



*Maine's
Public
Universities*

UNIVERSITY OF MAINE SYSTEM

UMS UNIFIED ACCREDITATION SURVEY RESULTS

Organized by Theme

**Prepared by the
Office of Organizational Effectiveness**

ABOUT THE SURVEY

At the September, 2019 Board of Trustees' (BOT) Meeting, the Trustees charged Chancellor Malloy with visiting the seven universities of the University of Maine System three times during the fall of 2019 and the spring of 2020. The goal of the visits was to share what unified accreditation (UA) is and is not, to hear concerns, and to prioritize opportunities if UA is approved by the BOT.

The Office of Organizational Effectiveness published a survey that ran from September 30 to November 8, 2019, in parallel with several of the Chancellor's visits to campuses. The survey was designed to solicit feedback regarding Chancellor Malloy's recommendation that the University of Maine System should seek Unified Accreditation from its accrediting body NECHE.

The full results – by question – will be posted to the Unified Accreditation website as of Monday, November 18, 2019. Below you will find a summary of comments by theme.

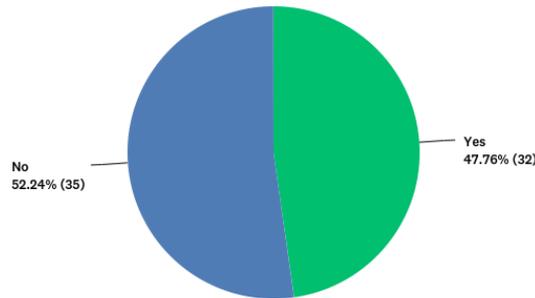
Respondents

▼ University of Maine	7.46%	5
▼ University of Maine at Augusta	7.46%	5
▼ University of Maine at Farmington	13.43%	9
▼ University of Maine at Fort Kent	41.79%	28
▼ University of Maine at Machias	5.97%	4
▼ University of Maine at Presque Isle	2.99%	2
▼ University of Southern Maine	16.42%	11
▼ University Services/University of Maine System	4.48%	3
TOTAL		67

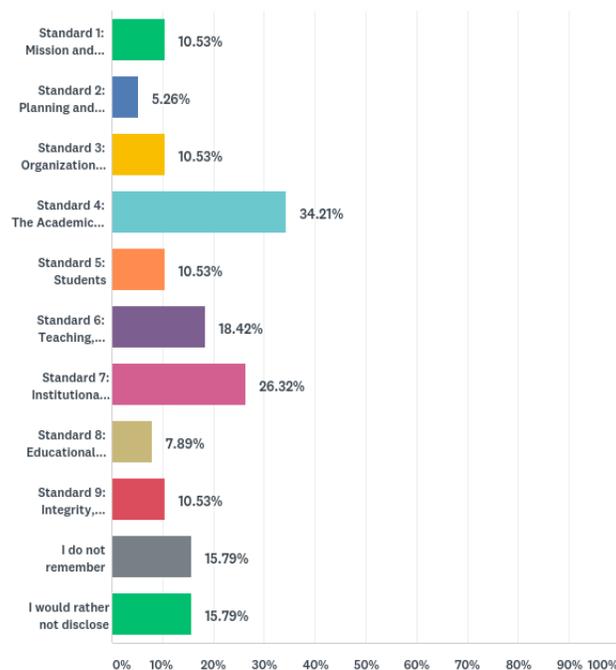
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ Full-time faculty	34.33%	23
▼ Part-time faculty	11.94%	8
▼ Full-time staff	46.27%	31
▼ Part-time staff	2.99%	2
▼ Undergraduate student	1.49%	1
▼ Graduate student	2.99%	2
▼ Board of Trustee	0.00%	0
▼ Board of Visitor	0.00%	0
▼ Foundation member	1.49%	1
▼ Alumni	5.97%	4
▼ Other (please specify)	Responses 1.49%	1
Total Respondents: 67		

SURVEY QUESTIONS

Q3 Have you ever written or contributed to a portion of a NECHE (or NEASC) accreditation?



Q4 If yes, which standards did you contribute to? (Please check all that apply)



Other Questions (responses summarized by theme on following pages)

- What do you like about the Unified Accreditation recommendation?
- Please identify ways that you believe students could benefit with all UMS universities working together in a unified accreditation structure.
- What are some of the challenges to consider regarding unifying accreditation?
- What concerns and/or suggestions do you have about the Unified Accreditation recommendation?
- If the UMS Board approves the implementation plan and directs UMS to seek unified accreditation, what are the priority processes and/or policies we should examine in order to create the best experience for students?
- Any final comments or suggestions for the team and/or Board of Trustees regarding the final approval and implementation of Unified Accreditation?

MOVING FORWARD: Leadership and Process

Major Themes:

- Strong desire to keep campus autonomy
 - "Allow each school to thrive in a way that make sense to its geography, infrastructure and regional opportunities"
- It will be challenging to get everyone to work together/cooperate (both logistically and getting general buy-in)
- Encourages (requires) cross-campus collaboration and partnerships and simplifies processes

"There needs to be clarity around leadership for each campus and decision making. If there are systems level policies that affect everyone then how does each campus get a say? We are already seeing challenges with this process in the academic integrity policy. How will we identify ourselves, as just one organization or will we retain our identities?"

Concerns:

- Oversight at a distance
 - "Decision-making will shift even further to those who are less in touch with individual campuses, which is not usually beneficial to the individual campuses."
 - "May inhibit the small campus' ability to respond quickly and flexibly to changing conditions."
- "We will need more system employees, AND for those campuses operating with minimum staffing on the ground we will not be able to cut any without damaging functionality."
- Too many shared positions
- Reconciliation of policies and procedures
- Campus pushback
- Communication
- "I think one concern many have is that unified accreditation is simply a stepping stone that will eventually lead to consolidating all of the campuses into (a true) one university with satellite campuses. While some may suspect that and are not bothered by it, some pushback will likely come from some of the local communities in which these campuses are housed due to a perceived "lack of ownership" over campuses that are vital to the survival of said communities. As such, reassurance to the communities may be necessary several times throughout the process to assure community members that their campuses will still remain vital to their communities and their respective cultures."
- Power dynamics; larger campuses will take control
- Guiding Principles are too conceptual; not specific enough

"I believe your intentions are good in this effort, and I think you've communicated them to the faculty and staff, but I think you will have a bigger challenge communicating it effectively to the public, especially the communities around the smaller campuses."

MOVING FORWARD: Leadership and Process (continued)

Other Related Direct Quotes:

- “We should be having more guest/chancellor visual presentations that the UMS students can attend. Teleconference style”
- “Campuses with larger endowments should not be given preferential treatment to host lucrative programs.”
- “There has been a remarkable amount of turnover among the faculty at UMFK in the last two years, and substantial changes in administrative structure. I hope we can give these a few years to come to fruition before we seriously assess what to keep on campus vs. "share" with other campuses.”
- “Please do not forget Student Affairs- it is such an important part of the work. Please keep soliciting input and advice from folks as this process unfolds, and if possible, offer change management leadership or support for the institutions. Read "Dare to Lead" - it will inspire you and help you to think about how we engage in these conversations while helping folks to think through the actual operational-ization of our organizational values which is critical to the success of this initiative.”
- "Working backwards from what success looks like for any number of students under a single accreditation may prove helpful...especially in overcoming the barriers that routinely put such organization-wide initiatives into potentially game-ending spirals."
- "Unified UMS diversity plan that's comprehensive under standard 5"
- "Follow-through so it doesn't just look good on the internet. An ombudsman program for a check on when something is wrong."
- "Residency requirements for each campus"

"What does a high level decision like this look like on the ground? The MBA merger is a good example: we have UM students on our campus but cannot really serve them locally in any meaningful way. Every service, every policy, every process, every everything needs to be reconsidered."

- “Gather verifiable data and engage truly independent assessors to determine costs and benefits.”
- “Need to establishing clear governance/hierarchy”
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- "I would like to suggest the consideration of how the new Learning Management System could be used to leverage the use of new tools and learning analytics to approach NECHE with a modern solution for how we could better address accreditation with innovative approaches that could become new models for Higher Education."
- “Loss of momentum that accompanies territorial and provincial considerations...stall speed is all too possible which generates opposition just as a matter of course...so maintaining the initiative, capturing testimonial affirmation, presenting proof of performance, and demonstrating positive student outcomes to help drive the effort will be critical.”
- "First do no harm. Don't decimate the campuses that work on a daily basis with students in order to increase the power of the System office. Learn from the failure of University College rather than repeat it. In terms of process, you have asked for our feedback and invited us to meetings. But you have also fired the UM provost. Please don't expect or represent your efforts as consultative. You have demonstrated that you silence all who have information which does not fit your plan."

- "The biggest challenge is probably MaineStreet followed closely by policies, procedures, and practices."
- "I have no confidence that the system's office under a chancellor and BOT with little to no higher ed experience will facilitate a workable, let alone a better, course of action."
- "Beyond the normal bumps and detours that come with change and new ways, we'll likely need to be careful to not run afoul of other, current accreditation systems that the many campuses are operating under. Athletics, professional organizations, etc. will need to be researched as work begins."

"The benefit needs to be really, really clear. And consequences, intended and unintended, need to be thought through and presented. There needs to be a compelling argument to move in this direction versus maintaining the status quo. Demographic urgency is real but the connection is unclear; what does unified accreditation solve in particular to combat that challenge?"

- "I think one concern many have is that unified accreditation is simply a stepping stone that will eventually lead to consolidating all of the campuses into (a true) one university with satellite campuses. While some may suspect that and are not bothered by it, some pushback will likely come from some of the local communities in which these campuses are housed due to a perceived "lack of ownership" over campuses that are vital to the survival of said communities. As such, reassurance to the communities may be necessary several times throughout the process to assure community members that their campuses will still remain vital to their communities and their respective cultures."
- "This effort should be directed by people with earned doctorates and a solid, sustained track record in higher education"
- "I would like to see the process "marketed" in a way that will inform the more reluctant stakeholders among us. In most cases, probably, the reluctance is born of fear, not so much of "change" but of what the personal consequences will be. If the process could be seen as a challenge rather than a threat, and one that provides faculty, staff, and administration the opportunity to participate in and guide the crafting of, I would hope that would invite the more reluctant among us to constructively and actively participate."
- "What makes us think that the system can actually manage a single accreditation? The members of the Board of Trustees lack academic expertise to guide them in decision making. No one has yet been able after 2+years to even define what a "regional" campus is."
- "The whole process seems designed to fix a flaw in the system that lies elsewhere."
- "Make a specific connection to unified accreditation and the issues facing the UMS and Maine. Fast forward to the day (assuming it happens) when unified accreditation happens. Then what? Explain to everyone what then occurs (generally and specifically). It is one thing to say that the current system is not working, is broken, or isn't benefiting students. It is another thing to say how system-wide accreditation fixes any of the supposed problems."
- "Too much of an aspirational "transformative" leadership approach out of the gate. Need to pace it, slow it down if possible, break it into incremental, attainable steps"
- "Working in student affairs, I have great concern that this area will not be attended to well. At this point in time, it appears that there is primary focus on the academic realm. However, there is so much work to do in student affairs - the intersection of different policies and practices greatly affects the student, including their success. We must keep in the forefront that retention is everyone's responsibility and that when students are not successful, research shows us that much of that is due to the institution and not the student's "complicated life" or level of preparation. We do little to assess student's dynamic needs as they enter the educational space, nor do we adequately communicate with them or connect them to resources. Many of the practices used by institutions such as SNHU should be developed here within our institutions- but we do not need to hire an

outside agency (Academic Partnerships) to do that work. Regular outreach, designated success coaches, etc. are absolutely essential and can be done in-house. My other concern is that there is going to continue to be a collaborative approach. While that sounds counter-intuitive, the bottom line is that we are not all always going to agree - and that we need to move forward anyway. I worry that there will continue to be a lack of direction from the top - many of us DO need specific (and required) pathways of action. Accountability needs to be built in along with assessment."

- UA avoids campus closures and jobs lost (including Presidents/Provosts/etc.)
- Guiding Principles hold us accountable

MOVING FORWARD: Governance

Major Theme:

- UA makes resources available to smaller campuses that they may not have been able to afford by themselves

Concerns:

- Increased conflict between campuses over authority in each discipline

"No one wants to be further under the thumb of the Orono campus. There will be a power imbalance between the campuses and most won't feel like they have any voice or control over their academic programs."

Other Related Direct Quotes:

- "I struggle with what that look likes administratively since each institution has the benefits of its own leaders right now. Who makes decisions about policies and addressing concerns? Each institution has its own identity and specialties so I am worried these will get lost or watered down. We do not all want to just be a branch of the Univ. of Maine (Orono). We have all our centers as well and I'm worried they are going to get lost again too."
- "The University of Maine System is already a marriage of convenience for the System and impractical and wasteful for those campuses which are sustainable. University of Maine students' tuition and fees already directly pay for services received by UMM students. The tuition and fees paid by the students enrolled at UM which go to the System disproportionately pay for System staff relative to the tuition dollars paid by students at UMM, UMFK, and UMPI. The centralization of IT and HR, for instance, have been failures from the perspective of services available to the faculty, students, and staff. That is to say, both organizations fail to provide basic services at the campuses that pay the most for them. The short-term financial benefits of the centralization of these functions has long past. Will this new unification effort degrade services in similar ways, though now focused on academic programs? The Systems track record for centralization is one of failure."
- "working together" is typically just nomenclature for Orono doing and taking whatever it wants. We tout 'one university' unless Orono wants a program that another campus already delivers, then Orono gets to do what it wants even if that means unnecessary duplication. Orono rents space on other campuses to deliver programs that are already offered by that campus! Ridiculous. Students don't benefit from that arrangement. Rather their money is just being used to prop up Orono's programs that can't exist solely being housed in Orono.'

MOVING FORWARD: Accreditation

Major Theme:

- NECHE report length/flexibility
 - "Writing only a 100 page report to NECHE to address each of the standards for 7 institutions"

"When each campus has its own NECHE report to do, depending on the standard, one has a set number of pages to write to meet the 100-page requirement. This is doable for a single campus (speaking for myself of course). Our section had five pages. My concern is if through a Unified Accreditation we are still limited to 100 pages, the five pages may not be enough for all seven campuses. The standards are also different now than they were, which means the part we would now have for what I previously helped write would be one or two sub-standards out of many of just one standard. This could mean a single paragraph for all seven campuses for our input. I don't think this is doable. I am one who loves a challenge, but this is beyond that. I hope that the report will have a larger limit than 100 pages.

Concerns:

- Maintaining data standards (collection and analysis)
- "Worried about confusion for students about how do students know where to apply for the majors they want if we are all one university."
- Hinders individual campuses from fulfilling their distinct missions which will have negative impact on students

Other Related Direct Quotes:

- "Accreditation is a huge undertaking even on a small campus, and the scope of the task for unified accreditation seems unmanageable. Things could easily be glossed over, skipped, or overlooked because of the sheer volume of information and work required. Specific campuses may also not get the depth of feedback that would help them improve, particularly smaller campuses. Although this might benefit the system, I feel it will be detrimental to individual campuses."
- "How to ensure consistency in meeting NECHE standards across all 7 campuses. Without careful planning of which programs are offered at which campus(es), it may create more competition and result in some of the smaller, more rural campuses, to lose enrollments."
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MOVING FORWARD: Students and Services

Major Themes:

- UA impact on course availability/accessibility
 - Impact on graduation rates; students can take the classes they need sooner
 - More hands-on opportunities
 - Less redundancies (unified course catalog)
 - More innovative programs available to all campuses (more programs in general to the students at rural campuses)
 - Allows the smaller campuses to keep their students while still offering the students courses at other campuses
- UA puts the student experience and their education above all else; less confusion; seamless support services
- First step to eliminating competition of funds/student enrollment between campuses which will help students long-term
- Moving to a unified accreditation should identify areas where there are barriers to students
- Students will benefit from across-the-board sharing of information and campuses working together
- Give students ability to leverage faculty expertise regardless of campus
- UA will hopefully provide:
 - Updated registration process that includes non-degree student access to education
 -
 - Standardized procedures across campuses that differ. (career services, health resources, research/data tools, financial aid, advising models, fee schedules, etc.)
 - Academic policy alignment; addressing the need for "away" forms"
 - A system-level Dean's list

"Students will likely appreciate a simpler, more transparent process for enrolling in courses and earning degree credits across campuses. That aspect should be more fully investigated, especially as it relates to potential creation of cross-campus majors and emerging fields of study. I'm not sure that students will care so much about how the accreditation is accomplished, provided each campus is accredited."

Other Related Direct Quotes:

- "Establish uniform policies for taking online vs live campus' so that students do not simply shop around for the easiest option"
- "Increase the remote connectivity to between campuses with investments in teleconferencing hardware--the type of equipment that gets as close as possible to sitting in the classroom in real time, with the ability to ask questions."
- "My hope is that by combining as one through accreditation and the One University that we will eventually be able to eliminate tuition altogether. Yes, my dreams may be considered pipe dreams, but think about retention and recruitment if all they have to pay for is fees and room/board?"

MOVING FORWARD: Programs & Curricula

Major Themes:

- Degree program availability to all students regardless of campus
 - More choices for students with cross listed courses
 - Class availability
 - Particularly good for small campuses to improve options/flexibility
 - Could potentially lead to unified general education requirements
 - More coherency and less redundancy across campuses; will allow consolidation where appropriate
- Consistent quality (academic and curricular) standards will be key
- Improve/streamline transfer credit process; will be major benefit to students

“Need to figure out how to maintain quality of programs and faculty, how programs will be managed across institutions, and having more policy consistency across all institutions so that we are all doing things the same way.”

Concerns:

- "Campus mission differentiation, resources and lack thereof and marginalizing campuses that are not UM. USM, the second largest campus in the system, were forced to lose their accredited MBA so UMS could have only one MBA - rather than 2 distinct MBAs in UMS - taught by UM on the USM campus. Unifying seems to reduce student choice and access."
- "That tenure will still probably exist. I think that is a significant drawback - not because of the length of appointment term but instead because we seem to not be able to build in accountability controls. Faculty who haven't updated their curriculum/courses for a decade should not still be teaching them. Even in the most stable fields (i.e. math), there have been significant improvements in pedagogy and approach to teaching in that time - yet people are able to just teach the same information with zero accountability. The greatest challenge will be people's resistance. I think there needs to be dedicated support for people to engage in meaningful, tough conversations - and change management specialists to help train folks how to do this as it is not something we do well yet."
- "Four credit to three credit contrast"
 - "One university uses a 4 credit system, whereas the other universities in the system uses a 3 credit system. Faculty already are very concerned about their positions and departments. Does unification mean that faculty and staff will be fired?"

Other Related Direct Quotes:

- "Gives Mainers better access to the best UMS has to offer"
- "Use of learning analytics in the new LMS to provide real-time accurate reporting of Learning Outcomes from the UMS system level all the way down to individual course assessments."
- "I think that you need to select specific campuses to offer programs to ensure that each will get some minimum of enrollments and reduce competition - e.g. nursing only offered at UMFK and UMA, which would meet this program need in two different regions of the state. We need to ensure, especially with campuses that are in closer proximity to each other, that they are not offering similar programs, which will negatively impact enrollments at both institutions."
- "Degrees should require a certain amount of in-person contact hours."

- “Unifying gen eds will be challenging”
- "It is remarkable that the University of Maine System seems unaware of history, economics, and data. Specifically, the former president of Princeton, William Bowen, in the 1960s teamed up to describe what is now known as the Baumol's cost disease or the Baumol effect. This effect describes industries, such as education and medicine, which rely on interactions in time that cannot be compressed to realize greater efficiency. The University of Maine System seems to treat teaching and learning as economically indistinguishable from tasks such as grass cutting or snow removal. While you can buy faster lawnmowers and snow blowers, you are much more limited when it comes to speeding up student learning. Professors speaking faster will not lead to students learning faster. Putting cameras in classrooms and sharing the videos with remote students may seem like efficiency, but this has a negative impact on student learning."
- "Must avoid the temptation to cancel programs of moderate enrollment that do not meet the standards for programs for examination. If those standards remain the same, I have no problem. But we can't go cancelling biology programs on five of the campuses because USM and UMaine have great programs on their campuses."

Cross-listing of courses across campuses requires approval through each campus' process; where a single accreditation might include a system-wide "curriculum committee" to facilitate course cross-listing.

MOVING FORWARD: Faculty

Major Themes:

- Fear of losing programs/control of programs
- Fear of jobs lost due to redundancy of positions (faculty but also eventually for positions like Registrar, Provost, President, etc.)

Concerns:

- "Where is the faculty's voice in any of this??? I don't see any accreditor giving you the green light if you don't get some shared governance happening yesterday. Talking to governance boards isn't sufficient and, ultimately, won't get you where you need to be to make this thing fly. Faculty need to take the lead, not boards. If you want programs to come together, then ask the faculty to help do it. Asking the leading campus in each area (i.e., biggest program and/or best ranked program) to facilitate this discussion is the best way to do this. If you continue to only talk to presidents (who are also almost as new as you are) and board members (who are mostly business leaders and community members) you're missing out on the folks on the ground who will actually have to do the work of making it work. You're alienating people and replicating the problems that plagued you in CT. Please don't start out this way here in Maine."
- "Faculty time for collaboration and curriculum revisions"

"Faculty and staff morale. Many are concerned that this will result in cuts. It is hard to get behind something that seems to end in cuts to staff. Based on my reading of the guiding principles, it is hard to see how anything changes at any of the campuses in terms of academic programs or governance. If that is the case, what purpose does this serve?"

Other Related Direct Quotes:

- "Better treatment and respect for adjuncts; opportunities for them to become full-time"
- "If more online courses become available to meet campus needs there should be PAID training for adjuncts, and adjuncts developing courses"
- "Faculty identity and employment--can we move back and forth among institutions without applying for tenure again? there are unequal standards among and between different academic units"
- "The assumption is that an online class serves the population as well as a face-to-face class. As an online institution, I am not sure we can compete nationally."

"When it comes to creating syllabi for each degree program, I believe that each instructor should have a part in making this process run smoothly, as well as to feel as if what they say matters."

MOVING FORWARD: Financial

Major Themes:

- UA will save the campuses money; less campus resources dedicated to NECHE reporting
- Simplifying administration could reduce costs
- Consolidated marketing to UMS

Concerns:

- The massive costs will outweigh the benefits
- Vast difference in resources from small campuses to larger campuses
- Faculty & staff pay disparities
 - "If we continue with the language of faculty of the whole, due diligence with pay equity is necessary. Differences in tuition rates by campus will also need to disappear to truly support students needing to take courses at different campuses."

"It will be very expensive. The System will have to establish an accreditation office with several employees. Unless all programs are forced to be standardized, I am not sure how much it will help with transfer credits. Mandating standardization will be difficult. Cultures on each campus are different and faculty are often inflexible. I am not trying to be negative but I fail to understand the benefits except for demonstrating financial stability."

Other Related Direct Quotes:

- "Important to informing students on impact UA could have on their cost (if any?)"
- "Tuition disparities for students taking classes at different campuses. Benchmarks for campus performance that don't encourage competition rather than cooperation."
- "Financial aid structures are so different campus-to-campus, with each built in the best interest of the campuses, I think it's going to be a challenge to "be one" without damage."
- "\$\$\$; so what institution pays the instructor for collaborative course; what tuition does the student pay; where does the tuition dollars stay; institutions still keeping their distinct mission/identity; athletic conferences"

- "Stop this expensive exercise in paper pushing and talk to faculty, staff and students about what they need."
- "It seems like an inordinate waste of resources for very little to no benefit. It could lead to a lot of online/distance education which dilutes quality and limits hands on practice and experience."
- "How financial aid from the state or federal government is divvied up. I heard from someone who works in financial aid that the formula for dividing up among campuses is based on a long-ago date, when UMFK had less numbers than UMPI. Because of this UMPI is more competitive and can offer more in financial aid for some students, and we do lose students who will go to another campus if they receive better financial aid packages."

"First and foremost, beyond aligning all campus programs to the same academic standards, would be simplifying the costs involved in students taking classes across multiple campuses. Tuition and fee rates should be aligned so the per-credit cost is the same at all campuses, and students shouldn't have to pay the same fees twice because of having classes through multiple campuses. Having the same tuition rates would also help reduce competition between campuses as no one campus would have a greater advantage over another in terms of offering the same program at a cheaper rate. Further, the degree all students in all programs receive should come either from the University of Maine System (as opposed to individual campuses), or otherwise have the degree come from the institution they attended rather than the "parent campus" of their degree program (like it currently is with shared programs like education and nursing -- a nursing student at UMA or UMPI gets a UMFK degree, or an education major at UMFK gets an UMPI degree despite attending UMFK as their home campus). If degrees are to still come from the individual institutions, then the student should receive their degree from the campus they attend, regardless of the campus originating/offering the degree program. There is a lot of pride in one's institution as an alumnus/alumna, and no student should feel like they aren't truly part of their institution's alumni because their degree comes from a different campus."

- "Most important - examine student affordability through not just known financial methods such as tuition and fees, affordable housing, and food plans, but also through out-of-the-box methods such as Open Educational Resources (OER). Make OER a system-wide initiative. This will push back against rising textbook costs, help faculty find reliable resources for their classes, help students pass their classes, and have the University of Maine System join other colleges and universities across the US who are adopting OER as a priority. Collaborate more with the cooperative extensions across the system and scale up the emergence of greenhouses on campuses creating system-wide greenhouse initiative growing food for 30% or more of the student populations, while also composting and teaching future growers, farmers, and/or individuals. There are bound to be a plethora of ideas out there that lend themselves to more affordable education for our students, and I bet grants to help support these ideas. The phrase "if you build it, they will come" refers to making what we have desirable enough so that students will want to come to our universities. Rather than trying to get them to come before you build it, which in some cases is what is happening with recruitment and retention, let's relook at our system from the ground up and "build it" to where retention and recruitment will no longer have to be the focus."

QUESTIONS

- "What are the chances the state legislature will change the law concerning 7 campuses? Is there a recommendation pending from the BOT to ask to change the law?"
- "Who pays for marketing?"
- "Wouldn't every degree program need to change? Major requirements, teaching format, credits given...not to mention financial issues, student aid, class sizes, etc.. The massive amount of change seems incomprehensible."
- "How will course ownership by campus be determined?"
- "There is much talk about students moving among and between campuses. But I have no experience of such students. How many students in the last 2+/- years have taken classes at multiple Maine Universities that this effort would meaningfully serve? Please provide real data rather than hand waving."
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- "How will reappointment, promotion, and tenure be handled in a unified structure? Will universities that offer CAEP accredited programs still be allowed to seek those accreditations? If a program is closed at a campus, will tenured faculty from that campus be retrenched at another campus, particularly when adjuncts are used at the other campus?"
- "This whole effort seems to be based on an unsubstantiated assumption that there is efficiency to be gained by combining seven unique institutions into one whole. The published principles claim to honor what is unique about each institution, but no evidence is offered to demonstrate that you have any understanding of what this means. How, for example, will an accredited business program at one campus merge with an unaccredited business program at another? What will it cost to raise all boats? Or will we lower all boats? What are the actual costs and benefits? Data-informed assessment is shockingly absent from all materials."
- "I appreciated the FAQs posted at the end of October, but have a question about data AND about strategy. FAQ #16 says: "Right now, our universities are competing for the 30% of Maine high school college-going graduates who end up matriculating at one of UMS's universities. This ignores our more serious competition with some of the state's private schools, where most of the other 70% go." a) I was surprised to read that we are trying to compete with the state's private schools - as opposed to the NEW ENGLAND REGION's public AND private institutions -and b) that 70% of Maine college bound students go to Maine private schools. So I tried to find other data and this was all I could find, from 2014. Please explain where your data are from - hopefully they are more recent than what's presented in this report, but as this statement in the FAQ is written, I'm not sure. <http://mitchellinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/MaineCollegeGoing2015.pdf>"

OTHER COMMENTS

Major Themes

- UA is one step closer to One University; all the campuses will be stronger together
- UA is more collegial & cooperative; eliminate competition between campuses
- UA will allow us to adapt to changing labor market

General Concerns

- "Change in convention/tradition"
- "All of the unknowns -- report doesn't provide enough detail"
- "Fear of the unknown"
- "AFUM! They will likely fight this as they do anything progressive."

Other Direct Quotes

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- "This effort seems driven by individuals with no experience with teaching and limited understanding of how students learn. It is imperative that the Maine Educational System make decisions about education that are informed by research in learning and data. Abstract business principles apply to abstract businesses. Our students are not abstract."
- "I really don't believe any change to accreditation addresses the main issue. That is, as a "public" university we fall short in public investment in our universities. Without increased funding (which may involve tax increases) I don't see how the most significant issue (funding) gets addressed."
- "Individual campus accreditation is an important asset of a campus, it embodies the campus sovereignty and identity. A single system accreditation would allow the BOT to homogenize the campuses."
- "The System CIO has explained in an open campus meeting that it will cost the System up to \$6 million dollars to reconfigure or replace PeopleSoft to accommodate a single accreditation. That does not include the non-IT staff hours to make these changes, learn a new system, change the systems that rely on data from PeopleSoft, etc. On the other hand, press releases from the System celebrate an estimated \$800K savings over ten years if all seven campuses are accredited together. Please be upfront and honest about the full cost of re-tooling the Universities for a single accreditation. For instance, engage an independent entity to assess the impact on both enrollment and tuition dollars received. Do a full business impact assessment, rather than a public relations stunt."
- "The materials thus far presented demonstrated only the most shallow of thinking. How and who will undertake the careful and thorough work to make this a success? Will this be done by System staff who have an employment interest in removing autonomy from the campus or will neutral, third parties be engaged?"
- "Challenges" is an understatement. I see a number of insurmountable obstacles, including the loss of campus individuality, the undermining of local efficiency and governance, and a huge reduction in student choice."
- "It is unclear how students might benefit. It does not seem like many students enroll in a lot of courses across universities. Some students take online courses from another university in the system during the summer, but it is rare during the academic year."
- "I do not think that all students would benefit from a single accreditation. Students would benefit most by receiving the education that challenges them at the appropriate level. They would benefit by learning among a cohort of other students who challenge them. They will benefit by having choices. They will not benefit by reducing the overall quality of education available at public universities in Maine to the lowest common denominator. The System has brought about a situation in which three campuses cannot be independently accredited (UMM, UMFK, and UMPI). If the System continues on its current track, I fear that students who are dedicated to learning will be driven away from Maine. In time, will the quality of the education available have decreased to such a level that Maine will no longer have universities? I appreciate that a portion of the country does not value education. But we should."
- "Come up with a better name/idea to make it a little more appealing to students."
- "Kudos to the current Chancellor and Board for being willing to move so quickly on this."
- "No longer pursue unified accreditation. Deal with the unique needs of each university appropriately."

- "This is a solution in search of a problem and if BOT and the Chancellor were serious about transparency, the campus tours and asking for input in single accreditation would have happened before the Chancellor presented it and BOT approved it."
- The individual campus accreditation is a barrier to a fully shared set of library resources. (Complete access for all students to all library resources would also require a unified budget.) However this may require more of a "One University" approach
- UA encourages greater collaboration between individuals with difference; diversity in thoughts/approach
- "I like the idea that UMS would be more of a "system" and, ultimately, that the satellite campuses like UMFK would be more accountable"

ALTERNATE OPTIONS/IDEAS

- "Instead of immediately unify all the 7 accreditations, could the System obtain an accreditation status to oversee collaborative programs and credit transfers and keep the existing institutional accreditations?"
- "Stop and get faculty involved"
- "Stop process until faculty is involved"
- "At this point, the students should be made aware of what changes are to come, and get their feedback as well. We are doing this for them, so they should be a part of it."
- "I think there needs to be input from adjunct teachers who work on more than one campus, they have a lot to offer and can tell you what works and doesn't work for each place. There needs to be more opportunity for adjuncts to go full time as well especially with the number of classes they teach."
- "The small campuses, UMPI, UMFK, and UMM are unable independently to achieve accreditation. These campuses as well as UMA should join with the Maine Community College System. They are unable to recruit and retain enough 4-year college students and are independently unable to provide a sustainable number of 4-yr degrees. The remaining three campuses have distinct missions, each of which is valuable independently. Please don't continue to cannibalize viable campuses with sustainable educational models in order to temporarily delay the closure of those that are already neither viable nor sustainable."