty on the majority of institutional committees.
- The confidence of the campus leaders in the academic impact of the campus and their willingness to embrace the focus of access in order to educate non-traditional students on-site and off-campus.
- The UMS support of a \$900,000 special funding request for UMA to the Maine Legislature to help address the institution's new mission.

Concerns

- The need to continue to develop a multi-campus governance model that manages resources/information/involvement between the two campuses effectively.
- The need to define/identify the role and responsibilities of faculty governing bodies within UMA through clearly articulated policies and procedures that allow for transparent organization and structure of the institution as well as decision-making.
- The need to develop an effective fundraising arm of the university which can support an increase in external funding.

Suggestions

- Complete the Faculty Handbook and other related policies and procedures guidelines in order to provide an infrastructure of governance for faculty.
- Prioritize elements/initiatives of the strategic plan.
- Clearly identify the roles and responsibilities and relationship of all constituent groups and administrative levels of authority through the development of policies and procedures that can be consistently utilized at all levels of the campus community.
- Clarify the purpose and organization of the Faculty Senate and its committees.

STANDARD FOUR – THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

While UMA is in the midst of a transition into a new mission and purpose, the institution has gotten a solid start on putting mechanisms in place to fulfill the mission of a regional baccalaureate institution. There is a history of a collaborative environment for program planning, implementation and oversight, and this collaborative culture will serve UMA well through the mission transition, especially as it undertakes the hard work of implementing the newly envisioned assessment process which, while designed as a tool for improvement across the institution, has focused largely on assessment of academic quality.

There is a clear system for program development in place, and this system is used effectively. Over the last decade, the university has proposed and approved 16 baccalaureate programs.

Since 1998, the university has gone from three to 19 bachelor's programs, and shifted from 32 to 51% bachelor's candidates among the student population. Throughout this shift, the reliance on their program development process made for smooth decision making and planning for implementation. Particularly important to such a process is the initial needs assessment upon which it is based, and the academic leadership at UMA is careful to match plans for new programs to clearly identified needs in the community. The report of The Governor's Task Force on Higher Education in the Kennebec Valley—*Economic Growth and Development in the Kennebec Valley and Implications for Higher Education*—has been used as an initial guide for program planning recently, but the deans of the colleges point to many other examples of working with members of the business, social sector, and higher education communities to clarify needs for UMA to serve. Another example of program development based on community needs assessment is a new bachelor's degree in Human Services stemming from a Governor's Task Force which a UMA College Dean chaired.

Equally important to program planning is how the institution plans for and implements program eliminations, especially how it tends to the needs of students in eliminated programs. In 2005 UMA made a decision to phase out its offerings at the Lewiston-Auburn Campus (LA). Similar associate degrees were available to these students by Central Maine Community College (CMCC) and the University of Southern Maine (USM) and UMA enrollments at LA were declining. Also, USM had sole authority for baccalaureate degrees at LA. UMA developed a "teach-out" plan for students at LA enrolled in UMA programs. Students qualified for participation in the plan were enrolled in a UMA degree program and met other criteria. For these students UMA committed to deliver on-site courses required for the degree program through May 2009, with distance delivery of such courses through 2016. UMA published on its website answers to questions about the conversion: financial aid, health insurance, course waivers, UMA-LA Student Government, etc. Although the decision to end UMA's presence at LA undoubtedly concerned affected students, care is evident in the teach-out plan and it was communicated through advisors, student forums, and updates to the website. The foundation that's been laid for understanding how and what students are learning is impressive. Almost all of the college's programs have completed foundation documents in support of this effort, including learning goals and objectives, curriculum maps, and assessment techniques. Additionally, some of the academic programs have begun to write annual reports outlining assessment activity, curriculum changes, and resource needs (personnel, physical plant, technology). All of these documents are published in the university's intranet and available for review by all members of the university community. While there is still a long way to go with regard to realizing the potential of the new assessment process, and faculty and academic leaders will have to remain diligent in following through, there is a solid base upon which to build academic program quality evaluation and improvement.

UMA has an intensive writing requirement met by English courses; more writing outside of English courses is seen as a need. A Writing Lab was added to the Augusta Campus based on a successful Writing Lab in Bangor.

Undergraduate Degree Programs:

The institution offers 19 bachelors degree programs, 15 associates programs, and 15 certificate programs. The programs are organized within three colleges—The College of Arts

and Humanities, The College of Mathematics and Professional Studies, and the College of Natural and Social Sciences. The distribution of programs across degree/certificate categories is clearly representative of an institution in transition from one at which associates degrees are emphasized to one at which the baccalaureate is the focus. The array of programs offered, however—from those that are relevant to local workforce development needs, to pre-professional programs, to solid arts and humanities programs—is impressive and positions the institution well for serving a range of needs and interests as a regional baccalaureate institution.

The institution has offered bachelors degree programs since 1975 (ten years after UMA was founded as an extension of the University of Maine at Orono), but has always offered more associates degree programs than bachelors. Now that UMA has shed the “Community College of Maine” brand and mission given it by the state from 1986 until 2003, and gained support of the legislature and University of Maine System for its baccalaureate-focused mission, the goal is to shift the balance and offer mostly bachelors, while continuing to make available “select” associates programs. This shift is deliberate and thoughtful. UMA has a tradition of providing a central liberal arts core that facilitates transfer; this also ensures consistency in quality and programming that is helpful as faculty and College Deans selectively and carefully transform associate to baccalaureate degrees, adds baccalaureate degrees, eliminates associate’s degrees. The institution has throughout its history worked to make sure that its programs are consistent with and serve to fulfill its mission and purposes.

Academic oversight is provided through a system of program coordinators and College Deans, reporting to the Provost, with standing faculty committees that assure appropriate interdisciplinary faculty oversight of academic policies, curriculum, general education, assessment and program review. Interactions between academic deans, faculty, and the provost are generally marked by collegiality and a sense of working together toward the same goals. This collegial atmosphere helps to insure academic oversight with a minimum of hurdles, and with the best interests of the students in mind. Many of the programs offered by UMA have significant gateway and capstone experiences built in—sophomore auditions and senior concerts for music majors, a senior show for art students, internships for business students, clinical experiences for nurses and human services students, to name just a few—and incorporation of such experiences would not be possible without the kind of academic oversight culture in place at UMA.

As evidence by such synthesis of learning opportunities, the programs clearly articulate and implement goals related to creative abilities, values and career preparation practices. These goals are presented in internal documents such as those being used as the basis for program assessment, and also in the catalog and on the university’s web site.

It is clear from this careful articulation of goals that a great deal of care goes into assuring that the colleges are setting out to deliver high quality academic programs. Work is only beginning on assuring the quality through ongoing assessment as part of academic oversight, but as mentioned earlier an impressive foundation has been laid for this work. Significant effort has been expended by faculty, and especially by program coordinators, in bringing even more depth and clarity to the articulation of goals for learning outcomes. Their involvement in workshops on assessment, participation in a faculty retreat, and enthusiastic

adoption of another college's assessment model are more examples of a faculty committed to quality academic offerings.

As the academic program expands in baccalaureate offerings and contracts in associates programs, continued careful attention to quality will be important. The faculty, program coordinators and academic deans are to be commended on their efforts to remain flexible in accommodating students with associates degrees, helping them make the transition into bachelors programs by providing the option to transfer courses into elective slots while maintaining the integrity of upper division requirements. It's clear that as the university continues in its 2-year to 4-year focus transition, advising will become an increasingly important aspect of the student experience, and UMA should continue to build on the significant achievements of the Advising Center in establishing easy-to-use program check sheets and facilitating degree audits.

Deployment of information technology resources is strong and technological tools for teaching are widely available. Support for faculty using these resources is also generally very accessible. Indeed, such support will be critical as the university works to implement the plans developed by the Core-General Education committee to incorporate computer and information literacy into university curricula. It's clear from many of the program goals that significant thought has already been given to development of information technology skills—from basic skills to discipline-specific applications.

General Education:

UMA has a rich mix of certificate and degree offerings. All associate's and degree programs have a common general education core, that is deepened at the baccalaureate level, and a college wide set of core competencies expected of all graduates of degree programs. UMA established a general education core that is consistent for all associate degree programs. Twenty credits are required at that level; 40 at the baccalaureate level; the core includes the arts and humanities, the sciences including mathematics, the social sciences. A faculty-led committee has also articulated core competencies which all degree students are expected to achieve UMA's definition of an educated person. It is anticipated that some programs will apply to this committee to meet the requirement through required program courses. For example, CIS and Accounting students might achieve information literacy through different courses. At this point, faculty expect that the general education core will be followed and specialized courses will serve to deepen core competencies. UMA responded to the UMS Diversity Initiative with a multi-step action plan that includes addressing diversity issues within the curriculum.

The Major or Concentration:

All degree programs have appropriate requirements and suggested electives so that students can achieve in-depth knowledge of a particular field. The Interdisciplinary Liberal Arts BA provides for an individualized degree program in the Humanities. Other baccalaureate degrees enable a student in a career field (such as Fire Science or Justice Studies) to gain management learning necessary for career advancement in the field. Professional programs have internships for practice of knowledge gained in the classroom; some other programs have capstone experiences.

Integrity in the Award of Academic Credit:

Considering the university's largely non-traditional student population, the opportunities for students to earn credit for experiential learning are an important aspect of the overall academic offerings. The colleges and programs are careful to make sure to assess such experiential learning in a way that insures demonstration of student learning equal to corollary institutionally provided learning experiences. The process for developing and submitting portfolios of prior learning experience is clearly defined and the institution works to insure that this option is promoted to those students who can benefit from it. Options for getting credit through CLEP, DANTES and other examinations are also promoted. Overall, UMA offers an impressive array of alternative credentialing options and works to make sure that these are used as tools for promoting access.

UMA has long been the state of Maine's distance learning leader, having pioneered the use of interactive television and compressed video delivery systems and continuing to offer a wide array of courses and programs in distance formats. Courses and programs delivered in these formats are integral to the institution and its overall academic program. Steps have always been taken to insure that courses offered via these distribution mechanisms have been of the same high quality as courses offered on site, and these efforts will be reinforced by recent work in documenting program and course goals and "course charters" (standard course descriptions and learning outcomes).

UMA also offers on-site courses in classrooms at the UMS University College's centers throughout the state, and these courses are considered part of the distance learning offerings. Most recently, distance delivery of courses has been enhanced by the addition of online courses, and UMA has adopted this new distance learning format enthusiastically, offering one program—a B.S. in Library and Information Services—entirely online (with no on-site version of the program available).

It was twelve years ago that the University of Maine System's University College took over control of the distance learning centers and the interactive television network to expand availability of these delivery modes to other UMS institutions. UMS/UC also manages online course delivery as the host of the Blackboard learning management system for all UMS institutions. These operations had been managed by UMA until being transferred to the state system. While UMA reports a collaborative relationship with UMS/UC (the offices for which are still housed at the UMA campus), a concern is that UMA no longer maintains sole responsibility for assuring adequate resources to support quality in its distance learning programs. UMA depends on resources outside its direct control yet no provision has been made for a clear, fixed understanding of the relationship or assurance of the reasonable continued availability of distance learning resources. It's not clear that UMA has control over the quality of the experience for students in distance learning, and some consideration ought to be given to developing an agreement with UMS/UC, including clear mechanisms for dealing with technical and other infrastructure or support problems.

Distance learning is an area where the institution has generally demonstrated a clear knowledge of its capacity is has delivered programs and services in line with that capacity. Caution should be exercised as UMA moves into delivery of online education, and careful

consideration will need to be given to creating mechanisms for quality assurance in this new delivery mode. UMA already offers an exemplary program online—the B.S. in Library and Information Services. However, for a program with an enrollment of over 350 students nationwide and internationally, there is only one full-time faculty member who not only teaches and acts as program coordinator but also does the lion’s share of advising for the program. UMA should be careful not to set a precedent in overtaxing resources. If careful planning is given to resources needed for delivery of high quality online programs, UMA will be able to maintain its position as the state’s distance learning leader as the field moves rapidly to web-based offerings.

Assessment of Student Learning and Institutional Effectiveness:

UMA’s most significant undertaking has been the revision of the academic program review process to focus on assessment. Each program has now articulated program-level learning outcomes and published them. Programs have begun the process of “mapping” where in the course requirements or core the student will achieve these outcomes and what strategies will be used to assess this learning. Strategies are varied: employer surveys, alumni surveys, transfer records, portfolios, juried performances, capstone experiences. Annual program reports will require faculty to keep abreast of factors that affect learning, and impact institutional planning. Reports include brief statements about curriculum changes, enrollment and graduation, assessment strategies used and results, impact on planning. Full program reviews will occur every seven years but will be based on this continuing documentation. The Provost developed the process with input; the Faculty Senate approved the new process in concept. The Faculty Senate committee on Program Review and Assessment is considering dividing into two standing committees: one may review the program review reports, review action items that require funding, and recommend funding priorities to the Senate and administration. A second may focus just on the assessment process. This is a change under consideration. If successful, the program review process will align program review, college-wide academic planning and resource allocation. Using this model, attention is paid at the course, program and institutional level. There will be evidence to support institutional improvement.

An external perspective of what should be learned and how well students are being prepared is achieved in various ways. Professional programs have external advisory boards. Membership lists are readily available to students and may include contact information. Sometimes these membership lists serve as an inducement to enroll: for example, the program sheet describing both A.S. and B.S. degrees in Public Administration lists board members and their prestigious positions; some are graduates of the program (e.g., Speaker of the Maine House, a US Congressman, Augusta City Manager). Other strategies for gaining an external perspective include employer surveys, alumni surveys.

Strengths

- The University offers a wide array of programs—career oriented, pre-professional, arts and humanities.
- There is an impressive level of information technology support sustaining the teaching function of the University.
- The University’s commitment to distance learning is robust and impressive; the LIS program is outstanding in its administration and in the support provided for students.

- UMA's new program review process has potential to refocus attention on learning outcomes at the course and program level and to be an evidence-based factor in planning.
- UMA has identified learning outcomes for all of its programs.

Concerns

- The collection of data for program review and program planning has been inconsistent and incomplete. Program coordinators and faculty will need assistance in collecting and interpreting data, especially over the long term. Benchmarks are needed before trends can be discerned and conclusions drawn.
- The range of strategies for assessment is broad; faculty will need assistance to determine which strategies are both feasible and useful, and in learning how to use them.

Suggestions

- The University should consider moving ahead rather quickly to maintain its leadership position in distance learning by increasing its online education offerings.
- The University should consider carefully monitoring the next steps in implementing the ambitious assessment model—to make sure that connections are made to overall academic planning and budget/resource planning.

STANDARD FIVE – THE FACULTY

Review of the self-study and documentary evidence, and interviews with personnel in the University community demonstrate that the faculty is a competent group of concerned professionals that are a significant source of strength for the institution. At the time of the team visit, 61 percent (58) of the full-time faculty were tenured while another 16 percent (15) were in a tenure-track status; 23 percent of the full-time faculty (22) were serving in fixed length, non-tenure positions. Of the full time faculty 62 percent (45) held recognized terminal degrees; this represents an increase of 21% since the last self study (1995). Four years ago the University formally adopted the terminal degree as the standard for all new faculty hires. UMA has also recognized the need for more diversity among its full-time faculty; diversity hiring strategies have resulted in a substantial increase in the percentage of female faculty (from 39 percent in 1995 to 54 percent in 2005). Because the UMA offers a number of professional degree programs there is a need to hire outside professionals as adjunct faculty and the greater Augusta area has a significant pool upon which to draw. This group of adjunct faculty appears to be well qualified with 21 percent holding doctoral or other terminal degrees while 66 percent are licensed or certified in their fields.

Full-time faculty teach a base load of 12 credit hours or an equivalent load each semester. Faculty are expected to advise students, participate in curriculum development and committee work, produce scholarship, and provide additional service to the institution.

Faulty compensation ranks just below the average by rank from that given by the Chronicle of Higher Education as well as their peer institutions. The salary range is fixed, with some flexibility by agreement between UMA and the University of Maine System collective bargaining agreement.

Evaluation of junior faculty occurs at the end of each year by student evaluation, peer evaluation, their respective college dean, and provost. Evaluation of tenured faculty occur by a post tenure review in a four-year cycle. For satisfactory performance an additional 3.5 percent base pay salary adjustment is provided as part of the UMS contractual agreement. Up to an additional 3.5 percent may be recommended by the provost to address matters of performance, equity, or salary compression. Part time faculty are evaluated at the end of each course by student evaluation using the same form as that for full time faculty

There has been some concern expressed in the self-study about the part time full time ratio of faculty but it appears that the part time faculty represents a quality group of professionals it well may be the nature of some of professional programs that require such a higher ratio of part time faculty. The self study highlights the results of a survey from 75 part time faculty that show that about 41% were engaged in scholarly work while 31% either served on panels at professional conferences or presented papers. The visiting team did not identify utilization of part time faculty as excessive or problematic.

The faculty do enjoy the advantages of having available classroom which contain modern technology. These classrooms are user friendly and takes a minimum amount of class time from the allotted time available.

STANDARD SIX – STUDENTS

At both the University of Maine at Augusta (UMA) and the University College at Bangor (UCB), the staff works diligently to provide access to students who could not otherwise aspire to and/or find higher education affordable. They are committed to ensuring student success and, as a result of knowing and understanding the needs of their students, provide appropriate services and support for them. The culture of care exists on these campuses serves as a strong foundation for the students in gaining confidence and developing maturity which enables them to achieve the goals of earning associates or baccalaureate degrees.

Access is of prime importance to the faculty and staff of the University and the “responsible admissions policy” was enacted and is understood among the populations seeking matriculation into degree granting programs. This thoughtfully planned program includes requiring a series of placement tests either prior to or immediately following acceptance into the University which determines the need for remedial coursework. In this way, students who are not adequately prepared for university level work are provided with the entry level skills through formal classroom preparation, tutoring and mentoring. Programs like the TRIO funded Cornerstone Program or the Maine Centers for Women, Work and Community offer focused supportive service to eligible students. The Learning Support Center provides necessary ADA accommodation for students with documented disabilities. Counseling, Student Life and the Learning Support Center for tutoring, mentoring and note-taking are also helpful in guiding them through the institutions. Staff time is appropriately distributed among grant and institutional funds representing their percent of effort in working wit grant-eligible and the general student population.

The high level of engagement with students is apparent on both campuses. At UCB, it is clear that faculty interaction with students both in and outside the classroom is a key in the

effective retention of many of their “new” traditional students. While retention and graduation rates are not as strong as other four year institutions, students consistently reported, “we love this place” citing the caring and supportive faculty and staff as their primary reason.

The newly adopted institutional assessment plan calls for the development of student learning outcomes by each department in the Division of Student Development. This is a strong start at important work which will be regularly reviewed and updated through the annual report system.

The orientation program is offered through the Dean of Students Office on a regular basis at the start of each semester (fall, spring and summer) at both Augusta and Bangor. While the staff wish all incoming students would attend, data collected reveals that busy work schedules or obligations at home prevents some from gaining this comprehensive overview. Discussion is ensuing about other delivery methods for those who cannot come to the campus to participate.

The commitment of students to shared governance is impressive. There are three different Student Associations, all select members to attend the University-wide General Assembly. Students are elected to represent the Augusta and Bangor campuses as well as representatives from the distance learning group. The UCB Student Government spoke of sponsoring “Campus Communications” when there is a need for a campus-wide discussion to take place about emerging issues.

There are three varsity sports programs – men’s and women’s basketball and women’s soccer. The lack of an on-campus gymnasium is a factor in recruiting students to play for these teams in Augusta; Bangor students are eligible to play. Intramural programs are popular on the Bangor campus since there is a full-service gymnasium.

Student services are provided by a caring and educated group of professional, clerical and student support staff, many of whom have been at the campus in excess of two decades. Some face the responsibility of traveling between the two campuses and maintaining offices in both places which disrupts the continuity of service for students who do not visit the campus on a daily basis.

Strengths

- Staff fully understands the wide range and types of students who enroll at UMA and provide appropriate and well designed programs and services supporting them at their developmental levels.
- The recent reorganization of the Enrollment Management Division under a new Dean will further improve the coordination between and among important services for entering students.
- The staff approaches the upcoming full implementation of PeopleSoft for the student records system with optimism that it will enhance effectiveness, streamline procedures and assist in data collection.
- The administration of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) in the spring of 2007 for first year students and seniors will create valuable baseline data which is comparable to other institutions.

- The learning support center has moved to use of assistive technology to provide accommodation to students with certain types of documented disabilities.
- The initial stages of assessment and the development of student learning outcomes for programs in the Division of Student Development is a positive start.

Concerns

- The University has not yet developed a comprehensive enrollment management plan (although it does establish enrollment targets for each semester using the Noel-Levitz Funnel Model).
- The institution lacks longitudinal retention data. Existing data does not appear to be widely used for planning purposes.
- Without wide use of the university issued e-mail address, communication with students is time consuming, costly and not always effective since the mode is through mailings and phone calls.

Suggestions

- Robinson Hall, home of many student services including admissions, financial aid, student accounts and dean of students, is in dire need of renovation and updating. It is geographically removed from the main campus buildings. A safe and paved sidewalk should be created from the Student Technology Center to Robinson Hall.
- Plans should be developed to fully implement a student portal and gradually introduce the requirement that all students must regularly check their University email accounts.
- The University should consider development of a comprehensive enrollment management plan which involves an understanding of the impact of meeting, missing or exceeding admissions targets on all areas of the university.

STANDARD SEVEN – LIBRARY AND OTHER INFORMATION SOURCES

The UMA Libraries comprise the recently renovated Bennett D. Katz Library in Augusta and the Bangor Campus Library. The Katz Library facility has a spacious sculpture-filled interior with high ceilings and large windows; it houses a collection of more than 55,000 print books, almost 8,000 e-books, 350+ periodical/newspaper subscriptions, and 65 online database subscriptions. The physical facility devoted to the Bangor Campus Library is less adequate, however the University has plans for its improvement. The Bangor Campus Library houses 25,000+ print books, almost 8,000 e-books, 194 print journals, 65 online database subscriptions. Each library also maintains microfilm, DVD, video, CD, and record album collections appropriate to support the teaching mission of its respective campus.

The University libraries are administered by a single Dean of Libraries and Distance Learning. Thus, planning for acquisitions and services are coordinated and complimentary. The libraries have developed well articulated organizational and operational plans, and the University has demonstrated its attention to said plans in its overall planning processes. Program, resource and service evaluation is well developed for the library and information technology. The library uses a Library Program Assessment Model to propose outcomes and measures to evaluate each area of the library. The evaluations for technical services, reference and instruction, collection development, and audiovisual and web support are all extensive and should help inform future planning decisions. Computer Services takes a

different, though equally effective, approach to evaluation of information technology on campus. Purchasing decisions, products and procedures are evaluated through meetings with end-users, Computer Information Science (CIS) faculty, the Technology Advisory and Planning Committee, and staff on other UMS campuses.

The University has consistently increased total library revenue allocations each year since 2003. Combined allocations for library acquisitions at the two libraries have increased over 22 percent in the last four years. In addition, the University has committed funds to support the instructional technology aspect of the libraries' missions. Each campus facility has instructional computer labs appropriate to meet its needs, and plans exist to ensure regular improvements and upgrades to this equipment.

A professionally qualified library staff is employed on each campus. All professional librarians hold the master's degree in the field. Other personnel hold degrees that are appropriate to their assignment. Library personnel demonstrated a distinctive commitment toward cooperation and collaboration between the two campuses.

Library personnel are responsible for delivering general library instruction to students at both the Augusta and Bangor campuses. Documentary evidence of the extent of this activity was verified through interviews with faculty and students. While the elements of basic information literacy have been incorporated into all English 101 courses, the University has recognized that not all students complete this course during their first semester of enrollment, and it is making plans for expansion and alternative delivery of information literacy instruction.

Faculty and students agree that the level of holdings and services on each campus are adequate to meet current needs. However, there is some general recognition that as the University develops additional four-year degree programs, it will be necessary to attend to library expansion—in holdings, services, and personnel.

Strengths

- Construction of the Maine Holocaust and Human Rights Education Center (underway) will provide a new entrance to the Katz Library and the proximity of the Center to the library promises to enhance space as well as programming opportunities.
- UMA offers an impressive amount of high quality instructional technology for its students, including a sufficient number of technology classrooms.
- Faculty, staff and students are well-served by the wide range of training and support available for computers and library resources. The online training calendar seems particularly useful for providing up-to-date training information in an easy-to-read format. General and discipline-specific library instruction reaches a large number of students through course-related presentations. Faculty who are teaching an online course for the first time receive training in the use of Blackboard, a distance learning platform.
- Library and information resources and services are available to UMA students in all program locations. On-ground and distance education students have the additional benefit of resources and services provided by UMS Off-Campus Library Services (OCLS) librarians.

Concerns

- As the University transitions to become fully focused on its mission as a four-year institution, it is likely that additional staff will be needed to handle increased processing of materials, use of the collections, and more specialized collection development.

STANDARD EIGHT – PHYSICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The University of Maine at Augusta (UMA) occupies two campus locations, the Augusta Campus and the Bangor Campus, located approximately 75 miles apart. Created by the legislature in 1965 and situated in its present location in 1970, the facilities at the Augusta campus are relatively new. The Bangor Campus is a former air force base and was transferred to UMA from the University of Maine at Orono in 1995. UMA also delivers courses through distance education at multiple locations accessed statewide via the University of Maine System. These locations are not owned nor managed by UMA. As a commuter university, UMA does not include residential facilities. In recent years, the university has upgraded campus safety through the addition of security positions as well as selective installation of security cameras, emergency telephones, and computerized building access control via card readers. Safety improvements also have been implemented relative to pedestrian traffic and environmental health and safety. Additional improvements are planned.

UMA demonstrates strong use of planning and maintenance tools relative to building and grounds. Technology is used to efficiently monitor and execute preventative maintenance tasks and routine work orders. As buildings are renovated, controls and automated energy management systems are installed to improve operations. Deferred maintenance is tracked in detail by facility and incorporated into facilities planning. Five-year facilities requests are submitted bi-annually to the System Office to inform legislative requests. In the past, the desired capital projects have been compiled by UMA's Senior Staff. Going forward, the university has indicated its intention to engage the President's Advisory Council, consistent with the university's strategic plan. A master facilities plan was completed for the Augusta Campus in 1998 and for the Bangor Campus in 2000. The university's strategic plan calls for updating the existing master facilities plan and integrating project priorities for both campuses in FY09 and FY10.

Augusta Campus

The Augusta Campus includes 17 buildings with approximately 174,450 square feet on 159 acres. The total value of the Augusta Campus (land, buildings, and contents) is \$42.6 million. In addition, the university leases approximately 18,917 square feet in the Augusta Civic Center.

Recent new construction includes the completion of the 40,000 square foot Student Technology Center in 2005 and the 5,500 square foot Michael Klahr Center in 2007. Substantial facilities renovations, HVAC upgrades, and other infrastructure improvements have been implemented in campus buildings, notably in Jewett Hall and the Katz Library, as well as to campus grounds. Facilities developments since 1995 have increased the number of

classrooms and teaching spaces by approximately 50% and have added faculty and staff offices as well as parking and green spaces.

All general purpose classrooms, except those in the Civic Center, are technology-equipped. Four meeting rooms are equipped for video-conferencing. Six rooms with approximately 150 PC/MAC workstations in all are designated as student computer labs, teaching classrooms, or the tutoring lab. Equipment in these rooms is replaced every two to three years and rotated to faculty or staff. Seventy-five percent of the LAN cabling is CAT6, and the WAN is fiber. Permanent back-up power generation services the Katz Library, and portable back-up generators are available for other buildings.

Although specific classroom utilization data was not available, reportedly, adequate classrooms exist to meet teaching requirements. Notwithstanding the recent addition of offices, the university currently does not have capacity to accommodate individual offices for all full time faculty. Few of the university's part-time faculty have access to office space.

Other presently identified space needs include additional space with improved functionality for music instruction and practice rooms, as well as expanded space for art and architecture studios/labs. In the near term, the university intends to renovate space in the Civic Center for music and subsequently convert existing music space for use by art. Longer term, an addition to the Katz Library is planned to accommodate music.

Bangor Campus

The Bangor Campus includes 17 buildings with approximately 150,579 square feet on 43 acres. Eleven buildings are in use. The total value of the Bangor Campus (land, buildings, and contents) is \$34.4 million.

The university has invested in facilities at the Bangor Campus since that campus became part of UMA in 1995. However, as a result of its history, the Bangor facilities have significant deferred maintenance and many buildings are not particularly well-suited for instructional purposes. UMA has completed infrastructure improvements in several buildings, such as asbestos abatement, accessibility compliance, roof and window repair and replacement, boiler replacement, utility service improvements, space renovations, and more. Selected buildings have been demolished. Camden Hall was renovated. Several technology-equipped classrooms were installed.

Approximately 30 percent of general purpose classrooms at Bangor are technology-equipped, and UMA plans to convert one additional classroom annually. Outdated LAN cabling (CAT3) predominantly is in place throughout the campus. UMA has indicated the need to upgrade telephone services, which currently are provided through the Orono campus.

Approximately \$600,000 has been identified for library improvement. Besides the library, high priority facilities needs identified by the university include upgraded HVAC controls and systems for numerous buildings, expansion and upgrade of the dental clinic, and upgrade of LAN wiring. The university has indicated that the amount of classroom space seems adequate.

Off-campus centers and sites for distance education

Approximately forty percent of UMA's students take classes on-line, or at off-campus centers and sites where many courses (over 20,000 credit hours annually) are broadcast over the University System's Interactive Television Network (ITV). Over 50 potential off-campus locations exist throughout the State of Maine. These locations are not managed by UMA, but rather are overseen by the University College of the University of Maine System Office. Given the significant number and percentage of UMA students participating in distance education, it would be advantageous for the university to pursue a formal agreement with University College to define expectations and terms for management of facilities and technology associated with this course delivery method.

Strengths

- Maintenance and general functionality at the Augusta Campus.
- Facilities upgrades and expansion through new construction and renovations.
- Technology equipped classrooms and labs on the Augusta campus.
- Use of tools for operational planning and maintenance, including work orders, preventative maintenance, and deferred maintenance.
- Demonstrated commitment to infrastructure upgrades.

Concerns

- Need integrated planning process to align resources and establish priorities for implementation of revised mission, changing programs, strategic priorities, and master plan.
- Adequacy of capital resources to accomplish capital improvements associated with revised mission is uncertain.
- Off-campus centers and sites are not managed by UMA and there is no evidence that a formal agreement exists regarding facilities and technology expectations and terms.
- Significant deferred maintenance at the Bangor Campus; quality of Bangor facilities is not on par with Augusta facilities.
- Existing shortages for music, art, architecture, and faculty offices at Augusta.

STANDARD NINE – FINANCIAL RESOURCES

The University of Maine at Augusta operates within the construct of the University of Maine System (UMS) and its Board of Trustees. The Board establishes financial policies that are to be followed by UMA and other system universities. The CFO and treasurer establishes system-wide financial procedures by issuing Administrative Practice Letters (APL), which incorporate input from the universities. UMS manages UMA's endowment (\$1.5 million at June 30, 2006) and bonded indebtedness (\$2.9 million at June 30, 2006).

UMS financial records are externally audited annually and have consistently received unqualified opinions. The external accountants also furnish management letters regarding internal controls for response and follow-up, per standard practice. Additionally, UMS submits an annual OMB A-133 Compliance Statement for federally funded grant and contract activity.

Regarding budget, prudence calls for close monitoring of the sufficiency of financial resources— particularly in light of the transitional issues introduced by the university’s revised mission coupled with constrained ongoing funding sources. The two primary funding sources for the university’s operating budget currently are student tuition and fees and state appropriations. In recent years, growth in state appropriations has been very modest and enrollment counts have not grown. As a result, increased expenditures have been funded with tuition and fee rate increases.

The FY06 operating *expense* budget for UMA totaled \$32.9 million. This represents a total increase of \$2.9 million or 10 percent as compared with FY03, three years prior. *Revenues* to fund expenses consist of student tuition and fees, state appropriations, government and private grants, interest income, and other revenues. During FY06, student fees amounted to \$15.9 million gross and \$11.2 million net (net of UMA’s \$4.7M scholarship allowance). The non-capital state appropriation amounted to \$9.5 million.

During the three years from FY03 to FY06, revenues from *state appropriations* increased \$200,000 or two percent (less than one percent per year, on average), while total *gross tuition revenues* increased by \$2.6 million or 20 percent, and *net tuition revenues* increased by \$2.1 million or 23 percent. The tuition revenue increase is attributable to increased rates, as rates increased by 30 percent over these three years. FTE enrollment during the same period was flat, while headcount enrollment was off four percent. Financial forecasts continue to project flat enrollment through FY10.

With expenses increasing by 10 percent over the three year period, and state appropriations increasing by just two percent, UMA has become increasingly dependent on student tuition and fee revenues to meet expenses. Absent enrollment growth, tuition and fee rate increases have been utilized to cover expenses. For a full-time undergraduate student, tuition and fees totaled \$5,025 in FY06 and \$5,445 in FY07. Per the UMA VP for Finance, the university will be requesting a 14 percent tuition and fee increase for FY08.

Looking ahead, the university is likely to require additional resources in order to implement its revised mission and strategic plan. A robust prioritization and implementation process is encouraged. The needed incremental amount can then be forecast. At present, a legislative bill has been introduced that, if passed, will result provide an additional \$900,000 in state appropriation to the university. It is unclear whether the bill will pass, whether the amount will be an addition to base funding vs. one-time funding, and whether \$900,000 is a reasonable estimate of the incremental amount needed. The university has stated that if the special state appropriation is not approved, some current programs and services will need to be curtailed beginning next year.

In light of the potential threat to financial stability inherent in the current circumstances and economic model, close scrutiny of the major revenue and expense management opportunities is warranted.

Funding provided through the state appropriation has been difficult for UMA to influence. According to UMA, no written document exists that explains the distribution methodology for state appropriations, but in practice, it is historically based and is not routinely adjusted based on enrollment, space, etc. Presently, UMA appears to be disadvantaged in the state

appropriation distribution model, as UMA generates approximately 12.5 percent of the credits in the University of Maine system, yet receives just 5.5 percent of the state appropriation. Any opportunity is encouraged to explore the equity within the distribution model.

Regarding tuition and fee revenues, financial improvements may be possible to attain through a more aggressive and sophisticated approach to enrollment management, supported by an integrated institutional marketing plan. More robust recruitment and retention strategies for Augusta, Bangor, and distance education likely would be beneficial, and it appears that UMA has the physical capacity to grow its enrollment. Development of data driven targets and execution and monitoring of corresponding recruitment strategies have the potential to increase student enrollment, and therefore, tuition and fee revenues, without necessarily increasing rates.

A significant subset of UMA's tuition and fee revenues is the funding generated by distance education. UMA alone generates over 20,000 distance education credits annually and approximately 45 percent of the distance education credits of the entire system. Most of the distance education credits are delivered at off-campus centers and sites that are not managed by UMA, but rather are overseen by the University College of USM. Similarly, the governance and financial policies are set by USM.

Strengths

- Defined policies and procedures.
- Record of financial integrity
- Potential for increased state appropriation funding of \$900,000 (provided proposed statutory enactment passes).

Concerns

- Apparent inflexibility of fund distribution methodology for state appropriation. (The current distribution disadvantages UMA.)
- Distance education dependent on policies and administration set by University College rather than directly managed by UMA

STANDARD TEN – PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

UMA has developed numerous ways to communicate, in both electronic and print formats, with a variety of constituencies. Most of this communication is coordinated by the Office of Public Information (OPI), led by a Director of Communications and Marketing, hired in January 2006. The rest of OPI is made up of the Director of Advertising and Publications, a secretary and a webmaster who was hired soon after the Director of Communications and Marketing. The UMA Communications and Marketing Plan is divided into Audience, Goals/Objectives, Strategic Plan, Messages, Current Communication Vehicles, and Proposed Changes. Publication schedules in the timeline are being followed and proposed changes in the plan are being implemented on schedule. Many initiatives are being planned to measure the effectiveness of paid advertising and direct mail efforts, all of which will provide key information to fine-tune this outreach to the community. The UMA catalog, Moose Print—

the quarterly newsletter, Moose-Bytes, View Book and website all provide information in a clear and accessible manner.

Strength

- The proposed webpage focusing on "public disclosure" will provide links to data that are not currently available on the UMA website, such as the percentage of Nursing graduates passing the state RN licensure exam.

Concern

- At the time of the visit, 245 courses out of 926 listed in the catalog had not been offered since Fall 2004.

Suggestion

- The proposed "public disclosure" webpage would be enhanced by including data from the following areas that are now only found on the University of Maine website:
 - 1) The most recent audited financial statement
 - 2) Names and principal affiliations of members of the governing board

STANDARD ELEVEN – INTEGRITY

The University of Maine at Augusta (UMA) is one of seven campuses of the University of Maine System (UMS). Chartered in 1965, the University now offers baccalaureate and associate degree programs on the campuses in Augusta and Bangor as well as through multiple University Colleges throughout the state of Maine via ITV and videoconferencing. On-line courses provide access to UMA's students and residents of central Maine as well as nationally and internationally.

In 1986, UMA was designated as the Community College of the University of Maine System; this responsibility now rests to some degree with the University Colleges and, most notably with, a separate community college system. In the last 20 years there has been continuous development and approval of new associate and baccalaureate programs. In 2004 the institution learned that the UMS strategic plan proposed a merger of UMA with the University of Southern Maine simultaneously planning that the University College in Bangor affiliate with the University of Maine at Orono. Members of the campus communities worked diligently to maintain autonomy during the following two year period. The Board of Trustees accepted the recommendation from a Task Force in 2006 to maintain the University of Maine at Augusta as an autonomous institution and established the University College at Bangor as a UMA campus. Shortly thereafter, the new institutional mission, to serve as a regional baccalaureate institution in central Maine with selected programs designed to meet the educational, economic and cultural needs of the region was approved. The mission of UMA is in the forefront of institutional planning and has created a clear identity for the institutions within UMS although there is concern expressed by some members of the campus communities about the elimination of many of the associate degree programs since it will impact their accessibility to some students.

The University of Maine at Augusta adheres to policies of the University of Maine System. Campus electronic and print publications serve as the accessible source of the UMS policies as well as UMA policies, procedures and regulations.

Five collective bargaining agreements address treatment of employees. The nondiscrimination policy appears in publications. The Human Resources function has a positive record of managing a full range of personnel actions including recruitment, employment practices, evaluation processes and pursuit of disciplinary actions. While new students receive important information about where University policies and procedures can be found during the new student orientation program, a comparable program for new employees does presently not exist.

Annual audits have been conducted by independent accounting firms and have consistently received unqualified opinions.

Presently work is underway to review the academic integrity policies in an effort to strengthen and support a clear standard of academic honesty. The study includes the utilization of plagiarism detection software. Implementation is slated to take place before the start of the fall of 2007.

Reasonable efforts are made to provide accommodation for those who are protected by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). A Diversity Action Plan states the commitment of the institution to increase diversity but it is acknowledged in the Self Study Document that this plan needs to be updated.

Under the present student records system, students' social security numbers serve as their identification number. While efforts have been made to enhance student privacy of this number through use of a keypad instead of verbalizing it when asked, the staff looks forward to the full implementation of PeopleSoft when a new id number will be created for each student.

Strength

- There is an evident commitment to consistently and fairly enforce policies effecting students, faculty and staff.

Concern

- There is some confusion over the role of the Faculty Assemblies on the campuses in Augusta and Bangor to the Faculty Senate and its relationship with other campus governance groups.

Suggestion

- Clarify the existing governance structure in light of the new mission and strategic plan and work to revise, as appropriate, to guarantee involvement of all members of the campus community in priority setting and decision making.

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND SUMMATIVE
LIST OF INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHS,
CONCERNS, AND SUGGESTIONS

The visiting team appreciates the thoroughness, openness, and transparency with which the University prepared its Self-Study as well as the forthrightness and candor demonstrated throughout the onsite visit. In every instance, the onsite visit interviews and documentary evidence reviews confirmed that all critical issues had been sufficiently and honestly addressed throughout the self-study process.

Clearly, the University has demonstrated that its programs are based on a clearly stated and appropriate mission; it is also evident that the mission is regularly and periodically reviewed, and that the results of those reviews actually advance its operations and effectiveness. Planning at UMA is directly tied to the institution's mission and—although system-wide circumstances have taken the planning in several different directions over the past decade, and recent demands for expediency resulted in a less-inclusive process than was employed in the development of the Mission Statement—it appears that the University is ready to proceed with more globally inclusive participation in future planning activities.

After a short period of organizational instability caused by the question of whether UMA would be merged with the University of Southern Maine, the University has emerged with a commitment from the University System's Board of Trustees to continue operating as a single institution with a defined mission at the baccalaureate degree level. All appropriate and necessary administrative structures are in place. The organizational and governance relationship between the University and the System are clearly defined and are operating effectively and efficiently. Relationships between the campus and the System are better than they have been in several years. The University benefits from the strong, dedicated, and highly competent leadership of its President, Provost, and other executive-level administrators.

The University offers an appropriate range of academic programs at the associate and bachelor's degree levels. In its planning activities it is reviewing the extent to which it should/can appropriately balance between these two levels while completely fulfilling its responsibilities as a newly designated baccalaureate -level institution. It is commendable that planning is being significantly influenced by the University's responsibility to address "the educational, economic, and cultural needs of Central Maine" (from the Mission Statement). The University appears to excel in its responsibility as a teaching institution. It has initiated a program for the assessment of student learning outcomes, and every program now has a well developed statement of learning outcomes. Plans are being developed for collection and analysis of data to determine the degree to which these outcomes are being realized. While the visiting team commends the University for initiating this assessment process, and while the team was very impressed with the extent of effort and quality of leadership being provided by the faculty and administrative staff responsible for outcomes assessment, it is concerned that the University has not yet been able to dedicate resources that the team believes will be necessary to fully engage a robust student learning assessment program.

The UMA faculty appears to be well qualified and demonstrates productivity in teaching, scholarly activity , and service to the institution, community, and professions. Policies are in

place to delimit teaching assignments and appropriately recognize and reward instructional and scholarly achievements. The faculty are obviously deeply committed to serving the students who comprise a diverse population (especially when characterized by previous academic preparation and age), many of whom are place-bound for whom other higher education alternatives are simply not realistic.

Although not without challenges yet to be met, the University provides sufficient library, information technology, physical plant and technology infrastructure necessary to meet its mission. In some instances, the University's historic leadership in distance education has given it a technology edge and the visiting team noted areas where resources far exceeded what might be expected at a similarly sized and located institution.

Virtually every person at the University demonstrated awareness of the University's changing mission, to become a fully-functioning baccalaureate-level institution. Several faculty members and administrators did express concern that there has not yet been sufficient planning or change in the University's funding mechanisms to ensure sufficient resources necessary to support the change. To some degree, this concern may be dissuaded as campus planning identifies both (a) the programs to be developed and (b) funding and funding mechanisms necessary to provide resources for the proposed programs. Current University funding resource allocations appear to be adequate and are consistent with established University of Maine System policies.

In general, the visiting team found the University of Maine at Augusta to be an open, inclusive institution that is driven by a commitment to student success. The team believes that it is achieving its institutional mission.

The following delineated list of strengths, concerns, and suggestions were identified by the visiting team as deserving of mention. These items either (a) do not directly apply to one single accreditation standard, or (b) applying to more than one standard and are incorporated here in order to reduce redundancy within the report.

Strengths

- The University of Maine System Board of Trustees has established a strategic plan that recognizes and values UMA's mission as a baccalaureate university within the State's system of higher education.
- The University leadership is sound, especially competent, and stable, and demonstrates tremendous loyalty to the institution and its personnel (faculty, staff, and students).
- The University enjoys tremendous goodwill and a strong sense of community. Students and the general public recognize that the faculty and staff of UMA are committed to student success, and they are confident of the faculty's ability to respond to the unique nature and needs of a less-traditional student body.
- The University has demonstrated capability in providing distance education, and has a similarly well demonstrated capacity to provide technology at appropriate levels and of appropriate quality to support the teaching/learning function of its mission.
- The University has established an impressive foundation in assessment of student learning outcomes.

Concerns

- The Mission of the University has changed without a concomitant change in funding/revenue allocation systems to support its move to become a baccalaureate-level institution.
- Although a good foundation in assessment of student learning outcomes has been established, it is not clear that the University will be able to continue this initiative without the commitment of full-time personnel resources—in both assessment and institutional research.

Suggestions

- The University should develop means of reliably projecting and maximizing revenue and of matching expenses accordingly within the context of its new mission and the priorities of the strategic plan.
- Several individuals at the Bangor center noted a feeling of awkwardness over completing their entire program at Bangor and then receiving a degree from the University at *Augusta*. Although this expression had nothing to do with any qualitative concern, it was noted as pervasive and strongly felt. In its planning, the University may wish to consider whether a change of name is desirable.
- Given the UMS projection for a system-wide revenue shortfall over the next five years, and considering the anticipated additional revenue needs that will be required in order for the university to fully realize its new mission as a baccalaureate-level institution, strategies should be developed to ensure the maintenance and enhancement of the current positive relationship with the system administration and the Board of Trustees.