

Intercampus Faculty Council  
Meeting of 10 December 2014 at the Amherst Campus

Present: Ernest May (president, Amherst), Marilyn Billings (Amherst), MJ Peterson (Amherst), Susan Krauss Whitbourne (Amherst), Eve Buzawa (Lowell), Michael Carter (Lowell), Leslie Shaw (Worcester)

Minutes of the meeting on 17 September 2014 were accepted.

Campus reports:

**Amherst -**

- Capital investment is focused on reaching specific goals for destination of choice, partner of choice: life sciences, promotion of advanced manufacturing, team-based and flipped classroom instruction in Integrated Learning Center.
- Negotiations of contracts with the staff unions are stalled on various issues. The campus commissioned a study by Buck Associates to identify ways in which employment rules for professional and classified staff could be simplified and modernized; the need is particularly acute in information technology where current rules make it difficult to offer pay that will attract competent, trained people. However the rules on job classifications and hiring are embedded in state law and the state's general civil service law. Though the University of Maryland has long had a waiver and Scott Brown gave the University of Wisconsin a waiver, there has been no movement in that direction here. One member thought that the rules cannot be serving state government in general very well, but hit the university particularly hard because of the differences in organization of workplaces between it and most state agencies.
- Katherine Newman, the new provost, is pushing a variety of ideas for improving the intellectual life on campus, including a fall Fresher (First Year) Seminar to be offered through the colleges, capped at 19 and exploring an intellectual topic of interest to a variety of majors within the college. Her vision is an academic endeavor but others on campus feel that a somewhat different sort of seminar, one focusing on study skills and navigating the college environment, would be at least equally useful.
- The Library's open access/open educational materials efforts are gaining momentum; the campus is seriously discussing adoption of an open access policy covering journal articles written by faculty.

Lowell:

- The new Provost came from Northeastern, where there is no faculty union, and is still getting used to the governance structure.
- Search for new Dean of Management has begun.
- The most notable new initiative is the agreement with the government of Kuwait to help them add sciences and engineering to an existing management college and integrate the programs to train people for an economy diversified away from oil. Diversifying away is a major government policy goal, and the government is also aware that it lacks domestic capacity to maintain its high

tech military equipment. As part of a deal, Raytheon is providing up to \$50 million to assist in this, and the Lowell campus has been engaged to manage the creation of the new science and engineering faculties.

- This is not a UMass Lowell campus in another country, a type of enterprise that can work if there is sufficient money but often fails. Rather, UMass Lowell is providing help to establish new faculties in an already existing Kuwaiti university.

#### Worcester

- The campus is hiring a Vice Chancellor for Business Development to oversee licensing of technology and spinning-off of startup firms.
- The Clinical Translational Science grant is up for renewal.
- The campus is negotiating a contract with the Veterans' Administration to operate an outpatient clinic in Worcester; at present, veterans needing those services have to go to either Leeds or Boston; this will provide better service to a significant veteran population. The building will replace the MA Department of Transportation facility that had been next to the campus.
- Victor Ambrose was a winner of a 2014 Breakthrough Award, a \$3 million prize funded by several of the major IT entrepreneurs to honor advances in science.
- With a \$350,000 ACE/Sloan Foundation grant the campus is developing an internal "Vitality Award" program awarding \$5 to 40 thousand to provide midcareer faculty with opportunities to learn new research techniques and revitalize their research programs.
- The open access proposal on campus died because the waiver process was viewed as an obstacle and because faculty were concerned about divergences between the final author version of the paper that would be in the campus repository and the officially-published PDF version. Discussion of where to go now is occurring department-by-department (which is roughly equivalent to college-by-college on the other campuses).

#### General discussions of issues inspired by mention in campus reports

- Ongoing media discussion of on-campus sexual assaults inspired discussion of how to best address the issue. One member thought that an important step would be to get more accurate data about prevalence and circumstances in which sexual assaults occur through campus wide surveys. National questionnaires more effective at acquiring information than the current system of relying primarily on victims reporting an incident to the campus or the local police do exist and could be done on campus. The analysis could also be done on campus.
- Alcohol is at the center of the sexual assault problem. Females need to become more aware of how others can try to push them to drink more than they should as well as understand better why getting too drunk puts them in danger. Males need to be made aware of their behavior and of the consequences for their lives and careers if accused or convicted of sexual assault.
- Mention of several consultant reports led one member to note that the campuses could do more to tap faculty expertise rather than always engage a consulting firm.
- Lowell went to Division I athletics without football; would not have been able to make the move if football had been included.

- The campus is continuing to build on its reputation in ice hockey; Chancellor Meehan had been out on the west coast for a series of alumni events tied to the Lowell-San Diego State hockey game, a game shown on NBC sports

Opportunities for UMass in the upcoming Baker Administration: Conversation with Chancellor Meehan

- The “Here for a reason” campaign is good; it ties the system together while allowing each campus to present its own distinct identity through the reasons it chooses to highlight.
- Meehan is co-chair of Governor-elect Baker’s education transition team with Chairman Thomas, who owns a communications company. The team includes 39-40 people.
- It is particularly interested in hearing about a) what works and is worth replicating or scaling up, b) what are the biggest challenges facing UMass at system and campus level, c) where are the best opportunities for enhancing innovation, efficiency, and good outcomes, what resources of people, facilities, and funding are available, e) what can be done quickly, and d) characteristics to be sought when appointing trustees.
- Baker is “a policy wonk” and interested in comparing campuses to national norms.
- Tax increases are not on the table, but arguments phrased as “provide x appropriation and we will not have to raise fees” are good strategy.
- Baker is receptive to public/private partnerships, particularly in student housing. He will also be interested in finding other ways to reduce state construction costs.
- Ideas floating around include whether to move to a higher fee/higher financial aid model, restructuring of higher education, particularly of the community colleges.
- Some discussion of the composition of the UMass Board of Trustees and of the rule for selecting the chair.
- Also discussion of whether it would be opportune to appoint a successor to the Saxon Commission on Higher Education (which became a vehicle for delinking the UMass system from the State Board of Higher Education) to revisit some UMass/state university/community colleges issues.

Respectfully submitted

MJ Peterson  
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