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Board of Trustees Educational Policy Committee November 14, 1988

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UNIVERSITY OF MAINE SYSTEM
Board of Trustees

University of Maine at Farmington
November 14, 1988

Educational Policy Committee

PRESENT: Stewart Smith, Chair; Patricia Collins, Bennett Katz, Geneva Kirk, James Storer, George Wood; Faculty Representatives Ralph Jans and John Zaner; Student Representative Linda Bartlett.
Staff: Chancellor Robert Woodbury and Richard Bowers.

Dr. Stewart Smith, Chair, convened the meeting and introduced the members of the Committee.

Transferability of Credit. Vice Chancellor Richard Bowers highlighted a report on the status of transferability of credit which was on the agenda at the request of Trustee Katz. Dr. Bowers touched on the steps the University already has taken to address the concerns about credit transfer both from within and from outside the System. Most of the problems emerge from transfers among and between the Campuses in the System and Dr. Bowers noted that the Board's policy mandates that all credits are transferable. Problems may arise when students learn that credits are not automatically applicable to the degree program which they have transferred. He described the uniform course numbering system and equivalent course matrix which have been devised to facilitate transfers and he reported that the Chief Academic Officers monitor the experience with transfers, recognizing that more needs to be done despite the progress already made. Mr. Katz said he was confident that serious attempts have been made to deal with the problems. However, criticism was still being directed toward the System about transfer problems and he thought more could be done since these were and would continue to be an issue with the public and in the Legislature. There was extensive discussion of other steps that might be effective to improve the process further. Student Representative Linda Bartlett noted that it is difficult for students to understand that credits from different degree programs can't always be combined and she said most students aren't interested in the transfer process or how it works until they want to transfer or encounter problems. Among the suggestions for reducing the problems was the designation of a so-called transfer officer on each campus who would be responsible for assisting students who wanted to transfer. Also considered were ways to better inform students about the process. Chancellor Woodbury said he wanted to point out that on the other side of this issue were the equally important efforts that are made and must be maintained, to insure that the System has distinct programs and different curricula. These desirable distinctions do not mitigate against improving the transfer process, however. At the end of the discussion and on behalf of the Committee, Dr. Smith requested that the Chancellor determine what further steps could be taken to eliminate existing barriers to transfer of credit, and to improve the delivery of information to students, for a report back to the Committee at the January meeting.

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Update on Engineering/Technology Education Panel Report. Dr. Smith reported that at the September meeting, the Board asked the Committee to review the recommendations contained in the Report. He said the two recommendations which require internal action are in progress: 1) a proposal for the establishment of a Center for Engineering Studies is on the agenda for action at this session of the Board; and 2) programs in manufacturing education are being developed. The Chancellor was directed to take the initiative for coordination of two other recommendations with educational institutions in the State, as appropriate: 1) to broaden access to engineering/technology education; and 2) to develop a certificate program for two-year technical graduates for recognition for studies beyond the Associate Degree. In addition, he reported that while the Panel concurred in general with the so-called Nine-Point agreement, there was not unanimity concerning the eventual evaluation of the BSEE at the University of Southern Maine. The Panel concurred that the BSEE was to be evaluated at the end of the third year and that an advisory committee was to review the evaluation and make recommendations to the Board about the future of the program. A slight majority of the Panel preferred to have an advisory committee appointed to review the evaluation and make the recommendations. The remainder of the Panel preferred to have the Panel to continue in existence and serve as the Advisory Committee. Dr. Smith said he thought it would be possible to accommodate both points of view and suggested that the Board be asked to create a task force to make recommendations on the general issues of engineering/technology education, on an ongoing basis. Mrs. Collins said she favored retaining the Panel for that purpose in the interest of continuity, given the extensive involvement of its membership in the issues of engineering education, generally, and in the background of USM's BSEE, in particular. She acknowledged that some members might not want, or be able, to continue their service, and that some new constituent members might need to be added, but the retention of the original Panel was, in her view, the best alternative. During discussion, Professor Zaner, who was also a member of the Panel, said it would be important to clearly define the scope of the Advisory Committee so that it did not intrude on local campus efforts. Dr. Storer supported this position, noting that the continuity would be desirable if the scope of the advisory committee activity could be kept in the proper perspective. It was agreed that the Educational Policy Committee would recommend:

- . the establishment of an ongoing advisory committee on engineering/technology education;
- . that the existing Panel would be invited to serve as the new advisory committee;
- . that the charge to the new advisory committee be carefully drawn to reflect concerns expressed about the scope and activities of the committee;
- . that the advisory committee would review the evaluation of the BSEE at USM and make recommendations to the Board;

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- . that representatives from the VTIs and Maine Maritime Academy be included in the membership of the advisory committee.

In response to questions from Professor Zaner, and to clarify the function of the advisory committee with respect to the evaluation of the BSEE, Dr. Smith said the intent was not that the advisory committee would evaluate the BSEE but that the BSEE would be evaluated through the normal process for evaluation of new programs, and that the committee would receive that evaluation, and other appropriate information, and recommend to the Trustees whether the program should be continued, modified, or eliminated. There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned.

JoAnne R. Magill
Clerk of the Board

