

Maine Compact for Higher Education

Board of Directors Meeting

November 13, 2009

FAME, Augusta

Minutes

Board members present: Wendy Ault, Ron Bancroft, Mary Cathcart, John Diamond, Joseph Foley, Martha Johnston, Meredith Jones, Dan MacDonald, Richard Pattenaude, Susan Percy, Colleen Quint, Peggy Rotundo, Theodore Scontras, Melinda Shofner, and George Spann.

Guests and Staff present: Henry Bourgeois, Patricia Hart, and Dianne Heino.

Summary of Compact's strategic assessment process. Ms. Quint opened the meeting at 9:35 a.m., and asked Mr. Bourgeois to summarize the last two board meetings of the board which focused on the Compact's strategic plan. He said the board reviewed the Compact's achievements and missed opportunities at the August meeting; followed by an examination of demographic and economic trends at the September meeting. Today, the board will discuss the implications of what we have learned and agree on priority objectives going forward. Mr. Bourgeois referred members to the Strategic Assessment Worksheet for more detail.

Priorities for the Compact. Mr. Foley asked board members to reflect on what they learned at the last two meetings and from the Strategic Assessment Worksheet, and offer their ideas on priorities going forward. Board member suggestions were centered around five major themes, which are summarized below:

a. Engage more business people.

- We need to engage more business leaders and employers in advancing the Compact's vision and goal, and expressing the long-term economic benefits of increasing education attainment – locally and statewide.
- Access to the business community is the distinctive asset we bring to the table.
- The Compact needs more active business engagement on our Board of Directors and in our program and advocacy initiatives.
- We need an orientation program on higher education for CEOs to maximize their engagement.

b. Prepare a strategy and unified vision for higher education.

- The Compact is in a unique position, as an independent, non-partisan organization without a campus or system-specific agenda, to articulate and promote a higher education strategy and unify the key constituents around it.
- There is no coherent plan for investing in higher education over the long-term, which makes it difficult to advocate for short-term solutions. There is no comprehensive inventory of best practices.
- We need a cohesive and coherent marketing campaign for higher education that makes the connection with economic prosperity.

c. Build a strong constituency for higher education.

- We need is a committed and diversified constituency – led by business people – to promote investments in higher education. We spend too much time 'preaching to the choir'.

- d. Advocate broadly for higher education investments by the Legislature.
 - There is no unified vision or voice for higher education at the Legislature. The Compact should act as an advocate and strategic vision for higher education.

- e. Support programs to achieve the Compact's goal.
 - The Compact should support programs if our approach remains facilitative. That is, the Compact's role should be limited to building the capacity of other organizations to take the lead and deliver the program. For example, the College Transitions program is delivered by the State Dept. of Education, and the Harold Alfond College Challenge is delivered by FAME and the Alfond Scholarship Foundation.
 - The Compact should be 'opportunity-focused' in terms of new program initiatives.

- f. Other observations and suggestions:
 - The Compact's mission should be changed to: "advocate for an educated workforce" (not higher education).
 - The Compact needs a simple and powerful core message: for example, more kids will stay in Maine if they are educated here.
 - We need to understand the concerns of current and prospective college students, parents and their teachers.

One of the board members summarized the discussion by noting that our task in this strategy process is to build on our strengths and seize opportunities. He asked, what's unique about the Compact...what is the distinct thing the Compact brings to the table...what are our strengths? His answer:

- Access to the business community.
- Economic imperative goal.
- Independence; no vested interest; credibility.

Financial report & minutes. Mr. Bourgeois presented the projected year-end expenses and revenues, and a preliminary 2010 budget. Board members also reviewed the minutes, and

VOTED, on a motion by Ms. Quint, seconded by Mr. Spann, to approve the minutes of the Board of Directors meeting of September 18, 2009. The vote was unanimous.

Mr. Foley thanked the board members and adjourned the meeting at 11:35 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Henry Bourgeois, Executive Director, December 4, 2009