

Strategic Resource Allocation Plan: Summary of Fall, 2016 UMS Campus Visits

During the Fall, 2016 semester, staff from the UMS office visited each of the seven campuses twice to share information about a proposed UMS Strategic Resource Allocation Plan (SRAP) and to gather initial impressions of that plan. Attendees during the second round of campus visits were asked to participate in a live polling exercise and roundtable discussions about various elements of the SRAP. The information that resulted from these sessions is certainly useful as a glimpse into the initial reaction of session participants to the SRAP; however, several caveats are necessary regarding the use of the data. First, the polling and roundtable exercises were not intended to be a comprehensive campus engagement strategy – longer term engagement will occur over the next several months. Second, the results represent only the first reactions of those individuals that participated in the sessions, which was limited on some campuses. Third, the participant representation was dominated by staff, with only limited or modest representation from faculty, i.e., this information is not a random sample, nor can it be disaggregated by employee type. The trends and information, consequently, must be interpreted simply as only an informative snapshot of the thinking of the actual session participants for each campus, and not necessarily representative of a broader campuses opinions. Sophisticated interpretation of the trends would require a rigorous sampling and survey methodology not possible with the informal nature of the UMS information sessions on each campus.

The above cautionary notes notwithstanding, multiple components of the Strategic Resource Allocation Plan seemed to resonate with faculty and staff participating in the information sessions. On the basis of the live polling exercise, Likert scale questioning resulted in respondents rating a number of SRAP initiatives that seemed important for funding (Table 1).

Table 1: Strategic Resource Allocation Plan initiatives most supported by the “live polling” exercises during Fall, 2016 campus visits.

Initiatives Identified as Important for funding (>70% of attendees identifying as important)	Initiatives Identified as Secondarily Important (50 – 70% of attendees identifying as important)
• *Institutional Research	• Transfer counselors in CCs
• *Growing enrollment	• Professional development for advisors
• *Improving student retention	• Collaborative program development
• *Early alert for students	• Graduate Program development
• Adult populations	• Broad-based UMS marketing/branding
• Pathways to completion	
• Incentivizing student retention/completion	
• Engaging external constituencies	
• Align with workforce needs	
• Online-hybrid program delivery	

*highest general ratings across the campuses

Among the initiatives on Table 1 for which the polling data indicated importance, the opinions of session respondents still were mixed regarding broad-based UMS marketing/branding, dual

enrollment, adult populations, shared out-of-state recruiters, student completion initiatives, graduate program development, online-hybrid program delivery, and collaborative programs.

Again, with the cautionary note about the limited nature of the data, a few campus observations may be worthy of future exploration. Table 2 indicates those initiatives for which a campus deviated from the general trend of support indicated in Table 1. As an example, the University of Maine (UM) and the University of Maine at Farmington (UMF) both were less supportive of seven separate SRAP initiatives, starting with the “broad-based UMS marketing/branding” initiative for the UM and “completion initiatives” for UMF (Table 2). Similarly, the University of Maine at Machias was also less supportive of the “broad-based UMS marketing/branding” initiative and UMFK was less supportive of “graduate program development.”

Table 2: Strategic Resource Allocation Plan initiatives for which individual campuses deviated from the general trend of importance during the Fall, 2016 “live polling” exercises.

UMaine	UMF
• Broad-based UMS marketing/branding	• Completion initiatives
• Dual enrollment	• Adult populations
• Adult populations	• Professional development for advisors
• Shared out-of-state recruiters	• External constituencies
• Transfer counselors in CCs	• Collaborative programs
• Pathways to completion	• Graduate program development
• Collaborative programs	• Online-hybrid program delivery
USM	UMFK
• Broad-based UMS marketing/branding	• Graduate program development

In addition to the summary information presented in Tables 1 & 2, the following pages provide (a) all of the data from the live polling exercise, including both data aggregated across the campuses and individual campus data, and (b) the prevailing themes resulting from the round-table discussions. With respect to the round-table discussions, all campuses noted the importance of investments in quality student advising and the need for better access to information that could result from investment in institutional research initiatives. Regarding collaboration, many participants identified structural barriers impeding academic partnerships across campuses, e.g., tuition strategies, course content and number, financial aid, ease of transfer credit, etc.

In closing, the UMS staff are particularly grateful to the faculty and staff from each campus that participated in the information sessions during the Fall, 2016 semester, particularly the participant’s willingness to share their time and to express their thoughts/ideas in candid, but constructive ways. Going forward, in the Spring, 2017 semester, UMS staff look forward to further discussions of the SRAP plan, as well as more general opportunities for engagement

with faculty, staff, and campus administrative leaders about UMS strategies to maximize the success of each of the seven campuses.