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Board of Trustees Educational Policy Committee November 15, 1987

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UNIVERSITY OF MAINE SYSTEM
Board of Trustees

University of Maine at Machias
November 15, 1987

Educational Policy Committee

PRESENT: Chairman Stewart Smith, Patricia Collins, Geneva Kirk, James Storer, Carol-Ann Hall, Sharon Zimmer-Boucher, David Flanagan and Russell Cotnoir for Rodney Cole. Other Trustees: George Wood, David Flanagan. Staff: Chancellor Woodbury, Richard Bowers, George Connick, James Roach, Dale Lick, Barbara Leondar, Patricia Plante, Frederic Reynolds. Press and Public.

Chairman Stewart Smith convened the meeting which was called for discussion of the Community College proposal and to review the responses to the recommendations of the Trustees' ad hoc committee which completed a study of the Maine Extension Service and Agricultural Experiment Station earlier this year.

Community College Proposal. Dr. Smith reported that since the last meeting, public hearings have been held around the State to receive comments on the proposal, and that a suggested resolution for action had been circulated with the materials for the meeting and would be discussed at this session. Chancellor Woodbury noted that the latest summary of the Plan included the budget material, which would be reviewed by the Finance Committee on the next day. Vice Chancellor Richard Bowers briefed the Committee on the hearings which had been held in Van Buren, Calais, Rumford and Wells. He reported that the proposal was strongly supported by the public at the hearings, although some concerns were raised by University faculty who were present, who focussed primarily on the capacity of the telecommunications mechanism to deliver quality education. He noted that questions raised were unique in each region and that each area seemed to be expecting something slightly different from the others. The Trustees who chaired the several hearings shared their perceptions of the public responses which they said were mostly enthusiastic and supportive with some concerns voiced by area faculty. Mrs. Collins who chaired the Van Buren hearing reported her concern that expectations were so high that the University may not be able to meet them. In addition to Mrs. Collins, other hearing Chairmen were Stewart Smith, Wells; Geneva Kirk, Rumford; and Teresa Moore, Calais. During discussion, Dr. George Connick, who developed the proposal, was available for questions and to respond to some of the concerns that had been raised. Also present were Thomas Abbott, Director of Learning Resources, UMA, and Elaine Albright, University Librarian, UM, who served as resource people for the extensive discussion on library resources to support the Community College Plan. Mr. Abbott and Ms. Albright elaborated on ways to incorporate the library into the students' learning experiences. Included among these were provisions for on-line access to information in the library; a small on-site reference collection with indices; and periodic visits of a travelling librarian. Professor Hall expressed reservations about these arrangements and said she thought that degrees obtained through this program would not be equivalent to on-Campus programs. Dr. Connick pointed out that not all courses in the program would be delivered by television. Where there were sufficient numbers of students, the more traditional methods of instruction would be used. In addition, students would be expected to be on Campus,

at least occasionally. He said the issue was that these elements - on-site courses and support services - could not be provided in all of the most isolated locales and with the telecommunications system, students in isolated places would have as much access as possible given their location. In response to a question from Mr. Flanagan, Dr. Connick said he saw no distinction between the degrees earned by campus-based students and those earned through the Community College Plan since the requirements were the same for all. Professor Cotnoir said he thought there were and would continue to be some problems, but that these could probably be resolved. He urged that a meaningful and ongoing evaluation process be built into the program. Professor Hall said there were problems in determining the equivalency of courses that should be worked out before the proposal was moved forward, and she was also concerned about those who didn't clearly understand what the Community College System actually could deliver and whose expectations were unrealistically high. Chancellor Woodbury said he too was concerned about those who were hopeful the Community College would provide opportunities they couldn't have before. Many of the expectations might be met at some point but not instantaneously, and the University has a responsibility to say that. On the other hand, while the University shouldn't over promise, he said the proposal should not be rejected just because it wouldn't solve all the problems. Dr. Smith requested consideration of the resolution itself. Mr. Robert Kantz, Superintendent of Schools of Wells-Ogunquit, was present to support the proposal, and he handed out copies of some suggested revisions to the Plan and to the resolution, which had been prepared by educators in York County. He elaborated on each of the suggestions and noted that his constituents were very much in favor of the Community College proposal. Dr. Smith summarized his understanding of Mr. Kantz suggestions which focussed on coordination and cooperation with external entities interested in the Community College System. Dr. Connick indicated that he would modify the proposal to address the issue of participation. There being no further discussion, the Committee VOTED to recommend Board approval of the Community College Plan.

MAES/MCES Recommendations. Dr. Smith, who chaired the Trustees' ad hoc committee which reviewed UM's Agricultural Service Programs, expressed appreciation for the report on the disposition of the Committee's recommendations. He noted that the responses had been primarily positive except for the issue of joint appointments between Extension personnel and teaching. He also said he was pleased with the way the research agenda of the Experiment Station had developed and that Agriculture Director Wallace Dunham had done an excellent job involving constituents in the process. President Lick said the staff had been diligent on the implementation although some issues were still being addressed and the Campus will continue to work on the joint appointments. There was further discussion of the report and Dr. Smith commended the staff for excellent progress on the Committee recommendations.

Adjournment.

JoAnne R. Magill
Clerk