

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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**STATE OF MAINE
117TH LEGISLATURE**

**Report of the
Commission on Higher
Education Governance**

**Initial Report
March 1996**

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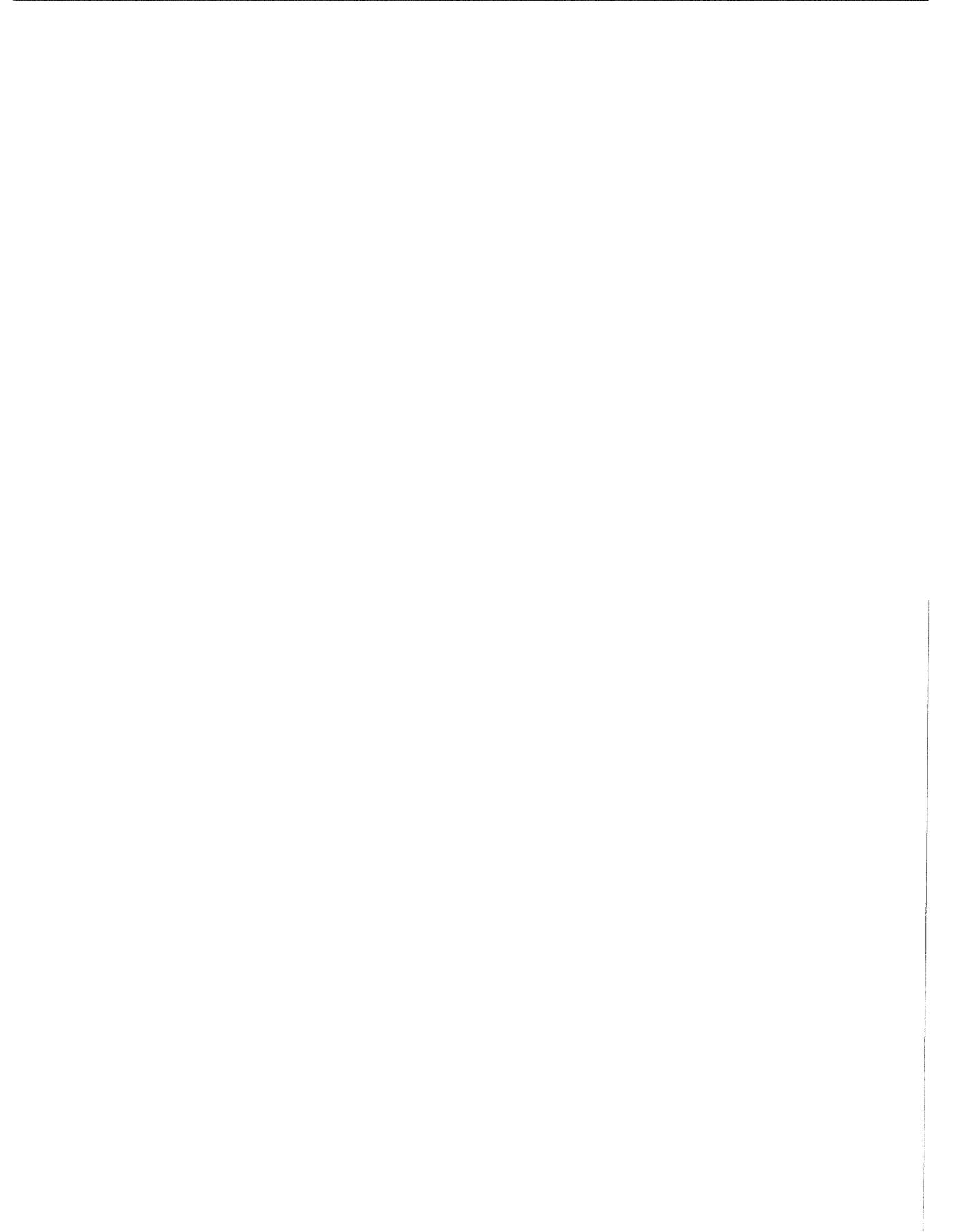
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The legislation creating the Commission on Higher Education Governance, Public Law 1995, Chapter 395, assigned eight duties. These eight duties required the Commission to review and examine most aspects of Maine's system of public and private higher education, including governance, access, resource allocation, budgeting, financial aid, program offerings, distance learning, and the role of State Government.

The initial discussion of these duties led the Commission to realize that the following issues, contained within duties 1, 2 and 6, were extremely important: the lack of a state-wide vision for higher education; the need to coordinate higher educational systems to avoid duplication in the light of scarce State resources; the need to assure adequate access to higher education; and the need to provide a full range of community college services and associate degree offerings. Accordingly, the Commission chose to focus initially on these aspects of duties 1, 2, and 6.

The Commission also agreed that the review of these three aspects would provide a structural basis for its examination of the remainder of its duties. These then were the initial focus of the Commission's work, which is encompassed in this report. In accordance with this, the recommendations presented in this report fall under the following headings: intersystem coordination, community college services and associate degree offerings, and access to the systems of higher education.

INTERSYSTEM COORDINATION

In its review of the issue of intersystem coordination, the Commission saw evidence of much movement nationally toward merging systems of higher education. This trend appears to be emerging as states compete for increasingly scarce federal dollars and see their own state resources for higher education shrinking.

There is general agreement among Commission members that the governance structures of Maine's systems fit within the range of accepted national models for higher education governance. The consensus when the University of Maine System (UMS) was created in the 1970s and the Maine Technical College System (MTCS) was established in the 1980s was that both represented improvements over the random associations then in place. These systems are seen by some as national models for postsecondary educational organization and leadership. As a consequence, the Commission is working from the conviction that the systems are not broken, but rather are in need of fine tuning to provide vision, planning, coordination and accountability.

Recommendations

The Commission recommends the creation of two new approaches to offer vision, planning, coordination and accountability. The first would be external to the UMS, the MTCS and the Maine Maritime Academy (MMA) and would provide identification of state-wide needs and the second would be internal to them and provide implementation and action based on these identified needs.

Recommendation One

The Governor should establish a public dialogue, incorporating representatives of a diversity of views (diversity in geographic base and expertise, and a mix of public and private participants), to be held every four years. The first one should occur within one year of the issuance of this report. The dialogue should focus on identifying current state-wide needs for higher education in Maine.

Recommendation Two

A Joint Coordinating Committee should be established. This Joint Coordinating Committee should:

- *include one member from the Board of Trustees of the UMS, the MTCS and the MMA, and the Chief Executive Officers of these systems, for a total of six;*
- *develop a four year strategic plan to meet the needs identified by the public dialogue established by the Governor;*
- *work collaboratively to meet the goals of the strategic plan;*
- *provide for regional cooperation to meet those goals through the coordination of regional resources, including the private institutions of postsecondary education, and with input from constituents including faculty and students;*
- *recommend incentives to be used to encourage greater collaboration and coordination among the systems and institutions of postsecondary education (for example, a retention of savings achieved through collaboration and coordination could be reinvested in institutional development); and*
- *report annually to the Governor and the Legislature on their progress in meeting these goals.*

Staffing for this Committee should come from their system or institutional offices as the Committee designates, within their current budget allocations. The Commission also adds the caveat that the other issues it will be addressing may impact on the roles or duties of this Committee.

Secondary recommendations:

The Commission recommends that:

- *the legislation governing the duties of the Boards of Trustees of the public institutions of higher education be amended to include a requirement to maintain a level of cooperation and collaboration among systems;*
- *the regulations concerning the needs assessment process for adding new program offerings at each institution include a section reviewing similar programs offered through the private institutions; and*
- *while the right of any college to judge the suitability of courses offered to meet its stated requirements should be defended, the colleges should routinely maintain listings to inform students which courses in other public institutions satisfy given requirements. Such updated information should be widely available to the public through current technological means, for example, through the Internet.*

COMMUNITY COLLEGE AND ASSOCIATE DEGREE OFFERINGS

Nationally the debate about this issue is extensive, and in some cases heated. The competition for increasingly scarce resources appears to be driving this issue as institutions extend their missions to create increased revenues. The Board of Trustees of the Maine Technical College System is currently reviewing its mission and capacity in an effort to expand its offerings to include Associate of Arts transfer degrees.

The Board of Trustees of the University of Maine System has also focused energy on the issue of community college and associate degree offerings in the past few years in regard to their newly re-designated "Community College of Maine" at the University of Maine at Augusta (UMA). The Board of Trustees voted to separate the Educational Network of Maine (ENM), along with staff, resources and outreach educational sites, from the UMA to allow the ENM to become a free standing institution, and it has transferred the affiliation of the University College of Bangor from the University of Maine in Orono to UMA. These changes remain an issue of high interest and concern within the UMS community.

There are many problems the Commission has enumerated in their findings. These problems revolve around equitable funding, student access to course offerings, transferability or applicability of coursework, conflict between the missions and roles at some institutions offering associate degree programs and duplication of two year program offerings.

Recommendations

Based on the premises that different regions of the State have different needs for two year programs and associate degree offerings, that there are regional differences in availability of resources to meet these needs, and that both the MTCS and the UMS have an historical, educational and financial interest in providing two year programs and associate degree offerings, the Commission recommends that the MTCS and the UMS:

- *initiate a dialogue, to include the private institutions of postsecondary education, to address community and student needs for two year programs and associate degree offerings state-wide. The purpose of the dialogue is to develop a state-wide plan, based on regional strengths, to address the problems identified in this report;*
- *carefully review their respective missions and resources in considering solutions;*
- *carefully consider establishing regional, cooperative solutions to these problems to avoid monolithic one-size-fits-all solutions. The Commission recommends that the MTCS not expand its mission to offer AA transfer degrees on a blanket state-wide basis, but rather, that this be considered within this regional, cooperative approach. Also, the Commission notes the conflict inherent between the UMS and the MTCS on this issue and recommends they seek assistance from the previously established Joint Coordinating Committee in addressing the matter;*
- *review the varied tuition costs to students for two year programs in the two systems and within the campuses of the UMS, as well as the cost to taxpayers of providing these programs, with a focus on maintaining the lowest cost to both student and taxpayer; and*
- *report to the Governor and the Legislature within one year with their recommendations for solutions.*

It should be acknowledged that this dialogue may be the last opportunity for public and private institutions of higher education to jointly develop solutions to these complex issues without overt and possibly partisan political intervention. The Legislature has made clear that it desires and expects a resolution to these issues, and it has refrained thus far from direct intervention. This restraint, however, cannot and probably should not be maintained in the absence of a concerted effort by the participants in this dialogue to solve these problems. The Commission therefore urges all the participants to commit themselves to this process and to a constructive resolution.

ACCESS TO THE SYSTEMS OF PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION

The Commission has identified four broad aspects of access to higher education that need to be addressed. The findings from the Commission's review of this issue are discussed under these headings: geographic access; scheduling access (timing and delivery of courses); admissions access (nature of standards); and financial access. Financial access continues to be a problem which the commission will explore further in its consideration of duty 5, which pertains to access to financial aid.

Recommendations

In general the Commission agrees that geographic, scheduling and admissions access to public higher education in Maine is good. However, the Commission stresses the need for public higher education to meet the demands of lifelong learning. The Commission offers the following two recommendations to assure that the first three types of access continue to be good and to meet the needs of a changing workforce and changing student population.

Recommendation One

The Commission recommends that single point access for information and advising be developed in all public institutions so that potential students could not only access all of the information needed to apply for admission to any institution (as recommended in this document previously under the secondary recommendations to Intersystem Coordination), but could also have access to face-to-face advising on how to proceed.

Recommendation Two

Every four years as the Joint Coordinating Committee develops its strategic plan, it should review geographic and scheduling access in response to the state's changing demographics.

1. PREFACE

The Commission on Higher Education Governance began its work in November of 1995. Public Law 1995, Chapter 395, created the Commission to begin work by August 15th and directed it to present a report to the Second Regular Session of the 117th Legislature outlining its findings, together with any necessary implementing legislation, no later than December 15, 1995. However, because the appointing process was delayed until October, the Commission requested from the Legislative Council an extension until June 30th to complete its work in the thorough manner it merited. The extension was granted along with the request for an initial report to be presented by March 1st, 1996 to be considered by the Second Regular Session of the 117th Legislature.

The Commission consists of eleven members, five appointed by the Governor, three appointed by the President of the Senate, and three appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives. No members of the Commission are employed by public or private institutions of higher education in the State.

In order to conduct its work in a comprehensive manner the Commission designated four subcommittees. At this point in the Commission's timeline only one of these has reported its findings to the full Commission. The others are scheduled for reporting dates as the process continues.

To date the Commission has met nine times and anticipates meeting ten more times in completing its duties. It has held one public forum over the Education Network of Maine, with connections to the public institutions in Fort Kent, Presque Isle, Machias, Farmington, Orono, Augusta and Portland to provide state-wide access for comments. Other forums will be held at later dates to cover the issues the Commission is addressing throughout the process.

In reaching the conclusions contained in this initial document, the Commission reviewed numerous books and articles, analyzed national and state statistics and data, and heard from a number of interested individuals. At each meeting, time has been allotted to hear from members of the audience. The commission has also interviewed several dozen stakeholders, from chief executive and academic officers in the various systems and institutions to faculty members and students. Written comments from staff, students and faculty at various campuses have been received in response to questions circulated by the Commission. This input added much to the Commission's deliberations by providing valuable information, suggestions and recommendations.

This initial report contains six divisions including this preface. The Introduction presents the Commission's mandate in more detail and also details the approach the Commission is taking in reaching its recommendations. The third division addresses intersystem coordination among the three systems of public postsecondary education in Maine. The fourth division is concerned with the issue of community college and technical college offerings and the concept of community college services in general. A fifth division adds findings and recommendations about the issue of access to the systems of higher education. The concluding division offers a view of other issues the Commission will be addressing as this process continues.

2. INTRODUCTION

The legislation creating the Commission on Higher Education Governance, Public Law 1995, Chapter 395, assigned eight duties to fulfill. These duties required the Commission to:

1. Review the missions, roles, organizational structure and leadership structure of the State's public institutions of higher education, including the Maine Maritime Academy, the Maine Technical College System and the University of Maine System;
2. Examine the adequacy of opportunities offered to meet the diverse needs of people in the state by public institutions of higher education and the role of the State's private institutions of higher education in complementing those opportunities;
3. Examine how effectively and productively resources are utilized to achieve higher education institutional missions and address the State's economic and social needs;
4. Conduct a review of state funding levels among all constituent entities of public higher education in the State in relationship to each other and to national averages and trends;
5. Review the level and type of state-funded financial aid available to resident students;
6. Examine the provision of community college services, associate degree programs, baccalaureate programs and graduate programs to ensure that the full range of needed academic programs are widely available in the State and are delivered without wasteful overlap by the appropriate institutions;
7. Examine the role, scope, nature and resource needs of distance learning through instructional television provided by the University of Maine System; and
8. Examine the relationship between State Government and the State's private institutions of higher education, including the role of the Legislature in approving programs at private institutions of higher education.

The initial discussion of these duties led the Commission to realize that the following issues were extremely important: the lack of a state-wide vision for higher education; the need to coordinate higher educational systems to avoid duplication in the light of scarce State resources; the need to assure adequate access to higher education; and the need to provide a full range of community college services and associate degree offerings. Accordingly, the Commission chose to focus initially on these aspects of duties 1, 2, and 6. The Commission also agreed that the review of these three aspects would provide a structural basis for its examination of the remainder of these duties.

In accordance with this initial focus, the recommendations by the Commission presented in this report fall under the following headings: intersystem coordination, community college services and associate degree offerings, and access to the systems of higher education.

The Commission also notes the other specific aspects of duties 1, 2 and 6 that will be examined as this process continues. They include the following:

- a further review of the internal governance and leadership structures of the University of Maine System (UMS), the Maine Technical College System (MTCS), and the Maine Maritime Academy (MMA);

- a further review of the missions of the UMS and MTCS campuses and the MMA;
- a review of financial access to higher education in Maine will be conducted with the review of financial aid called for in duty 5; and
- an examination of the role of private institutions in meeting student needs, as called for in duty 2, to be conducted along with the examination of duty 8, the relationship between the State Government and the State's private institutions of higher education.

3. INTERSYSTEM COORDINATION

The Commission reviewed a large number of recent articles and books regarding national trends in higher education governance, and heard directly from experts. Systems of higher education in place nation-wide were reviewed by the Commission as a source of comparison to the systems currently in place in Maine. In this process, the Commission came to several conclusions relative to the governance of public higher education:

- State public institutions nationally, and in Maine, have been organized within traditional structures, but new factors such as changing economies, new technologies and a scarcity of resources are cutting across these structures;
- The focus of public higher education needs to be on state-wide needs rather than institutional needs, where it has been traditionally; and
- There are many examples nationally of collaborative agreements between institutions of public higher education breaking down owing to competition for scarce resources. Competition becomes heightened as institutions expand and duplicate services and programs in an attempt to extend their missions to provide more revenues.

In its review of the issue of intersystem coordination, the Commission saw evidence of much movement nationally toward merging systems of higher education. The Commission has examined mergers of varying degrees in Minnesota, North Carolina, South Carolina, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Massachusetts, Alaska and Maryland. This trend appears to be emerging as states compete for increasingly scarce federal dollars and see their own state resources for higher education shrinking in the face of increased expenditures.

3.1 Findings

A review of the current operations of Maine's system of public higher education shows the lack of a formal mechanism for intersystem cooperation. As a result there is:

- no single source of information which would allow potential students to understand what is available state-wide for course and program offerings, and what can be transferred and be applicable among the campuses and systems of higher education in Maine;
- no state-wide articulation agreements between the UMS and the MTCS for course transferability and applicability (some regional arrangements exist between individual institutions but there is an absence of any overall mechanism or established process for coordination);

- the potential for duplication of programs, as evidenced by the rapid expansion of nursing programs seen state-wide in the 1970's and 1980's by the technical institutes, private institutions and campuses in the UMS;
- confusion and conflict over the governance of community college services and associate degree offerings state-wide, resulting in the potential for unproductive competition, redundancy and duplication of services; and
- no state-wide cooperative planning for higher education, as evidenced recently in the conflict between the MMA and the University of Maine (UM) in Orono over the creation of a new School of Marine Sciences at UM. Currently planning is institution-based or single-system-based.

While students apparently have little difficulty in transferring credits within the University of Maine System, there is anecdotal information that it can be more difficult between the systems. Moreover, in both cases there seem to be problems when students attempt to offer courses from one institution to meet the specific program requirements at another institution. While the student may receive credit for the course, he or she may need to take an additional course to meet program or prerequisite requirements. This result in extra costs and additional time for the student, who may ultimately graduate with an excess of credits.

There is general agreement among Commission members that the governance structures on the system level fit within the range of accepted national models for higher education governance. The consensus when the UMS was created in the 1970s and the MTCS was established in the 1980s was that both represented improvements over the random associations then in place. These systems are seen by some as national models for postsecondary educational organization and leadership. As a consequence, the Commission is working from the conviction that the systems are not broken, but rather are in need of fine tuning to provide vision, planning, coordination and accountability.

The following criteria were developed by the Commission to guide its deliberations on intersystem coordination:

- It is preferable to build on the strengths of the systems, rather than create new structures or bureaucracies;
- State-wide vision, or a "public agenda" for higher education should be developed based on needs assessment;
- Some level of autonomy should be maintained at the campus level;
- Faculty and students should be assured the opportunity to participate in intersystem coordination and planning;
- A regional approach, to involve the community in planning should be established;
- Intersystem coordination should focus on private and public institutional resources;
- A coordinating body should be established; and
- Accountability for the overall operation of public higher education in Maine should be to the Governor since he, or she, is where all lines of authority converge.

3.2 Recommendations

The Commission recommends the creation of two new approaches to offer vision, planning, coordination and accountability. The first would be external to the UMS, the MTCS and the Maine Maritime Academy (MMA) and would provide identification of state-wide needs and the second would be internal to them and provide implementation and action based on these identified needs.

Recommendation One

The Governor should establish a public dialogue, incorporating representatives of a diversity of views (diversity in geographic base and expertise, and a mix of public and private participants), to be held every four years. The first one should occur within one year of the issuance of this report. The dialogue should focus on identifying current state-wide needs for higher education in Maine.

Recommendation Two

A Joint Coordinating Committee should be established. This Joint Coordinating Committee should:

- include one member from the Board of Trustees of the UMS, the MTCS and the MMA, and the Chief Executive Officers of these systems, for a total of six;
- develop a four year strategic plan to meet the needs identified by the public dialogue established by the Governor;
- work collaboratively to meet the goals of the strategic plan;
- provide for regional cooperation to meet those goals through the coordination of regional resources, including the private institutions of postsecondary education, and with input from constituents including faculty and students;
- recommend incentives to be used to encourage greater collaboration and coordination among the systems and institutions of postsecondary education (for example, a retention of savings achieved through collaboration and coordination could be reinvested in institutional development); and
- report annually to the Governor and the Legislature on their progress in meeting these goals.

Staffing for this Committee should come from their system or institutional offices as the Committee designates, within their current budget allocations. The Commission also adds the caveat that the other issues it will be addressing may impact on the roles or duties of this Committee.

Secondary recommendations:

The Commission recommends that:

- the legislation governing the duties of the Boards of Trustees of the public institutions of higher education be amended to include a requirement to maintain a level of cooperation and collaboration among systems;
- the regulations concerning the needs assessment process for adding new program offerings at each institution include a section reviewing similar programs offered through the private institutions; and
- while the right of any college to judge the suitability of courses offered to meet its stated requirements should be defended, the colleges should routinely maintain listings to inform students which courses in other public institutions satisfy given requirements. Such updated information should be widely available to the public through current technological means, for example, through the Internet.

4. COMMUNITY COLLEGE AND ASSOCIATE DEGREE OFFERINGS

Nationally the debate about this issue is extensive, and in some cases heated. As stated previously, the competition for increasingly scarce resources appears to be driving this issue as institutions extend their missions to create increased revenues. The Board of Trustees of the Maine Technical College System is currently reviewing its mission and capacity in an effort to expand its offerings to include Associate of Arts transfer degrees. In the view of the MTCS, this will generate revenue as it is less costly to deliver these courses than the technical/occupational courses. In the estimation of the MTCS this would help its colleges maintain and expand their highly demanded occupational programs with less financial burden on the State.

The Board of Trustees of the University of Maine System has also focused energy on the issue of community college and associate degree offerings in the past few years in regards to its newly re-designated "Community College of Maine" at the University of Maine at Augusta (UMA). The Board of Trustees voted to separate the Educational Network of Maine (ENM), along with staff, resources and outreach educational sites, from the UMA to allow the ENM to become a free standing institution, and it has transferred the affiliation of the University College of Bangor from the University of Maine in Orono to the UMA. These changes appear to have remained an issue of high interest and concern within the UMS community. The status of UMA's accreditation has also been impacted by these changes, with its re-accreditation currently deferred until further review in January of 1997 (although UMA continues to be accredited throughout this process).

The Report of the Visiting Committee to the University of Maine noted that,

In theory, a joint VTI - University Screening Committee is supposed to coordinate the two-year programs of both institutions. In practice, it has not worked. The Committee has not even met in recent years. Furthermore, the community college function is not really acknowledged as the legitimate and central purpose of any institutions within the University System. UMA is regarded as the System's community college, yet it offers both baccalaureate and even graduate programs. Bangor Community College, the Division of Basic Studies at USM, and the community college activities of the regional baccalaureate campuses are part of larger institutions, the central missions of which lie in other areas (p. 14, 1986).

Many of these concerns continue, ten years later, even with the changes that have occurred since. The funding level of UMA remains low in comparison to that of the other campuses. According to the recently completed Report on the Self Study of the University of Maine at Augusta, prepared for their re-accreditation process, the separation of ENM from UMA resulted in an increase of UMA's dependence on tuition and fees to rise from 45% to 83%. The coordination of two-year programs between the two systems also remains an issue and the screening committee seems to have gone out of existence.

Exacerbating this situation is the emerging separation of the student population into two distinct groups, with two distinct sets of needs. There is a segment of students who are 18 to 22 years old, perceived as traditional learners following traditional paths, and there is a growing segment of students between the ages of 23 and 43 (and many older) who are pursuing specific vocational, occupational or professional goals. These two separate constituencies, both seeking education and deserving of educational opportunity, require different scheduling access, duration of programs and support services.

In reviewing this issue the Commission agreed on a definition of the community college services and features normally provided by a community college system. The Commission does not,

however, recommend that these services and features be available through a single system, but that they be provided through collaborative effort. This definition is set forth in Appendix Three.

4.1 Findings

Key issues identified by the commission:

- Maine has a high need for technical and occupational education owing to its economic base.
- The growth in enrollment in the UMS in the past ten years has largely been at UMA. Similarly, there has been an increase in enrollments at the MTCS.
- The per student funding to deliver programs at UMA is half of the average of the rest of the UMS.
- There is some reflection of community college services in the missions of the three regional baccalaureate institutions of UMS (UMFK, UMPI, and UMM).
- The MTCS is considering the expansion of its mission to offer Associate of Arts degrees.

Problems identified by the commission:

- Maine has the seventh highest tuition at two year public institutions in the nation.
- Two year programs are sometimes held in low esteem (by guidance counselors, faculty, etc.).
- The average reported acceptance rate at the MTCS is 51%, owing mostly to lack of available spaces. This appears to document an unmet need for these programs.
- There is an increasing demand for non-technical preparation to meet the changing demands of the workplace in the 21st Century. According to the Maine Department of Labor, employment demand for occupations requiring more than a high school education will increase markedly by the year 2005. It anticipates these types of occupations will grow by 57% over the next ten years.
- While the Maine Department of Labor statistics show an increasing demand for postsecondary education in the workplace for the 21st Century, Maine has a high school completion rate that is exceptionally high, but only an average per capita associate degree level of attainment and a per capita baccalaureate and graduate degree level of attainment that is below average.
- If the MTCS offers AA degrees the Commission identified four concerns:
 1. it may not fit their mission;
 2. they may not have enough resources to support the expansion;
 3. they may not have the spatial and support capacity in view of the fact that they cannot meet current demand;
 4. they may duplicate offerings at UMS and, therefore, drain State resources while providing no new access; and
 5. they may duplicate programs offered in private institutions.
- There are concerns about the level of community involvement and student support which can be sustained state-wide through the Community College of Maine, based in one central location at the University of Maine at Augusta.

4.2 Recommendations

Based on the premises that different regions of the State have different needs for two year programs and associate degree offerings, that there are regional differences in availability of resources to meet these needs, and that both the MTCS and the UMS have an historical, educational and financial interest in providing two year programs and associate degree offerings, the Commission recommends that the MTCS and the UMS:

- initiate a dialogue, to include the private institutions of postsecondary education, to address community and student needs for two year programs and associate degree offerings state-wide. The purpose of the dialogue is to develop a state-wide plan, based on regional strengths, to address the problems identified in this report;
- carefully review their respective missions and resources in considering solutions;
- carefully consider establishing regional, cooperative solutions to these problems to avoid monolithic one-size-fits-all solutions. The Commission recommends that the MTCS not expand its mission to offer AA transfer degrees on a blanket state-wide basis, but rather, that this be considered within this regional, cooperative approach. Also, the Commission notes the conflict inherent between the UMS and the MTCS on this issue and recommends they seek assistance from the previously established Joint Coordinating Committee in addressing the matter;
- review the varied tuition costs to students for two year programs in the two systems and within the campuses of the UMS, as well as the cost to taxpayers of providing these programs, with a focus on maintaining the lowest cost to both student and taxpayer; and
- report to the Governor and the Legislature within one year with recommendations for solutions.

It should be acknowledged that this dialogue may be the last opportunity for public and private institutions of higher education to jointly develop solutions to these complex issues without overt and possibly partisan political intervention. The Legislature has made clear that it desires and expects a resolution to these issues, and it has refrained thus far from direct intervention. This restraint, however, cannot and probably should not be maintained in the absence of a concerted effort by the participants in this dialogue to solve these problems. The Commission therefore urges all the participants to commit themselves to this process and to a constructive resolution.

5. ACCESS TO THE SYSTEMS OF PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION

The Commission has identified four broad aspects of access to higher education that need to be addressed. The findings from the Commission's review of this issue are discussed under these headings: geographic access; scheduling access (timing and delivery of courses); admissions access (nature of standards); and financial access.

5.1 Findings

Geographic access:

There appears to be wide geographic access to public higher education in Maine. With fourteen campuses, ten centers and numerous sites, there appears to be ample opportunity across the State for students to access higher education. There are also twelve private campuses state-wide. The

Commission, however, did hear concerns about limited access to graduate education for placebound adults. Graduate education is offered at only two public campuses currently, and, in a limited capacity, at two others through the technology of the ENM. There was also some expressed concern about access to offerings of all levels in the midcoast region.

Scheduling access (timing and delivery of courses)

It is noted that the system cannot be all things for all people in view of the scarcity of resources available. Currently, the MTCS does not offer extensive evening courses, and no courses on weekends. They also do not actively offer courses through the summer months. The MTCS states that this is, in part, owing to a lack of funding.

Admissions access (nature of standards and space availability):

The MTCS has an open admissions policy in regard to most of its programs (there are a few that have more stringent requirements owing to their highly technical nature), but there appears to be a lack of offerings in relation to demand owing to scarce resources. An open admissions policy should mean that if the space is available and the minimum requirement of a high school diploma or GED is met, all applicants are accepted. However, in 1995 the MTCS reported that it was forced to reject 49% of its applicants, in large part, because of lack of spaces in their programs. The 1995 reported admission rates at the MTCS vary from a low of 39% at KVTC to a high of 77% at the new campus at YCTC.

Admission standards are varied at the different campuses of UMS. The acceptance rates to the UMS campuses also vary, partly in keeping with the selectiveness of their standards. In 1995 these reported rates varied from a low of 73% at UMF to a high of 88% at UMFK. The Maine Maritime Academy, which also has a selective admissions policy, reported an acceptance rate of 72% in 1995. At UMA, where there is a largely open admissions policy, the reported rate was 86% in 1995.

Financial access:

Financial access continues to be a problem which the commission will explore further in its consideration of duty 5, which pertains to access to financial aid in Maine.

5.2 Recommendations

In general the Commission agrees that geographic, scheduling and admissions access to public higher education in Maine is good. However, the Commission stresses the need for public higher education to meet the demands of lifelong learning. The Commission offers the following two recommendations to assure that the first three types of access continue to be good and to meet the needs of a changing workforce and changing student population.

Recommendation One

The Commission recommends that single point access for information and advising be developed in all public institutions so that potential students could not only access all of the information needed to apply for admission to any institution (as recommended in this document previously under the secondary recommendations to Intersystem Coordination), but could also have access to face-to-face advising on how to proceed.

Recommendation Two

Every four years as the Joint Coordinating Committee develops its strategic plan, it should review geographic and scheduling access in response to the state's changing demographics.

6. OTHER ISSUES TO ADDRESS

Internal governance and leadership structures

A further review of the internal governance and leadership structures of the University of Maine System, the Maine Technical College System, and the Maine Maritime Academy will be conducted. This has begun, but is not so complete as to be reported comprehensively within this initial report. The Commission agrees that the issue of resource allocation and budgeting within each system must be addressed prior to the submission of recommendations.

Missions and roles

A further review of the mission statements of the University of Maine System (UMS), will be conducted in conjunction with a closer examination of the internal leadership and organizational structure of the UMS

Access

The issue of financial access will be discussed in more detail as the Commission reviews duty 5, which pertains to financial aid in Maine.

Private institutions of higher education

The examination of the role of private institutions in meeting student needs, called for in duty 2, will be reviewed in conjunction with the examination of duty 8, the relationship between the State Government and the State's private institutions of higher education.

Completion of other duties

Results of the completion of duties 3, 4, 5, 7 and 8 will also be included in the final report to be issued by the Commission by June 30, 1996.

7. APPENDICES

7.1 Appendix One

The following subcommittees were designated by the full Commission:

- Community College- N. Fournier, E. Multer, D. Sparks.
- ENM and Distance Learning- R. Binswanger, L. Hart, M. Weston.
- Financial Aid- M. Pearson, R. Strout
- Finance and Budget - D. Albanese, L. Hart, J. Mullen, D. Putnam.

7.2 Appendix Two

Tentative outline of work / timeline (3/1 - 6/30), subject to Commission review.

- | | |
|----------|--|
| March 5 | Initial discussion by commission on UMS, MTCS and MMA internal governance and missions. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determine the current status.• Identify issues. |
| March 19 | UMS, MTCS and MMA internal governance: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hear from stakeholders.• Identify problems.• Define recommendations. Public hearing in response to the initial report. |
| April 2 | Discussion of initial report and legislative hearing.
Presentation from Distance Learning Subcommittee.
Commission discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determine the current status.• Hear from stakeholders.• Identify issues. |
| April 16 | Distance Learning issue: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion of findings• Recommendations discussed |
| April 23 | Presentation from Financial Subcommittee
Commission discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determine the current status.• Hear from stakeholders.• Identify issues. |
| May 14 | Financial issue: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify problems.• Define recommendations. |
| May 28 | Presentation from Financial Aid Subcommittee
Commission discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determine the current status.• Hear from stakeholders.• Identify issues.• Identify problems.• Define recommendations. |
| June 4 | Discussion of role between State Government and private institutions of higher education.
Discuss private institution offerings in Maine. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determine the current status.• Hear from stakeholders.• Identify issues.• Identify problems.• Define recommendations. |
| June 18 | Discuss the recommendations for the final report and report format.
Wrap up outstanding issues. |
| June 25 | Review draft. |
| June 30 | Presentation of final report. |

7.3 Appendix Three

This is abridged from the report, A Study of the Roles and Missions of Idaho Public Institutions of Higher Education, submitted to the Idaho State Board of Education, October 6, 1995. The study was conducted by the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, Boulder, Colorado.

Features of the Community College Mission:

1. A commitment to access, usually encompassing the following:
 - economic access - through low tuition and a commitment to financial aid.
 - geographic access - due to a largely commuter student population.
 - open admissions policies.
 - responsiveness to the students diverse needs of time and method of delivery.
2. A central focus on teaching, not research, with the student as the focal point.
3. Design of programs to respond to the needs of its' community or region.
4. Extensive involvement of representatives of the service area (*i.e. employers, civic leaders, students, and community organizations*) in defining needs and setting priorities, as well as in general governance.

Services commonly offered:

1. Lower division instruction towards the first two years of a baccalaureate degree.
2. Vocational and technical programs.
3. Pre-collegiate remedial education for youth and adults.
4. Instruction, training and technical assistance to local employers.
5. Collaboration with K-12 public education systems to ensure adequate preparation of students for postsecondary education.
6. Providing community services and cultural resources to the community.
7. Linking the community with educational and training resources outside of the region through technology and telecommunications.

7.5 Appendix Four

Abridged bibliography:

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- Lorenzo, Albert L. and Nancy Arnes LeCroy, "A Framework for Fundamental Change in the Community College" *AACC Journal*, Feb/Mar, 1994. pp. 14 - 19.
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