

Report to the
Faculty, Administration, Trustees, Students
of the

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS, BOSTON

Boston, Massachusetts, 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 the campus April 12-15, 2015

The members of the team:

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This report represents the views of the evaluation committee as interpreted by the chairperson. Its content is based on the committee's evaluation of the institution with respect to the Commission's criteria for accreditation. It is a confidential document in which all comments are made in good faith. The report is prepared both as an educational service to the institution and to assist the Commission in making a decision about the institution's accreditation status.

**COMMISSION ON INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION
New England Association of Schools and College
Preface Page to the Team Report**

Please complete **during the team visit** and include with the report prepared by the visiting team

Date form completed: 2-6-15

Name of Institution University of Massachusetts Boston

1. History Year chartered or authorized 1964 Year first degrees awarded: 1969

2. Type of control: State City Other; specify:

Private, not-for-profit Religious Group; specify:

Proprietary Other; specify:

3. Degree level:

Associate Baccalaureate Masters Professional Doctorate

4. Enrollment in Degree Programs (Fall 2014):

	Full-time	Part-time	FTE	Retention ^a	Graduation ^b	# Degrees ^c
Associate	-	-	-	-	-	-
Baccalaureate	9,057	2,991	9803.47	79.7%	42.1%	2,366
Graduate	1,332	2,113	2494.67	na	na	1,306*

(a) full-time 1st to 2nd year (b) 6 year graduation rate (c) no. of degrees awarded most recent year

*Masters, Doctorates, CAGS, and Graduate Certificates

5. Number of current faculty: Full time 650 Part-time 569 FTE: 895.57

6. Current fund data for most recently completed fiscal year: (Specify year: FY14)

(Double click in any cell to enter spreadsheet. Enter dollars in millions; e.g., \$1,456,200 = \$1.456)

Error! Objects cannot be created from editing field codes.

7. Number of off-campus locations:

In-state: 1 Other U.S.: 0 International: 0 Total: 1

8. Number of degrees and certificates offered electronically:

Programs offered entirely online: 31 Programs offered 50-99% online: -

9. Is instruction offered through a contractual relationship?

No Yes; specify program(s):

10. Other characteristics:

Introduction

A ten-member Evaluation Team visited the University of Massachusetts, Boston (hereafter UMass Boston) from April 12 to April 15, 2015, in order to explore in greater depth on site the University's satisfaction of the *Standards for Accreditation* of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. This report summarizes the observations of the Evaluation Team as the materials in the *Institutional Self-Study* were contextualized and tested through the campus visit and also through extensive meetings with members of the UMass Boston community, including a member of the Board of Trustees of the University of Massachusetts System, Richard Campbell, System President Robert Caret, Chancellor J. Keith Motley, senior administrators, deans, faculty, staff, and students.

The Evaluation Team was graciously received by the UMass Boston community. The Team was housed in the Marriott Courtyard South Boston, a short van ride from the campus; the team had one of its two work rooms in the hotel, the other being located on campus, in Quinn Hall, the administration building. It was evident to the Team that key campus constituencies—including the leadership of the Faculty Senate and of various faculty and staff councils, student leaders, deans and the chairs of academic departments—were aware of the nature and importance of the *Self-Study* and the accreditation process. It appears that the process of creating the *Self-Study* entailed broad-based participation in authorship and that the campus by and large has a sense of ownership of the *Self-Study* itself and of the reflective process that produced it.

The Evaluation Team believes that the *Self-Study* and the other materials made available by UMass Boston (including planning documents, policy statements, catalogs, Web sites, and financial statements) provide a sufficient basis, along with the Chair's and Assisting Chair's preliminary visit to the University in December, 2014, and the full Evaluation Team's visit in April, 2015, for an accurate description of the state of the University and for the information and evaluative judgments contained in the eleven following sections of this report. These sections address the *Standards for Accreditation* of the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges.

This assessment of UMass Boston is a comprehensive evaluation following the last comprehensive evaluation in 2005. When the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education continued the University's accreditation in November of 2005, it asked that the Fifth-Year Interim Report give special attention to ensuring its success in 1) reducing the institution's reliance on part-time faculty, 2) ensuring that it is enrolling and retaining the student body it seeks to serve, given its missions to provide access of all qualified students; 3) developing and implementing systematic ways to understand what and how students are learning and use the results to improve the academic program and its services for students, 4) developing and balancing sources of revenue, including state support, tuition and fees, and private support, and 5) undertaking strategic planning, including its integration with financial, academic, and facilities planning. A sixth recommendation called for an early report, in the fall of 2008, on progress in reversing deterioration of the foundation megastructure of the original campus buildings. In a letter of December 22, 2008, the Commission accepted the 2008 facilities report and stipulated that, in addition to the items already specified in November of 2005, the institution give emphasis, in

the spring 2010 report, to its progress in implementing its master facilities plan. The Fifth-Year Interim Report was filed in 2010 and was accepted by NEASC in a letter of June 8, 2010, with four additional stipulations, calling on the institution to give emphasis in its Spring 2015 evaluation to its success in 1) developing course and program assessment that provides evidence for revisions to the curriculum, 2) addressing the institution's goals for reducing dependence on part-time faculty, 3) continuing to improve enrollment, retention, and graduation rates, and 4) addressing challenges with funding, particularly in light of the institution's ambitious goals.

Work on the UMass Boston *Self-Study* began in 2013 for the 2015 site visit. Almost concurrently, UMass Boston was engaged in preparation for the current celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of its founding and in assessing progress made during the 2010-2015 phase of its ambitious strategic plan. The Evaluation Team appreciates the rapidity of the intentional transformation the University is undergoing, building on programmatic and faculty strengths to complement its historic mission of access and affordability with the rapid growth of research and doctoral education on the campus. The Evaluation Team was impressed, furthermore, with the quality of the University's faculty, staff and students, and of its administrative, faculty and student leadership and with their collective dedication to and enthusiasm for sustaining the University's historic mission as an urban-serving public University with a large cadre of undergraduate commuters while also building residential communities supportive of student success and research, graduate, and professional programs at the competitive levels expected of a Carnegie high-activity research institution.

Finally, the Evaluation Team observes that the institution will do well to focus for the next two or three years on consolidating its rapid gains. While good faith efforts are under way in academic programs throughout the campus to assess student learning and to use assessment findings for programmatic and curricular improvement, the campus may benefit from taking the time to establish systems that will ensure that those efforts are recognized, celebrated, widely shared, and consistently and accountably monitored across all colleges and schools. Similarly, having rapidly launched a series of new doctoral programs, the University would do well to ensure that these programs are well established and adequately supported before forwarding any further doctoral program proposals to the University of Massachusetts System. In general, the University needs to take the time to continue its entwined programs of planning and assessing progress in an integrated way to ensure that real yet manageable resource gaps currently apparent in financial projections three, four, and five years out are closed in ways that will optimize support for students, programs, faculty, and staff.

Standard One: Mission and Purposes

The University of Massachusetts, Boston, opened in downtown Boston in 1965 as the third campus of the University of Massachusetts (and moved to its current Dorchester campus in the early 1970s). The University of Massachusetts had originated in the 1863 chartering as the Massachusetts Agricultural College of the Morrill Land-Grant institution now known as UMass Amherst, which was renamed the Massachusetts State College in 1931 and as the University of Massachusetts in 1947. The creation eighteen years later of UMass Boston was part of the mid-twentieth century national movement in higher education that extended to

urban areas the mission and reach of the public universities created in the nineteenth century by the Morrill Land Grant Act.

The original “Statement of Purpose” for UMass Boston captures the spirit of this movement in declaring:

Our mission is to develop in Boston a great public urban University, which will preserve and extend in the best tradition of the Western world the domain of knowledge and nurture intellectual freedom and integrity, and with the kind of program, service and leadership given rural communities over the past century by the land-grant universities....The urban University must stand with the city, must serve and lead where the battle is. That is what the University of Massachusetts at Boston must do.

UMass Boston opened its doors in 1965 with a full range of undergraduate arts and sciences degree programs and graduated its first class of freshmen in 1969. Boston State College, which had a long history as a normal school and state college, was merged with UMass Boston in 1982. The addition of Boston State’s undergraduate education and nursing programs, and a number of master’s degree programs, was a major step in expanding the reach of the University and the fulfillment of its mission.

Following the enrollment in 1970 of the first medical students at the UMass Medical Center in Worcester (which had been founded in 1962), the President’s Office moved from the campus in Amherst to Boston and a Chancellor’s Office was established as the principal administrative position on each of the three campuses. In 1991, with the addition of the University of Massachusetts Lowell (formerly the University of Lowell) and the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth (formerly Southeastern Massachusetts University), a five-campus University of Massachusetts system was created by statute as it exists today under a single President and Board of Trustees.

The mission of the University system—“To provide an affordable and accessible education of high quality and to conduct programs of research and public service that advance knowledge and improve the lives of the people of the Commonwealth, the nation, and the world”—is also the mission statement of each of its campuses. Derived from the original mission statement of UMass Amherst, the mission statement was reaffirmed by the Board of Trustees in 2005.

The University System and UMass Boston are thus technically in compliance with NEASC Substandard 1.2, that “The institution’s mission is set forth in a concise statement that is formally adopted by the governing board and appears in appropriate institutional publications.” System leadership, however, has encouraged each campus within the University of Massachusetts to develop its own strengths, some of them unique within the System and complementary with respect to other institutions within the System, and, accordingly, each campus has developed its own mission and vision statements. Thus, the latest version of the UMass Boston mission statement was formulated as part of the 2010-2011 UMass Boston strategic planning exercise. In the important report in which that planning exercise culminated, *Fulfilling the Promise*, the new mission statement reads as follows:

The University of Massachusetts Boston is a public research University with a dynamic culture of teaching and learning, and a special commitment to urban and global engagement. Our vibrant, multi-cultural educational environment encourages our broadly diverse campus community to thrive and succeed. Our distinguished scholarship, dedicated teaching, and engaged public service are mutually reinforcing, creating new knowledge while serving the public good of our city, our commonwealth, our nation, and our world.

While this new campus mission statement has been presented to—and informally applauded by—the governing board, it has not been, to quote the NEASC standard, “formally adopted by the governing board.” The Visiting Team believes that the System and its governing board should in future, consistent with its vision of five great campuses being the indispensable constituents of a great system, strongly consider formal adoption of campus mission statements in accord with the NEASC standards.

Institutional Effectiveness

The latest campus mission statement (2010) of UMass Boston honors the University’s land-grant legacy with an appropriate emphasis on the urban mission of a diverse metropolitan institution. The mission is fully appropriate to the nature and role of the urban public research University in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The mission is clearly reflected in the institution’s planning and assessment activities and in its academic, research, and service agendas. Precisely because the University honors its mission statement in all of its activities, formal adoption of this (and other campus-specific) mission statements by the governing board of the University of Massachusetts should be considered.

Standard Two: Planning and Evaluation

Planning

In 2006, Chancellor Michael F. Collins established a Strategic Plan Task Force to guide the development of the University from 2007 to 2010. The Task Force was supported by the contributions of 6 committees that included Enrollment & Financial Aid, Academics, Research & Graduate Studies, External Community and Student Life. During the 2006-2007 academic years, the Task Force held several retreats to develop key goals and objectives for the 3 year strategic plan with a theme of “UMass Boston Renewal: Fidelity to Urban Mission.” The goals included:

- Goal 1: Increase student access, engagement, and success
- Goal 2: Attract, develop, and sustain highly effective faculty
- Goal 3: Create a physical environment that supports teaching, learning, and research
- Goal 4: Enhance campus-community engagement through improved operational structures.

In an effort to design and develop the physical infrastructure to support the academic goals of the Strategic Plan, in 2006 Chancellor Collins also commissioned the master plan development.

Beginning in 2010, Chancellor J. Keith Motley launched a new Strategic Planning Task Force with the objective of developing longer-term (15 years) plans to address major goals that included:

- Advancing student success and development
- Enriching and expanding academic programs and research
- Improving the learning, teaching and working environment
- Establishing a financial resources model consistent with the University's vision statement
- Developing an infrastructure supportive of the preceding goals.

After the development of the goals, the Implementation Design Team was established by Provost Winston Langley to identify and select key objectives to support the 15-year goals, with an emphasis on providing details for the first 5 years. This process included support from 7 working groups (Academic Planning & Enrollment, Additional Investment & Operational Revenues, Administrative & Physical Infrastructure Support, Communication, Graduation Rates, Residence Halls, and Space) comprising more than 100 members of the University community working for a period of 9 months that included more than 22 meetings and 30 campus events to seek input from the University community. The key objectives that support the goals of the 15-year *Strategic Plan: Fulfilling the Promise: A Blueprint for UMass Boston* include:

- Increase the graduation rate for freshmen and transfer students
- Open the first residence hall by 2014
- Ensure a full range of undergraduate programs is offered
- Establish new graduate programs
- Expand online course offerings
- Increase extramural funding
- Construct new academic buildings
- Recruit and retain talented faculty
- Increase enrollment to 18,000 students by 2015, 20,000 by 2020, and 25,000 by 2025.

The Implementation Development Team used project management tools to report and evaluate progress and to determine next steps in the complex and interdependent components of the strategic plan. For this purpose, the University collects data from the offices of the Registrar, Enrollment Management, Financial Aid, Budget & Financial Planning, Human Resources, Government Relations & Public Affairs, Development, Provost, Institutional Research, and Grants & Research, among others.

Each year, a work plan is developed that identifies the specific objectives, activities to support the objectives, measures of success, and individuals responsible for attainment of objectives. The Strategic Plan Progress report of April 8, 2015 includes the following measures of success:

- Increased retention and graduation rates
- Increased enrollment of Honors students

- Increased number of students participating in co-curricular activities
- Developed new BA programs in Communication and new BS programs in Electrical Engineering and Computer Engineering
- Increased enrollment to over 16,000.

Concerns remain whether an integrated, collaborative process for planning and evaluation involving the Provost, Vice Chancellor for Finance & Administration, Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management, and the Office of Campus Master Planning is in place to meet the ambitious goals of the strategic plan. For example, how will annual extramural funding reach \$200-300M by 2025? This represents a significant growth from the current level of \$60M and will require identifying key growth areas and additional resources for faculty startup, equipment, graduate assistantships, and growth in library collections and services to attract and retain research-active faculty. To increase retention and graduation rates, additional programs and resources will be required for co-curricular activities, the development of learning communities, and student affairs. Plans for these investments to meet the goals of the strategic plan need to be developed and shared with the University community. Growth in enrollment to 25,000 students by 2025 is a central goal of the strategic plan which will require careful analysis and calibration to ensure that the mission of the University in teaching, research and outreach is met. The University is encouraged to share widely and as fully as possible plans for investments in faculty, staff, and space resources and operating budgets to meet that growth.

Evaluation

The Strategic Planning Implementation Group (SPIG) plays a key role in initiating as well as reviewing, evaluating and approving budgetary matters to ensure that the goals of the Strategic Plan are met. To support the Strategic Plan, the University allocated funds for the Strategic Plan for FY12 through FY14 using additional revenues from increased enrollment. Meeting the goals of the Strategic Plan may also require careful examination of reducing or eliminating support for programs that do not meet the goals/objectives of the Strategic Plan and to reallocate these resources to grow programs of excellence that do so.

The Office of Budget and Financial Planning was reconstituted in 2006 to support development of more entrepreneurial and revenue-generating programs to decrease reliance on state appropriations. Processes for developing an increasingly manageable budget process, for making improvements in accountability, and for demonstrating alignment of budgeting with strategic planning goals will need to operate at levels commensurate with the institution's dynamic and evolving strategic plan.

Programs and departments at UMass Boston are reviewed every 5 to 7 years following the UMass System process, Academic Quality Assessment and Development (AQUAD). The review team has two or three external reviewers (one of whom may from another UMass campus). The rigorous criteria for review include the following conditions and expectations:

1. Programs shall ensure that their goals and objectives are linked to the campus mission and strategic priorities.
2. Programs shall ensure that curriculum is relevant, rigorous, current and coherent.

3. Programs shall ensure faculty quality and productivity.
4. Programs shall ensure teaching/learning environments that facilitate student success.
5. Programs shall ensure that resources are used wisely.

The Office of Institutional Research and Policy Studies (OIRP) collects data on student success including retention rates, graduation rates, GPA, and progress towards degree. Through the AQUAD program, assessments are implemented for new student placement, writing proficiency examinations, the term-end self-assessment, etc. The faculty plays a key role in this program through the auspices of the Faculty Council Assessment Subcommittee and the University Assessment Council. It is not apparent, however, that AQUAD findings are used to improve programs and outcomes consistently across all of the University's colleges and schools, nor that there is a systematic program in place to evaluate learning outcomes, student satisfaction with academic programs, job placement and other measures of the success of recent graduates.

Institutional Effectiveness

The University is pursuing a strategic plan that saw widespread participation from the campus community in its creation. The plan is sufficiently ambitious and complex to require integration in planning in all domains (from finance and budget and facilities to academic programs to student affairs) at levels commensurate with the challenges of the plan, and attaining those levels is still a work-in-progress. The absence through OIRP of interactive methods of data-sharing is an impediment to efficient, data-based planning and decision-making.

The AQUAD process for review of departments and programs has produced some exemplary program reviews (exemplary with respect to process, to the findings of the reviews, and to the use of those findings for improvement), but demonstration of commitment to AQUAD is uneven across the campus. The University should continue to improve the AQUAD system to ensure that program review is consistent across all academic units, including a consistently demonstrated commitment to using assessment findings to improve outcomes.

Standard Three: Organization and Governance

The University of Massachusetts Boston (UMass Boston) is organized by means of a complex network of interlocking levels of governance, starting with the system's Board of Trustees (BoT) and the commonwealth's Board of Higher Education (BHE), and moving down through the system President, the campus Chancellor, the Provost, the Faculty Council, various college governance structures, and the Student Government Association and Graduate Student Assembly. Because the campus is unionized, faculty and staff are also represented by their respective bargaining units.

The authority, responsibilities, and relationships among the various levels of governance, from the system level down to the campus level, are articulated in the *Board of Trustee's Statement on University Governance* (rev. 1993), which endorses the *AAUP Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities* and assigns in some detail the primary responsibility for various

major components of governance—i.e., academic matters, faculty status, student affairs, and planning, development and budget—to one of the various University governance levels.

The system's BoT is constituted by the authority of Commonwealth law, which defines the composition of the Board. A policy regarding conflict of interest disclosure was passed by the BoT in 2003, and this policy requires that Board members file an annual disclosure form regarding possible conflicts of interests. The Commonwealth's BHE is also constituted by the authority of Commonwealth law and is charged with defining the mission of and coordinating the Commonwealth's system of higher education. The BHE regulates not only 4-year institutions but also community colleges.

The duties of the system President and the campus Chancellor are clearly defined in the BoT's *Statement on University Governance*. The Chancellor is the chief academic and executive officer of the campus but works under the direction of the President. The Chancellor, who is formally evaluated after the first two to three years in office and every five years thereafter, is highly connected to and involved with governance at the system level, and this assures an effective channel of communication between the BoT and the campus. The Chancellor's duties also include the formulation and implementation of campus policies, preparation and presentation of the campus budget, the appointment of the Provost, various Vice Chancellors, and deans, the recommendation of campus salary adjustments, and the coordination of various campus units. The Chancellor must assure that "all appropriate components of the campus have the opportunity to make recommendations prior to the establishment of policy."

The Chancellor is advised by a cabinet, including the Provost, a Chief of Staff, Assistant Chancellor, Special Assistant to the Chancellor, and the Vice Chancellors for University Advancement, for Enrollment Management, for Government Relations, for Student Affairs, for Athletics and Recreation, Special Programs and Projects, and for Administration and Finance. The Chancellor also has an extensive Executive Leadership Team, including the members of his Cabinet as well as the various college deans and a large number of support administrators.

The Provost is the University of Massachusetts Boston's chief academic officer. The Provost is charged with maintaining the quality of academic programming, primarily through Academic Quality Assessment and Development (AQUAD), which is a component of the University Performance Measurement System. (Successes and challenges with respect to AQUAD are discussed in Standards Two and Four). Among the Provost's direct reports are the deans of the various colleges and schools of the University.

Mechanisms and procedures exist for the Chancellor to consult with the faculty, staff, and students, and these mechanisms allow for the appropriate participation of the various constituencies in shared governance. The faculty elect representatives to the Faculty Council, which is comprised of 29 elected members from among the tenure-stream faculty, one of whom serves as a representative to the BoT. The Council's purpose is to ensure faculty representation, to coordinate actions taken by governance units of the various colleges, to maintain academic and procedural standards, and to recommend campus policies and procedures. Professional staff members have a representative on the Council as do graduate and undergraduate students. The large number of non-tenure stream faculty is not represented.

The BoT *Statement on University Governance* specifically gives faculty the “primary responsibility in such academic matters as curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction, research, admissions, libraries, and other aspects of University life which directly relate to educational purposes.” As elaborated in the *Constitution of the Faculty Council*, the Council has the power “to review and make recommendations on all matters relating to admissions, instructional goals, and the library.” The Constitution also specifically claims the right “to review and recommend graduate programs and courses,” but states that “the colleges shall have jurisdiction over their own undergraduate programs.”

Most, but not all, UMass Boston colleges have their own governance documents and procedures through which they participate in campus governance. For example, the College of Liberal Arts has its own Faculty Senate. The primary review of undergraduate courses and curricula occurs on the college level. Over the past few years several smaller colleges have been created, but governance systems are not yet in place for all of them. According to the Self-Study, all colleges will complete governance documents by the end of FY 15.

The BoT *Statement on Academic Personnel Policy*, while reserving the “statutory authority to make decisions in matters of faculty status,” specifically delegates to the faculty “primary responsibility in matters of faculty status, such as appointments, reappointments, promotions, tenure and salary adjustments” and describes the roles of departmental personnel procedures and college personnel committees. This policy is elaborated in the *Red Book*, or “Academic Personnel Policy of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Boston, and Worcester.” This document distributes specific responsibilities to each level of governance and, further, gives standards and criteria to be used for personnel reviews such as promotion and tenure.

Faculty members believe the governance system works well on the college level. Participation by non-tenure-stream faculty, however, varies. The Self-Study notes that the Faculty Council will review its constitution and by-laws, specifically with a focus on the question of faculty representation. Junior faculty, it notes, tend to be disproportionately represented in college governance structures.

Undergraduate students are represented by the Student Government Association (SGA), and graduate students by the Graduate Student Assembly. The Graduate Student Assembly serves as the voice of graduate students on campus. Student representatives (both graduate and undergraduate) were enthusiastic about UMass Boston.

Faculty, graduate students, and staff are also represented by unions for the purposes of collective bargaining. The faculty and librarians are represented by the Faculty Staff Union (FSU), a bargaining unit within the Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA). Membership (through the paying of dues) is available to all members of the bargaining unit as defined by the applicable collective bargaining agreement (i.e., tenure-stream faculty, non-tenure stream faculty, and librarians). Professional staff are represented by the Professional Staff Union, which is dedicated to upholding professional standards and advancing the socio-economic well-being of educational employees. The union’s bylaws as well as a contract from 2009-12

are available online. This chapter is also an affiliate of the MTA. Classified staff are represented by the Classified Staff Union, also an affiliate of the MTA, and public safety officers are represented by Teamsters Local 25. Graduate student employees are represented by the Graduate Employee Organization.

Institutional Effectiveness

Overall, the governance system at UMass Boston is well articulated in several key documents, and its implementation facilitates the accomplishment of the University's mission. While transparent internal communications are an ongoing challenge (as articulated especially by representatives of the various faculty and staff unions), the governance system works to create and sustain a productive academic environment for students, faculty, and staff.

Standard Four: The Academic Program

UMass Boston's academic programs are housed in eleven colleges/schools, with four new units created or significantly reorganized since 2010. The University offers 70 baccalaureate, 43 Master's and 23 doctoral degrees. In addition, a variety of certificate programs and tracks, both at the undergraduate and graduate levels are offered. The University offers a number of programs that are substantially or fully online—both degree programs and certificates at the undergraduate and graduate levels. A large number of new and/or substantially revised programs have been created since 2006 (106 programs/certificates according to Table 5.5 in the Self-Study). At the same time, seven baccalaureate programs and a number of minors and concentrations have been discontinued since 2005.

These new/revised programs—ranging from new baccalaureate programs in communication, global studies, and engineering to new doctoral programs in sociology, developmental and brain science, and applied physics—support three of the University's goals: extending research, advancing the institution's urban mission (especially in global terms), and filling gaps in offerings. New programs undergo review at multiple levels; typically, it takes at least two years for a new program to go through the various levels of review before implementation. New programs are approved by the department's curriculum committee, the school/college senate, the dean and provost, the System Office/Board of Trustees, and Massachusetts Department of Higher Education. In addition, graduate programs are approved by a University-wide Graduate Studies Committee and the Faculty Council before review by the provost.

There is one NEASC-approved additional instructional location—a small RN to BSN program at Cape Cod Community College. In addition, there are nine off-campus sites offering a variety of courses. The newly reorganized College of Advancing and Professional Studies oversees off-campus, online, weekend, summer/winter, international and corporate training programs.

All institutions in the UMass System participate in the Academic Quality Assessment and Development Program (AQUAD), which requires every academic program to undergo program review every seven years. The process is intended to assess the "core academic functions of each department/program including teaching and learning, research and creative activity, and

service and outreach.” The process includes external review and, more recently, has a strong focus on assessment of student learning.

Undergraduate Degree Programs

The University has experienced substantial growth in the number of undergraduate students, with more than 12,000 degree-seeking students registered in fall 2014. The growth has been particularly significant in the College of Science and Mathematics, which grew 43% between AY2010 and AY2014.

According to the Self-Study—and emphasized by faculty and administrators we spoke with during the site visit—undergraduate education is viewed through a developmental lens: majors build on capabilities developed during the general education program; a culminating experience/capstone, while located in the major, serves to reinforce general education skills and knowledge.

While it was noted that there has been enhancement of student success programs to complement classroom instruction, the Self-Study identified a continued need for additional supplemental instruction and individual tutoring in many disciplines. There is discussion about establishing a University-wide process for reviewing proposals for new undergraduate programs similar to the process currently used for reviewing graduate program proposals.

General Education

The University's general education program consists of three phases spanning the student's entire academic program. During the first year, students take two writing and composition courses, a first-year seminar, and a math/quantitative reasoning course. In the middle phase (second and third years), students take an intermediate seminar, complete the diversity requirement, complete most (or all) of the distribution requirements (arts and humanities, natural sciences and mathematics, social and behavioral sciences, world languages/world culture, foreign language proficiency [for BA students]), and complete the writing proficiency requirement. The last phase, during senior year, consists of a capstone experience in the major. The number of credits in the general education program varies by college/school, ranging from 43-55 credits (not including the capstone, which is counted in the major).

The program is designed to be flexible and focuses on building skills in four areas (with eight accompanying objectives): critical analysis and logical thought; verbal and quantitative reasoning; human diversity; and principal approaches to knowledge in the areas of mathematics and natural science, social and behavioral sciences, arts and humanities, and world languages and cultures. These are clearly delineated and explained on the University's Web site.

The program targets seven capabilities: careful reading, critical thinking, clear writing, library and information technology, oral communication, group work, and academic self-assessment. First-year seminars address these capabilities. Intermediate seminars address reading, writing, and critical thinking. In addition, students choose courses in each of the distribution areas, each

of which is required to address at least two of the capabilities. Students are required to demonstrate proficiency in writing through an assessment process in the junior year (between 60-75 credits). Proficiency is assessed through a portfolio submitted by the student or by examination.

The University's general education committee (appointed by the Faculty Council) oversees the program. Subcommittees are charged with developing and implementing assessments of the various components. For example, a common exam is used to assess the quantitative reasoning requirement. The distribution subcommittee is working on pilot assessment projects. The writing proficiency subcommittee has completed several projects to assess the writing proficiency requirement.

The current general education program is based on a 1997 document (the "Yellow Document") which was the culmination of a lengthy study by the faculty. Subsequent documents (2002, 2006) clarified and expanded on the 1997 plan. Since 2011, the University-wide general education committee has made several recommendations that are being implemented: expanded learning communities through more flexible first-year seminars, support for interdisciplinary study, and increased portability of requirements across colleges.

The Major or Concentration

At least one-third of credits are taken in the undergraduate major, with at least 10 courses taken in the major. All majors have culminating experiences that may include internship/practicum, thesis, capstone course, juried performance/exhibition, or, in some cases, advanced courses.

Consistent with the University's overarching goal of increasing its research focus, there is an emphasis on providing research skills and experiences to undergraduate students. The creation of the Honors College (from the Honors Program) and the goal of increasing the number of students in the College are in part expressions of the commitment to undergraduate research experiences. In 2013, a University-wide committee recommended that undergraduate research should be "a signature program" at UMass Boston and that all undergraduates should participate in some level of research activity. The committee's report also recommended the establishment of an Office of Undergraduate Research to coordinate these activities. This structure has not yet been implemented, and activities related to research are coordinated at the school/college level. Currently, there is no permanent base funding to support the development of this initiative, although the goal continues to be the development of a central clearing house/office.

Graduate Degree Programs

UMass Boston graduate programs have experienced significant growth since 2010. Twenty-two master's and graduate certificate programs and twelve doctoral programs added in the last five years are founded on the teaching and research strengths of the University and have been designed to feed into the workforce needs of metropolitan Boston as well as the national and global economies. Every master's and doctoral program requires a culminating experience with a dissertation and final research exercises or more practical exercises, depending on the

discipline. Graduate professional training is designed in accordance with professional association standards.

The development of new doctoral programs originates in the departments through the creation of a proposal, which is brought forward to the Dean. The Dean and Provost discuss the merits of each proposed doctoral program and determine whether adequate resources can be allocated to it. The Graduate Studies Committee of the Faculty Council then reviews the proposal and poses questions to the department. If endorsed, the proposal proceeds to the Faculty Council, then to the Provost, and then on to the System. The System will then request an external review for a recommendation on the proposal. The Board of Trustees forwards proposals it recommends for final approval by the State Board of Higher Education. The process takes at least two years to complete.

Currently, teaching assistant support originates from the Graduate Dean's office. The Graduate Dean provides funds for assistantships and the departments are asked to distribute the lines to students. The department must choose between supporting master's or doctoral students.

Faculty qualifications to serve on master's student committees are reviewed by the department. Recommendations for faculty to serve on doctoral student committees are reviewed by the Dean of the Graduate School. Faculty members must be approved for each committee on which they serve.

Admissions criteria are established to ensure that the most highly qualified students are accepted into the graduate programs. Admission requirements include a review of academic records, experience, research and career interests, and motivation for attending graduate school. Admission applications include letters of reference from previous academic or work experience and test scores from nationally certified programs such as the Graduate Record Examination.

In order to maintain cohesive curricula, the departmental graduate studies committees review the current curricula and policies of the graduate programs. New graduate program proposals are reviewed by the Graduate Studies committee, a subcommittee of the Faculty Council whose members hold three-year terms. Thus faculty input is integrated at every level of graduate program development.

With the significant increase in the number of graduate programs and increased graduate student enrollment, the increased number of new faculty members has had a positive impact on the graduate students. Graduate students now have many more faculty members to serve as mentors, instructors and colleagues. The graduate programs also make the most of their urban location and foster collaborations with research institutions throughout Boston.

While stipend levels are adequate for the small percentage (19%) of students supported by UMass Boston, they are low for a graduate school in a major urban area—\$15,908 to \$17,256 in Chemistry, for example, well below stipends at representative public universities in the New York metro area (\$25,000 at CUNY, \$26,000 at Rutgers). In addition, stipend support is not guaranteed for the entirety of a doctoral student's career at the University. This uncertainty

about the duration of stipend support has made recruitment difficult. Students mentioned the need for more travel funds to attend conferences.

It was noted that the graduate students do not have many opportunities to interact with each other. Although there is a Graduate Student Assembly, many programs do not have representatives in the Graduate Student Assembly. The students would like more career development workshops and information sessions.

Integrity in the Award of Academic Credit

The University offers a wide array of undergraduate and graduate programs that conform to common practices in higher education in terms of name of degree and number of credits required to complete the program. All baccalaureate programs require 120 credits for completion with the exception of nursing (123 credits). Master's degree programs require a minimum of 30 credits. Credit is not awarded for pre-collegiate or remedial work; developmental English courses have already been discontinued, and the University will discontinue developmental mathematics courses in fall 2015. No credit is awarded for experiential or non-collegiate learning; recently, the University has begun to award limited credit for military service in accordance with ACE guidelines.

All Massachusetts state universities have articulation agreements with Massachusetts community colleges. These are searchable on the Web site. The University maintains an extensive transfer database. Course credit is given following evaluation of equivalence by appropriate academic departments. In meetings over the course of the site visit, a number of transfer students expressed concern about the transfer evaluation process, citing confusion and inaccuracies in terms of courses being accepted. According to the director of the University's transfer center, transfer evaluation is completed at the point of admission, and many transfer students tend to apply late in the admission cycle. The University has been working to improve the admissions/advising process for transfer students: for example, the time for transfer evaluations has decreased significantly to a week or two after admission. Transfer admissions staff are also working more closely with advising and orientation staff to facilitate transfer students' entry to the University. Undergraduate programs have a 30-credit residency requirement. Graduate students may transfer in no more than six credits.

Up-to-date information about course schedules and course descriptions, graduation requirements, and policies and procedures for continuing, withdrawing, and re-entering can be found on the University's Web site. Departmental Web sites also contain information related to specific programs.

Department chairs and program directors have expressed concerns about having sufficient resources to maintain high quality programs, for example, to offer enough courses/sections to meet the needs of students for timely progression and graduation. Several students also mentioned difficulty in getting the classes that they needed.

Credit Hour

The federal credit hour definition and NEASC policy are displayed on the University's Web site. The Self-Study states that the provost directs colleges to abide by the policy in reviewing new and transfer course credit. Although the policy is not specifically mentioned in the new course approval process, there is significant attention by the faculty review committees to course rigor, including class time and the amount and depth of assignments. A review of sample syllabi provided to the site team confirmed that class meeting times and amount/type of assignments appear to be consistent with the credit hour policy.

Online Education

Online education continues to grow at the University. For example, in fall 2014, of 12,700 students enrolled in undergraduate classes, 2,417 students were in at least one online course (782 taking online courses only). The University has sixteen certificate programs, two bachelor degrees, eleven masters and one doctorate (nursing practice) that are offered at least 50% online. The programs are delivered using an appropriate mix of technologies that support both synchronous and asynchronous approaches to course delivery. Most notably, the nursing online programs provide strong support for synchronous and asynchronous approaches during clinical interactions and testing so that student identification is assured. Online courses also use Blackboard Learn to enforce student identification verification via user name and password authentication.

The University appears to treat both on-ground and online education with equal attention to detail and rigor, as evidenced by the commitment to technological resources and service learning (the latter entailing support offered by students enrolled in the University's degree program in instructional design for faculty teaching online).

Assessment of Student Learning

In response to NEASC reports in 2005 (10-year) and 2010 (5th year), UMass Boston has been working to build an assessment framework and to develop a culture of assessment on campus. A grant-funded series of faculty development projects (2011-2013) related to assessment as well as the newly required focus on student learning outcomes in the AQUAD reviews have been very useful in beginning to develop a campus assessment culture. In 2011, the Provost convened a University Assessment Council charged with making recommendations regarding the design and implementation of undergraduate learning outcomes assessment. The Council concluded its work in early 2013 with a series of recommendations, including a process for implementing assessment following the AQUAD review, an assessment cycle for departments, alignment of assessment of general education and the major, and the establishment of an Office of Assessment to coordinate and monitor assessment activities.

Based on these recommendations, a seven-year cycle of assessment activities to align with the AQUAD review has been distributed to the campus through a February 2014 memo from the Provost. Implementation of this process is just beginning and appears to be variable across

schools/colleges. Although the recommendation to establish an office to oversee assessment has not yet been implemented, the Provost expects to do so within the next year.

Almost all departments now have posted learning outcomes for degree programs and certificates on the University Web site. Examination of a sample of recent AQUAD reviews showed a range of assessment methodologies, including both direct and indirect measures. Documentation of how assessment data are used to guide curricular and program changes is not consistent across departments and schools/colleges. One example provided is the College of Liberal Arts: departments use their annual reports to speak to assessment results and changes implemented based on data gathered. Departmental use of assessment findings is monitored in the Dean's office.

Components of the general education program have undergone assessment, and there are plans to continue in an ongoing continuous improvement cycle. Changes to the program based on these assessments have been documented, notably in the writing proficiency process and first-year seminars.

Programs with disciplinary accreditation do not have to complete the AQUAD process. Many programs, including teacher preparation programs, nursing, computer science, business, mental health and psychology are accredited by their respective disciplinary accreditation organizations. One graduate program (marriage and family therapy) has recently withdrawn from its accreditation and is suspending admissions for the time being.

Institutional Effectiveness

External accreditation and AQUAD program reviews for both undergraduate and graduate programs address the quality and effectiveness of the academic programs. Although a campus culture of assessment is developing, progress has been somewhat uneven in the development of systematic assessment of student learning outcomes and the use of assessment data to inform program and curricular change. This issue was also identified as a concern in previous NEASC reports. Overall, the institution shows strong motivation to deliver the same content at the same level of rigor in both the online and on-ground settings.

Standard Five: Faculty

The University has made significant progress in decreasing reliance on part-time faculty and in increasing the number of full-time faculty: since 2010, full-time faculty appointments have increased from 524 to 650, and while part-time faculty numbers have also increased—from 513 to 569—the percentage of part-timers has dropped from 49.5% of the total to 46.7%. The University is also committed to efforts to reflect the diversity of the student body through the recruitment and retention of a diverse faculty in all areas. Faculty personnel policies and the various types of faculty appointments are well defined through local policies, the *Red Book* (see p. 11, above), and the collective bargaining agreement.

The mix of academic ranks appears appropriate for the institution's mission, but the Review Team shares a concern voiced by a number of UMass Boston faculty members about the large

number of associate professors impressed into service as chairs of their departments, with administrative duties inevitably detracting from the research productivity required for promotion to the rank of professor. The imposition of this burden may, moreover, be inflected by gender; several women on the faculty pointed to the disposition of senior males to impose the work of departmental administration on the most junior women among the tenured faculty in their units.

Faculty qualifications appear appropriate to the type of degrees that are being offered and there appears to be an adequate number faculty. Several factors should be followed closely for their impact on faculty deployment and class availability, including a shift to a 2-2 load for all faculty and the opening in the next few academic years of new academic buildings with very large lecture halls.

Currently, prospective faculty members are given access to a copy of the union contract which states the nature and terms of initial employment and tenure. There is a process in place for training and evaluation of graduate assistants.

Faculty contracts are under successive collective bargaining agreements that afford faculty reasonable and appropriate periods of job security. Salary and benefits seem appropriate to the University's mission. Relations between the faculty union and the administration are strained, largely because an impasse between the Governor and the System has led to raises in the collective bargaining agreement currently in force not being funded.

The University has created the Office of Faculty Development (OFD) to provide opportunities for professional development through mandatory training of graduate assistants, professional development in the use of technology enhanced classrooms, and support for faculty desiring to teach in a large lecture format. OFD has a well-articulated set of plans for professional development. With just one faculty member as director, one full-time professional staff member, and one part-time graduate assistant, OFD may be challenged to scale up its widely praised services as the University pursues its aggressive expansion in enrollment and concomitant growth in faculty numbers.

A review of syllabi indicates that instructional techniques and delivery systems are compatible with the mission and purpose of the institution. The institution offers multiple section of the same course, assuring appropriate balance between achieving learning outcomes and flexibility. Students expressed some concerns—and staff confirmed the validity of those concerns—that progress toward degree may be delayed for some students because not enough sections and seats are available to meet student demand, including sections and seats in general education courses.

While students report that course scheduling is at times made difficult by a complicated advising system, academic advising appears to be generally effective in meeting student needs in ways compatible with the educational objectives of the University. Faculty and professional advisers appear to be adequately informed and prepared to discharge their advising duties.

Faculty pursue scholarship, research, and creative activity at levels appropriate to the mission of UMass Boston as an urban research university. Scholarship and instruction are integrated

and mutually supportive. Research, supported by a number of extramural grants, appears to be compatible with the institution's mission and purpose and is reflective of the various degree levels offered.

Travel support is mandated by the union contract, and deans attempt to "top off" funds mandated in collective bargaining agreements, providing substantive travel support. The new Integrated Sciences Complex provides ample laboratory space for science professors, and the academic space coming online in the next twelve months appears commensurate with the next phase of the University's expansion.

Institutional Effectiveness

The institution periodically evaluates the sufficiency of and support for the faculty and the effectiveness of the faculty in teaching and advising, scholarship, service, and research and creative activity. The results of these evaluations are used to enhance fulfillment of the institution's mission. The University is encouraged to continue to examine governance structures with the goal of making participation in them more fully reflective of the composition and variety of faculty appointments.

Standard Six: Students

Over the last ten years UMass Boston has shifted its focus regarding the student experience to meet its mission more effectively, offering a dynamic culture of teaching and learning committed to urban and global engagement within a multicultural environment. To that end, the University has reorganized services and put impressive effort into improving and assessing student achievement on the undergraduate and graduate levels. The University organizes its enrollment, retention and graduation efforts on the undergraduate level through its Enrollment Management Division, Academic Support Services and Undergraduate Studies, collegiate deans' offices, Athletics and Recreation, and Student Affairs. The Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies handles graduate admissions. The school, in its relatively short history, has sought to serve Boston's less affluent and non-traditional population, including a large population of part-time students. Ten years ago, the University began to shift to a more traditional undergraduate body and to develop stronger graduate programs. The revised mission, developed in 2010 as part of a strategic planning process, reflects this change, as do recent reorganizations and new programming initiatives. In fall, 2014, the University enrolled an all-time high of 16,756 students.

Admissions

The University experienced significant growth in the last four years as it sought to expand its base. The strategy has been to create new markets by encouraging applications outside of Boston, both from New England and from the more populous Mid-Atlantic states. It has also sought to expand its international base through an agreement, on the graduate level, with Renmin University in China and through the Navitas program. It has developed articulation agreements with local community colleges to build its transfer base and better serve its core urban population. Finally, through the Boston Success Program, funded by local organizations,

UMass Boston has been able to attract a small number of deserving Boston Public School graduates for whom college might not have been viewed as an option. Each student is paired with a mentor from the Boston community, who plays that role throughout the student's time at UMass Boston. The school hosts another small program for those who do not meet admissions requirements. These programs, along with its U.S. Department of Education's TRIO Student Support Services Program for low-income first-generation students, reflect UMass Boston's continuing commitment to its urban mission.

University admissions criteria are appropriate and applied equitably to yield a largely urban population with a growing global component. The institution's goals for growth in student population – to increase enrollment to 18,000 students by 2015; 20,000 by 2020; and 25,000 by 2025 - as set forth in its strategic plan, are ambitious, and the University's ability to realize them might be viewed within the context of the declining college age population in this country. Goals will likely need to be revised periodically over the next ten years, and the financial implications of any demographic change carefully analyzed.

Undergraduate recruitment efforts, organized under the Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management, have led to substantial growth, with enrollments rising in 2014 by 8.4% over the 2010 enrollment. Transfer students continue to constitute 58% of the undergraduate population, though that number has been on a steady decline. The last several years have seen growth in first-time first-year students, a success attributed to scholarships for out-of-state students; focused recruitment by the Admissions Office, which engages student representatives with applicants; and use of extensive recruiting materials.

Enrollment goals are set each year, and a new initiative, led by the Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management, looks at carrying capacities by major in coordination with department chairs, deans, and the Provost. The University hopes to maintain its same level of diversity as it grows, even though it expects to be drawing increasingly from areas less diverse than Boston, the traditional source of its remarkable diversity. The overall sustainability of the current admissions trajectory and of the University's current level of diversity is unclear. The planned addition of on-campus housing will be a draw for some, and probably a more attractive option than the privately-held apartments adjacent to campus. These apartments do not use University staff for programming and so do not include the developmental activities viewed as one of the benefits of college residence hall living. University residential housing carries upfront costs to students that could decrease affordability. It also requires additional services, some covered by housing fees and some not. UMass Boston's current affordability in the Boston market is a clear, positive recruitment inducement.

There is currently little data collected by UMass Boston on first destination post-graduation outcomes—an area of intense national interest. Past attempts by the University to survey graduates have yielded little information, apparently due to small sample sizes, but an improved process is in the planning stage. Robust employment and other post-graduate outcomes data will be critical information for future recruiting efforts.

Retention and Graduation

UMass Boston's own analysis of six-year graduation rates for the 2008 cohort found that success in the first year matters: students who returned for the second year and had at least a 2.5 GPA and 24 credits had a 70% graduation rate compared to a 34% graduation rate for those who did not fit that profile. Further, the first-year retention rate of entering first-time students reached an impressive 79.7% last year. Immigrants were significantly more likely to return for the second year than US-born students (83% vs. 77%); women graduated or returned at a rate of 45.4% compared to 37.3% for men; differences by race/ethnicity were not statistically significant for men; and the GPA of transfer students was significantly and positively related to graduation/retention. Interestingly, UMass Boston's strongest retention is among its non-white population. In part, this reflects the proportion of non-white students in the undergraduate population (close to 50%), which in turn reflects the local pool of students entering both as new first-time first-year students and as transfers. UMass Boston students of color also consistently outperform the white student body. This is in striking contrast to what is observed elsewhere. Should the UMass Boston demographic change, as its recruitment efforts expand beyond Boston, the University will need to use care to ensure that this group of traditionally underrepresented students continues to thrive.

Graduate enrollment, retention, and graduation rates differ significantly among programs. Completion rates are highest among the more vocationally oriented programs (Management 81%, Nursing 83%, College of Public and Community Service: Human Services 83%, McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies 84%). There is considerable variation among doctoral programs, with the Clinical Psychology program showing the highest completion rates. A Graduate Student Success committee has evaluated these trends, and analysis is expected to continue. The ability to sustain recruitment and the ability to marshal sufficient resources in a coordinated way to attract graduate students are challenges. The shrinking demographic works against the former, and the inability of many graduate programs to offer competitive stipends with predictable renewability works against the latter.

Continuing Enrollment Management efforts to look at capacity by major will allow for growth in areas that can accommodate more students. Coordination will become more crucial as enrollments rise and competition for funds increases. Enrollment management projections will allow for necessary strategic investments to open more seats and sections.

Student Services

Affordability is a factor in student enrollment. Seventy per cent of UMass Boston students graduate with debt, which is in line with the national figure, but the default rate of UMass Boston students is below the national average. There is no evidence that students at UMass Boston are provided with clear, timely information about debt before borrowing, though an institutional presence was noted at several forums on this subject in the Boston area.

Since 2010 the University has sought to offset costs by increasing the amount of both need-based financial aid and merit scholarships available to students, particularly out-of-state students. These funds had, in the past, been restricted to Massachusetts residents. Recently, Enrollment Management has been able to provide a two-tiered scholarship program for its out-of-state market. Award criteria and application information are well-publicized for all types of financial aid.

The University also offers a full suite of non-financial student support services ranging from the academic to those addressing mental health and safety. It has added freshman learning communities tied to the major college divisions in an effort to more closely integrate students into the academic culture. These communities allow for the identification of cohorts of entering students, who are block-scheduled for their general education and major program classes and who then work closely with an advisor, frequently a faculty member. The institution has hired additional qualified academic advisors, who are assigned to colleges, in an attempt to improve core requirement advising in general. The University has invested in various software packages to track students' progress to degree and to provide early alerts for those going astray. These efforts are part of a current emphasis at UMass Boston on coordination among the academic support services to better serve student needs, and substantial resources have been directed to that end.

The academic support staff, working with an Institutional Research staff member, has been developing success analytics which are also guiding advising and interventions. Analyses indicate the importance of a strong grade-point average the first semester. As the traditional first-year college population has grown, UMass Boston's transfer population has shrunk, though it currently constitutes 58% of the undergraduate population. Efforts to maintain transfer enrollment have focused on building bridges between community colleges and UMass Boston, but students report difficulty in the transfer process as noted in Standard Four of this report.

Supplemental instruction and tutoring, an umbrella under Academic Support, is an area in need of some attention because students report unevenness in gaining access to these services. Services are split between the Campus Center and the library, the home for supplemental instruction. In addition, individual student support service programs provide their own tutoring assistance. The success of the Student Support Services TRIO program and related programs, which provide an "advisor for life" approach, model services that might benefit all students. Use of technology is helping students and advisors have a better idea of how students are progressing and increases the potential for sharing information, yet how these recently-added student tracking and data collection tools and programs (Advocate, Taskstream, MAP-Works, Start on Track, Titanium, UDirect) will be used to manage increasing support services is still being developed.

The structure of Academic Support Services and Undergraduate Studies has the depth, breadth, and expertise to support student retention, but funding and space are limiting factors. For example, there appears to be no budget projection for expansion of the successful freshman communities, and it is not clear if, as long as they remain voluntary, enrollments in these communities will grow. Space, particularly where confidentiality comes into play, is problematic. University plans do not appear to include centralized support space for student services.

Non-academic support services, organized under the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs—a post currently shared on an interim basis by two staff members—and the Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance are comprehensive, ranging from offices for student leadership and community engagement to health and safety services to dining and transportation ser-

vices. These services are clearly visible, ethically conducted, accessible, and staffed by qualified personnel. Safety is a particular priority. Also clearly visible and easily accessed through the University Web site are grievances procedures, codes of student conduct and of student rights and responsibilities, assurances of FERPA compliance and student information protections, and the like.

The University gauges student satisfaction through regular administrations of the National Survey of Student Engagement, and makes the results available to the public. In addition, the University conducted a climate survey in 2012 that addressed issues associated with diversity. In on-site meetings, students expressed satisfaction with student life on campus despite uniform concern about lack of and poor quality of spaces for study and for athletics, particularly during this time of major construction and building renovation. Undergraduate and graduate student government leaders expressed general appreciation for the University's support of student life. Athletes also felt supported, though not in terms of facilities. Student athletes with whom reviewers met took great pride in their accomplishments. UMass Boston boasts award-winning intercollegiate teams among its total of 18 teams (9 men's and 9 women's) in Division III NCAA sports.

Institutional Effectiveness

The University will need to take great care that strengths--strengths such as the remarkable diversity of the student body; the superior success rates, compared to majority students, of students of color; and the upward trajectory of the entire student body in retention and graduate rates--are not diminished or lost because advising and student support services cannot keep pace in scale and sophistication with the rapid pace of change in enrollment, in the mix of residential and non-residential students, and in the balance between students who begin college at UMass Boston and those who transfer from other post-secondary institutions.

Standard Seven: Library and Other Information Resources

Significant strengths in library and information resources at UMass Boston are counter-balanced by significant challenges that will grow as the University grows in complexity and enrollment. Faculty and students across campus have very positive opinions about the services offered to them through the centrally located Healy Library and a high level of confidence in the ability of the library to obtain whatever resources they need. Both faculty and students, moreover, are very positive about instructional programs through the library that support information literacy, and they appreciate the library's active liaison program that reaches out to the departments to provide library-related information and support. At the same time, the library faces constraints in space, staffing, budget, and central technology support that are already limiting and that will make it extremely challenging to serve a growing and increasingly residential campus population invested increasingly in graduate and professional study.

The library instruction program focuses on serving undergraduate students through face-to-face instruction with hands-on active learning. Resource-intensive in-person library instruction programs reach 7,600 student contacts per academic year. This number is also heavily weighted toward undergraduates; instruction for graduate-level courses accounts for about 5%

of the instructional effort. Leadership within the General Education program has been critical in that information literacy has been one of seven General Education capabilities since the establishment of the program and is heavily embedded in every first-year seminar. General Education faculty may pair with a Reference Outreach and Instruction librarian to develop instruction based on accessing and applying information resources to specific course assignments. Despite a robust instructional program, the library needs to reach a larger number of students across undergraduate and graduate academic programs.

Faculty and staff of the library are appropriately credentialed to fill the jobs they hold, and they seem genuinely to like working in the library and the University. Librarians provide individual and group instruction in the use of library resources. Recent hires of entry-level librarians have brought some new energy and ideas to the library. But the library currently has quite a few vacant positions, and understaffing—correlative with funding that has not kept pace with the growth of a University that ranks second-from-the-bottom among the library budgets of the eight peer institutions identified for UMass Boston and \$4 million below the median—makes it very difficult to keep up with existing roles and responsibilities, much less take on new ones.

Among the strengths of the library is the Interlibrary Loan Service, an indispensable supplement to collections that do not always include everything needed by students and faculty. The library has moved from a “just in case” acquisitions strategy to a “purchase on demand” strategy and will purchase virtually anything requested by faculty or students. The library provides a 24/7 online reference service which is said to be extremely efficient and effective. The library has significantly increased its electronic holdings and now has more electronic than print books. And yet, while students and faculty express great appreciation for the wealth of electronic resources, the library’s integrated library system (ILS) is outdated and does not include many of the features needed to support the research and study needs of the faculty and students of a modern research institution; the ILS currently lacks an associated discovery layer that would simplify searching for information resources, reduce the number of unsuccessful searches, and yield more comprehensive search results made up of items in multiple formats. In addition, the support provided by the University’s central Information Technology Services Division has not obviated the need for the library to expend scarce resources on outsourcing information technology services.

The library’s Special Collections and Archives holdings have increased at a tremendous rate in recent years. These collections include unique items that make the Healy Library stand out from other comparable libraries. The library is building an Institutional Repository which provides online access to documents and publications created by UMass Boston faculty and staff. The library partners with other offices and programs across the campus, even to the extent of housing many other units within the library building. These partnerships, while worthwhile, point to the facilities challenge facing the library, for the library has lost so much space to partners that space is now inadequate for essential library services and programs. The library has run out of space for housing and managing its Special Collections and Archives. Nor does it have enough space to plan creatively to meet the changing needs of students and faculty. Students expressed the need for more flexible study spaces in the library to accommodate more group work, and they also complained about the poor lighting throughout much of the library.

Access to the physical collections of library and information resources is somewhat hindered by the limited number of hours that the library is open each week.

The library participates in the LibQual and MISO surveys and uses the results to make improvements in library offerings. The library, however, is not included in AQUAD, nor is it subjected to any other periodic program review process. Such a review would offer the opportunity for external review of library operations and practices by experts in the field, providing useful feedback to be used in making improvements.

Institutional Effectiveness

The library and information resources provided by the University appear to be meeting the needs of the students and faculty of today; the heavy reliance on interlibrary loan notwithstanding, across the campus there is a very high level of satisfaction with the library. The University provides the instructional technology resources needed to support the teaching and learning environment. As the University grows its student body, especially on the graduate level, it will need to strengthen access to library and information resources. Careful attention should also be paid to the implications for library services of adding to the campus a residential student population that will likely change the nature of user demand for library services and resources.

Standard Eight: Physical and Technological Resources

UMass Boston has faced major challenges regarding its physical resources in recent years, and has been very responsible in addressing those challenges in order to continue to meet mission-critical goals. In 2006, external engineering consultants advised that the campus substructure was failing and recommended actions required to ensure the long-term viability of the buildings. An extensive campus master planning process occurred, with a 25-year plan issued in 2009. The first phase of that plan is nearing completion.

There are two major challenges. First, there are enormous space requirements associated with the remarkable enrollment growth that has occurred over the past decade. Second, the entire original campus was built at one time in 1974 and in general has deteriorated, has many spaces that no longer satisfy current pedagogical needs, has antiquated research facilities, and has building systems that are at the end of their useful life.

UMass Boston has taken many positive steps to address the space shortage issue. The University has expanded the standard class schedule on M-F by one hour at the beginning and end of each day and has eliminated a “free hour” formerly held at 3:00 p.m. A new space policy was established in 2012, followed by development of space standards for offices, research labs, and classrooms. A space inventory database has been created to help evaluate space requests and determine compliance with standards. A Space Committee consisting of the Provost, the VC for Administration and Finance, the VC for Student Affairs, and the Chief of Staff to the Chancellor, was established to make decisions about space requests. In addition to these efforts to use existing space as efficiently as possible, the first new academic buildings in the past 40 years are coming on line. The Integrated Sciences Complex opened in January 2015, and the General Academic Building 1 is nearing completion and is expected to open within the next year; programming and conceptual design of a General Academic Building 2 have begun.

These buildings are adding modern and right-sized classrooms, research labs, student gathering spaces and other much needed spaces.

The second challenge has been the increasingly poor condition of existing campus facilities. The 2006 structural study indicated that the campus substructure below the academic buildings, including two levels of parking, was failing. The University shored up the structure as best it could and then, through further study and a campus master planning process, determined that the original Science Building and the substructure surrounding existing buildings would have to be demolished. As part of the project, all utilities required relocation, and a plan was developed to reroute the campus loop road, relocating the utilities under the new road. This project is now under way, at a cost of \$180 million. During this period, the University has also invested its own funds in correcting existing facilities deficiencies, including addressing critical life safety and systems issues and adding up-to-date instructional technology to 95% of existing classrooms. Facilities leadership expressed confidence that they are able to keep up with these critical needs, and they have implemented a benchmarked Facilities Conditions tool to help them to stay on track.

Even with all of the recent improvements and the new and planned facilities—including planned new residence halls for which the funding model has yet to be determined—the campus will still have insufficient space to support the campus enrollment goal of 25,000 students by 2025. The next phases of the campus master planning process will address this issue, including planning additional academic buildings, development of recently acquired property adjacent to campus, online programs and other strategies. There is serious concern regarding availability of resources to support these additional strategies.

Technological Resources

The Information Technology Services Division (ITSD) is responsible for infrastructure, systems, services and support for both academic and administrative technology. A useful consulting engagement resulted in the 2011 Information Technology Enterprise Architecture report, which provides a set of recommendations for improving the infrastructure and systems on campus. ITSD has moved forward with a number of those recommendations.

ITSD is in the process of improving the wireless access on campus and upgrading the campus Web site. An IT strategic plan to guide improvements over the next five years is under development, with the next step being consultation with the campus community on a preliminary plan. The NEASC Review Team believes that one area that should be considered for inclusion in the IT strategic plan is the development of the IT infrastructure and systems to expand availability and use of data analytics to support campus decision-making going forward, working collaboratively with OIRP and other campus units.

Institutional Effectiveness

The University is responsibly addressing, at great cost, inherited deficits in the physical infrastructure of the campus, following expert assessment and a detailed facilities master plan, progress on which is being closely monitored. A comprehensive information technology strategic

planning process is currently under way. There is a need to align campus enrollment and research growth goals with a realistic assessment of physical and technology resources, both current and planned.

Standard Nine: Financial Resources

The University has seen consistent positive operating results in recent years, due primarily to tuition and fee revenue from enrollment growth—tuition and fees net of financial aid rose from \$96 million in 2008 to \$156 million in 2013, and from 35% to 45% of the operating budget—and to a lesser extent to increases in state appropriations, externally funded research, private giving, and interest income. UMass Boston has been intentional in setting aside funds to improve its financial cushion. The operating margin has hovered around 2% for the past 3 years; it is expected, however, that this measure will decline and will actually reflect operating deficits in the coming years due to increased debt and interest expenses and direct expenditures on capital projects. UMass Boston has built a healthy financial cushion over a number of years in preparation for expected required facilities investments. Those investments are beginning to take place, drawing down those reserves and limiting capacity for addressing unforeseen circumstances. All financial ratios have begun to flatten over the past couple of years and will continue to decline as increasing debt and facilities improvement costs absorb previously positive operating margins.

The University's plans for the future are dependent upon growing a number of revenue streams, each of which presents its own set of challenges. The largest source of projected revenue growth is student tuition and fees, resulting from increases in tuition and fees and from enrollment growth to 25,000 students by 2025 from the current 16,756: FY 2013 tuition and mandatory fees for full-time students were \$11,966 and \$26,150 for resident and non-resident undergraduates, respectively, and \$13,506 and \$26,164 for graduate students. The increasingly competitive market for both traditional and non-traditional students in the northeast is cause for concern about the ability to achieve its enrollment goal. UMass Boston points out that the combination of location, affordability, and reputation makes the University attractive to more students. Yet public backlash against tuition and fee increases will continue to challenge this strategy. State appropriations will continue to be stretched into the foreseeable future as a result of entitlement spending, public resistance to tax increases, and many competing interests. The private giving infrastructure at UMass Boston is still in early stages of development, and the young age of the University makes finding major donors difficult. Many appropriate actions are being taken to build strength in this area, but it will take time to gain significant traction in private giving. The final major source cited to fund strategic initiatives is indirect cost recovery (ICR) on external contracts and grants. While 100% of ICR is allocated to the Vice Provost for Research and Strategic Initiatives, 49.4% of that amount is passed on to individual units to cover their grant-related support services and other administrative costs. The rest covers numerous strategic university-wide research support and administrative costs.

The University has just begun to re-examine its strategic plan, preparing for the next phase, and its campus master plan, in light of current circumstances and constraints. A collaborative effort that engages all senior leadership as well as key campus constituents is essential if UMass Boston is to continue on its path to growth and transformation. Facing quite significant

revenue constraints, everyone will need to be focused on determining the most important actions to take, in the right order, to build capacity for future growth. Everyone will need to own responsibility for generating needed revenues and finding creative ways to contain costs.

UMass Boston has worked steadily to strengthen financial planning, management and allocation systems. A recently issued five-year revenue and expense forecast will serve as the basis for updating and refining campus strategic planning and the campus master plan. With widespread sharing and discussion, the forecast can also give all stakeholders a common understanding of challenges and opportunities, which can then form the basis for greater accountability and integration of planning and decision-making processes of the campus.

Efforts to build the financial management infrastructure include assembling strong central staff in such areas as budget, financial planning, and the controller's office. A new All Funds budget process will bring all campus resources to bear on achieving strategic goals. A well-documented Internal Controls Plan will limit financial management risks. A strong system-level Internal Audit function provides for objective and helpful external feedback on the effectiveness of internal controls. The Finance and Administration Advisory Group, with campus-wide membership, meets monthly to develop and oversee compliance with University policies and procedures, to receive updates and training on new administrative developments, and to provide feedback to central administration on how things are going. This level of collaboration, information sharing, and joint ownership of financial success serves as a model for the entire campus.

Institutional Effectiveness

While the University has seen positive operating margins in recent years, the cost of capital projects will create negative margins in the next few years unless they are significantly offset by revenue growth. Revenue growth is projected in a number of areas—above all in net tuition and fees, and also in indirect cost recovery from sponsored programs and in private giving—but none of this growth is assured and each component of projected growth entails risks. The University's strategic agenda, including its academic, facilities, information technology, and financial plans, will require transparent integration with each other and constant monitoring and adjustment to actual performance to ensure that the institutional growth agenda does not outstrip resources.

Standard Ten: Public Disclosure

The University's Web site was completely rebuilt on a new platform 3 years ago. According to students and faculty, the new Web site is a great improvement, making information about the University, its policies, programs, and plans readily accessible to those on campus as well as to the general public. While the Office of Communications provides oversight for the University's Web site as well as its print publications, the creation and maintenance of information on the Web site is the responsibility of various units. Content of the Web site is kept current by the designated editors and publishers in the various units. With multiple offices involved in managing and disseminating information on the campus, coordination between these various offices does not always go as smoothly as it could.

Information in print publications and on the Web site is consistent. The current catalog of the University is readily available on the Web site. It provides a clear and consistent description of the University and adequately outlines the obligations of both students and the University. Historical print catalogs are available in the Archives maintained by the University Libraries.

The University publishes information identifying faculty and administrators and providing pertinent background information about them. It also publishes a description of itself, including the size, the student body characteristics, the campus setting, available support services, and extra-curricular as well as co-curricular activities available to students. Information on the total cost of attending the University is published, as is information on the availability of financial aid, the expected student debt level at graduation, and the average time to graduation. The University publishes information on student success including retention and graduation rates. The University provides accurate and clearly worded information about its current accreditation status. This information appears on the Web site as well as in various print brochures and publications.

The Director of the Office of Communications is the designated spokesman for the University. University faculty and staff are aware that they are to refer requests to the Director when a “University” position is sought. The Director of the Office of Communications readily provides requested information whenever legally possible. Seldom is a freedom of information request required to obtain information from or about the University. As appropriate, the University’s Office of Communications coordinates and cooperates with the communications offices of the other UMass campuses.

Institutional Effectiveness

The University appears to have a well-established program of public disclosure. There are systems in place to periodically review and update both print and electronic publications of the University. Information about the University, its programs, services, and resources seems to be freely provided to the public as well as to those directly affiliated with the University. The University, however, would do well to assess and improve coordination among campus units in the management and dissemination of information.

Standard Eleven: Integrity

The UMass Boston self-study indicates that the “institution subscribes to and advocates high ethical standards in its management of its affairs and in all of its dealings with students, prospective students, faculty, staff, its governing board, external agencies and organizations, and the general public” and that “it strives to provide high quality education in an atmosphere of inquiry while promoting fairness, honesty, and transparency.” To achieve that fairness and allow equal access, the University seeks to create an atmosphere that fosters non-discrimination in education and employment without infringing on academic freedom and free expression. The team saw a great deal of evidence that the University lives up to its goals for ethical, fair, honest conduct in all activities. Of particular note are policies and supports in place to promote non-discrimination at all levels.

The University is subject to various federal and state laws, starting with the act of the Massachusetts General Court in 1964, establishing the University of Massachusetts, Boston (Chap. 75, Section 1). In addition, the institution comes under System, State, and school-specific policies and procedures as well as its collective bargaining agreements and Student Code of Conduct, recently revised. Taken together, these regulations are intended to protect academic freedom and free expression while promoting fairness among all constituents. The University's academic personnel policy outlines the commitment to faculty academic freedom. Both faculty and staff are held to the University's academic honesty policy. The Student Code of Conduct defines academic honesty and outlines infractions and consequences of violations. Information about this policy is a required part of course syllabi, and information about academic honesty with respect to distance education is included in distance learning program brochures.

Faculty and staff grievance policies and procedures found in the collective bargaining agreements are published and posted on the University's Web site. Issues involving protected classes are adjudicated under the guidance of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI). That office reports directly to the Chancellor. It investigates affirmative action, equal employment opportunity, sexual harassment complaints and Section 054 and Title IX compliance. Any member of the community may seek the help of this office.

The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs reviews and approves all research involving human subjects conducted by faculty, students or staff. It provides mandatory training every three years for researchers and Institutional Review Board (IRB) members. The IRB follows rules and guidelines of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

UMass Boston follows applicable state and federal laws with respect to privacy and data security. These laws include the electronic Communications Privacy Act, the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act, the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act, the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act. The University also has an electronic communications policy ensuring data security.

UMass Boston publishes a conflict of interest policy under state law: MGL Chap.268A. When faculty, staff, and students log on to the central information system for the first time, there is a forced-compliance screen requiring assent to having read the policy. University faculty, students and staff are also subject to the University of Massachusetts Intellectual Property Policy. Additionally, the University provides yearly reports on crime statistics under the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security and Campus Statistics Act.

E-mail and on-site evidence seen by the team chair and other committee members throughout the review process indicates UMass Boston's attention to clarification of and compliance with Commission requirements and requests.

Institutional Effectiveness

There is evidence that the University regularly reviews its ethical policies and procedures and attempts to meet all required reporting requirements. The Office of Diversity and Inclusion is in the process of expanding staff, partly to meet the demands of Title IX investigation and training. Currently it is not clear if there is an online way to report incidents, and physical access to the reporting office is cumbersome at best. Researchers learn of IRB policies through their departments, and students learn of these policies through faculty within classes or through advisors. New employees are informed about grievance procedures. New students are made aware of the Code of Student Conduct in orientation materials. It is noteworthy that distance education program developers have created innovative ways to ensure academic honesty. The University has identified several areas for improvement, including constructing a fraternization policy; enhancing “academic honesty” language on syllabi; and discussing a central mechanism to ensure that surveys do not violate restrictions on privacy. The institution might consider re-siting some policies to make them, along with compliance information, easier to find on the University Web site.

Institutional Effectiveness Summary

UMass Boston’s mission is fully appropriate to the nature and role of the urban public research university in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The mission is clearly reflected in the institution’s planning and assessment activities and in its academic, research, and service agendas.

Overall, the governance system at UMass Boston and its implementation facilitates the accomplishment of the University’s mission. While there may be occasional lapses in intra-campus communication, the governance system works to create and sustain a productive academic environment for both students and faculty. Team members raised concern, however, that the plans for building funding streams to support the ambitious strategic plan involve multiple contingencies, challenges, and risks. A recently developed five-year revenue and expense forecast, still in draft, may serve as the basis for updating and refining campus strategic planning and the campus master plan. With widespread sharing, discussion, and regularized assessment, the new forecast would also give all stakeholders a common understanding of challenges and opportunities, which can then form the basis for greater accountability and integration of planning and decision-making processes of the campus.

Academic programming at UMass Boston is sound. Special accreditation of professional programs and AQUAD program reviews for both undergraduate and graduate programs address the quality and effectiveness of the academic programs. Although a campus culture of assessment is developing, progress has been somewhat uneven in the development of systematic assessment of student learning outcomes and the use of assessment data to inform program and curricular change. It will be important for UMass Boston to assess student outcomes in all programs, going forward. Overall, the institution shows strong motivation to deliver the same content, at the same level of rigor in both the online and on ground settings. An elaborate

system, including Blackboard IP blocking, lock-down browsers for examinations, and plagiarism identification software is used to verify student identification and for grading. Faculty are well-qualified for the courses they teach, and UMass Boston has been able to reduce reliance on part-time faculty over the last few years. The mix of academic ranks appears appropriate for the institution's mission, but the Review Team shares a concern voiced by a number of UMass Boston faculty members about the large number of associate professors impressed into service as chairs of their departments, a burden that may, moreover, fall disproportionately on women.

Enrollment Management carefully monitors the qualifications of entering students. Several programs allow entry of a small number of students who do not meet admission criteria, and support for successful outcomes is provided to those students. The last few years have seen a substantial jump in retention as a result of changes in advising and support programs for students, including highly successful learning communities for first-year undergraduates, and the graduation rate is slowly climbing. Academic Support Services employs or is in the process of implementing new systems that track student performance. Specific tracking of transfer students will be important in determining opportunities for support and intervention for this particular group of students, who still comprise a high percentage of the student body.

The library and information resources provided by the University appear to be meeting the needs of the students and faculty of today. Across the campus there is a very high level of satisfaction with the library, despite an unusually high reliance on interlibrary loan and physical and information technology challenges. The University provides and supports instructional technology resources required for the teaching and learning environment at UMass Boston. As the University looks to the future and plans to grow its student body, especially at the graduate level, it will need to strengthen access to library and information resources. Careful attention should also be paid to the implications for adding a residential student population to the campus, which will likely change the nature of user demand for library services and resources.

The UMass Boston campus is in the midst of a major program of growth and renovation in physical facilities that signals a continuing need to align campus enrollment and research growth goals with a realistic assessment of resources, both current and planned, including classrooms, labs, library facilities, computing capacity, student life support services, faculty offices, parking etc.

The University appears to have a well-established program of public disclosure. There are systems in place to periodically review and update both print and electronic publications of the University. Information about the University, its programs, services, and resources seems to be freely provided to the public as well as to those directly affiliated with the University.

The University states that it regularly reviews its policies and procedures and attempts to meet all required reporting requirements. The Office of Diversity and Inclusion is in the process of expanding staff, partly to meet the demands of Title IX investigation and training. The institution is in compliance with other standards associated with integrity: policies are in place and implemented, and the University has self-identified some areas requiring enhancement or addition of policies.

Affirmation of Compliance

To document UMass Boston's compliance with Title IV, the Team reviewed the Affirmation of Compliance form signed by Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer Keith Motley, the *Self-Study*, and the UMass Boston Web site. The Team also spoke with members of the UMass Boston community. UMass Boston publicly discloses in print and on the Provost's Web site its credit hour policies. It also discloses its credit transfer policies in print and on the Admissions Web site. Policies on student rights and responsibilities are available online and in print publications, and the process appears to be fairly and consistently administered. UMass Boston provided opportunities for public comment prior to the Team's visit by publicizing both electronically and in print notice of the NEASC evaluation.

Summative List of Strengths and Concerns

Strengths

The long-term strategic plan is supported by a facilities master plan commensurate with projected growth.

The foundation for assessment has been established, and the University is moving toward development of a culture of assessment.

The University has made noteworthy progress regarding less dependence on part-time faculty and on improving faculty diversity. The increase in the number of faculty hires has had a positive impact on graduate and research programs: more mentors, more classes, new courses.

The University has an ambitious and well-defined capital program in process with identified funding, is aggressive in addressing critical deferred maintenance issues, and is more effectively using existing space (such as classroom space).

At the undergraduate level the general education program is well-developed, evolving, and connected to the major and the culminating experience. There is a good assessment in place for the general education program. Growth in new undergraduate programs has been focused on identified strategic goals, including the embedding of research into courses at all levels.

Distance Education employs well-developed instructional design in courses clearly equivalent to face-to-face courses. The Office of Faculty Development provides training opportunities for graduate assistants and faculty in various instructional modalities such as online course design and large-group instruction.

There is an impressive, diverse array of University-community partnerships.

Recruitment of first-year students is strong due to identification of new markets, an aggressive scholarship campaign for out-of-state students, and an integrated set of recruitment materials.

Analysis of the path to graduation for first-time first-year students has led to successful strategies and improving outcomes, including new learning communities, a marked improvement in assuring that first-semester undergraduates enroll full-time, and online tracking of first-year students in a system that includes communication with students.

The library is well-respected, perceptions are positive regarding the level of library services such as the efficiency of the Interlibrary Loan Service, and there are many electronic resources available.

The University has established a more disciplined, standardized financial management structure. There have been positive operating results for the past several years, allowing building of resources to support capital investments.

A complete overhaul of the university Web site has resulted in significant improvement in accessibility and navigability. There is full University compliance in providing the Academic Honesty Policy on all syllabi and online material.

Concerns

The University's Board of Trustees has not approved the mission of the University of Massachusetts, Boston.

The strategic plan is dependent on revenue growth that may be difficult to achieve. So many balls are in the air at once (among many others, enrollment growth, a very aggressive set of goals around metrics ranging from undergraduate student success to research funding, an array of current and projected capital projects), and the revenue sources on which the strategic plan is dependent—e.g., enrollment growth, state appropriations, private giving, externally funded research—are each and all potentially at risk. Given the scope and ambition of the plan, there is also concern about the enormity of the burdens potentially facing faculty and staff. Accordingly, there is a need to continually and systematically reassess and recalibrate the strategic plan, master plan, and capital plan to reflect current circumstances.

The analytic use of data in decision-making is critical for the success of the institution, but has not been optimized, with apparent disconnects between institutional research and decision-makers. An improved IT infrastructure, systems, etc. will be required for analytics and data-driven decision-making.

The very high University debt level affects resources, there is the potential for incurring more debt, and even after the current phases of the campus facilities master plan have been completed, there will be insufficient space to accommodate enrollment goals. Aggressive enrollment projections require commensurate resources, including improved faculty capacity and the ability to provide seats in courses required for timely graduation.

The use of AQUAD assessment findings for programmatic improvement needs to be more consistent across the University.

Supplemental instruction and tutoring programs are variable and clearly under pressure as enrollment grows. There is a significant unmet need for tutoring in many content areas.

There is evidence of difficulty with transfer credit equivalencies both in admissions and advising. The high number of transfer students and timing of admissions exacerbate this issue.

Many departments are unable to make firm, long-term commitments to fund graduate students, making recruitment difficult. In general, more resources are needed for graduate student support, including competitive stipends and travel monies. Graduate students need an improved structure for community-building of peer support, collaboration, and communication.

There is a heavy dependence on associate professors (especially women) for mid-level administration positions.

The Healy Library faces a number of resource challenges, including space availability, information technology, funding and staffing (and poor lighting!). Costly contracting for outside services has been required due to limitations of the campus IT infrastructure.