

Maine Compact for Higher Education

Board of Directors Meeting February 11, 2009 Senator Inn, Augusta
Minutes

Board members present: Alan Burton, Mary Cathcart, Glenn Cummings, Joyce Hedlund, Martha Johnston, Meredith Jones, Laurie Lachance, Danny MacDonald, Richard Pattenaude, Susan Percy, Derek Pierce, Lynn Ploof-Davis, Colleen Quint, and Melinda Shofner.

Guests and Staff present: Henry Bourgeois; Patricia Hart, Employer Initiative program director; and Dianne Heino.

Colleen Quint, vice chair of the board, opened the meeting at 9:10 a.m.

Legislators Breakfast. Board members discussed the breakfast just held for Legislators, conducted in partnership with the Maine Coalition for Excellence in Education. 71 attended, including 46 Legislators (25% of the Legislature). Members commented that the breakfast was very successful. Specifically: they commented on the format, noting that it seemed like the right combination of speakers and informal talk; they liked the idea of co-sponsoring it with the Coalition to demonstrate the connections between K-12 and postsecondary education; and, agreed that it was an important opportunity to inform the Legislators.

Advocacy. Mr. Bourgeois indicated that the Compact was planning to testify in support of several initiatives this session: early studies, college transitions, the Maine State Grant Program, and the appropriations requests of the University and Community College systems. Board members agreed and had several suggestions:

- a. One member, a former Legislative leader, noted that the Compact's focused message (e.g. goal of 40,000 net new degree holders by 2020) was effective with Legislators. The focus on the economic imperative of increasing attainment, and the clarity of the goal, has been well received and is remembered by busy Legislators.
- b. Another member suggested that the best persons to testify are business people and students.
- c. A member noted that the best testimony is targeted to specific legislation.
- d. The use of report cards by some organizations is effective, one member noted, though he was not necessarily suggesting this approach for the Compact.
- e. It was suggested that a letter be sent immediately to the Legislators who attended the breakfast, reminding them of the Compact's goals and our support of education; a similar letter should be sent to Legislators who were unable to attend.
- f. Another former Legislator noted that if 2-3 Compact members call a Legislator to request his/her support of an issue, it has a significant impact – much more than using emails.

At the Federal level, Mr. Bourgeois indicated that he had sent a letter to the Congressional Delegation urging their support of increased Pell Grant funds. He noted that over 20,000 Maine students are Pell grant recipients; the average grant is about \$2500 per year. He was pleased to report that, thanks to Senators Snowe and Collins, who were among a small group of Senators who orchestrated a compromise Stimulus Bill, the maximum Pell Grant amount will increase by about \$500.

In response to a question, Mr. Bourgeois reminded everyone that the board had reached consensus on two broad advocacy directions at last November's meeting:

- In the short-term, the Compact would advocate for access by urging increased Federal and State government financial support for students and institutions.
- In the long-term, the Compact would pursue a 'blue ribbon commission' approach aimed at strategic, long-term investments in higher education in Maine.

Alfond Scholarship Foundation (ASF). Ms. Quint, who chairs the Education Committee of the ASF board of directors, reported on the success of the December 11th launch event at UMA which featured over 120 babies and their parents. She also described the aspirational brochures which her committee is designing to be sent with quarterly account summaries to all enrollees. Each quarter, the brochure will feature a different

theme, i.e. literacy, financial literacy, numeracy, and nutrition/health. And, Ms. Quint presented the 2009 strategic marketing plan which her committee reviewed and approved.

Mr. Bourgeois distributed a summary of the 2009 goals and priorities for the ASF, noting that the primary work is involved with education, marketing, outreach and partnering – all aimed at enrolling 3500 babies (25% of the total births expected).

Mr. Bourgeois distributed the ASF's 2009 budget of \$2,268,337 which the Compact is responsible for administering. He noted that approximately \$1,750,000 of the proposed budget is for HACCC grants to newborns; \$518,337 is earmarked for operating expenses including marketing and personnel costs. This compares with 2008 expenditures of approximately \$535,862, which included \$165,500 for scholarship grants to newborns. Mr. Bourgeois explained that the budget anticipates that he will spend 70% of his time (about 3.5 days/week) administering the ASF; this figure was 80% in 2008. The Compact is reimbursed for these expenses by the ASF from funds received from the Harold Alford Foundation. The ASF board approved this budget at their January 15, 2009 meeting.

Other Business

- a. College Transitions. Mr. MacDonald reported on the success of the College Transitions program in Aroostook County, noting that demand is significantly higher because of the economic difficulties facing workers. He spoke at length about the value of the program to the County's adults. Mr. Bourgeois reported that, in 2008, over 1,000 adults participated in the comprehensive College Transitions program at one of the 22 sites around the state.
- b. Employer Initiative. Ms. Hart reported on several employers who have committed or were about to commit to the Employer's Initiative. She distributed an assessment instrument which she asked each board member to complete and return to her, indicating their policies and programs to support their workers' postsecondary education. Ms. Quint and Mr. Bourgeois encouraged board members to complete the survey and make the commitment; they noted that the survey is on line and should be returned to Ms. Hart as soon as possible.
- c. 2008 Financial Report. Mr. Bourgeois reported that the Compact ended the year with an excess of \$11,080 of revenue over expenditures; the budget approved by the board last year was balanced. He indicated that the Compact's 2008 finances will be reviewed by the CPA firm of Purdy Powers & Company of Portland; this audit review will be distributed to the Executive Committee in the next month.
- d. Collaboration Opportunities with Coalition. Two members asked if the Compact has considered a closer organizational relationship with the Coalition, whose mission is similar but focused on K-12. Mr. Bourgeois reported on informal discussions he has had with some of the Coalition's executive committee members regarding possible consolidation options. But, he stressed, that no formal discussions have taken place. Ms. Quint suggested that we discuss this issue at the Compact's next board of directors meeting.

Minutes of the November 14, 2008 board meeting. Ms. Quint asked the members if they wanted to suggest changes or corrections to the minutes; none were suggested. The board:

Voted, on a motion by Ms. Percy, seconded by Mr. Burton, to approve the minutes of the November 14, 2008 Board of Directors meeting. The vote was unanimous.

Ms. Quint thanked the board for their participation at the Legislators Breakfast and this meeting, reminded them that the next meeting was on May 8, 2000, and adjourned the meeting at 10:25 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Henry Bourgeois, Compact Executive Director
February 20, 2009