Economic Opportunity and Access

An analysis of participation of low-income students at UMass Amherst

University of Massachusetts Amherst
Office of Academic Planning and Assessment
Access and Mission

- UMass has had economic opportunity at the core of its mission for generations
  - Land Grant origins
  - GI Bill
  - Baby Boom
  - Knowledge-based economy

- As the new century opens, has UMass kept pace?
Understanding “Low Income”

- UMass does not require income information from students
  - Income estimates derived from annual ACE survey of entering students

- What is “low income”?
  - Many possible definitions
  - We chose fairly strict standard
    - Federal TRIO eligibility (150% of poverty level)
    - $25,575 for family of four in 2000
Estimated “Low-Income” Representation Among Entering Freshmen

UMass Amherst

All public universities
Estimated Representation of Freshmen with Family Incomes Below $40,000 (in 2000 Dollars)
Father’s Education — No College

All public universities

UMass Amherst

0% 5% 10% 15% 20% 25% 30% 35% 40%

Mother's Education — No College

All public universities
UMass Amherst

% of students with mother's education no college
Conclusions

- Study only describes situation at UMass and other public universities
- Policy debate continues:
  - Which students should be assisted
  - How assistance should be offered
  - Roles of different kinds of institutions
Conclusions

- UMass Amherst admits significant numbers of low-income students
- UMA compares favorably with other public universities
- Trend has persisted despite changes in admissions and finances over the past 15 years