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Board of Trustees Student Affairs Committee November 17, 1985

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UNIVERSITY OF MAINE
Board of Trustees

University of Maine at Presque Isle
November 17, 1985

Student Affairs Committee

PRESENT: Chairman Geneva Kirk; James Bowers, David Flanagan, Barbara Sanford, Patricia Schroth. Other trustees: Richard Morin, Robert Dunfey, Richard Marshall. Faculty Representatives: Ralph Jans, Julia Watkins, Carol Ann Hall. Student Representatives: Robert Sezak, Kenneth Fredette, Bradford Payne, Teresa Moore, Carolyn Wyman and Lisa Cote. Staff: Mary Ann Haas, William Sullivan, Robert Woodbury, Arthur Johnson, Frederic Reynolds, Richard Spath, Constance Carlson, Roger Spear, Russell Smith and Richard Eustis.

Chairman Geneva Kirk convened the meeting. She introduced recently appointed Trustees David Flanagan and Patricia Schroth and welcomed them to membership on the Committee.

Miss Kirk reported that a booklet, "Student Affairs Committee," published by the Association of Governing Boards, has been distributed to committee members. She handed out copies of material excerpted from the Bylaws and Board minutes dealing with 1) Board responsibilities in the area of student life and 2) the roles and responsibilities of the Board's standing committees, to provide a basis for future discussion and development of the Committee's agenda for the coming year.

Miss Kirk announced that the Committee's program of Campus visitations will be continued for another year. Responsibility for each of the Campuses has been assigned to individual Trustees, who have made a commitment for occasional visits to the assigned Campus, to become more familiar with the local interests and concerns. Assignments for FY 1985 are:

USM - Richard Morin
UMA - Robert Boose
UMF - Harrison Richardson
UMM - Francis Brown
UMO - Patricia Schroth
UMPI - Geneva Kirk
UMFK - Geneva Kirk

Miss Kirk reported that she has already made initial visits to Presque Isle and Fort Kent and the report of these visits was included for information with the materials circulated for this Board session.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Morin initiated discussion of overcrowded residence halls at UMO, where the practice has been to assign most freshman to triple occupancy of rooms designed for two persons. Dr. Thomas Aceto, UMO Vice President for Student Affairs, was present to provide information. There was extensive discussion of all aspects of the housing situation, the problems caused by overcrowding, and the implications of available alternatives. Trustees have reported receiving many complaints from parents about the triples, and some students say they were not advised in advance that they would be sharing space with two other roommates. They point out, too, that the overcrowding may not be resolved until next semester despite assurances earlier that the triples would be broken down within six weeks. In addition to the apparent lack of communication and poor public relations, it was suggested that freshman, as a group, may be less able to cope with the added stress of triple occupancy. Some felt it might be preferable to assign upperclassman to triples rather than freshman, who may be struggling to acclimate to University life in any case. Conversely, Vice President Aceto described efforts to resolve what he termed a complex issue where the Campus tries to balance a temporary shortage of space against its need for tuition revenue, and its commitment to providing access to the institution. It was suggested that many freshman do in fact cope quite well with triple occupancies and that turning students away for lack of dormitory space would generate more complaints than the triples. Nevertheless, Dr. Aceto reported that UMO is not happy about prevailing conditions and he said the staff would improve the communications and consider what alternatives could be developed to further alleviate the situation. Among the suggestions offered by the Committee, was that a meaningful discount might motivate some students to volunteer for the triples in return for the financial break. As the discussion concluded, Miss Kirk noted that better communications were essential, and that these issues would require further consideration.

Adjournment.

JoAnne R. Magill
Clerk