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Board of Trustees Educational Policy Committee May 23, 1988

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UNIVERSITY OF MAINE SYSTEM
Board of Trustees

May 23, 1988
Bangor, Maine

Educational Policy Committee

PRESENT: Chairman Stewart Smith; Patricia Collins, Geneva Kirk, James Storer, Rodney Cole, Carol Ann Hall, Sharon Zimmer-Boucher and David Levesque. Staff: Chancellor Robert Woodbury, Richard Bowers, Dale Lick and, for the UM Reorganization issue, Professor Walter Schoenberger and Professor Charles Russ. Press and Public.

Chairman Stewart Smith convened the meeting. For the benefit of the audience present for discussion of a proposal for Academic reorganization at the Orono Campus, members of the Committee were introduced, as were President Lick and Professors Schoenberger and Russ who would speak to the different positions on the reorganization proposal.

University of Maine Academic Reorganization. President Lick presented the recommendation and briefed the Committee on the process for development of the proposal. He reported that the seventeen-member Advisory Committee on Academic Reorganization which coordinated the development process, was composed primarily of faculty, and also included representatives from the student body, professional staff, administration, and the Alumni Association. Dr. Lick indicated that after several position papers had been reviewed and revised, two major plans were put forward, hearings were held, and the President ultimately accepted the unanimous recommendation of the Advisory Committee for the plan which was on the agenda for consideration at this meeting. He said the reorganization was designed to bring people in common areas together, and into units of essentially the same size. The proposed plan would result in nine colleges of approximately the same size, each very well focussed and each with strong leadership. Following Dr. Lick's presentation, Professor Charles Russ, who served on the Advisory Committee spoke in support of the reorganization, noting that the Committee had spent many hours in deliberation and in open hearings. He said the proposal would result in smaller, more highly focussed units which have a natural affinity for each other. He indicated that under the proposed structure it would be easier, for instance, to make decisions about the content of similar courses when both were lodged in the same college. Further he said the new plan which divided the existing college of Arts and Sciences into three smaller colleges, would provide for better management since the College is presently so big its needs drive the whole system. Professor Walter Schoenberger presented the arguments for those who oppose the reorganization. He distributed copies of a questionnaire which was circulated among Arts and Science faculty which he said had determined that 75-80% of the College's faculty were opposed to reorganization, and were particularly opposed to separating the social sciences from the humanities. He conveyed the faculty's concern that under the proposed plan it would be more difficult to maintain close working relationships, that the new administrative structure would be unduly cumbersome, and that the proposed Assembly of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences would be largely a powerless organization. He said the primary purpose of the College was to turn out graduates with broad knowledge in liberal areas and that an administrative structure should enhance that objective rather than restricting its focus to

small units. Vice President John Hitt, who chaired the Advisory Committee, responded to questions on specific provisions of the proposal. He elaborated on the program for undeclared majors which would combine advisors from all colleges and include participation by Student Affairs professionals and students would be encouraged to keep their options open. He pointed out that with the present practice of assigning all undeclared majors to the College of Arts and Sciences, some departments have felt disadvantaged. Faculty Representative Carol Ann Hall said it would be important to insure that the program did not become a recruiting mechanism for individual departments. Dr. Storer expressed some conditional support for the proposal; he commended the placement of the Chemistry Department in the College of Sciences, in particular. On the other hand, he said he had reservations about the proposed Assembly which seemed weak, and he was concerned that the role of some of the smaller colleges had not been developed. He said provision for the natural resources was not well done and that resource management and marine science should be recognized. President Lick responded to some of these concerns, elaborating on the rationale for the decision-making and on the issues that had shaped the plan. He pointed out that with sciences dispersed in three different colleges, it has been difficult for these faculty to interact and there has been a need for strong leadership, to speak for the sciences, to develop a coherent set of programs in the field and to seek out grant support. Arts and humanities have strong faculties and facilities which he said had not been fully utilized. There is a need for a spokesman for Arts and Humanities as well and this need which could not be readily met in a College where the dean had responsibility for more than 20 departments. Further, he said the social sciences deserve overt leadership. Dr. Smith raised questions about costs and President Lick reported that the proposal could be implemented by July, 1989, for less than \$100,000. Dr. Smith concurred with Dr. Storer's view that the natural resource component will need to be looked at again at some point. Dr. Storer said he could support the proposal with some reservations and suggested that provision be made for future review of the experience with the reorganization, to learn whether the Campus had achieved its expectations. The other members of the Committee concurred and the item was referred to the Board with a recommendation for approval which would include a review of the reorganization in 1990, after a year's experience with the new structure.

Adjournment.

JoAnne R. Magill
Clerk