Report to the Faculty, Administration, Trustees, Students of
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MAINE
Portland, Maine

by

An Evaluation Team representing the
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
of the
New England Association of Schools and Colleges

Prepared after study of the institution’s
self-evaluation report and a visit to
the campus April 1-4, 2001

The Members of the Team:

Dr. Jean MacCormack, Chancellor, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, Chairperson
Dr. Brenda Cherry, Dean, College of Nursing, University of Massachusetts Boston
Dr. Leslie Flemming, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, Ohio University
Dr. Cynthia Forest, Dean, Student Services, Framingham State College
Dr. Francine Hall, Professor of Organizational Behavior, University of New Hampshire
Dr. James Leheny, Associate Chancellor, University of Massachusetts Amherst
Dr. Blair Lord, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, University of Rhode Island
Dr. Dana Mohler-Faria, Vice President for Administration and Finance, Bridgewater State College
Ms. Jeanne Sohn, Director of Library Services, Central Connecticut State University

This report represents the views of the evaluation team as interpreted by the Chairperson. Its content is based on the committee’s evaluation of the institution with respect to the Commission’s criteria for accreditation. It is a confidential document in which all comments are made in good faith. The report is prepared both as an educational service to the institution and to assist the Commission in making a decision about the institution’s accreditation status.
University of Southern Maine
April 1 – 4, 2001

Introduction

During the first days of April 2001, a team from the New England Association of Schools and Colleges visited the University of Southern Maine to conduct their decanal accreditation assessment. The team met with an extensive group of faculty, staff, students, administrators, trustees, alumni and community members during the visit. Unfortunately, the Chancellor of the University of Maine System was traveling at this time, and it was only possible to talk with him by telephone following the visit.

There were individual meetings, group discussions, tours and observational opportunities included in the schedule. Visits were conducted at the Portland, Gorham and Lewiston-Auburn campuses, with open meetings for faculty, staff, students and administrators held at all three sites. A luncheon meeting with members of the external community at Lewiston-Auburn, and a breakfast meeting with members of the newly formed Board of Visitors in Portland was particularly informative and demonstrated the strong base of regional community support and expectations for USM. Well over 200 members of the USM community were active participants in the team’s evaluation visit. In all cases, the team found those they met to be well informed, knowledgeable about the self-study report, campus mission and activities, and open and candid in all their conversations.

The team is appreciative of the well-organized and complete materials provided before the visit and in the team room. There appears to have been an active and participative process for the preparation of the self-study report and an ongoing and open process for discussion of future orientated planning activities. The team is also grateful for the responsiveness of staff as new requests for data emerged during the visit. A careful review of the materials provided, combined with the insights gleaned from the Chair’s preliminary visit, and conversations during the full team visit provide the basis for the information and judgments contained in the 11 sections of this report. Each section addresses the Standards for Accreditation of the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the New England Association of School and Colleges.

The evaluation of the University of Southern Maine is a comprehensive evaluation following the submission of a progress report in 1993 and a fifth year report in 1996. Just following the last visit, President Richard L. Pattenache assumed his leadership position and has provided over this ten-year period stable and entrepreneurial
leadership. There has been substantial growth and change at the University presenting both opportunities and challenges to which the University has responded. This report outlines where the team has identified strength in the response and where attention should be directed to ensure the University’s ongoing ability to meet emerging challenges and opportunities effectively.

1. Mission and Purposes

The University of Southern Maine has a rich history dating back to 1878 and the Western Maine Normal School. The USM was established in 1970 from the merger of Gorham State College, the University of Maine Portland, and the independent University of Maine School of Law which was located in Portland. USM is one of seven university campuses in the University of Maine System. USM has three campuses: Gorham, Portland and Lewiston-Auburn. It works very closely with the University of Maine System off-campus centers in Saco, Sanford, Bath/Brunswick and Oxford Hills.

USM’s mission has evolved since 1970. It was stated very clearly in 1985 as that of an “urban, comprehensive university.” The mission of the University of Southern Maine is currently expressed in a statement approved in 1994 by the UMS Board of Trustees. This was a revision of the 1985 mission statement completed as part of the 1990 NEASC self-study process. Although the statement is long, it essentially matches the understanding and expectations of the university community, the Board of Trustees, and USM’s regional stakeholders. It calls the campus to be fully responsive to the needs of its region, to offer a wide range of excellent undergraduate and graduate programs to diverse students, to be innovative in its pedagogy, and to actively extend its research and public service mission to its state, the nation and the world. Its strong identifying characteristic is that of a “public, regional, comprehensive institution.”

The self-study clearly identifies the ways the University of Southern Maine has responded during this ten-year period to specific dimensions of its mission. It highlights the significant ways it has expanded both its outreach and partnership activities and its academic programs. Throughout the visit, the team consistently heard about initiatives that were described as “responsive to our mission” or meeting the “needs of our constituencies.” Being regional and being comprehensive is part of USM’s worldview and informs decision-making of faculty, administrators, and staff.

A recent report completed by the new campus Board of Visitors: A Southern Maine Imperative: Meeting the Region’s Needs in the 21st Century offers a substantive external perspective on what programs and outreach activities are currently needed and expected
from USM in living out its regional mission. Of special note was the call to quality, "becoming one of the top-ranked public regional comprehensive universities, noted for the quality and accessibility of its academic programs." The report also calls for the "expansion of science and technology programs and graduate programs in targeted areas of excellence." The University is urged to "maintain affordability and access, to meet the needs of older, returning students, to attract more 18-24 year old students, and to develop institutional research partnerships with business and industry." The Board of Visitors has been vocal and very public in urging the UMaine System to recognize the financial support required for USM to fully respond to these regional needs.

**Strengths**

- The mission is clearly stated and has not substantially changed since the last visit, although its full meaning is being fleshed out and interpreted in response to emerging needs.

- The mission continues to be ambitious and aspirational. Growth and development since the last visit is consistent with the mission direction and has happened despite continuing fiscal constraints, and because of an entrepreneurial spirit and a bold willingness to forge ahead.

- The mission is grounded in regional responsiveness and intellectual strength, and is based on the strongly held conviction that USM can and should effectively master and model achieving full access and programmatic excellence.

- The team especially notes the expansion of the LAC campus, their interdisciplinary, integrative, liberal arts character, and their cross boundary, collaborative style. The students the team met with at LAC gave compelling testimony to USM’s deep commitment to access and student success and achievement. They attribute their self-confidence and their academic achievements to the care, commitment, and challenge they have received from faculty and staff.

- The team was impressed by the mission commitment to enrollment growth at the outreach centers where life-long learning opportunities are offered with a great deal of flexibility.
• The team identifies the expansion of the graduate program portfolio at the master’s level as well as the implementation of the doctoral program in policy studies as an evolving and important part of the mission.

• The campus is commended for success in research activities, especially those supported with external funding. The outstanding work of the Muskie School, and the institutes and centers is leading the way in funded research expansion and policy services. The entrepreneurial service work of the College of Education is also recognized.

• The strong advocacy position of the BOV and their desire to be strong partners in helping USM translate its mission into action for southern Maine provides is a tremendous opportunity and as well as a real challenge.

**Areas of Concerns**

The team sounds one cautionary note -- USM cannot be all things to all people and fully meet its mission with the standard of excellence to which it aspires. The University must balance growth and responsiveness with specific efforts focused on internal integration of new programs and activities, while not losing the momentum of opportunity. The team sees a need for a period of consolidation and strengthening of recent new initiatives in order to ensure their long-term stability.

Although *A Southern Maine Imperative* is an external report is does express aspirations and elucidations of the mission that are consistent with those expressed by campus leadership and several campus constituencies (faculty and administrators). The campus self-study, however, calls attention to the inherent challenges in the report: It calls on USM, “To have a clear direction and perform multiple roles; provide solid programs in science and technology and professional fields and maintain the centrality of the liberal arts; be a high quality first choice institution while at the same time be a source of educational opportunity for those taking the first step toward lifelong learning.” The team heard from faculty and staff some worry about these contradictions and the dual demands they make when resources are still constrained. The new Provost will need to integrate these issues in recently started strategic planning. These worries were also echoed in Trustee and System voices. Although the team viewed these concerns as expected and healthy response to recent campus growing and stretching, some attention be paid to these voices to sort out how to best respond.

There is a need for full and open dialogue with the University system about the scope and timing of ongoing growth opportunities and exploring collaboration opportunities
with UM, where that collaboration will be mutually beneficial and responsive to local needs.

2. Planning and Evaluation

Every institution has its own history and culture, and intelligent planning for the future takes account of the context that shapes and informs planning exercises. The visiting team saw that the University of Southern Maine has taken the following players and experiences into account as it has continued to shape its future through goal-orientated planning.

The University of Maine System

As one of the seven campuses of the University of Maine System, USM is governed by a Board of Trustees that is appointed by the Governor with the consent of the state Senate. The Board is charged with developing system-wide policies and initiating system-wide strategic planning. Its role in planning has been to articulate missions for each campus and to receive and approve the Chancellor of Higher Education’s annual plan and recommendations for higher education in the state. The Chancellor’s most recent report, The Maine Idea, describes five broad goals and estimates that the resources needed to achieve them will total $58.8 million. The goals are:

1. Preparing Students for Life, Work and Citizenship in the 21st Century: assuming that Maine will become more ethnically diverse, that its citizens will make more decisions concerning the processes of life and death, that its economy will evolve and change, that its citizens will engage is more than five different careers during their work life, this goal will strengthen students’ cognitive skills and attitudes, will help students develop competencies essential to a “new economy,” will increase opportunities for work and service learning, and will develop means for assessing what students know and learn.

2. Increasing the Number of College Graduates: the University System will offer more financial aid, will develop programs relevant to industries in Maine, will provide community college programs, and will provide broad geographic access to public higher education.

3. Maximize the Use of Technology to Enrich Human Talent: the University System will adapt the best that technology offers to improve learning, information sharing and research, give graduates the technical skills needed for working in the
information economy, and will provide access to information for all Maine’s citizens through digital technology, especially digital library access.

4. **Work in Partnership for Better Results:** the System will strengthen working relationships between higher education and education K-12 in Maine, will expand collaboration in research and development with private laboratories, businesses and government, and will implement shared funding arrangements for key staff and capital investments.

5. **Sustain Core Operations:** the System will provide competitive compensation for all employees, will retain qualified professionals in competitive fields, and will maintain capital assets with an emphasis on technology.

**The Board of Visitors’ Report**

In 1997, a Board of Visitors was created by the state legislature for each of the campuses of the University System. Each Board has twenty members recommended by each campus President and approved by the System’s Board of Trustees. They are charged: to advocate for their specific institution, to assist in raising private funds to support it, to advise the head of each institution, and to review any recommendations to the Board concerning tuition increases, new academic programs, and the institution’s five year plan. In October 2000, USM’s Board of Visitors published its recommendations for the future course of the institution. In her letter to President Pattenue, Rosalyne Bernstein, the Board’s Chair, wrote: “Over the next ten years, the University of Southern Maine must become one of the top-ranked public, regional, comprehensive universities in the United States in the quality, breadth, and accessibility of its academic programs.” Among its key recommendations to USM, the Board’s Report also added the following:

1. To significantly expand academic programs needed regionally in science and technology as well as in graduate and professional fields, and to pursue ‘targeted areas of excellence strategy’ so that programs tied direction to regional priorities can become nationally competitive.

2. To enhance its broad range of liberal arts and humanities programs central to a solid undergraduate education and the intellectual needs of the region’s learners.

3. To place the continually changing needs of life-long learners within the region at the core of the design and delivery of academic programs, to develop a
comprehensive network of institutional partnerships, and to make creative use of
electronic learning opportunities.

4. To clarify, focus and assure the affordability of programs and services designed to
encourage university attendance, persistence, and life-long learning.

5. To gain more financial support from the state and from the business/industrial
community commensurate with USM’s mission and share of statewide
enrollment.

Campus Planning, 1996-2000

In April 1996, President Richard Pattenaude published the five-year plan for 1996-2001
entitled, USM in the 21st Century: Building a Better University During a Time of
Challenge. This ten-page document described four major goals for the institution, each
with action steps to achieve it. It included a financial plan of projected revenues and
expenditures, a timetable for the action steps, and a set of measurable performance
objectives. The goals and action steps were:

1. Increase the value of a USM undergraduate education: strengthen key curricular
competencies by adding intensive writing, computer literacy and global studies;
invest in technology; expand and enhance library collections and capacity;
reallocate faculty to high demand and high quality areas; increase external
fundraising to upgrade laboratories, libraries and classrooms.

2. Increase the quality of a USM student’s experience: improve advising and
mentoring; strengthen traditional undergraduate studies; revise course scheduling;
continue recreation and athletic initiatives; add internships, cooperative education
and service learning.

3. Increase USM’s responsiveness to regional needs: add new degree programs at
the bachelor’s and masters’ degree levels; expand professional development
opportunities; expand distance learning opportunities; add advisory committees.

4. Increase cost effectiveness of operations and raise revenues: achieve financial
plan targets (add $3.3 million in annual revenue and reduce annual costs by $1.0
million); program reductions and downsizing; restructuring; pursue cost
effectiveness and work simplification; manage more responsibly.
The performance measures identified to demonstrate progress towards these goals included: increased enrollments among first year students, transfer students, out-of-state students, and graduate applications; student retention and graduation levels; overall enrollment; residence hall occupancy; external funding; post-graduate placement; employer satisfaction with graduates; and the goals of the financial plan.

In March 1999, the President prepared a document that listed both accomplishments and unfinished business related to the 1996 plan. Many significant achievements were realized, but an important problem was frankly admitted: there was less reallocation of resources than anticipated, there was less savings from cost cutting than expected, and while the anticipated increases in enrollments were exceeded, they brought with them additional costs that partially offset the financial benefit of the additional tuition revenue. The financial goals of the plan related to these activities, therefore, were not met.

Unit Planning, Performance Budgeting and New College

During the late 1990s, the campus instituted a unit planning process to create a more grassroots’ planning model. Performance budgeting, while a separate initiative, was linked in most people’s minds to the planning initiative. Most administrative offices and professional schools on campus developed their plans, but various departments in the College of Arts and Sciences did not participate. Even among those academic units that did participate, many critics claimed the exercise was useless and the plans were unrealistic, given the financial climate of the institution. More recently a plan for New College, a program that addressed the needs of under-prepared students, was developed and then not fully implemented when the new Provost was appointed in 2000.

Current Planning Activities

Beginning in fall 2000, and under the leadership of the new Provost, the campus started its current planning exercise. The planning process includes a draft document developed from several town meetings convened at various sites around the University. From these discussions, the Provost has produced a draft planning report listing six fairly abstract goals that assert the primacy of intellectual inquiry and learning. They emphasize the centrality of inquiry and learning as organizing principles for the University, the development of a coherence and integrity within the organization and curriculum, enhanced budgets, empowered deans and department chairs, increased financial aid, strong collaborations and assessment. The document describing these goals has been distributed to all faculty and staff, and a continuing dialogue has been established. The next iteration of this document, with more specifics, is expected in late
April 2001. The current document simply lists goals. It includes very little about non-academic units and does not link goals and resources.

Current Evaluation Activities

The 1996 planning document was, on two separate occasions, thoroughly and candidly assessed. Recognizing the need to enhance the institution’s capacity for assessment and institutional research, the 1996 plan proposed several steps to reorganize the units that deal with the collection and analysis of important data relating to the campus. However, the full results of that recent reorganization have yet to be realized. The campus has taken important steps to integrate its databases. This, combined with the reorganization of assessment and institutional research, should provide the campus with the tools it will need to enhance its evaluation activities.

Strengths

- Despite the fact that the 1996 plan did not achieve some of the important financial goals it anticipated, it was a successful planning exercise. Goals were clear, action steps were specific, and performance measures were appropriate. The plan was thoroughly and candidly evaluated. The team saw that planning activities at USM during the past ten years demonstrated a sincere effort to respond to the suggestion made by NEASC Commissioners in 1991: develop a comprehensive academic plan which integrates financial and facilities planning, enrollment planning and fundraising.

- Despite the fact that unit-planning, performance budgeting and plans for New College were all unsuccessful in different ways, several campus units have successfully chartered a course for themselves: education, nursing, and the Lewiston Auburn College have all proposed planning documents that have the support of their constituents. Independent of an institution-wide plan, plans for facilities, technology, and diversity have all been developed during recent years.

- The team was impressed that planning for technology at USM has been quite successful, an example of how, when adequate resources are available, the institution can carefully plan and successfully implement a major initiative.

- Despite setbacks, there is considerable optimism at the University concerning the current planning process. The development process for a new strategic plan is late in starting, but overall, both the President and the Provost enjoy the confidence of the campus community concerning planning for its future.
Areas of Concern

Current planning, at present, is conceptual and goal orientated but includes no strong links to a financial plan. The substantial shortfall of the 1996 planning document’s financial goals makes this omission worrisome in terms of future results.

The reports by the System Chancellor and the Board of Visitors provide recommendations to the campus, which are quite compelling but must be carefully vetted and interpreted. In some places these documents clearly conflict with one another. Even within a single document, such as the Visitors’ Report, advice to the campus urges developments in different directions. For a campus with plentiful resources, developing strengths in both areas might be possible, but for an institution with a shallow resource base, some choices will need to be made and balances in priorities determined.

In the current draft planning document, there is minimal reference to student services, yet for a campus interested in improving its recruitment and retention of good students, overlooking student services, even at this early stage of planning, appears to be an oversight that needs to be addressed.

The need for improved assessment activities and institutional research is quite clear. To date, largely because of limited resources, these activities have focused on first-year students and retention issues. However, areas like the library and student services also deserve careful monitoring.

Suggestions
(These suggestions are advisory in nature and are offered by the Evaluation Team to the University of Southern Maine merely for their consideration and comments.)

The team believes that it might assist USM, both in planning and in assessment, for the institution to identify four or five peer institutions around the country for comparisons of public data or, if possible, the sharing of other information. It might also be useful for USM to identify a few “aspirant peers,” institutions that are clearly a step ahead of USM in their evolutions as national leaders.

3. Organization and Governance

University of Southern Maine is embedded in the organizational and governance structure of the University System of Maine and functions under the direction of the
System Chancellor and the System Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees is the
governing board and holds ultimate responsibility for the institution’s quality and
integrity, but delegates authority for many decisions and processes to the President of
USM, through the Chancellor of the University System. Recently, the System
established a Board of Visitors for each campus. The role of the Board includes:
advocating for their specific institution, assisting to raise private funds to support it,
advising the head of each institution, and reviewing any recommendations to the Board
concerning tuition increases, new academic programs, and the institution’s five year
plan. The President appoints members from the community at large. The University of
Southern Maine Board of Visitors stands out as an active board, committed to the future
development of the school, and serving as a strong advocate within the state business
and political community.

The division of authority and responsibility between the System office and the campus
is clear. Policies and procedures are defined and equitably administered. The method for
allocating resources among the campuses in the system, however, is an ongoing concern
for USM and its Board of Visitors.

USM has its own internal organizational structure and governance system, including a
campus President. The President serves as CEO and accepts responsibilities delegated
to him by the Board. In turn, the President consults with his administrators at all levels
in the development of policy and programs, delegating as appropriate. The President
manages publicly allocated resources and increasingly works with the Foundation,
Board of Visitors, and others to develop private funding to augment the resources
available through public funding in the State of Maine. The President has both formal
(official, constitutional) and informal means of communicating with faculty, students,
administrators, staff, and stakeholders. These include multiple Senates, representing
different constituencies as well as numerous meetings with the University’s various
boards of advisors. In addition informal luncheons, open forums, town meetings, and
other arenas exist for communication to assess and attempt to respond to needs of the
larger University community.

The University has an organization and governance system that facilitates its mission
and supports the functioning of its organizational components. In light of its changing
context and vision for the future, the effectiveness of the structure and system of
governance needs to be regularly evaluated to determine that there is not only support to
initiate programs, but also adequate support for developing and stabilizing new
programs. The Governance Constitution, Organization Chart, and supporting
documents clearly delineate the official roles and responsibilities of the administration
together with the governance roles of faculty, professional staff, classified staff, and students.

Administrative, faculty, and staff representatives are part of the governance system and the various senates. The system of governance clearly defines the role of the faculty as advisory to the administration and provides ample opportunity for a faculty “voice” in the academic affairs of the institution. Department Chairs serve as faculty, the Faculty Senate is the body that considers many of the programmatic issues brought before the campus, and Faculty serve in many other advisory capacities. One example is the President’s Budget and Planning Committee.

While the opportunity for the faculty to participate in governance activities is available, not all faculty members participate. Participation appears to be low. The growth and development of new programs and the academic integrity of those programs require a high level of faculty involvement in governance deliberations in all units.

The Student Senate provides an arena for student views and judgments and students also serve as volunteers on other committees on campus. Students appear to be well served and participate in the many planning processes taking part on campus.

The University Governance Constitution was amended in 1992 by the faculty, professional staff, and classified staff and approved by the Chancellor in 1995. While this is within an acceptable ten-year period of review, it may be advisable to consider revisiting governance systems before the next accreditation. The evolving programs of the University may require a reassessment of the effectiveness of the governance system as well as the extent of faculty participation.

The team believes that USM meets Standard Three at a satisfactory “constitutional level.” However, there are areas where there are challenges at the operational level.

**Strengths**

Several characteristics of the University’s structure and governance system deserve special note.

- The Constitution is a well-written public document that clearly spells out how the formal organization of governance will take place.

- The current structure clearly supports teaching and learning and, especially accessibility for students.
• There is a high degree of institutional identification among professional and classified staff as well as faculty. Involvement of all constituencies in governance is apparent.

• The opportunity for both faculty and staff members to be heard was readily apparent. There are many avenues for upward communication and reaction.

• The Board of Visitors, while not a governing body, is a noteworthy component of the organization and represents an exceptionally effective group of advocates and “external voices” that carry and disseminate USM’s message to the community and bring the needs of the region, its business community, and its students to the University. The Board of Visitors has clearly played a high-impact role in the evolution of an institutional vision and in the process of support for fund raising.

Areas of Concern

The concerns of the team center on operational issues behind the structure and governance system and do not reflect basic defects with the structure of governance

• Given the changing context of the university and its evolving programs, there needs to be a method of assessing the day-to-day ways the structure and organizational units and roles continue to provide adequate support for academic programs, libraries, and other services.

• As differentiation increases, the need for concurrent integration will need to increase. Therefore, the team is concerned that channels of communication be given special attention. In particular, the kind of communication that leads to coordination and collaboration among and between campus groups be cultivated, as well as intercampus and inter-institutional partnerships.

• Opportunities for two-way communication appear to be needed. While there are many opportunities for faculty and staff to react and input, there appears to be a need for greater and clearer communication disseminated downward and from the center of power to faculty and staff in order to ensure they will be appropriately well informed.

• The Faculty Senate is also a concern. Historically, the Senate has been an important arena for faculty participation. It currently lacks the vitality and broad-
based participation needed in an institution that is growing, changing, and evolving. USM needs to cultivate a sense of ownership in as broad a base of faculty and staff as possible.

Suggestions
(These suggestions are advisory in nature and are offered by the Evaluation Team to the University of Southern Maine for their consideration and comments).

Many of the concerns expressed above might be addressed by careful attention to clarifying processes and procedures along with concurrent growth in organizational and faculty development efforts. Investments in support units, activities that engage and inform faculty and staff, focused efforts to develop faculty and staff leaders, incentives of various kinds, increased recognition for faculty and staff, and other tools and techniques for involving people in the governance process in multiple ways need to be an integral part of the growth and development of the institution and its academic programs.

4. Programs and Instruction

The University of Southern Maine has eight schools and colleges and a Women’s Studies Program offering three associates, forty-seven baccalaureates, twenty masters, one JD, and one Ph.D program. Of the four Colleges and four Schools, Arts and Sciences (CAS), Education and Human Development (CEHD), Nursing and Health Professions (CONHP), the Lewiston-Auburn College (LAC), Applied Science, Engineering and Technology (ASET), Business (SOB), Muskie School of Public Service (MUSKIE) and Law; CAS has the largest number of majors (4,364) followed by the SOB (913), CONHP (654) and CEHD (626).

In the past 10 years, the School of Nursing was reorganized as a College of Nursing and Health Professions; nine baccalaureate and seven graduate degrees were initiated. One doctoral program in public policy enrolled students in fall 2000. One program was eliminated. New undergraduate degrees are offered in Environmental Science and Policy, Environmental Safety and Health, Health Sciences, Media Studies, Linguistics, Sports Medicine, Women’s Studies, Radiation Therapy and Geological Sciences. The BA in Liberal Studies was eliminated. The SOB received initial accreditation by the International Association for Management Education and the CONHP, CEHD and School of Law were reaccredited by their respective specialty organizations.

In addition to specialty accreditation held by programs such as Business, Nursing and Law, all academic programs are periodically evaluated as required by University and
System policies. Self-assessment and external evaluators are required. Economics and political science were among the last programs evaluated.

Courses and programs are also offered through University Extension, reorganized in 1996 within the Division Of Enrollment Management. Credit and non-credit courses are offered in non-traditional formats. Credit offerings are developed and approved by faculty within academic units. Faculty is consulted on a limited basis for non-credit courses.

There is clear distinction in level/scope and dimension of degree requirements for associate, baccalaureate and graduate degree programs. Learning outcomes (Expected Results of a University Education) are delineated in the undergraduate catalog and address the ability to enter the workforce/graduate school, be intelligent readers and use analysis, appreciate ways of knowing, etc. Some individual academic majors/units also have clear statements of expected student outcomes i.e. linguistics, engineering, special education, nursing, and American and New England Studies.

Each undergraduate program of studies requires a general education component. Progression and graduation requirements are clearly identified in the undergraduate catalog. A minimum of 120 credits is required for graduation. Specific major credit requirements vary, but range from 28-60. All baccalaureate programs require 30-34 credits from University General Education including COR (interdisciplinary) requirements.

Changes in Core requirement since 1990 include: an increase in the maximum interdisciplinary course size from 45-60; requirement that students complete C and D courses within their first 60 credits; increases in number of Core designated courses from 158 to 224: and a new W writing across the curriculum requirement. Plans are underway to establish a new series of diversity courses. Although general education requirements appear more distributive in nature, they are coherent, substantive, and embody the institutions definition of an educated person.

Scholarship and research are stated to be “fundamental to achievement of institutional purposes and a key component in faculty biannual and quadrennial reviews.” Evidence that faculty pursues scholarship and that scholarship is integrated into the teaching learning endeavor is present. However, workload is cited as the primary reason many undergraduate faculty do not have active research agendas or accomplishments. University support for scholarship includes summer research grants, faculty senate research funds, and technology grants. The team noted, however, there appears to be considerable unevenness in support of faculty scholarship across programs and colleges.
In discussing and observing classroom activity, the team noted a variety of instructional strategies and increases in use of instructional technology such as Blackboard’s Course Info and electronic course communication system and the Internet. The momentum for exploring and using these modes of instruction has increased, as has variation in scheduling. The team observed increased use of distance technologies such as compressed video, television, and the Internet. The team also reviewed data and was told that there has been a decline in class size from 16:1 in 1992 to 14:1 in 2000. Placement examinations need updating by self-report, but are available in addition to freshman seminars, as well as support for students with disabilities and ESL. Special opportunities for creative and scholarly achievement by students are available including the Russell Scholars and Honors programs. COR courses expose students to course variety and different disciplines, but transfer students may not have to meet this requirement.

Periodic assessments of instructional effectiveness are completed by student evaluations that are a required part of all faculty evaluations per trustee policy and AFUM agreement. Program outcome assessment is not consistently done across all academic units and is an issue of a good deal of discussion and debate among administration and faculty. The type of outcome assessment cited most frequently was the 5/7/10 year required program assessment. The LAC, College of Nursing and other professional schools have been active in program and outcome assessment including graduate/employer surveys, advisory boards, etc. There appears to be a need for more consistency across programs in implementation of program outcome assessment.

Admission and retention procedures and criteria are clearly delineated in the catalog. The Law School has a separate catalog and does not list courses in the general University catalog. Strategies to attract recruit and enroll qualified students that are representative of the target population are in place. Significant changes have taken place in this area since the last visit. The enrollment services (advising) group within the Division of Enrollment Management has been reorganized to report to both the provost and the Vice president for Enrollment Management. A new position of Associate provost for Undergraduate programs is being created for the 2001-02 academic year.

**Strengths**

- Faculty commitment to offering quality undergraduate education is evident.
• Pockets of excellence such as the Honors and Russell Honors programs and LAC exist and should be recognized and presented by University community for purposes of modeling success and offering benchmarking measures for others.

• The recent growth in graduate programs appears to be consonant with the needs of the region, a region that has seen and is likely to continue seeing strong economic growth. There are now several well-known, strong degree programs at the graduate level, including USM’s first doctoral program.

• As an increased emphasis on graduate education has developed, so too has the expectation for more formal scholarship and research. For those faculty appointed in the last decade, this expectation is generally well understood.

• USM’s research expectation emphasizes applied research which can have direct benefits to the region.

• Recent academic program development has linked appropriately with local business and industry and holds the promise of even stronger linkages and collaborations in the future.

• The development of independent research units, groups, centers, and institutes has helped promote faculty research and scholarship.

• Academic advising services provide comprehensive and effective services. Evidence of ongoing planning and development is quite evident.

• The momentum for utilization of technologies in teaching/learning situations has increased.

• Collaboration inside the campus, with external partners, and across the UMaine campuses to mount new programs and provide outreach is effective and increasingly successful.

Areas of Concern

While the team commends the campus for many very strong academic programs, the lack of consistent program and learning outcome assessment strategies across most academic and support units, particularly the core-general education program raises a concern. In order to build on current strengths and ensure ongoing quality, regular
assessment seems key. The team identifies a need for both professional development in this area and a campus structure and process to support these activities.

There is also concern about the level of overall support for faculty professional development to foster improvement in teaching and related applied research and pedagogical scholarship. There was evidence that the history of additional workload for extra compensation decreases the opportunities for faculty development that may impact quality of faculty resources for advances in graduate education, research activity, and innovative instructional strategies.

The future, financial stability and continued relevance of core curriculum in the changing organizational structure of the university needs serious and extensive discussions among stakeholders. In addition, some decisions related to computer literacy requirements in the core or elsewhere in undergraduate curricula surfaced as an issue needing direct attention.

There is extensive use of part time faculty in core courses. While adjunct faculty can bring strong skills to this instruction, monitoring this ratio seems important in order to ensure that full time program faculty maintain a critical role in this fundamental building block of the curriculum.

The management, governance, and administration of graduate education need to be coordinated, robust, and institutionalized. The team sees a need for greater uniformity and clarity on such matters as the use and definition of graduate assistants, thesis committee selection and structure, adjudication of student appeals, and so forth.

There is a need to fully examine the aspirations for additional graduate programs expressed by the community, the “institutional” understanding of USM’s internal and collective desires for graduate education, and the readiness of USM to undertake additional graduate programs, particularly in high cost disciplines such as science and technology. An appropriate process and forum is needed where strategic questions regarding program development and the choices inherently necessary when considering such development can take place.

In addition, the appropriate role of graduate education within the University of Maine System, particularly in relation to the University of Maine at Orono, needs to be clarified.
The ability to make the physical infra-structural investments to support the research agenda will be a challenge when the legislative support for targeted R&D funding expires in a few years.

The infrastructure to ensure compliance with the many (and increasing) federal mandates related to funded research (i.e., Institutional Review Board, Scientific Misconduct Policy, Animal Care Requirements) is thin and will require more attention as these activities grow.

Increasing available and valid data to inform university decision-making, particularly on academic matters is necessary. This should improve capacity to set priorities in use of academic resources as related to strategic and other plans.

**Suggestions**
(These suggestions are advisory in nature and are offered by the Evaluation Team to the University of Southern Maine merely for their consideration and comments.)

Appropriate collaborative graduate program initiatives with the University of Maine at Orono should be considered and pursued.

Explore the possible expanded role(s) of continuing education in efforts to raise external funds.

5. **Faculty**

The University of Southern Maine substantially meets the standard on faculty. Spread over USM’s three main campuses, the faculty in fall 2000 number approximately 371 full-time regular tenured/tenure track appointments. When adjunct/clinical part-time faculty are included, the total faculty headcount is 648 with a full-time equivalent of 470. Approximately 80% of faculty members possess the appropriate terminal degree from well-regarded institutions. Two system-wide unions represent tenured/tenure-track faculty members and part-time faculty members.

Faculty members participate in a range of activities, including teaching, research, outreach, service, and governance. Student faculty ratios are approximately 13 to 1, although there is considerable variation among programs in these ratios. Nevertheless, these relatively low ratios mean that most faculty members teach relatively small classes, even at the lower-division level. Many faculty members, especially but not exclusively, those hired in recent years, are research-active. A significant number of the research-active faculty have applied for and received external funding.
Faculty members, including most part-time faculty, are regularly evaluated according to internal policies and union contract provisions. The institution offers promotion and tenure through established processes, some of which are spelled out in union contracts and other governance documents. Opportunities for professional development are becoming increasingly available.

**Strengths**

- The largest share of the external funding for research at USM is awarded to the Muskie School of Public Service and various programs in Education. However, concrete steps have been taken to encourage faculty members in other areas to apply for and be successful in obtaining external funding. These steps include: the appointment of a research grant development specialist in the College of Arts and Sciences who collaborates with Education; the appointment of an associate dean for research in the College of Nursing; the use of R&D funds from the state to support activities of the Office of Sponsored Programs; and the encouragement of research collaborations with other institutions, the private sector, and other established networks.

- USM has made good use of R&D funds from the state to build competitive research capacity primarily in the biosciences and information sciences. As a result, the institution has created new institutes, provided start-up funds to new faculty hires in science and technology, provided summer support, and retrofitted needed space for laboratories. Plans are underway for the expansion and renovation of scientific research space.

- The College of Education and Human Development provides good orientation and mentoring of faculty. Programs in education maintain a wide network of collaborative partners through the Southern Maine Partnership and other entities that provide excellent opportunities for participation in sponsored research and other forms of faculty development.

- On the whole, USM faculty seem to care deeply about students, and especially about raising the levels of intellectual aspiration of the many first-generation students who make up their population.
Areas of Concern

There is a perception among many faculty members that the university lacks consistent policies, procedures, and standards for promotion and tenure. There appears to be widespread variation among the various departments, schools, and colleges. Many faculty members have no sense of the process beyond the department level.

Currently, USM is supporting faculty development unevenly. State R&D funds have enabled the expansion of support for faculty in science and technology. Grant networks and partnerships in Education provide opportunities for some faculty. However, as yet, many faculty, especially those in the humanities and social sciences, have limited opportunities for development either as instructors or researchers.

For faculty outside the Muskie School, Education, and programs receiving R&D funds, few incentives exist for engaging in research. In fact, overload teaching is apparently so common among senior faculty that for many to engage in research instead of teaching would require a financial sacrifice.

There do not seem to be mechanisms for establishing the appropriate number and balance of fulltime and part-time/adjunct faculty members.

There is no publicly articulated policy for the distribution of overhead return funds. Hence, faculty members obtaining external funds do not have the incentives or the ability to enhance research that these funds typically provide faculty members in other institutions.

Suggestions
(These suggestions are advisory in nature and are offered by the Evaluation Team to the University of Southern Maine merely for their consideration and comments.)

The Provost and/or President might consider calling for a university-wide review of department, school, and college promotion and tenure criteria. They might consider a policy that calls for such revisiting at stated intervals. Given the applied nature of many USM programs, they should ensure that P&T criteria reflect the value of applied research.

The Provost may want to articulate standards for sabbaticals and other professional leave arrangements. The Provost may also want to collate and publish the variety of
faculty development opportunities available. He may want to find creative and low-cost ways to lead and provide for faculty development opportunities outside the university. The University may also want to consider instituting regular mechanisms and funding for sending academic leaders among the faculty to such national leadership development efforts as the HERS Summer and Weekend Institutes, the Harvard Summer Institutes, the Snowmass Institute, etc.

The Provost should consider developing mechanisms for reporting on and benchmarks for the numbers of part-time and adjunct faculty in the various programs and may want to initiate planning to reach those benchmarks.

The President and Provost may want to more clearly articulate that teaching and research are not mutually exclusive but rather mutually interactive and enhancing. Through public relations and other mechanisms, they should articulate this clearly. They should also stress the concrete value of faculty research, including that in the humanities, to the surrounding region.

The Provost and Chief Financial Officer may want to develop a policy for the distribution of overhead return that provides incentives for continued development of externally funded research.

6. Student Services

There is a clearly articulated vision for quality student services at University of Southern Maine. Responsiveness to the needs of students is the organizing principle guiding the work of the offices that are responsible for the functions outlined in this standard. These functions are organized within four areas at USM—Student Development, Academic Affairs, Enrollment Management and Campus Diversity and Equity. These organizational units have a single vision of student support services, and are committed to collaboration to achieve a coordinated outcome. The Student Development staff aims to deliver quality services tailored to the distinctive needs of the many populations that comprise the student body. The Student Development staff also carefully factor in the unique features of the three primary campus environments that comprise the University in designing programs. The overarching force that makes these challenging conditions work for students is the dedicated staff whose energies, talents, resourcefulness, and vision translate into outstanding services, advocacy, and programs.

The University of Southern Maine has an entrepreneurial environment that propels these staff members to seek creative ways to promote the intellectual and personal development of the students. The student services areas support USM’s goals.
articulated in the 1996 strategic plan, “USM in the 21st Century”: “(1) to increase the value of a USM undergraduate education and (2) increase the quality of a USM student’s experience.”

Student services at the University of Southern Maine are grounded in a commitment to an accessible, responsive public regional institution of higher education. To this end, the University through its co-curricular services adheres to “both the spirit and intent of equal opportunity.” This dedication is visible in the structure and programs at USM. The Office of Campus Diversity and Equity supports the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs, staffed by both a director and a coordinator of Multicultural Student Programming. The Women’s Resources Center, the Gay Lesbian, Bisexual Transgender, Questioning and Ally Program Coordinator and the Office of International Exchange also provide specific outreach and services designed to promote equal opportunity and support.

Additional efforts to tailor service availability through the use of technology to meet the schedules and needs of commuters, part-time and evening students have been adopted in Financial Aid and Career Services/Cooperative Education. Finally, services for students with disabilities are coordinated through the Office of Academic Support for Students with Disabilities. Currently, this office has successfully reached its maximum service capacity at a time when student and institution response needs are continuing to increase.

The University is working to improve retention by focusing attention on supporting the academic success of its students. USM is revamping the academic support unit to provide a coherent and coordinated approach to academic advising, student learning assistance, first-year programming, and assessment of student learning needs. Additionally, placement testing in writing and mathematics is determined at the point of admission and articulated in the invitation to orientation. Testing occurs prior to orientation so that advisors can utilize this information in their work with new students. Students accepted on a conditional basis are advised with the assistance of a future learning plan. These present and future efforts support the goal of enhancing the likelihood of students’ successful entries into the academic community.

In addition to advising and support services, financial aid is critical to student success. Currently, the reliance on the packaging of loans because of the limited number of grant dollars leaves students graduating with high levels of debt. The development of additional resources for grants is an important area for strategic planning. While resources for awards are limited, the improved use of technology to include scanning of all records and using the web for notification of awards has provided excellent support
to students in finding financial means to attend USM. The staff members have done an outstanding job of enhancing and streamlining services.

The strategy for the assessment of outcomes is still evolving. Currently, there is continuous outreach to “keep a finger on the pulse” of student opinion. Additionally, the Lewiston/Auburn Campus has surveyed graduates to determine their reported educational outcomes in relationship to career impacts. Also satisfaction surveys have been conducted by the Counseling Center as well as quality assurance system studies in Health Services. The Athletic Department has also surveyed athletes regarding the self-reported benefits of participation in team sports. Ongoing efforts to examine and serve the needs of new students have been discussed in the Portland and Gorham work groups. A doctoral dissertation study focused on the retention of students of color at USM is underway with joint support from faculty in the Muskie School of Public Service and staff in the Office of Campus Diversity and Equity. These examples illustrate that assessment steps have been taken.

Established services and staff are dedicated to assist students with personal, physical, and educational problems. Additionally, services are in place to address the career development and counseling need of students. The University also provides health education and health care through the University Counseling Center and University Health Services. It appears from interviews that staff members possess the credentials to provide these services. Continued efforts to diversify the staff in both areas are viewed as important by students and staff.

There is a wide range of opportunities for student leadership and campus involvement. Each campus has a tailored approach to insure involvement options match the needs of students. With over 30 clubs and organizations, students, who choose to become involved, have a plethora of options designed to promote community and education. Additionally, the Residence Hall Councils, provide residence hall students with avenues for impacting decision-making related to all residents. The Student Senate is the recognized governance body with responsibility for the allocation of Student Activities Fees.

On the Portland campus, the facilities are inadequate to provide the physical space to house all student organizations in one facility. Currently, many organizations, including the Student Government, are housed in facilities that are not equipped for students with mobility disabilities. To maximize the opportunities for developing community and delivering services in a three-campus university, the need for space which houses student groups in close proximity to each other and to student services is critical.
Intercollegiate sports and recreation are provided for men and women at USM. The University is in compliance with Title IX. The quality of sports and recreation facilities for students and student athletes is impressive. However, there are challenges and conflicts for fee-paying students having access to these facilities at all times due to the need to generate revenue from outside groups to assist in bond repayment. These competing needs present scheduling difficulties.

The University of Southern Maine Student Handbook, The Navigator, contains a description of services and policies that impact students. Specifically, each service and its purpose are explained. Additionally, this publication carefully details students’ rights and responsibilities plus the policies and procedures governing conduct and discipline as well as student records. Finally, the structures are in place for fairly administering the processes involved in discipline and other grievances.

The four areas responsible for student services functions at USM have been faced with new organizational and leadership changes that have created opportunities for a fresh look at practice and priorities. Collaboration and assessment remain important next steps for a strategic planning process.

Strengths

- The staff members within the student service areas are committed to the community-focused mission of the University and understand the importance of tailoring initiatives to meet the distinctive needs of each campus environment.

- The entrepreneurial spirit combined with the vision, talents, energy and skills of the Student Development staff have generated needed resources to provide services to students in a time of declining budgets.

- Continued focus on strategic planning is important to identify the priorities and directions for refining Student Development services and programs.

- The leadership for supporting racial, ethnic and sexual orientation diversity initiatives by the areas delivering student services is important and essential as the University continues to enhance its outreach to under-represented populations.

- Students reported significant “value-added” to their education by involvement in leadership and student employment opportunities on campus.
• The promotion of civility as a theme of campus life has created an environment that supports discourse for individuals with divergent opinions.

• The addition of a new residence hall that offers multiple housing options, up-to-date amenities and needed parking is important for improving campus life.

• The community policing model that has been implemented is important to community life.

• Providing campus childcare is a positive support service for the large nontraditional student population at USM.

**Areas of Concern**

The team identifies a need to conduct an audit of the assessment initiatives currently being conducted and planned for each department. While environmental scans are done, a more regular effort that is coordinated and focused will help sustain the quality of the services being provided.

While technology has been used to extend services to students, it is clear that ongoing technology support is needed to advance web-based services to better serve the large number of commuters and other nontraditional students.

Continued engagement in the strategic planning process initiated by the Provost is important to insure that the co-curricular programs and services are integrated into the final plan with consideration for all the potential impacts on all areas of the campus.

The limited financial aid offered through grants and the continued reliance on loans as the primary source for financial aid for students at USM is a serious concern shared by the team.

While the refocusing of diversity, enrollment, advisement and student development functions within new organizational structures has created changes, the importance of ongoing collaboration among and between these four areas is critical for ensuring a coordinated approach to student services.

*7. Libraries and Information Resources*

A central feature of the USM libraries is the staff and the outstanding Portland facility that is in process of being renovated and expanded. The staff appears to be well
deployed in their various functions, and discussions with faculty confirmed the fact that the staff are well respected and provide outstanding service. Generally, they are enthusiastic about the institution and seem dedicated to the Library and the University as a positive place in which to work.

Observation of several areas and functions suggested existence of strong and creative leadership. The consolidation of the technical service units to the Portland campus is an efficiency that seems to have been well considered, given the extremely tight staffing situation. Likewise the cooperative agreements with the Garbrecht Law Library as well as other UMS libraries are to be commended.

The acquisition and renovation of Glickman Family Library is an impressive undertaking that should provide the USM with excellent facilities well into the future. The expansion should resolve a number of problems apparent in the current facility, the most pressing of which is space for materials. In addition to extensive stacks for materials, there will be the creation of expanded space for technical services, an electronic classroom and increased public space. Of critical importance is the fact that the building is being planned for “extensive technology applications.” The fact that the two other libraries on the other two campuses are going to be renovated is also a very positive step that will improve services on all the campuses.

Although many issues will be resolved when the expansion is complete, the team calls attention to the fact that the expansion will require additional staff, already a resource that is scarce. The renovation of three additional floors in the building is already creating concerns for security, particularly given the fact that there will be no consistent staff presence.

USM libraries have a strong on-line library system. USM is a UMS partner in the online bibliographic database provider, Innovative Interfaces, Inc. As one of many players in the centrally budgeted shared database, URSUS, USM library users have access not only to holdings of the university libraries in the system but to the State Library as well as several public libraries. Mariner, the UMS digital library, provides a broad range of online resources and is an excellent resource for USM library users.

Although the libraries are able to take advantage of the outstanding collection of online materials provided by Navigator through the University of Maine System, it does not make up for the deficient collection of print materials. The budget throughout the 1990’s was insufficient to keep up with the needs of the institution and the consequence has been an inadequate print collection. There are many new programs that are being implemented at the University; faculty and students will receive inadequate support if
the current level of funding continues. The fact that a strong document and efficient delivery system exists among the various UMS libraries and through Interlibrary Loan does not automatically replace ownership and the need for the individual campuses to own a substantial amount of their own material. The extremely high rate of interlibrary borrowing is an indication of this need.

The library instruction program appears to be developing well, utilizing both training sessions and classroom instruction. It is important not to overlook the important role that information literacy will play as information technology develops. It will become necessary to develop ties with faculty in order to provide critical methods of accessing and analyzing information. Information literacy is going to require teamwork at every level of the university.

**Strengths**

- Certainly the high level of service provided by the staff at all campus libraries is the primary strength to be reported. They are a hard-working group who are devoted to the library and to serving the University community. They have the difficult task of trying to compensate for the low staffing level at each of the libraries. Without their level of commitment, the libraries would be in a very difficult position.

- The Osher Map Library and the Library’s Special Collections are without any doubt a true credit to the University. The Osher Map Library in particular brings exceptional resources to the USM, Portland and the State of Maine; USM can consider itself very fortunate to have such a rich resource.

- Level of cooperative efforts and networking are very positive, particularly with institutions within Maine. URSUS and Mariner are two highly visible examples, but the libraries also participate in a number of other cooperative efforts that provide valuable support for USM.

- Plans for the expansion and renovation of library space will benefit all three campuses. The Glickman Family Library has very exciting plans not only to accommodate the housing of collections and study space, but also to provide a dynamic public meeting and a large reading room. Both the Gorham and LAC libraries are also scheduled for renovation.
Areas of Concern

Funding for collections is poor. The level budget for the past several years is in actuality a reduction, given the overall inflation rate. There are new programs that require library support, particularly those at graduate levels. The team is strongly concerned that funding is currently insufficient to support both existing and new programs.

The level of staffing is a serious problem. The best efforts of an excellent library administration and staff cannot compensate for the many opportunities missed by having a staff size that does not meet minimal standards.

Although the plans for the Glickman Family Library expansion are a real strength, there is some concern that the implementation may be delayed. Not all of the funding has yet been received; should there be a significant delay, serious space problems for materials may be created and other libraries’ renovations delayed.

Suggestions
(These suggestions are advisory in nature and are offered by the Evaluation Team to the University of Southern Maine merely for their consideration and comments.)

One of the areas of interest to the team and helpful in terms of library planning is assessment. It would be useful for the libraries to begin a process of self-assessment, perhaps doing an annual user survey, benchmarking or bringing together occasional focus groups. This would provide qualitative information to assist in justifying programmatic requests.

The Library could be helped by finding a dynamic mechanism for participating in curricular decisions that have an impact on its staffing and collections. It would assist them in gaining needed support for new courses and programs.

Having to provide collections and services for three campuses puts a drain on meager resources. It would be helpful to explore efficient and effective ways to maximize duplicative services and collections, particularly those that are duplicative.

8. Physical Resources

The University of Southern Maine has sufficient physical resources to meet its current mission and purpose. The physical plant is substantially adequate to accommodate teaching and learning activities and to support the activities of the staff and
administration. There are an adequate number of classrooms and laboratories to accommodate scheduled classes and they are maintained at a standard that is acceptable for university activity. The campus has engaged in facilities planning with a focus on resolving current space needs and future programming. The planning, although not linked by any identifiable process to other units, reflects the needs for both academic and student affairs expansion. Construction of a new Bioscience building, renovation to the library, construction of a new residence hall and development of a renovated facility for the Muskie Center are all evidence and results of campus planning activity. A committee exists for the purpose of space allocation and assignment; however, many staff members indicated that it was not always clear how decisions made by this group related to identified priorities for the university.

The facilities are well maintained by a competent and dedicated staff. The dedication and commitment of the staff compensate in some measure for the less than adequate number of staff in this area. The campus is accessible, safe and complies with applicable laws, regulations, and codes. The campus engages in proactive programs for environmental health and safety to ensure that a safe and comfortable working, living, learning and teaching environment exists for students, faculty and staff.

Although the multi-campus operation poses resource and staff challenges, the university has developed and maintained processes that allow for the sharing of resources where possible and the duplication where necessary. All standards for facilities development and maintenance appear to be consistent at all campus locations. Current deferred maintenance is approximately $42 million dollars. Although the staff have begun to address this backlog, more resources would be necessary to keep pace with this growing backlog.

Members of the staff and administration have developed a variety of technology-based applications to meet the processing and service demands for the campus community. Although the applications are well developed and meet a growing demand for services, there is currently no integrated database system to allow for efficient, timely and effective processing and communications between administrative units.

The university has acquired and renovated a building that now serves as a library on the Portland campus. The renovation of three remaining floors in the facility is scheduled for completion in the near future. This renovation will provide necessary space to adequately house the library collection.
Strengths

- The facilities staff maintains a high level of commitment to providing adequate facilities for university activities and to the university as a community.

- The campus is moving aggressively to complete facilities planning and construction to meet the needs of students, faculty and staff as evidenced by the comprehensive facilities plan.

- Staff and administration have developed a variety of effective technology based applications to meet a growing demand and need for efficient processing.

- The addition of new facilities has been carefully planned to include operational costs and reserves for deferred maintenance.

Areas of Concern

The facilities planning process does not demonstrate a clear and distinct connection to the campus-wide vision and program planning for the future of the university.

The commitment from the state of Maine to provide funding for construction and operational costs for new campus facilities is marginal and inadequate. This results in a drain of campus resources that could otherwise be used to support program efforts in academic and student affairs.

Space allocation and utilization appears not to be accomplished with consideration for campus-wide needs and with the benefit of adequate input from appropriate stakeholders.

Library space is inadequate to house the current collection and meet identified needs.

Although several departments have completed commendable database systems for administrative processing, there is no campus-wide effort to integrate these databases.

Suggestions
(These suggestions are advisory in nature and are offered by the Evaluation Team to the University of Southern Maine merely for their consideration and comments.)
The President, through the office of the Chancellor, should explore all options for additional funding to support the development, operation and maintenance of existing and new campus facilities.

A more effective method for allocating space should be developed for the campus. This process should include all stakeholders when decisions are considered for use of space.

The facilities planning process should be clearly linked to other campus planning efforts.

Planning for library space must be included in ongoing facilities planning.

9. Financial Resources

The University of Southern Maine is financially stable and maintains the necessary financial resources to substantially achieve its mission and objectives. Revenues are devoted to the educational purpose and programs of the institution. The fiscal area staff is competent and maintains all necessary records and reports related to financial activity of the university.

Although financial resources are well managed, there is no clear link between long-range program planning and financial resource planning. The university has been funded at minimal levels by the state creating an environment of uncertainty concerning the ability to identify resources necessary for future expansion of academic and student affairs programming.

The university currently provides approximately $1,483,421 in E&G financial aid to students. The campus only provides $320,000 in discretionary university scholarships. Given the emphasis on enrollments as a source of new revenues, the campus should consider how the internal University commitment of aid students is impacting enrollment.

Private fundraising has become a central effort of the institution and recent activities have resulted in increased giving to the university. These efforts should be sustained and supported as a central funding source for ongoing programming and planning. These efforts combined with the increased revenues in the area of sponsored projects and research may play an increased role in funding of academic and student affairs programs. The current indirect cost recovery for grants and sponsored research is approximately 11%. The bulk of these revenues support campus activities and overhead costs related to program support.
Current funding for library resources is less than adequate. Collections are dated and resources are limited to support student and faculty research.

**Strengths**

- The staff in the fiscal area is knowledgeable and committed to providing accurate and timely information to the campus community. They comply with all federal, state and higher education standards in the conduct of their responsibilities.

- The appropriate internal controls and administrative structures exist to ensure that university resources are accounted for and safeguarded.

- The revenues are expended to enhance institutional mission and goals.

**Areas of Concerns**

Financial planning is not directly or visibly linked to institutional and program planning efforts. Although the President and the Vice President for Finances communicate regularly on budget matters, there is no clear evidence that a comprehensive financial plan is in place to support the stated goals and direction of the university. Annual planning and budgeting priorities are not clearly articulated to broad campus constituencies. Most senior level officers are unaware of the relationship between financial allocations and institutional goals.

The University has not regularly distributed funds for indirect cost recovery on grants and sponsored projects to academic units and investigators. In this past academic year, $177,000 was distributed to schools and colleges based on a formula that has been in place for over ten years. However, the distribution mechanism and formula is not widely understood. Distribution to departments and investigators has been at the discretion of Deans.

There is not adequate institutional financial aid provided to students. The current allocation is much too low for a university of this size.

**Suggestions**

(These suggestions are advisory in nature and are offered by the Evaluation Team to the University of Southern Maine merely for their consideration and comments.)
The university needs to develop a method and process for integrating financial and resource planning and institutional planning. It’s not clear in the current planning documents that the university has identified necessary resources to move ahead with goals and initiatives outlined.

A process to review the current practice and policies related to the distribution of indirect costs recovery should be conducted. All stakeholders should participate in this process.

Additional resources need to be allocated for the preservation and expansion of the current library collections.

The fiscal staff should work closely with academic and student affairs during the annual budget process to ensure that funding levels and processes are clearly understood by all stakeholders.

10. Public Disclosure

Generally, all USM documents and publications meet the expected standards for public disclosure, including current catalogs (both undergraduate and graduate) which provide the mission statement, university expectations and requirements, faculty information, appropriate course information, etc. The catalogs, as well as the University view book and web pages, are useful, informative and present a professional appearance. The University Factbook and the web pages are designed to provide additional information about the University that is statistical in nature. They further describe the University and provide information to external agencies as well as the public at large. Both the printed material and web pages generally appear to be accurate and complete and present a positive image of the university.

Strengths

- Major campus publications are well done; they present a cohesive and professionally designed group of publications. The Web site is also useful and provides online information in an easily accessible format.

- The Offices of Publications and Marketing and Media and Community Relations actively support the efforts of the President, faculty and students in making connections with the community. The marketing plan is well organized and appears to be accomplishing many of its goals.
Areas of Concern:

All offices must ensure that the material that they produce contains timely, consistent and accurate information. This will require more extensive coordination and communication with and among the many units at the University that initiate and need materials.

Neither unit is generously funded and must struggle to accomplish the goals that they have set for themselves. There is also concern that the marketing budget is not sufficiently centralized to take advantage of all of the services that the Office of Publications and Marketing can provide.

11. Integrity

As the self-study document indicates, “the University of Southern Maine is one of seven members of the University of Maine System; under the University Charter, USM has the authority to grant degrees. USM operates within the policies and procedures established by the Board of Trustees of the University of Maine System and within USM’s own governance and administrative governance and by-laws.” The institution subscribes to, exemplifies, and advocates for high ethical standards in the management of its affairs as evidenced in its policies and procedures manuals, catalogue, and student handbook. Additionally, the human resource management staff articulates a consistent message that promotes the value of all employees. Every representative of the institution stressed the importance of the individual in the life of the institution.

The University advocates and exemplifies, to its campus constituencies and in its work with those outside the institution, a commitment to ethical conduct. Through its publications, the University describes the ethical principles embodied in and ensured through policies and procedures that support and promote academic honesty, privacy rights, and fairness. Additionally, the University communicates its stance regarding academic freedom for both students and faculty members in its publications that are widely distributed. Important policies describing the ethical treatment of students include the Academic Integrity Policy, the Student Academic Appeals Policy, and the Student Administrative Appeals Policy.

The University has dedicated itself to providing an accessible, quality education to serve the region as reflected its current mission statement. Admissions policies and practices support this stance. Programs and services have been developed to support these principles, too. Also recruitment of a diverse faculty and staff is underway and supported by the Affirmative Action Plan that provides guidance for searches.
Currently, 39% of full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty are women. Also, strides have been made in the recruitment of students from under-represented populations. As another avenue of support, the offices of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning Program, Multicultural Student Programs, Native American Student Affairs, Campus Diversity and Equity, Academic Support for Student with Disabilities plus the Women’s Center and Office Women’s Resources were established to respond to the needs expressed by students, staff, faculty, and community members.

The collective bargaining agreements have been cited as key documents that ensure clearly delineated processes are understood and followed by all parties.

Through the self-study process, the University identified several areas requiring planning and associated action. These needs include the academic and student life support for the diverse needs of entering students so as to ensure access and quality of the academic experience. Continued attention to these areas is needed.

**Strengths**

- The University has made progress in addressing the gender-related pay inequities for women faculty.

- A process for salary reviews for all newly hired staff has been instituted by the Office of Campus Diversity and Equity

- Recruitment and selection policies and procedures to promote affirmative action are in place.

- Detailed job descriptions for all professional positions and a more standardized salary scale have been established to promote equity in hiring.

- New advising systems have been planned to insure students entering USM have the level of support to promote success and retention.

- The University has provided for Title IX compliance for gender equity in intercollegiate sports.
Areas of Concern

The continued efforts to address pay equity issues are important to promote integrity within the University.

The team is concerned about the level of resources to support students with disabilities. Adequate resources are essential for ensuring the level of service needed by an increasing population of students who need a great deal of individual attention.

Based on consistently expressed confusion regarding the promotion and tenure procedures, additional steps should be taken to supply needed information designed to answer questions raised by faculty members.

Summary

In general, it is the view of the Evaluation Team that the University of Southern Maine is achieving its mission and offering programs and services consistent with its stated mission. Dedication to intellectual rigor, quality programs, full access, and responsiveness to its region were in full evidence. A clear spirit of collegiality and cooperation exists at the campus and the team was welcomed with candor and openness.

The team commends the leadership of the campus, especially President Patenaude for their entrepreneurial spirit and their embracing of the twin goals of access and excellence and rigor and responsiveness. There is no question that while success at this institution comes from leadership exercised at many levels; the President and senior leadership team have been effective. They demand the best and the most from everyone. They have had the courage and the will to lay out a path for growth and development for the campus even in difficult financial times, and it has made a very real and measurable difference. The team also commends the USM Board of Visitors as extended members of the community and leadership team. It is clear to us that they are strong ally’s and supporters and that they intend to stand with the campus and the UMaine System in making it possible for USM to both sustain and continue to develop its mission as a premier regional, public, comprehensive university of the 21st century. The team recognizes that USM is at a different place than it was ten years ago, and the team also acknowledges that it is a stronger, more responsive institution.

While there are continuing fiscal challenges, USM has used strategic planning and targeted growth goals to expand graduate programs, strengthen the Lewiston-Auburn campus offerings, integrate new technologies into instruction and service enterprises, increase overall enrollment and resources, develop additional life-long learning options
at the outreach centers, and develop significant funded research activity and regional partnership programs. Fundraising accomplishments are to be noted as well as physical plant expansions, particularly the Glickman Library. We also call attention to diversity and technology planning and accomplishments. We recognize success in planning and moving ahead in several specific units—education, nursing, and LAC. These are seen as continuing efforts and generate considerable optimism concerning the current planning process. There appears to be confidence in planning as a path to improvement.

The team offers the following summary of the most important strengths and concerns.

**Strengths**

- The mission is ambitious and aspirational. Growth and development follows the mission direction and has happened despite continuing fiscal constraints, supported by an entrepreneurial spirit and a bold willingness to forge ahead.

- USM faculty cares deeply about students and are dedicated to raising the levels of intellectual aspiration of the many first-generation students who attend USM.

- Growth in graduate programs is consonant with the needs of the region, a region likely to continue strong economic growth. Several well-known, strong degree programs at the graduate level, including USM's first doctoral program add luster to its programmatic mix.

- The strong advocacy position of the BOV and their desire to be strong partners in helping USM translate its mission into action for Southern Maine provides a tremendous opportunity and a real challenge.

- Despite setbacks, there is considerable optimism at the University concerning planning processes. The new strategic plan is late in starting, but overall, both the President and the Provost enjoy the confidence of the campus community concerning planning for its future.

- The development of independent research units, groups, centers and institutes has helped promote faculty research and scholarship.
Concerns

- The campus must continue its commitment to university planning efforts, judiciously moving current strategic planning from the conceptual stage to the strategic stage and carefully linking academic and programmatic planning with financial resources. This will ensure a solid foundation for continuing to meet the mission challenges to become a premier regional, public, comprehensive university of the 21st century.

- The team urges a serious effort to address the critical need for enhancement of library collections and services for faculty and students.

- The team also identified a need for full and open dialogue with the University system about the scope and timing of ongoing growth opportunities and exploring collaboration opportunities with UM, where that collaboration will be mutually beneficial and responsive to local needs.

- The team is concerned about the lack of consistent outcome assessment strategies across most academic and support units. In order to build on current strength and ensure ongoing quality, regular assessment is key. Professional development is needed and a campus structure and process to support these activities.