Program Integration: 2016-2017
University of Maine System
November 11, 2016

The UMS has coordinated Rounds 1 and 2 of Program Integration (PI) exploration over the last two years, during which time many strategies and recommendations were offered to facilitate opportunities for program collaboration and alignments across the seven campuses. The quality of this work has been substantial and has been greatly appreciated by the senior leadership on the campuses and in the UMS offices. In general, most PI teams have recognized that collaborative program delivery has potential to provide benefits to students, faculty, disciplines, and the UMS Universities – the obvious technical, curricular, governance, financial and distance barriers notwithstanding. Reasons to continuing to forge ahead with PI and to address the various barriers include, but are not limited to:

- enriching the student experience by expanding the array of programs and courses to which all UMS students have access;
- developing shared support services to maximize student degree completion;
- easing student's ability to transfer within the UMS;
- expanding student recruitment efforts from within and outside Maine through more integrated programming, and marketing of programs;
- seeking efficiencies and economies of scale to allow reinvestment of savings back into faculty lines and academic programming;
- developing clear educational pathways for students as the UMS begins to collaborate more effectively with community colleges to facilitate opportunities for transfer students;
- advancing all forms of research/scholarship/creative activity across the UMS by providing new opportunities for students and faculty to engage in scholarly collaborations;
- and, the list continues.

To maintain the momentum developed in Rounds 1 and 2 of Program Integration, a two-fold approach will be used Fall, 2016 and into 2017 to (a) continue the work of the existing PI teams, and (b) provide a new funding opportunity for groups of faculty to come together voluntarily to advance their own ideas for expanded collaborative programming within the UMS. These two approaches are:

Direction 1: Continuation of Round 1 and 2 efforts – Across the 17 teams working in Rounds 1 & 2, > 30 individual options and recommendations were provided for facilitating program integration. This myriad of offerings seems too broad to address PI in a systematic manner; thus, in the coming year:

  a. the efforts of each team will be focused to a vital few goals that will be collaboratively coordinated with each team by the VCAA. Goals have been identified generally from the list provided to each team by the Chancellor, but with an allowance for team deliberation with the VCAA for adjustments to goals;

For Round 2, two of the goals are intended to be in common across all teams, with one or two additional goals unique to each Round 2 team;

b. leadership and facilitation of each team will be recognized through appropriate reassignment, stipend, or other support to faculty team leaders;

c. interaction needed to build strong relationships that underpin collaborations will be supported by the UMS to bring team members together at least once per year, or to explore other options to promote in-person interactions among team members;

d. two new teams will be added in the areas of Cybersecurity and Spatial Technology;

e. each PI team's work is intended to culminate in a final report by May 31, 2017.

Direction 2: Launch of the ***Program Innovation Fund*** – The overarching intent of this initiative is to facilitate the development and/or expansion of collaborative programs that have student enrollment potential. More specifically, and importantly, this program support fund provides any group of faculty or academic units a mechanism by which to offer program ideas that address areas important to the UMS, such as collaboration across disciplines and campuses, graduate programs, innovation, use of technology, and programs that tie to Maine economic needs, etc. The Chief Academic Officer (CAO) on each campus will distribute the Program Innovation Fund guidelines. Key elements include:

a. brief proposals (12-page maximum) will be invited for submission by March 16, 2017;

b. Proposals must address the priorities listed in the guidelines;

c. CAOs will oversee the evaluation and scoring of proposals;

d. Notification of proposal funding will occur in April, 2017 such that projects can begin in the Summer or Fall, 2017 as appropriate.