

Report to the
Faculty, Administration, Trustees, Students
Of
University of Massachusetts Boston
Boston, MA

By

An Evaluation Team Representing the
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
Of the
New England Association of Schools and Colleges

Prepared after study of the institution's
Self-evaluation report and a visit to
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Introduction to the Report

The team that was invited to act on behalf of NEASC in the review and assessment of the University of Massachusetts Boston was diverse and broadly experienced in a wide variety of academic and non-academic fields. Most were experienced in participating in such reviews; a few were “beginners.” But the team quickly bonded and began its work in earnest. The team members had an excellent grasp of the institution from the outset because the self study was extremely well done. It involved many individuals from all across the campus, and it is clear that many thoughtful hours were spent in forming the document. Often enough, unhappily, administrations, faculty, staff, and students miss the opportunity to engage themselves in a critical understanding of their institution in view of its history and its understanding of its own future. That is most emphatically not the case at UMass Boston. The self study is a concerned document that looks deeply into the institution and its future. It stands proud of its accomplishments, with knowledge of its problems, and brings a willingness to be seen clearly by others.

It is with the preparation of having read the self study that the team came together and defined its role as that of a “loving critic.” The standards are clear, and the role of evaluating the evidence of their having been met is not a small matter. Our ultimate aim was to make that assessment, that evaluation of evidence, in a way that would serve the long term best interests of the University as well as the long term best interests of the people who provide it for the uses of the students and their professors.

The work of evaluation and assessment was made substantially easier by the people we met at the University. Members of the administration from the President to Department Chairs were uniformly helpful. Professors met us as sincerely interested and often quite concerned for “their” University. Students were assigned to escort team members and consistently expressed their pride in what they were achieving, and they were equally proud of the people who were helping them to achieve those things—their professors. And the staff—the people who made the visit “work” -- couldn’t have been more interested in the visit or more helpful to us individually than they were. To each of them we owe a debt of gratitude. They have adopted “the urban mission” with open minds and hearts, and we were grateful for the opportunity to spend some time, if only a little, among them.

Standard One MISSION AND PURPOSES

The University of Massachusetts Boston’s mission statement is grounded in certain well articulated core values. These are access to the highest quality university education for all, public service, and deep connections with the city in teaching, research and service. Following from those core values, there is a mission and a vision statement which have been approved by the Board of Trustees and the Higher Education Coordinating Council in academic year 1992-93 and reaffirmed during the institution’s planning process in academic year 2003-04. The mission and vision statements are appropriate to an institution of higher learning, and they include statements asserting a distinctive character as an urban institution. These statements are organized around issues of access which address the needs of both traditional and non-traditional students

who come from widely varying social, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds, with a wide variety of previous educational experiences and who typically combine university education with work and familial responsibilities. A very large proportion of the students come from families in which English is not spoken as the primary language, and in some cases the students may be the only English speakers in their families. This variety is, in large measure, the product of urban life, and the institution intentionally reaches out to it and embraces it in its own statement of purpose.

At the same time, UMass Boston addresses, at a high level, the intellectual and professional needs of its students. There is, in its mission statement, a substantial concern for excellence in the academic experience, and “excellence” and “elitism” have not been confused. The institution has selected four areas of study in which to distinguish itself: studies of the physical environment, social and public policy issues, leadership in health, education, and human services, and high technology manpower needs.

The university extends the original land grant tradition to the urban environment through its public service activities, linking its research strengths to its public service work. There are links forged with communities, government, and other educational institutions, directed at the social and economic issues of the day—issues such as city planning, tax policy, economic development, the schools, and others. The university has developed a culture through its understanding of its mission and vision which is a culture of accountability, collaboration and innovation directed to the solution or, at the least, the amelioration of urban problems and the enhancement of the quality of urban life.

The University’s “vision,” which is to say its collective understanding of the possibilities for development in an uncertain future, is the product of collaboration between the faculty council and the chancellor’s office. Vision statements are in reality “sense making” statements—they make sense of the academic world as it might come to be. In the case of UMass Boston, that understanding begins with the rebuilding of a superior faculty devoted to excellence in the instructional enterprise (there have been two waves of early retirement buy-outs, and “rebuilding” is the proper term as used here). It includes the provision of innovative and often inter-disciplinary programs that can be brought to bear in a timely manner on urban problems and issues. (This presupposes a “nimble” institution). It seeks to become an institution that embraces the idea of diversity and seeks to find ways to become more inclusive. At the same time, it is an institution that understands that if diversity is to be meaningful its uses must be fully understood and exploited in service to the community. The institution seeks to advance in pure and applied studies especially aimed at urban issues in order to improve life in the urban place, the Commonwealth more generally, and in a globalizing society.

The mission and purposes of the University are understood—but from time to time, they are understood differently by different constituent groups within the institution. Some have argued that the definition of “urban” essentially means teaching and serving urban, especially minority, populations. They would argue that the intrusion of a rather substantial research mission into the institution is a diversion from the fundamental purpose. Others argue that a research mission is pivotal to an understanding of the problems and issues of urban life in America and that research always serves the purpose of informing both undergraduate and graduate instruction. While this debate has developed, in another way there has been a debate framed that essentially pits those who see the institution as a university that happens to be in an urban environment against those who understand that the meaning of urban university sees the institution as organically connected to the city and its environs—literally “of the city” as opposed to

merely in it. This latter position in the debate is not on the surface, although it can be heard, while the former position is very much on the surface and a source of modest tension. For a time, these sorts of debates were had “in the halls,” or were hashed out within academic colleges and even departments.

With the understanding that statements of mission and vision are not particularly helpful unless institutional leadership is able to forge an institution-wide consensus around those statements, the former chancellor had convened a very large “consultation” on the mission with members of the faculty and a few members of the staff. It does not include student representation and it should. This Urban Mission Coordinating Committee of fifty-one members continues under the leadership of the Interim-Chancellor. It will probably never disband, and it shouldn’t. Its purpose is to forge that all important consensus around the mission and vision and to maintain it—perhaps from time-to-time reassessing those things in the light of environmental or internal change. The institutional document, “UMass Boston’s Urban Mission: Key Working Principles,” is the statement of the emerging consensus and is to be applauded. The mechanism for reassessment of purpose is in place through the coordinating committee, and it is fair to say that Standard One, Mission and Purposes, is well met, widely broadcast in institutional print and on-line documents. Everything else can flow more smoothly because of this emerging understanding of mission and purpose, and for the most part, as the reader will see, that is the case.

Standard Two PLANNING AND EVALUATION

UMass Boston engages in systematic academic planning and evaluation at all levels, from institution-wide strategic planning to program- and service-specific planning and assessment. In general these efforts are inclusive of faculty, and, less regularly, of other stakeholders (students, staff, and the wider community). Although UMass Boston exists in a difficult fiscal environment that has made long-term strategic planning problematic at best, the University is making progress towards fulfilling the major goals of its current (2008) Strategic Plan: Retention, Research and Reputation. This plan seeks to improve undergraduate retention and completion rates, strengthen sponsored research (with an elastic emphasis on research integral to the University’s urban mission), and enhance its reputation as an institution of high quality making important contributions to improving the quality of urban environments. The published plan has clear goals, outcome measures for each goal, and specific action items necessary to implementing its goals. Moreover, the University clearly is allocating its resources in support of the plan. The programs drive the budget and not the other way around.

In initiating the planning process in 2002 former chancellor, Dr. Jo Ann Gora, emphasized the importance of process, noting that the plan that emerged would need to be adjusted on the basis of accomplishments and changing circumstances. Unfortunately, the concern that the planning process would need to be adjusted based upon changing circumstances has proven all too prescient. Since 2001 the Commonwealth has reduced its support of the University’s general operating and library budgets (previously amounting to about 55% of the total budget) by a staggering 34 per cent. UMass Boston has accommodated these reductions in state revenue by increasing its Educational Operations Fee to students by 110% over that same period. Two rounds of mandated

incentives for early retirement of faculty members reduced the University's FTE's in the professorial ranks by about 25%. These actions have caused the University to rely more heavily on teaching assistants and part-time faculty to teach classes, and they have led to some increases in class size. Thus, while the cost of attending UMass Boston has gone up dramatically, the perceived quality of the educational experience the University offers its undergraduate students arguably has declined. During this same time (since fall 2001) undergraduate headcount enrollment dropped by about 18%, and graduate enrollment by about 11%, to a total headcount enrollment of 10,400 in the fall of 2004, with one-year declines of 50% or more in some academic majors. The University has not studied the price elasticity of its services within its traditional student market, but most of the decline in enrollment occurred among its part-time students, suggesting that many of them are, at least temporarily, priced out of the higher education market. These results suggest the University may have difficulty reaching its goal (expressed in the current NEASC self-study) of stabilizing enrollment at 13,500 over the next decade.

For about twenty years the University has been discussing the desirability of constructing on-campus student housing. Anecdotal data and surveys of admitted students suggest that a significant number would like to have on-campus housing, and that some applicants approved for admission elect not to attend because housing is not available. A recent initiative to win approval to build residence halls was not successful, but there is a widespread assumption that "in a couple years" the initiative will be taken forward again. It remains for the University to carry out a thorough analysis of real costs (e.g., increased staffing in student affairs, increased student aid to offset housing costs) and benefits (e.g., increased recruiting potential, increased retention and completion rates) associated with the project. The project also carries with it intangible but potentially damaging costs in public relations: some students and faculty members see constructing on-campus housing as a sea-change that inevitably will draw the University away from the urban mission. This could become a divisive issue on a campus now remarkably free of divisiveness.

The Academic Quality Assessment and Development (AQUAD) program review process is a self-study and quality assessment program that all departments undergo on a seven-year cycle. Teams of external evaluators visit campus and submit a written report. Departments then review the findings and recommendations and submit a response through the dean to the provost preliminary to a follow-up meeting at which action plans are discussed. The University has an excellent record of using these reviews to guide program planning, e.g., recent reviews in Nursing and Health Sciences that led to the restructuring of the program in exercise science, and the review in Mathematics and Sciences that has led to the exploration of a baccalaureate degree in electrical engineering (replacing a pre-engineering program that required students to transfer to another university to complete the degree).

UMass Boston has effective ongoing assessment programs for the university-wide seminars and writing competency components of its general education program. The assessments are thorough and form the basis for changes in pedagogy and staffing. Formal assessment of learning outcomes within the disciplines, particularly disciplines not governed by professional accreditation, does not currently occur on a systematic basis. Understanding of the concept of assessment of learning outcomes appears incomplete across the University. The University administration is aware of this condition and of the need to address it.

UMass Boston is in compliance with standard two of the commission of Higher Education of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. It plans inclusively, creatively, and effectively, allocating resources to achieve its agreed-upon goals. The evidence uncovered by the team suggests that the institution takes assessment seriously and, for the most part, carries it out consistently and effectively. At the same time, as has been noted above, there is a continuing need to engage the faculties in the traditional academic disciplines in defining and assessing student learning outcomes. UMass Boston has not focused on most of its undertakings the same kind of review and assessment standards applied to AQUAD reviews. For example, there is no consistent evaluation of courses by students, nor are there ongoing data-driven evaluations of the effectiveness of many student services. And finally, we might suggest that the new chancellor, when selected, engage the broader campus community in a discussion of the wisdom of housing some portion of students on the campus without changing the mission or ethos of the institution as a part of the consultation on the mission itself as noted in Standard One.

Standard Three ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE

The University of Massachusetts is a system comprised of five campuses of which UMass Boston is one and the only “urban” campus. It was opened in 1965 and later (1982) was merged with Boston State College (which was formerly Boston Teacher’s College). The campus is headed by a Chancellor who is selected by the Board of Trustees and the President of the system. Operationally, the campus is autonomous, having its authority delegated from the Trustees and the President.

The Board of Trustees has twenty-two members of which seventeen are appointed by the Governor of the Commonwealth for terms of up to ten years; five other trustees are elected by the students on the several campuses. Students serve for one year terms and each campus elects a faculty representative to the Board. These faculty representatives are non-voting and serve two-year terms. The Trustees hold the campuses and all of their assets as a public trust.

The University was established by law and is authorized in Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 75, with purposes of public service, research, undergraduate and graduate instruction and continuing education programs as well. The Trustees have complete authority over the university, subject only to the broader authority of the Board of Higher Education which is charged with coordinating the mission and scope of activities of the University of Massachusetts, the state colleges, and the community colleges of the state as well. Thus, admissions criteria and tuition, as well as academic program development are originated on the campus in conjunction with the trustees, but subject to the approval of the Board of Higher Education. It is quite apparent that this system is designed to prevent “mission creep,” and it appears to be quite effective in its prevention of unnecessary duplication of programs.

Campus wide governance is accomplished through the Faculty Council, and each of the seven colleges and schools likewise has a separate governance body. The faculty has a substantive voice in matters pertinent to their purview: tenure, promotion, faculty selection, curriculum development, and a voice in institution-wide matters. There is a governance body with wide representation for coordinating the professional education programs. Academic units that prepare teachers have representation on this council.

There is the full panoply of committees that one would expect of a complex academic organization, and students are appointed to the Faculty Council as non-voting members by their own governance mechanisms—the Undergraduate Student Senate and the Graduate Student Assembly.

The professors and the librarians are organized into the Faculty Staff Union, while classified and professional staff are represented by the SEIU Local 888. The graduate students are organized and represented by UAW Local 1596.

The self-study, which is very informative with regard to organization and governance matters, is also very forthcoming with regard to current issues and problems. One of these has to do with the two rounds of early retirement buyouts and their effects on “institutional memory,” much of which has been or will be lost. There is a sense that while such institutional memory is a non-bureaucratic part of the governance structure, it is invaluable in keeping the university on course and keeping it from being diverted into areas that have already been tried and found wanting. It prevents or can prevent repeating the errors of the past and point to directions that have proved successful in the past as well. The concern broadens out into a concern for junior or untenured faculty who are thrown into governance systems in order to pile up “service points” for the tenure dossier but who lack the understanding of university history that would make their service valuable.

The self study goes on to discuss the issue of governance in graduate studies as well. There is some ambiguity in the matter of responsibilities and decision making authority among the Graduate Studies Committee, the Faculty Council, the Graduate Dean, and the collegiate deans. While this is not a particularly unusual phenomenon, it is one that needs substantial attention and should be addressed by the Provost.

The team discovered a very new administration in place at UMass Boston. The previous chancellor had brought a number of new people to the campus, including the Provost, prior to her leaving to accept a position elsewhere. The Provost, who has been in office for about three years, has appointed most of the deans, but the appellation, “interim,” was not uncommon in this administration, and there is still substantial use of it with a few interim vice chancellors and elsewhere in the organization. Nevertheless, as new as this administration is, it appears to work in great harmony. The Provost, the Vice-Chancellor for Administration and Finance, as well as the interim-Chancellor, are remarkably collaborative, and as a group, they are very collaborative with the academic deans and other non-academic officers as well.

There is also some courage among this group which is hard to miss. With as many academic vacancies as there are, one might imagine a tendency to fill them by merely assigning the vacancies to the departments from which they came. This central administration has, however, determined that they shall not re-create the University of the 1970’s, but rather use the vacant positions to further the current direction of the university for the long term. While this would probably not be a wildly popular idea in many institutions, there seems to be some real acceptance of this strategy on the UMass Boston campus.

The institution periodically evaluates the effectiveness of the system of governance using the results for its improvement. It does not seem at all fearful of seeking better organizational methods for its operations. The development of the continuing education program is a case in point. The Division of Continuing, Corporate and Distance Education is uniquely well integrated into the academic programs of the

several colleges and is proving itself to be a substantial revenue generator in very hard times.

The organization and governance of the university are most assuredly appropriate to the university and facilitate activities directed toward the accomplishment of the mission and purpose of the institution. Lines of authority, responsibility and communication are clear and reflected in a variety of the campus policies and procedures. The governance structure is flexible and responds in a collaborative manner to campus concerns. The administration has collaborated with the faculty, staff and students to improve communication on campus.

The senior staff of the university is a collaborative team. They are committed to the university's mission and purpose and are able to manage the day-to-day activities while keeping before them the concerns of the university as a whole and its long term future.

The only disappointment that one finds is that while The Student Handbook contains all appropriate procedures and policies related to college life at UMass Boston, similar handbooks for the faculty and staff are not in evidence. The institution lacks a unified policy manual and should get after that matter with all deliberate speed.

Standard Four PROGRAMS AND INSTRUCTION

In the main, the institution has met Standard Four: Programs and Instruction. While we found some areas for attention and further consideration, we believe that the University provides an appropriate range and quality of undergraduate, graduate, and research programs in line with its expressed mission and the 2008 Strategic Plan.

UMass Boston is a doctoral-intensive university offering a full array of baccalaureate programs as well as selected masters and doctoral programs, a number of which are accredited by professional associations (e.g., AACSB, NCATE, and CCNE). Certificate programs and non-credit professional education programs are also available. Academic programs generally reflect disciplinary standards as well as the mission of the University. Requirements for degree completion are clearly spelled out in undergraduate and graduate catalogs.

The quality of academic programs is assessed primarily through a regular and formal program review process mandated by the University of Massachusetts. In cases where programs are accredited by external bodies, a program may substitute such reviews for the AQUAD process (e.g., in the College of Management which has been accredited by AACSB since 2000). There is ample evidence that the results of program review, both internal and external, are used to make strategic decisions regarding curriculum development, resource allocation, and organizational changes. In some cases, the implementation of such decisions may be delayed due to resource constraints (e.g., inability to add instructional capacity, lack of professional staff support, space limitations).

With respect to the assessment of student outcomes, there has yet to be a campus-wide discussion of the learning and developmental goals of undergraduate education as well as the means to assess the achievement of those goals in graduating baccalaureate students. Likewise, there is no standard or systematic approach to evaluating the learning and placement success of graduate students. Some professionally accredited programs

are making efforts to create such systems, but there is not yet a “culture of evidence” with respect to student learning and outcomes in the University.

In selected areas, there appear to be less than adequate instructional resources to sustain the quality and breadth of curriculum. As the Self Study acknowledges, faculty shortages in the Public Policy doctoral program and the MA in Critical and Creative Thinking create special challenges that are met by assigning faculty from other areas to participate in the core requirements. In the College of Management, the breadth of curriculum is constrained by faculty numbers, even though faculty in the College typically teach a six-course load. The restructuring and renewal of the PhD in Green Chemistry after the departure of a key faculty member illustrates the challenge of supporting academic programs with insufficient depth of faculty resources, and underlines the necessity for re-building the faculty with all deliberate speed. Library resources for graduate study seem significantly constrained, with one program reporting that all of its periodical subscriptions have been cut in recent years, and others reporting that there are substantial gaps in collections due to the lack of purchases from the 1980’s up to the recent present. More of this concern will be discussed in the section devoted to Standard Seven.

Faculty teaching loads are relatively high for a research-oriented university, with a six-course load defined as the norm. Many units provide course reductions for junior faculty, typically prior to the required fourth-year review. At that time, the load is normally adjusted to five courses. Faculty actively engaged in funded research often buy out of courses or arrange other means of release, resulting in an average of three or four courses per year in the College of Science and Mathematics, for example. Similarly, units with research-based graduate programs recognize graduate student supervision as part of a faculty member’s teaching assignment, and course loads are appropriately adjusted. As the University moves toward its vision to become a recognized urban research university, it will need to consider the relationship of faculty teaching loads to expectations for increased extramural funding and scholarly productivity.

Academic program development is characterized as a bottom-up process, with new courses or programs conceived and designed at the department level and then moving through various levels of review at the college, university, and board level. In cases of graduate programs, the Graduate Studies Committee of the Faculty Council also formally reviews and approves such changes. New program development takes 18 to 24 months from inception to final approval.

The University has a well-developed Corporate, Continuing, and Distance Education (CCDE) program. It is closely integrated with academic programs. All credit bearing courses offered through CCDE are approved by and located in academic departments, all instructional personnel are reviewed and approved by program faculty, and there is careful market research and planning between CCDE and departments when courses for non-matriculated audiences are developed. Academic standards for on-line instruction are equal to those for campus-based instruction. CCDE provides appropriate financial incentives to departments for participation in its programs and contributes materially to the resources of the University.

The undergraduate programs at the University are grounded in the liberal arts and sciences and emphasize the development of writing, quantitative and critical thinking skills across a range of disciplines along with in-depth knowledge in disciplinary major areas of study. The University offers 78 degree programs. It also offers 14

undergraduate certificates. The rationale and requirements for the degrees and certificates are clearly specified in the Undergraduate Catalog.

Each undergraduate degree program has a general education requirement and a major requirement. The general education requirements comprise one-third of a student's total curriculum and emphasize skills and knowledge in the areas of critical analysis and logical thought, verbal and quantitative reasoning, human diversity, and principal approaches to knowledge. Eight learning objectives are specified for these areas. Student learning is assessed through a mix of methods, including tests and writing and portfolio analyses, with each college responsible for managing requirements and assessments. Assessment of the major is less developed, although programs are evaluated every seven years through the AQUAD process, as noted above.

The University effectively protected its core instructional function through several rounds of budget cuts experienced as a result of both enrollment decreases and diminished support by the state. As a result of early retirements among the faculty, increased numbers of sections have been taught by part-time faculty. The University has been recruiting new faculty members and seems to be containing the trend and will most likely be reversing it in the next few years.

The University offers 13 doctoral programs, 28 master's degrees, three Certificates of Advanced Graduate Study (CAGS), and 20 graduate certificate programs. The strategic plan for the University calls for an increase in the proportion of graduate students to 25 percent by 2008, a figure already nearly attained due to the decline in undergraduate enrollments over the past four years. As the University continues to expand its research mission, it will be important to grow the capacity of graduate programs aligned with that mission.

Because of the University's financial constraints, and because of the relative newness of its research mission, a very small number of graduate students have access to financial aid in the form of assistantships and tuition waivers. Only 10 percent of students are provided assistantships funded with institutional dollars, and only 6.5 percent of students are supported on external grants and contracts. In order to support both the instructional mission of the University and its research programs, these proportions will need to grow significantly in the coming years. The allocation of assistantships to departments must reflect a rational process based on explicit criteria related to such areas as undergraduate teaching, level of research activity, and the nature of the graduate degree (professional, applied, academic).

The faculty in graduate programs are appropriately qualified, and there are effective governance mechanisms in place to assure program quality and oversight. The Graduate Studies Committee and the Graduate Program Directors (GPD's) serve as important advisory groups to the Dean of Graduate Studies and the Faculty Council. The Graduate Student Assembly is actively involved with both these groups and is represented by a non-voting member on the Faculty Council. As the University achieves its research-oriented mission in the future, some thought should be given to the standards for designation of separate graduate faculty status in order to assure effective supervision of master's and doctoral theses. The purpose here is not to create a two-tiered faculty but to emphasize the special nature of graduate instruction and student advising. Such a designation could also help to rationalize differential teaching loads in departments with significant graduate programs aligned with research.

Assessment of graduate student learning outcomes and post-graduate placement is at an early stage of development at the University. As with undergraduate programs,

practices vary considerably across programs, with professionally accredited programs more likely to practice outcome assessment than those not accredited. All master's programs require a capstone experience, and some programs are experimenting with new forms of assessment such as teaching portfolios. At the program level, reviews based on the AQUAD process should be sure to include a substantive role for the Dean of Graduate Studies in order to link evaluation with governance structures, resource allocation, and strategic planning. In addition, systematic collection and analysis of graduate student retention data will be critical to the development of successful programs.

An important asset for scholarship and research at the University is the multiple centers and institutes aligned with the colleges and the provost's office ("free standing" centers). There appear to be strong connections between these centers and the academic programs, resulting in greater opportunities for applied scholarship by students and faculty.

Through these centers as well as the efforts of academic departments, extramural funding for the University has grown substantially in recent years. The distribution of these grants is uneven, with a few awards accounting for the majority of the current level of \$35 million in funding (e.g., the Institute on Community Inclusion, BATEC, and the Boston Science Partnership). Future efforts to assure a widespread and diverse funding base will be necessary. In addition, the current research infrastructure is inadequate to support planned expansion of grant activity. Research facilities are in the early stages of development; the availability of reallocated space is a tremendous asset for the campus and will require careful strategic decisions by the provost and deans. A newly created University Research Committee, with strong faculty representation, can play a crucial role in such decisions.

Allocation of indirect cost recovery appears to be effective for supporting and stimulating research at the department level. The availability of "hybrid funds" from CCDE activity to support course release is also an effective tool for assisting faculty with high teaching loads.

There is a shared emphasis among faculty, chairs, and deans on the importance of effective pedagogy. The historical focus of the institution on teaching has been sustained even in the face of limited resources and competing demands related to research and outreach. Resources that assure quality of instruction are found primarily in the Center for the Improvement of Teaching (CIT) and the Instructional Technology Center. Although these resources have lost funding in the recent years of budget cuts, they are serving the faculty well. IT resources in classrooms are relatively limited however.

Systematic evaluation of teaching effectiveness is missing. While all instructors must be evaluated by students at the end of a semester, the means for such evaluation are not standardized and in fact vary considerably across departments. Thus, it is difficult to assess the overall quality of instruction and then design faculty development programs aimed at improved teaching. There is no formal connection between the teaching evaluation process and the resources offered by the CIT.

The University, which values both access and excellence in education, has an orderly and ethical program of admissions in accordance with the Board of Higher Education Admissions Standards. Generally, requirements for admission are clearly specified in the Undergraduate Programs Catalog and are consistent with the university's mission. The University accepts transfer students and maintains articulation agreements with community colleges, Dean College and Quincy College. The requirements for

admission to graduate programs are specified in the Graduate Studies Bulletin. Transfer credits are limited to six and meet the standards for admissions and retention.

The high school grade point average (GPA) entrance requirement for traditional freshman applicants was changed from 2.0 to 2.3 in 2002, and then from 2.3 to 2.5 in 2003. The new GPA requirement needs to be clearly specified in the Catalog. The changes in the requirement have contributed to an overall increase in the freshman average high school GPA. More than 50% of the new freshman entrants in fall, 2004 had GPA's higher than 3.0

The University is quite proud of its diverse student population, especially at the undergraduate level. It views itself as having the most diverse student body among colleges and universities in the New England region. In addition, given its history and its mission, faculty members emphasize diversity and multiculturalism in the curriculum

Although the University has a range of appropriate academic supports in place to provide reasonable opportunities for success to students, it has high student attrition rates in general. Its six-year graduation rate for undergraduates, for instance, hovers around 30 per cent. The University recognizes attrition as a strategic challenge and is seeking to stabilize its enrollments at around 13,000 to 13,500. However, the university has not launched an institution-wide retention initiative, with retention efforts occurring within units but without much collaboration. It would benefit the university to design and implement a retention plan that would harness the energies of all the units on campus.

At the graduate level, admissions policies and practices are clearly articulated in the Graduate Bulletin (2002-2004) and reflect national standards. The Office of Graduate Studies oversees the application and admission process, while admissions decisions are made at the program and college level. The graduate student body is highly diverse, even more so than the regional and national populations. The lack of a University level recruitment plan for graduate students will need to be addressed if the goal of increasing graduate enrollments and program quality is to be met.

Graduate credit transfer policies are consistent with national norms (up to 6 credits earned at another accredited institution in the past seven years). Minimum grade policies are published in the Graduate Bulletin. Individual programs may set higher standards; for example, some programs in the College of Liberal Arts do not give any credit for courses in which a student receives less than a B (e.g., clinical psychology) or B- (e.g., history). Some programs set a GPA average (3.0) but do not specify a limit on the number of courses in which a C grade is allowable. Others do not specify minimum grade requirements in the catalog (e.g. English, Counseling), thus the assumption is that Graduate Bulletin policies prevail. When students majoring in one program take elective courses in another program, there is the potential for conflicting policies regarding minimum grade requirements.

In short, we find a shared institutional value for both access and excellence in instruction paired with a dedicated and well qualified instructional faculty. There is a rich diversity among both faculty and students—a diversity not only of color, culture, and ethnicity, but of point of view as well. There are emerging areas of academic excellence in select programs that are consistent with the University's urban mission. Important to the future of the institution, there is a collegial governance system that supports constructive program review and the deliberate development of new academic programs. We have also found a very responsive and closely integrated division of Corporate, Continuing, and Distance Education that has become a critical part of resource

development for the university. And finally, we found a sound and clear general education requirement that is widely supported by the faculty.

Nevertheless, we are concerned about the increasing reliance upon part-time and non-tenure track faculty who often do not necessarily feel well informed of the institution's purposes, aims, and objectives. At the same time, we are concerned about inadequate financial aid packages for graduate students, evidenced by an insufficient number of institutionally funded teaching assistantships and the small number of students receiving externally funded research assistantships. As a part of this same concern, we have noted inadequate laboratory and library resources for some of the research-based academic programs in some of the sciences and applied professional disciplines.

The lack of standardized and systematic means to assess student learning outcomes and post-graduate experiences of both undergraduate and graduate students is of very real concern and was noted earlier in this discussion. The infrastructure necessary to support anticipated growth in funded research needs attention in the immediate future, and there is, at the moment, some misalignment between research activities and aspirations relative to academic program strengths and goals. Rebuilding the faculty carefully in terms of reallocation of positions available from the early retirement programs will be crucial for the proper alignment of research activities and goals.

And finally, the institution is in critical need of a comprehensive, institution-wide retention plan and a recruitment plan at the graduate level.

Standard Five FACULTY

UMass-Boston has an extraordinarily dedicated faculty who are committed to providing excellence in education for students at all levels. Among the full-time faculty, 92% hold terminal degrees from a broad range of distinguished institutions, and many are making outstanding contributions in the areas of teaching, research, and service. However, as a result of state budget cuts and early retirement incentive programs, UMass-Boston has experienced an 8.5% decrease in full-time faculty and a concomitant 8.7% increase in part-time faculty since 1993. Sixty-two of the 433 full-time faculty employed in 2003 held non-tenure track positions, with 398 part-time faculty constituting 132 full-time equivalents. Thirty-five percent of the current course offerings are taught by part-time faculty, including eighty-two percent of the first-year general education seminar courses.

The majority of part-timers are "per course instructors" teaching two, and at times three, courses per semester. A small number are regular, part-time faculty who work half-time or more. Part-time instructors become members of the faculty bargaining unit after teaching five courses in three consecutive semesters. In addition, UMass-Boston also utilizes two types of teaching assistants. TA I's provide instructional support; while TA II's have responsibility for entire courses. There were 14 FTE's teaching 28 sections at the TA II level in the 2003-2004 academic year. The University seeks to increase these numbers to between 25 and 30 FTE's responsible for teaching 50-60 sections and is in the process of reviewing criteria for TA allocation. Instructional development for graduate students is carried out at the departmental level, which includes courses or seminars in teaching pedagogy during the first year.

The standard teaching load at UMass-Boston remains three courses per semester in spite of an increase of 119% in external grants and contracts from 1996 to 2004. However, some departments have moved to a 2/2 or 2/1 teaching load to accommodate increased levels of faculty research. Sponsored activity in Instruction and Public Service has experienced rapid growth, increasing 84% between the 1998 and 2002 fiscal year.

Full-time faculty bear the primary responsibility for the development and assessment of learning outcomes, out of classroom advising, academic planning and policy making, curricular development, and institutional governance. Increased reliance on part-time faculty poses a challenge for implementing and sustaining initiatives in these areas, in particular delivery of the general education program. In response, the administration has set a goal to replace 80% of the retirements with new tenure-track faculty within the next five years.

As noted in an earlier discussion, there is no designated graduate faculty for delivering the graduate curriculum and for serving on thesis and dissertation committees. This is a policy that warrants review in relation to the expanding research mission.

Faculty ranks and hiring are outlined in the "Academic Personnel Policy of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Boston, and Worcester." The University's commitment to affirmative action has led to an increase in full-time minority faculty from 6.5% in 1985 to 22% in 2003. Women comprise 39.6% of the tenured faculty and 43.8% of the full-time faculty. In spite of this, the self-study expresses a desire for greater involvement from Affirmative Action in assisting with the identification, recruitment, and retention of minority faculty.

Faculty salaries and contracts are set by the collective bargaining agreement between the Faculty Staff Union and the Board of Trustees. Cost of living increases and merit pay are included in these agreements. Merit pay is awarded based on departmental assessments of productivity in research, teaching, and service. The Deans, Provost, and Chancellor may also make awards to recognize University service. There is an effort to regularize criteria for merit increases at both levels and to communicate the standards.

Faculty salaries exceed the median at peer institutions but need to be viewed in relation to the cost of living in the Boston area. In 2004, the Massachusetts legislature agreed to fund a 15% negotiated increase for faculty over the 2000-2003 contract period. This payment did not cover retirees or retroactive payments. Moreover, faculty contributions to health insurance coverage rose 50% to include a 15% contribution by faculty. Parking contributions increased from \$3 to \$6 per day and are expected to increase further. Faculty receive 85% coverage for health insurance, a dental plan, participation in a retirement program outside of Social Security, coverage of optical care under two plans, and access to pre-tax programs. Timely implementation of negotiated salary increases has been problematic.

Appointments, re-appointments, review, and tenure processes are outlined in the Collective Bargaining Agreement. Faculty are required to submit annual reports detailing accomplishments in the areas of service, research and teaching. Student evaluations are also required. Departmental personnel committees are responsible for conducting annual reviews. There is a comprehensive fourth year review prior to tenure. Every seven years after the granting of tenure, senior faculty submit a self-assessment report and propose strategic plans for their professional development and contributions to the University through the PMYR (a post tenure review) process. Each faculty member is given some money toward achieving the outlined goals.

Faculty who serve as department chairs are given course reductions and a stipend which varies from one department and college to another. The central administration is working toward standards across colleges for compensation of chairs.

Start-up funds are provided for new faculty and efforts are made by the deans to provide course reductions for the development of research, scholarship, and artistic activities. Research Trust Funds are used to support travel, seed money, or supplementary funds for research projects. The Vice Provost for Research also administers four internal grant competitions for funds for research and outreach. Departmental merit increases and Chancellor's awards for Distinguished Scholarship, Teaching, and Service also contribute to faculty development.

Faculty have further opportunities for professional development through the Center for the Improvement of Teaching, the Instructional Technology Center, and through the sabbatical leave process.

In short, we have found a dedicated and well qualified cadre of professors, but too few of them. They are, nonetheless, dedicated to their own development in pedagogy and research, and they are overwhelmingly devoted to their students both in and out of the classrooms.

We cannot help but be concerned about the rather heavy reliance on non-tenure track and adjunct faculty; such a distribution puts an increased burden on the regular, full time faculty members for service, both on and off the campus, and for student advisement. We should add here that staff reductions have placed a further burden on the faculty for taking over clerical responsibilities. Implementation of negotiated salary increases in a timely fashion seems more than warranted given current work loads. And, speaking of those work loads, they need to be regulated across colleges and within departments in a way that reflects the reality of increased research initiatives and graduate student supervision.

Standard Six STUDENT SERVICES

Student services at UMass-Boston are divided among three areas of the university: academic affairs, enrollment management, and student affairs. The university utilizes a student-centered philosophy in the development and delivery of services to students. A central theme that permeates student services is "an ethic of care". Early in our visit, the interim Chancellor enunciated this principle, and we found broad acceptance and agreement with it among faculty and staff.

The area of academic support services includes: pre-collegiate and educational support programs, advising center, university honors program, office of career services and internships, and academic support programs. This area was not significantly impacted by the institutional budget cuts. A commitment to access was expressed as an important element of the work of these units.

The orientation program has undergone significant changes during the past two years. A committee was formed, Students in Transition, and is a collaborative effort among several units to enhance the socialization of students into the University. Specialized programs for freshmen and transfers have been developed and student orientation leaders are part of the new orientation model. "Students come first" was expressed as a value related to the creation of the programs. Student participants evaluate

each orientation session. First year seminars are required for freshmen and intermediate seminars are required for transfer students (30 plus credit hours). These courses are three credits and taught by faculty.

The centralization of career services is an on-going process. The office is beginning to shift from a career development focus to a career placement focus. Limited funds and low staff salaries provide some challenges for the administration of the unit. Data have not been collected regarding placement of graduates.

In the area of international student services, the campus experienced a significant enrollment decline (almost half) of international students following the events of 9/11. There are limited recruitment efforts related to this population.

Disabled student services are divided between academic support services and the Affirmative Action and Multicultural Affairs office. The Ross Center for Disability Services serves as an intermediary between students and faculty, overseeing accommodation requests for classroom and instruction purposes. The access needs for this population are addressed by an ADA compliance officer who is located in the Affirmative Action and Multicultural Affairs office.

Tutoring services are offered to students in this manner: one hour of tutoring every week for each course, and group tutoring is also available. That additional funding in the areas of staffing would enhance delivery of student services, particularly in the tutoring area, is currently under discussion. It will undoubtedly find its way into the student retention program.

The enrollment management area includes admissions, financial aid, registrar, enrollment information and marketing, merit based scholarships, the One Stop, student employment, and the radio station (WUMB). The area operates as individual units whose technical and database systems are not well integrated.

Budget cuts had a serious impact on student costs, especially for part-time and out-of-state students. Although one million dollars was recently added to the financial aid budget, students' financial needs remain a major concern.

A "one stop shop" was developed to consolidate student administrative services (registration, financial aid, and billing), providing an efficient approach in addressing student questions and issues. Student feedback was positive regarding the one stop shop, but it appears that the "shop" can only deal with the simplest of issues; more complex problems and issues require trips to the several student services offices. This might be a more efficient and helpful office if it had been well designed with information technology at its core.

The lack of on-campus housing has been regarded as a negative factor in recruitment efforts. Prospective students and parents expressed interest in a housing option, and the campus view is that decisions to attend the university are severely affected by the lack of an on-campus housing option.

As a result of surveying students to identify service concerns, a more service-oriented approach has been initiated and the number of student complaints has decreased.

The student affairs area includes: athletics, Early Learning Center, health services, campus ministry, public safety, service learning and community service, student life (student activities and organizations), student conduct, and off-campus student housing services.

The student affairs area is in a state of transition. The Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs has been serving in an interim role for only a few months, having replaced the former Vice Chancellor who is at this writing the interim Chancellor. The recent budget

cuts had a significant impact on the area, most notably in athletics. Student affairs staff has assumed multiple roles due to a reallocation of duties as a result of budgetary limitations. Nevertheless, there is a positive attitude about serving students and a genuine concern demonstrated (the “ethic of care” noted earlier). A strategic planning process for student affairs is underway and should be completed in the summer of 2005.

A few noteworthy accomplishments include: the assignment of Public Safety to the student affairs area resulting in an improved perception of services, enhanced training for officers, and improved relationships with campus constituencies; comprehensive and well-managed student health services; the revision of the student code of conduct; the positive student perceptions of student affairs staff, services, and programs

In short, there are substantial strengths in this division. The focus on students with a guiding principle of an “ethic of care” is chief among them. Student feedback about their university experiences is solicited on a one-on-one, personal basis, and that is made possible by the accessibility, visibility, approachability of staff and administrators. Overall, the student affairs units appear to be very well managed and there is a strong emphasis on advising student organizations. This strong advising orientation is critical to the retention effort, as it is well known that keeping students engaged through their organizations helps the matter of persistence to the degree. We also noticed that there were very few student grievances and very few student conduct cases.

Still, we noticed that there was a persistent lack of systematic assessment practices with regard to student learning outcomes, as noted earlier. It is important that there be a continued effort to enhance collaboration with academic affairs. And, finally, the enrollment management philosophy, especially the retention focus, seems to us to be unclear.

Standard Seven

LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION RESOURCES

The Joseph P. Healey Library serves and supports the community of UMass-Boston in research, teaching, and learning. The Director of Library reports to the Provost. The Provost has irregular meetings with the Library Director who has been interim for 3 years and there is no plan to conduct a search for a permanent hire. Staffing levels have been reduced due to early retirements and unfilled positions from 42 FTE in 1995 to 33 FTE positions by 2004. Student employment has increased to alleviate full time staffing shortages.

The purpose of the Healey Library is to be a gateway to informational resources. With the current budget, the University cannot expect the library to own or have access to all necessary journals and other library materials. The library participates in several consortia to insure timely access either through interlibrary loan/document delivery or borrowing privileges.

The library is a participant in the general education program on campus. Faculty has been impressed with the improvement of library resources over the past five years. The faculty has required and incorporated library assignments into their course work. The Capstone program pushes the limit on library owned materials and students need to explore other informational sources.

The Division of Information Technology (IT) has the responsibility to provide information technology resources and strategies to the University community. IT takes its lead from the Chief Information Officer (CIO) who reports to the Chancellor. The

CIO invites the Library Director to IT departmental meetings, thus creating a sense of collaboration.

The campus is fully wired and supports both hard-wired and wireless capabilities. Many departments on campus rely on IT for computer support. Currently, IT is exploring standardization issues for best practices. The Department has incorporated a four-year replacement program for computers. In AY05 faculty received laptops from the replacement program. The current reporting structure, though decentralized for the Library and IT, appears to be effective at this moment in time. The two units work closely with each other, even though there are certain “cultural” barriers.

Professionally educated and qualified librarians are available to train the University community in library and resources skills as well as provide a full range of professional library services. The professional librarians are members of the Faculty Staff Union.

The future plans for continued library improvements are impressive. Much has been accomplished with the current financial condition. Planning is underway to explore an *Academic Town Center* image for both the Library and IT. This should help create a new and exciting environment needed and required to attract students, faculty, and staff. The Library should be a key unit in the strategic plan due to the critical and essential nature of the unit. The development of a Cyber Café within the library has created a new sense of energy within the library.

The Library and IT are extremely interested in fundraising and working with Institutional Advancement. However, Institutional Advancement has been hit with serious staffing reductions and finds it difficult to meet all of the needs of the campus units and divisions. Both units are working towards a creative initiative to promote and raise visibility and campus awareness. A collaboration effort for pooling resources to hire a marketing professional has begun.

UMass-Boston is fortunate to have dedicated and talented leadership and staff. There has been very creative thinking during periods of substantial financial stress. This stems in large measure from a sense of genuine commitment to students and their needs to access information and to beneficial collaborations with other institutions as well.

At the same time, one can only be very concerned with the level of library and IT funding to support academic programs. The collection is imperiled and the level of staffing is quite insufficient. Information resources for many master’s level and doctoral programs are so seriously lacking that some academic areas have had to create their own departmental libraries.

There is a lack of a single sign-on mechanism to access library and other institutional resources. New faculty expecting and requiring different and more advanced technology are often disappointed. The library needs additional staff with advanced technical skill sets. As a caution, the institution might consider ending the use of Social Security numbers as access methods for passwords. This should be considered in light of privacy concerns and growing concerns about identity theft.

Standard Eight PHYSICAL RESOURCES

UMass Boston is located three miles from downtown Boston on 184 acres overlooking the Atlantic Ocean on the Columbia Point peninsula, abutted by the John F.

Kennedy Presidential Library and the Massachusetts State Archives and Commonwealth Museum, the Boston College High School and several low and moderate priced housing projects. Its prominent urban location is accessed via public roadways and public transportation. The campus occupies 2.5 million gross square feet and 1.3 million net assignable square feet, much of which was built in 1974. The original campus, described by the campus as a mega structure, is comprised of five buildings, Quinn Administration Building, Healey Library, McCormack Hall, Science Center, and Wheatley Hall. The mega-structure is integrated by a common concrete plaza over a large parking garage, which connects the five buildings ranging three to ten occupied floors in height. The buildings share a common architectural theme found at urban campuses constructed in the early 1970's; what one staff member described as urban brutalism architecture. Concrete and brick surfaces dominate interior and exterior walls. Exposed pre-cast concrete panels provide high ceilings over many areas. Floor surfaces are primarily concrete or vinyl tile over concrete. Interior UMass Boston's walkways over the concrete plaza further integrate the campus, which was conceived on what is described as the Oxford model, where each building would support the collegial mission self-contained within it. The University's self-identified "One Community" goal attempts to create resource sharing models, such as the consolidation of library functions in Healy Library. A single physical plant support building provides heat and chilled water for air conditioning to each building's mechanical systems. The University's off campus locations include a research field station on Nantucket, a leased facility for a child care center and eight off-campus continuing education locations in and around Greater Boston.

The mega-structure and its severe deterioration represent the primary capital funding issue UMass Boston has addressed over the last 10 years: replacing all major building roofs at a cost of \$3 M; replacing Healy Library's entire brick envelope at a cost of \$12.5 M; and repairing structural beams and columns in the parking garage at a cost of \$1.4 M in 2001. UMass Boston raised \$40 M in 2004 to construct new and repair existing parking facilities. There are 2470 designated parking spaces on campus and 1590 of these are in the structured parking garage.

The deteriorating mega-structure continues to be UMass Boston's highest priority for State capital funding. A Boston Globe front page story coinciding with the start of the NEASC team's visit described the history of the original mega-structure construction irregularities, the continuing deterioration and the lack of attention received from the State. This type of news, while perhaps bringing a State capital funding solution much closer also creates an image barrier UMass Boston hopes to overcome in the near future. In the meantime important physical improvements to support its academic programs and urban research mission depend on an annual operating budget allocation of around \$1 million. Indirect cost funds are seen by the university as an additional source to set-up laboratories for research and newly hired faculty.

UMass Boston's significant physical improvements since its inception have come in two new buildings. The Clark Athletic Center constructed in 1982 added an ice rink, gymnasium, exercise rooms, swimming pool, and administrative spaces. This complements external recreational and athletic facilities including practice and playing fields, eight tennis courts, a six lane track, and a boat dock with space for recreational and research vessels.

The new Campus Center became operational in the spring of 2004, adding 331,000 gross square feet. Enrollment, student and academic support services, the

bookstore, dining and conference rooms are housed in this new space. Unlike the original campus, it is filled with sunlight, impressive ocean views, ceramic tile and light colors. It creates an attractive first impression to incoming students and the community, which often uses the building's conferencing spaces. It is also the drop-off location for the campus shuttle service that links the campus to the City's public rail transportation.

UMass Boston has freed up 75,000 square feet by relocating services to the new Campus Center. Further efforts to consolidate functions, such as the separate cafeteria spaces located in most of the original buildings, would yield still more space for academic and student uses. The University has moved cautiously to identify uses for vacated space. Besides a lack of renovation resources, the University has not updated its facilities master plan since 1992. Hence the campus lacks a thorough analysis of its deferred maintenance, space use, land use options and emerging program space needs.

The lack of a facilities master plan is as much a missing outcome as it is a missing process. The University recognizes that a master planning process can involve its campus and external communities to define how best to carry out its mission. This is particularly the case with plans to construct residential housing for 15 percent of its undergraduate enrollment, which were placed on hold this past year while the University addresses community concerns. UMass Boston does not provide residential housing, except through negotiated arrangements with surrounding developments. Some UMass Boston students are concerned that on-campus housing would change the University's commitment from serving its demographically diverse, urban student body to a more traditional student body attracted from outside of Boston. External concerns relate to the impact residential students would have on neighboring communities. This issue needs to be vetted during the facilities master planning process. UMass Boston's Capital Plan, FY2005-2014 indicates that the operating budget is the future source of funding for the campus master plan.

UMass Boston maintains offices and staff for Environmental Health and Safety, Campus Safety and ADA compliance and accommodations. The six person Office of Environmental Health and Safety evolved from 1994 environmental control incidents closing the University. As part of continuing its proactive efforts to address laboratory waste management, ventilation and water penetration problems, UMass Boston became one of three New England universities in the U.S. EPA's Project XL assisting the agency to clarify problems arising in interpreting hazardous waste regulations and proposing alternative regulations. As part of the Project, EPA audits occur every two years rather than spontaneously. Through recent capital funding, science labs have been improved with the addition of emergency eyewash and shower stations. Capital requests are pending that would allow the University to add sprinklers to two classroom buildings, Science Center and Wheatley, and the Healey Library. Other buildings are equipped with sprinkler systems.

The Office of Campus Safety has 29 certified officers and 10 security guards serving the campus over a 24x7 schedule. The major problems they face are parking control and on-campus thefts. Relative to ADA issues, the University provides adaptive learning technologies and employee accommodations. Additional laboratory and elevator accommodations needing attention have been identified and are part of the Capital Plan.

In order to modernize the University's technology infrastructure, \$10.7 million has been raised through bond funding. The funds will be focused on in-building information system network rewiring with fiber optics, creating secured data closets and updating switching equipment. While a revenue stream for repaying the technology debt

exists through telephone charge-backs, the charge-back structure is based on telephone usage and more importantly there is no revenue structure for sustaining the University's technology investments. The University's access to Internet and Internet 2 are over fiber optic lines to the campus that flex to carry between 7 megabytes to 20 megabytes. The current Technology Fee of \$100 per year is aligned to services for students. Annual Information Technology expenses total \$15 million. Department and faculty workstations are on a four-year replacement schedule. Network servers, routers and printers are not on a replacement schedule. The PeopleSoft enterprise information system implementation costs are shared by the campus along with the other campuses in the system.

UMass Boston has been steadfast in pursuing the funding needed to address the deferred maintenance of its mega-structure. It now seems to be at the point of having the necessary funds to correct its problem. At the same time, assigning facilities and space to strategic priorities and quantifying facility renovation needs are two processes inhibited by the lack of a facilities master plan, an up-to-date evaluation of facility conditions, and a review of facility usage. A master plan process can provide an opportunity to engage campus and external communities in a dialogue about how the campus can meet its undergraduate access and retention priorities, and graduate program and research priorities.

One cannot reinforce enough the fact that the lack of attention to long-standing mega-structure deterioration impairs the campus' reputation, functionality, and attractiveness. The State must address this issue at the earliest possible moment.

Standard Nine FINANCIAL RESOURCES

The University of Massachusetts-Boston current year, FY05, beginning budget totals \$200,909,555, a 6.2 percent increase over FY2004 actual revenue. Revenues are derived from general operations, \$122.4 million, designated funds, \$36.9 million and restricted funds, \$41.6 million.

General operating funds are comprised of state appropriations, \$68.9 million, tuition waivers of \$4.7 million and curriculum support fees of \$44.7 million. Since FY2001 curriculum support fees and the revenue they generate have more than doubled to offset a \$22.8 million decline in total state appropriations. All matriculated students pay curriculum support fees; part-time students pay a prorated share. Continuing education revenue represents one-half of all **designated funds**. Other designated fund revenues derived from mandatory fees support auxiliary services, health services, student activities, athletics and technology. **Restricted funds** come primarily from federal, state and other grants and contracts. FY2005 anticipated revenue compares closely to \$29 million realized in FY2004 derived from 595 awards. State and federally funded financial aid are the remaining large source of restricted funds approximately \$11.4 million. The campus goal is to push annual grants and contract funding to \$50 million.

After the beginning of FY2005, additional state appropriations of \$7.3 million were added to cover current year costs of negotiated salary increases together with higher than budgeted restricted revenues, bringing total anticipated FY2005 revenue to nearly \$211 million. At these revised levels, State appropriations, exclusive of tuition waivers, represent 36 percent of the total FY2005 budget.

The University of Massachusetts financial statement shows significant improvement over the past couple years. Breakouts for UMass Boston show FY2004 total assets of \$298.5 million and total liabilities of \$167.9 million. Total Net Assets are \$130.6 million, of which \$100 million are capital assets and \$17 million are restricted net assets. Unrestricted net assets totaling \$13 million represent UMass Boston's financial cushion, which is 6.7 percent of FY2004 expenses. Relative to its peers, this financial health indicator is low by nearly half. The campus needs to determine the extent to which its lack of residence halls compensates for this disparity. There is no established goal that the University is expected to achieve.

Student tuition and fees have increased substantially during the past five-years of declining state appropriations. Since Academic Year 2000-2001, tuition and fees have increased by 90 percent for full-time undergraduates to \$8,024, which is the highest among UMass Boston's ten peer public urban universities. Part-time undergraduates per credit hour tuition and fees rose by 119 percent to \$334 per credit hour. Continuing education tuition and fees per credit hour rose to \$252, a rate that exceeds public institutions of Greater Boston. Over the same period, fall semester headcount enrollment (including continuing education) decreased by 1664 or 12 percent to 11,682 and FTE decreased by 700 to 8,459. The largest decreases were among part-time students

The same five-years are a period during which UMass Boston's outstanding debt obligations have increased from nearly zero to \$128 million. Funds have been raised to: match state appropriations for a new Campus Center; construct a new or renovate the existing parking garage; modernize the technology infrastructure, faculty and staff workstations, central cooling and heating mechanical systems, lighting fixtures, energy monitoring systems, fire alarm panels and elevators, furnish and equip academic areas and science and technology labs; and install PeopleSoft enterprises information systems. The current year operating budget funds over \$10 million in debt service, which represents 5 percent of total annual expenditures, including restricted funds. Additionally, one-time investments made herein, such as for technology infrastructure upgrades, do not have identifiable revenue streams for replacement.

In summary, over the past five years the University has had to manage significant reductions in state appropriations, increase student costs, incur significant debt, reduce designated fund reserves, forego income from enrollment loss, and suffer significant faculty and staff turnover following retirement incentive programs.

To many members of the campus community present over the entire period, the campus has never recovered from the first few years of budget reductions and position turnover. To the credit of current campus administrators, campus constituencies also express confidence that the University has gained control over the continuing shifts in revenue sources and maintained stability over the past couple years. Faculty have remained involved in campus committees that view future budgets and recommend alternatives for balancing them, both in terms of revenue enhancements and cost reductions. The Budget Brainstorming Committee, formed to address plans for the FY03 budget, and the Committee on University Revenues and Expenditures (CURE), formed for the FY04 budget, were co-chaired by the Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance and the Provost. Their recommendations were reviewed in "Town Meetings" before final decisions were made by the Chancellor. Financial plans have been monitored through the Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance (VPAF) and have contributed to the financial stability of the University. Faculty, through the Faculty Council's Budget and Planning Committee, continue to view financial conditions and

next year's budget requests and express confidence that the sharing of financial information by executive officers has improved significantly during this period.

The University's Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance tends a budget planning process that invites Vice Chancellors, Deans and Department Heads to submit general operating budget requests in April. Requests are shared for comment with the Budget and Planning Committee and reviewed by the Chancellor, Provost and VPAF. The budget process memo makes clear the need for links between budget requests and decisions and the campus Strategic Plan and anticipated budget constraints. The Provost, prior to campus review, discusses faculty position vacancies with Deans to direct resources to the University's strategic goals of reputation, research and retention.

The University has installed PeopleSoft's human resource and financial information systems as part of a University of Massachusetts system-wide implementation. There have been training opportunities over the last academic year. Monthly monitoring reports are distributed to budget managers and are viewable on line. However, report writing tools are a future addition to the systems that the University staff hope will provide multi-year, year- to-date comparisons and cost accounting capabilities.

Annual financial audits of the University of Massachusetts, both its campuses and affiliated Foundation, are performed by Pricewaterhouse Coopers and for FY2004 received unqualified opinions in both cases. UMass Boston had no new or repeat findings in the A-133 audit and was noted as having plans in progress to address past findings about grant and contract sub-award recipient monitoring, Perkins loan exit interviews and Title IV refunds.

UMass Boston's Alumni and Advancement Office is led by an Interim Vice Chancellor for Advancement and supported by a staff of 17 positions of which 14 are filled currently. The Office works with Deans, as requested, on solicitation proposals, as well as leading annual fund campaigns, endowment creation, and donor reporting. The University of Massachusetts endowment invested on behalf of UMass Boston as of the end of FY2004 totaled \$21 million. Annual endowment payout to purpose is four percent and around one percent for administrative overhead. Annual endowment return on funds invested was around five percent for FY2004. For FY2004, UMass Boston's fund raising added to endowment totaled \$753,109 of total private giving of \$2.4 million. Annual fund giving comprised approximately \$130,000 of this total, received from 1800 alumni donors. With 65,000 alums, around three percent of all alums gave, after adjusting for active addresses.

The University community believes advancement needs to be a greater part of the effort to achieve its strategic priorities related to undergraduate and graduate student access, research, academic programs, community outreach, and facility improvements. The University of Massachusetts has requested state appropriations funding from the legislature to restore state matching funds to endowments at a ratio of \$1 to every \$2 raised.

In summary, the current administrative team has worked well with the campus to stabilize financial resources over the past couple years in the wake of continuous reductions in state appropriations. Their openness in decision-making and involving faculty in developing budget saving and revenue creation alternatives has contributed to understanding for measures required to balance campus budgets. Their efforts to establish a defined budget process for distribution of resources has fostered an opportunity to demonstrate links between campus planning priorities and resource allocations.

Nevertheless, the measures necessary to balance budgets over the past 5 years as state appropriations were reduced -- debt accumulation and reserve depletion, together with deferred expenses and enrollment declines -- limit capabilities to respond to contingencies, seize future opportunities and develop reliable revenue streams to sustain many of its technology investments. UMass Boston's efforts to support its academic programs, research linked to the urban mission, undergraduate and graduate student access, and facilities improvements merits an advancement and alumni development program that contributes to strategic priorities.

Standard Ten PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

UMass-Boston produces publications in a variety of formats: person-to-person, print, and electronic. Communication involves every department and program on campus. UMass-Boston also participates in an annual open house, welcome day, and an annual meeting with area guidance counselors. UMass-Boston recognizes the importance of timely and accurate communication streams and has put their major publications on an editing schedule (every two years). The University publishes all the traditional publications including the *Undergraduate Catalog*, *Graduate Bulletin*, and *Schedule of Courses*, *Student Handbook* as well as the alumni magazine. The University has published several periodicals to improve communication with legislators and state and local government officials. In general, the publications are clear and present an accurate picture of the programs, policies, procedures as well as the institutional mission offered at UMass-Boston. College and departmental brochures support the University publications.

The institution has offered free e-mail accounts to the University community. Using this system UMass-Boston e-mails campus events, daily news, and important academic business to the University community. The University also recognizes the importance of communication to external constituencies. The Office of Institutional Research and Policy Studies monitors the information sent to *U.S. News & World Report*, *Peterson's Guide*, and IPEDS.

The Student Handbook expands the information provided in the *Undergraduate Catalog* and the *Graduate Bulletin*. The *Student Rights and Responsibilities* are located in both publications as well as online. However, there is no mention of either a Faculty or Staff Handbook. Faculty and Staff information is in various styles and formats with no uniformity.

UMass Boston recognizes the importance of communication especially with a commuting population, and it has expanded communications methods using electronic means and video monitors around the campus. At the same time the critical importance of keeping state and local government officials informed of the strengths of the institution is uppermost in the minds of the administration. University representatives attend local civic association meetings, and all things considered, the institution is quite conscious of its obligations to communicate to its internal constituents and to the public which provides the university as a resource to the students and the professors.

Nevertheless, budgetary constraints have hampered communication coordination and limited the extent to which this function can be carried forward. In fact, the team noted a lamentable lack of faculty and staff handbooks and a lack of a single, uniform policy manual available to all.

Standard Eleven INTEGRITY

The University of Mass-Boston demonstrates the centrality of students in its deliberations and activities. The institution has set high ethical standards in the management of its affairs and its dealings with internal and external constituencies. There are mechanisms developed for addressing issues related to ethical standards and the effective implementation of its principles.

Institutional policies and practices reflect a commitment to fairness and integrity and an expectation of ethical behavior by all members of the campus community. Faculty and staff policies are contained in various documents and memoranda. There is no unified faculty handbook. There is not a comprehensive staff handbook. The Student Handbook contains clear and accurate information regarding student policies, rights, and responsibilities. A future goal is to establish a uniform approach in the development of all official publications in order to ensure consistency and accuracy of these materials.

The institution is committed to the tradition of academic freedom, to the free pursuit and dissemination of knowledge, and to the right to teach and study in any given available field. The faculty contract states the minimum obligations required (attending classes, advising students, maintaining office hours). Sanctions can be applied quickly for a breach of the minimum obligations.

Policies concerning intellectual property, copyrights, patents, and plagiarism are contained in a Board of Trustees document, and the student code of conduct has been revised and is in the approval process. The new code allows for a more streamlined appeal process. The Procedures for Student Grievances regarding Academic Matters continues to be reviewed. The Office of Affirmative Action and Multicultural Relations monitors the implementation and evaluation of policies which relate to affirmative action and non-discriminatory practices.

Principle Strengths and Areas of Concern

What follows is a listing of some strengths and concerns upon which the team has agreed. The listing is in no particular order and should not be taken as being “in order of importance.” This is most certainly not an executive summary. The report itself is a summary of all of the team’s findings.

Some Strengths

1. Access and excellence are morally compelling values of the institution, and excellence is not confused with elitism
2. The institution plans effectively and creatively; it allocates its resources based on the plan; the link between planning and budgeting is very clear. The current administration is a fine model of a collaborative culture.
3. The University uses a student-centered philosophy in its delivery of services to students. A central theme is an ethic of care, which we verified in several campus meetings.

4. There is a strong general education program and a strong assessment of its objectives. The effective mentoring program found in the first year seminars is especially noteworthy.
5. The diversity of the faculty, staff, and students is laudable and important. It is also the case that the University is concerned about “the uses of diversity,” wishing to make this an even greater educational strength. Diversity of points of view is also valued. The challenge is to distinguish between “the mere presence” of diversity and the building of an inclusive culture.
6. The degree of integration between Corporate, Continuing, and Distance Education and the core academic programs and departments is commendable and surprising.
7. The student-faculty relationship is strong and highly valued by students and professors alike. The commitment to teaching is very strong, and the university as a student-focused center of academic excellence is quite clear.

Concerns

1. An over-reliance on part-time and non-tenure track faculty and a reduction in support staff are a concern for both the teaching and research enterprises.
2. In general, there is a lack of systematic and rigorous outcomes assessment across a broad range of programs that informs decision making and program improvement and revenue allocations.
3. The current level of library funding –especially considering the research mission—is woefully inadequate. The infrastructure needed to support the anticipated growth in research is quite insufficient.
4. There are no up-to-date faculty and staff handbooks or comprehensive policy and procedures manuals (with the exception of the student handbook).
5. Debt accumulation is a concern of substantial importance as is defining a revenue stream in support of technology needs. The poor state of the program for development activities and alumni relations are equally concerning. These functions need special attention given the issue of revenue development.
6. The institution needs to develop a campus master plan in advance of assigning facilities and space to programs.
7. There is an insufficient number of graduate assistants, given the research mission.
8. The physical plant (mega-structure) and its severely deteriorated condition is a major detraction in recruitment and retention of students.