

# Maine Compact for Higher Education

Board of Directors Meeting

June 5, 2007

FAME, Augusta

## Minutes

**Board members present:** Laird Covey, Joseph Foley, Shep Harris, Mike Higgins, Laurie Lachance, Richard Pattenauade, Susan Percy, Kent Peterson, Lynn Ploof-Davis, Colleen Quint, Betty Robinson, Henry Schmelzer, George Spann, Mila Tappan, and Susan Tuthill.

**Staff present:** Henry Bourgeois and Dianne Heino.

Joseph Foley, chair of the board, opened the meeting at 9:35 a.m. He explained that today's agenda will focus on the continuing discussion of the Compact's strategic plan.

**Minutes of the April 10 board meeting.** Mr. Foley asked the board members if they had any changes to offer in the minutes of the last board meeting. No corrections were suggested. The board:

**Voted,** on a motion by Mr. Peterson, seconded by Ms. Robinson, to approve the minutes of the April 10, 2007 Board of Directors meeting. The vote was unanimous.

**Framework for Compact's Strategy.** Mr. Bourgeois briefly outlined the 'summary of compact priorities for 2008-10' (attached to these minutes) which is a framework for the overall strategic plan for the organization for the next three years. The board concentrated on three components of the strategy statement:

**Certificates:** the board agreed that this issue was too important to simply add a reference to it in our goal statement without further discussion concerning how to measure its achievement and how it should influence our programs. This is a summary of board member comments, questions and suggestions regarding certificates:

- a. Comments:
  - (1) Certificate attainment is very important because it speaks to one of the Compact's 'reasons for being', i.e. economic development, and addresses the priority needs of many of our employers.
  - (2) Some employers are offended by the focus on degrees, and what appears to be a devaluing of non-degree certificate attainment.
  - (3) Many employers are doing a lot, and simply want recognition for what they are doing and help on how to move forward. Acknowledging their support of certificates is important.
  - (4) Measuring certificate attainment is very difficult. Some certificate training at the Community Colleges is reported to DoE. Surveys may be necessary to collect data on certificate enrollment and attainment.
- b. We need more information:
  - (1) How many businesses require certificates?
  - (2) To what extent do employees who earn certificates move on to matriculate into degree-granting programs?
  - (3) What about other non-credit postsecondary credentials, e.g.: licenses, apprenticeships, in-house training, non-credit courses and institutes, use of CEUs, etc. How do we define 'certificates'?
  - (4) We should talk with CED people on campuses to understand issue.
- c. Questions:
  - (1) As important as non-degree certificate attainment is, is it the Compact's responsibility? If we focus on certificates, will it dilute our work and/or move us away from our core mission?
  - (2) Should the Compact view the attainment of a certificate as a means to an end (i.e. a step toward matriculating into a degree-granting program), or an end in itself?
  - (3) If we encourage employers to support workers to earn a certificate, will it reduce employer support of workers attaining a degree?
- d. Suggestions included:
  - Find out who's doing what from both the employer side and the higher education side,
  - Figure out a way to measure attainment and incorporate it into the Compact's metrics,

- Examine the feasibility of incorporating certificate attainment into the Compact's strategies as a means to an end, and
- Prepare a recommendation for the board.

**Leadership Initiative:** the board agreed that this new initiative should be pursued as a pilot program with measurable outcomes. Board member comments follow:

- a. One member asked about the relationship of this new initiative to the regional approach in Androscoggin County. She suggested the Compact needed to help the regional effort succeed, and a new leadership program might pull scarce resources from the community.
- b. Board members who were alums of Leadership Maine and the Institute for Civic Leadership commented positively on this approach, and liked the idea of recruiting alumni of regional and statewide leadership programs to participate.
- c. Another member suggested that the initiative should complement the Symposium. For example, one of the workshops might showcase examples of leaders taking actions locally.
- d. One member observed that this initiative might be a way to recruit and engage more business people in the Compact's work.

**Symposium:** the board agreed that increased attendance by Legislators and business people should be a goal this year; we do not want to be simply 'preaching to the choir', which seemed the case last year.

- a. Mr. Bourgeois explained that Ms. Quint has agreed to organize a 90-minute panel on the Mitchell Institute's "Barriers 2" report, and that Chancellor-designee Pattenauade has agreed to speak.
- b. Mr. Pattenauade indicated that the UMS campus Presidents will participate.
- c. One member suggested that the theme be connected to the economy to encourage business attendance; he suggested a title: "Building Your Workforce for Today and Tomorrow... Bridging The Gap Between Capacities and Expectations..."

**Other issues discussed by the board,** included:

- a. Retention. Mr. Pattenauade and Mr. Spann noted that we cannot reach the Compact's goal in Maine until we increase student retention; and, increasing retention requires increased student financial aid and more higher education personnel to support the students. While acknowledging that the campuses and Systems had primary responsibility for increasing retention rates, several members noted that the Compact's scholarship initiative and early college programs could have a positive impact on retention.
- b. Scholarship Program. Despite excellent testimony by Ms. Tappan, her colleague at St. Joseph's College, students, and Mr. Witherspoon, the Legislature's Appropriations Committee did not support additional funding for the Maine State Grant Program – one of the Compact's action strategies. Mr. Bourgeois suggested that he meet soon with Ms. Tappan and Mr. Witherspoon to organize a strategy for next session. Two members urged that the issue be considered more broadly, in terms of financial access; another member suggested that we consider private sector contributions to 'match' state appropriations.
- c. Compact Metrics. In response to Mr. Peterson's question about the extent to which we were achieving our goal of 40,000 new degree-holders, members suggested that we probably needed to retest the metrics. Mr. Bourgeois reported that the analysis undertaken to arrive at that figure in 2003 was sound but not precise; and, although we have made some progress in the last four years, it would be timely to revisit the methodology and recalculate the projections with updated data. One member commented that it may be time to update the '30 and 1000' report prepared by the State Planning office in 2000.

Mr. Foley thanked the board and adjourned the meeting at 11:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Henry Bourgeois,  
Compact Executive Director  
June 8, 2007