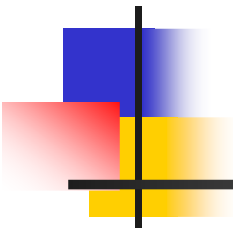


Accreditation & Planning



Context and Process

Presentation to the Faculty Senate

March 13, 2008



1 Purpose, 2 Processes

- Overarching purpose: Fulfill our mission as the Commonwealth's flagship public university
 - Reaccreditation
 - New England Association of Schools and Colleges
 - Every ten years
 - Strategic Plan
 - Respond to Trustee mandate
 - Prepare for next step in campus's development



Past Lessons

- Reaccreditation is important opportunity for the campus
 - Past reviews have helped frame key questions
 - Broad participation brings community together
- Planning more episodic, impact less clear
 - Approaches sometimes poorly integrated
 - Effort sometimes wasted or duplicated
 - Products sometimes little used
- Convergence of reaccreditation and planning is opportunity to do better



Focus on “Flagship”

- Historical
 - Innovator and leader
 - Foundation for others
- Leadership and Excellence
 - Expectation of quality
 - National and international context
- Comprehensiveness
 - Full range of academic programs
 - Strong presence in all areas of inquiry
- Stature
 - Standard-bearer for public higher education



Reaccreditation

- Last visit: Fall 1998
 - Next visit originally scheduled for Nov. 2008
 - NEASC granted postponement to Nov. 2009
- Requirements
 - Institutional Self-Study
 - Respond to 172 topics within eleven standards
 - Broad engagement of the campus community
 - Campus visit
 - External team of experts



Reaccreditation

- Frame of reference
 - Previous findings
 - Starting point for team's review
 - Changing standards
 - Shifts in emphasis on part of accreditors
 - Changing environment
 - Societal and other factors affecting how the campus approaches its review
 - Institutional issues
 - Specific challenges facing the institution



Previous Findings

- 1998–99 review identified four issues requiring follow-up:
 - Campus/system governance relationships
 - Assessment of student learning outcomes
 - Library collections, staffing and facilities
 - Deferred maintenance and



Governance

- “Evaluate the effectiveness of ... governance relationships between the system’s trustees and the University, particularly as it affects the ‘flagship’ status.”
 - Assessment in five-year interim report:
 - “Whatever previous concerns may have existed about the status and delegated authority to the Amherst campus..., these no longer exist, and the ... campus is fully satisfied with the autonomy and authority that the President and Trustees have provided to sustain the campus and its flagship status.”



Outcomes Assessment

- “Developing direct measures of student learning in both general education and in the major,” and “systematically applying information obtained through its evaluation activities to inform institutional planning.”
 - Assessment in five-year interim report:
 - “The campus has developed one of the most extensive student assessment programs in the Northeast, and it continues its efforts to imbed assessment into the institutional culture.”



Library

- “The University has not been able to keep pace with the demands to meet the challenges required of a research library.”
 - Assessment in five-year interim report:
 - “Campus plans to increase support for the University Library ... have been profoundly undercut by the decline and then elimination” of direct state library support. “As a result, neither collection development nor staffing have increased. ...The campus in general assumes that the Library will have the opportunity to rebuild in coming years.”



Facilities

- “...Serious concern regarding the facilities’ suitability and adequacy to support UMass Amherst’s strategic vision and objectives.” State funding “has been relatively meager,” and “the institution lacks the management flexibility to oversee capital projects efficiently and promptly.”
 - Assessment in five-year interim report:
 - “While much remains to be done for its



Faculty

- Early retirement has “transferred significant portions of teaching and service onto remaining faculty members.” The campus “needs to ‘re-equilibrate’ its faculty resources ... in accordance with need and demand.”
- Assessment in five-year interim report:
 - “Two early retirement programs and limited faculty hiring because of budget cuts have had their impact,” resulting in “a loss of over 100 faculty.”



Changing Expectations

- New emphases in 2006 NEASC standards
 - Mission and governance
 - Capacity
 - Evaluation, evaluation, evaluation
 - Direct outcomes
 - “Culture of evidence”
 - Accountability to stakeholders
- External expectations
 - Accountability
 - Cost



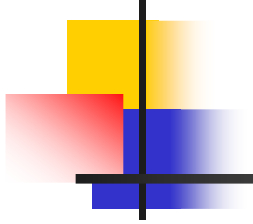
Institutional Issues

- Faculty Renewal
 - Amherst 250
 - Instructional need
 - Research opportunities
- Facilities Improvement
 - Challenges of “self-funding”
 - Planning for state investment
 - Governor’s higher education capital bond bill
 - Life Sciences initiative
- First-Year Student Experience
 - Advising and early success
 - General Education
 - Impact on admissions competitiveness



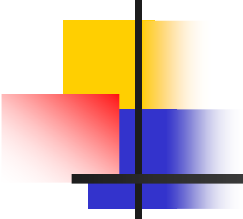
Accreditation Approach

- Choice of method to structure Self-Study
 - Standard-by-standard
 - “Self-study with areas of emphasis”
 - Focus appraisal and planning on a set of “salient and challenging issues” that warrant “intensive examination” under conditions and circumstances that “make the timing ‘right’ to engage in self-examination with respect to primarily these selected issues.”
 - Circumstances seem right to pursue “areas of emphasis” approach



F

F³


$$\frac{F}{F^3}$$

The Flagship Challenge

- What understandings and expectations does our flagship status imply?
 - Where do we stand in terms of meeting those expectations?
 - What is necessary to secure our role as a nationally recognized flagship in the top tier of public universities in the country?
-

F^1 : Faculty Renewal

F^2 : Facilities

F^3 : First-Year Student Experience



Link to Planning

- Campus in need of clear plan
 - End of Amherst 250 in sight
 - Decisions to drive capital planning
 - Enrollment challenges
- Trustee mandate
 - “Strong and nationally-recognized flagship is essential.”
 - Board “commits itself to moving UMass Amherst into the top tier” of public universities
 - Campus charged to develop “outline” of a strategic plan ... “that the new Chancellor will direct.”
 - Requested by July, 2008



Link to Planning

- Possible components of strategic plan outline
 - Definition of “flagship”
 - Who are they?
 - What distinguishes them?
 - Where UMass Amherst stands
 - Reputation
 - Resources
 - Students
 - Research impact
 - Key issues defining future success
 - Faculty renewal, facilities, first-year experience
 - Context for planning at school and college level



Next Steps

- Reaccreditation
 - Finalize plan, consult with NEASC
 - Organize Self-Study
 - Relationship between standards and emphasis areas
 - Recruit participants
 - Steering Committee
 - External advisory committee
 - Working groups for emphasis areas
 - Working groups for standards
 - Engage community
- Strategic Plan
 - Work with Rules Committee on outline