

Lawrence M. Schall, President

NECHE

April 18, 2021

AFUM is in receipt of the UMS response (March 31, 2021) to the AFUM January 4, 2021 letter.

If outcomes are determined purely by the volume of verbiage, UMS wins.

The AFUM January 4<sup>th</sup> letter made two factual points that are largely unaddressed in the UMS response. Do note that it took UMS nearly three months to respond to a 2-page letter. AFUM and faculty were provided 0 days, indeed negative days, to respond to the UMS substantive change proposal.

Examination of the NECHE website shows that there is not a June meeting where substantive change proposals are even considered.

There were only two acceptable possibilities; UMS submit their proposal to meet NECHE requirements and that NECHE provides appropriate time for input, or NECHE should have refused to consider the proposal until the appropriate meeting and required that there be sufficient time for response.

These facts are clear; NECHE provided no opportunity for faculty input into the UMS substantive change proposal, Indeed, NECHE created additional time for UMS to submit and have accepted their proposal at a June meeting that, by NECHE rules, is not provided for.

These, and other actions, make it appear that NECHE is acting on many ways as a captured agency by UMS.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> point of the AFUM January 4<sup>th</sup> letter, was that UMS is actively undermining a collectively bargained provision of Cooperating Departments. UMS continues to actively undermine this contractual provision, making specious statements and attempting to sway faculty governance leaders. This continuing action violates UMS guiding principles.

I truly wish UMS would stop the PR train and actually listen instead of talking about how much they are listening.

Early in the process, I asked the Chancellor a simple question; what does UMS wish to do under Unified Accreditation that it cannot do with individually accredited universities. No answer was forthcoming {UMS claims that Cooperating Departments would violate a NECHE standard prior to unified accreditation. AFUM disagrees, but the body responsible for answering that question is NECHE}

NECHE failed in their responsibility by not asking, and demanding an answer, to the above equation. Had NECHE fulfilled their responsibility they could have focused on legitimate issues that would best be handled by modifications/reinterpretation of NECHE standards instead of rushing to approve an ill-defined first of its kind structure.

NECHE continues to fail in its responsibility to treat the upcoming visit as routine, and continuing its exceptionally close relationship with UMS. With no disrespect intended to the two members of the

NECHE visiting team, we note one has little higher education/faculty governance experience and is not from New England.

We also note that NECHE refuses to meet with the AFUM Executive Committee to have forthright discussions of the complicated issues.

Please consider this response a Comment. It is in process of being turned into a complaint.

I suggest that both UMS and NECHE reexamine UMS actions in terms of NECHE Standards, in particular Standard 9 and Standard 5.

  
Jim McClymer, PhD

AFUM President