

Academic Transformation Presentation

19 August 2015

Good morning! As Jan mentioned, I'm Dr. Cindy Huggins. In a former life, I was a college president for ten years. These days I'm a freelance writer and book editor, but I'm also moonlighting as Chief Academic Officer for the System a couple of days per week.

Normally Dr. Ellen Chaffee would be here to talk with you about academic transformation, but she is a million miles away playing with her grandchildren in North Dakota. So I'm going to try and channel her this morning, and tell you what I think she would tell you if she were here. (What's that old saying? Something like, I'm not really Ellen Chaffee. But I play her in the movies?)

As you're probably aware, last January the University of Maine System launched what was then called APRIP—which stood for Academic Program Review and Integration Process. Yes, that's a mouthful. Nine teams of faculty were assembled from across all seven campuses and a faculty leader was selected for each team. The disciplines represented included (1) recreation and tourism, (2) nursing, (3) education, (4) world languages, (5) history, (6) engineering, (7) marine science, (8) criminal justice, and (9) business.

Over the next four months, each team worked collaboratively to build a set of recommendations that would move their particular degree programs toward three overarching goals: (1) increased quality, (2) expanded access for students, and (3) financial sustainability and efficiency.

On June 1st, the nine teams submitted their final reports to Dr. Chaffee. The content of those reports quickly made two things very clear — (1) we have a LOT of opportunity for academic collaboration across the seven campuses, but also (2) we have a LOT of challenges to overcome in order to fully capitalize on those opportunities.

In June, the seven chief academic officers took the first run at sifting through the long list of recommendations, sorting them out, and attempting to prioritize a short list with which to launch the implementation phase. Their short list has been vetted with the APRIP Oversight Committee, the Presidents Council, Chancellor Page, and the Academic Affairs Committee of our Board of Trustees.

Over the summer, we have taken the time to step back and make a few course corrections to this process. This is our chance to improve the process before we launch Round Two in a few weeks. So let me tell you what's being changed.

First, the work of these discipline-based teams of faculty—when you get right down to it—is really and truly about program integration. Full integration in some cases, partial

integration in others. So we've dropped the confusing use of APRIP, and now we're just calling it **Program Integration**. No more APRIP.

Second, we now have a better understanding that Program Integration—as delightful as it may be—is actually only part of a much needed, far more comprehensive academic transformation across the seven campuses. So you'll be hearing the umbrella term **Academic Transformation** to refer to the group of initiatives that includes program integration, portfolio review, ABCDE, credit transfer, unified online, and other academic initiatives that may be defined and launched in the future.

And the third change is that as we assemble the next set of faculty teams and launch Round Two next month, we'll give each discipline-based team a more fine-tuned charge that is actually tailored to their specific challenges and opportunities—rather than just giving all teams the same, somewhat generic charge.

Now let me back up a bit and tell you about the recommendations that the faculty in Round One came up with. They tended to fall into four separate areas:

(1) Joint or system degrees — A good example of this is in history. We have four active history degrees in the System, as well as one program that is suspended but not eliminated. This fall, the history faculty across the System will be exploring the possibility of merging into a single degree program that will be available to students on ANY campus, as well as to online students. That single program would include several tracks or concentrations, which might be available only at specific campuses, but students on all campuses would take the same set of basic history courses. It's also a good case of the benefit of combining program integration with campus/mission differentiation.

Other examples might include a single MBA shared by UMaine and USM. The marine science faculty across 3 campuses want to develop a 4+1 Professional Science Master's degree, and the criminal justice faculty are interested in a shared associate's degree program with common course numbers and learning outcomes.

(2) A second set of recommendations is about shared courses and faculty, although not necessarily as a single fully integrated degree program. The recreation and tourism faculty, for example, are eager to establish semester-long residencies at other campuses for specialized opportunities. Recreation students from Machias could spend time on the Farmington campus learning about the ski industry, and rec students from Farmington could learn to ocean kayak at UMM.

(3) A third set of recommendations is all about defining academic pathways for students to move from one campus into a more advanced degree program at another campus. The education faculty are building a 3+2 program in Rehabilitation and Counselor

Education, and the recreation and tourism faculty are excited about defined pathways for 4+1 articulation into graduate work.

- (4) The final set of recommendations concerns such things as short courses and shared certificate programs. The history faculty, for example, would like to pursue shared certificate programs in such areas as Canadian Studies or War and Peace. Several teams recommended taking better advantage of summer session, winter term, and May term to offer short, field-based courses that would be available to students across the System.

As you might imagine, we have done a great job over the past 40 years of constructing barriers to collaboration, that were designed to “protect” each campus from the other six campuses. Now begins the process of breaking down those barriers and working with each other, instead of against each other. We have a lot of hard work ahead of us. Program integration and collaboration are pointless unless we make the necessary changes in policies and procedures, so that our students can full advantage of academic opportunities across all seven campuses. That means we need to change student advising, course registration, and financial aid. It means we need uniform academic calendars, including registration dates and drop/add dates. It means we need up-to-date, reliable technology—hardware, software, you name it. The list goes on and on. But the work is beginning, at last.

So what’s going to happen during fall semester? You’ll be hearing about the gradual implementation of recommendations from the first nine Program Integration teams. And in late September we’ll be launching a second round of faculty teams in seven more disciplines—English, social work, psychology, chemistry, biology, physics, and mathematics. The disciplines in this second round of program integration differ from round one in their emphasis on providing support courses, general education options, and entry level courses for other disciplines and majors. The final reports for round two, containing the next set of Program Integration recommendations, will be due at the end of January. And the cycle will continue.

Meanwhile the Chief Academic Officers will be engaged in what is being called Portfolio Review—examining the full inventory of degree programs available across all seven campuses. The goal is to ensure that we’re offering programs that make sense for our students and the State of Maine, programs that are fiscally sustainable, and programs that fit the differentiated missions of our seven campuses. They’ll also be looking to identify programs that we don’t currently offer, but should—new programs that would benefit the Maine economy, the job market, and the emerging trends in higher education across the country.

I’m going to stop here—because I’m channeling Ellen Chaffee and I think I can hear her saying, “Stop, stop!” But I’ll be glad to answer any questions.