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Board of Trustees Educational Policy and Finance Committee September 14, 1987

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UNIVERSITY OF MAINE SYSTEM
Board of Trustees

University of Southern Maine
Portland Campus
September 14, 1987

Educational Policy and Finance Committees
Joint Session

PRESENT: Educational Policy Committee Chairman Stewart Smith; Finance Committee Chairman, David Flanagan; Patricia Collins, Robert Dunfey, Joseph Hakanson, Geneva Kirk, Richard Morin, Harrison Richardson and James Storer. Faculty Representatives: Jefferson White, Sharon Zimmer-Boucher, and Russell Cotnoir for Rodney Cole. Student Representative: Robert Tracey. Staff: Chancellor Robert Woodbury, William Sullivan, Richard Bowers, Mary Ann Haas, Kent Price, George Connick, Dale Lick, Barbara Leondar, Frederic Reynolds, Patricia Plante, Norman Crawford. Press and Public.

Mr. Flanagan convened the meeting and presided.

In November, 1985, the Board of Trustees directed Dr. George Connick to develop for the University of Maine System a community college component which would provide greater access to the University for older, part-time and commuter students. A report which contained the nucleus of a community college plan was submitted to the Board in May, 1986. The principal features of the plan called for centralization of responsibility at UMA for two-year programs; establishment of regional centers and sites throughout the State; development of a telecommunications network for delivery of programs; and utilization of the faculty and programs of all Campuses in the System. The Trustees received the report and authorized Dr. Connick to proceed with the next phase of the planning.

This joint session of the Educational Policy and Finance Committees had been scheduled for preliminary discussion of the proposal which had been refined in the planning since May, 1986. A background paper, "The Community College of Maine and A University of Maine System Educational Telecommunications Authority," contained the details of the proposal and served as the basis for discussion. Dr. Connick elaborated on the statistics and assumptions on which the proposal was developed, noting especially the geographic, social and economic barriers to higher education in the State which has many isolated communities and a level of income which ranks 49th in the nation. The revised proposal retained the provisions listed above, and further expanded the educational capacity of the telecommunications system to include non-University providers, and called for the establishment of a University of Maine System Educational Telecommunications Authority which would function as a statewide delivery mechanism with the University System serving as convener with responsibility for its administration.

Dr. Connick went through each provision in the proposal in some detail and responded to questions from the Committees. Chancellor Woodbury pointed out that the proposal actually contained two overlapping concepts: the first dealt with the community college, and the second with telecommunications. The

concepts overlapped since the telecommunications mechanism was being put forward as the primary way to deliver the community college programs. The interactive television system itself is perceived as a vehicle not only for the University's use, but for a great many other potential users as well. The Chancellor said it was expected that the community college programs would absorb only about 30% of the system's capacity. With respect to the community college component, the Chancellor said the planners have concluded that the most effective way to achieve maximum accessibility to community college programs is through the interactive television system. Dr. Woodbury also took note of what he called an important difference in the new draft wherein responsibility for oversight of the proposed regional centers would rest with the University campuses having jurisdiction over those locations. All seven campuses offer community college programs and while UMA would have considerable central authority, each campus would retain jurisdiction over centers in their areas. Summarized below is an outline of major questions and discussion points.

- . Projected number of new staff needed in the first year of operation: 20 professionals; 6 faculty; 35 classified.
- . Projected enrollment is not based on reshuffling the same students in the System now but on assumptions about future demands for educating workers.
- . Effectiveness of proposed mechanism? Dr. Connick reported that USM spent six months researching instructional technologies where students in classrooms and in remote sites were tracked. Those in remote sites did as well or better than classroom students and he concluded that technology was adequate as a learning tool. Professor White noted that getting information to the student was only part of the successful learning experience and he said he thought that some courses which were particularly labor intensive, e.g. writing and developmental courses, would be difficult to teach qualitatively using the technological approach. Dr. Connick listed an extensive range of courses which he said had been taught successfully with transactive television but he said that developmental studies have not been tested on the system and he believed that the traditional labor intensive approach was still best for these studies.
- . President Lick said he thought there would be some problems with the system but that it would be the best mechanism for delivery of programs state-wide and that it would offer extraordinary flexibility. He noted that it is not possible to do the same job in an outreach center as on a campus but the issue is not which is better but rather how to reach those who cannot come to a campus.
- . Concerning the nature of faculty involvement in a system of this kind, Dr. Connick described the model in place at USM which con-

stitutes the most extensive experience in the State. He said there was some resistance at first but most faculty came back to teach again and the numbers grew. This experience has been the norm in like systems across the country. The pilot program at USM has been in operation for three years and has provided an extensive opportunity to explore issues.

- . Students, especially those remote from the campus, have been enthusiastic about the interactive television approach and the evidence indicates that they learn as well as classroom-based students.
- . Concerning ways to work with developmental students who would be a large and important segment of the potential market, Dr. Connick said there would need to be multiple ways which would include labs, self-paced learning, and teams of instructors to help with math and writing, for instance. It would be necessary to use small modules backed up by part-time instructors at the centers.
- . Concerning the clientele and the need, Dr. Connick said that virtually every adult would be a potential client and the assumption was that if education were available, people would take advantage of it. He said he thought that Maine people do, in fact, have aspirations and what is needed is opportunity to bring them to fruition.

Mr. Donald Nicoll, consultant on a needs assessment for the community college planning, briefed the committees on his assessment which was based on a combination of interviews, surveys, and demographic projections. He said he thought 10,000 projected enrollment was a reasonable expectation for a long-range goal. He also said he thought that the community college portion of the telecommunications system would not be underused and that the University would have to protect the portion allocated to the program since it was anticipated that there would be great demand for the use of the system.

Chancellor Woodbury pointed out that if the University was to go forward with the proposal, a budget would have to be included in the request to the Legislature which will be considered by the Board at the November meeting. The proposal was referred to the September meeting for continuing consideration and there was further discussion of costs and alternatives to the proposal, to give the staff guidance about the kinds of questions and issues the committees would focus on at their September meeting.

Adjournment.

JoAnne R. Magill
Clerk

