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Maine's
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January 29, 2010

The University of Maine

University of Maine
at Augusta

University of Maine
at Farmington

University of Maine
at Fort Kent

University of Maine
at Machias

University of Maine
at Presque Isle

University of
Southern Maine

Senator Justin L. Alfond
Representative Patricia B. Sutherland
Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0100

Dear Senator Alfond and Representative Sutherland:

The 124th First Regular Session enacted L.D. 984 – Resolve, To Establish a Pilot Program To Provide Greater Cooperation and Coordination between the University of Maine System and the Maine Community College System, Public Law 2009, Resolve Chapter 28 in which it states that the Maine Community College System and the University of Maine System provide an interim report on the progress of the pilot program to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs.

As requested, we are pleased to attach the report on the Collaboration between Southern Maine Community College and the University of Southern Maine along with the report from Kennebec Valley Community College and the University of Maine at Augusta. As always, please contact us if you have any questions regarding these reports.

Sincerely,

Selma Botman, President
University of Southern Maine

Allyson Hughes Handley, President
University of Maine at Augusta

James O. Ortiz, President
Southern Maine Community College

Barbara Woodlee, President
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Report on Collaboration between
Southern Maine Community College
and
University of Southern Maine

Submitted January, 2010

Southern Maine Community College Participants:

James O. Ortiz, President
Janet M. Sortor, Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs
Diane Vickrey, Dean of Students
Margie Fahey, Assistant Dean for Curriculum Design
Paul Charpentier, Assistant Academic Dean

University of Southern Maine Participants:

Selma Botman, President
Kate Forhan, Provost and Vice-President for Academic Affairs
Scott Steinberg, Dean of Undergraduate Admission
Susan Campbell, Associate Vice-President for Academic Affairs

Introduction

Southern Maine Community College (SMCC) and the University of Southern Maine (USM) have traditionally collaborated in admissions, advising, student affairs and academic programs and initiatives. Even before the signing of the AdvantageU agreement between the Maine Community College System (MCCS) and the University of Maine System (UMS) in 2005, SMCC and USM had established a 2 + 2 program called the Associate in Arts Advantage (AAA) program. The AAA program served as the model for AdvantageU, the system-wide agreement for transfer from a Maine community college to a university in the University of Maine System. The tradition of working collaboratively continues, and the partnership between SMCC and USM is strong.

Both SMCC and USM are located in Greater Portland, serve diverse communities and adhere to high educational standards. These commonalities, the framework for past and present cooperation, hold out the promise of still greater collaboration in the future. This report describes current ongoing efforts and future initiatives under consideration.

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Academic Initiatives

- **Thinking Matters**

Thinking Matters is a celebration of student research, scholarship, and creativity held annually at the USM Portland campus. Students and faculty come together to share and showcase the results of their academic work. SMCC students and faculty have participated the past five years, demonstrating their work in such areas as Biotechnology, Marine Science, Art, Forensics and Honors. We are now in the planning stages for the spring '10 program. An SMCC Assistant Dean serves on the USM Thinking Matters Advisory Board.

- **USM's School of Applied Science, Engineering, & Technology (ASET) and SMCC's Integrated Manufacturing (IMT) Joint Admissions Proposal**

ASET and the Integrated Manufacturing Program at SMCC have drafted an innovative joint enrollment agreement that would allow prospective IMT applicants to declare their intention to continue their education in the Bachelor of Science (BS) in Precision Manufacturing at USM and the Advanced Certificate in Multi-Axis Machining upon completion of the Associate in Applied Science (AAS) at SMCC. The intent is to streamline the process of transitioning from the AAS to the BS by eliminating redundant admission processes and providing early advising and registration at USM.

- **Health Science Programs**

USM's College of Nursing and Health Professions (CONHP) and the SMCC Assistant Dean are in the process of renewing the Nursing articulation and reviewing a draft articulation between Cardiovascular Technology and Health Sciences. Dean Judy Spross and CONHP Department Chairs met with the SMCC Assistant Dean to discuss other initiatives including the formation of a joint speakers' bureau.

- **Communication New Media and Communication Media Studies**

In December of 2009, the faculty from these departments came together at SMCC to discuss their respective programs and identify opportunities for collaboration. We will spend the spring semester reviewing course syllabi to create better transferability. The group is also discussing ways for USM students to have access to SMCC .

- **Art**

The Art Departments are having on-going conversations about aligning the art foundation program at SMCC to enable students to transfer with junior status. Once the departments have signed an articulation, we plan to discuss USM Art faculty participation in SMCC's Portfolio Day.

- **Business Programs**

USM's Associate Dean of the School of Business initiated a discussion with Margie Fahey, Assistant Dean of Curriculum Design and Stephen Strand, Chair of Business Administration, of SMCC regarding current and future program articulations.

- **Library and Information Literacy**

The reference librarians at both institutions have supported each other's work on developing Information Literacy curriculum and outcomes. Joint library staff meetings provided a vehicle to share their challenges and accomplishments. For example, Bill Grubb at USM worked with Susan Nester and Bryan Strniste at SMCC to learn how they developed library orientation and NoodleBib workshops for SMCC students. These workshops are very well attended. As a result, Bill Grubb has developed a USM course on Information Literacy.

The SMCC Reference Librarians also created an interactive workshop on developing abstracts for SMCC Thinking Matters participants and shared this tool with the USM library staff.

- **Joint Faculty Meetings: Mathematics**

The national Math crisis is evident in Maine. Both Math Departments are struggling to address the skills gap by offering developmental courses while also providing college-level service courses to many academic programs. The departments held joint meetings to share best practices and focus on local efforts to address the Math gap.

- **Program Advisory Boards**

Faculty members from USM serve on SMCC program advisory boards, and faculty members from SMCC serve on USM program advisory boards. For example:

- Howard Burnham, SMCC Construction Technology Department Chair, serves on ASET's Construction Management Advisory board.
- A USM faculty member serves on the SMCC Integrated Technology Advisory Board.
- Nancy Smith, SMCC Nursing Department Chair, serves on the USM Nursing Advisory Board, and a USM Nursing faculty member serves on the SMCC Nursing Advisory Board.
- John Marshall from ASET sits on SMCC's Electrical Engineering Technology Advisory Board.
- Emily Woods, SMCC Math Department Chair, sits on USM's Electrical Engineering Advisory Board.

- **Greater Portland Alliance of Colleges and Universities (GPACU)**

SMCC and USM belong to the Greater Portland Alliance of Colleges & Universities (GPACU), a higher education consortium that broadens learning opportunities. Through

valuable services such as cross registration and shared library borrowing, GPACU benefits students, staff, and faculty; expands intercollegiate cooperation; and enhances the cultural, educational and economic quality of life in Greater Portland. Cross registration allows students to take courses toward their degree from one of the following GPACU member colleges:

- • Andover College
- • Maine College of Art
- • Saint Joseph's College
- • Southern Maine Community College
- • University of New England
- • University of Southern Maine

- **Internship Opportunities**

The following are two examples of internships that benefit students and the institution providing the opportunity:

- SMCC recently upgraded its student information system, and the College's full-time programmer needed some help with the long list of new projects. SMCC contacted the USM Computer Science Department to create an academic internship for an upper-level Computer Science student. The student is now engaged in programming and troubleshooting projects. This collaboration will serve as a model for future academic internships between the two institutions.
- During the spring 2009 semester, SMCC's Counselor acted as a placement supervisor for a USM graduate student in the Counseling Education program.

The reorganization of Student Services at USM and the development of an internship clearinghouse will provide a framework to encourage and support additional participation in internships.

Admissions, Advising and Student Affairs

- **Transfer Staff Positions**

SMCC currently employs two professionals whose primary responsibility is to facilitate transfer to a four-year institution: the Director of Career and Transfer Services, whose job responsibilities specifically include assistance and counseling to students seeking to transfer, and the Assistant Dean for Curriculum Design, who works with institutions to develop articulation agreements for seamless transfer.

USM has four staff members in Undergraduate Admission dedicated to Transfer Affairs:

- Associate Director of Transfer Affairs. This individual oversees all evaluations of transfer credit and work with individual students in providing official as well as unofficial evaluations, the latter important to students exploring academic program possibilities.
- Two administrative support staff dedicated to data processing to handle the increasing volume of transfer credit evaluations to ensure timely responses to students. The addition of a second administrative support person in 2007 reflects the increasing interest in USM by community college students and graduates as well as USM's commitment to ensuring a seamless transition to baccalaureate degree programs.
- Coordinator of Transfer Student Recruitment. The USM Coordinator of Transfer Student Recruitment has a regular presence on the SMCC campus. On a monthly basis, she schedules a full day of interviews for prospective transfers, providing one-on-one advising, and staffs an information table in a high traffic area in the Campus Center. In addition, she participates in the SMCC Transfer Fair, which hosts 35 colleges and universities. Meetings with individual students include discussion of transfer credit and often an unofficial review of the SMCC student's transcript.

In addition to these staff members, to ensure seamless service, additional staff members in USM's Undergraduate Admission office have been cross-trained to provide additional recruitment and credit evaluation support.

- **AdvantageU**

AdvantageU, the state-wide agreement between the Maine Community Colleges and the University of Maine System, facilitates seamless transfer for students who graduate with an Associate in Arts. Students who meet requirements benefit from the following goals of the program:

- Guaranteed admission and registration at junior standing at a UMS University;
- Seamless transition from SMCC to a UMS University;
- Minimal paper flow; and
- Transfer of a minimum of 60 credits.

SMCC students learn about AdvantageU during the admissions process and student orientation program, and those interested are asked to fill out an AdvantageU application. In the current (2009-2010) academic year, **nearly 80% of AdvantageU applicants indicate that they are interested in continuing their education at USM.**

Each semester, USM contacts SMCC to apprise them of students who, according to records, will be completing their associate degree programs and are ready to transfer to USM the following semester. The admission application fee is waived for AdvantageU students.

- **Orientation**

USM holds a special orientation program for AdvantageU students. The program supports early registration of SMCC students and supports the transition to USM. A member of USM's Student Success Center is responsible for coordination of this orientation program.

- **On-line Transfer Information**

Both the SMCC website, www.smccme.edu, and the USM website, www.usm.maine.edu, provide information to assist students in the transfer process.

The SMCC website includes information for students on transfer advising, AdvantageU, and helpful on-line resources; by going to MySMCC (the SMCC portal), students can access additional information and resources, including the connection to a course equivalency tool that shows how SMCC courses transfer to the University of Maine System.

The USM web site also has detailed information available for prospective transfer students, including the following:

Transfer Student Page: <http://www.usm.maine.edu/admit/transfer.html>

How to Apply: <http://www.usm.maine.edu/admit/howtoapply.html>

Visit USM (includes link to on-line sign-up form):

<http://www.usm.maine.edu/admit/visit.html>

The UMS recently released the Transfer Course Equivalency function in MaineStreet. This function provides access to specific institution-to-institution course equivalencies. Data is entered for all UMS institutions and all of the community colleges. This tool is available to the public and is easy to navigate without any specialized training. A link to MaineStreet is available on the SMCC portal.

- **Transfer Fairs**

The SMCC Transfer Fair brings representatives from over 35 colleges and universities to the campus every December. This past December, two representatives from USM participated, as did seven representatives from six other universities in the University of

Maine System. The Transfer Fair is a wonderful opportunity for students to meet admissions representatives from many institutions all in one location on the same day.

- **Joint Student Affairs Meeting**

SMCC brought together student affairs staff from both institutions to discuss their respective roles and explore opportunities for collaboration, including running some joint social activities. As a result of these conversations, the SMCC Director of Student Development served on USM's Student Leadership Conference Committee and brought a team of SMCC students to USM's Leadership Conference and invited USM students to SMCC's student leadership conference, held in October 2009.

- **Other Initiatives to Support Student Degree Progress**

- Prior Learning Assessment. USM continues to explore possibilities to increase the transferability of portfolio assessment with the community colleges in our service region. This initiative is important to serving adult learners in Maine who bring to the table a wealth of experience that might translate to college credit toward a degree.

- **Tracking Transfer Students**

Student transfers from SMCC to other institutions are currently tracked using the National Student Clearinghouse. In a recent study, SMCC found the following:

- Of all transfer students, **44% transferred to a University of Maine school.**
- Of all transfers to a University of Maine school, **68% transferred to USM.**
- Of those students who transferred to USM,
 - The average SMCC GPA is **3.19**; and
 - For those who declared a major, the majority are **Liberal Studies** or **Business Administration.**

Looking Ahead

- **TRiO Student Support Services Proposal**

SMCC recently submitted a TRiO Student Support Services proposal. The goals of this federal program are to increase the college retention rate and graduation and transfer rates of its participants. If the proposal is funded, additional services will become available to participating students as they transition to USM and other institutions of higher education.

USM also submitted a TRiO Student Support Services proposal. Both institutions wrote letters of support for the other's program submission.

- **Transfer Study**

SMCC and USM will explore ways of sharing enrollment records to better track student transfers and identify areas for further development. Identifying gateway courses and other courses that are barriers to student progression and developing ways to resolve these student experience concerns is one of the goals for this project.

- **Joint Committee for Academic Initiatives**

At the request of the presidents of USM and SMCC, a committee will explore further collaboration between the two institutions. This initiative will be led by USM's Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and SMCC's Vice President and Dean of Academic Affairs. An initial discussion between the two Vice Presidents has yielded set of principles and identification of key issues to address including:

- Mutual goal is to increase transfers /transferability, collaborations
- First steps are to
 - Facilitate faculty-to -faculty meetings to discuss ideal course content, performance standards, etc.
 - Encourage guest speakers from USM to SMCC to develop personal relationships among faculty.
 - Recognize that relationships must be beneficial for both institutions as well as students