

Maine Compact for Higher Education

Board of Directors Meeting May 8, 2009 FAME, Augusta

Minutes

Board members present: Wendy Ault, Ron Bancroft, Alan Burton, Laird Covey, Joseph Foley, Joyce Hedlund, Martha Johnston, Meredith Jones, Richard Pattenaude, Susan Percy, Kent Peterson, Lynn Ploof-Davis, Colleen Quint, Melinda Shofner, and George Spann.

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

Strategic Framework & Campaign for Guiding Education Investments. Joseph Foley, chair of the board, opened the meeting at 9:35 a.m. He called members attention to the first item on the agenda – the Strategic Framework outline -- and provided some background for the discussion:

- At the Compact's last board meeting, on February 11, we briefly discussed opportunities for closer collaboration with the Maine Coalition for Excellence in Education. The Coalition is Maine's K-12 focused, business-led, 'sister' organization. Compact members noted that the Coalition had expressed a similar interest over the last few months.
- This mutual interest led to a joint conference call with both organizations' executive committees on March 23, during which an informal consensus emerged that a comprehensive education strategy for preK through postsecondary should be in place before we determine the optimum relationship between the Compact and Coalition.
- This idea for a strategy came, in part, from several Compact members who have expressed increasing frustration with the absence of a comprehensive education strategy to guide budget, program and policy decisions.
- Over the last year, the Coalition has been advancing the idea of organizing a statewide campaign to re-establish education as a visible, urgent priority issue for Maine's economy and quality of life – and secure the support of the new Governor and Legislature for their policies. The next gubernatorial election will be in 18 months - November, 2010.
- The Strategic Framework & Campaign outline was prepared by Mr. Bourgeois as a request of the two executive committees. It is an attempt to combine the interests of the Compact and Coalition into a single 18-month initiative sponsored by both groups. The intent of the outline is to stimulate and focus discussion by both organizations.

One board member, unfamiliar with the Coalition, asked for a brief description. Mr. Bancroft, a founding member of the Coalition and former Coalition board chair, described the Coalition:

- The Coalition was created in 1991 following a symposium on education organized by the Maine Development Foundation.
- The initial focus of the Coalition was to encourage adoption by the state of outcome-based learning standards; the result was enactment of Learning Results in 1997. Advocating for implementation of these standards continues to be the Coalition's top priority.
- The Coalition is a non-profit, 501/c/3 organization with a 40+ member board of directors composed of educators, business people and community leaders; a business leader chairs the board. The organization has one full time staff person and relies heavily on its volunteer members to advocate for policies at the statehouse. It is financed primarily with corporate contributions raised annually.

Board members discussed several facets of this issue:

- One member observed that it was increasingly difficult to engage business leaders in either organization and asked 'where are the business leaders of the future?' Another member responded that business people may not be engaged in statewide policy, but they are very active in her community, serving on the community college's advisory committees, working with the local chamber of commerce on their 'Bridges' program, etc.. But, another member from a different community noted that she had a difficult time finding business people to mentor students or speak to classes in the high school.
- Several members noted that college completion rates are a serious problem, although Maine's completion rates are similar to those of the nation. One member pointed out that it is difficult to get good data on individuals who do not complete their college experience.
- Another member noted that more attention needs to be placed on the purpose of education which, in his opinion should be job-related and economic development. Two other members agreed, noting that we must make a better case for the connection to the economy.
- The increasing cost of college and the very complex and misleading information about loans that are promoted by private interests leads many students and their families to either make unwise borrowing decisions (resulting in heavy debt) or to give up their aspirations because of the cost.
- A member suggested that we should reinforce the strong correlation between health status and education attainment which a recent study documented. An extension of this correlation might be a reduction in health care costs, i.e. the higher the educational attainment, the healthier the individual, and the lower the health care costs.
- Family background is a primary reason for not attending and/or completing college; with 67% of Maine parents without college degrees, there is probably less support at home for encouraging young people to attend college.

Ms. Quint observed that the Compact is at a fork in the road, and needs to pursue one of two paths:

- 1) One alternative is the Framework/Campaign approach with the Coalition, which encompasses a broad approach to ensure that all students are ready for elementary school, high school and college. One member characterized this as the 'umbrella' approach.
- 2) The other alternative is to stay more narrowly focused on the Compact's postsecondary mission, and consider altering our strategies and tactics; e.g. programs to increase college completion rates.

She noted that both approaches attempt to achieve the Compact's goal of reaching the New England average of education attainment by 2020.

Mr. Foley expressed the feelings of several members when he said that this was an excellent and important discussion. He suggested that we organize a small working committee to consider these alternatives and recommend a course of action to the full board. The members agreed with the suggestion. Four members volunteered to be on the working group: Ms. Ault, Mr. Bancroft, Mr. Burton and Ms. Quint

Program Reports

- a. Student Financial Aid. Ms. Johnston reported on the status of Federal Pell grants and the State of Maine grants:

Pell grants:

- Based on Federal stimulus funds put into the Pell Grant program for the 2009-2010 academic year, FAME is estimating that the average amount of Pell Grant received by eligible Maine students will be \$3,124; this is up from \$2,763 in 2008-2009. (The maximum Pell Grant for 2009-2010 is \$5,350).
- The President's proposed budget has come out of conference and is now with appropriations. Pell Grants in the proposed budget, if passed without changes, would become mandatory in its funding and the maximum Pell Grant in 2010-2011 would be \$5,550. FAME estimates that this would take the average Maine Pell award to \$3,241.

State of Maine Grant for 2009-2010:

- FAME thus far has seen a proposed 10% cut to its General Fund Appropriation for the biennial budget – down \$1,276,000 from last year. FAME funds three education programs from this line, the largest of which is the Maine State Grant. Based on this proposed cut, State of Maine Grant funds available from this line for 2009-2010 are estimated to be \$9.8 million. Student awards were dropped to the statutory minimums for 2009-2010.
- b. College Transitions. Ms. Meade highlighted the program’s results and key activities:
- 1,300 adults are currently enrolled in a comprehensive College Transitions program at one of the 22 adult education centers across the state.
 - About 38% (500) of these 1,300 adults are enrolled in college (37% full-time; 42% half-time).
 - Maine College Transitions is recruiting the intended target population: adults who are first-time postsecondary education candidates, in the workforce, beyond their teenage years, and have either never attended college or have not been successful in college, and can build skills to enter college within 12-18 months.
 - More than 75% of enrolled students have the goal of enrolling in a 2-year postsecondary institution.
 - 75% of enrolled students are increasing their Accuplacer scores in reading, writing, arithmetic, and algebra.
 - 29% of students chose careers in healthcare as their course of study in college.
- c. Employer Initiative. Ms. Hart reported on several aspects of the program:
- Twenty-three employers have ‘committed’ to date (i.e. signed a commitment statement to take a step to support their employees’ education), and an additional 31 employers have filled out needs assessments (first step to making a ‘commitment’). This includes large and small employers, from the public, private and non-profit sectors. There are more opportunities in May to reach employers through the state-level HR professional groups.
 - There are new promotional materials: program logo, updated Resource Guide, new employer Toolkit with links to model policies of Maine companies and organizations, recognition certificates, a new ‘tracking thermometer, and updated website.
 - The Mitchell Institute has been retained to conduct the program evaluation, using a new design that will include a review of what other states are doing and two employer surveys.
- d. Early College. Ms. Quint reported on a recent survey of Maine high school experiences with early college; 85% of Maine’s 130 high public high schools (111) responded. Highlights of the survey:
- Student participation: survey respondents estimate that their students will take a total of 1,985 dual credit courses in 2008-2009. Combined with earlier estimates, these figures indicate that dual enrollment participation has decreased only slightly, despite the fact that a major grant for early college from the National Governors Association ended last year.
 - 95% of respondents (106 schools) indicate that their school allows students to take college courses for both high school and college credit (“dual credit”). This proportion has markedly increased from 73% (77 schools) in 2006, the last time we conducted this survey.
 - Most schools report that dual credit courses are offered at more than one location; at 82% of high schools that offer dual credit opportunities, students can take courses on one or more college campuses; 65% of responding schools offer dual credit courses online or via distance learning; and, 47% of respondents offer dual credit courses at the high school.
 - 42 schools—40% of those that allow dual credit courses—do not require students to meet any criteria to take a college course. The majority (60%) do have criteria for which students

may take dual credit courses, e.g. 50% of responding schools limit dual credit courses to juniors and seniors, and 25% limit dual credit courses to students who have earned passing grades in core courses.

- o Respondents were asked an open-ended question about the primary benefits of offering dual credit opportunities. 59% mentioned the academic benefits, such as academic rigor, exposure to college-level work before leaving high school, and expanded course offerings. 44% cited the personal benefits to students of participating in dual credit courses. 38% mentioned the financial benefits of participating.

e. Alfond Scholarship Foundation. Mr. Bourgeois summarized results to date, from data compiled by FAME:

Results YTD April 30, 2009:

Results as of:	Pilot year	1/31/2009	2/28/2009	3/31/2009	4/30/2009	YTD 2009
Babies Born	2008	1019	1005	1130	961*	4115
Inquiries Received	1508	585	425	652	554	2216
% inquiries submitted online	--	36%	42%	44%	38%	40%
Completed Applications Received	409	41	45	109	103	298

Notes: April data is babies with a date of birth through 4/27/2009. Only MaineGeneral babies were eligible in 2008. We used a prenatal marketing model; hence the number of inquiries is larger than the number of births. 77% (542) of the 707 babies who have complete applications as of 4/30/2009 are Pilot Year 2008 MaineGeneral babies. The online inquiry system went live on December 11, 2008.

Results vs. Goals:

Results as of:	1 st Quarter 2009			2 nd Quarter 2009 Goal	4/30/2009	YTD 2009	2009 Goal
	Goal	Actual	Variance				
Inquiries Received	1400	1662	+19%	1400	554	2216	5,600
Comp. Apps. Received	250	195	-22%	500	103	298	3,500

Note: the first mailing of enrollment kits did not occur in 2009 until February 13, and it takes babies 2-4 weeks to obtain their social security number.

In other business, Mr. Bourgeois called board members' attention to the April 30 financial reports which were distributed. There were no board member questions.

Minutes of the February 11, 2009 board meeting. Mr. Foley asked the members if there were changes or corrections to the minutes; none were suggested. The board:

Voted, on a motion by Mr. Spann, seconded by Ms. Jones, to approve the minutes of the February 11, 2009 Board of Directors meeting. The vote was unanimous.

Mr. Foley thanked the board for their participation and adjourned the meeting at 11:35 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Henry Bourgeois, Compact Executive Director May 12, 2009