USM as Maine’s Metropolitan University

• The original inspiration for USM as Maine’s Metropolitan University came from the university’s “Direction Package” effort of 2013-14; and

• UMS Chancellor James Page and Board of Trustees endorsed and funded the initiative at their July 2014 meeting.
“To recommend a strategy and implementation plan that will make the Metropolitan University concept the strategic focus of USM going forward, maximize its impact within USM and with its community partners, and afford competitive advantage to position USM for growth and success....”
The MUSG consists of 30 individuals – including faculty, students, staff, and community partners. At Outreach Meetings between June 11th and August 21, with each USM college and on each USM campus:

• We heard hopes and fears for the MU idea from over 250 faculty, staff, students and community stakeholders.

• We learned there is broad support for the MU initiative throughout USM, on each campus, among faculty, students, and staff, as well as community partners.
We looked at best MU practices among these highly recommended peer institutions:

- Portland State University
- U. of Wisconsin/Milwaukee
- Purdue University/Indianapolis
- Northern Kentucky University
- SUNY/Binghamton
- U. of Michigan/Dearborn
- Arizona State University
- Utah Valley University
- UMass/Boston and Lowell
Some Core Characteristics of MU’s

We learned there is no pat or fixed formula for building a Metropolitan University. They are as diverse as:

- University of Pennsylvania
- Colombia University
- UMass Boston
- Maryville College
- Rutgers University/Camden
- Old Dominion University
- University of Colorado/Denver
- Syracuse University
- Purdue University/Indianapolis
- Medgar Evers College

- And each has found its own way forward, given its resources and setting.
1) Conviction that, as anchor institutions, they have the skills and intellectual, human, technological, and social resources to engage in the critical challenges facing their communities;
2) Close alignment of:

- Mission
- Leadership
- Branding and marketing
- Budgetary support
- Infrastructure development
- Faculty and staff development
- Recognition and rewards
- Strategic plan that represents the MU’s commitment to *community engagement*;
3) Engagement that is not simply transactional, based on considerations of exchange or one-sided benefits; but is purposefully organized toward the goals of building long-term relationships of mutual respect, trust, and benefit with its partners, and of its being transformative for all parties involved.
A Systematic Approach

For greatest effect, then, the MU idea must be *systematically* integrated and aligned throughout the institution; USM will need to focus its culture and:

• Adopt policies to make engaged teaching and learning opportunities available *throughout* the university (as opposed to scattershot);

• Remove institutional barriers and impediments to these (like silos);

• Provide robust incentives and support for engagement, and recognize and reward outstanding successes;

• Regularly and consistently measure performance and progress.
A Systematic Approach Means

- Senior leadership with university-wide reach
- Faculty capacity-building for teaching and research
- Alignment of tenure and promotion standards
- Curricular development and reform
- Both curricular and co-curricular opportunities for students
- Resources and structure for regionally-relevant research
- Resources and structure for outreach
- Economic development strategy and staffing
- College access and pipeline programs
- Platform partnerships
- Consistent messaging about the centrality of community engagement
“USM is an integral and indispensable partner to the communities it serves, and takes great pride in the energetic support of its many, engaged partners. Engaged teaching, learning, scholarship, creation, and service thrive in a seamless organizational structure that ensures an integrated and fully aligned student pathway from recruitment to graduation….
“….We are an accessible and affordable source of transformative higher education for our students, a birthplace for first and new careers, an incubator for applied research and economic development, and a training ground for public service. We are Maine’s Metropolitan University.”
“Our Metropolitan University seeks deep and abiding engagement with community partners to serve students and build the future of the region - economically, socially, ecologically, and civically - through mutually beneficial and rewarding partnerships.”
Immediate Goals

To realize this vision, USM will need to change:

1) To re-invent itself as a community-based institution, one that invites and welcomes the community onto the campus and extends its classrooms, scholarship, and related activities into the community through mutually beneficial and enduring partnerships;

2) To achieve Elective Carnegie Classification as an Engaged University in the year 2020; and
3) In the process, to become known throughout the region and the Northeast as a leader in merging educational excellence and innovation with the opportunity to test one’s learning against critical thinking and problem-solving challenges outside the classroom.
Definition:

“Community engagement describes the collaboration between institutional higher education and their communities – local, regional, state, national, and global – for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity.”
Several Dozen Indicators of:

- Institutional identity and culture
- Institutional commitment and impact
- Curricular engagement
- Outreach and partnerships
MUSG Administrative Recommendations

For the President:

Understand his/her important role in encouraging engagement in the world around us by promoting and encouraging faculty to pursue community-engaged teaching, learning, scholarship, creation, and service.

For the Provost:

Recognize that, as much as any campus administrator, s/he will set the tone for where community engagement fits as an institutional priority for faculty and how it will be rewarded;
For the new MU Senior Leadership Position:

Understand that s/he is responsible and accountable across USM to advance the MU mission, implement its requirements, and achieve Carnegie Elective Classification as an Engaged University in 2020

For the College Deans:

Take line responsibility for MU implementation within their college and work to foster needed cross-college collaboration;
For the MUSG, itself:

Be reduced in size to some 10-12 members appointed by the President, and continued through 2020 as a visioning, advisory, and support group to the MU senior leadership officer

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Together with a limited number of specific actions for each!
For the Board of Trustees:

Inasmuch as the UMS Chancellor and Board of Trustees have endorsed USM’s becoming Maine’s Metropolitan University, the MUSG believes they must bear responsibility for assuring that adequate resources for success are made available during this critical, five-year transition period.
These address:

• Senior Leadership Position for MU Initiative
• Annual operating budget
• Community Engagement and Career Development Center
• Curriculum design
• Internship and volunteer activities
• Comprehensive, effective student advising
• Faculty training and development
• Seed funding for initiatives
• Training for staff
• Rewards and recognition
• Internal and external communications
• Community needs assessment
• Website design
• Assessment and tracking
Moving Forward

- A final report the Board of Trustees due in early December
- A Convocation on December 4th and 5th for all stakeholders in the future of Maine’s Metropolitan University
- Carnegie Classification in 2020
Conclusion

• There is no pat or formula for creating a Metropolitan University

• A caution:

“The lure and familiarity of traditional models of higher education are powerful.... The traditional university has been accepted for hundreds of years; the metropolitan university model is brand new by comparison. Even our own faculty need constant reminding that where they work is not like where they were educated.”
USM as Maine’s Metropolitan University will be what WE, together, make it!

What can YOU do to help create the future of USM as Maine’s Metropolitan University?
For more information:

- Visit [www.usm.maine.edu/musteeringgroup](http://www.usm.maine.edu/musteeringgroup)

- Attend the MU Convocation on December 4th at 4:00 p.m. in the Wishcamper Center. Special Guest, Barbara Holland of Portland State U.

- See and read the full report when it is published on the President’s website in early December

“Unless education has some frame of reference it is bound to be aimless, lacking a unified objective…. There exists in this country such a unified frame. It is called democracy.”