Strategic Direction 7
Vision for Shared Administrative Services

**Strategic Direction 7** - Centralize the System’s business/administrative functions, where appropriate, in order to leverage resources and increase effectiveness of service throughout the System.

**Vision**  
Administrative services in an institution of higher education support the core missions of teaching, research and public service. The goal of shared administrative services in a public system is to protect the core of each institution, improve services to students, faculty and staff, and free up resources for re-investment in institutional quality.

**Principles**  
In order to maximize quality and minimize costs in the University of Maine System, administrative services -- including information technology, student administrative services, human resources, and financial services -- should be structured along the following principles to the extent possible.

- Shared administrative services must support and be designed in the context of differentiated institutional missions.
- Common policies should be established where idiosyncratic policies are not tied to mission.
- Transaction processing should be centralized, when economically beneficial, to take advantage of technology and economies of scale and to allow university staff to focus on value-added functions.
- When centralization is not cost effective, de-centralized processes should employ common standards and policies.
- Services should be designed to collaborate with the State, K – 12 education, and other higher education institutions to facilitate seamless education Pre-K – 20.
- Individual university strengths should be utilized for the benefit of the System.

Shared services do not mean that there will be a cookie-cutter approach to providing services. The differences in campus missions, sizes and locations require that the service model be flexible. However, the service model will emphasize consolidation, integration, collaboration, and standardization in order to provide a single management structure wherever possible. Together we will strive to find the best balance of centralization and decentralization to meet the needs of students, faculty and staff in the most efficient manner possible.

**Delivery Model**  
To insure that the goals of shared services are achieved, the delivery model must be characterized by

- A focus on students and other constituents;
- A high technology, learning environment;
- Continuous improvement;
• Avoidance of unnecessary duplication;
• Decision making at the lowest level of the organization that is consistent with other goals;
• Adequate training to meet high standards for customer service;
• Assessment to assure that services are not compromised and that savings and cost avoidance are realized; and
• Accountability to the public.

**Tools**
There are many obstacles to implementation of shared services in the UMS. Effective leadership and perseverance are needed to effect a change in the service delivery paradigm. Change of this magnitude requires tools such as

• an enterprise-wide planning system (ERP),
• back office service centers,
• many people working collaboratively toward a shared vision,
• organizational change and transformation,
• alignment of all functions with the UMS mission and strategic plan,
• development of an appropriate method of assessing and sharing costs of shared services, and
• standardization of practices, which will often require change from custom and habit.

**Partnership**
UMS leaders in finance, technology, student services, academic affairs, and human resources are committed to working in partnership to fulfill our vision of shared services within UMS. Each Strategic Direction 7 Implementation Committee is charged with addressing the shared vision in its work on the centralization of services.

DRAFT 1/5/06
Strategic Direction 7 – Information Technology
Second Report

Executive Summary:

Information technology supports nearly every facet of today’s higher education environment. New information technologies that are effectively integrated into institutional systems and processes allow the institution to realize—and maximize—the value of the original technological investment. The bond issue that enabled the University of Maine System to undertake information technology initiatives has allowed UMS to provide hardware and software enhancements to students, faculty, and staff that will, when fully implemented and integrated, increase the effectiveness of services provided throughout the System.

Background:

The First Report submitted by the sub-committee on Information Technology in June 2005 was focused on the $3.0M bond issue and possible organizational and information technology (IT) efficiencies that might be implemented in the University of Maine System as a result of this funding. Since that report, the University System hired its first Chief Information Officer. During his first 90 days with the System, the CIO has visited all campuses, participated in the September planning retreat, and met three times with the System IT Policy and Planning Committee.

Based on the discussions at the planning retreat and the implicit and explicit interdependency among information technology products and solutions and the other Strategic Directions (this also pertains to campus strategic plans), it is suggested that Strategic Direction #7’s Information Technology charge be broadened to encompass the needs of the University of Maine System to accomplish its missions of education, service, research, and economic development.

The following goal for Strategic Direction #7 - Information Technology in the University of Maine System is proposed:

Establish and maintain a robust, flexible, secure, and manageable information technology infrastructure (see attachment) in the University of Maine System that:

- supports and enables education, public service, and research
- provides services and information to students, faculty, and staff any time on any device (desktops, laptops, PDAs, cell phones, etc.)
• enables the University System to employ 21st century technology to become and remain competitive with other higher education institutions both regionally and nationally.

Providing access to all aspects of that information technology infrastructure via a personalized portal, requiring only a single sign-on, is one example of the enhanced support services cited in the goal for information technology in the University System.

Other large, multi-institution higher education systems have already realized benefits from creating a seamless, multi-institution technological functionality (students at the University of Georgia, for example, can [or will soon be able to] take courses at any of the Georgia system’s 34 institutions without having to repeat administrative processes such as admissions, bill payment, or applying for financial aid; they’ll perform these tasks once, either online or in person, at only their home campus). Students and employees at Wayne State University can use their OneCard system for library services, bookstore purchases, parking fees, and other services, including viewing and adding to account balances. Similar models are in use or envisioned for the University of Maine System.

A recent survey conducted by Intel Corp. in conjunction with the Center for Digital Education identified the top 50 colleges/universities by wireless Internet accessibility (in the U.S.). Ninety-eight percent of these top 50 are covered by a wireless network, up from 64% in 2004, and 74% of these schools now have 100% wireless network coverage on campus, up from just 14% last year. Clearly, offering “anytime, anywhere, any device” capability is essential for the University of Maine System to remain competitive in today’s increasingly tech-savvy world.

**Strategies and Recommendations for Implementation:**

To accomplish the mandate of Strategic Direction #7 and to achieve the proposed information technology goal, **four strategies, with initial action steps necessary to carry them out, and target dates for completion have been identified.**

1. Implement and integrate UMS and campus software applications that simplify processes and service delivery to students, faculty, staff, and affiliated groups.
   a. Action: Verify with all universities the campus-based applications that must be integrated. Target date: March 2006.
   b. Support Project Enterprise and THESIS Admissions & Recruitment implementation in July 2006 with the integration of PeopleSoft and document imaging.

2. Assess the status of the IT infrastructure at each university and at the System Office from the physical layer (wiring) up.
   a. Visit each campus to determine infrastructure status and available budgets.
   b. Initiate assessment of security practices and technology against international standards. Target date: May 2006.
3. Transform System and campus IT units into a seamless virtual team focused on service delivery, business value, and end-user satisfaction.
   a. Come to agreement on technical and product standards for network technology across the System. Target date: June 2006.

4. Establish a governance process across the System and at each university that encompasses a broad array of end-users, including campus leadership, to establish plans, strategies, and priorities.
   a. Evaluate current structures and propose improvements. Target date: June 2006.

As these strategies are developed and implemented, care is and will be taken to preserve the uniqueness of each university and ensure that appropriate levels of functional capability at the individual universities are balanced with efficient, effective, and secure centralized services.

Any additional action steps required to implement these strategies will be identified and mapped out during the first quarter of calendar year 2006.

**Budget:**

To be determined.

**Decision-Making Matrix:**

To be determined.

**Implementation Timeline:**

- March 2006: Strategy 1
- May 2006: Strategy 2; Strategy 3
- June 2006: Strategy 4
- July 2006: Integration and implementation of PeopleSoft Admissions & Recruitment and document imaging/management to support the THESIS Project portion of Strategic Direction #7 and the goals of Project Enterprise.