

University of Maine – Fort Kent

Final Recommendations

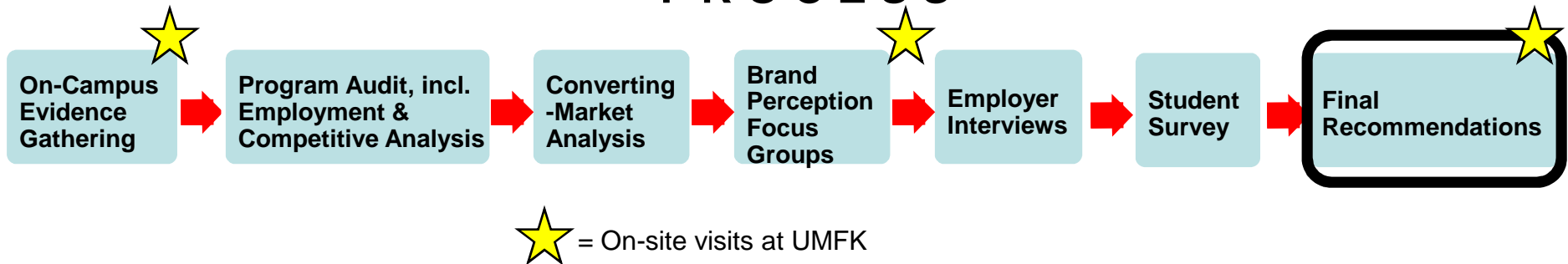
March 16, 2010

Today Is Our Final Meeting of the Engagement, Where We'll Discuss Recommended Next Steps for UMFK

OBJECTIVES



PROCESS



We Recommend that UMFK Adopt a Student-Driven EM Approach

- UMFK has made admirable progress in self-understanding and self-assessment through the Strategic Planning and EMPAC initiatives
- Our recommendations here are research-based and will lead UMFK to the next stage of development: Achieving market focus
 - We assume that UMFK wants to grow in order to attain financial stability and to ensure long-term viability as an independent entity
- A more “student-driven” approach implies allowing external demand to drive program offerings; we provide recommendations by program
- UMFK needs to segment its market and communicate separately and uniquely to each segment to drive enrollments
- Technology should play a growing role in both the delivery of education and the administration of marketing strategy and the EM Plan
- *Caveat.* The actions and changes implied by our recommendations and by assuming a student-driven approach will be challenging at times, but if undertaken will improve the financial stability of the institution

What Does a Student-Driven Approach Look Like? View UMFK Through the Eyes of Your Students and Prospects

Evaluating EMPAC's "UMFK Redesign 2009" Document

<i>Powerful Words & Concepts</i>	<i>Limiting Words & Concepts</i>
Resourceful	Rural
Innovative	Acadian
Individualism	Traditional
Sustainable	Experiential learning
Community	Saint John Valley
International	

Where are...

References to student outcomes, including employment placement after graduation? Retention rates?

References to UMFK's affordable tuition?

References to its leading programs (e.g., nursing, education)?

References to its unique strengths as part of the Maine System?

OBJECTIVES

Develop a Competitive Program Portfolio

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Shape a portfolio that positions UMFK to demonstrate consistent growth by moving toward areas of demand; build on areas of strength to be more competitive
- *Expand programs* in nursing and education, while adding promising new programs:
 - ✓ BS, Healthcare Management
 - ✓ AS, Accounting
 - ✓ Certificate in Emergency Management
- *Reposition programs* (i.e., enhance messaging, change promotional strategy) in business, criminal justice, environmental studies, and several other areas to more effectively bring UMFK's competencies to market
- *Restructure* delivery of programs in e-commerce, computer science, and several areas of the humanities to reflect market realities; we do not recommend adding a standalone AS GIS program at this time

OBJECTIVES

Establish a Competitive Brand Image

RECOMMENDATIONS

- We conducted a survey among 2009-10 inquiries, non-enrolling admits, and enrolled students, as well as several focus groups to define market positioning
 - We have compared those results to national benchmarks to recommend specific actions in the EM Plan
- *Current students* perceive UMFK's academic quality and affordability in large numbers; most chose to attend based on the availability of academic programs. The availability of online courses also emerged as a major enrollment driver
 - On the other hand, they do not perceive UMFK's career preparation capabilities or community as strongly
- *Non-enrolling admits* share the same profile as current students, and presumably were influenced not to enroll by the lacking factors of career prep and community
- *Inquiries* tend to be slightly more aware of UMFK's affordability and slightly less likely to perceive strong career preparation capabilities
- UMFK should present itself using language as the market understands it and not solely as UMFK would like it to be understood (e.g., "community," "rural")

OBJECTIVES

Launch an Effective Marketing Strategy

RECOMMENDATIONS

- An effective marketing strategy begins with profiling to whom you're marketing your degree and certificate programs – but know that markets change regularly
- We recommend segmenting your markets in the following manner:
 - *Traditional-aged students*: first-time freshmen who are local, out-of-region, and international
 - *Transfer students*
 - *Adult (non-traditional) students*
- Each segment needs distinct messages, recruiting channels and methods
- Outcomes data should be regularly collected and messaged to prospective audiences
- The institutional website should be architected to serve the needs of these segments first and foremost

OBJECTIVES

Evolve an Enrollment Management Plan

RECOMMENDATIONS

- UMFK's relatively new focus on "enrollment management" has begun to align operations around key markets
- Installing a Director of Enrollment Management will institutionalize commitment to the goals and methods that EMPAC has worked to put in place
- Online delivery of courses and programs offers a convenience profile that adult students and students distant from campus increasingly find essential; setting a limit of 20% for online enrollments is inconsistent with an EM approach
- Technologies can enhance UMFK's EM productivity; online lead-generation sites and the Common Application and Universal Application are examples
- Enhancing and broadening UMFK's alumni and employer relations management efforts will serve critical EM objectives

Program Portfolio Recommendations

Eduventures Has Conducted an Audit of UMFK’s Program Portfolio Based on the Following Factors and Sources

Factor	Data	Source
National Market Size	Number of enrollments (nationally), 2008	National Center of Education Statistics
National Market Growth	Annual growth rate in enrollments, 2004-2008	National Center of Education Statistics
Regional Market Size	Number of enrollments (in the northeast), 2008	National Center of Education Statistics
Regional Market Growth	Annual growth rate in enrollments, 2004-2008	National Center of Education Statistics
Labor Demand	Occupation size and 10-year growth projection	Bureau of Labor Statistics
Student Preference	Percentage of students selecting a discipline	Survey of current, prospective and non-enrolling UMFK students

In addition to these data, Eduventures considered qualitative data from interviews with employers, student and alumni focus groups, and expert insights.

Based On The Market Research Findings, Eduventures Has Made Recommendations For Each UMFK Degree Program

Note that the recommendations are aimed at optimizing the enrollment potential of degree programs, while Eduventures also recognizes the importance of UMFK's general education offerings in terms of meeting its mission.

Each degree program is categorized according to its recommended enrollment strategy, as follows:

- ***Expand*** – *Programs in this category have exhibited strong demand and enrollment potential at UMFK. We recommend investments in program development and/or marketing for these programs.*
- ***Reposition*** – *Programs in this category have relevant market demand, though to take advantage of it, UMFK needs to rename or remarket them to better respond to market need. Therefore, we recommend a shift in program marketing and positioning.*
- ***Restructure*** – *Programs in this category have experienced declining enrollments and weak demand. Therefore, we recommend restructuring how their content is delivered – for example, by combining programs or focusing on a weaker program's potential to contribute to UMFK's general education degree requirements.*

Based on FY'08 financial results shared by UMFK, the break-even point for a course of study is 21 enrollments

Programs to Expand

Academic Program	Enrollments 2009	Distance to Break-Even	Recommendation
Nursing (BSN, RN to BSN, Accelerated BSN)	228	+207	Nursing is the core brand of UMFK; additional investment to allow for an increase in program size should be made as demand and enrollment potential are robust. RN to BSN online should be marketed throughout Maine as the premier, low-cost degree for nurses. Consider expanding to MSN programming in next 5 years
Secondary Education (BS)	39	+18	Demand for secondary education programs in content areas offered at UMFK is high; market STEM curricula along with technology integration (computer applications); consider endorsements in core content areas as well as online delivery
Elementary Education (BS)	62	+41	Promote program size and success to reach teachers and career changers outside of Aroostook County through online delivery; also, consider leveraging content to develop Early Childhood program (high demand among UMFK students, prospects, and the macro market)
Emergency Management (Certificate)	*New Program		There is an established labor market for emergency management/homeland security professionals; UMFK can take advantage of its brand strength in public administration and law enforcement to promote program credibility; demand at the certificate level is significantly stronger than at the associate level, and should be offered online
Accounting (AA)	*New Program		High student and employer demand for accounting exist with potential as a separate program outside of Business major
Healthcare Management (BS)	*New Program		Combine business and nursing expertise to offer management-focused healthcare curriculum; target alumni in health care professions who would benefit from this degree

Programs to Reposition

Academic Program	Enrollments 2009	Distance to Break-Even	Recommendation
Behavioral Science (BS)	45	+24	Relevant demand exists for a behavioral science program; position program to have a career-preparation focus with specific tracks – options can include social work, human services, applied psychology, etc.
Biology (BS)	23	+2	Biology is in moderate demand and might produce more enrollments if positioned as a pre-med program.
Environmental Studies (BS)	36	+15	Consider offering a more science and technology-focused than social science-focused environmental <i>science</i> program. Include more biology, chemistry, physics, and GIS curricula in upper division courses
Business (BS)	71	+50	Business has relevant student demand and efforts should be focused in specializing in a few high demand content areas. Top areas include Management/administration, public relations, marketing.
Rural Public Safety Administration (BS)	24	+3	The content of this program has relevant demand and could benefit from having a broader scope to encompass a more diverse student body from a career perspective – consider Public Safety Management, Public Administration
Criminal Justice (AA)	26	+5	Criminal Justice is in demand and is a core strength at UMFK; consider offering it as a bachelor's degree with career tracks – law enforcement, criminology.
Computer Applications (BS)	17	-4	Specific concentrations within Computer Applications have relevant market demand; reposition program to focus on key in demand specialization – Information Security and CIS. Also, consider offering program online, where growth has been particularly robust
Forest Technology (AS)	18	-3	Promote the 2+2 Forestry plus Business program, where the labor demand is most prominent. Consider calling the program <i>Applied Forest Management</i> ; also consider the feasibility of it as a 2-year offering.

Programs to Restructure

Academic Program	Enrollments 2009	Distance to Break-Even	Recommendation
E-Commerce (BS)	9	-12	Demand for E-Commerce as a degree program has been on the decline for years and enrollments do not support program sustainability. Continue to offer relevant coursework in Business and Information Security programs
English (BA)	9	-12	Consider using core capabilities in English and Literature to augment offerings in Education program. Transformative Language Arts has been an effective niche program in Teacher Education
French (BA)	2	-19	Leverage strength in French language education and cultural / Acadian studies to offer a <i>French Culture and the Arts</i> program that encompasses all relevant curriculum
Social Science (BA)	4	-17	The core competencies of the social science program should be used to support the Behavioral Science major
Computer Science (AS)	6	-15	Computer Science as a field has experienced significant decline in recent years, being replaced with Computer Systems Networking, IT, CIS, and Information Security. Relevant content should be utilized in Information Security program
GIS (AS)	*Proposed new program		GIS as a stand-alone program does not represent significant enrollment opportunity, but the content is valuable for other existing programs including Environmental Studies, Biology, CIS. Several Maine schools offer GIS and the programs are small and usually tied to an engineering curriculum

Enrollment Management Plan

Enrollment Management Plan

1. Building an Enrollment Management Function at UMFK
 - a. General EM Recommendations
 - b. Recruitment Strategy
 - c. Retention Strategy
2. Brand Strategy
3. Program Marketing Strategies

Building an EM Function at UMFK: General Recommendations

- **UMFK should obtain funding and approval for a Director of Enrollment Management.** This person can build on past successes and continue to grow enrollments by championing a student-driven approach. Candidates look for a data-driven environment, an institution open to self-evaluation, and an opportunity to succeed—all of which UMFK offers. Candidates' experience should include growing residential and online enrollments.
- **UMFK should continue to drive growth in online courses and roll out a fully online curriculum** that may drive the population beyond an 80% residential / 20% online mix (as specified in the 2009 EMPAC plan). Nationally, online growth has enhanced residential student experiences and scheduling options when resources are managed in a balanced, integrated manner. Based on UMFK's geographic location and positive track record in online offerings, online strategy should be of highest priority to drive growth.
- **Because classification systems regularly change and are designed for the purposes of conducting research across a diverse range of institutions, we do not recommend that Carnegie classification be used as a basis for curricular or programmatic strategy.*** Instead, feasibility studies, mission, student demand, and institutional strengths should determine the appropriate mix of undergraduate majors. For example, launching one or more master's programs might be the most effective strategy for UMFK over the next ten years.

*UMFK's 2009 EMPAC plan calls for "a 'Balanced University' designation from the Carnegie Foundation within the next ten years." Currently, UMFK's basic classification is "Bac/Diverse: Baccalaureate College--Diverse Fields." Its undergraduate instructional program classification is "Prof-F/NGC: Professions focus, no graduate coexistence." And, its undergraduate profile classification is "FT4/I: Full-time four-year, inclusive."

Building an EM Function at UMFK: Recruitment Strategy

- **UMFK should build visibility and drive applications through investments in reputable online marketing channels.** Channels such as Meritaid.com (scholarship matching service that allows for targeted messages for niche programs) and CollegeWeeklive.com (a virtual college fair service) offer immediate opportunities, while new sites such as Collegefish.org (Phi Theta Kappa's new site for matching transfer students to four-year institutions) may also be appropriate. Some state institutions in Maine are using these services, which provide relatively low-cost ways to market to targeted populations and students interested in specific majors.
- **UMFK should consider membership in the Common Application and/or the Universal Application.** Joining at least one of these groups would increase the number of applications while easing the application process for both first-time and transfer students.
- **Now is a good time for UMFK to explore further recruitment opportunities and identify communities in Canada** that may be underserved due to their rural locations or lack of specific programming. UMFK presently receives inquiries and some enrollments from Canada, and has historically enjoyed success with Canada as a recruitment territory for certain majors. Organizations such as ACE are presently encouraging North American institutions to engage in more cross-border collaborations, based on models for successful collaborations across borders in Europe.

Building an EM Function at UMFK: Retention Strategy (1 of 2)

- **UMFK needs to take further steps to ensure that first-year retention rates (both freshmen and transfer) continue to rise a minimum of one to two percentage points per year.** UMFK's retention rates among first-time populations are trending in a positive direction—76.4% first-year retention rate for the Fall 2008 cohort. And, first-year retention rates for transfer populations have remained steady for the past three years at approximately 67%.
- **UMFK should balance retention resources strategically between those dedicated to at-risk populations and those dedicated to retaining high-achieving, out-of-region, and online populations.** In our work, we have consistently seen that successful institutional leaders address a wide range of retention risks and devote significant resources to the measurement of key performance indicators.
- **We recommend that UMFK reduce the number of conditional-admits across all populations by redefining and/or raising admission standards.** Of the 12 conditional-admits in the Fall 2008 first-time cohort, 58% did not return for a second year—resulting in a significant impact on UMFK's first-year retention rate, and further holding back four- and six-year graduate rates.

Building an EM Function at UMFK: Retention Strategy (2 of 2)

- In line with the 2009 EMPAC recommendation “Commit to getting SAT scores of incoming students to the national average within five years,” **we recommend that UMFK revisit the rationale for accepting extremely low test scores and consider policies and practices that raise SAT scores incrementally.**
- **UMFK should monitor student aversion to debt and offer debt management and financial counseling services to students** as a tactic to reduce retention risk. Programming that informs and educates students during the recruitment and orientation process and one-on-one conversations can increase yield and reduce retention risks.

UMFK Brand Strategy (1 of 2)

- **Career preparation is a leading selection criterion across all student segments; UFMK should redefine its commitment to *experiential learning* to be more *career-oriented* and *outcomes-focused*.** UFMK should use additional descriptors such as service learning, fieldwork, lab work, clinical, internships, practicum, job shadowing, and other career and curricular descriptions to help students and employers fully understand UFMK's offerings. Concrete examples (such as successful NCLEX scores) should be provided in marketing materials.
- **Along with messaging about being outcomes-focused, UFMK needs to re-engage with local and regional employers to support the brand and mindset.** UFMK should consider having a role devoted to employer relations purposed at building UFMK's career-focused positioning and serving as enhancement to the job placement function.
- **UMFK needs to further build on its strength as a member of University of Maine system.** As part of a "brand family," UFMK should both differentiate and strategically position the campus among its in-state competitors.

UMFK Brand Strategy (2 of 2)

- **Building on the brand includes leveraging UMFK's existing champions – its alumni.** This serves several purposes including building out and formalizing the growing UMFK 'community,' discovering potential new job pipelines, and promoting new programs or courses for professional development or advanced degree attainment.
- **UMFK needs to emphasize its competitive position as *the* 'value' provider in the University of Maine system.** Affordability is a message that is presently underutilized by UMFK and will continue to be a key driver of enrollment for years to come. Focus groups indicate that many students choose UMFK for this reason and the message should be more broadly promoted as a strength.
- **UMFK has brand awareness and strength in Aroostook County; the next step for growth is focusing on improving recognition and perceptions in neighboring counties.** Regarding brand recognition and geographic diversity of student enrollments, universities typically transition through the following stages (based on Eduventures research):
 - local footprint
 - regional footprint (including all in-state counties and bordering states)
 - aspiring national footprint
 - national footprint

Program Marketing Strategies (1 of 2)


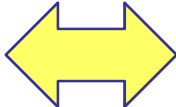

- **UMFK should invest in program-specific marketing plans to highlight academic strengths in specific fields/industries including health care, education, and law enforcement.** The process should involve a combined effort between marketing, enrollment management, and academic units.
- **UMFK offers several, unique interdisciplinary degrees, and should market these as differentiated, one-of-a-kind programs.** For example, UMFK's degree in Behavioral Science is interdisciplinary in nature—which is a unique strength. But, prospective students do not necessarily search for this term or fully understand the curriculum of such a degree without proper description.
- **Similarly to the strategy pertaining to interdisciplinary degrees offerings, UMFK should more avidly promote its *build your own degree* University Studies program.** The University Studies program allows students to design their own degree (and transfer in a mix of prior credit), but it is initially represented on the Web as a degree for those who are *undecided*. The program description of this degree and others should be rewritten to emphasize the true strengths of a student designing his/her own program by creating a customized, interdisciplinary experience.

Program Marketing Strategies (2 of 2)

- **UMFK should continue to evolve the language developed for the 2009 EMPAC report and the new Strategic Plan to develop student-focused messages that resonate across targeted populations including those who are online or out of region.** Components of this language should be incorporated in a standardized manner across Web page content, print publications, letters and other communication to prospective audiences.
- **UMFK’s Web site should be simplified and streamlined with the goal of serving populations least familiar with the institution.** The university needs to invest time and resources in revamping the Web site and increasing Web traffic with a major goal of also increasing on-site visits by prospective students or engaging those interested in online programs in the enrollment process.
- **From the home page of UMFK’s Web site, a clear, direct path to “Majors” or “Academic programs” needs to be made available.** This same link should be highly visible on the Admissions landing page as well. One alphabetical list of majors should be provided on the Web site and in accompanying general print documents (those that are not major specific) for prospective audiences. Programs should be cross listed as appropriate. For example, Psychology—see Behavioral Sciences.

Appendix: Program Market Research Findings Summary

The Following Slides Represent a System of Evaluating Market Potential by Program

		Legend				
		National Market Size	Regional Market Size	Market Growth (CAGR)	Labor Market Growth (10-year)	Student Preference
Positive Indicator		>50,000	>10,000	>5%	>13%	>15%
Moderate/Flat Indicator		5,000-50,000	2,000-10,000	2-5%	5-13%	5-15%
Negative Indicator		<5,000	<2,000	<2%	<5%	<5%

Market Research Findings: Behavioral Sciences

Degree Program	National Market Size	National Market Growth	Regional Market Size	Regional Market Growth	Labor Demand	Student Preference
Accounting	↑	↔	↔	↑	↔	↔
Business	↑	↔	↔	↔	↔	↔
eCommerce	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
Rural Public Safety Admin.	↑	↔	↓	↔	↔	↓
Behavioral Science	↑	↔	↔	↔	↔	↑
Social Science	↔	↔	↓	↔	↓	↔
Human Services	↔	↑	↑	↑	↔	↔
Computer Science	↑	↓	↔	↓	↑	↔
Information Security	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	↔
Criminal Justice	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑

Market Research Findings: Natural Sciences

Degree Program	National Market Size	National Market Growth	Regional Market Size	Regional Market Growth	Labor Demand	Student Preference
Biology						
Environmental Studies						
Forestry						

Market Research Findings: Education

Degree Program	National Market Size	National Market Growth	Regional Market Size	Regional Market Growth	Labor Demand	Student Preference
Education (Overall)						
Elementary Education						
Secondary Education						
Special Education						

Market Research Findings: Arts and Humanities

Degree Program	National Market Size	National Market Growth	Regional Market Size	Regional Market Growth	Labor Demand	Student Preference
English						
French						

Market Research Findings: Health Care

Program Area	National Market Size	National Market Growth	Regional Market Size	Regional Market Growth	Labor Demand	Student Preference
Nursing						
Healthcare Administration						