ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

UNIVERSITY RELATIONS AND ADVANCEMENT COUNCIL

ACADEMIC YEAR 2021-22

Presented at the
817th Regular Meeting of the Faculty Senate
November 17, 2022

COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

Philippe Baillargeon, Languages, Literatures, and Cultures (Chair)
David Biancamano, Athletics
Emmanuel Buzay, Languages, Literatures, and Cultures
Jeffery Clark, Accounting
Arwen Duffy, Vice-Chancellor for University Advancement
Farshid Hajir, Mathematics (Designee of the Provost)
John Kennedy, Vice-Chancellor for University Relations
Om Parkash Dhankher, Stockbridge School of Agriculture
Anthony Paik, Faculty Senate
Aaron Rubinstein, Library
Hava Siegelman, Computer Science
Ruth-Ellen Verock-O’Loughlin, TECS
Gabriella Wiever, Chemistry
Dara Wier, English
A. Introduction

2021-2022 was again a transitional year for the University Relations and Advancement Council (URAC) who benefited from the addition of a few new active members. The Advancement Office was again experiencing a period of transition as the campus was in the silent phase for the next capital campaign and a search was initiated by the Chancellor for the position of Vice Chancellor for University Advancement during the summer of 2021. This successful search led to the hiring of Arwen Duffy, who came to UMass from the University of Southern California. The Chair of the URAC was a member of this Search Committee. 2021-2022 was also a year of continuous added responsibilities for the University Relations Office, who played a crucial role in the orchestration of the Covid-19 crisis response on campus and in the Amherst community, and in the coordination to the response to various crises related to incidents of sexual harassment on campus, and racist emails targeting the black student community, while working on the redesign of the University’s web ecosystem.

B. Meetings

October 7, 2021: John Kennedy, Vice Chancellor for University Relations, provided an update on the work of his division, addressing the latest incidents related sexual assaults on campus, and racist emails targeting the University’s black student community. University Relations is working on maintaining an appropriate level of transparency, which can prove challenging given the delicate nature of these incidents. University Relations has continued to work with the State Health Department, and is maintaining the Covid-testing center, but the new focus will be placed on vaccination. Key Nuttall, Chief Marketing Officer, provided an update on the unified technical model for the main websites of the University. Claudia Donald, Executive Director of Digital Strategy, provided an in-depth presentation on the project to unify the institution’s websites.

December 2, 2021: The URAC members welcomed Arwen Duffy as the new Vice Chancellor for University Advancement. Arwen Duffy, Vice Chancellor for Advancement, provided an update on the capital campaign and its timeline for the benefit of the many newcomers to the council. Crystal Daugherty, Executive Director of Principal Gifts, provided an overview of fundraising initiatives with donations of one million dollars or more. Matthew Carlyon, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Constituent Programs, provided an overview on fundraising at the Schools’, Colleges’, and Units’ level.

February 3, 2022: Arwen Duffy, Vice Chancellor for Advancement, provided an overview of the Advancement division and offered an update on the timeline of the campaign. Bandith Vorasane, Executive Director of Advancement Marketing and Communications, provided an overview of the Case Statement Development. Deb Goodhind, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Alumni Relations, provided an overview of alumni engagement. Homecoming proved to be highly successful with an increase of 20% in attendance.

March 3, 2022: John Kennedy, Vice Chancellor for University Relations, provided an update of the University Relations division. The University Relations is slowly moving away from “pandemic mode” but is still very involved with Covid initiatives and communication at UMass and in the community. University Relations is promoting the Chancellor’s UMass Flex initiative, continuing its work on the University branding, and fine-tuning the University’s CRM system in conjunction with the IT department. Chris Dunn, Executive Director of Government Relations and Special Advisor to the Chancellor, provided an update on the effort deployed in the field of Government Relations mostly in regard of the University’s budget.

May 5, 2022: Arwen Duffy, Vice Chancellor for Advancement, explained the role of the UMass Foundation regarding the Advancement division. The Vice Chancellor of Advancement stressed the increase in major gifts that occurred in the last year, which could see the average yearly fundraising yield doubled by the end of June 2022. Marco Monoc, Executive Director of Foundation Relations, provided an overview of the role and services offered by the Foundation.
C. Conclusion

In the light of the new stability in the leadership position in the University Advancement division, and the de-escalation of the pandemic that has occupied for the last two years the Office of University Relations, the Council plans to continue to work with both Vice-Chancellors to provide faculty perspective and, when appropriate, to encourage faculty involvement.

Respectfully submitted,

Philippe Baillargeon
Chair