

Maine Compact for Higher Education

Board of Directors Meeting

April 10, 2007

Senator Inn, Augusta

Minutes

Board members present: Wendy Ault, Ron Bancroft, Alan Burton, Mary Cathcart, Laird Covey, Joseph Foley, Laura Fortman, Susan Gendron, Laurie Lachance, Richard Pattenaude, Susan Percy, Derek Pierce, Kent Peterson, Lynn Ploof-Davis, Colleen Quint, Betty Robinson, Henry Schmelzer, Ted Scontras, George Spann, Mila Tappan, Susan Tuthill, and John Witherspoon.

Staff present: Henry Bourgeois and Dianne Heino.

Joseph Foley, chair of the board, opened the meeting at 9:35 a.m., and reviewed the agenda. He noted that most of the agenda will focus on the Compact's strategic plan for the next few years.

Minutes of the board meeting. Mr. Foley asked the board members if they had any changes to suggest to the minutes of the last board meeting. No changes or corrections were suggested. The board:

Voted, on a motion by Mr. Schmelzer, seconded by Ms. Quint, to approve the minutes of the November 30, 2006 Board of Directors meeting. The vote was unanimous.

Election of board members. Ms. Robinson nominated two individuals to serve on the board: Laird Covey, Chief Operating Officer of Central Maine Medical Center, and Mila Tappan, Associate Director of Student Aid at the University of Maine. The Compact's Executive Committee recommended both individuals. Ms. Tappan replaces Ron Milliken who recently resigned due to increasing work commitments; Mr. Milliken had served on the board since its inception. Mr. Covey fills a board vacancy from last fall. The board:

Voted, on a motion by Ms. Robinson, seconded by Mr. Witherspoon, to elect Laird Covey and Mila Tappan to the Compact's board of directors for three-year terms, commencing immediately. The vote was unanimous.

Status of Action Strategies. Mr. Bourgeois provided an overview of the Compact's five action strategies that were adopted by the board three years ago. The presentation and discussion covered three themes:

Each strategy is at a different stages of development:

- *Early College* and *College Transitions* are well-along in terms of implementation and institutionalization;
- The *Campaign* is well underway, but lacks long-term funding and institutional support;
- The *Employer Initiative* launches its major program this spring; and,
- The *Scholarship proposal* is awaiting Legislative action.

The Compact's role is primarily facilitative -- in almost every case, the Compact's role in advancing these strategies is facilitative; that is, the Compact is relying on another organization(s) to actually implement the initiative, and the Compact's role is to support that organization. The level of the Compact's involvement varies among strategies and within strategies -- ranging from somewhat passive involvement to active, day-to-day involvement.

- *Early College* is being implemented by four organizations; the Compact is supporting the Mitchell Institute to build the statewide infrastructure to sustain the initiatives.
- *College Transitions* is the responsibility of the Dept. of Education, working with 30+ local adult education programs, the Maine Adult Education Assoc., and postsecondary institutions.
- The *Scholarship program* is proposed and advocated by the Compact, although FAME will administer and deliver it when it is approved by the Legislature.
- The *Employer Initiative* will be delivered by the Maine Development Foundation, with assistance from the Compact and the Maine Community Foundation.
- The *Campaign* is a joint undertaking of the Mitchell Institute, Dept. of Education, and Compact.

The Compact's Partners are essential – the Compact has partnered with several organizations the last three years, most notable of which is the Maine Community Foundation. MCF has provided financial support for the entire operation and three of the five strategies. Partners perform different functions to support the Compact and its strategies; some partners perform more than one function:

- a. Funders: Maine Community Foundation, Boulos, Cianbro, Ford Foundation, Great Maine Schools Project/Mitchell Institute, Libra, Lumina Foundation for Education, Maine Department of Education, Maine Education Loan Authority, MELMAC Education Foundation, Nellie Mae Education Foundation, TDBanknorth, and Unum.
- b. Strategy Deliverers: Finance Authority of Maine, Maine Adult Education Association, Maine Department of Education, Maine Development Foundation, Maine's colleges and universities, and the Mitchell Institute.
- c. Compact Operations: Maine Community Foundation and Maine Development Foundation.

Board member comments: Mr. Bourgeois described the status of each strategy, referring board members to the three-year progress report, which is appended to these minutes, for more detail. Board member comments and reactions follow:

1. Scholarship

- a. Mr. Bourgeois acknowledged that full funding of this initiative is unlikely this year due to the budget constraints facing the state. He noted that the Compact views this effort as a long-term initiative to increase access for low-income students. The Compact should plan to be before the Legislature again next year and subsequent years to seek need-based scholarship support.

2. Early College

- a. Ms. Quint discussed the success of the ACE program, and noted that a major report on Early College would be published by the Mitchell Institute at the end of this year.
- b. Ms. Gendron urged that we make the connection between Early College and Advanced Placement (AP), noting that 4,500 AP courses will be available this year to high school students.

3. College Transitions

- a. Ms. Gendron praised the program, noting that the Governor's \$1 million request to the Legislature has been reduced to \$500,000; final Legislative action on this request is pending.

4. Employer Initiative

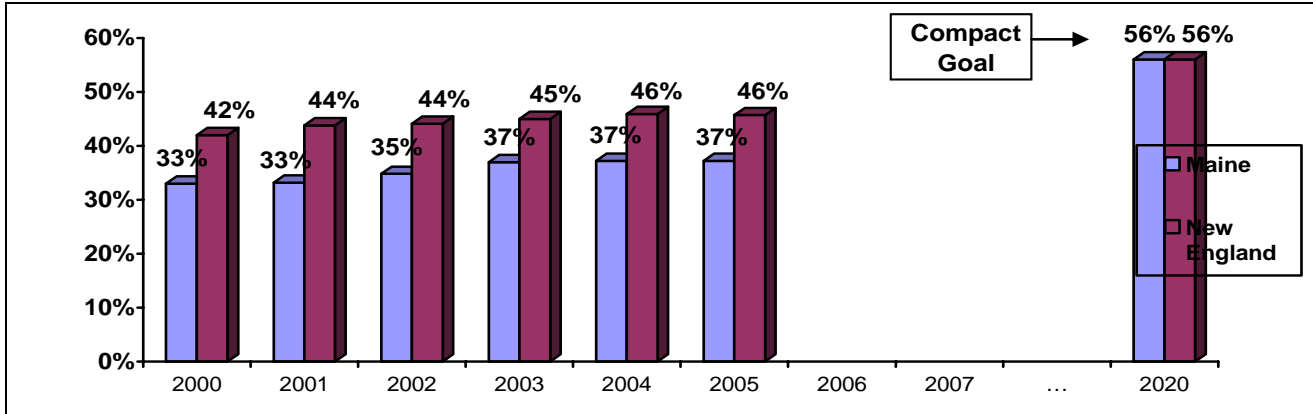
- a. Mr. Schmelzer reported on grants from the Lumina Foundation and the Ford Foundation which the Maine Community Foundation just received to support the Employer Initiative for three years.
- b. Ms. Lachance indicated that MDF is interviewing applicants for the program director position, and the advisory committee is being appointed.
- c. Mr. Spann pointed out that, in his experience as a campus president, he has noticed a decrease in employer support of workers' education in recent years.
- d. Mr. Foley and other board members congratulated Mr. Schmelzer and Ms. Lachance on the progress with this strategy.

5. Campaign

- a. Ms. Quint described the success of the KickStart campaign aimed at 8th graders, and the interest of the Lumina Foundation in possibly financing expansion of the program.
- b. Mr. Bourgeois described the successful Community Partnership program, whereby each of 23 high school-community partnership received \$2,000 and some networking/technical assistance
- c. Ms. Ault cited MELMAC's successful experience providing small grants (\$4,000) to 25 adult education programs as proof that it does not take a lot of money to change behavior.

Performance Measures and Metrics. Mr. Bourgeois presented a chart, below, to show the extent to which we are achieving our goal of reaching the New England average of working-age adults with degrees by 2020:

Working Age Adults With A College Degree – Maine and New England



He noted that the chart is part of a larger data set – indicators of higher education achievement – that the Mitchell Institute compiles for the Compact annually. In this case, the data is not available any more recently than 2005, and therefore is not useful for measuring impact since 2004.

Mr. Foley and other board members suggested that the Compact should invest more time in preparing performance metrics for the various strategies and the overall effort. He indicated that several of the strategies – early college, transitions, and employer initiative – would benefit from better data to assess performance.

Expanding the definition of ‘attainment’. This prompted a larger discussion concerning the Compact’s core goal of increasing the percentage of degree holders in the workforce. A consensus began to emerge that the Compact should broaden the definition of higher education to include individuals seeking certificates in skills or crafts, as well as military service. Board member comments:

- a. Several members suggested that this rigid adherence to degree-holders as the central measure of Compact effectiveness appears to not value other postsecondary attainment, in particular the certificates and other training that is required of technical and craft careers, from welding and automobile mechanics to carpentry and truck driving. They suggested that it is about choices; i.e. students and others should be encouraged to choose different paths when they leave high school, and for a lot of graduates, college is not the best path to take.
- b. Another member agreed and noted that MELMAC’s definition of higher education includes certificates and military service.
- c. A member agreed that the Compact should find a way to recognize and value other forms of postsecondary achievement. But, he also stressed that masters and doctorate-degree attainment should also be measured and encouraged because there is a very strong correlation between economic development and innovation and higher levels of degree attainment.
- d. Another member, while agreeing with the need to broaden the definition, noted that simplicity of the current language seems to energize the debate.
- e. Two members discussed the importance of better connecting degree attainment with jobs, noting that the outcome is not education but good jobs.
- f. Another member observed that lifelong learning is also not included in the definition of higher education, and is critical in this rapidly changing, technology-driven economy.
- g. Mr. Bourgeois mentioned that the ready availability of data was the reason the Compact choose degrees as the primary measure.

Successes and Issues. To prompt discussion for the next part of the agenda, Mr. Foley offered his views of Compact successes the last three years, and issues going forward:

Successes:

- Public awareness has changed.
 - Debate about tactics
 - Economic imperative
- A significant number of tactical activities are underway that the Compact has launched or is a major participant.
- We have impacted the rate of College Degrees.
 - 33% in 2001 to 37% in 2005
 - Lag in impact of programs

Issues:

- Is the rate improving enough to achieve our goal?
- Are the tactical activities enough?
- Do the special interests of those who care impact our ability to be successful?
- Competing initiatives are a problem.
- Lack of a comprehensive plan.

Compact's Objective and Role. Mr. Foley asked board members to take a few minutes to answer two questions: over the next 3-4 years, what should be the Compact's objective? And, what should be the Compact's role? Mr. Foley then asked each member to offer his or her suggestions; each letter below indicates a different member's response.

- a. Objective: Help all Maine people work to their greatest potential; in the context of a good education will enable a good job and prosperity and a high quality of life.
Role: Set and articulate the values, and align everyone to work together toward them.
- b. Objective: All students and families in Maine, regardless of income, will have choices.
Role: Articulate common vision and bring players together around that vision.
- c. Objective: Increase choices, quality of life, civic vitality, and economic sustainability.
Role: Increase collaboration among all educational operations in Maine and between educators and employers. Collaboration and communication will yield innovative problem solving.
- d. Action: Incorporate certificate attainment into the Compact's core goals.
Stay the course with strategies – much more needs to be done.
Comment: This board has done a good job of bringing together the key elements of business and education; without this board, we would be 'reinventing the wheel'.
- e. Objective: The Compact's global focus should remain the economy of Maine and the availability of educated/skilled workers.
Role: Forum to have experts in education and employment come together.
Actions: Education system alignment with future needs of employers.
Coordinate employer activities to increase education opportunities for workers.
- f. Objective: Increase the education attainment level of Maine's workforce as part of the shared work of strengthening the economic and civic culture of Maine.
Role: Generate consensus, support innovation, and produce collaborative action.
- g. Objective: The Compact's current goal and five strategies are excellent and need more time and support to realize their potential.
Comment: The employer initiative shows great promise, but it needs better data with which to assess progress.

Compact's Objectives and Roles (Continued)

- h. Objective: Provide opportunities and access to all people, in particular low-income students.
Role: Help all students stay in high school and graduate.
Comment: The Compact is missing a whole group of students who face severe poverty and drop out of high school.
- i. Actions: Compact needs to focus on helping all Maine students, particularly those who are from low-income families and first generation college families. It is difficult to find good data on poverty and student performance.
- j. Comments: The Compact strengths: it has a clear and compelling goal, has shown an ability to raise money, and has become well-positioned as facilitator, 'prodder of efforts', and coordinator.

 The Compact's opportunities: the employer initiative, adult education, and a new issue – "boys".
- k. Objective: Compact should be more explicit about stretching the goal continuum; i.e. expanding the goal to include certificates. We lose people if we don't.
Role: Pull everyone in the same direction – level of intentionality.
Actions: Focus on two strategies (access-scholarship proposal and employer initiative); the Compact's value added with the other three, going forward, is minimal.
- l. Actions: Compact must continue pushing for more financial aid (scholarship proposal).

 Educating the public on why we need to achieve our goal is critically important.
- m. Objective: Compact needs to continue to be the 'big arrow' on degree attainment.
Actions: Compact should target support for high need students; for example, English-language learners, boys, low income.
- n. Actions: Consider dividing the employer initiative into two parts – one focused on the workforce and their responsibilities and opportunities, and another focused on broadening the access and aspirations for all workers regardless of disabilities.
- o. Actions: Stay the course with the current five action strategies to see to fruition, unless there are some we think we can successfully hand off to another champion.

 Lead the effort to align higher education with current and future economic opportunities in Maine.

 Help develop a statewide comprehensive long-term plan to address Maine's higher education needs with buy-in from educators, government, business, community, etc.

 Develop and use meaningful metrics.
- p. Objective: Stay the course – the current goal is excellent.
- q. Objective: Broaden the goal to include certificates.
Actions: Stay the course on the five strategies.
 Consider serving as a clearinghouse for the numerous initiatives.
- r. Objective: Compact needs to broaden how we speak of our goal. The goal of a two- or four-year degree seems too limiting; lifelong learning engages more people.
Role: Neutral convener, safe environment.

Action: Compact's current strategies are sound and should be pursued; but the state needs a comprehensive strategy that incorporates worker training and future employment opportunities.

Mr. Foley thanked the board for their candid comments and explained that the Executive Committee will review these ideas and suggest a course of action at the next board meeting on June 5, 2007. Mr. Foley adjourned the meeting at 12:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Henry Bourgeois
Compact Executive Director
April 26, 2007