

UNIVERSITY OF MAINE SYSTEM  
Board of Trustees Meeting

Zoom Meeting  
October 26, 2020

**Academic and Student Affairs Committee Meeting**

**Present: Committee Members:** Lisa Eames; Chair, Timothy Doak, Michael Michaud, James Erwin, David MacMahon, and Betsey Timm. **Other Trustees/Non-Voting:** Trevor Hustus, Trish Riley and Jessica Nixon (for Pender Makin). **Chancellor:** Dannel Malloy. **Presidents:** Glenn Cummings, Deborah Hedeon, Edward Serna, Rebecca Wyke, and Joan Ferrini-Mundy. **Faculty Representatives:** Lisa Leduc, Harlan Onsrud, Tim Surette, Clyde Mitchell, Kennedy Rubert-Nason, and William Otto. **Student Representatives:** Ameya Karapurkar, Salvatore Cardinale, Emma Jones, Abigail Despres, and David Ballard. **System Staff:** Ellen Doughty, Robert Placido, Rosa Redonnett, Carolyn Dorsey, James Thelen, Laura Cyr, David Demers, Kim Jenkins, Sam Warren and Ryan Low. **Others Present:** John Volin, Jeannine Uzzi, and Megan Clough.

**Committee Members Absent:** Mark Gardner and Pender Makin.

Trustee Eames, Chair, welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order. The Clerk performed a roll call of the Committee members present.

**Awarding of Academic Degrees**

Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Success and Credential Attainment Rosa Redonnett asked the Board of Trustees to approve the awarding of academic degrees for 2021 commencement.

On a motion by Trustee Michaud, which was seconded by Trustee MacMahon, and approved by a roll call vote of all Trustees present, the Academic and Student Affairs Committee approved this item to be forwarded to the Consent Agenda at the November 16, 2020 Board of Trustees meeting for approval of the following resolution:

That the Board of Trustees of the University of Maine System accepts the recommendation of the Academic and Student Affairs Committee and authorizes the awarding of degrees during Commencement ceremonies for the 2020-2021 academic year to those students fully recommended by the appropriate faculties and the presidents of the respective institutions of the University of Maine System.

**Academic Year (AY) Calendar: AY 2023-2024 & AY 2024-2025**

Ms. Redonnett presented the academic year calendars for 2023-2024 & 2024-2025. The calendars do not require Board of Trustee approval and were presented for information purposes only.

**Imperative for Change**

Ms. Redonnett and Director of Learning and Organizational Development Megan Clough provided an update on the UMS Imperative for Change initiative. The Chancellor affirmed the condemnation of racial injustice and violence against Black Americans, as well as a commitment to examining, confronting and ending inequities in our universities and communities wherever and against whomever they exist. Since that time, the Human Resources team and the Academic Affairs Office jointly has continued on-going effort to review our history, to assess current practices and to recommend future initiatives to ensure the university is not only ending any inequities but creating an environment that actively seeks and welcomes a diverse population of faculty, students and staff. Additionally, the team conducted a resource analysis across the System and met with the UM Grant Leadership Department and the General Counsel's

Office to inquire about funding for the initiative. A starting analysis where the team assessed progress since UMS Talent & Inclusion Competitive Advantage White Paper was presented in September 2019 and a review of all UMS employees, students, and Trustees for diversity, equity, and inclusion was also completed. A history of UMS initiatives with similar intent spanning back from 1989 to present day was provided to the Committee. The presenters outlined a short-term initial proposal of action plans to be implemented within the next year. These are plans that are intentional to be sustainable and in the immediate and long term future for generations of the University of Maine System. Additionally, they provided information on the University Diversity Councils and the UMS Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Steering Committee and how they are addressing diversity, inclusion, and equity in the areas of human capital, managing culture, education, research, and services. Since the charge from the Chancellor the Academic and Student Affairs Office has taken actions to review the UMS student conduct code update, enrollment application, and testing protocols through an anti-bias lens. Additionally, the Human Resources Department has been working to revamp and build on to the “Building UMS Talent & Inclusion Competitive Advantage” white paper, that was submitted to Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration & Treasurer Ryan Low back in September 2019. The Trustees asked what changes have been made since the last time this initiative was presented, in order to make sure that it is successful. Ms. Redonnett and Ms. Clough explained that one of the issues in the past was that there has been a lot of turn-over in key positions and lack of funding in the past but that these issues have improved and set the stage for a more successful outcome. Chancellor Malloy stated that the Academic & Student Affairs (ASA) Committee should provide a progress update to the Board on a quarterly basis and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (VCAA) Dr. Robert Placido agreed and stated that it would be added to the ASA Committee work plan.

### **Fall Enrollment and Return Rate**

VCAA Placido and Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Carolyn Dorsey provided a brief update on the Fall 2020 Enrollment Report as of the October 15th census date and the Return Rate Report. VCAA Placido stated that nationally higher education institutions are down in enrollment, with Community Colleges hit with the most severe drops, somewhere between 10 and 20 percent. He stated that UMS is in the top 4 percent of public universities nationally for enrollment. As of October 15<sup>th</sup>, UMS is down just 0.6 percent when compared to last year. Although UMS is down slightly, it is actually a great achievement because it was projected that the System could be down almost 4 percent, without adding in losses due to the pandemic. UMPI is up 13.2 percent when compared to last year at this time, due to an aggressive marketing campaign and increased enrollment in the Academic Partnerships online courses. UM and USM had a combined increased enrollment of 8.6 percent in the graduate program. One area of concern is the matriculation of Maine high school students to the UMS. Currently, UMS is down 320 students or 10.5 percent from last year in this demographic. Additionally, approximately 6 percent of high school students deferred enrollment to Spring 2021. Chancellor Malloy has charged Executive Director of Public Affairs Dan Demeritt with developing several comprehensive and exciting marketing initiatives to help capture increased enrollment from this population. VCAA Placido explained that it is extremely hard to move the needle when it comes to traditional return rate data, due to the very narrowly defined cohort of students that are being measured. This cohort only includes first time, traditionally aged, college students. UMS has moved to measuring all students on a Fall-to-Fall basis, which allows for a greater data pool and inclusivity among the many diverse students demographics across the System. Based on the data collected it has been found that if UMS can keep the student for the first two years, they will most likely stay with UMS through completion of their degree. UMS is currently down 695 or 19.9 percent on applications as compared to last year. Major factors to this decrease include students considering a gap year, lack of college counseling in high schools, and financial hardships for families due to the pandemic. In-state first year student applications are down 62.3 percent, which is a major concern for VCAA Placido. Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Carolyn Dorsey provided an update on the UMS Academic Partnerships (AP) program. Currently USM, UMFK, and UMPI are working with AP on various accelerated online

course programs. When UMS first started working with AP initial enrollment totals were less than expected; however, the total enrollments have jumped from 60 in October 2019 to 490 as of October 2020. Even with this increase, numbers are still lower than expected but UMS is hopeful that new program offerings and increased communication with AP will continue to grow enrollment.

### **Programs for Examination**

VCAA Placido provided a brief update on the progress of the annual Programs for Examination (PFE) process. The annual PFE process was initiated in Spring and over the Summer, each academic unit was given their base data and asked to provide a series of additional data points. All of the University level data was summarized and shared with the Chief Academic Officers (CAOs). The CAOs have until November 15th to notify VCAA Placido which of the programs will be further examined this year. By March, the CAOs will present action plans for each of the programs identified. VCAA Placido provided an example of the PFE data to show the Trustees what information is being collected and tracked currently and what additional information is being added for this year. He also stated that more information about this item will be provided at the November 16<sup>th</sup> Board of Trustees meeting. UM Student Representative Abigail Despres asked if data surrounding student perspective on the program was included in the PFE process. VCAA Placido stated that the full course evaluations do include that data but the PFE process does not currently track it. He thanked Ms. Despres for the feedback and said that he would look into including that data in the next round. Trustee Erwin asked if there could be more data provided concerning program relevance to current workforce needs as part of the PFE process. VCAA Placido said that he would bring this recommendation to the next CAO meeting.

### **Brightspace Learning Management System Migration**

Chief Information Officer David Demers provided a brief overview of the replacement of the legacy Learning Management System (Blackboard Learn) with the modern, mobile-friendly, cloudbased platform, Brightspace from Desire2Learn. Full deployment and conversion of courses to the Brightspace platform was implemented for the Fall 2020 term and \$1.4 million in one-time support was provided to campuses to manage training, course conversion for Fall 2020 launch. Recently completed work includes the Brightspace Virtual Symposium held in May 2020, full integration between MaineStreet/Peoplesoft and Brightspace and integration of 3rd Party tools and plugins. On August 31, UMS successfully launched Brightspace as the official LMS, replacing Blackboard Learn. Overall, feedback has indicated success, with no critical or widespread issues reported. The Implementation Core Team and Technical Teams continue to meet weekly to work through and respond to post-implementation needs. Currently, the project stands at 95% complete. Work in progress includes further development and refinement of user roles and permissions, sunseting Blackboard LMS, Brightspace Governance planning, and course-level activity reporting. Next steps for the project include integration of the Brightspace Activity Reporting Datamart, full grading integration with MaineStreet, and deployment of the Brightspace Learning Outcomes tool and Course Merchant.

### **Office of Organizational Effectiveness (OE) Update**

Director of Organizational Effectiveness Kim Jenkins provided an overview of the UMS Office of Organizational Effectiveness (OE) and the projects that the department are working on. OE operates as internal organizational consultants who partner with System and University leadership to support UMS efforts toward strategic change management, organizational performance excellence, and continuous improvement. The OE staff helps campuses, departments, and teams to challenge the status quo and create and achieve their own objectives within larger UMS priorities and goals. OE provides executive coaching and leadership mentoring, team development, meeting management, facilitation, process mapping, and more. Several teams are currently engaged in improvement and alignment efforts. Dr. Jenkins provided the highlights from OE's work with the Academic Affairs Office to improve the UMS undergraduate

application process and disciplinary question review and their work with the Human Resources department to help drive and coordinate a new process for eliminating and avoiding the creation of duplicate employee identification numbers.

### **Unified Accreditation Update**

VCAA Placido and UMS Chief of Staff (COS) and General Counsel, Mr. James Thelen provided a brief update on UMS unified accreditation progress. Currently, UMS is focusing on identifying the leadership team who will lead the effort of the unified accreditation initiative as it moves forward. COS Thelen reminded the Committee that unified accreditation was not brought forth to create new offices, functions, or demand for resources and staff to do what UMS universities have already done when they were separately accredited. Going forward the organization and effort to prepare the self-study to be reviewed by the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE) during their Fall 2022 visit, will be kept at the university level with coordination by the System. A Committee of faculty leaders from the faculty senate and assembly has been formed in an effort to build out the System-wide Faculty Governance structure, which is one of the requirements for unified accreditation. UMS has been working closely with the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE), to make sure that financial aid administration between UMS and USDOE in unified accreditation continues to allow UMS universities to manage their own federal financial aid programs as they did when they were separately accredited. Such an arrangement is not prohibited by federal higher education law, but is an exception to USDOE's normal practices. USDOE's Deputy Undersecretary has committed to formalizing this practice and arrangement for UMS with unified accreditation.

### **Change to Board of Trustees Policy 308 – Accreditation**

COS Thelen provided an overview of the proposed changes to Board Policy 308 – *Accreditation*, to reflect the System's attainment of unified accreditation. Discussion among Trustees at the Board's September 14, 2020 Academic and Student Affairs Committee suggested that proposed Policy 308 include a direction to consider and, where appropriate, incorporate unified accreditation principles in all future System and university-specific work on mission, strategic planning, and academic program review and approval. COS Thelen worked with UMS Presidents, Board faculty and student representatives, and other constituencies to revise the current proposed language to address the Trustees' above-noted request and is presenting the revised language at this meeting, with the intention that it be approved to be forwarded to the November 16, 2020 Board of Trustees meeting for approval.

On a motion by Trustee Doak, which was seconded by Trustee Michaud, and approved by a roll call vote of all Trustees present, the Academic and Student Affairs Committee agreed to forward this item to the November 16, 2020 Board of Trustees meeting for approval of the following resolution:

That the Board of Trustees accepts the recommendation of the Academic & Student Affairs Committee and approves the proposed changes to Board of Trustees Policy 308 to incorporate the principles of Unified Accreditation.

### **Faculty Representatives Discussion**

UMF Faculty Representative Clyde Mitchell stated that he has heard from students that they are seriously considering the option of taking a gap year with the unknowns of the pandemic. He asked if UMS has developed any kind of strategy or communication to the students about this matter. VCAA Placido stated that this concern has been a topic of discussion with university Presidents and enrollment teams and they are working on initiatives and communications to mitigate the situation. Professor Mitchell also asked if there was additional support for professors who are having a difficult time switching their program to an online modality or working with the Brightspace platform. VCAA Placido stated that measures have been put in place to address this concern already; however, UMS is in the process of looking at new ways to

really revamp and ramp up online course evaluations and support. UM Faculty Representative Harlan Onsrud stated that he likes the new Brightspace platform. He explained that it offers many improvements that were not available with Blackboard and that his students have provided feedback that they are enjoying Brightspace as well. He stated that one issue that he did have was with the conversion of his course from Blackboard to Brightspace and that he did not find the workshops about this matter were very useful. Mr. Onsrud also asked that UMS should offer an on demand type of support center for faculty to contact when they are having issues with the platform. UMA Faculty Representative Tim Surette stated that the UMA Faculty Development Center virtual live support has been very helpful to him and his transition to Brightspace and asked if a similar support mechanism could be developed at other campuses. Chief Information Officer David Demers stated that campus level IT support is receiving additional Brightspace platform training and instruction, to better support faculty.

### **Student Representatives Discussion**

UM Student Representative to the Board of Trustees, Abigail Despres commended the System for their work on the Imperative for Change initiative, as it has been a major concern for UMS students. She stated that she has heard nearly all great feedback in support of the new Brightspace platform. Additionally, Ms. Despres brought up concerns the students have surrounding the change to the academic calendar and the decision to remove the March break. She stated that it would be helpful if there could be approval of other one day breaks during the Spring semester to allow students to gain some much needed down time for mental and physical health benefits, before finals. Additionally, she asked if there would be more stringent pandemic testing around the time that Spring break would have occurred, as there has been talk of some students traveling during that time despite the removal of the break. She stated that the student representatives have developed a document expression their concerns and some possible solutions going forward. VCAA Placido thanked Ms. Despres for her feedback and asked if she could send the student representative document to him so that he could discuss it with the Chancellor.

Additional information about the meeting can be found on the Board of Trustees website:  
<https://www.maine.edu/board-of-trustees/meeting-agendas-materials/academic-and-student-affairs-committee/>

Adjournment,

Heather A. Massey for  
Ellen N. Doughty, Clerk