



Faculty and Staff Workshop
January 11, 2019

I want to welcome you back for the second semester. I hope you've had a restorative break, and I wish health, happiness and much success for you in the year ahead. I can't help but comment on the federal government shutdown as it prevented our seniors from taking the coast guard license exams. The dysfunction that is Washington, DC, a place where I spent much of my career, makes me realize how fortunate I am to have a job at Maine Maritime Academy, especially to work in a place that means so much to me.

As I contemplate the year ahead, there are several things that I am focused on and concerned about in relation to the decline in enrollment and the consequent impact upon revenue. Has our program been thoroughly reviewed for relevance? Are we adequately prepared to undertake the effort that will be necessary to really alter admissions dynamics? Are we sufficiently aware, engaged and willing to do what is necessary to ensure Maine Maritime Academy is sustainable?

What we do and how we do it, what we say and where and to whom we say it has an impact upon the brand, and that can have an influence upon admissions – upon our ability to attract new students. There is no doubt that that can have a positive or negative impact upon our jobs. So make no mistake about it - enrollment is everyone's business, no matter what our job here happens to be.

Maine Maritime Academy is a unique college, certainly unique here in the State of Maine and that has been one of our strengths. But occupying such a unique niche within the higher education market place is also one of our weaknesses, especially being in a state that has not made a strong connection between higher education and economic success.

The changing character of higher education presents opportunities for Maine Maritime Academy, but declining demographics present us with challenges. Therefore, we need to ask ourselves what needs to be done to ensure that the college will be sustainable and continue to prosper into the future? Do we have the mechanisms in place to ensure that the programs and actions undertaken are aligned with the mission and vision statement? Are the people necessary to achieving the pertinent goals and objectives working successfully to achieve those goals and objectives?

The College Advisory Team has done incredible work shepherding the strategic plan and I expect that they will report to the community in the very near future about the updated plan and where our actions are taking us. All of us are programmatically intertwined, and I need to know that we are all working as a team the way we should be. If we are not addressing the challenges ahead together, we are going to be confronted with very difficult choices to make in the future. I do believe we can be successful, and time is of the essence.

In 2011, I issued what I referred to as my state of the academy report. It was my assessment of the academy, its strengths and weaknesses, following a thorough review during my first year as president. Several themes emerged at that time, among which I grouped budget transparency, enrollment management, program and curriculum evolution, and institutional growth and advancement.

Over the past several years, we have achieved much success in many of these areas, but much more lies ahead. In a world of rapidly changing economic and financial circumstances, institutions like Maine Maritime Academy have, of necessity, become less reliant upon traditional sources of support, and now must operate more like a private college. We must become more adept at developing alternative means to advance. We must become more creative in our use of resources including our facilities and our assets, both in the way they serve the Academy as well as the way in which they impact the broader community.

I am of the opinion that a process that allows transparent review of planning, programming, budgeting and execution is the best way to overcome the wasteful internal competition related to resources of time and money. It is also the best way to insure that programs are aligned with the institution's vision and mission statements, which I believe should be developed collaboratively. Over the past several years, we have built a transparent system, and developed the processes necessary to work collaboratively towards effective budgetary execution. Yet I fear that all do not engage with the process as intended or in a fashion that would maximize the benefits for the college. I encourage budget managers to critically evaluate and validate their base programs before seeking additional resources for new programs or activities.

It is the nature of business and industry to either keep up or be left behind. This pertains to us too and to our curriculum and our programs. We need to retain the high quality and relevance of our academic programs here on campus by keeping up with new knowledge, technology and instructional techniques. My state of the academy report called for a curriculum review and several years ago I issued an environmental vision statement that led to the creation of an environmental engineering minor that was endorsed by the faculty Senate. Where is that minor in our curriculum? What is the status of a curriculum review? I encourage those involved with curriculum to ensure that it evolves to address contemporary circumstances.

It may seem a bit dismissive to categorize elements here at the Maine Maritime Academy as the "things," but that is exactly what we are talking about – the things that make the Academy function, including the budget, the curriculum, the various programs, the academic and administrative policies, and the like, which are often where opportunities exist and obstacles abound. Some of the things that deserve attention are those that are fundamental to our operation such as the necessary financial resources to offer the kind of scholarships that enable us to be competitive in a world of increased competition for admissions applicants.

It has always been the mission of Maine Maritime Academy to provide an affordable education even to students of limited means and it is not our intent to balance the books with tuition. The necessary financial resources will have to be raised elsewhere, thus our fundraising and development efforts must be refined to enable us to effectively advance the institution. We need to keep our antenna tuned to identify new circumstances and take advantage of opportunities. We need to build communication systems to enable our alumni to fully appreciate the changes the college has undergone and to understand their role in helping us remain sustainable.

Given that many graduates of the Academy, by the very nature of their employment need additional training, portends growth opportunities for the institution as an area that can be tapped as a source of new revenue. Importantly, it also presents professional development opportunities for our graduates and it represents a means of enhancing our outreach to a broader community. We must be prepared to adapt and confront change – to evolve to remain sustainable. We need to develop a spirit of philanthropy within the community here on campus as well as within the greater community in order to remain viable.

Towards the end of last year, action was taken on a couple of things that will usher in change for Maine Maritime Academy. We signed the purchase and sale agreement to acquire property in Bucksport in

which to expand our continuing education program, and the Board of Trustees approved a recommendation to discontinue the on-campus master's degree Program.

The purchase of the 5-acre parcel including a classroom building at the former Verso Mill site is a significant development in a year-long focus to establish a satellite campus to house the new Center for Professional Mariner Development. Signing of the agreement initiated a due diligence period during which any survey and deed issues will be addressed, and the final closing is expected to occur within the next month. When complete, the Center will include a full suite of recertification trainers, simulators and blended instructional capability to fully serve the demand for US Coast Guard license recertification and upgrade for our graduates and other professional mariners. Importantly for the future of the Academy, it will produce auxiliary income for the academy at a time when looming deficits are causing us to look carefully at our campus programs.

The other action taken last year during the last Board meeting, is directly related to our need to ensure that our programs are contributing to the long term financial stability of the Academy. Following a yearlong review and analysis of the on-campus masters degree program, the Board approved a recommendation to discontinue the program at the end of this academic year. This action became necessary after several years of chronic financial losses by the program due to structural and marketplace challenges. While the on-campus graduate program will be discontinued, the successful on-line graduate program will continue. Available resources will be redirected to enhance both the undergraduate IBL program and the on-line masters program. Discontinuing a program is never an easy decision and a difficult one for me personally to see something that has served the Academy well in the past become a financial liability. But after thorough review by the administration and the department, and with input from alumni and others, it was clear that the time had come to act.

The Academy is facing financial challenges in the future brought about by demographic reductions of college bound high school graduates from Maine. This puts us in a position of having to compete more directly with the other maritime academies for out of state students. As I said at the outset, enrollment management at a college is everybody's business – the Board, the administration, the faculty and the staff – we are all involved in helping to ensure that Maine Maritime Academy remains financially strong. But it has become clear that in order to more effectively compete beyond the borders of Maine for future cadres of incoming students, we must have more financial resources in hand to offer more attractive scholarships. In March, we will kick off a \$20 million capital campaign devoted exclusively to scholarships, more than doubling what we presently have available in our endowment to devote to financial aid.

Enrollment is what I am concerned about – it is the central issue. Failure to have a relevant program impacts admissions, failure to have sufficient philanthropy impacts admissions, failure to jettison failed programs wastes money that could go to scholarships, failure to develop an ancillary source of income makes less money available for admissions programs. Without students we have no reason to exist.

Creating an ancillary source of revenue as we are doing through the Center for Professional Mariner Development, effectively stewarding our precious resources by closely reviewing our programs and determining whether they continue to sustain the mission, and aggressively pursuing a more philanthropic means of supporting students of the future is all part of the evolution and transformation that Maine Maritime Academy must undertake to be sustainable.

As I mentioned, we'll be reporting out soon on the strategic objectives set by the vice presidents. Those objectives, and a collective commitment to achieving those objectives will be our guide. All of the work that was done in the strategic planning focus groups—where we discussed the professional and academic

environment within which we exist, our strengths and weaknesses, our opportunities and threats, will come to bear on the next year and years of work we are going to accomplish together.

Sometimes, ensuring financial security means making tough choices, sometimes it requires change, and it definitely takes commitment. I believe that if you embrace it with me, we will be making necessary change for a stronger Maine Maritime Academy.