

# Preparing USM for the Future 2009-2014

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# PREPARING USM FOR THE FUTURE

2009-2014

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The University of Southern Maine (USM) has ambitious goals as northern New England's outstanding public, regional, comprehensive university. As USM embarks on the next stage of its academic evolution, it commits itself to fulfilling its potential as a dynamic, innovative, and rigorously mission-focused 21<sup>st</sup>-century institution. Dedicated to providing its students with a high-quality, accessible, and affordable education, USM is a center of discovery, scholarship, creativity, and public service that benefits its region, its state, the nation, and the world.

USM confronts the economic challenges of the present through an institutional culture of critical inquiry and civic participation. Accordingly, the university embraces its responsibility to serve as a wise and prudent steward of the public resources entrusted to its use so that its undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs may thrive. USM's role in educating future leaders in the liberal arts and sciences, the visual and performing arts, engineering and technology, health and social services, education, business, law, and public service requires it to target its resources strategically on those programs and initiatives that are central to its mission.

By the conclusion of this plan in 2014, USM will have become a leaner, more strategically focused institution in order to continue to offer high-quality teaching and learning opportunities for its students as well as to support the scholarship, research, and creative endeavors of its deeply engaged faculty.

Responsible and prudent decisions in public higher education depend upon building a culture of data-driven decision making. Indeed, the work to realize the goals of this strategic plan demands an approach to institutional data that is transparent, rigorous, and conscientious. All of USM's constituencies must have access to accurate and timely information about the academic and fiscal state of this institution in order to make informed decisions about the university's future, the quality of its efforts, and the integrity of its decision-making processes.

The collective energies and efforts of the entire university community must be harnessed through a strengthened sense of common purpose and collaboration that brings to bear USM's best, most creative efforts to sustain and nurture its mission-critical programs. This collective aspiration is predicated on the university's dedication to creating life-long learners and culturally-engaged

citizens, and it reflects a deep institutional engagement with the creation, inculcation, and dissemination of knowledge. Students, faculty, and staff work collaboratively within this culture, dedicated to expanding knowledge through teaching, learning, research, and creative endeavors. Encountering the joys of learning through experiential involvement must be seen widely as a hallmark of USM's approach to higher education. Our faculty and staff model this involvement through their work; our students encounter it in their classrooms and co-curricular activities; and our surrounding communities benefit from its application in the world outside the university.

New ways of linking students, faculty, staff, and the public at large to the activities and accomplishments of the USM community through both new and traditional media depend on greater sophistication in the university's internal news gathering and public relations activities. The knowledge activities and processes at the center of the university's mission deserve purposeful and creative presentation through the University's website that serves all USM campuses, its online learning efforts, and external audiences.

USM will continue to embrace academic freedom as a core value of higher education. It will also further diversity in all aspects of its campus life and academic work. Furthermore, it will build on its efforts in sustainable development, environmental stewardship, and community involvement.

Historic strengths, infrastructure investments, and community contributions will continue to shape each campus' identity and contribution to the larger enterprise of the university. USM will invest strategically in its three campuses to strengthen their programs and service to the communities of central and southern Maine. At the same time, it will focus on enhancing the university through furthering each campus' distinction.

In 2000 USM's Board of Visitors issued its report *A Southern Maine Imperative*, calling on the university to become "one of the top-ranked public, regional, comprehensive universities in the United States in the quality, breadth, and the accessibility of its academic programs" (2). The university responded the following year with *The USM Plan*, envisaging a roadmap for achieving national recognition of its regional excellence. When the Board of Visitors revisited its call for USM's further development in 2008's *A Southern Maine Imperative II*, it noted that although "progress has been made in pursuing our recommendations from 2000, much work needs to be done, especially in supporting USM in a manner consistent with its mission" (1).

*Preparing USM for the Future* seeks to build on these earlier visions for the university at a time of economic uncertainty and continuing fiscal challenge because it believes passionately that USM's vitality and health are integral to its region's and its state's prosperity. Self-confident institutions with clear missions

look at the present as filled with possibilities for progress. They see obstacles as problems to be solved and challenges as tests of their intellectual and organizational capital. USM embraces this moment in its history as a turning point and renews its pledge to the State of Maine that it will devote its academic vision and talents to fulfilling its mission as northern New England's outstanding public, regional, comprehensive university.

## 2 VISION, MISSION, VALUES, AND ACADEMIC IDENTITY

### 2.1 VISION

The University of Southern Maine provides a transformative educational experience for its students; makes significant contributions to knowledge through scholarship, research, and creative endeavor; and plays a pivotal role in helping central and southern Maine fulfill their economic, social, and cultural aspirations.

USM is recognized throughout Maine, northern New England, and the nation as an institution that places engagement at the center of its educational, scholarly, research, and creative efforts. Modeled by USM's faculty through their own research, scholarship, and creative endeavors, engaged learning builds the conditions for student success through repeated experiences with the creation, inculcation, and dissemination of knowledge. It is a form of active learning that seeks to captivate students through imaginative and effective pedagogy in the classroom while developing their abilities to understand, construct, create, and apply knowledge. Activities that motivate students and heighten their involvement in learning can also be found in opportunities to participate in research and to experience the insights gained through scholarship. Engaged learning encourages students to take advantage of co-curricular experiences designed to deepen their understanding of theory, to offer opportunities for applied practice outside the classroom, and to foster reflection on the relationship between what is learned in the classroom and in real-world situations. USM wants such engagement to be pervasive throughout a student's academic career.

The university's marketing campaign focuses on engaged education as a signature characteristic of a USM degree. Through its participation in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE), and in accordance with the Association of American Colleges and Universities' (AAC&U) focus on engaged learning as a core of liberal education, USM fosters sustained attention across its campuses to the theory and practice of engaged education through its participation in AAC&U's Bringing Theory to Practice (BTOP) and other regional or national efforts. This includes careful local attention to institutional data as well as broadly-based faculty conversations about learning, pedagogy, and assessment.

USM is perceived as a thoughtful steward of public resources. It is a model of fiscal responsibility and effective management, dedicated to ensuring the fiscal health of its core mission-critical academic enterprise. Each campus within the university must play an integral role within the university's overall mission and business plan.

USM's three campuses are distinguished by a strategic combination of destination programs and facilities designed to support the needs and aspirations of students, faculty, and staff. During the course of this strategic plan the university seeks to fill critical academic gaps at its three campuses, guided by the needs of central and southern Maine. Each campus also relies on and benefits from the collective intellectual capital of the university as a whole.

The core of every successful university is an engaged faculty. USM nurtures its faculty's teaching, scholarship, research, and creative endeavors in recognition of the centrality of these activities to the university's mission and student success. The university furthers its mission to serve its region through support for its faculty's work that benefits and enriches the public good within Maine.

In addition to USM's commitment to providing a high-quality education for its undergraduates, the university prizes its distinctive graduate and professional programs in business, creative writing, education, law, nursing and health professions, public service, STEM, and visual and performing arts. Strengthening them will be a priority throughout the next five years.

## 2.2 MISSION

[This Mission Statement was passed by the USM Faculty Senate on October 3, 2008. Although it has not yet been approved by the University of Maine System Board of Trustees, the University of Maine System agrees to its inclusion in the ongoing work of strategic planning at USM.]

The University of Southern Maine, northern New England's outstanding public, regional, comprehensive university, is dedicated to providing students with a high-quality, accessible, affordable education. Through its undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs, USM faculty members educate future leaders in the liberal arts and sciences, engineering and technology, health and social services, education, business, law, and public service. Distinguished for their teaching, research, scholarly publication, and creative activity, the faculty are committed to fostering a spirit of critical inquiry and civic participation. USM embraces academic freedom for students, faculty, and staff, and advocates diversity in all aspects of its campus life and academic work. It supports sustainable development, environmental stewardship, and community involvement. As a center for discovery, scholarship, and creativity, USM provides resources for the state, the nation, and the world.

## 2.3 VALUES

The University of Southern Maine values:

- Student success—USM is committed to the principle that earning a degree is critical to transforming the lives of its students, their families, and our state. Higher learning, of course, has more profound effects than simply earning a credential. However, attaining a degree is one of the most powerful predictors of personal economic advancement, and a region's economic outlook is tied closely to the numbers of its workforce with college degrees. USM supports the goal of the Maine Compact for Higher Education to match New England's higher education attainment by 2020. The university's academic culture focuses on cultivating the power of engaged learning to prepare students comprehensively for personal, social, and professional fulfillment after graduation and to impress on them the necessity of life-long learning.
- Responsible stewardship—USM recognizes its obligation to manage both wisely and prudently the public resources entrusted to its use. The future of this university is predicated on leveraging those resources in the service of higher education's public good. The university also views its responsibilities to conserve and protect environmental resources as an important aspect of that stewardship.
- Integrity—USM values honesty, openness, collegiality, and respect for others. The university expects students, faculty, and staff to practice civility and mutual respect in all academic and organizational activities.
- Creativity—USM celebrates the importance of learning, research, scholarship, and creative endeavors as integral to its academic enterprise. The university supports the creativity and innovation with which its faculty, students, and staff contribute to the advance of knowledge and the creative economy of central and southern Maine.
- Diversity—USM recognizes the complexity of our identities and adopts the philosophy that we embrace, include, and accord all groups equitable, political, and social status. USM is committed to:
  1. Providing equal access to educational opportunities for all students.
  2. Actively examining and exchanging diverse ideas and perspectives.
  3. Respecting, encouraging, and fostering cultural and ethnic differences that lead to a dynamic sustainable academic society.

4. Investigating and implementing strategies that create and sustain innovative and intercultural structures, policies, and practices.
  5. Recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty, staff, and student body.
- Community—USM facilitates the creation of community across the university. It strives to enable its students, faculty, staff, and the citizenry at large to share responsibility for sustaining the relationships which animate and enrich the university's activities and contributions to the general good. It practices accountability as a communal and civic virtue stemming from the mutual respect that binds its members.

## 2.4 ACADEMIC IDENTITY

The University of Southern Maine is northern New England's model 21<sup>st</sup>-century public, regional, comprehensive university, dedicated to providing students with a high-quality, accessible, affordable education. As a center for discovery, scholarship, practice, and creativity, USM provides resources for the state, the nation, and the world.

### 3 TOWARD USM'S FUTURE

#### 3.1 SERVING THE NEEDS AND ASPIRATIONS OF 21<sup>ST</sup>-CENTURY MAINE

USM is the future of Maine. It serves the needs and aspirations of the state's most populous region as well as its chief center for business, technology, government, and culture. As the region's public comprehensive university, USM educates a substantial proportion of Maine's future artists, business people, healthcare professionals, managers, lawyers, public servants, and teachers.

The university's strategic focus on educating the workforce of this region and state is a natural reflection of its status as an engine for innovation, economic development, and public service. The vitality and relevance of its programs and initiatives must be predicated upon supplying the intellectual capital essential for Maine's future prosperity and the wellbeing of its citizenry. This requires a realistic and foresighted approach to academic offerings. Reflecting the need to better align USM with the needs of the State of Maine, the university must engage in a conscientious, continuing effort to assess the appropriateness and efficacy of its degree programs, adding new programs where necessary and eliminating others when prudent. USM seeks to play a critical role in preparing the region and the state for the challenges of the increasingly globalized marketplace, the State's growing creative economy, and the necessity of a well-educated populace.

#### 3.2 MAKING STUDENT SUCCESS A CORE USM PRIORITY

USM is dedicated to providing both its undergraduate and graduate students with a high-quality, accessible, affordable education intended to transform their personal and professional lives. Consequently, student success is a core priority of the university.

Students benefit in many ways from higher education, both intellectually and socially. They develop habits of mind through their coursework, research, and scholarship. They hone social skills through interactions with their peers, their professors, and their communities. They experience opportunities to participate in cultural, athletic, leadership, and civic activities that promote enhanced self-esteem, self-awareness, and community engagement. All of these elements play integral roles in student success.

However, in order for students to attain the fullest benefit from a university education, they must earn a degree. Achieving a degree is one of the most powerful predictors of personal economic advancement, and possession of a baccalaureate or graduate credential is a prerequisite for employment in a rapidly expanding number of fields. When more students persist in their degree

programs and advance steadily toward graduation, USM does not have to spend additional funds recruiting new students to replace those it fails to retain, a far more expensive endeavor than doing all it can to ensure that more students succeed in graduating. As persistence and graduation rates increase, the university's reputation grows as a successful institution of higher learning. Accordingly, USM will focus on increasing the year-to-year persistence of its students and the proportion of its student body earning degrees within six years.

The university recognizes the well-documented relationship between high levels of student engagement in appropriate educational activities and student learning. Indeed, the University of Southern Maine participates in the annual National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE), launched with support from the Pew Charitable Trusts and currently supported by grants from the Lumina Foundation for Education and the Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts at Wabash College. NSSE's and FSSE's annual reports, based on data from hundreds of American colleges and universities, provides widely respected, empirically confirmed evidence of effective practices in undergraduate education.

Supported by this data, USM will foster a culture of high expectations and pedagogical innovation supported through a professionally enriching program of faculty development. It will showcase effective teaching practices that engage students in active learning, connecting them clearly to student success through assessment and thoughtful application of appropriate scholarship in teaching and learning. Engaged learning is already a goal of many USM faculty in the classroom as they foster an environment rich in challenges that encourage students to work hard, participate actively in their own learning, and achieve academic distinction. The university seeks to build on this tradition of engaged learning and creative teaching through increasing opportunities for students to conduct research, gain real-life experience in their disciplines through internships, enrich their academic lives with meaningful co-curricular activities, and fulfill their civic responsibilities through community service. By 2014 USM's undergraduate and graduate degrees will guarantee numerous, disciplinarily appropriate engaged learning opportunities throughout students' academic careers.

Developed with the support of three grants from the Davis Educational Foundation, the university's new core curriculum embodies the faculty's commitment to a rich and broad liberal education for undergraduates that "both illuminates and transcends the perspectives of various disciplines and systematically fosters the values, dispositions, knowledge, and skills essential for student success after college" (USM Faculty Senate motion, passed January 18, 2008). Already recognized by the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) for its distinctive developmental approach, the new core

curriculum requires ongoing implementation through 2012. USM will conduct sustained assessment as this process evolves.

Student progress toward degree may be impeded unintentionally through unresponsive institutional and bureaucratic practices. For instance, student success depends on the provision of learning experiences and courses during times when and at places where students can take advantage of them. As a 21<sup>st</sup>-century university, USM must improve access for students through a strategic combination of traditional classrooms and online learning that serves the academic needs of place-bound, busy students.

Course scheduling requires sophisticated planning and thoughtful attention to classroom capacity, appropriateness of facilities, campus location, and student demand. USM's continuing goal is to ensure that courses are provided in ways that enable students to manage their time on campus efficiently and productively while negotiating the demands of their increasingly complex lives as workers, family members, and parents. More low-residency degree programs, like USM's Stonecoast MFA in creative writing, will expand possibilities for prospective students whose work or family responsibilities would otherwise prohibit them from pursuing a degree.

Finally, student services must also be provided in a similarly sophisticated and cost-effective manner so that students can conveniently reap their benefits. Expanded provision of services over the Internet will allow students to receive services essential to their success outside traditional business hours and when they are unable to be on campus.

### 3.3 PROVIDING THE DISTINCTIVE GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL TRAINING CRITICAL TO THE NEEDS OF 21<sup>ST</sup>-CENTURY MAINE

USM takes special pride in its graduate and professional programs, which enroll almost half of the University of Maine System graduate students and currently comprise over 20% of USM's student body. The alumni of these programs will direct our communities' public, private, and non-profit institutions into the 21<sup>st</sup>-century. Graduate studies and professional education at USM seek to advance the human capital, economic opportunity, and quality of life in Maine. However, extending the university's reach in graduate education and research to regional, national, and international settings is an explicit and complementary strategy that serves to enrich and contribute to the social, cultural, economic diversity, and well-being of the people of this state.

The USM School of Business is one of only five business schools in northern New England, and one of only two in Maine, accredited by the Association of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). The School has some of the largest

undergraduate and graduate programs at the university, which are operating at or near capacity. Accordingly, it has mapped out a growth strategy based on the overall high demand for its programs, including expanding programs in sport management and marketing as well as increasing capacity within its core business courses that serve all majors. The School of Business' mission includes stimulating economic growth and avows partnership with the business community as a pervasive and distinguishing characteristic of the school.

The College of Education and Human Development is USM's oldest college. In partnerships with practicing educators, its faculty educates a significant number of Maine's teachers, curriculum specialists, and school administrators through graduate and 3+2 programs. Indeed, all of its qualifying programs are nationally accredited. The College also offers graduate programs unique in Northern New England in adult education, counselor education, and school psychology as well as numerous graduate courses specifically designed to meet continuing education requirements of teachers and other human development professionals.

USM is also home to the University of Maine School of Law, this State's only public law school. It competes for students in a national market, particularly in the northeast, mid-Atlantic, and selected West Coast states. The School of Law consistently achieves high standards in teaching and professional skills development, student satisfaction and retention, bar exam pass rate, career placement, faculty scholarship, civic engagement, and public service. Its Cumberland Legal Aid Clinic and Center for Law and Innovation make substantial contributions to the community. In the context of wider university curricula, scholarship, and service, the School of Law will support and add value to other departments and schools at USM and throughout the System.

The Muskie School of Public Service is a unique institution of USM and the University of Maine System, the only 'named' school or college within either. The Muskie School is an essential community resource that extends the reach of the university beyond the classroom and brings to the classroom opportunities for engagement unsurpassed within the University System. Its graduate programs renew the legacy of Senator Edmund Muskie, preparing future leaders in public affairs for distinguished careers in the public's service. The Muskie School's extensive research programs develop interdisciplinary and applied knowledge that serves communities in Maine and across the United States. The Muskie School is recognized among its peer institutions as a national leader in the receipt of competitive grants and awards in its fields of research, teaching, and outreach.

The College of Nursing and Health Professions educates a significant proportion of Maine's health professionals, and it serves the compelling need for quality healthcare across the State of Maine. The College must also anticipate the

future needs of the region. For example, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) has approved that the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) be the required credential for all advanced practice nurses by 2015.

The Stonecoast MFA in creative writing is one of the nation's leading low-residency programs. Recruiting students from across the nation, the Stonecoast MFA has been singled out by *Atlantic Monthly* and is nationally recognized for its Stonecoast in Ireland program. Its faculty's awards include the Lannan Grant, the Pulitzer Prize, Guggenheim grants, the American Book Award, and the Whiting Writer's Award. Alumni have had their books published by such presses as Coffee House Press, Bantam Books, and Random House, and have garnered honors including the Pen New England award and finalist for the National Book Award.

USM offers 27 advanced degree programs on the master's and doctoral levels, in addition to a variety of post-baccalaureate and masters certificate programs. In addition, many of USM's graduate programs exist in partnership with the university's undergraduate programs. Through the use of shared courses, accelerated degree programs, and linkages between undergraduate and graduate education, USM's graduate offerings strengthen the undergraduate curricula, as for example, the Stonecoast MFA enriches the English Department's major in creative writing. Indeed, professional degrees in education and nursing, using so-called 3+2 structures which lead to graduate degrees through clear undergraduate pathways, blend undergraduate and graduate education. The presence and interaction of graduate and undergraduate students at USM provides students useful models for lifelong learning.

#### 3.4 SUPPORTING RESEARCH, SCHOLARSHIP, AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY

Research, scholarship, and creative activity are essential to the future of USM, contributing not only to the generation of new knowledge but also to student success. In order to offer programs capitalizing on engaged and interdisciplinary education at both the undergraduate and the graduate levels, faculty and students must be immersed in research, scholarship, and creative activities authentic to their disciplines.

As Maine's urban public university, USM builds on the pursuit and transfer of knowledge with a distinctive mission to serve the betterment of Maine and Maine people. Resources such as the Franco-American Collection at USM's Lewiston-Auburn campus, the Jean Byers Sampson Center for Diversity at the Glickman Library, and the Osher Map Library, the newest addition to the Glickman Library in Portland, provide access to unique scholarly and archival collections. The School of Law's library also provides critical support to Maine's

legal community and its court system. The Maine Center for Toxicology and Environmental Health is a major focal point for bioscience research at USM that contributes to statewide and national efforts to study environmental contaminants and reduce their effects.

Undergraduate and graduate education at USM must be clearly and directly linked to a related and active research agenda. Faculty and professional staff will work collaboratively to develop and implement appropriate research agendas and engage students as part of an integrated and seamless course of study. The USM Libraries' collections of primary materials and graduate-level resources will require further investment to support engaged learning and advanced research.

Maintaining adequate and cost-effective research infrastructure is critical to continuation of the university's faculty and student research activities. The university will develop a plan for research infrastructure development, implementation, and evaluation that is comprehensive, yet both targeted and prioritized according to identified areas of excellence.

### 3.5 BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE UNIVERSITY

As in most of the United States, public higher education in Maine faces a significant, sustained fiscal challenge during what is projected to be a long period of reduced tax revenues and investment income. USM must manage its expenditures and financial obligations strategically in order to provide the means for investing in those mission-critical programs and activities essential to its future. Keeping operating expenditures in line with revenues will go far toward ensuring the university's long-term financial health. However, fiscal prudence must also be informed by both innovation and accountability.

This effort calls for broad participation by the faculty and staff in the identification and effective management of existing areas of excellence and those programs or activities essential to USM's mission. Among the faculty and staff, department chairs hold critical leadership roles and must receive appropriate professional development that supports their efforts to manage their departments effectively and to mentor their colleagues appropriately.

It is impossible to make informed choices about the future of USM without accurate and timely access to information and data, both financial and academic. Beginning in the first year of this strategic plan, the university must build institutional research capacity to better inform not only its fiscal operations and cost analyses but also its academic decision making and policy. Accordingly, USM's leadership will consistently model data-informed planning and decision making.

The admissions office must also work strategically during a period of demographic shift in New England, with a projected 1% per year decline in high school graduates through 2021-2022. Providing a stable enrollment in first-time full-time students is critical, and USM's strength in serving non-traditional students will provide new markets for recruitment efforts.

Institutional advancement plays an important role in support of the university's fiscal health and its academic mission, and USM will set ambitious goals for a revitalized Office of Advancement. This will involve connecting the university's academic priorities and student needs with funders and individual donors who are committed to USM's vision of change and innovation in public higher education in Maine and northern New England.

### 3.6 FURTHERING USM'S COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY

Diversity of experience and viewpoint is one of the essential components of a university education. It creates a fertile context for intellectual inquiry, social awareness, and appreciation of the importance of difference within the human community.

USM will further its commitment to diversity throughout university life. It will promote respect for and awareness of the cultural and ethnic differences that inform and enliven our region, the nation, and the world. In support of its mission as a public institution of higher learning, the university will also continue its efforts to recruit and retain a diverse student body, faculty, and staff.

### 3.7 NURTURING COMMUNITY

Spread across three campuses, USM must work harder to build a strong and rewarding sense of community for its diverse students, faculty, and staff. Close attention to the varied cultural, social, and learning activities or opportunities available at USM, and the timely dissemination of that information, should be central characteristics of the university's website and marketing. Provision of a virtual commons shared by all USM campuses will foster a more pervasive USM identity, independent of physical presence on a USM campus. This online resource will also serve the increasing numbers of students enrolled in the continuing education and online courses.

As USM rethinks how to best provide student, faculty, and staff support services, it will also seek opportunities to cultivate social interactions through developing communal gathering places at the physical locations in which support services

are offered. The physical location of these service centers will be widely advertised and clearly marked on each campus.

While USM continues to improve class scheduling and ensure that students have access to the classes they need, the university will also foster new opportunities for community building and intellectual exchange on its three campuses. Social and cultural events as well as communal university-wide experiences will be scheduled to bring together USM faculty, students, and staff in activities that enrich campus and university life. When possible, the university will employ Internet-based broadcasts to enable those not present on a campus to participate in these activities or to view them after the fact.

The experience of campus life will continue to be the single most important day-to-day context for most students, faculty, and staff. Consequently, each campus must offer inviting locations for study, learning, and social interaction. Indeed, the university's marketing campaign should feature and capitalize upon the individual attractions and opportunities found on each campus. Proximity and access to classes, services, and opportunities are also reasonable expectations for members of the university community, and USM must find ways for students, faculty, and staff to avoid the need to commute between campuses for single classes or services. Such efforts will significantly advance reduction of the university's carbon footprint.

The identities of USM's three campuses will continue to evolve over time, but they are enriched through the collective talents of the university faculty as a whole. In addition to USM's signature destination programs and unique facilities its three locations, USM's faculty on each campus will continue to collaborate with colleagues throughout the university. The potential inherent within the combined intellectual capital of the faculty as a whole will result in new programs, in renewed and enhanced existing programs, and in signature interdisciplinary, cross-campus efforts designed to address the needs of students, interests of faculty, and aspirations of USM's surrounding communities.

### 3.8 DEPLOYING THE UNIVERSITY'S INFRASTRUCTURE IN SERVICE OF ITS MISSION

Like those of many other higher education institutions, USM's facilities pose daunting problems due to their varied ages, conditions, and previously deferred maintenance. USM must manage its physical plant cost-effectively in support of its mission and its current and future academic endeavors, conducting judicious capital planning and containing energy expenditures as well as reducing the number of energy-inefficient structures across the university.

The demands placed on the university's information infrastructure must also not be overlooked if many of USM's goals are to be fulfilled. USM's Office of the

Chief Information Officer must be involved in planning and implementation of all university initiatives that will place new demands on existing information technology services or require additional infrastructure investments.

#### **4 USM IN 2014**

Realizing this vision for USM by 2014 will require sustained attention to a new way of conducting university business. It will also require ongoing evaluation of the extent to which USM's programs, initiatives, and efforts contribute strategically to the university's academic enterprise and fiscal health. The President will oversee this effort in collaboration with the President's Staff, the Provost, the Deans and Directors, the faculty, and the staff.

The USM of 2014 will be a more focused, structurally leaner institution. Its three vibrant campuses will offer a mix of new and existing destination programs that strategically support USM's mission and the aspirations of central and southern Maine. Each campus will provide students with rigorous, engaged educational experiences and the effective services necessary for their success. Programs not central to USM's mission will have been replaced or re-imagined in order to ensure that students receive the high-quality education and professional preparation they need to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup>-century workforce. New programs that meet student interests and regional needs will be added to the range of programs already offered.

As a center for discovery, scholarship, practice, and creativity, USM will provide resources for Maine, the nation, and the world. A new university business plan will ensure the effective provision of resources and services for students, faculty, and staff within realistic and transparent budgets. All members of the university community will be united in a common effort to advance student success, faculty satisfaction, and staff fulfillment.

The work to realize the goals of this strategic plan belongs to each member of the USM community. Its ambitions and aspirations call for conscientious collaboration, imaginative engagement, and responsible academic citizenship. The USM of 2014 will bear evidence to the commitment and passion of a community that embraces the promise of public higher education to transform lives and that believes in the wise stewardship of the public's resources entrusted to the university's use by the taxpayers of Maine.

## **5 USM'S STRATEGIC GOALS FOR 2009-2014**

Summoning its best efforts and most creative thinking, the University of Southern Maine sets the following goals in fulfillment of its mission over the next five years:

### **GOAL 1**

To serve the needs and aspirations of 21<sup>st</sup>-century Maine.

### **GOAL 2**

To make student success a core university priority.

### **GOAL 3**

To provide the distinctive graduate and professional training critical to the needs of 21<sup>st</sup>-century Maine.

### **GOAL 4**

To support faculty research, scholarship, and creative activity in service of the public good.

### **GOAL 5**

To ensure the university's fiscal sustainability.

### **GOAL 6**

To further the university's commitment to diversity.

### **GOAL 7**

To strengthen community on and across USM's three campuses.

### **GOAL 8**

To deploy USM's physical plant in support of the university's mission.

## 6 THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

These strategies provide a broad roadmap to guide the University of Southern Maine's development through 2014. They provide a framework for implementing the eight overarching goals of this strategic plan. Since various aspects of these strategies are interdependent (for instance, budgetary constraints or required infrastructure investments will necessarily influence student success or faculty research initiatives), the timeline for implementing each strategy will be adjusted during ongoing assessment of the five-year process and the application of appropriate performance indicators. Additional actions and initiatives will emerge over the life of this plan in order to further focus each strategy, shape its outcome, or respond to new opportunities to advance the university. Students, faculty, staff, and friends of USM in the community will contribute to and further refine this process.

A steering committee, appointed by and reporting directly to the president, will oversee the implementation process. It will establish priorities and enforce timelines in consultation with the president. The USM Strategic Planning website will provide ongoing coverage of progress during the implementation phase and provide updates from the steering committee.

### 6.1 GOAL 1: TO SERVE THE NEEDS AND ASPIRATIONS OF 21<sup>ST</sup>-CENTURY MAINE.

STRATEGY: Continue to refine the vision for the university articulated in *The Southern Maine Imperative I and II*.

STRATEGY: Engage USM's Corporate Partners, Boards of Visitors, and friends in ongoing discussions about the State's and the region's expectations for public higher education and emerging workforce needs.

STRATEGY: Identify a strategic, signature role for USM in service of the State's creative economy.

STRATEGY: Assess the appropriateness and efficacy of degree programs, adding new programs where necessary and eliminating others when prudent, in order to better align USM with the needs of the State of Maine.

STRATEGY: Establish community/program partnerships where appropriate.

- ACTION: Promote community/program interactions as a critical part of the university's work in central and southern Maine and beyond.

STRATEGY: Bring more local and regional business, community, and political leaders to the university for interactions with students, faculty, and staff about workforce trends, social issues, and public affairs.

## 6.2 GOAL 2: TO MAKE STUDENT SUCCESS A CORE UNIVERSITY PRIORITY.

STRATEGY: Increase persistence and progress to degree of both first-time freshmen and transfer students to levels comparable to USM's peer institutions, and extend that effort to retention and graduation of graduate students.

- ACTION: Develop a university-wide student success initiative, led by Academic Affairs.
  - INITIATIVE: Set student-success benchmarks for each USM program in conjunction with the deans and the faculties of the schools and colleges.
  - INITIATIVE: Develop indicators for student success that are appropriate to each program at USM.
  - INITIATIVE: Set targets for increased retention and progress to degree for all undergraduate and graduate programs.
  - INITIATIVE: Expand the Library Liaison Program to the departments and its information literacy initiatives designed to foster students' ability to recognize the need for information and to locate, evaluate, and use it effectively
  - INITIATIVE: Invest academic resources strategically in support of student success.

STRATEGY: Continue enactment of the new core curriculum.

- ACTION: Conduct ongoing assessment of USM's general education efforts to assure their quality and effectiveness.

STRATEGY: Celebrate engaged teaching and learning as USM's signature approach to undergraduate and graduate education.

- ACTION: Focus sustained university-wide attention on the scholarship of teaching and learning and its importance to liberal education.
  - INITIATIVE: Use NSSE and FSSE benchmarks to improve student experience in the classroom and during co-curricular experiences.
  - INITIATIVE: Hold university-wide forums on NSSE and FSSE results and student engagement.
- ACTION: Support both undergraduate and graduate faculty who incorporate engaged learning experiences and opportunities in their courses, conduct research into its impact on teaching and learning, and participate in professional development that enhances their pedagogy.
- ACTION: Cultivate and publicize opportunities for engaged education throughout the undergraduate and graduate curricula.

- INITIATIVE: Create and maintain a comprehensive online catalog of engaged education opportunities for students.
- ACTION: Highlight examples of engaged education at USM and its relationship to student success in USM's marketing campaign.
  - INITIATIVE: Develop a section of USM's website on engaged education.
  - INITIATIVE: Make engaged education and student success major themes of university's marketing campaigns.
- ACTION: Incorporate into student advising information about engaged education opportunities and their benefits to students' academic careers, professional futures, and personal development.
- ACTION: Create and maintain partnerships and linkages that facilitate the design and implementation of discipline-specific engaged learning activities in all graduate programs and, where appropriate, between undergraduate and graduate programs.

STRATEGY: Increase rate of student progress to degree.

- ACTION: Schedule classes at times and places best suited to student needs.
  - INITIATIVE: Implement recommendations of the Provost's Committee on Schedule Development and Curriculum Management.
- ACTION: Promote the development of cost-effective online teaching and learning, degree programs, and academic support services.
  - INITIATIVE: Develop new opportunities for online teaching and learning, including new online degree programs.
  - INITIATIVE: Allot sufficient funding for IT services and support, including Instructional Technology and Media Services (ITMS) and the Center for Technology-Enhanced Learning (CTEL), as needed.
- ACTION: Charge an existing unit within USM with meeting the unique needs of students who work during the day, offering programs and services in times, locations, and formats that are accessible and cost-effective.

STRATEGY: Ensure the availability of appropriate and effective student academic support services.

- ACTION: Develop one-stop Student Success Centers to improve the delivery of student academic support services.
  - INITIATIVE: Consolidate student advising services into cost-effective, single-location Student Success Centers on each campus.
  - INITIATIVE: Further develop cost-effective online student academic support services.

**6.3 Goal 3: TO PROVIDE THE DISTINCTIVE GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL TRAINING CRITICAL TO THE NEEDS OF 21<sup>ST</sup>-CENTURY MAINE.**

STRATEGY: Recognize and promote the complex range of graduate programs at USM.

- ACTION: Develop a marketing strategy for USM's graduate programs that distinguishes their specialized nature and that is targeted to businesses, health care institutions, public schools, and other professional areas with potential candidates for graduate study.
- ACTION: Refine administrative and support services to ensure that they are accessible to graduate students and that they are responsive to the unique demographic features and circumstances of this student population.
- ACTION: Engage graduate students and faculty in university life by supporting activities and programs that promote USM's graduate programs and the contributions of its graduate faculty.
- ACTION: Survey regularly USM's graduate students to assess their perception of their programs and support services.

STRATEGY: Develop new graduate and professional programs that address emerging needs in the State of Maine.

**6.4 GOAL 4: TO SUPPORT FACULTY RESEARCH, SCHOLARSHIP, AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY IN SERVICE OF THE PUBLIC GOOD.**

STRATEGY: Recognize and honor faculty scholarship, research, and creative endeavors through more effective support.

- ACTION: Work with University Advancement to cultivate giving sources that fund faculty scholarship, research, and creative endeavors.

STRATEGY: Develop a university plan for cost-effective research infrastructure development, implementation, and evaluation.

STRATEGY: Enhance the Library's collections of primary materials and essential research resources.

STRATEGY: Increase communication about faculty research, scholarship, and creative activity for audiences both internal and external to USM.

- ACTION: Feature faculty research, scholarship, and creative activity in university marketing campaigns and materials.

- ACTION: Highlight prominently faculty activity in these areas on the university website.
- ACTION: Create vetted lists of experts that USM's Office of Public Affairs may put forward to the press in response to news events or inquiries from the media.

#### **6.5 GOAL 5: TO ENSURE THE UNIVERSITY'S FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY.**

STRATEGY: Build a sustainable university by focusing USM's resources on those programs and activities most critical to its mission.

- ACTION: Assess the degree to which programs, centers, institutes, initiatives, and other financially supported activities serve USM's mission, giving priority in funding and resources to those units that students require and the region needs, and that enhance the stature and diversity of the university.
  - INITIATIVE: Charge the provost and deans with evaluating each program for centrality to the university's mission, articulating both the direct and indirect costs associated with each program.
- ACTION: Charge the vice presidents with developing and publicizing appropriate models for business plans for their respective areas.
  - INITIATIVE: Require business plans for all new university efforts, articulating their relationship to USM's mission, describing both anticipated and actual costs to the university, and projecting a realistic strategy for sustaining the effort.
- ACTION: Assess the departmental review process.
  - INITIATIVE: Charge the provost with updating the procedures or improving the process, if necessary.
- ACTION: Provide appropriate professional development for department chairs.
- ACTION: Develop new programs that respond to existing or emerging State of Maine and nationwide workforce needs.

STRATEGY: Maintain a balanced budget that allocates university resources transparently in support of USM's mission.

STRATEGY: Sustain an institutional culture in which data inform decision making.

- ACTION: Establish an Office of Institutional Research, with a director and support staff.
- ACTION: Set up a data warehouse, stocked with timely, authoritative reports and data sets vetted and prepared by the Office of Institutional Research, to inform USM's academic program development and

administration, student success initiatives, and institutional financial management.

- ACTION: Require appropriate data for all proposals.

STRATEGY: Refashion the university's structure and size in ways that make sound academic sense and that increase cost-effectiveness.

- ACTION: Conduct realistic, data-informed, comprehensive planning for all reorganization proposals.
- ACTION: Maintain ongoing dialogue with students, faculty, and staff about the university's fiscal condition and the economic considerations underlying university decision making.

STRATEGY: Stabilize enrollment of first-time full-time students and expand recruitment of non-traditional students.

STRATEGY: Increase Institutional Advancement capacity to raise funds for USM's strategic priorities in student support, programs, and facilities.

- ACTION: Rebuild Institutional Advancement organization to increase fundraising capacity.
  - INITIATIVE: Establish priorities, based on the results of January 2009 staffing audit and benchmarking of peer institutions.
  - INITIATIVE: Hire new staff and/or expand skills to build high-performing team of fundraising professionals.
  - INITIATIVE: Institute best practices of cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship.
  - INITIATIVE: Clarify roles and responsibilities of the USM Foundation and USM for all non-annual fund needs.
- ACTION: Improve data management and technology to support fundraising initiatives.
  - INITIATIVE: Focus on improving the integrity of advancement data and reporting.
  - INITIATIVE: Plan for and implement new Sunguard Advance donor database platform.
  - INITIATIVE: Maximize use of Web 2.0, social networking, web-based online giving, and other available technologies to increase reach, connection, communication, and support from alumni and friends of USM.
- ACTION: Create a culture of philanthropy throughout the USM community, effectively engaging both internal and external constituencies in USM fundraising.
  - INITIATIVE: Reconstitute the Development Council with clear mission to increase capacity, clarify roles/responsibilities, and coordinate all fundraising for USM.

- INITIATIVE: Engage all external advisory boards, the USM Foundation Board, the University Council, and Development Council in support of USM initiatives.
  - INITIATIVE: Increase communication and recognition of all USM fundraising priorities and advancement efforts.
- ACTION: Focus on cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship of both major and potential donors.
  - INITIATIVE: Define a formal process for managing the identification, qualification, cultivation and solicitation of key donors.
  - INITIATIVE: Utilize prospect research, data management, effective communication, and other best practices to shepherd prospects to become USM donors.
  - INITIATIVE: Evaluate all programs in light of specific, quantifiable goals, and success criteria to measure progress and identify opportunities for improvement.
  - INITIATIVE: Re-institute planned giving programs to increase number of participants, communications, and increase utilization of these vehicles for giving to USM.
- ACTION: Build an alumni relations program that promotes and foster lifelong connections between alumni and USM and that increases alumni giving.
  - INITIATIVE: Create lifecycle profiles for different alumni segments based on time from graduation and other demographic and psychographic information.
  - INITIATIVE: Develop alumni programs that are valuable and mutually beneficial across each of these segments.
  - INITIATIVE: Develop communications plan utilizing new technology and a variety of media to increase outreach to USM alumni.
  - INITIATIVE: Reevaluate all current alumni events, programs, and support structures; reinstitute, expand, or contract to focus efforts for greatest benefit and return.
- ACTION: Prepare for and initiate next major comprehensive capital campaign to support USM priorities for facilities and programming.
  - INITIATIVE: Plan for and conduct feasibility studies to determine external capacity to support internally-driven initiatives.
  - INITIATIVE: Clarify roles and responsibilities of the USM Foundation and the university in fundraising for comprehensive capital campaigns.
  - INITIATIVE: Develop comprehensive planning and communication strategies to support campaign.

## **6.6 GOAL 6: TO FURTHER THE UNIVERSITY'S COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY.**

STRATEGY: Further USM's commitment to diversity through marketing; recruitment; student, faculty, and staff services; and innovative strategies to celebrate the intellectual, social, and cultural value of a diverse academic community.

- ACTION: Provide all USM students with a high-quality education.
- ACTION: Support the active examination and exchange of diverse ideas and perspectives throughout the university.
- ACTION: Respect, encourage, and foster cultural and ethnic differences that lead to a dynamic, sustainable academic society.
- ACTION: Investigate and implement strategies that create and sustain innovative intercultural structures, policies, and practices.
- ACTION: Recruit and retain a diverse faculty, staff, and student body.
- ACTION: Encourage interdisciplinary approaches in teaching, scholarship, research, and creative endeavors, with incentives for developing rich and sophisticated cross-campus collaborations that draw on faculty in a variety of disciplines.

## **6.7 GOAL 7: TO STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY ON AND ACROSS USM'S THREE CAMPUSES.**

STRATEGY: Adopt a more news-oriented approach to content provided on the USM website.

- ACTION: Implement a content-management system for the USM website and train the faculty and/or staff in its use where appropriate.
- ACTION: Expand website coverage of faculty, staff, and student accomplishments and honors.
- ACTION: Improve and expand the USM online calendar of events.

STRATEGY: Create a virtual university commons within the USM website which provides a central, easily accessible place for locating information, news, and interactive support services for students, faculty, and staff.

- ACTION: Provide additional IT support for developing and maintaining the virtual commons.
- ACTION: Move, wherever possible and cost-effective, the provision of student, faculty, and staff support services to the virtual commons.

STRATEGY: Provide students, faculty, and staff who find themselves on any campus with a full range of support services at centralized service locations, including work/study and conference spaces that provide welcoming and useful places to conduct university-related activities.

- ACTION: Consolidate and centralize student, faculty, and staff support services.
- ACTION: Enhance the electronic availability of student, faculty, and staff support services through expanded use of the Internet.
- ACTION: Study feasibility of creating discrete faculty social spaces.

STRATEGY: Increase opportunities for community exchanges and university-wide communal events.

- ACTION: Set aside a consistent University Hour across all campuses for the conduct of student, faculty, and/or staff activities, with few classes scheduled during this period.
- ACTION: Use the Internet whenever possible to extend the reach of University Hour events, through either live or delayed broadcast.
- ACTION: Program the University Hour with opportunities for faculty and staff development as well as community-enhancing activities.

STRATEGY: Minimize commuting between campuses.

- ACTION: Increase use of distance and online learning technologies that link students with courses on other campuses.
- ACTION: Increase use of teleconferencing and Internet video for USM meetings.

STRATEGY: Articulate the identity of each campus within USM as an intentional, coherent mix of destination programs, unique facilities, and location-specific missions that support and enhance the university's mission.

- ACTION: Use appropriate financial, demographic, and academic data to guide future programmatic development on, and infrastructure investment in, each campus.
  - INITIATIVE: Begin planning for a new visual and performing arts center not only to house the visual and performing arts programs in Gorham but also to serve the cultural and performance space needs of arts organizations throughout central and southern Maine.
  - INITIATIVE: Continue support for the USM art galleries on each campus.

## **6.8 GOAL 8: TO DEPLOY USM'S PHYSICAL PLANT IN SUPPORT OF THE UNIVERSITY'S MISSION.**

STRATEGY: Complete a comprehensive master plan of the university's campuses and facilities.

- ACTION: Charge the Executive Director of Facilities with developing a comprehensive utilities master plan for the university in preparation for a comprehensive, university-wide facilities master plan.
- ACTION: Collaborate with the USM Space and Classroom Improvement Committees to identify instructional and support areas that require facility improvements, and to prioritize their rehabilitation.

STRATEGY: Contain energy expenditures across the university.

- ACTION: Conduct a campus energy conservation assessment.
- ACTION: Develop unit-specific plans for containing and reducing energy consumption.
- ACTION: Improve facilities' energy efficiency.
  - INITIATIVE: Develop practical plans to retro-fit, sell, remove, or replace structures to achieve greater energy efficiency.
- ACTION: Reduce the university's carbon footprint.
  - INITIATIVE: Evaluate recommendations of the President's Council on Carbon Neutrality for possible implementation.
  - INITIATIVE: Charge the Executive Director of Facilities with developing methods of operation that reduce the university's carbon footprint.
  - INITIATIVE: Expand use of Internet-based videoconferencing for participants in meetings at different campuses or outside the university.

## 7 APPENDICES

### 7.1 THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Upon arrival at the university in July 2008, President Selma Botman announced a new strategic planning effort that would begin during the fall semester. Dr. Timothy Stevens, Special Assistant to the President for Planning and Project Development, oversaw development of the project and managed its execution.

The planning process began with four Working Groups, including around 120 people and composed of a cross-section of students, faculty, staff, administrators, and friends of the university. During four two-hour sessions spread across the fall 2008 semester and supported by Blackboard-based discussions, each group focused on a broad theme: engaged education, interdisciplinarity, access, and the university's three-campus structure. A university website provided community access to the Working Groups' agendas, discussion summaries, and the common reference documents for their work.

In the meantime, the president and Dr. Stevens reached out to a wide range of students, faculty, staff, administrators, departments, and divisions in order to ensure broad awareness of and participation in the process. After the Working Groups had completed their discussions, Dr. Stevens developed a first draft, reflecting the wide range of opinions and viewpoints from these early discussions. President Botman invited the entire USM community to offer feedback for revising and further focusing the plan.

Over the course of the spring 2009 semester, two more drafts of the plan benefited from comments and suggestions submitted by every school, college, and division. Accordingly, the fifth and final draft reflects the input of virtually every constituency within the university. The university's strategic planning website has been designed to provide an archive of the discussion phase of the process as well as ongoing coverage of the plan's implementation.

## 7.2 MEMBERSHIP OF THE 4 WORKING GROUPS

### Working Group 1: Engaged Education

First Name	Last Name	Department
Julie	Atkins	Muskie School, Child and Family Institute
David	Champlin	Associate Professor, Biological Sciences
Margaret	Cleveland	Human Resources
Dave	Cluchey	Professor, School of Law
Tara	Coste	Associate Professor, Leadership and Organizational Studies
Molly	Dolby	Student Senate Executive Board
Susan	Feiner	Professor, Economics; Women's and Gender Studies
Bill	Grubb	Head of Reference and Instructional Services
Jack	Kartez	Associate Vice President for Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity; Research Administration; Professor, Muskie School of Public Service
Michele	Kaschub	Associate Professor, Music; Coordinator of Music Teacher Education and Graduate Studies
Bette	Katsekos	Associate Professor, Counselor Education
Jim	Kessler	Software Support Specialist, IT User Services
Robert	Kuech	CEHD Faculty Chair, Associate Professor, Science Education
Katharine	Kuhn	Administrative Assistant II, Payroll Systems; Classified Staff Senate Vice Chair
Jim	Milliken	USM Corporate Partner; CCE Project Management Instructor
Sue	Picinich	Associate Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
Cindy	Quinn	Executive Director of Financial Resources
Emmy	Raviv	Student
Greg	Reid	Writer, Marketing
Kathleen	Roberts	Executive Director of Campus Diversity and Equity
Jeffrey	Shields	Associate Professor, Accounting and Finance
Andrea	Thompson	Director, Community Service and Civic Engagement, Student and University Life
Judy H.	Tizon	Associate Provost, Undergraduate Education & Core Office, Provost's Office, Associate Professor, Geography and Anthropology
Jeannine	Uzzi	Professor, Classics
Lisa	Walker	Professor, English
Brenna	Widdis	Student Athlete and Student Group Leader
Karen	Wilson	Assistant Research Faculty, Environmental Science; Aquatic Systems Group

## Working Group 2: Interdisciplinarity

First Name	Last Name	Department
Peter	Aicher	Professor, Classics
Roxie	Black	Professor, Occupational Therapy
Joan	Boggis	Provost's Office
Julie	Brewer	Student Senate Executive Board, Resident Assistant
Douglas	Brown	Network Support Technician, Telecommunications/CSS
Rosemary	Cleary	Director, Honors Program; Associate Professor, Social and Behavioral Sciences, LAC
Patricia	Davis	Director, Information Reporting
Paul	Dexter	Director, Early Student Success
Michelle	Drucker	Director, Leadership and Organization Development/Human Resources
Julie	Ellis	Associate Professor, Engineering
Susan	Feiner	Director, Women's and Gender Studies
William	Harrison	Director, Office of Research Compliance
Kathleen	Kirsch	Administrative Assistant II, Finance and Administration Office
Lynn	Kuzma	Associate Professor, Political Science
Gerald	LaSala	Professor, Physics
Dahlia	Lynn	Associate Dean, Muskie School of Public Service
Nancy	Martz	Director, Research Administration
Leigh	Mundhenk	Assistant Professor, Leadership and Organizational Studies, LAC; Director of Field Experiences
Johann	Pretorius	Maine Street Information Manager, Information Reporting-Human Resources
Leigh	Raposo	Assistant Director, Marketing
Kent	Ryden	Associate Professor, American and New England Studies
Judy	Spross	Professor, Nursing
Elizabeth	Turesky	Assistant Professor, Leadership and Organizational Studies
Lawrence	Waxler	Director, Sponsored Programs
Blake	Whitaker	Associate Professor, Natural and Applied Sciences
Thomas	Wood	Director of Operations, Research Administration and Development
Margo	Wood	Associate Provost/Dean for Graduate Studies

## Working Group 3: Access

<b>First Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>Department</b>
Al	Bean	Director, Intercollegiate Athletics and Recreation
Jody	Capelluti	Professor, Educational Leadership, Professional Education
Janet	Casey	Coordinator of Graduate Student Services
Laurie	Caton Lemos	Instructor, Nursing
Charlie	Colgan	Professor, Muskie School of Public Service
Casandra	Fitzherbert	Head of Access Services and Coordinator of Library Liaison Program
Marie	Follayttar	Student UMS Board of Trustees Representative
Amy	Gieseke	Administrative Coordinator, Center for Continuing Education
Gayle	Giroux	Assistant Director , Student Financial Aid
Nancy	Gish	Professor, English and Women's Studies
Bob	Hansen	Associate Provost, University Outreach
Beth	Higgins	Executive Director, Advising and Academic Resources
Kim	Jenkins	Director, Student Services, LAC; President's Council on Diversity
Gary	Johnson	Associate Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
Walter	Kimball	Professor, Teacher Education
Joyce	Lapping	Director, Prior Learning Assessment
Katherine	Letourneau	Student Senate Chair
Heather	Monroe	Manager of Funded Accounts, Child Care Services
Rachel	Morales	Associate Director, Undergraduate Admission
Jan	Phillips	Associate Dean for Community Relations/Learning Works, LAC
Susan	Robinson	Manager of Administration, Telecommunications
Robert	Sanford	Professor, Environmental Science
Susan	Sepples	Associate Professor, Nursing
Mary	Sloan	Assistant Dean of Graduate Studies; Director of Graduate Admissions
John	Voyer	Associate Dean, Business

## Working Group 4: 3 Campuses, 1 University

<b>First Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>Department</b>
Andrew	Anderson	Associate Dean, Applied Science, Engineering, and Technology
Bruce	Andrews	Professor, Business Administration
Paul	Baresel	Facilities Management
Joyce	Branaman	Director, Support for Student with Disabilities
Rachel	Brown-Chidsey	Associate Professor, School Psychology, CEHD
Jean	Cavanaugh	Mail Services Supervisor; Chair, Classified Staff Senate
Ed	Cormier	Board of Visitors; Harriman Architect and Engineers
Lennie	Cross	Community member, Building Committee for New Residence Hall; Gorham Resident
Patrick Aaron	Decker	Student; Residential Life Paraprofessional
Luisa	Deprez	Professor, Sociology; Chair, NEASC Accreditation
Marv	Druker	Dean of Lewiston-Auburn College
Christopher	Fox	Undergraduate Admission Counselor; Liaison to USM Alumni Executive Board
Christopher	Hopkins	Student Senate Executive Board
Stephen	Houser	Director of Networking, Database Application and Support; Professional Staff Senate Chair
John	Jensen	Associate Professor, Business Administration
Christopher	Knott	Director, Law Library
Paul	Kuplinski	Director, Administration and Information Systems, Facilities Management
Monique	LaRocque	Associate Dean, Academic Outreach
Patsy	Muzzy	Member, Woodfords-Oakdale Neighborhood Association; OLLI Board Member
Denise	Nelson	Director, Residential Life and Resident Education
David	Nutty	University Librarian
Thomas	Power	Professor, Theater; Grievance Chair, USM-AFUM Chapter
Jeff	Shields	Associate Professor, Accounting
Andy	Smith-Petersen	System Administrator, IT Network Services
William	Steele	Professor, Theater; President, USM-AFUM Chapter
Benjamin	Taylor	President, Student Body
Vanessa	Veilleux	Vice Chair, Student Government, LAC

## 7.3 SUMMARIES OF WORKING GROUP DISCUSSIONS

### Summary of Discussion Strategic Plan Engaged Education Working Group November 7, 2007

Engaged education characterizes a significant number of student and faculty experiences at USM, making it a reasonable candidate for focusing our academic identity around it as a hallmark of a USM education. However, there are significant communication challenges that must be overcome as we nurture engagement as a defining characteristic of USM's approach to learning.

There is a need to publicize and promote existing examples of engaged education so that faculty can learn from each other's practice, successes, and disappointments. This would be especially valuable in stimulating faculty participation in the new core curriculum and EYE courses. Staff would also benefit from greater awareness of faculty involvement in engaged approaches to student learning as they attempt to reinforce and enrich the student experience. We also need to promote USM's interest in providing our students with productive engaged co-curricular experiences, making it critical to improve our ability to attract community involvement and support for our efforts. Since our students represent the most tangible evidence of the value added by a USM education, cultivating internship opportunities in the community would significantly enrich the options available to our students both during their education at USM and after graduation as they seek employment.

USM's marketing must provide clear messages about USM's approach to engaged education, highlighting the many opportunities to both experience and benefit from it. However, these messages should be authentic and accurate about what students will experience if they choose to come to USM. It is also essential to extend the message internally in order to celebrate the best examples of engaged education and to advertise opportunities for participation by faculty, staff, and students. Advising, mentoring, and career services provide additional places to reinforce and extend the benefits. USM's marketing should promote stories of student success and examples of alumni

who have prospered as a result of their USM education, making the case that engaged education will help them succeed in life after graduation.

Summary of Discussion  
Strategic Plan Interdisciplinarity Group  
November 7, 2008

Interdisciplinarity is closely tied to the goal of preparing students for ongoing learning throughout both their academic careers and their lives after graduation. There are real merits to USM committing itself to a broad model of in-depth, collaborative learning that prioritizes problem-solving within a community of teachers and learners from a variety of disciplines. Indeed, interdisciplinarity seems closely tied to the cultivation of emerging 21<sup>st</sup>-century intellectual and professional skills.

However, USM has traditionally treated interdisciplinary teaching, learning, and research as a luxury reserved for “good times,” retreating back into the disciplines whenever institutional challenges emerge. This period of economic challenge provides an opportunity to change USM’s institutional culture to encourage and reward collaboration. Incentives could be strategically designed to support those faculty who want to do interdisciplinary work, and collaborative opportunities that already exist could be better advertised within the university and celebrated by all levels of USM’s administration and faculty. USM needs to explore the most effective drivers of interdisciplinary teaching, study, and research and practice them consistently and effectively.

The EYE courses pose a striking case study in the ways in which USM articulates the value of interdisciplinarity, but undermines its practice. While the courses themselves are designed to be richly interdisciplinary, the fact remains that too few faculty from too few disciplines are active in their development and teaching, posing a question about their sustainability as currently configured. Better connections between these EYE courses and student success would provide an institutional imperative for embracing them and would encourage faculty buy-in for their continued development and maintenance. Deans should make participation in the EYE courses an imperative for the departments under their supervision, and the chairs should be aggressively enlisted in motivating their faculties.

The Muskie School provides a clear example of a USM community organized around an interdisciplinary approach to its mission, as do the School of Business and Lewiston-Auburn College. USM's centers and institutes also hold promise and should be cultivated intentionally to demonstrate the university's commitment to interdisciplinary research and practice.

A college of interdisciplinary studies would be one way to focus USM's energies in this area, but basic organizational housekeeping is essential to ease problems with faculty participation across the disciplines, including joint appointments between departments as well as better routine accounting for FTEs achieved in such courses.

There is a compelling need, at this time of institutional challenge, for a new way of thinking about how USM teaches and conducts research. Supporting interdisciplinarity in both word and deed is certainly complex institutionally, but very worthwhile if carefully tied to overall university priorities and student success.

Summary of Discussion  
Strategic Plan Access Group  
November 14, 2008

Like many other public universities, USM has undergone a demographic transformation of its student body, with declining enrollments among students entering directly after high school and increased numbers of older students, many with work and family obligations that pose challenges to effective course scheduling strategies, student support services, and recruitment. Offering courses at times that accommodate the employment circumstances and complex personal lives of an ever larger proportion of USM's students requires creative adjustment and re-imagination of institutional policies often designed to fulfill the needs of only younger, full-time students.

Indeed, a more student-centered approach to the provision of services and instruction—traditional in-class, online blended, and fully online—for students of all ages and backgrounds would increase their opportunities to take advantage of all that USM has to offer and significantly reduce their frustration at being unable to receive essential services outside traditional office hours. During a

period of great financial challenge to USM, it is essential to sustain or strategically increase enrollments of both graduating high school seniors and community college graduates seeking baccalaureate degrees.

USM's excellent graduate and professional programs also offer opportunities to attract other students who are seeking professional advancement or career change, but since these are more expensive to sustain than undergraduate programs, graduate and professional programs require thoughtful, cost-effective integration into the larger business plans of schools and colleges. Students in such programs, as well as undergraduates, have differing financial aid needs and expectations, something exacerbated by the lack of USM funds to provide additional scholarships, fellowships, and tuition remission. USM would do well to invest more effort in attracting donor and grant support for such financial aid activities.

Until USM's academic identity and mission is better focused, it will remain difficult to align academic offerings, student services, and recruitment with an ever more diverse prospective student body. However, nurturing a culture of intentionality in addressing student needs would represent a very important step towards ensuring that students have meaningful access to USM's courses, programs, and services.

### Summary of Discussion Strategic Plan 3 Campuses/1 University Group November 14, 2008

USM needs to sharpen the identities of its three campuses in order to better integrate them within the University. Indeed, the three campuses that make up USM should be seen as distinctive features of USM's overall identity, with a clear branding strategy designed to convey continuity and consistency throughout the campuses while capitalizing on their unique qualities. There are already strong associations for each of the campuses that provide a basis for further distinguishing their academic personalities within the USM family of institutions. The Gorham campus is home to USM's residential student population, with its large numbers of undergraduates as well as state-of-the-art athletic facilities that are instrumental in recruiting high school seniors interested in team and intramural sports. LAC is noted for its interdisciplinary approach to teaching,

learning, and research, and Portland is closely associated with USM's professional schools and graduate education. The challenge lies in the operational details of further defining the educational experience at each campus, such as: acceptable levels of programmatic duplication, the development of more blended and fully online coursework, the availability of sufficient classroom space, and facilities management challenges within and across the campuses.

Nevertheless, the differing geographical locations of the three campuses offer opportunities for providing distinctive programmatic offerings that are tightly identified with individual campuses. Students, faculty, and staff would be able to build local communities and support systems that were coincident with their studies or workplaces. This could make marketing of USM's programs more straightforward, reduce or eliminate the need to travel between the campuses for either study or teaching, and enhance campus-based experiences across the university.

Presently, commuting issues are a significant hindrance to cultivating our three-campus structure as a positive feature of USM's identity. Time spent commuting cannot be devoted to other academic purposes. There is also a legitimate concern with the energy costs associated with such travel between campuses, providing another imperative for better organizing USM's academic experience around individual campuses so that students, faculty, and staff at each campus can help shrink the university's carbon footprint, saving time and money for both USM and the individuals who work and study here.

This Working Group recommends development of a comprehensive, three-campus facilities master plan as an essential step toward better managing and cultivating our three-campus/one-university identity.

Summary of Discussion  
Strategic Plan Engaged Education Group  
November 21, 2008

For engaged education to be a worthy focus of USM's academic identity, it must reflect a community-wide commitment to providing students with

meaningful, outcomes-sensitive experiences that enhance student success. An inventory of current internship, civic engagement, and research experiences at USM will be useful for increasing campus awareness of existing opportunities as well as suggestive of areas in need of attention. In the short term, such an inventory will provide a useful resource for advising, curriculum development, marketing, and community relations.

USM needs to establish a clear link between engaged education and student success, using data to assess its effectiveness and to inform students, their families, and the community of the benefits associated with USM's approach to teaching and learning. Since areas of engagement exist within both courses and student activities, marketing should look broadly for vivid examples and present them in ways that make clear the value they add to a USM degree or certificate.

In the longer term, USM needs to promote and reward the development of engaged education throughout the curriculum. Programs that already make effective use of internship, civic engagement, and research opportunities can serve as models for others as well as nucleating agents for interdisciplinary efforts to disperse such experiences throughout the curriculum as well as the academic, co-curricular, and extracurricular experiences available to our students. The university website would be an obvious place to foreground these opportunities as well as to communicate their value within a student's education at USM. A content management system for the website would greatly ease the presentation of such information as well as ensure its currency by making it easier to modify and update the website.

USM should also focus on securing external financial support for such efforts, including both faculty and curricular development as well as support for co- and extracurricular opportunities. Existing examples of engaged education provide supporting evidence of an institutional commitment to engaged education, but the university must find ways to make it an organic feature of campus life. Engaged faculty and staff provide powerful role models for students as well as a critical resource for finding creative and pedagogically sound ways to offer engaged experiences throughout a student's USM career.

Summary of Discussion  
Strategic Plan Interdisciplinarity Group  
November 21, 2008

There is no more powerful case to be made for the value of interdisciplinarity than its effect on student success. USM must articulate a compelling rationale for promoting interdisciplinary approaches to teaching and learning that encourage faculty to embrace them within their curricula and to empower students to apply them throughout their educational careers. Students should also understand the real-world benefits of interdisciplinary learning and be able to connect them to success after graduation. Alumnae can provide powerful examples from the workplace, and members of the business, professional, and cultural communities could be enlisted to testify to the value of an interdisciplinary approach in their respective fields and to provide internship and co-curricular experiences for students at USM. Communicating this during the marketing process would prepare students for what they will experience in courses as well as provide their families with the assurance that the benefits will accrue across their lives and careers as our graduates find themselves well equipped to negotiate the challenges of career and professional growth through life-long learning.

USM should also tackle the challenge of communicating internally the value of interdisciplinary research, teaching, and learning, distinguishing it from multi-disciplinary approaches. In addition, the university must consider the ways in which its disciplinary organization acts as a disincentive to interdisciplinary work and seek creative ways to bridge the divide between the disciplines, including innovative re-groupings of faculty and increased opportunities for collaboration across the university.

The university's infrastructure does not encourage interdisciplinarity, and USM must consider ways in which it can accommodate the interaction and proximities necessary for nurturing an academic culture of interdisciplinary endeavors that are organic to university interactions, student learning, and faculty research.

USM's challenge is going forward is to translate a common, but unfocused institutional culture of interdisciplinary work into a more intentional effort to

provide a coherent, effective, and productive educational experience for students. Our goal must be to increase their opportunities for success at USM and equip them to lead rewarding personal and professional lives.

Summary of Discussion  
Strategic Plan Access Group  
December 5, 2008

Access depends upon effectively and creatively matching services and opportunities to the full range of students at USM so that USM can market itself to a wide variety of prospective students, from high school seniors to degree holders seeking graduate training, from adult degree completers to community members seeking certificates and professional advancement. This will require institutional willingness to provide services outside traditional business hours and on weekends, both in person and online. Further investment in online teaching and learning as well as online academic support would help USM provide meaningful access for the diverse student body it serves.

USM should conduct a thoughtful examination of any disincentives to admission or student success that its policies may engender. For example, the lack of early admissions decisions affects recruitment of students who may be tempted by early decision offers from other institutions. USM's course withdrawal rules that require no contact with faculty before the decision may prevent constructive interventions by faculty to ensure that students do not withdraw from courses unnecessarily and thereby hinder their progress toward their degrees. University policies should be reviewed in order to ensure that unintentional outcomes do not undermine USM's ability to recruit, retain, and graduate as many students as possible.

It is also critical that USM develops an effective strategy for competing with the community colleges in southern Maine that demonstrates and explains the added value of a USM degree. Focusing on the research and expertise of the faculty would provide a compelling message for the university's marketing efforts, highlighting the benefits of studying with faculty who are actively engaged in their disciplines and providing accessible models that embody the sorts of expertise desired by prospective students seeking high-quality preparation for careers and professions. USM must make the case that its

degrees provide rigorous and effective instruction that better positions its students in the competition for jobs after graduation than do associate degrees.

Graduate education is an essential part of the University of Southern Maine. As one of only two campuses in the University of Maine System with a graduate mission, USM has particular strengths in graduate professional education and capabilities in the humanities and sciences which could be expanded in the future. Because of the specialized nature of graduate education, attracting graduate students requires somewhat different marketing strategies than those used for undergraduates, and USM should move expeditiously to incorporate within the university's marketing efforts presentations that demonstrate the strengths of USM's graduate programs and that will serve as an effective means of attracting graduate students to USM's graduate programs.

### Summary of Discussion Strategic Plan 3 Campuses/1 University Group December 5, 2008

USM would profit most immediately by focusing each campus around existing programs that are predominately situated on a single campus in order to take advantage of well-established communities as well as their support systems. Since the Gorham campus hosts the residential facilities for USM, the population of which is approximately 70% sophomore and freshman, there is a compelling case for cultivating a further focus for that campus on the first two years of students' academic lives. This would support the cultivation of more learning communities for lower-division students, while providing a more coherent geographical location for delivering student services for them. Existing programs that are already well established on the Gorham campus, such as the visual and performing arts, geosciences, and technology, would benefit not only from the proximity of the student residence facilities but also from the livelier atmosphere engendered by the concentration of larger numbers of students in the most formative years of their academic experience and the expanded services that would follow them.

The presence of the Muskie School, the Law School, and the School of Business on the Portland campus suggests an existing identification of the Portland campus with graduate and professional education. If Gorham assumes primary

responsibility for lower-division students, Portland could focus its support services on addressing the needs of upper-division, graduate, and professional programs. While this would not immediately eliminate the need for all students to commute between campuses, it would sharply reduce the number and allow for subsequent relocation of programs and services that further reinforce the predominant character of each campus. The focus on more advanced students in Portland would allow development of marketing efforts that differentiate the roles of the campuses more explicitly by academic, rather than geographic focus, foregrounding the educational missions, rather than the lifestyle characteristics, of each campus. Over time the Gorham and Portland campuses would develop more focused programmatic identities and more strategic provision of services for the programs situated on them, their faculties, and their students.

The identity of the Lewiston-Auburn campus attends most clearly to its geographical location with a resulting sensitivity for making deep connections to the local community's needs and aspirations, making it a valuable model for more tightly organizing campus life across USM in ways that leverage proximity, external expectations, existing markets, and community while emphasizing the provision of communal spaces that enrich students' academic and personal development. LAC's creativity in outreach and scheduling is also suggestive of a student-centered approach to delivering curricula in ways that address the needs of working students, whether new to college, degree completers, or in pursuit of further professional credentials.

USM can profit from a strategy that foregrounds the distinctiveness of the three campuses which comprise it, each offering coherent programs and services that enrich the campus experiences of students, faculty, and staff and support the academic enterprise in each location.

Summary of Discussion  
Strategic Plan Engaged Education Working Group  
December 18, 2008

It is important to consider how USM can incorporate engaged education within an outcomes-based educational model so that its effectiveness can be

evaluated and the resulting data applied constructively across the university, perhaps within the existing program review process. Not only would this contribute to USM's understanding of the value of engaged teaching and learning, but it would encourage its adoption by faculty and support its continued vitality among those already practicing such approaches. If USM institutionalizes engaged education and then studies its impact on student outcomes, the budgetary rationale for its support can tie it clearly to student success, building a case for it as a priority in future university budgets.

There are a number of existing examples of engaged teaching and learning at USM that should be analyzed in order to understand how they might serve as models to other faculty and programs, such as USM's visual and performing arts programs, undergraduate research in the sciences, civic engagement activities, EYE curriculum, learning communities, Thinking Matters, and athletics. The introduction of a common period across the university, during which no classes would be scheduled, could provide a continuing forum on engaged teaching and learning that nurtures a discussion of best practices and data-based exploration of their impact.

If engaged learning is to become USM's signature educational approach, it must be promoted both internally, through mentoring students and professional development of faculty, and externally, through marketing and the advancement office. There will need to be a clearly articulated plan for stimulating and sustaining student interest in engaged learning opportunities as well ongoing efforts to generate a wealth of such experiences throughout a student's academic career at USM. The university's marketing campaign will then find ample material to present engaged education as a compelling reason for prospective students to choose USM, and the university's advancement office will have persuasive evidence of the value of USM's approach to teaching and learning with which to engage current and prospective community supporters and donors.

Summary of Discussion  
Strategic Plan Interdisciplinarity Group  
December 18, 2008

The most compelling rationale for the value of interdisciplinary study at USM is its impact on student success. It prepares students for life-long learning through its foregrounding of the intellectual skills expected in college graduates by the future employers. It models for students a well-rounded approach to problem solving from which they will continue to benefit long after their academic careers at USM.

Learning communities offer an effective avenue for providing students with interdisciplinary experiences, and their impact on student success is well established, especially in the crucial first-year experience. Such communities can also serve as ready laboratories for small-scale, innovative experiments in interdisciplinary teaching and learning. Assessment of the outcomes of such experiments contributes useful information about their efficacy and reinforces a culture of intentionality through ongoing institutional analysis.

Faculty groups also represent learning communities and offer all sorts of possibilities within the university for bringing faculty together for exciting and productive intellectual experiences and initiatives. However, interdisciplinary efforts would benefit from incentives designed to overcome faculty reluctance to participate in activities not tied to individual departments, and high-level recognition and celebration of those faculty who embrace and practice interdisciplinarity in their research, scholarship, creative endeavors, and teaching is a necessary and strategic demonstration that such work is important to USM's academic culture.

Organizationally, USM must profess interdisciplinarity as a community value, incorporating it into faculty and student evaluations when relevant. Although it would be difficult to mandate, interdisciplinary work at USM can be promoted effectively through a combination of incentives, sustained discussions, and foregrounding in the university's marketing campaign. USM can thereby encourage faculty and students to seek out opportunities to work and learn through these opportunities, changing the university's culture through experience and practice.

Summary of Discussion  
Strategic Plan Access Group  
December 19, 2008

USM needs to exercise greater intentionality in its efforts to ensure student access. Policies concerning deadlines for course cancellations, open enrollment for non-matriculating and transfer students, e-learning tuition rates, and scheduling should be carefully examined for their impact on the ability of students to successfully enroll and pursue their educational goals. The university needs to question one-size-fits-all approaches that are not tailored to the needs of USM diverse student body.

Graduate education necessarily requires a different set of policies than those for undergraduates, but both would benefit from more extensive market research to identify impediments to student success. Predictability in the provision of services, coupled with effective and timely notice, would allow greater numbers of students to take advantage of services while more sophisticated enrollment management would address the challenge of recruiting and retaining more students through the elimination of bureaucratic hurdles and the strategic provision of student support services.

Community-college transfer students would benefit from better information about USM degree requirements, and the university should consider carefully crafted articulation agreements and so-called 2+2 joint degrees that make the transition from the community colleges to USM less fraught with uncertainty while guiding students toward productive choices during the first two years of their college education.

Communicating the value of a USM degree, through both marketing and advising directed at prospective and current community college students, would not only reinforce the academic distinction between the university and the community colleges, but also help educate students to the curricular differences between introductory coursework and more advanced study. Development of 2+2 joint degree programs with the community colleges would ease this process considerably and provide students with more intentional pathways toward a baccalaureate degree and future professional success.

A thoughtfully balanced mix of appropriately resourced undergraduate and graduate programs underlies all successful universities, but USM must enroll sufficient numbers of students to fill those programs. USM should consider carefully the appropriate number of students it must enroll to sustain the vitality of its programs and to support its operations since falling enrollment undermines the university's ability to support its operations with sufficient tuition dollars.

Summary of Discussion  
Strategic Plan 3 Campuses/1 University Group  
December 19, 2008

The questions surrounding USM campus identities are not easily resolvable due to the lack of coordinated development of the university over time. The result has been a scattering of programs and facilities across the campuses, but most especially, the Portland and Gorham campuses. Since investments in infrastructure are not easily redirected once a facility exists, the university must think both carefully and strategically about how to accommodate the "facts on the ground" within any proposal to further focus and define the campuses. The lack of a University-wide facilities master plan hinders the university's understanding of how to move toward greater coherence in each campus' identity.

While it is clear that Gorham has a high proportion of undergraduates, especially in the dormitories and that Portland has several high-profile professional and graduate programs, both have substantial roles in graduate and undergraduate education. Accordingly, any plan to further focus the campuses must be flexible enough to address the needs of programs that are not easily relocated. USM must proceed strategically in realigning the campus identities to avoid creating new inconveniences and disincentives for students, faculty, and staff that are not compensated by substantial gains in the vitality and productiveness of university life.

However, it is indisputable that USM has not attended sufficiently to the need for social gathering and networking sites in Portland and Gorham for students, faculty, and staff. Such locations provide community-building opportunities that are essential components of satisfying campus experiences and that contribute substantially to the quality of life experienced by the university community.

As USM considers ways in which to maximize and optimize the use of its facilities, it should also consider the extent to which more sophisticated scheduling of classes, activities, and services can contribute to the quality of university life. During a time of constrained resources, distributing the demands on our existing facilities throughout the day and week may offer more immediate opportunities to serve a greater proportion of the university community in more convenient and effective ways. More institutional data, and an institutional research capacity for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting that data, are essential as USM attempts to bring greater efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and coherence to each campus' identity and sense of community.