Strategic Direction 9
Second Report

Strategic Direction 9 - Develop a coordinated, collaborative approach to University advancement and advocacy in ways that increase public understanding of the mission, value, and benefits of Maine’s public universities; and enhance the universities’ individual and collective appeal, reputation, financial resources, and public support.

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Throughout, this committee has worked in three areas, 1. Communications and advocacy for Maine’s Public Universities, 2. Marketing and recruitment, and 3. Support for fund-raising/development. Always there was and is a natural tension between our work to advance each of the campuses individually, and the identification of places where the system can help us to promote all of the institutions that comprise the system.

The committee recommends as a number one priority the creation and implementation of a multi-year awareness and advocacy publicity campaign for Maine’s Public Universities. We need to help people recognize the value to the state as well as to individuals achieved by having a strong system of diverse institutions making up the University of Maine System. The state is stronger because there are seven quality institutions in the system, all with a special appeal to certain populations. System staff and presidents are working to initiate such a campaign.

The second priority is installation of modern state-of-the–art software to support our fund-raising efforts. The University of Maine Campaign and the Transforming Southern Maine Campaign will be the centerpieces of this effort, but the same level of data management support is needed by all institutions in order to permit effective fund-raising to take place. The focus of fund-raising efforts should be at the level of the individual campuses, but they can succeed only if we work together to provide the best data management packages to support them. The Chief Financial Officer of the System together with the Chief Information Officer has been working with campus development personnel to assess needs and identify the optimum software to meet our needs.

The desired end state of this strategic direction is a strong system of seven distinct institutions, working together to promote the value of the system to the people of Maine, and encouraging support from legislators, prospective donors and friends for this extraordinary educational resource. Education will continue to be the most powerful engine driving the state economy. Chancellor Westphal has been very interested in the work of this committee, supportive of our goals, and of the importance of advancement issues for the System. He has dedicated $400,000 to marketing and recruitment in FY06.
II. BACKGROUND

Consistent with the goals set out for this direction in the Strategic Plan, the steering committee created three sub committees to address: 1. Communications and Advocacy, 2. Marketing and Recruitment, and 3. Development.

The Committee met twice, February 23, and again on March 22 to outline the objectives to be addressed and to organize the subcommittees. On May 19, 2005 a full day session was held in Belfast at the Hutchinson Center with the three subcommittees working on their own and reporting to the whole group at the end of the session.

Many members of the committee attended the September 16, 2005 meeting of all Strategic Planning Committees at Orono. At that session, we worked with all committees to explore points of connection among the various committees and identification of the key “headline” issues facing each committee. The two headline issues agreed upon for Strategic Direction Nine were 1. Creation of a system marketing campaign to enhance the visibility of our seven institutions and their positive impacts on the state of Maine, and 2. Identification of the best development data management tools to support fund raising.

A Meeting of the full committee was convened December 14 at the University of Maine to review a draft report, recommendations and related staff activities. Our goal at this session was to summarize and prioritize our work.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

A. COMMUNICATIONS AND ADVOCACY - GOALS

1. Assess what resources will be available to develop a comprehensive state-wide (and beyond) communications and advocacy program.
2. Create a campaign focused on the value of a baccalaureate and graduate degrees to the individual and to the state of Maine. Highlight opportunities available in Maine through our public universities.
3. Establish the Public Universities of Maine brand. Consider changing the collective label to the Public Universities of Maine, or Maine’s Public Universities. This goal emerged from the Marketing Committee as well.
4. Build a sense of “public ownership” of Maine’s Public Universities.
5. Promote the quality aspects emerging through all elements of the System Strategic Plan.
6. Help employers to understand the important role their public universities plan in educating the future workforce of Maine.

COMMUNICATIONS AND ADVOCACY – RECOMMENDATIONS/ACTIONS
1. An Advocacy Campaign focused on the value to Maine and its people provided by Maine’s Public Universities emerged as the highest priority for this committee. Such a campaign will require a system-wide commitment and needs to run for three to five years to be truly effective. The plan should incorporate annual evaluation of progress and success. It should focus on the importance of our public mission and what the return is to the state. Such a campaign might cost $300,000 to $500,000 annually.

2. John Diamond informed the Committee Co-Chair on November 30th that the Chancellor and the Presidents are considering elements of an advocacy and outreach plan consistent with the work of the committee to commence this spring. This plan was shared with the system presidents at their meeting December 15, 2005. The System Office has been moving forward with Swardlick Marketing of Portland to develop a theme for System-Wide promotion and positioning of our universities. Preliminary versions of the materials have been shared with admissions directors and communications directors. The campaign is intended to get people to think positively about Maine as a state in which to pursue higher education. The imbedded messages are based on market research conducted in 2004-2005 by Strategic Marketing Services.

3. Materials under development include a first-impression piece aimed primarily at out-of-state prospects and their influencers, as well as to in-state prospective students; an awareness poster to be distributed to guidance counselors, in-state and out of state; and a direct mail campaign. All of these initiatives will be compatible with other college-awareness efforts underway by such groups as the Maine Compact for Higher Education, the Maine Readiness Campaign, and FAME.

4. We make a distinction here between a publicity campaign and the creation of an advocacy network of friends of the institutions and the System. Such a network might entail a common database but more importantly could be a resource we might utilize to promote legislation or bond issues in support of Maine’s Public Universities. This has been discussed at various times by the committee and emerges as a relatively low cost, low priority project.

5. A successful outcome for this area will be achieved when the individual marketing efforts of each of our institutions are supported and extended to an even broader market by System Campaigns encouraging students to explore higher education opportunities available through Maine’s Public Universities. Seven quality institutions serving the people of Maine.
B. MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT - GOALS

1. Update the central website to provide a complete inventory of institutions and academic programs available. Generate attractive printed materials with this same information.

2. Create a television campaign that depicts and promotes the “open doors” and the high quality of Maine’s Public Universities. Through visitor’s Centers and other mechanisms, make people feel the same way about Maine’s Public Universities as they do about their local high schools.

3. Create an “Aspirations” Recruiting Campaign focused on the value of higher education (through Maine’s Public Universities) as an outreach to: Middle School Students, High Schools Students including both “college bound” and those not so certain, and a component encouraging current undergraduate students to consider graduate programs. Another video could highlight the many exciting summer programs and camps (sports, culture and so on) that take place on our campuses.

4. Conduct market research to verify where we are and where we want to be every two years.

5. Profile outstanding faculty at Maine’s Public Universities.

6. Explore other media such as signage on trucks, buses and public transportation.

MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT – RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

1. These goals were identified as secondary to the advocacy actions noted in A above.

2. The System Office reports that we are about to launch the beta site for a new UMS website. The beta site will be a secured site available through the internet but not available through search engines. Members of this committee along with 150 other reviewers will be asked to review the site and share responses and suggestions. The site is intended for all of our audiences but is designed especially to make a good first impression on new visitors to the site.

C. DEVELOPMENT - GOALS

1. Provide the support needed to upgrade the current donor database management system to a usable system.
2. Consider a focused campaign for Maine’s Public Universities targeted to corporations and foundations that may operate in state but have headquarters elsewhere.

3. Launch an information/awareness campaign highlighting the importance of charitable giving to public higher education. This might involve testimonials from donors at all levels and from all institutions.

4. Support ongoing campus efforts: Insure that the central website is up to date and effective for donors; Market the existing Charitable Gift Annuity Program more aggressively and more routinely; Facilitate professional development for fund raising personnel.

5. Host a senior level Development Advisory Council to meet periodically with System Staff personnel. They could explore opportunities for collaboration and cooperation as well as mutual support, in areas such as training and professional development.

DEVELOPMENT – RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

1. There have been a number of meetings of Development Officers through the fall to explore an array of options for a suitable software solution to support fund-raising by system institutions. On December 1st, a meeting was convened by System CFO Joanne Yestramski to review where we are and to look at a number of options. These include proposals from Datatel, Blackbaud, Sunguard BSR, and others. The System plans to give Datatel one more opportunity to complete their commitment to SAFARI, and will then consider alternative models. There will be a follow-up meeting of this group within a month or two.

2. On December 5th, the University System Trustees approved a proposal by the University of Maine to embark on a comprehensive campaign with a goal of at least $150 million to run over the next six years, January 1, 2006 through December 31, 2012. At the same time, the University of Southern Maine is over halfway through its campaign, Transforming the University of Southern Maine.

3. Achievement of this strategic goal will be met when all of the system universities have access to state-of-the-art development software and are actively engaged in annual giving, planned giving, and capital campaigns as appropriate.
IV. KEY AREAS OF OVERLAP

This committee has extensive overlap with all of the other elements of the System Strategic Plan. Indeed, in many ways the work of the other eight committees establishes the agenda for Strategic Direction Nine. As these committees change the face of the University System, the job of this committee will be to market the emerging Maine System of Universities. Specific overlaps are noted below.

1. **Strategic Direction 3.** As we work to expand distance education opportunities, we should explore the ability to incorporate marketing screens for Maine’s Public Universities within these materials.

2. **Strategic Direction 4.** Achieving the goals of Strategic Direction 4 will require that all University of Maine System advancement and advocacy strategies include libraries and public access to information for the citizens of Maine. It is important to include support for libraries as we move forward to enhance the appeal, reputation and support for Maine’s Public Universities.

V. BUDGET

1. We estimate that a full scale visibility campaign may cost anywhere from $300,000 to $500,000 per year. It will be important to commit these funds over a three to five year period in order to achieve maximum impact.

2. The cost of data management software packages will range from $30,000 at each of the small campuses to a possible $300,000 to $400,000 for the large campuses with all of the options. These amounts need to be viewed in the context of multi-million dollar campaigns at some institutions and $150 million in the case of the University of Maine.

3. Work on the UMS website is underway and is close to completion.

VI. TIMELINE

The Strategic Direction 9 Committee has identified two highest priority actions and a second level recommendation concerning student marketing. We recommend action as soon as possible in the area of an advocacy campaign and urge a determination no later than this spring on how to provide the best possible data management system for all seven institutions. Especially with the announcement of the University of Maine Campaign, it is vitally important that we install just as quickly as possible a system or systems that will be robust, state of the art, and that will provide all of the support for managing and conducting sophisticated fund raising campaigns.

The urgency for publicity supporting system institutions stems from the time of year and the importance of reaching out to both our friends and prospective students. In the wake of the negative vote on Question Six and the importance of the University of Maine Capital Campaign, we need to restore the image and the perceived importance of Maine’s Public Universities in the eyes of our many constituencies. Preparing a visibility
campaign takes time and effort and in order to go on stream this spring we need to move quickly. Here again, we appreciate the support of the Chancellor and the actions underway by campus and system leadership.

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