APPENDIX VII:
RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO UMS DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN
UMS FACULTY STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMIT
JULY 29 AND 30, 2004

Although the faculty recognize that the present charter of the Board of Trustees does not require it to pursue a policy of shared governance, we deeply believe that any system functions more efficiently and effectively when all the major stakeholders have significant input and decision-making power. This is the case for the University of California System. The public commentary period on the Strategic Plan notwithstanding, we believe this Strategic Plan was not generated in the spirit of shared governance, or with proper respect to the unique and traditional role of faculty as the backbone of the University System. We therefore offer the following recommendations on the Board of Trustee’s Strategic Action Plan under protest at the process the Board chose to pursue.

Strategic Direction 1: Strive for quality across the System through rigorous academic program planning, strengthened student services, and program realignment.

Faculty support performance goals set collaboratively through a shared governance model. The desired goal of academic quality, while difficult to quantify, must be informed by individual campus missions.

Recommendations:

1. Quality should be defined in academic terms.
2. The Strategic Plan should not equate quality with enrollment, retention, and graduation rates. Benchmarks for these goals should be established based on campus mission, location, and student demographics. Each campus should be compared to similar institutions nationally rather than to a State-wide standard.
3. The system office should provide each campus with the means to conduct longitudinal studies of graduate success.
4. Appropriate faculty/student and faculty/staff ratios should be determined by individual campuses based upon mission and location.
5. Academic programming processes should be established at the individual campus level with collaboration between and among campuses as desired and needed.
Strategic Direction Two: Build a high-quality and well-supported faculty System-wide.

We recommend the implementation of this strategic direction through the process of shared governance. We wish to remind the System that criteria for faculty review is a contractural issue and comes under the purview of individual department faculty.

Recommendations:

1. A formal, appropriately funded, faculty development program should be established. This should include a formal mentoring program for junior faculty.
2. Faculty and staff compensation levels should be commensurate with national standards.
3. Faculty should be supported by appropriate staff and technology for all teaching, research, scholarship, and service activities.
4. Diversity is essential to the quality of faculty and the campuses; therefore, we recommend the following word change: “Hiring and retaining strong, diverse, credentialed faculty.”

Strategic Direction Three: Improve and expand the System’s Distance Education program by taking advantage of new technologies and pedagogies; and working with K-12 educators to utilize better existing electronic-classrooms located in most high schools throughout Maine.

Recommendations:

1. Distance Education programs must be generated and controlled from campuses and not from the System Office.
2. The System should control technology investments, coordination, and availability.
3. The System should develop an agreement for transferability of Distance Education courses.
4. The System MUST invest in state-of-the-art equipment.
5. The System must invest in faculty development for the use of state-of-the-art equipment.
6. The Chancellor’s office should:
   (a) assess the placement of Distance Education in the System;
   (b) do an inventory of what we already have;
   (c) determine what we need for a state-of-the-art system;
   (d) consider how existing UNET resources inform the development of a state-of-the-art system.
7. The System should ensure that each campus have an experienced IT person capable of maintaining the latest in technology, software, etc., and capable of teaching faculty how to use this technology.
8. Resources, once obtained, should be sustained at the cutting edge.
Strategic Direction Four: Expand and enhance the System’s library resources in ways that benefit the needs of our universities as well as the needs of other institutions and individuals across the State.

In general, the System libraries should be developed along the principles of coordination and cooperation, rather than along the principle of centralization.

Recommendations:

1. Language in the original version of the Strategic Plan should be replaced with that proposed by the System-wide council of librarians.
2. Each campus must have or have access to a comprehensive undergraduate library, along with holdings specific to their mission and/or specialized programs.
3. The System should prioritize funding campaigns for a State-wide digital library.
4. Because libraries are now being accredited on the basis of outcomes rather than volume count, each library should have enough local resources to develop and promote information literacy programs, central to the education of students.
5. The System Office should pursue appropriate borrowing arrangements with the private colleges in Maine.
6. A significant portion of grant revenues now taken as overhead by the System should be reallocated to a library fund.

Strategic Direction Five:  Strengthen and expand university-based research activity and capacity to enhance Maine’s economy.

We recommend implementation of this strategic direction through the process of shared governance.

Recommendations:

1. Entrepreneurship and local control in research is critical. Consequently, the first bullet, which emphasizes centralization, should be deleted and replaced with the following language: “The System will partner with the campuses for advocacy, planning, and development.”
2. The second bullet should be changed to read: “Setting greater incentives for faculty research and scholarship, including appropriately adjusting teaching loads.”
3. Because the fifth bullet pertains to institutional research it should be moved from this strategic direction to strategic direction six.
Strategic Direction Six: Establish performance measures to ensure prudent stewardship and public accountability.

While faculty agree that accountability is necessary, we believe that assessment measures should be carefully constructed and should be based upon long-term best practices. Such “best practices” should be primarily based upon the shared wisdom of faculty.

Recommendations:

1. The most successful and productive evaluation models are formative: when built upon a series of feedback loops, they not only provide opportunities for genuine growth and development, but also provide a means of evaluating and modifying the assessment criteria themselves. Before adopting any assessment model, the System should educate itself about the wide array of assessment models and strategies, including the 360-degree feedback model which is an iterative model in which plans and decisions are created with input from all participants.

2. As the above indicates, ultimately, the effective measures of accountability are generated in relation to the mission and vision of each individual campus.

Strategic Direction Seven: Centralize System-wide business and administrative functions to 1) increase effectiveness of service throughout the System; 2) free up resources for reallocation to priority areas; and 3) allow for front-line customer services to be maintained at the individual university level.

Faculty agree that centralized purchasing is an important strategic direction but maintain that, in many cases, “coordination” rather than “centralization” should be the goal.

Recommendations:

1. Each campus should maintain its own recruiting and advising strategies.
2. Each campus should maintain the capacity for the innovative and creative use of technology.
3. If, in the future, campuses are to be billed for services presently treated as part of our campus budget, such services and costs should be specifically delineated in the revised version of the Strategic Plan.
4. Campuses should be given a choice as to whether or not to participate in centralized services, based upon their quality and cost-effectiveness. The effectiveness of centralized services should be subject to periodic, independent review.
5. The System Office should create and maintain a dialog with faculty about potential sources of savings, including savings on non-personnel items.
Strategic Direction Eight: Strategically modify the System’s organization and structure in ways that 1) clearly define the niches and interrelationships of institutions; 2) ensure that the System serves the higher education needs of the State of Maine; and 3) move the System toward greater financial stability and sustainability.

We acknowledge the need for the UM System to become a fiscally viable and high-quality State-wide organization, and we stand ready, as a faculty, to engage in serious discussions of strategies which may contribute to this larger goal. Given our commitment to shared governance, however, we reject the merger plan outlined in Strategic Direction 8, or any major reorganization effort that prohibits individual campuses from evaluating and controlling their own future.