

Commission to Study College Affordability and College Completion
Resolves 2013, Chapter 109

Chairs:

Senator Rebecca J. Millett
Representative Matthea Elizabeth Daughtry

Staff:

Lock Kiermaier

Website: <http://www.maine.gov/legis/opla/collegeaffordability.htm>

Meeting Summary
October 22, 2014
Room 202, Cross Office Building
Augusta, ME

Members present: Senator Rebecca Millett (Chair), Representative Mattie Daughtry (Chair), Representative Brian Hubbell, Representative Matt Pouliot, John Fitzsimmons (MCCS), Wendy Ault (MELMAC), Ryan Low (UMS), Gianna Marrs (UM), Mila Tappan (FAME), Elizabeth True (MMA), Lisa Plimpton (Mitchell Institute), Dan Walker (Maine Independent College Association)

Staff: Lock Kiermaier (Contract)

The meeting commenced at approximately 9:30 AM. The Chairs, Senator Rebecca Millett and Representative Mattie Daughtry, asked those members present to introduce themselves.

As the first order of business, the Chairs initiated discussion of a draft survey instrument. Representative Mattie Daughtry and Commission member Mila Tappen introduced the topic by stating that the survey was intended as an anecdotal attempt to gather opinions and feedback on the topic of college affordability and completion from Maine citizens. Representative Daughtry further explained that the draft survey document included in the Commission's printed documents had been supplemented by an on-line version of the survey which had been developed and refined with the assistance of Mikel Leighton, Administrative Specialist, UMS Student Affairs & Organizational Effectiveness. Representative Daughtry directed the Commission's attention to a projected version of the draft survey which was viewed from the following link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/MaineStudentCostsandLoans>

The displayed draft survey instrument presented options for Students, Parents and College Graduates to proceed with the survey and asked informational questions on the following topics;

- Access to financial aid information;
- Access to estimated college cost information;
- Information regarding the college application process; and

- Information regarding college completion

After the review of the on-line survey document, Commission members offered the following suggestions and comments:

- There needed to be a question asking if the “ability to pay” had influenced the decision to apply to a particular college;
- There needs to be a question regarding whether the individual was able to access the information online or not;
- The commission engaged in a discussion on how to properly phrase the concept of “unmet need”. Commission members discussed a number of options and alternatives with a focus on trying to get at whatever the remaining costs were after the available financial aid had been obtained;
- When asked about how the survey was to be deployed, Ms. Tappan stated that the intention was to reach families that Commission members had had contact with regarding the topic of college affordability as well as reaching out to a large number of high school counselors. It was also suggested that a variety of websites that Commission members have access to could be used to distribute and publicize the online survey; and
- The need to have information regarding the respondent’s family income levels by certain levels was also mentioned.

Next, the Chairs moved to a discussion of various fees charged by private institutions of higher education located in Maine. Dan Walker, sitting in for Robert Clark and representing the Maine Independent College Association, presented a written document which listed the annual General Fees charged by 10 private colleges in Maine. The fees, which were not identified by particular college, ranged from a low of \$280 to a high of \$1,990 with an average annual General Fee of \$869. Mr. Walker explained that the fees represented on the document included a wide variety of different fees including technology, mandatory, class dues, activity, health, service, residential, comprehensive and orientation. Mr. Walker was asked to provide a further breakdown and more detailed depiction of the particular fees charged by the 10 private colleges in Maine and to have each college identified with the particular fees that are being charged.

Regarding the next item for discussion, the Chairs invited Garrett Martin, Executive Director of the Maine Center for Economic Policy, to speak regarding his assessment of a cost estimate provided by John Burbank, Executive Director of the Economic Opportunity Institute. Mr. Burbank had been asked by the Commission Chairs to provide a cost estimate for implementing a pilot version of the “Pay It Forward” model that would involve a pool of 200 four year students from the UMS and 500 two year students from the MCCS. In a detailed memo dated October 20, 2014, copies of which were provided to Commission members, Mr. Burbank had estimated first year costs of \$4.6 million.

In his remarks to the Commission regarding Mr. Burbank’s estimate and memo, Mr. Martin made the following points:

- The basic cost assumptions regarding current tuition at the UMS and the MCCS were accurate;

- However, the Pay It Forward cost model is undergirded by numerous assumptions that are not made clear and will be important to understand. Questions regarding these assumptions include the following:
 - The completion rate and financial obligation of non-completes is not clearly stated
 - For various reasons, not all students who graduate will be employed and not all graduates will chose to reside in Maine
 - What are realistic wage levels and income growth assumptions?
 - What are the assumptions regarding access for low-income and middle class students?
 - Have the costs associated with college inflation been properly reflected in the model?
 - The contribution rate of 4.5% over 20 years for UMS graduates seems to be high

Mr. Martin also made the following remarks regarding the cost estimates provided by the Economic Opportunity Institute:

- In terms of future generations/growth:
 - The assumptions made by the model may be deceptive in that it does not reflect the fact the number of people affected by the Pay It Forward model is effectively capped after a set number of years.
 - The model also seems to ignore the immediate challenge regarding the fact that 43% of Maine's working low-income families (or 17,180 families) have parents with no postsecondary education. These families need higher education now to get better jobs. 280,665 people in Maine between 18 and 64 have only a high school education and it is not clear whether their needs are adequately addressed in the Pay It Forward model.
- In terms of the total investment for current and out years and how to maintain commitment, there is a concern regarding the significant amounts of “start-up costs” required from each public higher education system:
 - More than \$19 million over 17 years for the MCCA; and
 - More than \$40 million over 25 years for the UMS

After Mr. Martin’s comments, comments and questions from Commission members included the following:

- Regarding completion rates and any assumptions used to determine them, Mr. Martin stated that the concern is that the overall completion rate assumptions need to be made completely clear;
- Regarding the notion that the Pay It Forward model provides an opportunity for the anticipation of a positive cash flow for public institutions of higher education, Mr. Martin commented that based on the information and data presented to date, he questioned

whether there actually will be a net positive cash flow that can be anticipated in future years and that the challenge of the model is to provide the start-up costs and then ensure a “steady state” model that guarantees adequate cash flow in future years. In the best case scenario, the ultimate result of the Pay It Forward model would not be a positive cash flow but rather a break even or no net cash increase;

- Regarding the fact that no tuition would be charged for students enrolled under the Pay It Forward model, has anyone examined the question about what would happen to the availability of state funds from the Maine State Grant programs and federal funds like the Pell Grant program to students in Maine? It was suggested that this type of question might be more properly addressed to Mr. Burbank and was outside the scope of what Mr. Martin had been asked to assess; and
- Assuming that the Pay It Forward model had been implemented 10 years ago and the subsequent economic effects of the recent recession, what would have happened to the assumptions regarding such factors as pay-back, graduation rates and employment? Mr. Martin responded that these concerns would have indeed adversely affected the assumptions that the model seems to be making and that conversely, the model could be positively affected by an unanticipated period of significant economic prosperity.

Next on the proposed agenda, the Chairs launched a discussion regarding the various options that had been included in the “Affordability Options Template” spreadsheet. The Commission developed this EXCEL spreadsheet formally titled “Template to Facilitate Analysis of Affordability Options” as a means to collect various affordability options that the Commission may want to consider recommending in the final report. Representative Mattie Daughtry led the Commission through a brief discussion on each of the following options with the intention that no final action be taken at that time regarding any of the options:

1. hiring 30 College Navigators; MCCS
2. expanding student Work Study opportunities; MCCS
3. providing Summer Scholarships; MCCS
4. Create 2 Early College for ME staff positions; MCCS
5. Increase Early College for ME scholarships from \$1K per year to \$1.5 K per year; MCCS
6. Increase funding for Maine State Grant Program to reach 10,000 EFC and average award of \$1,500; FAME
7. Increase funding for Maine State Grant Program to reach 10,000 EFC and allow average award of \$2,500; FAME
8. Increase funding for Maine State Grant Program to allow EFC cutoff of 10,000; FAME
9. Tiered grants of \$250 increments beginning with \$1,000 and reaching 10,000 EFC; FAME
10. STEM Loan Repayment Program; FAME
11. Hire a First Yr Experience Coordinator; MMA
12. Expand College Student Inventory administration; MMA
13. Hire an Academic Coach; MMA
14. Fully fund Higher Education budget requests for FY16-17, allowing UMS to freeze tuition for two additional years; UMS
15. Pay It Forward model; public higher education institutions

Options emanating from the GameChangers report included:

1. Corequisite Remediation; UMS
2. Full Time is 15 Credit Hours; UMS
3. Performance Funding; UMS
4. Structured Scheduling; UMS
5. Guided Pathways to Success; UMS
6. Additional Work Study Funding; MMA
7. Additional Faculty positions funded; MMA
8. Performance Funding; Enrollment in Remedial Instruction; MCCC
9. Performance Funding; Attraction and Retention Initiatives; MCCC
10. Structured Scheduling; Occupational Programs; MCCC
11. Guided Pathways to Success; Matriculated Students; MCCC

During the discussion regarding these options the following information, comments and questions were offered:

- KeyBank has just recently provided a 3 year \$500,000 grant to SMCC to hire 3 College Navigator positions; in addition, each of the participating SMCC students will receive a \$1,500 scholarship from KeyBank; and
- Clarification was requested from FAME regarding various funding options for the Maine State Grant Program.

Next, the Chairs moved the discussion to a consideration of the so-called “Washington State model”. In brief, during an earlier meeting, the Commission had reviewed a report developed by HCM Strategists titled, “POLICY OPTIONS FOR AFFORDABILITY AND STATE NEED GRANT”. This report was prepared by HCM Strategists for the Washington Student Achievement Council in August of 2014 and provides a useful methodology for assessing the “unmet need” of college students in Washington State after available sources of financial aid such as family resources, state appropriations, federal grants and loans and work study have been obtained. The Commission had expressed a previous interest in applying the methodology of this report. In response, Commission member Lisa Plimpton, Research Director for the Mitchell Institute, volunteered to adapt Maine data for use into the so-called “Washington Model”. For the purposes of this meeting, Ms. Plimpton prepared several data scenarios for the Commission’s consideration. These scenarios were printed out and displayed for the Commission in a PowerPoint presentation and were intended to answer the following questions:

- Is there a viable pathway to a bachelor’s degree (including significant part-time work and student loans) for all state residents?
- How can state grant policies (amount, eligibility, etc.) increase affordability for students?
- Should any policies be modified to support student success?

The assumptions behind the data scenarios that Ms. Plimpton presented included the following:

- Cost to students include tuition + fees, lost wages (full-time at minimum wage for nine months), and books/supplies.

- State contribution* = Cost of education and related expenses – Tuition + fees
- Federal contribution = Pell grant and American Opportunity Tax Credit
- Expected family contributions assume a family of four with one in college and average assets

In summary, Ms. Plimpton identified and discussed the following scenarios:

- Dependent Students, Two Years at MCCS at two year average cost of \$40,800:
 - For families with a median income of up to \$30,000, there is an affordability gap of approximately \$3,000;
 - For families with a median income of up to \$60,000, there is an affordability gap of approximately \$1,500;
 - For families with a median income of up to and more than \$80,000, there is no affordability gap;
- Dependent Students, Two Years at MCCS + Two Years at UMS at an approximate 4 year cost of \$90,000:
 - For families with a median income of up to \$30,000, there is an affordability gap of more than \$10,000;
 - For families with a median income of up to \$60,000, there is an affordability gap of approximately \$8,000;
 - For families with a median income of up to and more than \$80,000, there is no affordability gap;
- Dependent Students, Four Years at UMS at four year average cost of \$102,400:
 - For families with a median income of up to \$30,000, there is an affordability gap of approximately \$20,000;
 - For families with a median income of up to \$60,000, there is an affordability gap of approximately \$15,000;
 - For families with a median income of up to \$80,000, there is a minor affordability gap of approximately \$1,000;
 - For families with a median income of up to \$120,000, there is no affordability gap.

Ms. Plimpton also added a new group to the model, that of Independent Students; her assumptions for applying the model to this group included the following:

- No dependents
- Working year-round full-time in the year before they apply for financial aid
- No assets
- Variations shown are hourly wages of \$8, \$10, and \$15
 - Median hourly wage in Maine is \$16.00
- Cost of college is higher than for dependent students because of higher hourly wage/opportunity cost
- American Opportunity Tax Credit = \$1,000 (refundable portion only)
- Can still earn same wage while working part-time during college

Using these assumptions, application of the Independent Students group to the Affordability Model yielded the following results:

- Independent Students, Two Years at MCCC at two year average cost of \$40,800:
 - For students earning \$8 per hour with annual income of \$16,000, there is an affordability gap of approximately \$5,000;
 - For students earning \$10 per hour with annual income of \$20,000, there is an affordability gap of approximately \$7,000;
 - For students earning \$15 per hour with annual income of \$30,000, there is an affordability gap of somewhat less than \$20,000;

- Independent Students, Two Years at MCCC + Two Years at UMS at an approximate 4 year cost of \$90,000:
 - For students earning \$8 per hour with annual income of \$16,000, there is an affordability gap of approximately \$15,000;
 - For students earning \$10 per hour with annual income of \$20,000, there is an affordability gap of approximately \$20,000;
 - For students earning \$15 per hour with annual income of \$30,000, there is an affordability gap of approximately \$40,000;

Finally, Ms. Plimpton did several, more recent data scenarios (not included in the Commission's printed materials) which attempted to determine the affordability gap for the following circumstances:

- Dependent students;
- 4 year program at the UMS;
- An appropriations increase to UMS of 3%; and
- An EFC-based tiered Maine State Grant up to \$2,500 and EFCs of up to \$10,000.

The results for this scenario suggested that the affordability gap would be reduced by about one-third for families with median incomes of up to \$30,000 and \$60,000.

Ms. Plimpton ran an additional scenario with the following circumstances:

- Dependent students;
- 4 year program at the UMS;
- An appropriations increase to UMS of 3%; and
- A time or credit-based tiered Maine State Grant which increased by \$250 per year.

This scenario produced results which increased annual Maine State Grant awards by \$1,500 for all family income levels, thereby not making much of a dent in the affordability gap- particularly for families at the lower end of the income scale.

After discussion, Ms. Plimpton and Bill Norbert from FAME were asked if they could use the upcoming lunch hour to use the model to quickly calculate the results of adjusting the Maine State Grant program award by EFC amounts or levels.

After lunch, the Commission entered into the process of addressing the 5 statutory strategies (and possible subsequent recommendations) that the Legislature had stipulated in the Commission's authorizing legislation (RESOLVE Chapter 109, LD 1849, 126th Maine State Legislature Resolve, To Establish the Commission To Study College Affordability and College Completion):

1. *Oregon's "Pay Forward, Pay Back" pilot project's model of funding public postsecondary education, under which a student enrolled in a public institution of higher education, in lieu of paying tuition or fees, contracts to pay to the State a certain percentage of the student's annual income upon graduation for a specified number of years;*
2. *Increased funding to the State of Maine Grant Program established in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A, section 11612 that boosts the minimum grant from \$1,000 to \$1,500 for eligible Maine residents;*
3. *The initiatives proposed by the public and independent colleges and universities in the State as part of the March 2014 "Improving College Affordability and Completion in Maine" report submitted to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs;*
4. *The extent to which Maine's public institutions of higher education support the state reforms included in the October 2013 "The Game Changers" report prepared by Complete College America, which recommends implementing the following strategies to enable more college students to complete degree programs and certificate programs and graduate from college: Performance Funding; Corequisite Remediation; Full-Time is 15; Structured Schedules; and Guided Pathways to Success;*
5. *The mandatory fees charged to students beyond the price of tuition charges, including technology and laboratory fees;*
6. *The affordability of college textbooks, including consideration of the costs and benefits of open source textbooks, for college students in the State; and*
7. *Other strategies that a majority of the commission members agree to include in this review.*

Upon discussion of the Pay It Forward model and estimated pilot project costs submitted by Mr. Burbank, Commission members made the following comments:

- At roughly the same level of investment of \$4.6 million for the pilot project, the UMS could freeze tuition rates for a year;
- The use of the Pay It Forward model raises unanswered questions about what would happen with unused federal loan programs such as the Pell grants;
- Pay It Forward require students to pay 100% of the costs of college and consequently does not really address the issues of affordability;
- Pay It Forward does not address affordability issues for students at private colleges and universities; and

- The lengthy commitment of at least 20 years is a significant commitment that remains a serious concern particularly with regards to economic downturns.

Upon further consideration, a motion was made and seconded that the Commission not endorse or recommend implementation of the Pay It Forward model in its final report to the Legislature. The Commission members voted unanimously to approve the motion.

With regards to the Maine State Grant program and the original charge to consider increasing the annual grant award to \$1,500, after a further lengthy discussion, the following points and decisions were made:

- There is sentiment among some Commission members to increasing the average annual grant award to \$2,500;
- Perhaps it would be necessary to consider the various proposals for the Maine State Grant program in a rank ordered fashion alongside the other proposals that the Commission will be considering;
- Concern was expressed about the current financial aid packages which are being awarded in a manner which “frontloads” the awards and does not do anything to address the issue of college completion; thus favoring some sort of tiering the awards to encourage completion;
- An approach which utilizes a system of tiered grant awards based on grade level attained is favored by some Commission members;
- Somewhat similarly, other members favor a tiered approach which increases grants based on how long a student has attended;
- Another Commission member wondered about the possibility of encouraging students to take on a 15 credit hour program as a basis for awarding grants; such an approach would deal with affordability and completion;
- In terms of tentative estimates that had been previously discussed, it will cost approximately \$5 million to increase the average Maine State Award to \$1,500 with the goal of reaching the same population as it does currently; i.e. those families with an EFC of up to \$6,000. Further, increasing the families served to an EFC of \$10,000 would cost approximately \$6 million. Further discussion refined a question for FAME: what would be the cost of providing tiered grants of \$250 increments starting at \$1,250 and reaching \$2,000 to the current population without changes to the EFC level? FAME later responded that it would cost approximately an additional \$3.5 million to implement the \$250 increment approach;
- A question was also raised about changing (or delaying) the current application deadline of May 1st for the Maine State Grant program; perhaps there is a possibility of developing another tiered approach which reserves funds for those students who are applying after the deadline;
- From some perspectives, certain Commission members favor a simple increase in average grant amounts without the use of a tiered approach;
- By previous estimates, increasing grants awards to \$2,500 using a tiered approach which increases family EFC levels to \$10,000 does not eliminate the affordability gap but rather reduces it by one-third;

- To completely eliminate the affordability gap for 4 year students at UMS, the Maine State Grant program annual award would have to be increased to at least \$4,000; a commission member asked if that goal should be recommended by the Commission considering the charge of the Commission is to make college affordable in Maine. In addition, an increase of the grant award to \$2,500 would erase the affordability gap for those students attending 2 years at the MCCS and then 2 years at the UMS;
- From the perspective of public higher eds, the most effective tool to ensure affordability is to maintain a certain level of state appropriations; such an approach enables public higher eds to freeze tuitions;
- Some on the commission favor an approach to college affordability and completion which ties the provision of additional financial resources to certain incentives, conditions, circumstances or results;
- To account for inflation since the 1990s, the average Maine State Grant award would have to be increased to \$2,500 to have the same purchasing power; and
- A brief straw poll was taken of Commission members preferences for changes in the Maine State Grant program. There was a general consensus for an increase in the current average grant award of \$1,000 with a range of a \$500 increase to a \$3,000 increase. Many, but not all, members favored the implementation of some sort of tiering system based on EFC levels.

After suggesting that the Commission revisit the issue of what to recommend regarding the Maine State Grant program at its next and final meeting, the Commission Chairs then moved the discussion to a consideration of the Commission's third statutory charge; i.e. a consideration of the recommendations of the March 2014 "Improving College Affordability and Completion in Maine" report. By institution, these recommendations included:

- MCCS
 - Hiring 30 College Navigator positions;
 - Increasing student work study funding;
 - Providing funding for summer scholarships; and
 - Create 2 Early College for ME staff positions.
- MMA
 - Hire a First Year Experience Coordinator
 - Expand College Student Inventory administration
 - Hire an Academic Coach position
- UMS
 - Fully fund Higher Education budget requests for FY 16-17, allowing UMS to freeze tuition for two additional years.

Commission members were then asked to informally rank each of these recommendations anonymously on paper as to their priority using a scale of 1 to 3; 1 being high and 3 being low. Mr. Kiermaier reported that the vote totals were somewhat hard to tally in that some individuals assigned a "1" (or other numbers) to several recommendations whereas other members simply ranked the top 3 recommendations. A subsequent re-voting by several members was

inconclusive in that it was difficult to determine who had voted again and who had not. The initial balloting had the following results:

- MCCS
 - Hiring 30 College Navigator positions- 7 ballots ranked this as #1; 3 ballots ranked this as #2
 - Increasing student work study funding- 4 ballots ranked this as #1; 3 ballots ranked this as #2; 1 ballot ranked this as #3
 - Providing funding for summer scholarships- 1 ballot ranked this as #1, 6 ballots ranked this as #2 and 1 ballot ranked this as #3

- MMA
 - Hire a First Year Experience Coordinator- 3 ballots ranked this as #1; ballots ranked this as #2; 1 ballot ranked this as #3
 - Expand College Student Inventory administration- 1 ballot ranked this as #2; 4 ballots ranked this as #3
 - Hire an Academic Coach position- 3 ballots ranked this as #1; 5 ballots ranked this as #2

- UMS
 - Fully fund Higher Education budget requests for FY 16-17, allowing UMS to freeze tuition for two additional years- 7 ballots ranked this as #1; 1 ballot ranked this as #2; 2 ballots ranked this as #3.

Next, the Chairs asked the Commission to consider the statutory charge to consider the extent to which Maine's public institutions of higher education have acted to support the state reforms included in the October 2013 "The Game Changers" report prepared by Complete College America. (The Chairs also reminded Commission members that the MCCS, UMS and MMA had addressed the extent to which the strategies have been implemented in the Template to Facilitate Analysis of Affordability Options.) This report recommends implementing the following strategies to enable more college students to complete degree programs and certificate programs and graduate from college:

- Performance Funding;
- Corequisite Remediation;
- Full-Time is 15;
- Structured Schedules; and
- Guided Pathways to Success

Upon initial consideration of this report, Commission member John Fitzsimmons, President of the MCCS, suggested that the Commission might consider recommending that the appropriate Boards of Trustees be asked to evaluate the various Game Changer strategies to see whether they have value to their particular institution of higher education. President Fitzsimmons added that the MCCS Board of Trustees has yet not formally reviewed or discussed these strategies. In response to President Fitzsimmons' suggestion, Senator Millet suggested a somewhat more specific course for the Commission to recommend that the various Boards of Trustees review the

Game Changer strategies and a report back to the Legislature regarding their reactions to these strategies.

Upon consideration of this possible recommendation, the Commission segued into a discussion of the goals and objectives enumerated in the “Statewide Education and Workforce Development Strategic Plan”; which was originally submitted to the Legislature on 1/30/14. In particular, the discussion focused on those goals and objectives which focused on graduation rates and persistence which include:

Goal 1: Prepare students in Maine’s K-12 System for success in the current and emerging economy

Goal 2: Provide higher education programs leading to academic credentials that meet the demands of the current and emerging economy.

Objective 1. Improve persistence and graduation rates.

After further discussion, the Commission also considered the following recommendation:

The Commission endorses the various goals and objectives pertaining to attainment and completion stated in the Statewide Education and Workforce Development Strategic Plan and requires MCCS, UMS and MMA to report back to the Joint Standing Committee on Education regarding progress in implementing these goals and objectives.

Upon a formal motion to accept this recommendation, the Commission voted unanimously to accept it and it was further decided that the Chairs would work with Mr. Kiermaier to bring specific data on attainment and graduation (such as that generated by Educate Maine) back to the Commission for further consideration at its next meeting.

Turning back to the Game Changers report, Senator Millet proposed the following recommendation:

Require the Boards of Trustees for the UMS, MCCS and MMA to report back to the Joint Standing Committee of Education by March 1, 2015 regarding their reactions to the Game Changers strategies, what action(s) was agreed upon, what additional resources would be required to implement these strategies, what plan of action has been adopted and identify how the State of Maine could assist in implementation of these strategies.

Upon a formal motion to accept this recommendation, the Commission voted unanimously to accept it.

Next, the Chairs turned to a discussion of the Commission’s statutory charge to consider the topic of mandatory fees charged by institutions of higher education in Maine. After a discussion regarding the practical limits to what the Commission could actually do or recommend regarding the many diverse fees charged by colleges and universities in Maine, it was pointed out that UMS has already pledged, as part of its current budget request, to freeze both tuition and fees for

the next 3 years. Senator Millett then suggested that perhaps the Commission could recommend, in the name of transparency, that all higher education fees be published along with tuition rates. It was also pointed out that current Title IV regulations from the federal government currently require disclosure of certain information including fees for all institutions of higher education. Representative Daughtry then proposed the following recommendation:

All public and private institutions of higher education in Maine publish average class fees by major course of study and that the Joint Standing Committee on Education consider including this requirement in statutory law and work with the Maine Department of Education to determine what requirements currently exist regarding the publication of current class fees.

Upon a formal motion to accept this recommendation, the Commission voted unanimously to accept it.

Next, the Chairs addressed the statutory charge that the Commission examine the issue of textbook costs. The ensuing discussion included the following comments:

- The rising cost of textbooks has often exceeded recent increases in the cost of tuition.
- Is there a way of making “Open Resource” textbooks more available to higher education students in the State of Maine?
- Based on the previous panel discussion on textbook costs which occurred in the Commission’s October 8th meeting, it was suggested that the Commission’s role might be to simply increase awareness and use of the Open Resource textbook alternative.

After discussion, the Commission considered the following recommendation:

The Commission encourages higher education institutions in the State of Maine to partner, where possible, with other colleges and institutions in other states to develop open education resources and to secure, when possible, private funding for the further development of open education resources. In addition, the Commission recommends that colleges and universities in Maine work to encourage additional options in securing classroom materials such as open education resources.

Upon a formal motion to accept this recommendation, the Commission voted unanimously to accept it.

At the close of the meeting, information was requested regarding the higher education completion and graduation rates in those countries where tuition is either free or heavily subsidized. The so-called PISA (Primary International Student Assessment) issued approximately a year and a half ago was suggested as a source by which that information could be obtained. In addition, it was requested that, in light of the Affordability Model developed by HCM for the State of Washington, it would be useful to know what the graduation rates are for higher education students in that state.

The Chairs then adjourned the meeting at approximately 4:15 PM.