INTERIM REPORT

OF THE

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC OVERSIGHT

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Report to the Faculty Senate
Ad Hoc Council on Strategic Oversight (AHCSO)

(1) Background, rationale, and Faculty Senate charge to AHCSO:

The Ad Hoc Committee on Strategic Oversight (AHCSO) was established by vote of the Faculty Senate on May 5, 2009 (amended May 26, 2009) (Sen. Doc. No. 09-042A) with the following rationale and purpose:

Rationale:
The 2008-2009 academic year was challenging for the University of Massachusetts Amherst in terms of budget cuts and ongoing financial uncertainty, proposals for reorganization, and strategic planning. The campus responded in a variety of ways: formation of a broadly representative task force to advise on matters of budget planning; formation of another task force to consider options for school/college reorganization; and development of a short-term budget strategy to guide the campus through a chaotic year. These short-term measures were accompanied by Chancellor Holub’s “Framework for Excellence: The Flagship Report, Spring 2009” (www.umass.edu/chancellor/budget_planning_041309.html), which set the stage for a subsequent consultative process to assist the campus in understanding its goals and options in a more broadly systematic way. This consultative process moved forward in two ways. First, Chancellor Holub had requested a formal review of the “Framework for Excellence” during the Fall 2009 semester. Second, academic and administrative units were asked to develop their own plans within the campus framework.

Committee membership included the following representatives:
1) Ten Faculty and/or Librarians, with at least one from each college, school and the library, to be appointed by the Rules Committee of the Faculty Senate;
2) The Secretary of the Faculty Senate or designee;
3) The President of the MSP or designee;
4) The Faculty Delegate to the Board of Trustees;
5) The Chair of the Rules Committee or designee;
6) The Chair of the Academic Priorities Council or designee;
7) The Chair of the Program and Budget Council or designee;
8) The Chair of the Research Council or designee;
9) The Student Trustee;
10) The President of the Graduate Student Senate;
11) The President of the Student Government Association;
12) Two ex officio non-voting members of the central administration, appointed by the Chancellor; and
13) Two ex officio non-voting members of the central administration, appointed by the Rules Committee.

Purpose:
The Ad Hoc Committee on Strategic Oversight was charged to:
• Lead the faculty discussion of the “Framework for Excellence,” involving appropriate councils and committees;
• Develop a coordinated and unified response to the framework;
• Monitor the development of administrative and academic unit plans, and lead the faculty discussion of and response to them.
Meetings:

AHCSO met three times in Fall semester 2011 and one time in Spring semester 2012, with two additional subcommittee meetings and was co-chaired by Amilcar Shabazz (Rules Committee) and Nancy Cohen (SPHHS representative). At the first meeting on September 23, 2011, the committee discussed the charge to the committee, and began to collect input about the Framework and approach to the year's committee activities in the context of the chancellor search. On September 26, 2011, committee chairs joined the Rules Committee meeting to meet with Vice Chancellor Diacon to discuss the Framework indicators. A subcommittee met on September 27, 2011, to discuss how best to collect feedback and data regarding the Framework, and address interpretation of the committee charge within the context of a new chancellor search. The committee met on October 7, 2011, and discussed data needs and input in the context of the chancellor search. At the committee meeting on November 30, 2011, Bryan Harvey presented data comparing UMass to the Top 25 Ratings of *US News and World Report*, and a discussion about the data ensued. On March 12, 2012, the committee held its final meeting of the academic year to review and interpret current UMass benchmark data compared to the framework and US News goals.

We held extensive discussions about the most important contributions the committee could make during this year of transition with a new chancellor search in process. We focused on providing a status report on the progress of the university toward meeting the benchmarks identified in the Framework. Much discussion was centered on the key goal in the Framework related to joining the AAU. While the aspiration described in the document is not to join the AAU per se, but to match the excellence of those public universities who are in the AAU, the distinction between the two was not uniformly understood among constituent faculty and students. In October, when President Caret indicated that his goal for UMass is to move to the top 25 public universities, the committee reviewed related indicators from US News and World Report. The committee did not address response to academic unit plans in this academic year, as the specifics of those plans may change when a new administration begins in the near future.

The following information is a summary of current data available related to the goals and 12 components of the Framework, along with indicators from the US News Top 25 ratings, with committee commentary on the progress the university is making toward the benchmarks and what is needed to achieve these goals. These data come from the UMass OIR websites, the Center for Measuring University Performance website ([http://mup.asu.edu/MUP-DataViewer2010.xls](http://mup.asu.edu/MUP-DataViewer2010.xls)), the data that Bryan Harvey shared with us at our November meeting on the US News Top 25, and the data from the Framework for Excellence Scorecard distributed by Vice Chancellor Diacon in February 2012. Academic Analytics data for AAU and AAU-potential universities was also utilized.

I. Framework Vision:

The Framework states, "UMass Amherst... aspires to be among the very best public research universities in the country, and more specifically it aspires to match the excellence of the public universities that are members of the prestigious Association of American Universities (AAU)."

Using the Academic Analytics data, if UMass were in the AAU, out of the 59 AAU members, it would rank 47 in faculty, 46 in books, 48 in articles, 50 in citations, 48 in awards, 50 in number of grants, and 52 in grant dollars. UMass is rated an "AAU-Potential" university in the Academic Analytics database. Of these 65 colleges with that designation, UMass ranks 16
UMass Amherst thus already demonstrates achievements that are within the realm of AAU status. As all of the indicators emanate from the faculty body and its achievements, the committee considers that growing the number of faculty is a central goal toward achieving further progress related to AAU indicators.

There was considerable discussion in the committee about whether AAU inclusion is a goal that best represents the campus' desires to advance the research mission, and if there are other qualities of the university that may be brought forth as part of a vision, such as affordability, other indicators of excellence such as honors college expansion, or values such as sustainability or community outreach. The committee did not redefine goals, suggest a vision, or recommend specific changes, but would recommend, if strategic planning is undertaken in the future, that a discussion on broader goals and vision be considered.

II. The 12 Components of the Framework

1. Faculty Development
   a. Increase the size of the faculty to 1200 by 2020
      In Fall 2009, UMass had 972 faculty; it has risen slowly to 978 in Fall 10, and 993 in Fall 11. This growth has not matched the recent growth in the number of students. The committee recommends that faculty hiring remain a critically high priority for future achievement. The role of lecturers in the university's growth should also be examined in future planning.
   b. Increase faculty compensation at all ranks to the average of our national peer universities, and eventually to the average of similar universities in the Northeast.
      Scorecard salary data indicates that UMass is below its peers in salaries for assistant professors and full professors. The extraordinary merit process implemented in Spring 2012 may rectify this imbalance. The committee recommends examining these data after this first year of merit process, with discussion of other approaches that can be used if needed as well to raise faculty salaries commensurate with peers.
   c. The committee reviewed faculty awards and National Academy members. These have been relatively stable since 2001.

2. Research and Creative Development
   a. Double federal research awards/expenditures (up from $80 million).
      Federal research excluding ARRA funding has been relatively stable at approximately $80 - $95 million from 2006-11. Total sponsored research outside of ARRA has also been stable at $130-$135 million from 2007-11. The committee recommends continued emphasis on expanding the research
enterprise, but notes that the goal to double the awards may be difficult to achieve within the current environment.

b. *Increase post-doctoral appointments by 50% (up from 160)*

The number of postdoctorates has increased from 178 in 2007 (rank 53) to 224 in 08 (rank 41). It has declined annually since then, with estimates from the Scorecard of 198 in 2011.

3. Graduate Education

a. *Increase doctorates awarded to 375 degrees/year (30% increase from 2007-2008).*

The number of doctorates awarded has fallen from 293 in 2007 (rank 43) to 291 in 2008 to 255 in 2009 (rank 47). It has risen in 2010 and 2011 to 281 and 282, respectively. Overall, the number of doctorates awarded has been relatively stable from 2007-11.

b. *Eliminate roadblocks that increase time to degree.*

While the doctoral review process that is ongoing will be examining ways to increase the graduation rate for doctoral students, the committee notes that student concerns about housing and health care may also limit successes in this category if not addressed sufficiently.

The Scorecard notes a goal to increase the competitiveness of graduate stipends, and indicates that the TA stipend has increased from $18.15 in FY06 to $21.89 in FY12. Graduate funding increases commensurate with the cost of living will be important for competitiveness and future growth. The committee notes that the demand for TAs has increased dramatically recently due to General Education reform and increasing undergraduate student body, but the supply of TAs has been stable. This pattern is not consistent with achieving the goals to increase doctorates, stipends, and competitiveness.

4. Undergraduate Education

a. *Improve First Year Experience programming/offering.*

The Scorecard contains statistics regarding the rapid expansion of the new Residential First Year Experience from 300 programs in AY10 to 1234 in AY11, other offerings such as Common Read, Freshman Convocation, and First Year Intelligence, and Residential Academic Program (RAP) growth from 43 in 2008 to 58 programs in 2010. First Year Seminars increased from 351 in AY10 to 641 in AY11.

Informal feedback from students indicates that these programs are well received; the committee recommends a more complete evaluation be undertaken from both the student and faculty perspective.
b. *Expand undergraduate research opportunities.*

The Scorecard displays data from the Office of Undergraduate Research, with fluctuations of students from 70 in AY08 to 95 in AY11 and information about the First Year Research Experience in CNS with 18 students. There are many other potential indicators, such as number of undergraduate theses, independent study credits, honors projects, etc. It would be of interest to track funding toward undergraduate research initiatives as well.

c. *Make General Education offerings vibrant and relevant.*

The General Education program has been highly modified since 2009, with the conversion of 3 credit GenEds to 4 credits and the implementation of the Integrative Experience requirement in 2012. While this expansion can be beneficial to students, the mandates for smaller class sizes and fourth contact hours have not come with funding and space to address the additional sections needed. The committee recommends that the decentralized funding model be reexamined to ensure that it is meeting the current demand.

5. Residential Life/Student Affairs

a. *Strengthen academic-student affairs connections and*

b. *Offer small enrollment academic courses in residence halls*

With the rapid expansion of First Year Experience Programs described above and other co-curricular academic offerings, there is a need to increase communication between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs, and to develop models in which faculty are involved in decisions. It would also be important to outline funding to support the model.

6. Diversity

a. *Expand efforts to recruit students from communities with known diversity and*

b. *Establish feeder programs in targeted areas (esp. Springfield).*

The undergraduate ALANA population at UMass has been relatively stable at 20% in 2009, 20.9% in 2010, and 20.9% in 2011 (the categorization of ALANA had changed in 2010). The committee recommends that a concerted initiative to increase the diversity on campus be formulated.

c. *Increase enrollment of international students.*

There were 255 international undergraduates in 2009, rising to 378 in 2011. This increase in students puts UMass back to the level it was in 1997.

d. *Ensure diversity representation in all search committees.*

The Scorecard presents data on ALANA faculty and staff from 2007-2011, with small increases from 2007-2010, and a decrease in 2011. There is much data in the 2010-11 Affirmative Action Plan that the committee did not review.
for this report regarding trends in hiring related to females and minorities, but should be reviewed in the context of future planning specific for advances in faculty and staff diversity.

7. Facilities and Physical Plant

While there were not specific data reviewed for this section, the committee noted that there has been much progress related to new facilities on campus, along with the development of a comprehensive master plan. There are building issues that have emerged that were not included the Framework report, such as the University Health Services building and Athletic infrastructure to support the new FBS football status. While the Framework does note that renovations to space are needed, it does not include a specific plan to address the many maintenance and deferred maintenance issues that exist on campus.

8. State Support

There was no data or specific benchmarks in this area for the Committee to review.

9. Enrollment and Demographics

a. *Increase undergraduate enrollment to 22,500 by 2020.*

The undergraduate enrollment has grown from 19,120 in 2007 to 20,126 in 2010 and 20,562 in 2011. This 7.5% growth since 2007 has been at a faster rate than the 2% growth in tenure stream faculty. A further 10% growth without concurrent investment in faculty and teaching assistants, or parallel growth in classrooms, residence halls, and other facilities, will not be likely to result in excellence as an outcome. The committee recommends that future plans identify a target FTE student/tenure system faculty ratio to achieve.

b. *Grow the number of out-of-state students to 6,500.*

The Scorecard indicates that out-of-state student enrollment was stable from 2007-2010 at about 3200 students. This grew 32% in 2011 to 4351 students. There have been many commitments of funds based on out-of-state student revenue, including plans to finance new faculty hires from these funds. If the formula for returning revenue to colleges changes, or the number of students predicted does not materialize, there is the possibility that overcommitment of funds may occur.

10. Development

a. *Double the annual fund*

The annual giving level has been stable over the past decade, ranging about $20 million to $30 million. It was $30 million in 2008 (rank 91), decreasing to $23 million in 09 (rank 104), and up to $58 million in 2010, due to a large gift to the university.
b. *Double the university’s endowment in ten years*

Endowment assets have been variable over the past few years, at $179 M in 2008 (rank 107), down to $160M in 2009. Despite the lower value, the university's rank increased to 92 in 2009.

11. Outreach

Several of the goals in the outreach section of the Framework relate to distance learning, summer school offerings, and expanded groups meeting on campus. The committee did not review CPE or other data related to these goals. The goal also includes the establishment of a permanent office in Springfield. There are many other potential outreach goals that are not addressed in the Framework that may relate to specific outcomes or audiences reached, furthering student engagement in communities and related issues such as transportation, or addressing faculty rewards for outreach and other staffing issues. If the Framework will be modified in the future, additional outreach goals may be important.

12. Communications and University Relations

There were no benchmark data related to the goals concerning communications and university relations for the committee to evaluate. The committee suggests that engaging a broader delegation of legislators may be a step that could be incorporated into future plans.

III. *US News and World Report* Criteria for Top 25 Public Universities

UMass's ranking in the *US News and World Report* for Public Universities has declined from 2008-2010 from ranking 45 to 52, and improved since then, to ranking 42 in 2012. *US News* uses 7 broad criteria areas for its selection of the Top 25 Public Universities:

1. Graduation Rate Performance

   This varies by cohort, but there was a large improvement in 2012 based on the 2004 cohort.

2. Undergraduate Academic Reputation

   This reputational rating is based on peers and High School counselors. This has been generally stable over the years.

3. 6-year Graduation and 1-year Retention Rate

   There has been general improvement past decade, but it will be harder to improve as levels approach the norm.

4. Alumni Giving

   This has been variable each year; but, overall, our ranking has declined from decade ago.
5.  Financial Resources

These data are not identified. UMass’ ranking has increased over the last 3 years (i.e., a decline in relative financial resources).

6.  Student Selectivity

This factor includes acceptance rate, the percent of the students who are in the top 10% of their high school class, and SAT/ACT scores. There has been general progress over the decade in these indicators.

7.  Faculty Resources

This includes faculty compensation, percent of faculty with highest degree, percent of full-time faculty, student/faculty ratio, and percent of classes <20 and >50. Our Rank improved in the past year, after declining the previous two years, and may be due to the increased number of first-year seminars and reduced class sizes in writing sections.

Overall, the items emphasized in the *US News* relate to undergraduate teaching and alumni, and many indicators are different from those used in the Framework. If a strategic planning process will be undertaken in the future, the committee recommends that faculty and students be engaged in the process to set a vision and that a new plan clarifies which of the Framework, *US News*, or other indicators are priorities. If planning is undertaken, it is recommended that a plan address aspirant goals based on the data and input available, and that action plans, budgets and evaluations ensue to track achievement of milestones.