Report to the

Faculty, administration, staff, and students

of

University of Maine at Fort Kent

by

An evaluation team representing the
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
of
the New England Association of Schools and Colleges

Prepared after review of the institution's self-study report
and a visit to the campus on November 6—9, 2005

The Members of the Team:

Joseph T. Mark, Academic Dean, Castleton State College, Team Chairperson

Ellen Russell Beatty, Associate Vice-President of Academic Affairs, Southern Connecticut State University

Bruce Berryman, Chair, Department of Meteorology, Lyndon State College

William R. Crangle, Vice President for Financial Affairs, Plymouth State University

Irene M. H. Herold, Director, Mason Library, Keene State College

Linda M. Jansky, Vice President for Student Development, Rivier College

Dan L. King, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Rhode Island College

Guest Observer:

Richard Hopper, Education Specialist, The World Bank

STANDARD SEVEN – LIBRARY AND INFORMATION RESOURCES

It is clear that students and faculty find the library and information resources of great value. With UMS-supported electronic materials currently available, resource access and collection concerns of the past are no longer perceived as an issue by the campus community. The book collection is still dated and in need of weeding, but interlibrary loan access supplies materials in a timely manner. The information technology (IT) and library staffs are qualified. With the possible exception of the need for a clerical support position for web services, IT is adequately staffed at the present time. The addition of a clerical support position for web services has the potential to create a much needed "domino effect," freeing up the Assistant Library Director's time, so she can focus more on library services. Presently, spending approximately 80% of her time on course management and web issues, she can give scant attention to traditional library matters.

The IT and Acadian Archive facilities are new or newly renovated. IT supports an impressive learning technology infrastructure, including dedicated computer classroom/labs, multimedia classrooms, mobile labs and multimedia resources, and video-conferencing and distance-learning installations. Deferred maintenance needs were evident in the library: popped up tiles, asbestos tiles requiring removal, and ceiling tiles stained and sagging from old leaks as well as current ones. Regrettably, the structure of the building does not lend itself to a straightforward, logical layout of collections, but rather produces a "rabbit warren" effect. This can make locating materials a challenge for users. The second-floor and basement levels are accessible only by stairs—in the latter case, a narrow spiral staircase—making ADA compliance a concern.

Librarians and IT staff provide extensive and appropriate orientation and training in the use of their resources. This is not based on an instructional plan or provided as part of an information literacy curriculum, and information literacy is not considered a component of campus-wide learning goals. The institution does not appear to be ensuring that students are using these resources as an integral part of their education, despite listing "research project" in the inventory of learning strategies.

Efforts systematically to evaluate the adequacy and utilization of the library, information resources, and its services are in place, but have not yet resulted in the use of data to improve these services.

Strengths
- Broad access to a wide variety of electronic materials is provided.
- The speed of the interlibrary loan system's response time negates deficiencies in the aging collection.
- The IT and library staff are credentialed and of demonstrated quality.

Concerns
- Consumption of library staff time in IT support limits development of library initiatives.
- The library facility has deferred maintenance issues that have been in existence for several years.
- Information literacy is not integrated into the campus culture.

Suggestion
- It may be advisable to review workload demands of course management and web support functions, especially if distance-learning enrollments continue to grow.