APPENDIX VI:
SUMMARY OF PUBLIC FEEDBACK

Note to readers: The following information synthesizes feedback and suggestions expressed to UMS leadership orally and in writing during the April-June public comment period. It is not meant to be a transcript of the dozens of public forums conducted during the three-month period, nor is it a compilation of written commentary. It does, however, identify and reflect the various themes, issues, and concerns categorically.

I. The Strategic Planning Initiative

Vision

1. The redraft should include a clearer, more succinct vision for the System's and its individual universities' roles in helping Maine satisfy its needs and achieve its goals.
2. Too much of the vision expressed in the Plan focuses on current and future finances. If the Plan is to be viewed and accepted as strategies for achieving quality, financial stability and sustainability should be dealt with as tactics rather than the objective.
3. The Plan's vision statement should address the System's role and future within all of higher education in Maine.
4. Greater emphasis must be placed on what the University of Maine System could be in the best of circumstances. The current Plan focuses too much on dealing with what is presented as troubled times ahead.
5. The vision needs to articulate the difference between 1) what the System currently does for students and for Maine; and 2) what it can do for students and for Maine under a new and enterprising vision of the System's role.
6. The intended outcomes need to be expressed more fully.
7. The Plan needs to address the need to provide effectiveness--defined as quality teaching and student learning--within a context of efficient and accountable planning and management.
8. The Draft Plan significantly understates the value and future of public service and outreach. The proposal is silent on the role and potential of Cooperative Extension and Women, Work, and Community.

The Directions and Objectives of the Plan

1. The public supports the community colleges because they address the needs of working, underemployed, unemployed, and displaced Mainers of all ages; because of the UMS plan's emphasis on four-year and graduate degrees, the UMS plan could be viewed as "classiest" or "elitist."
2. The emphasis on university-based research will create fewer jobs than would an increased emphasis on helping non-traditional students earn a college degree.
3. The Board and Chancellor deserve credit for undertaking the Plan in light of current and
future conditions. However, their conclusions and recommendations generate disagreement over the proper direction.

4. The Plan is transformational. It will make it possible to continue a university presence in northern Maine.

5. The Plan presents a framework similar to a constitution: it establishes possibilities that are confined only by the parameters of the framework.

6. The proposal will allow USM to flourish in response to the needs of the region.

7. The trustees need to build on the strengths that exist as well as build strengths in those areas that need a stronger university presence.

8. People in the business community feel very good about the Plan. They see it as being long overdue.

9. The descriptions of the specific roles each university will play are too negative and limiting. The Plan has to state the possibilities that exist as a result of the Plan. The language in the Draft Plan expresses the wrong tone.

10. The general direction is good, but more should be done to express the specific niches that each university and campus will pursue.

11. The Plan acknowledges that for years UMS has stressed "access" over "quality." It's time for it to use its resources to elevate quality in priority areas.

12. USM should be given an opportunity to build its research capacity. Rather than talk about USM having a "limited" research capacity, the Revised Plan should describe it as "more focused."

13. The Revised Plan needs to be more specific about the role of diversity in the future of UMS.

14. The Revised Plan should specifically address the Governor's call for a greater number and percentage of Maine residents with at least a four-year degree.

15. The Revised Plan should include a better explanation of how the different universities will address the state's overall need for a broad set of higher educational options.

16. The Plan needs to clarify that the liberal arts are central to each of our universities, not just to UMF.

17. The Plan needs to include a clear vision for the future of libraries within the System and throughout the State, supporting a high-quality, integrated consortium.

Process for Developing and Refining

1. The top-down model being used to develop the plan excludes groups and individuals who have a stake in the outcome; whose perspectives are necessary to construct an effective plan.

2. The process to develop the Draft Plan has resulted in a proposal that is irredeemably flawed.

3. Those who say the Plan is irredeemably flawed are predisposed to fighting the Plan and therefore it's debatable whether they should be involved in refining the Plan.

4. Effective strategic planning requires buy-in and consensus-building. The Board should abandon its current process and redesign a process that is more collaborative.

5. The System needs to do a better job of communicating opportunities to participate in the planning process as well as any changes and developments in the process. The fact-finding sessions of the fall were not well publicized or structured in any way that employees and students would recognize as potentially dramatic and profound.
II. Proposed Structure

Merging and Consolidating Universities and Campuses

1. The Draft Plan insufficiently explains the logic and ignores the practical realities of grouping institutions according to geography and/or size.
2. The Plan does not acknowledge the enormous growth that Maine will continue to experience in York and Cumberland counties and along the Interstate 95 corridor. The demands for traditional and non-traditional university education in those regions will strain USM far beyond the vision and role for it expressed in the Plan.
3. Reference to the future of UCB is absent from the Plan. The Revised Plan needs to address this gaping hole and talk about what is envisioned for UCB's employees, students, and programs.
4. The timetable for restructuring is unrealistic in the written document and unclear in the responses to questions given at public forums.
5. The Plan jeopardizes the universities hard-earned reputation for academic quality and cost-effectiveness. [said by advocates from each of the seven universities]
6. The University has stretched its resources extensively in order to fulfill its mission. [said by advocates from each of the seven universities]
7. The Plan, as drafted, will initially create financial hardships that will negatively affect academic quality and student services. [said by advocates from each of the seven universities]
8. If University College, as a System-operated entity, is restructured and its centers become affiliated with individual universities, distance education could become marginalized.
9. The Revised Plan needs to explain how the System defines and determines the viability of a center.

The Proposed University of Northern Maine

1. Merger is not necessary to achieve the savings and goals of the Draft Plan.
2. The three universities have tried in the past to collaborate on academic issues with each other but efforts have not been successful, mainly because of student disinterest.
3. UMFK and UMM will be disadvantaged because their student numbers are smaller than those of UMPI.
4. UMM is disadvantaged because of its distance from Presque Isle and Fort Kent.
5. The essence of a small campus environment means that leadership is local, decision makers are on scene, can be reached easily and conveniently, and decisions reached quickly.
6. Significant investment in technology and videoconferencing will be necessary to provide feasible collaboration between faculty members spread across three campuses located hours away from each other.
7. Some faculty members say the prospect of collaborating with peers at the other institutions is a "stressful proposition" because of differences in styles and personalities. Forcing us to work together is a recipe for disaster.
8. If the merger takes place, the faculties of each university have to take leadership roles in developing and implementing the concept of "three campuses, one faculty."
9. The concept of a "rural comprehensive university" will discourage, not attract, potential students.
10. If a merger takes place, its central administration should be in a neutral location.
11. Students who want to compete in intercollegiate athletics will lose opportunities to do so.
12. If sports teams are combined or offered only at one campus, the quality of student life will suffer for many students, even those who don't play sports but simply like to watch them.
13. The news media are overstating student and employee animosity toward other campuses in the proposed UNM.
14. Any emphasis on "rural comprehensive" education must do so within a global, multicultural context.
15. The academic quality of certain disciplines offered at UMM, UMFK, and UMPI differs and will need to be resolved in ways that improve, not weaken, teaching and learning. Disparity of quality exists among the three smaller universities.
16. Faculty and administrators will need to stop looking at other universities within the System as competitors and start looking at them as collaborators, especially those universities that will be involved in mergers.
17. Having a president at each campus has been beneficial to the universities, their host communities, and to their political clout.
18. Should the Plan be adopted as presented, the role of the president and each campus's day-to-day leader will need to be developed. The model does not exist within UMS.
19. UMS should examine the consortium model that Penn State and other institutions have adopted. It may be a better alternative for UMM, UMFK, and UMPI than an outright merger.
20. Students at the smaller universities will suffer by not having a campus-based president who can represent their concerns and issues at the System level.
21. Students at UMFK and the other smaller universities prefer the personal assistance they receive from staff and will not respond well to having to self-manage registration and other matters online or through a recorded telephone menu of options.
22. If universities are merged into one, special arrangements must be made to protect endowment funds developed by each of the campuses.
23. The proposed merger is the first step in the eventual move to close one or more campuses or to turn them over to the Community College System.
24. The System has given mixed messages about whether faculty and/or students will be expected to travel to other campuses to teach or take one or more classes. This issue needs to be clarified once and for all.
25. Merger of UMFK, UMM, and UMPI will create greater political clout with State policymakers for the universities as well as for northern and eastern Maine.
26. Under the proposed plan, USM's acquisition of UMA and several University College centers will give it enormous political clout and therefore could undermine the concept of a coordinated, statewide system of universities.
27. UMPI recently completed revising its general-education requirements and would have to start anew if UMPI is merged with UMM and UMFK.

The Proposed merger of USM and UMA

1. USM will have the resources, numbers, and management on its side and will not operate or treat UMA fairly or comparably. UMA will receive what's left over after USM's priorities are
addressed.
2. UMaine will benefit from a USM/UMA merger because UMaine will have a narrow mission, while USM will suffer because of its broader, disparate administrative responsibilities.
3. UMA will lose funding and influence within the System if it becomes part of USM.
4. The merger of USM and UMA would give the new entity responsibility for serving the regional needs of three-quarters of the State's population, which is encouraging for those who live, work, or go to school south of Waterville but a real threat to those who live, work, or go to school north and east of Kennebec County.
5. "Satellite" campuses will not be treated as equal; they will be subordinate to the larger campus within a multi-campus university and/or if the university president is based primarily at one campus.
6. USM and UMA have different academic cultures and standards. If those schools are merged, it will be extremely challenging to overcome those differences in a coherent manner.
7. Through sustained performance, UMA has earned the right to be a free-standing university. It is the most cost-efficient university within the System.

Suggested Alternatives to the Plan's Proposed Re-configurations

1. UMaine and UMM
2. UMaine and UCB
3. UMM and UMA
4. UMA and UMF
5. UMA, UMF, and UMM
6. UMF and UMM
7. UMFK and UMPI
8. UMA, UCB, UMM, UMF, and the University College centers at Ellsworth, Thomaston, Bath/Brunswick, Rumford-Mexico and possibly Norway/South Paris and LAC (to form the "University of Central Maine" or "Maine State University")
9. UMA, UCB, UMM, UMFK, UMPI, UMF, and the Houlton, Ellsworth, and Thomaston University College centers (to form Maine State University)
10. USM and the University College centers in Sanford and Saco-Biddeford
11. All University College centers with the "University of Central Maine" or "Maine State University"

The Importance of Name

1. The universities need to protect the brand equity and identity that each has developed under its existing name.
2. When marketing a small university, it is beneficial to have the location of the school as part of the university's name.
3. Decisions over what to call each university should be made in consultation with the university itself.
4. The name "University of Northern Maine" is a misnomer for UMM; Machias is in Downeast Maine, not northern Maine.
5. Consider the name "University of Rural Maine." It's more reflective of the Plan's intent and is more accurate.
6. Augusta is in central Maine, not southern Maine, and therefore should not be forced to call its university a campus of USM.
7. UMF is more than simply a liberal arts college; its name should reflect its broader purpose, its history, and its location.
8. Confusion over the "University of Maine" name will continue if the System itself retains that name even after the others are divested of it.

Centralization and Consolidation

1. The ERP project has demonstrated the benefits of centralization and new uses of technology.
2. The Revised Plan needs to be more specific about what aspects of operation will be centralized and/or consolidated, and where those will be based.
3. The Plan needs to address the role and functions to be assumed by the Chancellor's Office and System-wide Services.
4. The Plan and responses to questions create uncertainty whether each campus of a multi-campus university would handle its own recruitment and admissions.
5. The System should not centralize admissions nor should it determine which campus or university a student will be assigned to.
6. The System's interest in, and financial support for, campus-based student recruitment initiatives will help improve in-state and out-of-state recruitment.
7. Some aspects of each university's advancement/development functions can be centralized but the content of messages, strategies, and donor stewardship needs to be maintained at the campus level.

III. Academic Programs and Services

Phase-out of Associate-degree Programs

1. The Community College System is ill-suited to provide certain associate-degree programs that currently are provided by one of our universities—e.g., forest resources, dental hygiene, and veterinary science.
2. UCB and UMA have shown that students perceive a difference between an associate-degree experience provided in a university setting and an associate-degree experience provided by a community college. That's why students are willing to pay a university tuition rate rather than a lower community-college tuition rate.
3. Overall the faculty at UMA and UCB has attained higher academic degrees than what students will find at a community college.
4. The trustees should consider maintaining associate degrees for students who want more than a community college experience but, because of circumstances, preparedness, or lack of confidence, are not ready to commit to a four-year program.
5. The Community College System does not have the capacity or resources to handle existing demand, not to mention increased demand that would likely result from the System's elimination of associate-degree programs.
6. If the Community Colleges are not yet ready for the increased demands, UMS should not force them to accept them.
7. Enrollment numbers at the Community Colleges and the Universities demonstrate that many students see a difference between the two in the quality of the educational experience and are willing to pay more to take associate-degree courses at a University.
8. Though the Plan promises to provide for "current students" already enrolled in associate-degree programs, what assurances can be given to students who enroll in those programs in the 2004-05 academic year?
9. UMS will lose tuition dollars and students if it phases out its associate-degree offerings.
10. The University System needs to reassure the public and prospective students that any talk about eliminating programs won't happen immediately.
11. A high percentage of UMA and UCB students are women and non-traditional students, many of whom are lower-income. Eliminating associate-degree programs will create unique hardships for those students and may force them to drop their efforts to seek a college degree.
12. The public will not support the Plan if it eliminates associate-degree programs.
13. Discussions should take place to see whether Eastern Maine Community College would be interested in absorbing UCB's programs and employees.
14. The quality of instruction will suffer during phase-out period, as the good faculty who teach two-year programs will be seeking new positions while those who remain will be instructors who are preparing to retire, having difficulty finding a new job, or part-time adjunct faculty with other concerns besides students and teaching.
15. The University System should retain all or some of its associate-degree offerings until it is clearly determined that the Community College System has the capacity to support demand.

Distance Education

1. Distance Learning needs to be strengthened, not weakened. The University System has the potential to become a public "University of Phoenix."
2. University College centers and sites have changed in name over the years but continue to offer unique learning opportunities that are growing in demand, especially among non-traditional learners.
3. The nature of the UC centers and sites differs from what exists at the traditional campuses. The personnel needed to plan and operate those centers and sites are different, too. Those revising the strategic plan should not assume that they are interchangeable positions and talents.
4. UMS led the way in the early 1990s by having a vision for virtual education. It is no longer leading edge but can regain that title with a focus on performance and efficiency.
5. The Plan acknowledges the need and opportunity to use ITV for new and expanded purposes, especially to provide quality education to place-bound students.
6. If distance education is de-centralized, campuses will have a harder time making available courses and programs statewide, possibly losing the critical mass necessary to make instruction and learning meaningful. If Distance Education is de-centralized, the System still will have to play a coordinating role to ensure statewide delivery and avoid unnecessary obstacles and obstructions.
7. University College will suffer from de-centralization and from changes in ITV.
8. Fragmenting ITV will create more duplication of effort and less efficiency, which is contrary to the goals of the Plan.
9. Seeking cost-savings is good but closing down outreach centers and ITV sites will limit access, especially in areas of the State with high unemployment and non-traditional and place-
bound students.
10. The Maine Department of Education's ATM technology is less prevalent in Maine than the current ITV network. Accessibility to university education will decrease unless the number of ATV sites is increased.
11. The ATM and ITV technologies do not interface well. Concerns exist regarding who will bear the cost and responsibility for trouble-shooting when an ATM site experiences trouble during transmission of a UMS-based course. Concerns also exist about whether the University System's use of ATM would jeopardize the e-rate that Maine's schools get based on community wealth.
12. Half of ITV credit hours are generated by remote sites; the other half are generated at University College centers. The total number of credit hours delivered through ITV is increasing but the 50/50 distribution of credit hours remains constant. ITV is a growth area for the System and will continue to be, especially if the System pursues a strategy of attracting more non-traditional students to our universities.

Graduate Education

1. Creating graduate-education opportunities for the smaller campuses is a good thing.
2. Re-organization isn't necessary for the campuses to collaborate on offering graduate-level courses and degrees.
3. Graduate programs should be based on the region's and State's needs and student demand.
4. Graduate education is much better suited for distance learning than is undergraduate education. Graduate students are better prepared to use and maximize technology as a learning mode.

Digital Library

1. The emphasis on building a digital library is good for everyone so long as each campus is able to maintain the level of holdings and access it needs to support students and faculty.
2. The campuses need to be assured that their special collections (e.g., Acadian Archives) are not relocated to Orono as part of strengthening Fogler Library as Maine's designated research library.

Muskie School

1. The media have reported conflicting information about whether the Muskie School will have a physical presence and staff at UMA. The issue is important and needs to be clarified.
2. The Revised Plan needs to address whether the Trustees and Chancellor envision both the Muskie School and the Margaret Chase Smith Center increasing their presence and involvement with State Government and in Augusta.

IV. Effects on Faculty, Staff, and Students

Faculty and Staff
1. The Plan will have a negative effect on employees and employment.
2. The proposal to increase faculty compensation to 90 percent of the national average by 2008 is too slow a pace.
3. Given that the universities are having a hard time recruiting and maintaining quality faculties, it is unclear how the Plan will improve that situation at a time when it is trying to cut millions in costs.
4. The Plan, and the administration's comments about the Plan, are overly optimistic about being able to achieve the estimated savings through attrition and retirements.
5. Centralization will create heavier individual workloads at the campus level and more jobs at the System level.
6. Faculty from merged institutions might feel devalued and be less productive.
7. Faculty may be oppositional and not work well together.
8. Faculty might be more hierarchical, with some faculty diminished.
9. Students will receive weaker services and less individual attention if certain administrative functions are centralized at the System level.
10. The smaller communities will suffer if jobs are eliminated because of centralization.
11. The Draft Plan promises additional compensation and professional development opportunities for faculty and professional staff but not for classified staff.
12. The Revised Plan needs to provide greater clarification about the impact of attrition, centralization, and early retirements on employee workload.
13. The phrase "workforce management" is perceived by some as a euphemism for "relocate or lose your job."

**Students**

1. Students will suffer because of a lack of access and higher tuition.
2. 3,100 associate-degree students will be displaced unless they enroll in four-year or two-plus-two programs.
3. UMA students will have to pay a higher tuition rate if UMA becomes part of USM.
4. Maine's universities will become elitist if they drop associate-degree programs.
5. The new plan needs to assure a strong student voice with the BOT for each campus as well as each university.
6. If ITV sites are closed in favor of ATM locales, UMS students will still need technical and support services. If ITV personnel are eliminated, who will provide those services at the ATM/high school sites? Presumably UMS will have to share costs or pay in full for those services.

**Intercollegiate Athletics**

1. Discussion of cutting back the number and nature of athletic teams at the smaller campuses would hurt student recruitment and retention.
2. The smaller communities where the proposed UNM campuses exist take a lot of pride in the success and attention that their sports teams receive.
3. The smaller campuses are able to attract a more diverse student body in part because of the availability of athletics programs.
V. Funding and Cost Savings

Funding

1. A new funding formula should be developed if the System is indeed reorganized.
2. The individual universities and the System will suffer a net revenue loss by phasing out associate-degree offerings.
3. The System needs to make sure that re-organization does not negatively affect a university's eligibility to receive student financial aid dollars.
4. Any cost-savings realized through this plan will be siphoned away by the Legislature to support the Community College System.
5. The Legislature and the Governor will view the System's ability to save money as an opportunity to reduce the System's State appropriation.
6. Greater clarification is needed to explain what is meant by "performance measures" and "performance-based budgeting."
7. The System needs to continue aggressively seeking increases in State funding and not resign itself to the belief that policymakers won't make higher education funding a priority. Avoid taking a fatalistic approach to dealing with the Governor and Legislature.
8. The Legislature has been very supportive of UMS, and the System is in good standing. However, in these times of tight budgets, legislators will be asking the System what it is doing to become more efficient and to use resources wisely. There is an advantage in being able to point out that the System has identified ways to reduce expenses and generate money to reinvest in academics. Being able to show that the System has responsibly made reductions, and that faculty and administration are engaged in the changes, provides a strong basis for requesting additional support from the Legislature. The System has the opportunity to gain political advantage with the State Legislature by showing that "we are doing our job."
9. The BOT needs to address how the debt of each campus involved in a merger will be managed.

Cost Savings

1. How will the System be able to invest in new programs, given that it is facing immediate needs to reduce its budget and expenditures? In the short term, if centers are closed, programs are phased out, and revenues are lost, where will money come from for new programs?
2. Opportunities for growth will be diminished by the elimination of associate degrees and by limitations on entrepreneurial activities.
3. Reducing the number of presidents and vice presidents will not result in meaningful cost-savings.
4. Educating UMA students costs less per-student than at other UMS institutions – and even less than at Cony High School – yet the Board is proposing changes that will affect UMA students and staff more dramatically than the students and staff of any of the other universities.
5. The $15.5 million in anticipated savings is based on too many faulty assumptions and needs to be substantiated in greater detail than what has been provided on the website.
6. The Plan needs to provide details about how the Chancellor's Office and System-wide Services would contribute to cost savings and greater efficiencies.
7. Centralization is ineffective and inefficient. It will create more bureaucracy at the expense of
teaching, research, and learning.

VI. Implementation

1. A high level of unease exists about the process to be used to develop the implementation plan. Faculty and staff should have input into the implementation process as well as the implementation planning.
2. A faculty/administration summit should be held to identify ways to overcome concerns and objections related to governance and academic planning.
3. A staff/administration summit should be held to identify the pros and cons of centralization of certain administrative functions.
4. Faculty members seek a substantive role in developing the implementation plan as well as a leading role in academic issues, in keeping with the principle and practice of shared governance. The Board and the Chancellor need to communicate in detail what the faculty's role will be.
5. Faculty members perceive the proposed mergers as a threat to their autonomy. The administration and trustees need to provide reassurance.
6. Campus governance issues can be overcome but it will be time-consuming for an already-overextended faculty.
7. Some faculty members will not take part in discussing implementation if AFUM maintains its current position on the Plan.