

Response to the Focused Site Visit Report
To the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
Of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges
Prepared by the University of Maine at Augusta

July 1, 2018

The University in response to the Focused Site Visit Report wishes to thank the team of Drs. Patricia Meservey and Scott Stanley for their thoughtful and thorough report. It is an accurate representation of the University's efforts and results in the area of student success, default rate prevention and Second Chance Pell implementation. Herein, we will update the Commission on the work that we continue to do in these three areas of focused attention. We will highlight some recent efforts and some new data in preparation for our meeting before CIHE on November 15, 2018.

Student Success:

Updated Data: On p. 5 of the visiting team report, there is a paragraph containing a number of data points on our student population. Updating the data for the 2017-2018 academic year yields the following changes to the paragraph:

UMA serves approximately 5,470 students annual (FTE of 2,404). The average age of the students is 33 years old. Nearly half of the students (48%) complete most of their coursework online. 52% are first generation college students; 72% meet Pell income eligibility requirements; and 63% are part time students. 50% of our students are transfer students and 20% are readmits. In an effort to make higher education accessible, 99% of the applications were accepted; however approximately 27% do not meet placement testing benchmarks for college level reading, writing or mathematics.

In addition, IPEDS 150% Graduation Outcomes covers 18% for both bachelors an associates of the entering student enrollment (16% of our bachelor's degree seeking students).

While these updates do not significantly change the overall description of our student body, we wish to highlight three data points that reflect recent changes: First, UMA's headcount has dropped from 6,200 to 5,470. Second, the number of students who are attending part time has decreased from 70% to 63%, and this reflects a corresponding increase from 6% to 16% in baccalaureate students who are first time, full time students; this is a marked increase. Finally, the number of students who do not meet placement testing benchmarks has decreased from 40% to 27%. This last recent change reflects both a change to our admissions and recruiting efforts as well as a change to our approach to English developmental classes. In 2017, we developed a credit bearing course that prepares students to be successful in our College Composition ENG 101 course; since it is a credit bearing course, students who test into this ENG 100 course are

counted as meeting placement testing benchmarks for college level writing. Analysis of the success rates of this ENG 100 course (58% success overall) compares favorably to our previous ENG 005 course (54% success overall).

Regarding Associate's Degree Students 200% time to degree chart in the visiting team report, the Traditional first time-full time data are available, with 18.8% of those entering the fall of 2009, 14.3% entering in the fall of 2010 and 17.0% of those entering in the fall of 2011 graduating within that time frame.

In addition, the university acknowledges the conclusions in the visiting team report about sustainability of the efforts that we are making. Near the conclusion of our Title III cycle in 2021, the university is committed to a careful cost benefit analysis of the various Title III programs we are undertaking. Many of the programs, like our Online New Student Orientation, will not take a large number of resources because they are currently up and running. But our Class Steward program is resource intensive (with eleven classes with stewards over the summer and between eighteen and twenty-five in the fall).

Finally, we want to acknowledge that our Cyberspace Master Plan is complete and we are currently working on the implementation phase, which should take up to five years. Initial recommendations of the plan include: establishing our portal as our front door for service and support; creating a UMA app; expanding online services through a dynamic Q&A tool; embedding more services into classes; and building resources that allow student engagement with the institution outside of the classroom.

Student Concerns: Advising and Consistency in Course Structure:

The visiting team reported a lack of clarity on the part of students about advising. As a result, the Provost will convene an advising summit on July 25 with the newly reconstituted UMA center directors, student success coordinators and our professional advising staff. This summit will examine our current advising model and suggest possible adjustments, including a model where students receive advising exclusively from professional staff within the first year of their program. We have the capacity to consider this model now that the UMA centers are fully integrated into UMA and we have the resources of the student center coordinators to support this advising work. The Provost has also indicated to the faculty that discussions about our advising model will be a top priority in our academic agenda for 2018-2019. Regarding students reported concerns about the consistency in course structure, the university has developed a model for Academic Programs of the Future (APOF) to help programs develop consistency of course offerings within programs. The intent is to cycle through all of the university's programs on a multi-year basis to help improve our delivery to students.

Student Stop Outs:

On p. 13 of the visiting team report, the team indicates that student reasons for stopping out or dropping out remain anecdotal. In 2016, our Office of Institutional Research and Assessment collected data and analyzed what we know about students who have stopped out. Results indicated that many of our stop outs were for financial reasons and that few attended other institutions after stopping out of UMA. The full analysis is attached as appendix 1 to this document.

Admissions Update on Student Success:

Although one of UMA's strategic goals is to increase enrollment, it is the mission of the UMA Office of Admissions to bring in a larger enrollment of high caliber students to increase student success. Beginning in fall 2017, the Office of Admissions implemented a rigorous recruitment plan in addition to a more selective admissions process. Although UMA experienced a 5.9% decrease (n = 25) in new student enrollment in spring 2018, 83.4% of enrolled students were college ready. This was an increase of approximately 13% from the previous spring 2017 admission cycle.

Cycle	College Ready New Enrolled Students	Total New Enrolled Students	Percentage of Cohort that is College Ready
Spring 2017	300	424	70.7%
Spring 2018	333	399	83.4%

Additionally, the admission rate for spring 2018 was 95.3%, approximately 4% less than the average 99% acceptance rate experienced by UMA over the previous ten years, yet still consistent with our access mission.

Spring 2018 Total Admits	Completed Applications	Admit Rate
469	492	95.3%

It should be noted UMA does have a summer admission cycle. Due to the Office of Admissions rigorous recruitment plan, UMA experienced a 29.9% (n= ~40) increase in new student enrollment in summer 2018. Though the admission rate increased for the summer 2018 cycle, it is important to note that with the addition of a larger class, college readiness in the new cohort significantly increased as well.

Summer 2018 Total Admits	Completed Applications	Admit Rate
292	299	97.6%

Cycle	College Ready Enrolled New Students	Total Enrolled New Students	Percentage of Cohort that is College Ready
Summer 2017	96	127	75.5%
Summer 2018	134	165	81.2%

The fall 2018 recruitment and admission cycle has experienced the largest increase in any of the 2018 admission cycles. As of mid-June, UMA has experienced a 34.8% (n=~100) increase in new student enrollment. Again, the UMA Office of Admissions has been more selective in the cohort assembly and is currently experiencing a 96.4% admission rate.

Fall 2018 Admits	Completed Applications	Admit Rate
1,040	1,078	96.4%

Of matriculated students, 83.7% are college ready. This is an increase of approximately 2% from the previous fall 2018 admission cycle at this point in time last year.

Cycle	College Ready Enrolled New Students	Total Enrolled New Students	Percentage of Cohort that is College Ready
Fall 2017	217	265	81.8%
Fall 2018	298	356	83.7%

Though it is early to report fall 2018 new student enrollment metrics, UMA is optimistic about the student success of our future cohorts. We believe the UMA Office of Admissions is balancing the need to increase enrollment of high caliber students with the UMA access mission.

It should be noted to NEASC that should the UMA Office of Admissions have continued to employ the measures that resulted in 99% admittance rates for the previous ten years, UMA new student enrollment could have possibly increased in spring 2018. Additionally, enrollment in both summer and fall could have experienced larger increases. However, given the importance of lowering the student loan default rate and increasing the student success rate, the UMA Office of Admissions will continue to implement more selective measures as rigorous recruitment and marketing efforts result in larger applicant pools.

Student Default Rate

Recently, UMA was offered an opportunity to apply for a supplemental Title III grant of \$148,560.00 for the grant year of October 1, 2018, through September 30, 2019 of our existing Strengthening Institutions Program (SIP).

UMA's supplemental award will support activities in three areas:

- Personal Financial Literacy Instruction
- Strengthened Financial Aid Award Education
- Default Prevention Services

Personal Financial Literacy Education: UMA will contract with New Ventures Maine (NVME) to provide a comprehensive personal financial literacy education program. Components include financial coaching, an educational workshop series delivered at all UMA locations, availability of an interactive Financial Awareness Basics website and the development of additional modules in UMA's online new student orientation program.

Strengthened Financial Aid Award Process: UMA will augment its financial aid award communication with educational materials designed to promote a better understanding of student loan debt and the options available to borrowers to reduce their total loan burden. The financial

aid award process will also include invitations to financial education workshops (conducted by NVME and FAME) targeted to the needs of prospective and enrolled students, including Budgeting Basics, Understanding the Cost of College, and Managing Your Money.

Default Prevention Services: UMA will partner with the Finance Authority of Maine (FAME) to hire a vendor such as Educational Credit Management Corporation (ECMC) to provide comprehensive default prevention services. The service package will include default prevention counseling, delinquency outreach and grace period counseling. The Supplemental Award activities directly address the concerns posed by the NEASC visiting team, positioning UMA to institutionalize a new approach to its aid award process and further reduce UMA's student loan default rate.

Because we recognize that the SALT default prevention and financial counseling program for students is ending in December of this year, UMA is committed to identifying resources to develop this programming for students even if our supplemental Title III grant application is unsuccessful.

Second Chance Pell

We are appreciative of the very favorable review of our Second Chance Pell Program in the Maine State Prison and Maine Correctional Center. We are planning on enrolling another associate degree program cohort as of the January of 2019. We are very cognizant of the external political pressures on this program and are committed to enrolling students into the program only if we are confident that we can deliver the program to conclusion for these enrolled students.

Appendix 1: OIRA Analysis of Non-Enrolling Students:

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM
FROM: GREGORY LAPOINTE & LESLIE MCCORMICK
SUBJECT: NON-ENROLLING CONTINUING STUDENTS
DATE: APRIL 8, 2016
CC: PRESIDENT CONNEELY

Last year (Fall '14-Summer '15) 6,238 unduplicated students were enrolled at UMA – 83% (5,164) were degree or certificate-seeking students and 17% (1,074) were non-degree/certificate-seeking students. For analysis purposes, we focused on the cohort of 5,164 degree or certificate-seeking students. Last year, 10% (504) of the degree or certificate-seeking student cohort graduated from UMA.

The remaining 4,660 students were then evaluated to determine retention levels and possible reasons for not enrolling in the Fall '15 semester. Approximately, 64% (2,971 of 4,660 students) did re-enroll at UMA in the Fall '15.

So, what happened to the 36% or 1,689 students that did not register at UMA in the Fall '15?

The Office of Institutional Research and Planning queried the National Student Clearinghouse database to track the enrollment, if any, of these 1,689 students that did not register as of November, 6, 2015. Our analysis identified that –

- 9% (156 students) transferred and matriculated into a degree program at another institution
- 2% (39 students) registered for credits as a non-degree/certificate-seeking student at another UM System campus or Maine Community College (1 student enrolled out-of-state)
- **89% (1,494 students) did not register at UMA, UMS, or another institution**

Next, we attempted to understand the possible student reasons for not registering (1,494 students) –

- <1% (12 students) academic suspension and not eligible to register
- 2% (23 students) hold *-low* student effort to register (e.g., missing active mailing address)
- 4% (59 students) hold *-medium* student effort to register (e.g., immunization paperwork)
- 27% (404 students) hold *-high* student effort to register (e.g., financial issue)
- **67% (996 students) no idea why!**

With that said, we then evaluated if any of the 1,533 students (1,494 + 39 students) registered in the Spring '16 semester to help account for stop-out or swirling behavior of our student body. We found that 11% or 167 students re-enrolled at UMA in the Spring '16 semester.

Next, the Office of Institutional Research and Planning has launched a brief online survey (results in early May) to contact the 937 students that –

- Did not register in the Fall '15 and Spring '16 semesters
- And identified as “no idea why”, or had enrollment holds classified as “low or medium” student effort to register.

Transfer-Out Students

In the Fall '15, 156 UMA degree or certificate-seeking students transferred and matriculated into a degree program at another institution. Please note, 15% or 24 of the 156 total transfer-outs matriculated into UMFK's B.S. Nursing program as expected. Please find below a table that groups institutions attended by type of the remaining 132 (156 – 24) transfer-out students.

UMA Students Transferred and Matriculated Elsewhere, Fall 2015

Transfer Institution Type	%	Count	Top Institutions
Maine Community College System	35%	46	SMCC, 14; KVCC, 12; EMCC, 9
University of Maine System	26%	34	UMaine, 16; USM, 11; UMPI, 3; UMF, 3
In-State Private	14%	18	SNHU, 7; Kaplan, 5
Out-of-State Public	9%	12	No clear leaders
Out-of-State Community College	7%	9	
Out-of-State Private	6%	8	
On-line Private	3%	5	
Total	100%	132	UMaine, 16 (only 12% of total)

Next, we evaluated the overall top areas of study of the 132 UMA degree or certificate-seeking students that transferred and matriculated into a degree program at another institution.

The overall top areas of study (per CIP Code) at other institutions were -

- 15% (20 students) enrolled in Health Professions and Related Clinical Sciences
 - 40% transferred from UMA pre-science programs (e.g., Nursing)
- 13% (17 students) enrolled in Liberal Arts and Sciences, General Studies and Humanities
 - 29% transferred from UMA pre-science programs (e.g., Nursing)
- 11% (15 students) enrolled in Business, Management, Marketing, and Related Support Services
 - 67% transferred from UMA Business programs
- 8% (10 students) enrolled in Education
 - 50% transferred from UMA Education programs

Moreover, we examined areas of study by potential in-state competitors (i.e., Maine Community Colleges, UM System, and In-state Privates such as SNHU) and identified no clear top programs of choice for our transfer-outs at these institutions.

The data tables are available upon request. Thank you for your time and consideration.