Overview:

In 2019-2020, Luc Nya served as Chair of the University of Southern Maine’s Board of Visitors (BOV), with Jane Eberle as the Vice-Chair. The BOV focused its attention on the following areas: supporting, collaborating and helping USM achieve its goals, especially in the areas of enrollment and retention; consultation on USM’s 5 Year Strategic Vision and Plan; employment and career services; participation in system-wide joint BOT/BOV meetings; reaching out to Maine legislators in support of USM and the University of Maine System’s legislative agenda; and providing testimonials on the importance of USM and UMS to Maine’s economy and businesses, among other issues.

2018-2019 Membership

The USM Board of Visitors began 2019-2020 with twenty members (including the immediate past president). There were two vacancies during the year due to a resignation for work related reasons and one member terming out. There was ten men and ten women. Twelve members reside in the Portland or its surrounding southern Maine communities; six reside in Lewiston/Auburn/Lisbon; one residents in the mid-coast region, and one resides in other areas.

Members’ professional backgrounds:
- Technology and Manufacturing (3)
- Government/State/Economic Development (4)
- Financial (3)
- Arts (2)
- Real Estate (2)
- Architecture (1)
- Education/Youth Services (2)
- Healthcare/Medical (1)
- Law (1)
- Nonprofit Management (1)

Officers
Chair: Luc Nya
Vice-Chair: Jane Eberle

Schedule
The USM Board of Visitors met six times in 2019-2020. The BOV met three times in Portland, once at LAC, and twice remotely over Zoom. The Annual meeting is scheduled in June each
year. Board of Visitors member’s terms had been extended to include the first meeting of the 2020-2021 BOV calendar due to COVID-19.

Meetings and Agenda Items:

Friday, August 30, 2019

Chair Nya welcomed everyone to the first BOV meeting of the 2019-2020 academic year and allowed new members to introduce themselves. Provost Jeannine Uzzi gave a presentation on USM’s diversity and inclusion initiatives and included a list of book from which one will be selected to be read campus wide. Vice President of Human Resources, Natalie Jones, presented on search and retention, discussing required implicit bias training for all members of search committees and language that may exclude potential candidates. Vice President Jones discussed how “minorities” are defined and limitations on what can be collected. President Cummings discussed the new Goal 10 on equity and justice as well as an update on the University. The next five years will be focused on affordability and value, academic reputation, and ability to get a job after graduation. Vice President for Enrollment Management and Marketing, Jared Cash, gave an enrollment update presentation highlighting USM’s successes and factors moving forward. Chief Operations Officer, Nancy Griffin, gave a brief update on projects on the Portland and Gorham campuses.

Friday, October 25, 2019

The October BOV meeting was held at USM’s Lewiston-Auburn College and was structured as an open forum, with Q&A, and a brief presentation on USM’s Career Services and Employment Hub. Vice President for Corporate and Workforce Engagement Jeanne Paquette gave an update on the Lewiston-Auburn College. USM is exploring moving the LAC campus to downtown Lewiston to attract more students and be more accessible. A potential move will also increasing USM’s visibility, allowing for more opportunities to partner with local businesses. Discussion surrounding the importance of LAC to the high school and business community developed, with potential partnerships and the perception of higher education in the area discussed. BOV would like to see a clear vision for LAC. Discussion transitioned to USM’s Career and Employment Hub and the work they are doing, following a model developed by Florida State University, to reach students and the employer community. BOV members were very receptive to ideas and potential partnerships.

Friday, December 13, 2019

President Cummings began the December BOV meeting by informing members he has paused USM’s efforts to change the name to the University of Maine at Portland due to the Maine Legislature’s upcoming short session and the University’s many upcoming projects. Vice President Cash presented on the Admitted Student Questionnaire recently received from College Board regarding perception of USM among students who chose to attend and those who did not. The presentation also included historical trends and comparisons with competing
institutions. This report helps drive Admissions and Marketing planning by highlighting what USM is doing correct and areas for improvement. Vice President Cash discussed strategy, enrollment factors, and target audiences. COO Griffin, invited BOV members to attend the building launch ceremony scheduled for December 17th. At the ceremony renderings of the new Student Center and Residence Hall will be unveiled to the press.

Friday, February 10, 2020

The February meeting was a forum, open to the University, led by President Cumming and the President’s Cabinet. The focus of the forum was to provide updates on a variety of initiatives happening at the University of Southern Maine, a look back at where we have been, and a vision of where we are going in the next five years. The forum allowed the audience to pose questions and share their opinions with the Cabinet. Questions surrounding the President’s 10th goal – Equity and Justice, Student Affairs staffing, Enrollment, and Capital Projects were all addressed.

Friday, April 3, 2020

April 3rd meeting of the BOV was moved to Zoom with the COVID-19 Pandemic. President Cummings gave an update on the institutional and system response. Interim Vice President of Student Affairs, David Roussel, updated on reduced on-campus housing, outreach to every undergraduate student connecting them with resources around the University and tele-health professionals in the Counseling services department. Students with federal work study and in department funded positions ended March 21st. Students will receive three bi-weekly paychecks in April and May for the average number of hours worked for the period January 26th - March 7th. Vice President Roussel also highlighted the Student Emergency Fund and the community outreach which has begun; Red Cross Blood Drives, Sullivan Wellness Center, and food services for Wellness Center and local hospitals. Chief Business Officer Alec Porteous went in to detail on the steps USM will undertake to save money, halting all procurement and lowering Purchasing card limits to $1, and where the budget stands for FY21. Vice President Cash presented on the steps Admissions has taken to adapt to the new landscape, announced the “Welcome Home Scholarship”, and previewed projections for fall enrollment.

Friday, June 5, 2020

The annual BOV meeting in June began with an update and changes that have happened in the President’s Office. With Nancy Griffin’s retirement, Alec Porteous will take over responsibility for Capital Projects and Facilities Management and Steven Gregory will serve as Secretary to the Board. President Cummings previewed a fall return plan, an enrollment update for the summer, and an update on the academic partnership with the Roux Institute. The BOV voted unanimously on proposed meeting dates for the upcoming 2020-2021 year. The BOV voted unanimously to extend the term of Jane Eberle. President Cummings remarked that terms will be extended to the fall because of COVID-19. August 28, 2020 will be the final meeting with
President Cummings noted that Mary Kozicki-LaFontaine had resigned from the USM BOV and thanked her for her service. In his closing remarks Chair Nya highly recommended BOV Members attend the BOT/BOV summit.

**Friday, August 28, 2020**

The opening 2020-2021 BOV meeting was attended by 2019-2020 BOV members as an extension due to COVID-19. Chair Nya opened the meeting urging members to stay engaged and thanking them for their input in the draft of USM’s Five Year plan which was unveiled at the day prior’s opening breakfast. Chair Nya and President Cummings welcomed new board members Jana LaPoint and M. Nasir Shir, who introduced themselves. Chair Nya also let the group know Laongdao Suppasettawat had resigned from the BOV. President Cummings announces Unified Accreditation has been approved by NECHE. President Cummings gave a brief update on Fall Reentry and the protocol students received while returning to campus. Enrollment highlighted a dip in Maine students but an improvement in out of state and graduate students. President Cummings then moved to introduce the draft of the 5 Year Strategic Vision and Plan, moving from 10 goals to 5 priorities, with healthy discussion and feedback from members. Background, development, and next steps were all discussed. Vice President Jones introduced Dr. Idella Glenn who recently joined USM as the Associate Vice President for Equity, Inclusion, and Community Impact.

Submitted by Luc Nya, Chair USM Board of Visitors
Date September 24, 2020