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Summary Report of the Task Force on Preparing Ourselves for a Changing World

Dale W. Lick

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UNIVERSITY OF MAINE

Office of the President

Alumni Hall
Orono, Maine 04469
207/581-1512

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TO: Members of the University Community

FROM: Dale W. Lick *DWL*

RE: Summary Report of the Task Force on Preparing Ourselves for a Changing World

The Task Force on Preparing Ourselves for a Changing World was created two years ago. The following report on its work to date was presented to me in September of this year.

During the past 12 months, the statewide mission of this institution has been clearly reaffirmed. In order to help in fulfilling this mission, I have asked the Task Force to continue, and to develop a strategy for action that will assist us in achieving its original charge. Of special concern is a more positive focus for the public service mission of the university and the interplay between service, research and teaching. The Task Force will help us address the question of the appropriate role for a land-grant university in the 21st century.

Please review, reflect and react to the Task Force Report. One of its central issues is the need for leadership in developing a greater understanding of and commitment to the university's public service mission. Your suggestions, reactions, proposals, and comments will be most welcome and I encourage you to send them to any one of the members of the Task Force.

Public service, teaching and research are all vitally important as we continue our work in serving the people of Maine. I urge your active participation in helping to fulfill this important assignment.

SUMMARY REPORT FOR THE TASK FORCE ON PREPARING OURSELVES FOR A CHANGING WORLD

Mission Statement

The State of Maine and its people face difficult choices and exciting challenges in the years ahead. As the state's land-grant and sea-grant institution, the University of Maine has not only an opportunity but also an obligation to help Maine citizens deal with these choices and challenges in educated ways. The Task Force on Preparing Ourselves for a Changing World was created to play a key role in coordinating the university's resources to fulfill this important mission.

Objectives

1. To create opportunities for greater dialogue and sharing of resources among University of Maine faculty and staff and the people of Maine in dealing with issues confronting the State.
2. To organize and coordinate discussion forums in these primary areas:

The Impact of Recent Trends in Technology
Meeting the Changing Educational Needs of
Maine's People
Maine's Economic Future

The original charge of the Task Force was to encourage and help the university community respond intelligently to the modern, rapidly changing world. To accomplish this task, opinion leaders from various constituencies including the university community, business and community leaders, and alumni were surveyed. Three themes emerged on which we began to focus:

- a. University of Maine's role in technology in Maine
- b. University of Maine's role in education for Maine's citizens
- c. University of Maine's role in Maine's economic future

In the academic year 1984-1985, two speakers spent time on campus to give a public lecture and to meet with faculty, students, and staff. George McCully, historian and environmentalist, was on

campus in February 1985, and futurist Robert Theobald was here in April 1985.

In 1985-86, other activities took place. A round table discussion of the needs of non-traditional students, a group representing 28 percent of the student enrollment, was held in September 1985. Frank Newman, president of the Education Commission of the States, presented a convocation address in October 1985 on the topic "The Role of the University in the 21st Century." Dr. Newman met with faculty and administrators and was interviewed on the Maine Public Broadcasting Network. A lecture and panel discussion with Chancellor Emeritus Daniel Aldrich of the University of California at Irvine was held in March 1986. Dr. Aldrich spent two days on campus in discussions with faculty, students, administrators, and community leaders on the role and mission of a land-grant university. In April 1986 Patricia Riley, past director of the Bureau of Maine's Elderly and now director of the Department of Human Services' Medical Bureau spoke on "The Myth and Reality of Aging: A Challenge for the University."

Many issues emerged from the discussions with these speakers and the participating faculty, students, and community leaders attending the forums. The Task Force identified leadership as the central issue facing the university. The Task Force then developed recommendations to address this and other concerns.

Recommendations

- I. The central issue is the need for leadership with a vision and an understanding of the University of Maine's land-grant/sea-grant mission. The important service aspect of that mission should be revitalized through the following actions:
 - A. Public service activities should be valued and rewarded equally with research and teaching functions. University employees, be they support staff or faculty, should have their rewards, promotions, and tenure recommendations reflect the tripartite mission of the University of Maine: teaching, research, and public service.
 - B. The public service mission should be refined and clarified in contemporary terms so that University of Maine faculty and staff may fulfill their responsibilities as University of Maine employees.
 - C. Incumbent and new faculty, staff, and administrators should receive orientation on the university's land-grant/sea-grant mission.
 - D. An annual convocation should be held with the purpose of raising the consciousness of students, faculty, staff, parents, and public as to the land-grant/sea-grant mission. The convocation should address newly identified, unmet needs of Maine people.
 - E. A revitalized public service function should be coordinated and integrated through the appropriate university vice presidential office with links to all university units,

departments, and colleges to ensure efficiency and avoid duplication of effort.

F. University stationery, literature, handbooks, mission statements, and public relations materials should make reference to the University of Maine's land-grant/sea-grant mission.

G. The president's office, and those of the vice presidents and deans, should model and set the tone for enlightened leadership and a vision of the University of Maine serving the needs of Maine people. The public service function should receive equal attention with the research and teaching functions.

II. University of Maine students should be liberally educated for thoughtful existence and citizenship. A coordinated effort is needed among our colleges to assure all students are so empowered.

III. Public service should be expanded beyond our tradition as a land-grant/sea-grant university. Colleagues in the arts and humanities, natural and life sciences, engineering, technical, and business colleges must be encouraged to participate.

IV. As the world changes and knowledge increases, the original public service charters of land-grant/sea-grant institutions, like our Bill of Rights, must be amended to take in useful applications of scholarship and research.

Future Action

The Task Force urges the President of the University of Maine to carry out these recommendations in a timely fashion and stands ready to assist in their implementation.

Task Force Members

Conrad Griffin] **Co-Chairs**
Nancy MacKnight]

Elaine Albright	James Killacky
Richard Barringer	Ruth Munson
V.K. Balakrishman	William Murphy
Ronald Beard	James Rog
Suzanne Estler	Erling Skorpen
Jo Ann Fritsche	Robert Steele
Barbara Ives	Robert Whelan
	William Whitaker

Response Sheet

Name (optional): _____

Campus Address: _____

Comments On The Task Force's Recommendations:

Please clip and return this form to the Task Force, 302 Winslow Hall.