

**UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST  
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“UMA 250 PLAN – STATUS REPORT AND PROGRAM OUTLINE  
FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2007-2008”**

A PDF version of his PowerPoint presentation is available at:

<http://www.umass.edu/senate/news/A250%20AY2007-08%20Plan.pdf> &  
<http://www.umass.edu/senate/news/A250%20AY%2007-08%20Outline.pdf>

The Amherst 250 Plan, as probably everyone is generally aware, has been going on for a little while now with the purpose of trying to rebound from the significant decline in the size of the faculty that occurred as a result of factors beyond our control. So, a very important feature of it was to rebuild the faculty, get the number back up. We lost more than 300 faculty over the course of about fifteen years. A quarter of the faculty disappeared. This happened over two successive recessions in which state revenues fell, the ability of the state to support the campus declined, and, as a consequence, people left, and we were unable to refill those positions.

If you want to see a pretty graphic illustration of that, here is a progress of the size of the faculty back from our highpoint in 1989 to last year. You can see that we had almost 1200 tenure-track faculty at one time. At our low point, we got down to 875. You can see the effects of the recession in 1990 or 1991. We lost some, rebounded slightly, but never got back to where we were. Then, you can see the effects again of the recession earlier in this decade, another big drop in faculty without the ability to recover. Other things were happening. We were still teaching students, and if you look at the chart, just as an illustration, to see how these declines in faculty map to student credit hour production, the amount of teaching we do, it is pretty dramatic. You can see that for a while back in the early nineties, the amount of teaching that needed to be done declined at about the same proportion as the decline in the number of faculty. Thereafter, we began to learn to live with fairly sizeable gaps. In the nineties, it was certainly a pronounced and noticeable effect. More recently, we have just been living with the considerable challenge of the gap between the instructional resources we have available and the instruction we need to provide to serve our students.

In addition to simply rebuilding the size of the faculty, we also wanted to try to rebalance the faculty; the losses that occurred through multiple and overlapping retirement incentive programs, and people had left at random. This affected different departments differently. There are departments on campus that actually suffered relatively minor losses. There were others that were devastated with large fractions of their faculty disappearing. It also tended to distort the distribution across ranks. We have departments today that have very odd compositions in terms of entry level and mid-level and senior faculty because we are down stream from people leaving at various points in unpredicted and unplanned ways. So, we have some departments that are full of relatively new hires, which is great, but are showing problems because of the lack of mid-and senior-level faculty to provide leadership and other kinds of problems.

Finally, the Plan's purpose was to try to renew the faculty, not just get the number back, not just sort out the randomness. It is important to realize this is the second largest faculty hiring opportunity in the campus' history, second only to the sixties and early seventies when we were reaching the current size and scale of the institution. This is a hugely important decision because of the volume and scope of what we are able to do. So, the desire to focus not only on what we used to do but especially on our emerging and existing needs, not necessarily to restore the status quo or just to grow proportionally, but really to focus on what it is we need to do to be prepared for today's and tomorrow's challenges. What does that mean? Our mission remains the same: research and scholarship and teaching. In

terms of research and scholarship, one thing we need to be able to do is recognize and build on existing strengths. Even though we went through some tough times, the campus is extremely careful and creative in trying to maintain the areas of strength that we had. We need to take advantage of that and build on it. Despite our best efforts, there are programs on campus that lost faculty in critical core areas, areas needed to run a graduate program or maintain a research program, so we need to be attentive to that – but, importantly to position for emerging opportunities. Paul's discussion just now about renewable energy is a great example. There are directions and trajectories we need going in that we cannot do unless we make faculty hiring match our opportunities. On the teaching side, one of the most noticeable consequences of the loss of faculty we experienced was we had some very large instructional imbalances. Places that had huge amounts of students to teach, lots of faculty left. The students do not go away, in fact, as you saw the student-teaching maintained a pretty high level, so we had to try to figure out how to address that. We did it in part by trying to establish some reasonable teaching expectations, and then when those resources were not in place, direct resources to the largest gaps.

Progress to date has been good. The program is entering its third full year. Funding commitments, as the Provost pointed out, now total 150 positions, which is tremendous. That is sixty percent of the way toward the total program. I think in the first year or two we wondered if we would ever get to this point, and it is terrific to say that we have. It is important to point out, of course, that the funding commitments have come from institutional resources. We have carved these dollars out of our own operations to pay for these new positions. One of the hopes of the Amherst 250 that remains is that it may be a program that can attract additional investment from the Commonwealth to try to complete the program, but so far all 150 new positions have been funded from the normal revenue flow of the institution.

In the first year, we had 48 positions. Last year, we had two bites at the apple that totaled 45. For this year, another 57 were made available which is how we get to the 150. The other thing to keep in mind is that, largely because we are paying for this out of existing institutional revenues, the amount of money available to support these positions has been declining somewhat. At the beginning, the idea was to not just include a faculty salary but also start-up and facilities and support staff and TAs and other costs necessary to support faculty work. The last fifty-seven, it is really just the faculty salary for an entry-level position and also some money for start-up that is necessary to keep going.

You can see that the good news is that the size of the pool is where it needs to be, but there is a challenge trying to support those faculty. Of the 150 that have been budgeted for, 81 have already been allocated to programs, 54 of those are on campus with us now, all across campus in all kinds of programs. One thing we learned in this process was that it takes quite a while to find the right person sometimes. Charlena mentioned the high proportion of first and second choices we have been able to achieve in our searches, but that meant, in some cases, a search needed to be cancelled in one year because we could not get our first or second choice. The deal is the position remains in the department and they try again.

This is a ramping up process, 54 new people so far on the way to 150. There are 27 positions that have been allocated out to programs but have not yet been appointed, some because of searches that did not yield the desired choice. In some cases, positions were held back for a year because we were waiting for a new dean to come aboard or something like that. So that leaves 69 that remain to be allocated. That is all 57 from this year, a handful of what we call spousal opportunities. Increasingly, in the departments, as you all know, it is sometimes necessary when you are trying to hire your first choice in a search to also find a way to accommodate a spouse or individual whose presence is also required in order to make the hire work. So, we put a few aside for that, and, then last year, we established, from the second group, a little research and scholarship pool too late in the season to affect last year's hiring cycle, but that it now available. It needs to be allocated.

So, at the midpoint, more or less of this process, we have taken a look to see where we stand and what needs to happen next. Certainly the 54 hires to date are making a big difference on the campus. A good deal of random attrition has been corrected. There has been a significant infusion of resources

in some areas of tremendous instructional need. We are not done doing that, but we have definitely made progress. There has been a jump start in attracting the next generation of scholars. Many of the new folks who have come in are just doing tremendous things, have hit the ground running. In addition to the replacement positions we have been hiring, you can just feel the difference on campus.

At this point it is appropriate to think about where we are and whether some shifts in emphasis might be desirable. One of those things is to shift a little from the short-term more to the longer term – for example, from correcting some of the glaring instructional deficits to really rationalizing and improving the curriculum. The Provost mentioned the General Education Task Force that will be working throughout this year. That is very important because, as all of you know, we have worked very hard. We have scrambled at times to try to provide a full schedule and the choice of courses to individual students, but we have had to do that in ad hoc ways. Now is the time to think about how we can invest our resources to make that work in a long-term way that does what we need to do for our students. Also in terms of research and scholarship, we always want to take note of our existing strength and past accomplishments but also to position for future strength. We can see how we set the criteria for allocation needs to reflect that, the other transition, another shift is to try to move from looking at the Amherst 250 program as if it was its own thing – it is very important – but it really is in the context of our plans for investing in faculty. It is not just these new net positions but also the hiring that is going on in the background. Each year, about 40 replacement hires occur, and in combination that is a very large amount of resources and infusion of new folks and excitement in the departments. So, we want to look at all the hiring, the replacements and the net new, all the instructors, the tenure-track and the non-tenure track.

So the next phase – this year's process is trying to put together a comprehensive faculty hiring plan. In some ways, we want to begin with a vacancy analysis. I mentioned the number of background retirement hires/replacements that occur each year. We used to do this a lot. Those of you who have been here awhile remember, especially in the eighties, before recessions hit, and we no longer had anything to plan with, that there were a number of efforts to try to look and see where retirements might occur and see if there was a need to move positions around. We used to have something called tithing in which a percentage of a retiring faculty member's salary would go to some pool. We are not talking about those right now, but we are talking about trying to have a sense of where the vacancies are likely to occur in our minds as we make the new investments, partly because the potential retirement pool is rebuilding. People who were incentivized to leave are gone, and people are getting older, so more normal retirement activity is occurring. Also, there is a trend to more faculty mobility, in part because, when the opportunity to select TIAA-CREF versus the state retirement system for new faculty, it makes people more portable in a way that was not true in the past. So that is something to keep in mind.

We just have completed – I have got the first draft of this on my computer – the demographic variables to try to see what the age distributions and so forth are. We will send that out to the Schools and Colleges and ask them just to tell us if they know better than making a guess through an algorithm what is going on, and, that will be something that feeds into the process. The combination of vacancy savings and the Amherst 250 funds will make up an investment pool that will be extremely important as we move forward.

This year, as we get ready to allocate these positions, there are a few ground rules we have tried to put together. One of them I have mentioned. These are going to be entry-level salaries only. The allocation is of an entry-level salary. There may be needs for other kinds of salaries, but that will have to be worked out through departmental funds, college funds, and special conversations with the Provost. Very importantly, the facilities issues need to be integrated into these allocation decisions. We are approaching a crisis in accommodating new hires, especially when those hires require wet laboratory space or some other intensive use that requires specialized space. We are asking for explicit and verified facilities plans for all new hires, not just the 250 but the replacement ones. The good news is that, as part of the planning for the Amherst 250 program, a significant amount of money has been put aside to be able to make renovations and other improvements to facilities. So, our challenge is to make those fit together so that we have some place for the new person to be when

they get here. Some of you may know that, from time to time, you run into a problem if a faculty member arrives, the lab is not ready, the tenure clock is ticking. It is not a situation we wish to be in.

We have to have a special emphasis on laboratories, animal care, and major equipment. Our animal care facilities, which are very stringently regulated, are at capacity, so that is something we have to pay close attention to. In terms of start-up, again this is the kind of thing that Provosts and Deans and Chancellors have been trying to do the best they could with. In an uncertain situation over a period of some years, we need to try to regularize what our expectations and anticipated needs for start-up are going to be and how we can possibly come up with the cash necessary to make those offers possible. So, in terms of allocating for this year's group, on the instructional side, the good news is that the combination of the tenure-track allocations we have made already and some one-time lecture allocations that we have made have addressed many of the major crises. We are now shifting to some of the broader instructional issues. Some of the key factors are the tenure-track and non-tenure-track balance, the General Education or undergraduate education reform efforts that are going to be happening, and also program development and enrollment planning.

You know, the Amherst 250 is a program that allocates tenure-track lines. Its purpose is to rebuild and restore the size of the tenure-track faculty, but, we obviously have other things we do on campus and have a proportionate need to have some lecturer support at the same time. So, that is a challenge we need to figure out how to meet, and, one way of doing that is by looking to see where some of the School/College funds that might be available from vacated positions from retirement might be able to help. In terms of Gen. Ed. and undergraduate education, a very complicated set of issues but very important – how our resources are being used to deliver the curriculum, what our educational objectives are, how we are going to meet them. Some of these objectives come from societal expectations. Some are our own, about what we want our students to leave with. Our funding mechanisms have been ad hoc and a little bit hard to understand at times. We want to try to rationalize those with a goal of trying to put the resources and the expectations in the hands of Deans who can make sense out of it in the context of all the other things that are going on.

Finally, in terms of program development and enrollment planning, we have a relatively weak link between admissions, recruitment and so forth and the instructional offerings we are able to provide to students, partly because there really is not a link financially between the amount of students the program has and the amount of money it gets. So, we need to create a better context for making these instructional investments, looking at what we are trying to get to in terms of undergraduate enrollment, get some stability and predictability and try to resolve some of the supply and demand problems which have been vexing us. We have many students who want a certain major, cannot get it, show up somewhere else, create issues over there. So, one goal, as we move forward, is to try to figure out how to make these allocations of faculty lines help satisfy student interest as much as possible.

On research and scholarship – again the emphasis is on positioning emerging opportunities. Last year when we created the little research and scholarship pool, the Provost asked the Research Council to give some advice as to how to think about allocating that, and, the advice that came back was to consider cluster hiring where appropriate to promote synergy. I think, again, Paul's presentation on renewable energy is a great example of where faculty in different areas can work together. Interdisciplinary planning and hiring is very important, although we have to acknowledge that faculty have to have a home, there have to be fair evaluation practices and so forth, and, to look at performance, not only to respect past performance but also to look at performance in terms of what it sets you up for, what it makes you competitive for as you look forward. So, this leaves us with two allocation paths on the research and scholarship side. One is what we are calling an RFP process. This is for the research and scholarship pool which combines the 8 from last year and an additional 12 positions from the new ones – so 20 positions. And, the Deans are just now submitting proposals for those with an emphasis on specific opportunities, whether it is something like renewable energy, or whether it is finding an opportunity to provide leadership in an area of doctoral education or whatever it is – specify the opportunity, make reference to who cares about it, demonstrate through use of benchmarking data and AQAD results and other external kinds of testimonials why we are

well prepared to take advantage of the opportunity; show the benefits of interdisciplinary, where they exist, and be very specific for cost sharing and the outcomes and the consequences. This is sort of a venture-capital approach to making allocations, open to any kind of research and scholarship activity. The other path is more performance based. We want to continue to look at recent trends, the benchmarking data that the departments gathered last year. Also, because of the luck of the calendar, this is the year in which the National Research Council's study of graduate programs is being conducted. That is a unique opportunity, so we want to take advantage of that as well. There will be a number of our programs that will be showing good strength in the NRC results, and we want to have some allocations that respect that for programs that are not covered in the NRC study to use the benchmarking and other data to really take advantage of building strength where it already exists.

So here is the layout of the numbers, the 40 or so replacement positions that we expect; those 27 positions previously allocated, not yet hired; those searches need to be on full-steam. In addition, the research and scholarship pool carried over and a few spousal positions. So, even before talking about the 57 new ones for this year, it is going to be almost 80 searches possible, which is a lot of searches. So, to that, the plan is to take the 57 available new, and at this time cut it in half, roughly, take 29 of them and use them as follows: the 12 added to the research and scholarship pool to total 20; 12 for the performance pool which will be held pending the NRC results; another 5 or so to deal with remaining instructional deficits that may come up as we do this year's update to the analysis. So, doing all that gets us to perhaps a 108 searches. That is a huge year. That would be, certainly in modern times, a record hiring year.

This is a lot of activity in terms of faculty hiring. The remaining 28 from the 57 we have would be held back for a little bit, some in case we need a few more spousals. A significant number are held for the results of the curriculum review, the Gen. Ed. review, and the 5 for what are called emerging opportunities which means we do not know what will happen and you want to have a little something in your pocket. But, the other reason to hold some of these is that it is not yet clear what next year's budget will look like. It is not yet clear how many Amherst 250 positions will be possible. We want this program to be continuing, to be ramping along, and not come to any sudden discontinuities.

Finally, the timeline – back in early September, the Provost started all of this with a formal memo, met with the Deans. Actually, for several weeks now these RFP's have been out there. Deans have been preparing them and sending them in. Around about now, as I said, we have just got the first draft of the vacancy analysis. The Deans have been submitting their hiring plans all week. The RFP allocations could begin at anytime. We have some questions about some of them, but this will be an ongoing process. And, we will be doing the instructional analysis updates probably next week to get a look at if there are additional holes we have to try to fill. By the middle of the month, we will probably be able to act on those. And, then somewhere around – now it looks like February when the NRC results are reported – we will be able to move into the performance pool.

So, that is where we stand. It is a lot of activity going on. Much of this seems very familiar because it is more or less the approach we have taken over the past three years – some of it is a new twist or a new angle on how to do it.