

UMaine Presidential Task Force
Review and Make Recommendations Regarding
Campus and Satellite Space Footprint Reduction and Density Issues

Background

Since March 2015, the Board of Trustees has not permitted any increases in University space without explicit Trustee approval in order to constrain costs, improve conditions of University facilities and increase the use of existing facilities in pursuit of those ultimate goals.

According to Sightlines, a company that benchmarks and analyses UMS facilities, square footage across the system has declined by approximately 250,000 gross square feet since 2010. The Sightlines assessment of the reduction is contained in its annual report to the Trustees, delivered to the Facilities, Finance and Technology (FFT) Committee on 3/6/2019.

At the same time, Trustees have encouraged the University to achieve more intense use of its facilities. Trustees endorsed a goal of trying to attain 340 users per 100,000 gross square feet of space by FY2022 and ultimately a density of 400 users per 100,000 gross square feet of space thereafter. This action was taken in response to data showing that the University, relative to its own history and to higher education benchmarks, occupied too much space with respect to the size of its population of students, staff and faculty.

To continue this facility effort, Trustees approved in principle in January 2018 an initiative to remove space by demolition and to help fund as much as 300,000 GSF of vacant, under-utilized or poorer condition space and to eliminate the backlog of capital investments and operating costs associated with that space at campuses statewide.

Charge

The University of Maine has been tasked to constrain its growth in space utilization and to find targeted opportunities, where prudent, to demolish, sell, or lease through public private partnerships, its significant inventory of building assets. With its portfolio of older buildings and the sensitivity to raising buildings in the historic district, we have been challenged to reduce space and increase density. The University recognizes that it has varying space of differentiated size and density, which impacts costs to significant degrees.

The task force appointed to address these issues, will review the current System Sightlines Report, as well as the one specific to the University of Maine, and suggest thoughts/ideas/concepts that would address BOT concerns regarding density and the reduction of gross square footage. In its efforts, the task force will bear in mind the impact of its recommendations on the recently released UMS Board of Trustees Strategic Priorities, the University's own priorities in its ongoing Strategic Visions and Values efforts, and the upcoming Research and Development Plan Proposal to the BOT.