



NEW CHALLENGES NEW DIRECTIONS TASK FORCE

MAY 7, 2009

Meeting Summary

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

- Chair David Flanagan opened the meeting and informed the group that Aims McGuinness of the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) was joining the meeting by phone. Chair Flanagan reiterated the mandate and task of the committee and said over the next few weeks, he would like the task force and the subcommittees to start looking at alternatives to address the problems and reach consensus on those potential solutions. To start that work, he said the task force must:
 - State the problems in terms the group can agree upon
 - Identify some principles that could guide the group's thinking in what approaches would be reasonable
 - Keep in mind not just what might have to be cut, but what we want to protect
- Chair Flanagan said the UMS has signed a contract with NCHEMS to advise the task force on what has worked in other systems and what has not. The group has worked around the country and both McGuinness and Dennis Jones, president of NCHEMS, have many years of experience with higher education management. NCHEMS has agreed to do the following:
 - Conduct a fiscal analysis of the system
 - Compare UMS to national peers in terms of revenue, expenditures by function, staffing ratios and program offerings
 - Look at questions of access and whether what UMS delivers matches up with where the potential students are
 - Evaluate how what UMS is doing matches up with public policy priorities
 - Do their own assessment of the information already provided to the task force
 - Interview administrators at each of the universities
 - Help the task force develop policy recommendations or advise on policy recommendations
- Aims McGuinness spoke and briefly outlined how the NCHEMS consultants and the task force will work together. There was some discussion of the Chancellor's Agenda for Action as a base upon which to build a larger public agenda. McGuinness said a large

part of the task force's work should be to help reinforce the need for a public agenda, as Maine needs a better-educated population and needs an economy that employs that population.

- The task force then discussed the financial crisis the universities in the system are facing and the financial situation heading forward into the next fiscal year and whether the financial assumptions of the structural gap analysis are still correct. This led to a discussion of higher education pricing. McGuinness said the UMS should be careful in how high it allows tuition to become and recommended keeping it at low levels to increase access.
- A discussion of the system's role in economic development followed. Chair Flanagan said the role of the universities should be to create the innovators who can create industries and jobs. He used wind power as an example of what the universities should be doing; providing the state with the engineers that design the technology.
- Chair Flanagan then asked task force members to identify with problems to focus on as the group goes forward with its work.
 - Lack of use of finance policy to leverage change around public policy
 - Funding formula
 - What to incentivize/de-incentivize
 - Who decides
 - Size and role of the chancellor's office
 - Clarification of the chancellor's role as regards a new vision for the system
 - Lack of a state workforce plan/comprehensive economic development plan
 - System-wide services and duplication on the campuses
- There was some discussion of the role and funding mechanism for system-wide services and the Chancellor's office. The task force said the roles of these two offices should be differentiated, since they have distinct missions. The task force agreed that any change to SWS should maintain consistent service to the universities and ensure both proper communication between SWS and the universities and appropriate oversight.
- McGuinness said where the task force can contribute is providing the UMS with overall principles and a framework that allows it to act more like a system. The system has not yet figured out how it is supposed to function or whether it's a strong or weak system.
- The task force concluded the meeting by discussing the logistics of the next meeting and agreed to extend the length of meetings to ensure completion of the work. Chair Flanagan asked task force members to come to the next meeting with some draft recommendations.
- The meeting adjourned.