



## **NEW CHALLENGES, NEW DIRECTIONS TASK FORCE**

### **JUNE 4, 2009**

#### **Meeting Summary**

Present: David Flanagan, Norman Fournier, Charles Weiss, James Bradley, Robert Rice, Ron Mosley, Allyson Hughes Handley, Bertram Jacobs, James Breece, Rebecca Wyke, Valerie Seaberg, Michelle Hood, Marjorie Medd

Consultants: Dennis Jones, Aims McGuinness from the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS)

- Chair David Flanagan made an introductory statement and said the task force is moving toward the recommendation focus of their work. He said the purpose of this meeting is to discuss the suggestions of the subcommittees and draft document prepared by NCHEMS. The first draft will be made public for comments. He said the day's work can be divided into three sections:
  - Is there any major issue we've missed altogether?
  - Any fact or theory we've gotten fundamentally wrong?
  - Section by section discussion of concepts for final report
- Chair Flanagan said this has been one of the most fact-intensive task force he's seen, with 42 data requests, 21 public hearings and meetings with all presidents; many of staff members and Board of Visitors members, as well as the Board of Trustees. He said the task force has had multiple sessions with expert witnesses: Steve Reno, Tom Layzell, Terry MacTaggart, and Robert Zemsky. Chair Flanagan said the task force has reached consensus that Maine people can be proud of the university system. The System has capable student body, talented and dedicated professors, a cadre of good leaders and an honest and responsive system of governance. UMS is a higher education structure with many good attributes.
- Chair Flanagan said although this is a strong system, the task force needs to take a hard look at the problems, which include a gap between projected revenues and needs, a System characterized by competition between universities, and a lack of collaboration and duplication. He said the UMS needs a public agenda and align resources with that agenda and a more strategic approach to mission and student recruitment. Task force members suggested highlighting some of the positive elements of the UMS in the preamble of the report, and adding in more language about the importance of serving students.
- A task force member asked about cost savings and whether the final report would outline specific cost savings that would be achieved as a result of these recommendations. Chair Flanagan said the purpose of the task force was to recommend changes that would be implemented by the Board of Trustees and the Chief Financial Officers that would allow them to make funding decisions more strategic. Aims McGuinness said the work of this task force around governance and leadership is to ensure there is a strong engine to drive the system.

- The task force then began discussing the concepts for the final report. Dennis Jones of NCHEMS said the draft shows the need to align the system with needs of the state and its people and if the task force does nothing but get that point made and put the mechanics in place to carry that out, its time has been well spent.
- The task force engaged in a wide-ranging discussion of major themes and ideas. Those themes included:
  - Distance education
  - Location of the chancellor's office
  - Tuition policy
  - Affordability in education
  - Difference between system-wide services and Chancellor's office
  - Distance education and academic collaboration
- Meeting adjourned by Chair Flanagan. Next task force meeting will be held in Bangor on June 18.