

STANDARD 2

PLANNING AND EVALUATION

DESCRIPTION

University of Maine System Planning and Evaluation

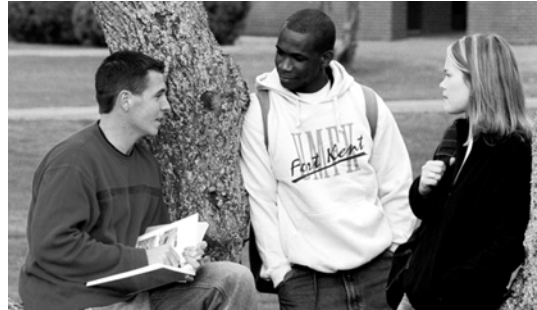
University of Maine System (UMS) planning and evaluation is conducted by the Board of Trustees (BOT) and carried out by the Chancellor to coordinate program offerings and academic and fiscal policies across campuses in consideration of educational needs state-wide. UMS requests funding from the State of Maine Legislature and divides resources among the seven campuses and the UMS office based on such planning and evaluation and on enrollment.

UMS recently revised its strategic plan. The *UMS Strategic Plan* was approved by the BOT September 20, 2004 (Exhibit 1.01), and is available online. The principal impact on this campus was the creation of a consortium involving small regional campuses at Fort Kent, Machias, and Presque Isle. Each campus will retain its individual leadership and distinct mission, but will work to expand student opportunities at all three campuses.

UMS Strategic Plan Website
<http://www.maine.edu/spp/strategicplanfinal.pdf>

Institutional Planning and Evaluation

UMFK implements its mission and goals through planning at three levels:
1) institutional mission and vision,



2) academic planning at the level of the four academic divisions, and 3) administrative unit or functional plans.

At the level of the institution, planning and evaluation are performed by a number of campus committees. Since NEASC's last visit, the University has been guided by two consecutive strategic plans developed by the Strategic Planning and Steering Committee (SPSC). This committee includes faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community members (Exhibit 2.01: *UMFK 1998-2003 Strategic Program Plan*); (Exhibit 1.03: *UMFK 2003-2008 Strategic Plan*).

These five-year plans identify campus priorities and describe strategies to satisfy and evaluate work toward UMFK's mission. The President's Cabinet regularly updates the *UMFK 5-Year Capital Plan* and the *UMFK Facilities Master Plan 2002*, which are developed and maintained by the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) (Exhibit 2.02, 2.03) and focus on maintaining present and constructing new physical structures on campus. As of 2003, the capital, master, and strategic plans are synchronized at the UMS level to ensure coherent System-wide economic planning for large capital expenditures (Appendix 1.03: *Institutional Performance Scorecard*; KPI 3.1-3.5). Further, pursuant to the new UMS plan, UMFK capital funding requests will be coordinated through the consortium.

In order to provide a level of specificity beyond that of the *UMFK 2003-2008 Strategic Plan*, an *Academic Plan* was created during the fall of 2004 by the four Division Chairs working with the Vice

President for Academic Affairs (VPAA). The goal of this plan was to set enrollment targets for UMFK and to provide a desired profile of major programs. Planning for the informational and technological needs of students has become the closely intertwined work of the Library and Academic Computing Committees, respectively.

Student services are planned by the Student Services Committee and by the Student Senate. Student Services plans for educational enrichment activities and housing, while the Student Senate plans social and recreational events, and performances.

The Faculty Assembly develops the academic policies of the campus and the Academic Council routinely reviews and evaluates these policies.

The four academic divisions constitute the basic structural level for academic planning and administration. Led by the Chair or Director, divisions plan for their respective academic programs. The Academic Council reviews program policies on a scheduled basis. Division chairs provide information for program planning in development of strategic planning initiatives in consultation with the VPAA.

At the academic unit level, ad-hoc committees and task forces plan within the scope of particular functions that cross divisional or departmental lines. The Environmental Studies Council plans for student projects and reviews global, regional, and campus environmental issues and recommends programmatic changes as necessary to the Bachelor of Science in Environmental Studies (BSES) degree. The Nursing Advisory Council provides a forum between nursing educators and practitioners, the public service sector, and community members with the goal of developing high quality practitioners that meet the needs of the community.

The Diversity Committee promotes an awareness of diversity issues in the academic curriculum and throughout the campus environment and routinely plans campus events and activities on cross-cultural issues. (Exhibit 1.03: *UMFK 2003-2008 Strategic Plan; Priority 2*).

Planning at all levels is conducted for short- as well as for long-term goals as outlined in the current five-year *UMFK 2003-2008 Strategic Plan*. The plan makes explicit a set of assumptions that guide planning and identifies advantages and limitations faced by UMFK. In consideration of these, it identifies the following ten priorities for UMFK during the five year period ending in 2008: 1) promote and pursue UMFK's mission, 2) provide quality academic experiences, 3) maintain qualified personnel, 4) embrace a rural focus, 5) promote bilingualism and multiculturalism, 6) provide student services, 7) systematically pursue diversity strategies, 8) reaffirm commitment to public service, 9) maintain facilities, and 10) generate external funding.

Enrollment planning has traditionally been guided by two sources of information updated annually. First, annual reports (2003-2004; 2004-2005) from the Admissions Office (Exhibit 2.04) provide the number of inquiries to the University by potential students, their demographic characteristics, and their status regarding acceptance, confirmation, enrollment, and retention. Second, statistics summarized by UMS in a *UMFK Statistical Abstract, May 31, 2005* (Exhibit 1.09) describe attrition and retention, tuition rates, campus physical development, library collections, course and program enrollments, program development, and graduation rates. Specific programmatic goals will be further shaped by the institution's *Academic Plan, 2004-2008* (Appendix 1.08).

In the fall of 2003, the VPAA inventoried existing survey/assessment activities (Appendix 2.01: *UMFK Survey Inventory*)

and produced a comprehensive plan for institutional effectiveness and assessment. The *Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment Plan* (Exhibit 1.16: IEAP) coordinates existing planning and evaluation with new measures of performance to support evaluation across the institution.

The assessment plan calls for process-specific assessment and effectiveness measures in areas such as academic advising and general education requirements and for evaluation at the institutional, divisional, and unit levels of UMFK. It also includes standardized measures such as the National Survey for Student Engagement (NSSE) (Appendix 1.03: *Institutional Performance Scorecard*) that enable comparison to other institutions. The plan incorporates Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), each with an implementation timeline and an office or person designated to develop the measure, gather data, and disseminate findings to other planning levels.

Assessment pursuant to the plan began with baseline information from 2003. Data gathered in 2004 was reviewed and compared to the baseline. The results of that comparison are expressed in an *Institutional Performance Scorecard* (Appendix 1.03) used to determine where the campus' strengths and weaknesses lie in terms of the institution's mission and purpose.

The process will be repeated from year to year and the data stored in an online data warehouse. This data can also be used to respond to external requests for evaluative information by NEASC, American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), and the American Council on Education (ACE).

Planning at UMFK is largely driven by evaluations drawn from program reviews, accrediting agencies, student assessments of courses, admission records, the *UMFK Statistical Abstract May 31, 2005* and, more recently, from the IEAP. The systematic evaluation of those data serves as a first step

in the planning process, as prescribed by the IEAP. The IEAP's effectiveness and assessment grids tie the KPIs directly to NEASC standards (section 2), and to each of the goals of the *UMFK 2003-2008 Strategic Plan* (section 3). Coordination and implementation of the IEAP is overseen by the Council for Institutional Effectiveness (CIHE) (Exhibit 2.05), which reports directly to the VPAA and tracks yearly assessments to gauge institutional growth and progress.

Effectiveness of Planning & Evaluation

At each level of the institution, planning and evaluation activities themselves are assessed. For example, the SPSC routinely evaluates the planning process and assessment of the strategic plan. The President's Cabinet assesses procedures for expanding and maintaining structures and property on campus through the *UMFK 5-Year Capital Improvement Plan* and the *UMFK Facilities Master Plan 2002*. In 2003, one outcome of the assessment of planning at this level was to synchronize the planning periods of the capital and master plans with the strategic planning period.

All academic divisions and hence all degree programs are reviewed every four years. Academic program review schedules are submitted to the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and any deviation from the review schedule must be approved by the UMS Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (Exhibit 2.06: Program Review Guidelines & Schedule). In Education, Forestry, and Nursing, program review is mandated for by state and/or national accreditation (Exhibit 2.07: Education, Forestry, and Nursing Self Studies and Accreditation Letters).

Nursing was reaccredited for ten years in 2003 by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (completed August 2002) without a single recommendation for change from the visiting team. That same fall the program was visited by the Maine State

Board of Nursing (November 2002) and again received full approval. Education is accredited by the State Board of Education and a visit occurred in the spring of 2005 resulting in a team recommendation for conditional accreditation for two years with a follow up report due February 15, 2007 on standards one and two; and Forest Technology is accredited by the Society of American Foresters. The next Forestry visit is scheduled for 2008, and a five year report was submitted in 2003.

The Academic Council assesses the planning and evaluation of the General Education Requirements. In Fall 2002 and 2003, the VPAA charged an ad hoc Academic Assessment Committee with assessing the need for writing skills training in general education courses. Faculty participated in a writing skills assessment workshop in May 2003. Since that committee was not active in the fall of 2004, the results will be evaluated by the standing Academic Assessment Committee in the fall of 2005 to plan writing components of general education courses (Exhibit 2.08: Academic Assessment Committee Minutes & Findings).

The Faculty Assembly, the Divisions, and the President's Cabinet evaluate criteria for contract renewal, promotion, and/or tenure of units under their purview.

The most dramatic assessment-driven change to planning and evaluation came with the implementation in 2003 of the IEAP with a central goal of the assessment of planning and evaluation. The integration of assessment strategies, the pre-determined assessment schedule, the looping of assessment information, and the yearly tracking of assessment results provide feedback on the effectiveness of planning and evaluative processes. The Council on Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment (CIEA) then advises the VPAA and the Faculty Assembly on the effectiveness of those processes. The CIEA includes a 15 member council with one representative

from each academic unit, academic support unit, and student government. The CIEA serves as a central feedback loop mechanism and coordinating body for assessment activities at UMFK with the aim of improving institutional effectiveness, student learning outcomes, and maintenance of the IEAP (Appendix 2.02: CIEA).

APPRAISAL

University of Maine System Planning and Evaluation

Planning across campuses by the BOT has historically provided important support for the smaller campuses in areas such as technology, library support, facilities (including the new UMFK residence hall), development –especially Charitable Gift Annuities, and human resource support. A dramatically new plan was proposed by the BOT in 2004 that focused on improved quality and preparing for projected state deficits. Among the initiatives, were a proposed merger of the System's smaller campuses at Fort Kent, Machias, and Presque Isle and the elimination of all associate degree programs. Following extensive public debate and input, a revised plan adopted in September 2004 calls for a consortium between the three regional campuses instead of a merger and preservation of the Forestry Technology Program on this campus (Exhibit 1.01). UMFK is currently working with the BOT to ensure that our institutional mission to meet the educational needs of the St. John Valley is preserved and indeed, strengthened, through this arrangement.

Institutional Planning and Evaluation

At UMFK, planning has always been an active process at all levels of the institution with participation by the administration, faculty, staff, and students. The various planning documents such as the *UMFK 2003-2008 Strategic Plan*, the *UMFK 5-*

Year Capital Plan, and the *UMFK Facilities Master Plan 2002* provide the fundamental guidelines to achieve the University's mission. Planning bodies operate at all levels of the institution.

The adoption of the IEAP in 2003 represented a proactive, coordinated approach to planning and evaluation. Perhaps the most important feature of the IEAP has been the integration of assessment results at all levels. In addition, the IEAP incorporates information from off campus assessment tools such as the NSSE (Appendix 1.07). This has resulted in a large amount of information available for the planning process. All assessment results are collected and entered in a campus database from which integrated information is then extracted and made available to all levels. This has resulted in the ability to make decisions, which bring together input from multiple diverse units.

Planning during the late 1990's tended to be reactionary and isolated. Plans frequently depended on an individual administrator, and would change or end when the administrator left the University. For instance, when a previous VPAA left in 1992, a mandate that an assessment policy for each major be developed resulted in policies for four of the 12 majors and further work halted. This changed in 2003 with the adoption of the IEAP.

Planning that incorporates strategic planning priorities and assessment data has promoted specific objectives and realistic courses of action. One example is the Natural and Behavioral Science Division's new major in Rural Public Safety Administration, which was spurred by the identification of local area needs for training in disaster management and public safety.

Effectiveness of Evaluation and Planning

The primary goal of the IEAP is to ensure that systematic assessment supports sound, pro-active planning. The specific

mechanisms used to reach this goal are the *Institutional Performance Scorecard* and the Strategic Plan Assessment Grids, which tie the KPIs to each of the NEASC standards and each of the priorities of the *UMFK 2003-2008 Strategic Plan*, respectively, and assessment data warehouse with oversight of activities by the CIEA. This database supplements the Integrated Student Information System[®] (ISIS) database used by the Registrar and who currently serves as the Institutional Research Officer.

The IEAP augments evaluation by incorporating traditional sources of assessment with new measures and by coordinating the evaluative process campus-wide. There are three major benefits to this systematic approach to information gathering. First, the effectiveness of the institution is quantified. With assessment information being collected yearly, the progress towards meeting institutional goals and unit KPIs can be visually charted on the *Institutional Performance Scorecard*. This provides instant progress reports on the effectiveness of the institution. Second, because of the interrelatedness of the IEAP, all collected information is looped to all levels, departments, and units. This provides individual units with current, cross-campus information for its planning activities. Unit planning is no longer performed in isolation. Third, the system is proactive in its assessment processes and in its effectiveness monitoring. Assessment is no longer done to correct a problem, but now is done to foresee potential issues. Assessing the effectiveness of planning and evaluation activities is integral to the IEAP and will be a primary responsibility of the CIEA.

The Faculty Assembly's recent reassessment of criteria for defining plagiarism benefited from the IEAP. The faculty's reassessment resulted in a set of new standards that impacted the campus Academic Honesty Policy (Exhibit 2.09), as well as the Student Academic Integrity Guidelines (Exhibit 2.10) because the feedback loops in the IEAP.

Through the IEAP, the University has in place a system that measures its effectiveness in reaching the goals outlined in the *UMFK 2003-2008 Strategic Plan*.

PROJECTION

To assure continued strength and individual identity within a well-coordinated UMS structure, UMFK will need to maintain a clear role and mission and continue to do what it does best. Increased collaborative efforts between UMFK, the University of Maine at Presque Isle, and the University of Maine at Machias through the consortium will continue in an attempt to coordinate academic activities and better serve the people of northern Maine.

Planning and evaluation will continue under the organizing structure of the IEAP. That plan is regarded as a fluid one, designed to change year to year in response to data that is collected and used in the assessment of planning and evaluation. The more years that data are gathered, the more visible longitudinal trends will become.

Increased proactive short and long-term planning will increase as the systematized IEAP is carried through. Ongoing participation, across all academic divisions and academic support units, in short and long-term planning toward meeting the University goals will increase accountability and ownership.

In the future, as annual divisional reports are generated, the plan is to require the reporting of all program and student learning assessment outcomes and integrate these into the campus database and make them available to all planning bodies. As a result, the evaluative process will be cumulative. Information generated from each assessment process will provide an evaluative

benchmark for future change. Information obtained by the repeated assessment process will then be used as the basis for additional changes and improvements focused on effectiveness. The CIEA will continue to serve as a resource council for assessment activity oversight. Ongoing assessment will require additional financial resources for purchasing valid and reliable assessment tools and services, for participating in professional development activities as they relate to assessment and accreditation activities, and for continued data warehouse development, data entry, and data analysis. During 2004-2005, \$6,000 was allocated to assessment processes.

A change in the campus attitude toward planning and evaluation is underway. By repeatedly following planning with evaluation and reassessing plans in light of evaluative data, planners will come to consider evaluation as an integral part of the planning process. And by using assessment and planning to actually guide resource allocation, the real impact of planning efforts will be clear to all. Priorities for new positions approved in the spring of 2005 originated in the *UMFK Academic Plan*.

UMFK is becoming proactive in its planning initiatives. The IEAP's feedback loops will continue to provide informed planning and enable the CIEA and other constituents to anticipate and develop plans for resolving problems before they become widespread.

Continued implementation of the IEAP will produce better evaluative measures of institutional effectiveness over time and provide reachable objectives through a process of institutional goal-setting. At the same time, the IEAP assesses its own assessment. Currently, evaluation is focused through the CIEA. Because of the importance of the assessment processes, a future consideration may be to create an office or appoint an individual with the responsibility of institutional research and evaluative activities.

The challenge during the next three years will be to continue developing and refining our mission while coordinating more closely with the consortium campuses in ways that truly benefit all.

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