

# UMBC

AN HONORS UNIVERSITY IN MARYLAND

## Periodic Review Report

University of Maryland Baltimore County

June 1, 2011

Dr. Freeman A. Hrabowski, III, President

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## SECTION ONE: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A brief overview of the institution and a summary of major changes and developments since the decennial accreditation.

Founded in 1966, the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) is a mid-sized public research university located outside of Baltimore, Maryland. UMBC is classified by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching as a high research activity institution. Under the leadership of President Freeman Hrabowski, the University delivers a distinctive undergraduate educational experience characterized by a strong liberal arts and sciences core with graduate programs emphasizing selected areas of engineering, information technology, science, public policy, and human services. The UMBC mission statement reflects the University's aspirations as an Honors University, "integrating teaching, research, and service to benefit the citizens of Maryland." All of its academic programs are offered on the main campus with a few programs offered at the Shade Grove campus. Fall 2010 enrollment of 12,888 included 10,210 undergraduate students (of whom 86.5% were full-time) and 2,678 graduate students (43 % full-time). More than 69% of the 1,499 new freshmen this year declared majors in science and engineering. Fall-to-spring retention rates were 93.5% for all new freshmen and 94.2% for African American freshmen. UMBC has continued to pursue growth in research grants and contracts in order to strengthen our culture as a research university. The campus also plays a proactive role in the region's economic development through sponsored research activities and continued development of *bwtech@umbc* as a center for new business incubation and university-industry-government collaboration.

The University is a maturing institution that has advanced since the *2006 Self Study* in terms of enrollments, research funding, graduate programs, and academic selectivity. The character of the campus has changed with new and renovated facilities including the Performing Arts and Humanities Building and the Retriever Learning Center. Distinguished faculty research across the disciplines and innovative research programs have resulted in an increase in external funding and a growing national reputation as a major research institution. The University has also gained recognition for its highly successful efforts to create a campus environment that encourages the advancement of underrepresented minorities and women.

In the past five years, UMBC has received several types of acclaim and recognition for its successes. We were very proud to be recognized in 2010 as the country's #1 "Up and Coming" national university for the second year in a row by *U.S. News and World Report*, which also ranked us fourth nationally for the faculty's "unusual commitment to undergraduate teaching," tied with Stanford and just behind Dartmouth, Princeton, and Yale. Additionally, the Princeton Review recently identified UMBC as one of the nation's "Best Value" universities and ranked us second on its "Most Diverse Student Populations" list. UMBC was also included in Kiplinger's "Top 100 Best Values in Public Colleges 2009 - 2010," based on academic quality

and affordable education. Further, in the recent book *Higher Education? How Colleges Are Wasting Our Money and Failing Our Kids - and What We Can Do About It*, the authors<sup>1</sup> relay, "Of all the research universities we've visited, [UMBC] is the place that has most capably connected research with undergraduate education." These accolades are indirect but important indicators that UMBC is fulfilling its academic mission and moving toward national prominence as a research university. The most significant impact of this positive recognition is more selective undergraduate admissions: we have maintained quality while increasing the size of our incoming classes. Students have the opportunity to engage in cutting edge research with world-class faculty, who are attracted to UMBC because of its national and international reputation.

In order to sustain its success, UMBC has invested significant time and effort in its planning processes over the past five years, guided by the *Strategic Framework for 2016* as its chief planning document. This *Periodic Review Report* employs the results of UMBC's planning and assessment activities to identify the progress the campus has made since the 2006 MSCHE reaffirmation of the decennial accreditation as well as the challenges that remain. Fiscal developments over the past few years at the national and state level provide an important backdrop to the *Periodic Review Report*. UMBC, along with other University System of Maryland (USM) institutions, faced continuing budget cuts and reductions in State support between 2008 and 2011, which have intensified the need for an effective strategic planning and budgeting process. Given these continuing resource constraints, the campus has made difficult choices in order to continue to move forward. Alignment of budget decisions with planning recommendations through the *Focusing Our Resources for Results* (2009) update to the *Framework for 2016* has played a critical role in this effort. Assessment of the effectiveness of existing and new initiatives has proved essential to ensuring wise use of limited resources. While considerable progress on assessment of student learning outcomes and institutional effectiveness has been made at UMBC, the campus remains committed to ensuring that what is learned from the assessment process is employed in future planning and decision-making. Toward that end, updating various campus information systems and developing a central integrated data warehouse have contributed to efficiencies and improved decision-making support.

### **The *Periodic Review Report***

In preparation for writing the *Periodic Review Report*, teams of UMBC faculty and administrators attended MSCHE workshops in 2009 - 2010, which provided a shared understanding of the review for the campus. The report has been compiled largely by working groups under the direction of four co-chairs. An Executive Steering Committee, consisting of faculty, staff, and students guided the process. The process was an inclusive one with a draft of the *Periodic Review Report* reviewed and approved by the Executive Steering Committee and then posted on the Provost's website for community review and comment. The draft report also was shared with the Council of Deans and representatives from Faculty Senate, the Professional Staff Senate, the Non-Exempt Staff Senate, the Graduate Student Association and

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew Hacker, a Queens College professor and author, and Claudia Dreifus, a *New York Times* writer and Columbia University professor

the Student Government Association. The process of compiling the *Periodic Review Report* provided an opportunity for the campus to examine its progress in advancing our educational and research goals and addressing continuing challenges.

The 2006 Middle States Evaluation Team found UMBC to be in full compliance with all standards of excellence. The Evaluation Team Report did, however, make one recommendation related to improving library resources and services. In addition, the Commission requested a 2008 Progress Report detailing (1) the implementation of a documented process to assess the achievement of institutional and program-level goals and student learning outcomes, (2) direct evidence of student achievement of program-level and general education student learning outcomes, and (3) steps taken to use assessment results to improve programs, services, processes, planning, and resource allocation. The Commission accepted the 2008 Progress Report and requested that the *Periodic Review Report* document further (1) direct evidence of student achievement of program-level and general education outcomes and (2) steps taken to use assessment results to improve student learning.

**Section Two** provides a summary response to the single recommendation in the 2006 Reviewers Report:

*The accreditation team recommends that UMBC address the deficiencies in its library resources as a priority. Consideration should be given to expanding its research resources, especially in STEM, and adding to its collection. Additional funding for library and staff positions, improved library services, and a closer link between library services and instruction should be discussed in the course of this process.*

The results of the UMBC Blue Ribbon Committee on the Library address this recommendation in light of the economic downturn and demonstrate the effective role of institutional constituencies in planning and budgeting.

**Section Three** discusses the accomplishments of UMBC since the 2006 review related to the Middle States standards and the challenges that remain. Several of the challenges also present opportunities given the steps that have been instituted through the campus priority planning process. Most significantly, our implementation of PeopleSoft Student Administration, pedagogical innovation and course redesign such as the College of Natural and Mathematical Sciences (CNMS) Active Science Teaching and Learning Environment (CASTLE), and construction of new facilities are having a transformative impact on the university. New academic programs and investments in our research infrastructure are enhancing opportunities for student learning and engagement.

In **Section Four**, updated information on enrollment and financial trends is provided along with analysis and projections for the period covered by the financial plan. Undergraduate enrollment is robust and stable with small changes in the mix between first time freshmen and transfer students. There has also been some growth in graduate enrollment in applied programs that address the needs of the state and regional workforce.

**Section Five** describes our processes to assess institutional effectiveness, which have been redesigned and implemented since the 2006 report. The process provides further direct evidence of student achievement of program level and general education outcomes through a multi-stage implementation that has a specific timetable for each stage. The assessment involves both internal and external review and is tied directly to campus planning and budgeting to achieve improved student learning.

**Section Six** provides a detailed discussion of our strategic planning that forms the foundation for our prioritization and budgeting process. The campus constituencies are engaged in setting the direction and in reinforcing that direction. Budget requests must be explicitly linked to the planning priorities. Cost cutting is required given current economic realities; however, making decisions strategically will position UMBC to achieve its short- and long-term goals.

Finally, the Appendix provides supporting documentation including institutional profiles, audited financial statements and management letters, institutional budget documents and planning documents, and outcomes assessment plans relative to both assessment of institutional effectiveness and assessment of student learning outcomes. The HEOA Distance Education Policy and UMBC's transfer credit policy are provided in the addenda.

The past few years have been challenging for public higher education. UMBC is fortunate to be in a state where the governor and the legislature are committed to education. The campus leadership has utilized an agreed upon set of principles to guide the university, creating efficient processes to achieve effectiveness. Linking planning, budgeting and assessment in a continuous improvement cycle has allowed us to move forward in a resource constrained environment. UMBC is a vibrant university with a bold vision. The University has made substantial progress over the past five years. Indeed, many of the challenges UMBC faces are to some extent the product of its successes. The faculty and staff of UMBC understand these challenges and are prepared to address them as the campus approaches its 50th anniversary in 2016.

## **SECTION TWO: SUMMARY RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS – LIBRARY RESOURCES**

The 2006 Reviewers' Report made the following recommendation to be addressed in UMBC's 2011 Periodic Review Report:

"The accreditation team recommends that UMBC address the deficiencies in its library resources as a priority. Consideration should be given to expanding its research resources, especially in STEM, and adding to its collection. Additional funding for library and staff positions, improved library services, and a closer link between library services and instruction should be discussed in the course of this process."

### Standard 9: Student Support Services

The institution provides student support services reasonably necessary to enable each student to achieve the institution's goals for students.

UMBC's Response: The Library has explored several methods for providing closer links between services and instruction. For example, renewed emphasis is being placed on development of online tutorials and other online point of need information literacy instruction. After extensive consultation with students on what they need from the Library, the campus leadership endorsed a plan for repurposing Library space as the Retriever Learning Center (RLC), which is now under construction. This \$500,000 improvement of 8,000 square feet on the Library's first floor will provide flexible workspaces for study, available 24/7. The design of the RLC facilitates student success by enabling collaborative and peer to peer learning in an attractive social environment. The Library, the Learning Resources Center, and the Division of Information Technology are integrating services for learners in conjunction with the opening of the RLC. The RLC will become a campus focal point for lively group study, scholarly discussion, collaboration and academic coaching.

In fiscal years 2007, 2008 and 2009, UMBC was able to allocate modest increases to library budgets. During those years the Library improved its interlibrary loan and article delivery services, which made feasible the cancellation of subscriptions that were the least cost effective. We can now rely on article delivery services instead of subscriptions for many more titles than in the past. Recognizing that Library resources and services are key to campus success, and in light of the economic downturn, in 2009 the Provost established a Blue Ribbon Committee on the Library (BRC) with the charge to "address in a proactive manner new ideas/approaches for dealing with the budget challenges faced by the Library." The BRC was to make realistic projections of budgets and usage patterns over the following five years, and then envision how UMBC's information needs could be served cost effectively within the anticipated budget constraints.

Based on the impact of inflationary subscription cost increases and State funding reductions, the BRC report projected a budget loss equivalent to a 3% cut in FY11 and again in FY12, then flat library budgets in FY13 through FY15. Utilizing a financial model based on these budget projections and a somewhat optimistic assumption of only a 5% subscription cost inflation rate going forward, the BRC projected subscription cuts of 8% in FY11 and in FY12 and 5% for each of the following three years. The Library and the BRC planned for an orderly and fact-based absorption of these cuts. A new, more open process for evaluating subscriptions and determining cancellations was implemented for the 2011 subscription year. Plans were implemented to strengthen further our online article delivery services to provide “just in time” articles in place of “just in case” subscriptions. Plans to cut library services and to improve operational efficiency were also formulated. Campus leaders and library users were consulted to discover nominations for service cuts that would result in the least impact and to give feedback on nominations. The BRC report recommended service cuts and efficiencies that are not expected to damage core library support of the campus mission.

The BRC, having completed its mission, disbanded and handed over the assessment of plan implementation to the Library Policy Committee (LPC), which is a University committee with membership from all campus senates. This assessment is ongoing. Since the issuance of the BRC report, the Library has released progress reports in June 2010, November, 2010 and March 2011. While these reports reveal the difficulty in achieving the planned cost savings in Library personnel and operating budgets, these difficulties are somewhat balanced by an actual loss of in FY11 of 2.5% instead of the anticipated 3%, resulting in a 7.5% cut to subscriptions. Identified cuts are likely to result in meeting the 2.5% requirement without a major loss of key services. For FY12, the current planning scenario uses a 1.1% loss to the Library budget which translates to a 4.75% cut in subscriptions, again a more positive outcome than the BRC had anticipated.

Should the level of State funding improve over the next several years, the campus will restore funding to the Library, but not likely to the specific budgets that were cut. Instead, funding would be applied to library needs that most support the strategic priorities of the campus, as determined when the funding becomes available.

## SECTION THREE: MAJOR CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Record briefly and analyze chief accomplishments and significant challenges relevant to accreditation standards. Identify important challenges and opportunities over next five years.

UMBC has achieved substantial academic prominence as a result of effective strategic planning that builds upon our strengths and addresses our challenges. In this portion of the report, UMBC will record briefly and analyze chief accomplishments and significant challenges relevant to accreditation standards. The time period for this recordation and analysis is the five years since our last accreditation visit. The strengths and weaknesses identified in this document come from leaders all across UMBC. In this task, UMBC's strong culture of shared governance has proved invaluable. The challenges and opportunities articulated in the following pages cannot, by their very nature, be exhaustive. The process of identifying that which helps and that which challenges us is a continuous one; UMBC is ever vigilant. UMBC is in a strong position to continue to grow, taking its place among the world's preeminent research universities.

### I. ACCOMPLISHMENTS

#### ***New Facility***

The Performing Arts and Humanities Building (PAHB) that is under construction will provide new, state-of-the-art facilities for arts and humanities departments and programs. The PAHB will enhance UMBC's teaching, research and public outreach and will heighten the visibility of the arts and humanities as major components of campus and community life. [Standard 3]

#### ***Information Technology***

PeopleSoft - Since 2006, UMBC has invested heavily in PeopleSoft as part of the Student Administration (SA) project. This project began in 2007 and encompassed an upgrade to the Human Resources systems, document imaging, and new solutions for cashiering, parking management, and data warehousing to support various reporting activities. The goals for this project, as stated in the SA Project Charter were:

- Provide new or improved functionality to support students' academic progress and success, provide enhanced self-service access for students and faculty, and meet institutional enrollment objectives;
- Consistently apply academic rules and regulations while managing exceptions in a secure and verifiable manner;
- Reduce duplicative data entry and data maintenance;

- Refine and streamline business processes to improve efficiency and effectiveness;
- Provide at least the same level of services offered prior to the SA implementation; and
- Improve the quality and availability of data for strategic decision-making as well as operational needs

Today, UMBC has an automated degree audit system for undergraduate students, a graduate admissions process that integrates SA with document imaging, an online undergraduate recruitment system for admissions, streamlined parking management, a new cashiering system with improved billing, and a data warehouse that has streamlined reporting and decision making. Finally, one important, but often overlooked, outcome has been an on-going governance structure that integrates all key departments in a weekly SA-Executive Advisory meeting. [*Standard 3*]

High Performance Computing - The High Performance Computing Facility (HPCF) is a community-based, interdisciplinary core facility for scientific computing and research on parallel algorithms. The HPCF was started in 2008 by more than twenty researchers from more than ten departments and research centers from all three UMBC colleges. The HPCF allows faculty to be more competitive when applying for external funding, and its interdisciplinary approach allows UMBC to make more effective use of equipment, space, and staff resources. By utilizing a shared facility, UMBC is able to recruit and support faculty with cutting-edge research foci. Additionally, the shared nature of the HPCF demonstrates UMBC's ability to use its financial resources judiciously while continuing to provide state-of-the-art research tools to the community. [*Standard 3*]

### ***Pre-Award Infrastructure***

Since 2000, sponsored contracts and grants have grown by more than a third, from \$64 million to almost \$95 million. The campus recognized that research growth of that magnitude requires corresponding growth in pre-award infrastructure. In 2005, UMBC's Office of Sponsored Programs had only three grant management professionals. Today, that office has ten professionals dedicated to direct assistance to faculty and departments in preparing proposals, negotiating contracts, interpreting policies, rules and restrictions, and in finding appropriate sources of funding. Workshops are offered regularly to provide PIs with focused training and practical information on preparing proposals for sponsors such as the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health. [*Standards 2 and 3*]

### ***Environmental Impact***

UMBC is one of the country's most environmentally-responsible colleges according to The Princeton Review. The nationally known education services company selected UMBC for inclusion in a unique resource it has created for college applicants - *The Princeton Review's Guide to 286 Green Colleges*. This guide was developed by *The Princeton Review* in partnership with the U.S. Green Building Council to highlight institutions of higher education that have demonstrated an above average commitment to sustainability in terms of campus

infrastructure, activities and initiatives including an institution's commitment to building certification using USGBC's LEED green building certification program; environmental literacy programs; formal sustainability committees; use of renewable energy resources; recycling and conservation programs, and much more. The university's new Performing Arts and Humanities Building, currently under construction, will be the first LEED certified structure on the campus.

Since UMBC's President signed the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment in 2007, UMBC has worked toward supporting green efforts on campus in a multitude of ways through the Climate Change Task Force. The group is comprised of students, faculty and staff engaged in encouraging sustainability on campus through academics and other initiatives including the annual Ecofest, Recyclemania and the National Teach-in (in 2009).

"Students and their parents are becoming more and more interested in learning about and attending colleges and universities that practice, teach and support environmental responsibility," said Robert Franek, senior vice president and publisher, *The Princeton Review*. UMBC is among the ranks of outstanding universities and colleges nationwide that are leading the "green" movement through their own special programs and initiatives.

UMBC is committed to sustainable construction and renovation. All new buildings will have at a minimum a LEED Silver rating, including the Performing Arts and Humanities Facility and an addition to the Patapsco Residence Hall, both of which are currently under construction. This guiding principle continues to inform our building designs, as we plan a new Interdisciplinary Life Sciences Building. The sustainable design encompasses not just the building systems and materials, but extends to the site and the surrounding environment. [Standards 2 and 3]

### ***Academic Programs***

Assessment - UMBC's Assessment Plan was adopted in 2008 and since that time a major accomplishment is that the university has implemented that plan and made significant progress in creating a culture of assessment on the campus. We now have a comprehensive process to ensure that its academic programs are assessed on a regular basis and that the results of these assessments are used to ensure continuous program improvement. To support this process, the Provost's office sponsored a series of workshops guided by external experts. These workshops helped department chairs and faculty members understand the process and begin developing program-level assessment plans. The Division of Student Affairs has sponsored a series of assessment workshops and hosts an assessment and research committee. At this point, assessment has been institutionalized as part of regularly scheduled activities that occur annually and as part of periodic program reviews.

Learning outcomes have been established both for the university as a whole and for individual programs. Learning outcomes defined at the course-level support program-level learning outcome goals which are, in turn, consistent with the university's student learning outcome goals. Department Chairs, Program Directors, and Administrative Directors are responsible for developing and executing assessment plans for their respective programs. The

General Education Review Committee is responsible for monitoring general education assessment and the use of assessment data to improve this program. College Deans and the Vice President for Student Affairs are responsible for monitoring and ensuring implementation of assessment plans and for the use of the results to ensure academic and co-curricular program improvement. The Provost is responsible for monitoring and ensuring implementation of UMBC's Assessment plan, which includes all divisions of the university, and the use of assessment results to ensure institutional improvement. More details regarding UMBC's assessment process can be found in Section Five. [*Standard 14*]

New Academic Programs - At the undergraduate level, UMBC offers 43 majors, 42 minors and 17 certificate programs in the physical and biological sciences, social and behavioral sciences, engineering, mathematics, information technology, humanities, and visual and performing arts. This list includes recently created programs that are responsive to the needs of our students, the region, and the country. New opportunities for undergraduates include the B.A. in Media and Communication Studies, the B.A. in Asian Studies, the B.A. in Gender and Women's Studies, the B.A. in Physics Education, the B.A. in Chemistry Education, the Public Health track in the Health Administration and Policy Program, the Mathematics Education Concentration in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics, and the minor in Entrepreneurship. At the graduate level, UMBC offers 37 master's degree programs, 24 doctoral degree programs and 21 graduate certificate programs. Programs are offered in education, engineering, imaging and digital arts, information technology, aging services, life sciences, mathematics, physical sciences, psychology, public policy, and a host of other areas of interest. The graduate community has recently unveiled a number of new programs, including an M.S. and Ph.D. in Human Centered Computing, an M.S. and Ph.D. in Geography and Environmental Systems, and a Master in Professional Studies with areas of focus including Biotechnology, Cybersecurity, Geographic Information Systems, and Industrial/Organizational Psychology. [*Standard 11*]

Undergraduate Research - Early exposure to research enhances our students' readiness for graduate school and their chosen career paths. More importantly, independent research under the mentorship of UMBC's dedicated, talented faculty members can spark a student's lifelong interest in interdisciplinary learning. At UMBC, we reinforce our commitment to undergraduate research with grant awards and faculty support, so that research can be a part of any undergraduate's learning experience. Through the campus planning process, additional funding has been provided to increase the number of students who are able to participate in these activities. Each spring, student researchers have an opportunity to present their work at the Undergraduate Research and Creative Achievement Day (URCAD). URCAD features research, scholarship, and creative work carried out by UMBC undergraduates. Student work is shared in many ways: oral presentations, poster sessions, artistic exhibits and performances, and film. This campus celebration of achievement affirms UMBC's commitment to the twin goals of research and a distinctive undergraduate experience. [*Standard 13*]

New Academic Units - In 2010, UMBC formed the Department of Marine Biotechnology (DoMB) and the Institute of Fluorescence (IoF) within the College of Natural and Mathematical Sciences. These exciting additions, which emerged from the reorganization of the University of

Maryland Biotechnology Institute, enhance and expand UMBC's capacity in the areas of research infrastructure and environment and sustainability. In addition, students benefit from wide-ranging educational opportunities within these innovative research programs. Both groups are housed at the Columbus Center in downtown Baltimore.

The Department of Marine Biotechnology (DoMB) effectively integrates scientific excellence with education, training and economic development. The new faculty brought to UMBC exceptionally strong and integrated programs in such areas as Sustainable Marine Aquaculture, Marine Microbial Biodiversity and Biotechnology and Marine Bioenergy. DoMB's Sustainable Marine Aquaculture/Fisheries program has produced an array of patented technologies in biosecure and sustainable seafood production. This work optimizes closed aquaculture systems with zero pollution discharge maintained by microbial nitrogen and carbon transformation processes. DoMB faculty work with undergraduate and graduate students from a variety of disciplines and teach courses in the University System of Maryland Marine, Estuarine, Environmental Sciences (MEES) program.

The Institute of Fluorescence (IoF) came to UMBC with an international reputation for advancing fluorescence spectroscopy and plasmonics and breakthrough biomedical applications in health care and diagnostics. The IoF has developed processes through which fluorescent signatures are amplified millions of times, making it much easier to detect biomarkers for anthrax, salmonella, Chlamydia, diabetes, and heart attacks. The IoF is a leader in translational research with over 60 worldwide patents licensed to industry.

The Departments of Chemical and Biochemical Engineering and Civil and Environmental Engineering have merged to form a new department: Chemical, Biochemical and Environmental Engineering (CBEE). This new department helps define our presence in the areas of sustainability and the environment. The reorganization strategically leverages our strengths while increasing efficiency. Plans are underway for a track within the undergraduate program that focuses on sustainability and environmental engineering. This is an area of great interest to incoming students with high demand from employers. [*Standards 2, 5 and 13*]

### ***Pedagogical Innovation and Course Redesign***

UMBC has initiated a series of efforts to redesign courses with an emphasis on increasing student success, retention rates, and graduation rates. Examples include the new CNMS (College of Natural and Mathematical Sciences ) Active Science Teaching and Learning Environment (CASTLE). CASTLE was designed to develop and enhance innovative, inquiry-based instruction for foundational courses within the College of Natural and Mathematical Sciences. CASTLE provides flexible, small group learning space appropriate for multiple disciplines. All CASTLE instructors are encouraged to pilot novel pedagogical approaches within this environment that is being used as an incubator for new strategies and practices in active learning instruction.

UMBC is also actively exploring the use of hybrid courses in an effort to increase flexibility while leveraging new pedagogical approaches that can be supported though online

interactions and course material delivery. The Provost's Office sponsors workshops offered by Division of Information Technology for faculty interested in offering hybrid courses. More than 40 faculty members from 20 departments have participated in these workshops. Through these and related activities, the number of hybrid and online courses has increased substantially.

UMBC's Psychology Department participated in the USM Course Redesign Initiative with the National Center for Academic Transformation. As a result, the department's Introductory Psychology course was redesigned with enhanced use of technology. A study revealed better grades and student satisfaction in the redesigned course compared to the traditional format. [*Standards 2 and 13*]

## **II. SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES**

### ***PeopleSoft SA Implementation***

There are three related challenges associated with Student Administration (SA) system that the campus will continue to address over the next five years. The first is prioritizing which business processes will be reengineered and how to properly balance the effort to change the software versus changing the way people perform their work. The SA Academic Advisory committee meets regularly to discuss this issue. The second is building organizational capacity through training and appropriate staffing to take advantage of many of the new features, especially improvements in data reporting and analysis. Finally, we continue to look at third party applications that can integrate with PeopleSoft and provide business process improvements or functionality not found in PeopleSoft. [*Standards 2 and 3*]

### ***Library***

The campus community at UMBC is quick to commend the Library on the superb job it has done in providing the campus with the best possible information resources and services within the limits of its budget. It has used its talented staff to advantage and employed technology judiciously to achieve high cost effectiveness. However, a committee was convened to address severe challenges to the Library, and consequently to the campus, which are now emerging (see Section Two of this report). These challenges arise from the difficult economic climate and severe budget constraints as well as from budget pressures caused by external developments such as the spiraling costs of journal subscriptions and electronic resources, as well as radical changes in the channels of scholarly communication.

Librarians worldwide are planning for unprecedented changes in how they will serve the information needs of their users. At UMBC, librarians seek campus engagement in anticipating these changes and positioning the campus to reap maximum benefit from them. In the short-to-medium term, librarians and other campus leaders agree that changes will be dominated by budget constraints, but they also agree that judicious planning can minimize any harmful effects from these constraints and position the campus to take full advantage of emerging 21<sup>st</sup> century trends in publishing, scholarly communication and information technology.

UMBC has worked diligently to 1) address in a proactive manner new ideas/approaches for dealing with the budget challenges faced by the Library; 2) devise successful ways to address proactively these challenges, given the critical role played by the Library on all our educational activities; and 3) anticipate how the Library will be used in the future and recommend changes in Library functions and use of space consistent with that vision. [Standards 2 and 3]

### ***Research Infrastructure***

The infrastructure to support research is an area of ongoing concern. Reports regarding inadequacies of the research infrastructure date back a decade or more. While some progress has been made, such as increased staffing for pre-award support, there are many areas where adequate progress has yet to be seen. Post-award processing of grants and contracts still needs strengthening. To address this challenge, the Post Award Enhancement Initiative has been in process since January 2009. Some improvements have been made over this time period, but significant work remains. The Post Award Steering Committee, a group of faculty and staff with particular interest in this area, oversees the efforts of three workgroups. The workgroups, made up of both steering committee members and additional faculty and staff, are responsible for identifying and implementing enhancements. The three workgroups are Billing and Reporting, Compliance, and Administrative Systems. Progress has been made in all three areas, including streamlining of operations through more efficient use of IT tools for both grant accounting staff and grant PIs. [Standards 2 and 3]

### ***Services for Students with Disabilities***

Student Support Services coordinates the provision of services for students with disabilities. Both the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 state that a university shall provide academic accommodations for students with disabilities. Auxiliary aids must be provided which are necessary to ensure that students with disabilities are not "denied the benefits of, excluded from participation in, or otherwise subjected to discrimination in" the program. That is, UMBC is required to make reasonable accommodations to the known physical and cognitive limitations of otherwise qualified students with disabilities. UMBC complies with the articulated legal requirements to provide academic accommodations and also works to provide additional academic support services. While the needs of our students have increased, the available resources have not. UMBC has, in past years, funded a portion of our support services through a federal grant. That grant has not been renewed by the U.S. Department of Education, so UMBC will necessarily allocate a greater portion of its other financial resources to replace some of those from the grant. This reallocation will allow UMBC to maintain a similar level and nature of services, but it may be insufficient in the years to come. [Standard 9]

### ***IT Infrastructure***

Information technology continues to evolve at a rapid pace. While this leads to opportunities to achieve greater efficiencies, it also presents several challenges. In particular, it

is quite expensive to upgrade hardware and software to keep pace with technological advancements and to repair/replace equipment that receives heavy use. Compatibility issues can arise when these upgrades are staggered over time or when technology from various vendors must work in concert. With upgrades there is often a need to retrain users. An IT Restructuring Work Group was convened to examine several of these issues and make recommendations to the campus. The Division of Information Technology and the IT Steering Committee have developed a multi-year plan to ensure that our infrastructure needs are addressed efficiently and effectively. [*Standards 2 and 3*]

### ***National Economic Climate***

While the economic challenges facing the State and nation continue to be serious, we are confident that a thoughtful and positive approach has enabled us to maintain our strengths and our sense of community. In responding strategically to challenging economic times, UMBC has affirmed two core principles. First, we must protect and maintain the strength of our academic programs and prepare to make even greater progress when economic conditions improve. Second, we must support the members of our community. UMBC is a community that cares about people, and we will support them in these difficult economic times.

As a result of decreased state allocations, we have instituted a staff hiring freeze and have cancelled a number of faculty searches. We are taking a very conservative approach to spending, including reducing operating costs for utilities, facilities renewal, equipment, and supplies. Additionally, UMBC has also implemented furloughs and temporary salary reductions as part of the statewide plan. [*Standards 2 and 3*]

## **III. SIGNIFICANT OPPORTUNITIES**

### ***PeopleSoft***

While there are many challenges associated with PeopleSoft, once implemented it provides access to a wealth of data that can be leveraged to better understand how the university is functioning, including where there are inefficiencies that can be addressed. This is critical to our strategic planning and assessment activities. Furthermore, having integrated information systems has allowed us to streamline and automate operations, leading to increased efficiency and better service to the campus community. We are moving into phase II of our implementation and anticipate significant opportunities to continue to achieve further gains in data sophistication and workflow efficiency. [*Standards 2 and 3*]

### ***Budget Process***

UMBC has transformed its budget process to focus on preserving support for our highest priority initiatives, stabilizing support for those items that were new initiatives started with one-time or grant funding and that are judged to be both effective and critical to our core mission, and investing in emerging priorities that resulted from campus strategic planning. The outcomes of our assessment activities feed directly into determining budget priorities and areas

where there is funding that can be redirected in other ways (see Section Six of this report). By linking the budget to planning, UMBC is ensuring our fiscal health through these difficult budget years and positioning us well for the years ahead. [*Standard 2*]

### ***Retention/Graduation Rates***

Improving retention and graduation rates is a top priority for UMBC, and several of our recent initiatives provide an opportunity to succeed at these goals. Our accomplishments in innovative course delivery, including CASTLE and hybrid courses, provide opportunities to engage students and improve learning outcomes. Additional investments have been made through a multi-year budget planning process to reduce reliance on part-time faculty by creating additional full-time lecturer positions in key departments. The matriculation fee revenue for both undergraduate and graduate students is being used to expand programs that have proven to be successful, such as first year experiences for freshmen and transfer students, and success seminars for graduate students. The Retriever Learning Center, a 24-hour per day multi-media based group study facility, will be opening in the Library this fall. The Learning Resources Center that provides tutoring for freshman and sophomore level courses will be integrated into this facility. Through extensive data analysis we have made changes in our admissions standards for STEM disciplines. This should result in achieving a student profile that is consistent with the metrics that have produced successful retention and graduation. The PeopleSoft-based degree audit and new approaches to academic advising also provide opportunities to engage students and facilitate their success. By addressing retention/graduation rates, UMBC will make better use of existing resources. [*Standards 9 and 13*]

### ***External Funding***

UMBC has achieved significant growth in external grants and contracts over the past decade. The investment in infrastructure and administrative processes will allow our faculty and staff to continue this successful trajectory. Our capital campaign has focused attention and resources on our students and academic programs. Continuing this momentum allows us to attract and retain the best faculty and students. [*Standards 2 and 3*]

### ***Life Sciences Building***

Our campus master plan includes an interdisciplinary life sciences building that will have active learning spaces that contribute to retention/graduation rate goals. The planned facilities would support and encourage interdisciplinary research, and the shared lab space and core facilities (e.g., animal research) would support existing researchers and could be leveraged for startup when new faculty members are hired. [*Standards 2 and 3*]

### ***Leveraging Existing Resources***

As UMBC approaches its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary the growing ranks of alumni in influential positions are becoming a real asset for the university. Our Alumni Association works in partnership with other units on campus to build and strengthen relationships with our alumni who, in turn, help generate employment opportunities for students and research opportunities

for faculty, and forge new relationships in the community. Our programs undergo regular assessment that promotes improvements in response to both needs and opportunities. New programs can also be developed by leveraging our faculty expertise and innovations in course design. Earlier in this report we discussed the impact that positive publicity has had on students, faculty and staff. We are planning ways to channel this publicity to achieve our goals. Finally, one of the biggest assets that is unique to UMBC is our location relative to several federal research facilities, companies (large and small), and major transportation hubs.  
[Standards 2 and 3]

## **SECTION FOUR: ENROLLMENT AND FINANCE TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS**

### **I. FINANCIAL TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS**

The University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC) uses its strong shared governance structure to garner input and share financial data from all campus constituencies. This transparency assists us in developing a shared sense of responsibility for the overall financial strength of the University. Financial staff monitors and analyzes fiscal results throughout the year and reports regularly to senior leadership. Budgets are built to provide support for our strategic priorities of student success, research infrastructure, environment and sustainability, and campus safety. Resources are also allocated to support enrollment growth and enhance the quality of our programs, while staying within our means. The economic recession of the last three years has significantly reduced State appropriations. Progress continues, thanks to specific cost containment and enrollment growth measures that assist in offsetting the state cuts that have been absorbed. A significant aspect of these cost containment measures has been the state-wide furlough plan requiring all employees to take unpaid leave (on a graduated scale) for fiscal years 2009 through 2011.

The table below presents summary level data on UMBC's assets, liabilities, and net assets for the last 3 fiscal years. Steady growth of slightly more than 4% on average annually over the period in total net assets is a strong indication of the effectiveness of cost containment and enrollment growth measures in offsetting state appropriation reductions. As the pressure on available resources builds, we project a smaller yet positive increase in net assets to continue for fiscal years 2011 and 2012.

University of Maryland, Baltimore County						
Condensed Balance Sheets Years Ended June 30, 2010, 2009, and 2008						
			<u>2010</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2008</u>	
Current & Other Assets			\$ 69,544,606.00	\$ 68,902,915.00	\$ 48,247,078.00	
Capital Assets, Net			261,089,226.00	263,653,697.00	264,919,904.00	
	Total Assets		330,633,832.00	332,556,612.00	313,166,982.00	
Debt			88,184,920.00	93,367,296.00	98,799,660.00	
Other Liabilities			47,271,439.00	51,931,203.00	34,147,193.00	
	Total Liabilities		135,456,359.00	145,298,499.00	132,946,853.00	
Net Assets:						
	Invested in Capital Assets, Net of Related Debt		165,559,135.00	162,400,650.00	166,120,244.00	
	Restricted		3,524,148.00	21,554,467.00	3,298,936.00	
	Unrestricted		26,094,190.00	3,302,996.00	10,800,949.00	
	Total Net Assets		195,177,473.00	187,258,113.00	180,220,129.00	
	Net Assets & Liabilities		330,633,832.00	332,556,612.00	313,166,982.00	

The table below presents summary data on revenue, expenses, and other changes in net assets for UMBC over the past three fiscal years. Operating revenue has increased steadily despite the recession. This is primarily attributed to increased enrollments directly impacting tuition and auxiliary revenue, along with slight increases in externally funded research revenue over this period.

Tuition rates are set by the University System of Maryland's Board of Regents. The Governor has provided additional state support since fiscal year (or FY) 2007 as an incentive to hold tuition rates static. While rates were held steady from fall 2005 to spring 2011 for all in-state, undergraduate students (representing the large majority of the total enrollment population), rates for out-of-state and graduate students increased an average of 3% per year. As economic pressures have increased, the FY 2012 budget includes a 3% increase in tuition rates for in-state undergraduates and a 4% increase for all others. There are also increases in student fees averaging 3.8%. These increased revenue streams will absorb mandatory expense increases, such as employee benefits, insurance, debt service, and the elimination of the employee furloughs referenced above.

University of Maryland, Baltimore County						
<u>Condensed Statements of Revenue, Expenses &amp; Changes in Net Assets Years Ended June 30, 2010, 2009, and 2008</u>						
				<u>2010</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2008</u>
Operating Revenue				\$ 241,740,658.00	\$ 233,785,730.00	\$ 213,945,906.00
Operating Expenses				322,319,649.00	319,798,946.00	301,574,940.00
Operating Loss				(80,578,991.00)	(86,013,216.00)	(87,629,034.00)
State Appropriations				77,416,858.00	86,910,895.00	84,488,263.00
Other Nonoperating Revenue and Gains, net				8,620,134.00	2,070,568.00	(655,913.00)
Total Nonoperating Revenue				86,036,992.00	88,981,463.00	83,832,350.00
Income (Loss) Before Other Revenue				5,458,001.00	2,968,247.00	(3,796,684.00)
Other Revenue				2,461,359.00	4,069,737.00	2,495,669.00
Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets				7,919,360.00	7,037,984.00	(1,301,015.00)
Net Assets, beginning of year				187,258,113.00	180,220,129.00	181,521,144.00
Net Assets, end of year				195,177,473.00	187,258,113.00	180,220,129.00

Expenditure increases over this period are largely due to increased research expenditures, increased auxiliary expenditures (tied to growing enrollments), and rising cost of employee benefits. The table below summarizes expenses by program, as required by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB):

University of Maryland, Baltimore County						
<u>Operating Expenses years ended June 30, 2010, 2009, and 2008</u>						
				<u>2010</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2008</u>
Instruction				\$ 94,770,008.00	\$ 94,946,908.00	\$ 94,905,398.00
Research				65,653,747.00	60,607,396.00	53,190,208.00
Public service				18,363,933.00	18,558,527.00	21,748,142.00
Academic support				22,079,763.00	20,112,551.00	18,344,035.00
Student services				12,715,705.00	14,208,166.00	11,211,845.00
Institutional support				29,232,076.00	30,797,395.00	30,210,314.00
Operation and maintenance of plant				18,880,163.00	18,846,348.00	17,613,251.00
Scholarships and fellowships				14,548,415.00	16,218,046.00	15,985,010.00
Auxiliary enterprises:						
Residential Facilities				11,829,947.00	10,118,811.00	8,595,938.00
Dining Facilities				10,799,081.00	9,899,911.00	8,353,682.00
Intercollegiate athletics				5,749,902.00	6,187,570.00	5,684,163.00
Bookstore				6,027,170.00	6,990,330.00	5,873,997.00
Parking Facilities				-	-	-
Other auxiliary enterprises expenses				11,669,739.00	12,306,987.00	9,858,957.00
Total				\$ 322,319,649.00	\$ 319,798,946.00	\$ 301,574,940.00

The data clearly indicate that UMBC's planning and cost containment measures have enabled us to weather the recession reasonably well. More specifically, UMBC's efforts as part of the University System of Maryland Effectiveness and Efficiency initiative have identified numerous areas for cost savings totaling \$11.2 million over the past three years, including joint procurements, reorganization, going paperless, and many more.

In addition to the above mentioned cost containment measures, there are specific efforts to reduce expenditures in the following areas:

- A Blue Ribbon Commission has issued recommendations regarding the future of the Library. A number of recommendations are currently in the implementation phase.
- A work group has assessed strategies and produced recommendations to increase efficiencies in IT support.
- An effort is being made to identify and reduce low-enrollment classes.
- Utility savings are accruing as a result of new contracts and "green" energy saving initiatives across campus.

The University is very pleased to have a number of critical capital projects in progress, some with targeted completion in the next three years. These include:

- The new Performing Arts and Humanities Building (PAHB) will be the future home of many of our Performing Arts and Humanities programs. The building will play a central role on campus, with virtually every undergraduate student engaged in various academic activities making use of it.
- An addition to the Patapsco dormitory building will add a total of 189 beds to on campus housing facilities. This addition will facilitate the renovation of the residential communities of West Hill, Hillside and Terrace Apartments through sequential phases, without a loss of total beds on campus. The project will not add housing capacity to the campus until all three of these residential communities are renovated.
- Future plans include additional academic, residential, and student life facilities aligned with enrollment growth and external research support. A comprehensive Facilities Master Plan update was completed in March 2010.

The new PAHB project is funded by the State of Maryland's capital budget, thus limiting the need to add debt to our current liability obligations. The dormitory additions will be funded by auxiliary bonds debt. The positive revenue growth in our auxiliary area allows for the capacity to absorb the additional debt payments.

## **II. ENROLLMENT TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS**

Enrollment growth goals are supported through improvements in student retention and graduation rates and increased enrollments resulting from our highly visible national profile (ranked the #1 Up & Coming University by *US News and World Report* in 2010 and 2011). The

table below indicates consistent growth in FTE enrollment from FY2009 through FY2011 at an average annual rate of 3.4% over the period. Enrollment growth over the next two budget years is projected at an average rate of 2.7%. The slightly lower growth is taking into consideration space demands while balancing increased enrollment with University goals of providing a distinctive undergraduate experience.

			Actuals	Actuals	Actuals	Estimated	Estimated
			FALL 08/ FY09	FALL 09/ FY10	FALL 10/ FY11	FALL11/ FY12	FALL 12/ FY13
<b>FALL FTES</b>			<b>10052.3</b>	<b>10467.3</b>	<b>10738.9</b>	<b>10867.3</b>	<b>11178.5</b>
	UG		8789.3	9079.8	9270.0	9383.9	9665.4
	Grad		1263.0	1387.5	1468.9	1483.5	1513.2
			Actuals	Actuals			
			FALL 08/ FY09	FALL 09/ FY10	FALL 10/ FY11	FALL11/ FY12	FALL 12/ FY13
<b>SPRING FTES</b>			<b>9445.7</b>	<b>9997.3</b>			
	UG		8261.43	8641.90			
	Grad		1184.23	1355.40			
		Fall to Spring FTES Ratio	1.06	1.05			
		UG	1.06	1.05			
		Grad	1.07	1.02			
		Fall to Annual FTES Ratio	1.03	1.02			
		UG	1.03	1.02			
		Grad	1.03	1.01			
					Estimated	Estimated	Estimated
<b>AVERAGE ANNUAL FTE</b>			<b>9749.0</b>	<b>10232.3</b>	<b>10498.4</b>	<b>10603.1</b>	<b>10906.6</b>
	UG		8525.4	8860.9	9046.5	9149.3	9423.7
	Grad		1223.6	1371.5	1451.9	1453.8	1482.9
		Annual FTE Growth Rate					
		UG	3.21%	3.94%	2.09%	0.50%	3.00%
		Grad	6.28%	12.08%	5.87%	2.00%	2.00%
		Spring to Fall FTE Ratio Actuals					
		UG	93.99%	95.18%	95.00%		
		Grad	93.76%	97.69%	96.00%		

Additional detail as to the breakdown of enrollment data is provided in documents attached to this presentation.

The steady enrollment growth indicated has allowed the University to absorb painful budgetary cuts as detailed above. The increased tuition revenue has directly supported the overall budget goals and also allowed for targeted enhancements in areas of critical need. These enhancements are tied directly to the budget priorities described earlier. The enhancements are identified by the Vice Presidents and Deans as part of the annual, formal

budget development process. The Vice Presidents and Deans then provide feedback. The President has ultimate authority on the funding decisions. Details on these enhancements are found in Section 6.III of our MSPRR report.

In conclusion, UMBC is well positioned to continue its steady growth while supporting dual goals of a quality educational experience and expanding research mission. While we have been challenged by the current economic realities, our belt tightening and growing revenue streams have enabled us to continue to increase our total net assets and improve our overall financial condition. We are confident that our national reputation and conservative financial and budgeting practices will lead us to a very promising future.

## SECTION FIVE: ORGANIZED AND SUSTAINED PROCESSES TO ASSESS INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND STUDENT LEARNING

Provide an overview of the institution's assessment processes. The commission expects that the institution defines clearly articulated institutional and unit-level goals, assess achievement of those goals, and uses the results of those assessments to improve programs and services and to inform planning and resource allocation decisions.

Standard 7: Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal.

The institution has developed and implemented an assessment process that evaluates its overall effectiveness in achieving its mission and goals and its compliance with accreditation standards.

Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning

Assessment of student learning demonstrates that, at graduation, or other appropriate points, the institution's students have knowledge, skills, and competencies consistent with institutional and appropriate higher education goals.

### I. OVERVIEW

UMBC engages in the assessment and evaluation of its academic programs and administrative activities on a continuous basis. At the time of the *2008 UMBC Progress Report*, the campus had developed an Assessment Plan for improving institutional effectiveness through the shared governance process and had convened an Assessment Committee, composed of faculty and staff representatives of Academic Affairs and other administrative units, to guide the campus in its initial stage of implementation. Building on UMBC's history of assessment, the plan established a better documented approach to assessment than existed at the time of the *UMBC 2006 Self-Study*. UMBC's Assessment Plan, as described in the 2008 Progress Report, consists of plans from each college and school, the general education assessment plan, and the assessments plans of all administrative divisions and academic support units. In addition, all academic departments created program-level plans for student learning outcomes assessment, which were approved by the dean prior to implementation on a biennial schedule. The UMBC General Education Committee (GEC) is charged with responsibility for monitoring general education assessment and the use of outcome data to improve student learning.

Overall responsibility for implementation of the *UMBC Assessment Plan* rests with the Provost; the Vice Presidents assume responsibility for assessment within their divisions, and the Deans oversee implementation of assessment plans within their academic units. Experience with implementation of the *Plan* during the first year resulted in modifications to the schedule for submission of assessment reports and greater coordination between assessment activities and academic program reviews. The overall structure of the assessment process is represented in *Figure 1* from the 2009 version of the *UMBC Assessment Plan*.

To support comprehensive assessment, the UMBC Faculty Development Center provides departments and faculty with resources and guidance for the development of effective program-level and general education course assessment. In addition, the Provost's office has sponsored a series of workshops guided by external and internal experts to support the development and implementation of effective assessment. Workshops held in 2008 helped department chairs and faculty members understand the process and develop program-level assessment plans. Additional workshops were held in 2010 and 2011 to guide administrators, departments and faculty in the use of direct evidence in course-level assessment of general education functional competencies. The Division of Student Affairs also has sponsored a series of assessment workshops and hosts an assessment and research committee.

We now have a comprehensive process to ensure that our administrative units and academic programs are assessed on a regular basis and that the results of these assessments are used to ensure continuous improvement. The results of these efforts are decisions related to program content, program delivery, administrative practice, and/or allocation of resources to ensure improved institutional effectiveness. Assessment has been institutionalized as a component of regularly scheduled activities that occur annually and periodic academic program reviews that are conducted on a seven-year cycle with a subsequent internal third-year progress review.

## **II. ASSESSMENT- DRIVEN PLANNING**

### ***Focusing Our Resources for Results***

Our foundational planning document, *Strategic Framework for 2016*, is the driving document for campus planning and assessment activities. The *Framework* identifies two over-arching institutional goals and proposes approximately 35 sub-goals. The over-arching institutional goals are as follows:

#### ***Provide a distinctive undergraduate experience***

*Strengthen UMBC's performance as a research university that integrates a high-quality undergraduate education with faculty scholarship and research through a distinctive curriculum and set of experiences promoting student engagement, such as seminars, study groups, research opportunities, mentoring, advising, co-curricular learning experiences, and exposure to diversity.*

#### ***Continue to build research and graduate education.***

*Pursue growth in Ph.D.s granted, faculty awards, publications, scholarly activities, creative achievements, and research grants and contracts in order to strengthen the culture of UMBC as a research university and continue to rank in a prestigious cohort of research universities.*

UMBC has made substantial progress toward achieving its over-arching goals and the specific sub-goals represented in the strategic plan. We have also implemented a select set of

the initiatives proposed through academic cluster plans put forward by academic departments and units. The *2006 Self-Study* included assessment activities indicating that, while much work remained to be done, increases in student retention, graduate enrollment, applied learning experiences, applied professional programs, research facilities, and administrative staff reflected the impact of our planning processes. Beginning in fall 2008, a series of national financial crises dramatically re-shaped the U.S. economy and the overall fiscal climate for higher education. In Maryland, sharply declining state revenues led to state budget cuts, which in turn led to budget cuts for the University System of Maryland (USM) and UMBC. Recognizing the significance of these events, the President's Council and the Council of Vice Presidents and Deans undertook a number of steps in 2009 that were designed to move institutional planning forward in response to the new economic landscape. The motivation underlying all of these actions is our strong belief that strategic planning, priority setting, and effective assessment become more, not less, important when resources are limited.

These actions included the review and revision of our principles and approaches for cost containment, and the construction of planning scenarios for current and anticipated budget reductions. In addition, the Council of Vice Presidents and Deans, in consultation with the President, conducted a review of our strategic plan and its goals/sub-goals. The Council affirmed our dual institutional goals of providing a distinctive undergraduate experience and continuing to build research and graduate education. While the Council recognized that pursuing these dual goals creates certain financial challenges, we believe that these goals position UMBC strongly within Maryland higher education by re-affirming our role as a research university and an undergraduate Honors University. The Council also recommended that three over-arching themes guide our pursuit of specific priorities and initiatives. These themes reflect feedback received from the UMBC community in multiple forums, as well as the strong sentiments of the Council. The first theme is to increase faculty hiring, and the second theme is to increase staff hiring. These themes reflected the Council's recognition that there are numerous departments/units on campus in which staffing is not yet sufficient. The third theme is to maintain and increase our historical commitment to diversity. UMBC has taken a national leadership role as a welcoming, diverse community, and our intent is to build on this legacy as we pursue future academic and programmatic initiatives.

Finally, the Council recommended that four specific priorities be pursued in the coming two to four years (2009-2013), and proposed several initiatives to advance each priority. The priorities are:

- Student Retention and Graduation Rates
- Infrastructure for Research and Creative Activity
- Environment and Sustainability (Academic Programs and Practices)
- Campus Safety and Security

A sub-committee of the Council was convened to describe each priority, clarify the rationale for pursuing it, describe ongoing initiatives in the priority area, list ongoing initiatives that should be protected given budget challenges, determine new or expanded initiatives in the

priority area, specify the budgetary support necessary to protect current initiatives and build new initiatives, and identify metrics for evaluating the initiatives. The reports of these sub-committees, including progress in relation to the evaluation metrics, are presented in a July 2009 document, *Focusing Our Resources for Results: Collaborative Initiatives to Advance the University's Strategic Plan*. To solicit advice and guidance regarding our continuing commitment to UMBC's strategic goals, an extensive series of discussions was undertaken across the campus in the winter, spring, and summer of 2009. In addition, the priorities were shared for information and feedback with 180 participants at the annual University Retreat in August 2009.

The first two priorities identified by the Council in *Focusing Our Resources for Results* represent specific sub-goals from the *Strategic Framework for 2016* which directly or indirectly support student success. UMBC's ongoing institutional assessment of initiatives designed to support these priorities include annual assessment reports from all academic and administrative units, which are presented for discussion by the Council each spring. Each report includes benchmarks and outcomes that are reviewed by the President's Council and incorporated into the President's Annual Self-Evaluation. The President annually submits his Self-Evaluation to the USM Chancellor as the basis for the Chancellor's evaluation of the President. The Chancellor subsequently discusses that evaluation with the Board of Regents regarding the campus performance during that fiscal year.

### **III. ASSESSMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**

The Provost, with the support of the deans and vice presidents, is responsible for monitoring and ensuring implementation of UMBC's Assessment Plan, including the use of assessment results to ensure institutional improvement. The Assessment Committee serves as a forum for discussion and review of the plan's implementation and continuing development and institutional progress. In order to facilitate ongoing assessment, the Senior Management Team (comprised of Vice Presidents and Deans) and the UMBC Assessment Committee track progress closely through the use of retention and graduation rate analysis, yield data, space utilization surveys, student surveys (including NSSE), and data based on comparative peer assessment.

UMBC performance, both financial and academic, also is measured through a series of accountability reports mandated by the State of Maryland. Managing for Results (MFR) tracks UMBC's performance over time against a series of mission-based goals and objectives. The Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Report (SLOAR) is submitted to MHEC every three years, and includes an evaluation of outcomes in five Middle States competencies. The Peer Performance Measure report compares UMBC's performance on an established set of indicators, some of which are specific to the institution and its special mission, to that of an approved set of peers. The UMBC Progress Report on Institutional Programs of Cultural Diversity is submitted annually to USM as a means of tracking progress on our efforts to achieve a diverse student, staff and faculty community. The USM also utilizes a series of performance measures ("dashboard indicators") for its institutions, ranging from SAT scores to

R&D expenditures per full time faculty, that are used as assessments tools that inform budget and program decisions.

In conjunction with our colleagues in the University System of Maryland (USM), we have reviewed the potential benefits and potential costs of utilizing aptitude tests (i.e. MAPP and CLA) to measure student academic progress. Given concerns about validity and interpretation of such tests, we and our USM colleagues have determined we will not pursue testing at this time. Our campus will be participating in the national Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA) program.

#### **IV. PROGRAM-LEVEL ASSESSMENT**

Every undergraduate and graduate academic program at UMBC goes through a comprehensive Academic Program Review (APR) once every seven years. As outlined in the UMBC Assessment Plan, program-level assessment is closely tied to the APR process. These reviews must report on student learning outcomes and result in recommendations that inform resource allocation decisions related to curricular and administrative outcomes. Also, separate reviews related to renewing accreditation and certification of academic programs take place on a regular basis for academic programs in engineering, social work, education, chemistry, psychology, emergency health services, and public policy. These accreditation reviews also are tied to resource allocation decisions related to curricular and administrative outcomes.

Department Chairs and Graduate Program Directors are responsible for developing appropriate assessment plans for their respective academic degree programs. Student learning outcome goals at the course level support program-level student learning outcome goals which are consistent with the university's student learning outcome goals. Assessment plans have been created for all departments and graduate programs, reviewed by their respective deans and approved by the Provost. Plans developed within each college and school constitute the College and School Assessment Plans. Deans are responsible for monitoring and ensuring implementation of their College and School Assessment Plans as part of the Academic Program Review process. They also monitor the use of assessment results to ensure academic program improvement.

In addition to the respective academic Dean, the Graduate Dean and Graduate Council are responsible for monitoring graduate program assessments and the use of assessment data to improve graduate programs. UMBC participated in the national Ph.D. Completion Project sponsored by the Council of Graduate Schools. This included analysis of retention and completion data for each program and an assessment of the effectiveness of program milestones, such as comprehensive exams and requirements for reaching Ph.D. candidacy, at meeting program objectives. The data analysis and milestone assessment have led to changes in the design and timing of these requirements in several programs, resulting in improved retention and shorter time to degree.

On a biennial basis, academic departments submit summaries of student learning outcomes and the use of assessment results to improve student learning to the dean of the college. The department also reviews and, if appropriate, revises the department's program-level assessment plan and submits to the dean of the college for approval. In conjunction with the department's self-study for Academic Program Review, the department includes a summary of direct assessment of student learning outcomes for a sample of the program's courses. Academic deans review department assessment plans and assessment summaries and make recommendations to academic departments and the Provost based on their review. The deans' summary reports are presented at a joint meeting of the Council of Deans and the UMBC Assessment Committee for discussion and analysis.

## **V. GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT**

The General Education Committee (GEC) is responsible for monitoring general education assessments and results. In collaboration with the Council of Deans (COD) and the Assessment Committee, the GEC reviews assessment data and provides reports regarding general education and UMBC's Assessment Plan to the Provost and the COD. The Provost and the COD disseminate the Committee's analysis and recommendations to the academic departments and the campus community for discussion and policy-making purposes. The section below outlines a streamlined process that was adopted at the recommendation of the GEC to efficiently and effectively integrate general education student learning assessment with the institutional processes that are already underway. It is followed by a summary of actions taken by UMBC in General Education since the 2006 Self-Study.

### **General Education and Assessment: A Streamlined Process** *(Approved by the Provost April 2009; Amended by GEC March 2010)*

#### ***Initial and Continuing Course Review for General Education Designation (UMBC Assessment Plan, II.F)***

- Initial course review for general education designation is conducted by the GEC. The review focuses on: 1) accessibility to a broad undergraduate student community; 2) whether the course meets criteria for the proposed distribution area; and 3) whether the course addresses a minimum of one of the five functional competencies.
- Continuing review of general education courses is conducted by the GEC in accordance with the seven year Academic Program Review (APR) cycle. The department will resubmit GEP courses which have not been reviewed since the last APR.

#### ***Review of Course Level Learning Outcomes (Assessment Plan II.G)***

- As part of the biennial submission of department assessment reports, departments will provide a summary of learning outcomes for one general education course.
- Course selection will be made by the department to ensure that, over time, a sample of courses addressing the various functional competencies is represented

- Information submitted will include: 1) summary of how the course addresses the distribution area(s) designated; 2) summary of how the course addresses and measures each of the functional competencies designated; 3) examples of learning activities and assessment criteria for measuring designated functional competencies; 4) summary of assessments results on student learning outcomes regarding designated functional competencies; and 5) changes made or proposed to improve student learning.

### **Review of Program Level Learning Outcomes**

- As part of the seven year academic program review cycle, departments will provide a summary of assessment of an identified sample of general education courses.
- The report will summarize information on: 1) assessments and outcomes that are consistent with the review of course level learning outcomes; 2) strengths and weaknesses of the courses; and 3) changes made or proposed at the course and/or program levels to improve teaching and enhance student competencies.

## **General Education Assessment Actions since the *UMBC 2006 Self-Study***

### **2006 - 2007**

- UMBC creates a new set of general education requirements.
- UMBC adopts five functional competencies identified by MSCHE and Maryland Higher Education Commission as general education student learning goals.
- GEC conducts *de novo* review of 355 existing general education courses.

### **2007 - 2008**

- New general education program (GEP) goes into effect.
- Systematic assessment of key general education with large enrollments and selected First Year Seminars (FYS) assessment initiated with reliance on indirect evidence.
- UMBC Assessment Plan adopted and GEC charged with oversight of general education Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) assessment.
- UMBC submits *2008 Progress Report*

### **2008 - 2009**

- Program-level department assessment plans reviewed, revised and approved.
- First round of biennial program-level assessment initiated.
- Five departments include assessment of general education courses that mirror program-level review.
- GEC assesses campus "readiness" to move forward with distinct general education course-level assessment; simplifies reviews of assessment outcomes and proposes *General Education and Assessment: A Streamlined Process*.
- UMBC Assessment Committee revises Assessment Plan to incorporate GEC proposal.

## 2009 - 2010

- Second round of biennial program-level assessment initiated.
- General education assessment summaries included in APR self-study reports.
- GEC review of biennial reports and APR self-study reports determines that substantial progress had been made. Many reports reflect the adoption of both direct and indirect assessments as well as the use of data for improvement; some provided clear alignment of instruction, assessment and the general education functional competencies. However, the GEC identified continuing challenges to complete implementation of effective general education assessment of student learning outcomes.
- The GEC report recommends several actions: 1) Guidance and reference materials for effective general education assessment should be provided to departments and individual faculty through the UMBC Faculty Development Center; 2) Principles and mechanisms for assessment of general education courses should be consistent with those already identified by departments for program-level assessment; 3) To facilitate consistency and coherence of reporting, specific course review guidelines should be included in the APR self-study instructions and the biennial report template.
- UMBC Assessment Committee endorses the GEC recommendations and amends *General Education Assessment: A Streamlined Process* to include specific guidelines (i.e., "Information submitted will include:") for course-level and program-level general education reviews.

## 2010 - 2011

- Series of General Education Assessment Workshops conducted by Dr. Barbara Walvoord for administrators, chairs, and faculty. Includes targeted workshops for departments preparing for Academic Program Review.
- Second series of workshops by Dr. Barbara Walvoord focuses on assessment of GEP Writing Intensive courses.
- Under the leadership of a new director with assessment expertise, Dr. Linda Hodges, the Faculty Development Center now serves as primary resource to department and individual faculty for the development of effective student learning assessment.
- Biennial general education course assessments are due on May 31, 2011. Five of these biennial general education course-level assessments were available for review at the time of this PRR. Three of the five assessments use direct evidence, tie student learning outcomes to functional competencies and two use outcomes to improve student learning.

## VI. RESPONSE TO COMMISSION ACTION

### Commission Action Letter June 26, 2008:

***Periodic Review Report (June 1, 2011 must document: 1. Further direct evidence of student achievement of program-level and general education outcomes, 2. Steps further taken to use assessment results to improve student learning.***

Assessment has become a constant and dynamic feature of our institutional culture. We have made great progress on program level assessment at UMBC and have gained significant momentum for general education assessment. Our approach has always engaged faculty "in the trenches," as well as deans and the senior administration in this process and, although not always seamless, it has served us well. A review of the assessment summary reports provided to date by the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, the College of Natural and Mathematical Sciences, and the College of Engineering and Information Technology reveal that departments recognize the value of collecting data to determine how students are performing in their programs or courses and of using that data to improve student success. This focus on student performance, however, indicates that a number of departments continue to assess student outcomes through a *teaching-centered* approach rather than a *learning-centered* one. That is, a number of departments tend to rely primarily on indirect methods of assessing student learning, especially overall course grades or pass rates and student surveys.

Given these challenges, UMBC has moved forward with a two-pronged approach to continue to increase the use of direct evidence in the assessment of student learning outcomes. First, the Faculty Development Center has continued to make the processes of assessment as direct and transparent as possible by providing templates to fit a variety of programs and working closely with departments and faculty to efficiently and appropriately incorporate direct measures into their work. Second, UMBC has continued to strengthen a "culture of assessment" through promotion of a "learning-centered" model of teaching as inquiry. In that regard, the University has begun a new Teacher-Scholar Program this spring to cultivate a mindset of learning-centered inquiry within a supportive faculty cohort. Best practices from this Program will be disseminated to deans, chairs and faculty by the Faculty Development Center.

### Progress in Departments Using Assessment to Drive Changes to Practice

Colleges' Dept Reports AY 2009 and 2010	% Proposing Changes Based on Assessment	% Using Direct Measures of Assessment	% Proposing Changes from Direct Measures
CAHSS depts (23)	78%	52%	39%
CNMS depts (4)	25%	100%	25%
COEIT depts (5)	40%	60%	20%

## Examples of Using Learning Outcomes Results to Propose Changes

ENGL: *Learning Outcome: Students will be able to engage in research using appropriate methodology.* The English department analyzed samples of student papers in their six senior seminars using a rubric based on the program learning objectives. The data they gathered revealed that their students' skills in conceiving, conducting and writing research were weak for 20-30% of their graduates. Indirectly, their senior exit survey also confirmed this finding. They are instituting a requirement for two junior level courses that develop students' research skills and will reassess their students' progress in the next two-year cycle after making this change.

GWST: *Learning Outcome: Students will develop skills in information literacy, critical thinking, effective research, and effective writing.* Instructors in the capstone course, GWST 495, evaluated student work in terms of how well students were prepared for and exhibited effective research practices. Instructors also interviewed students about their perceptions of their abilities to carry out research projects. In their written report instructors noted that students needed more support in engaging scholarship effectively, framing research questions and drafting research findings. Assignments in prerequisite courses, GWST 100 and 300, were subsequently redesigned to focus more on developing students' research skills. The instructors in the capstone course conduct evaluations of student work yearly to monitor the effects of these changes.

MLLI: *Learning Outcome: Students will expand their written and oral communication skills in the language.* All of the language programs offered through MLLI employ extensive rubrics to assess students' written and oral communication skills in the language. They also survey students' perceptions of their achievement of these skills. The Spanish program, as an example, analyzed their students' oral and written communication skills using detailed rubrics and determined that students were significantly more proficient in oral expression than in writing. They propose curricular changes to SPA 300 and 400 to emphasize writing skills in the language more specifically. They also are considering a Spanish Writing Center for student support modeled after the new pilot of a German Writing Center. Student achievement will be reassessed in the next two-year assessment cycle after changes to the targeted courses have been implemented.

PHYS: *Learning Outcome: Students will be able to formulate problems in the language of mathematics and to use both mathematical and computational skills to solve physical problems.* The department assessed this outcome for the BS program in PHYS 424, quantum mechanics, by examining the results on specific exam questions pertaining to that outcome, as well as homework and in-class observation. Based on three semesters of student learning data, the department recommended emphasizing and monitoring this skill starting earlier in their curriculum and is adding assessment data from PHYS 220, Computational Physics, to their overall plan.

## Examples of Using Learning Outcomes Results to Propose Changes—General Education

HIST: *Functional Competencies Addressed: I. Oral and written communication and III. Critical and analytical reasoning. Learning Outcomes: Students will be able to construct cogent arguments, present supporting evidence, and draw conclusions; students will be able to analyze and use information effectively to support a particular argument or to produce a result.* The instructor of HIST 345, a GEP course, used a rubric to evaluate students' papers both for the students' ability to communicate effectively in writing in terms of constructing arguments (functional competency I) and to identify scholarly arguments and analyze primary sources (functional competency III). Her results showed that students were able to construct an argument and draw conclusions, but they were not able to analyze written arguments to her satisfaction. She proposed creating more effective assignments that trained students to question sources, not just read them. Her plan is that learning to question will help students learn to analyze.

DANC: *Functional Competencies Addressed: III. Critical and analytical reasoning. Learning Outcomes: Students will be able to analyze and interpret a variety of subjects, including ideas and issues, cultural artifacts or aesthetic works.* The instructor of DANC 202, a GEP course, evaluated select essay exam questions for students' ability to analyze the issue involved. Her results suggested that students were not taking a deep enough approach to their thinking on issues. She worked with the Director of the Faculty Development Center both to reframe the essay questions to evoke a deeper response from students and to think about activities to model this kind of analysis during class.

## **SECTION SIX: LINKED INSTITUTIONAL PLANNING AND BUDGETING PROCESSES**

Brief narrative describing current institutional planning and budgeting processes, with particular attention to demonstrating how such processes are integrated and linked. Narrative should reference institutional planning documents.

Standard 2: Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal:

An institution conducts ongoing planning and resource allocation based on its mission and goals, develops objectives to achieve them, and utilizes the results of its assessment activities for institutional renewal. Implementation and subsequent evaluation of the success of the strategic plan and resource allocation support the development and change necessary to improve and to maintain institutional quality.

This section analyzes UMBC's institutional planning and budgeting processes, with particular attention to assessing how these processes are linked and integrated. It demonstrates the significant extent to which strategic planning converts to budgeting at UMBC. The Middle States *Handbook for Periodic Review Reports* states that "institutions that have developed effective strategic or long-range master plans may satisfy this requirement of the PRR by making reference to such documents in the PRR and by including the planning documents as attachments." UMBC fulfills this criterion; strategic planning has long been an important component of our culture. Our focus on planning reflects the fundamental optimism and entrepreneurial spirit of a young campus that has made rapid and dramatic progress toward its goals. Subsection I below provides links to the University's core planning documents.

It is important to understand the extent to which UMBC's planning and budgeting processes are impacted by the external fiscal environment. Even in the best of times, factors such as the State's economic health, financial outlook, and priorities, as well as competition for funding with other University System of Maryland (USM) institutions, impose daunting fiscal constraints and uncertainties. The recent financial crisis and recession have profoundly exacerbated these "normal" challenges. The 2010 USM strategic plan, *Powering Maryland Forward: USM's 2020 Plan for More Degrees, A Stronger Innovation Economy, A Higher Quality of Life*, notes that public universities "are facing the most challenging fiscal environment since the Great Depression."

### **I. STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS**

The University's foundational planning document is the *Strategic Framework for 2016*. The *Framework* sets out UMBC's vision for itself in the years leading up to the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its founding in 1966. As the centerpiece of UMBC's ongoing and comprehensive planning process, the *Framework* clarifies goals, establishes expectations, and sets the agenda for future decision-making and actions. It guides UMBC's short- and long-term planning and resource

allocation, and it provides the context for all of the subsequent planning-related documents discussed in this section. These include: *Strategic Framework for 2016: Academic Planning Proposals from Clusters*, the *UMBC Self-Study 2006* the *2008 Progress Report to Middle States*, and two *Focusing Our Resources for Results* documents – *Collaborative Initiatives to Advance the University's Strategic Plan* (July 2009) and *Update on Initiatives to Advance UMBC* (March 2010).

The *Framework* and related planning materials reflect UMBC's long tradition of shared governance, with its established structures for collaboration and communication across academic and administrative divisions and departments. Faculty, students, and staff traditionally are represented in major decision-making efforts via representative bodies and such ad hoc groups as task forces, planning entities, and advisory groups. Planning at UMBC is an ongoing, active, comprehensive process that includes input from all segments of the campus community.

Since the creation of the strategic plan, UMBC has made substantial progress on our over-arching goals, the specific sub-goals represented in the *Framework*, and many of the initiatives proposed in the follow-on *Academic Planning Proposals from Clusters*. While much remains to be accomplished, increases in student retention, graduate enrollments, applied learning experiences, applied professional programs, research facilities, and administrative staff and improvements in a number of other areas reflect the effectiveness and outcomes of our planning process.

## **II. BUDGET DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**

The President has ultimate authority and responsibility for the University's budget. He has delegated certain roles and tasks to the Provost, the Vice President for Administration and Finance (VPAF), and the Council of Vice-Presidents and Deans (the "Council"), as outlined and described below. Generally speaking, the Council is responsible for overseeing the budget development process, identifying and evaluating options, and making recommendations to the President. Comprising senior representatives from all academic and administrative divisions, the Council serves as the University's senior management body. The Provost chairs the Council and is responsible for communicating its consensus views to the President.

At the beginning of the fall semester, the USM provides general budget guidance, including identification of broad budget parameters and initial identification of mandatory cost increases. Direction is also usually provided regarding tuition and fee rate increases, and UMBC is required to submit preliminary plans.

In mid-October/early November, the Council agrees on preliminary budget parameters and planning assumptions. This includes establishing ranges for enrollment, State appropriations, tuition and fee revenue, inflation, salary, and benefit increases. Budget commitments already made are reflected in this report, including such things as new faculty

hiring and start-up cost allocations, multi-year program funding plans, and mid-year decisions having budgetary implications. The Council reviews, refines, and revises, as needed, the set of short-term University priorities, which will serve to focus effort and resources in the next 1-2 years.

These priorities stem directly from the *Strategic Framework for 2016* and the *Academic Planning Proposals from Clusters* recommendations, an understanding of previous budget decisions and how they relate to the framework and plan, and an assessment of opportunities and challenges. Special emphasis is given to identifying cross-divisional priorities. The Provost and the Vice President for Administration and Finance (VPAF) coordinate communication of these parameters and assumptions with key campus leaders, in consultation with the President. These include the Budget Committee, department chairs, the Faculty Senate's Academic Planning and Budget Committee (APB), and division senior leadership teams. The vice presidents and deans begin focused discussions within their divisions regarding priorities for the coming year, tying back to the *Strategic Framework for 2016*. The Council then agrees on a final set of preliminary parameters and assumptions in order to complete initial budget forecast scenarios.

In December, the Department of Financial Services provides preliminary budget forecast scenarios – “Pessimistic,” “Optimistic,” and “Most Likely” – to the Budget Committee, based on the parameters and assumptions that were set by the Council. In January, the President sends budget materials to the vice presidents. This includes explanation of budget assumptions, the agreed upon short-term University priorities, and budget request materials. It may also include guidance on the availability of funds to support University priorities. Budget request materials include a standardized format for submission of requests for enhancements. The Vice President for Student Affairs and the VPAF develop recommendations for room and board rate increases, in accordance with the USM's annual request to campuses.

The division budget development process unfolds in January and February. Vice Presidents and Deans consult with their leadership teams regarding budget parameters, University priorities, and division/college needs. In late February, consideration of each division's budget submission includes a presentation by each Vice President and Dean to a joint session of the President and the Council. The Provost and the VPAF, in consultation with the Council, develop budget scenarios to be discussed with the President, including prioritizing budget allocations, further refinement of assumptions, and reallocation strategies. Room and board rates are finalized for submission to USM in early March.

In mid-March, preliminary budget decisions are made by the President, in consultation with the Provost and the VPAF and are then communicated to the Council. Follow-up discussions may occur. In late March/early April, a preliminary budget is finalized and communicated to key campus leaders and constituencies, including the UMBC Budget Committee, department chairs, senior divisional leaders, and the Faculty Senate's Academic Planning and Budget Committee (APB). This includes information on the connection between budget decisions and the previously communicated short-term University priorities. In late April,

the President, in consultation with the Council, determines any budget adjustments necessary in response to final legislative action on state allocations.

In early May, the Provost and VPAF coordinate communication of the final budget plan to the campus community, including information on the connection of budget allocation decisions to short-term University priorities, the *Strategic Framework for 2016*. In July, tentative allocations are made for new faculty hiring for the next fiscal year and communicated to departments. In August and September, in response to direction from the USM, specialized State budget requests are submitted to USM, in consultation with the Council. The President presents UMBC's budget request to the Board of Regents.

### **III. UMBC PLANNING AND BUDGETING: LINKED AND INTEGRATED**

The Middle States *Handbook for Periodic Review Reports* says: "institutions that are actively engaged in continuous planning and assessment are strongly encouraged to submit documentation from regular processes without significant description or analysis." UMBC meets this criterion. This section provides a concise narrative highlighting the University's integrated planning and budgeting processes, while referencing a number of important documents that demonstrate how planning and budgeting are linked.

The University has long devoted attention to improving the connection between its ongoing strategic planning and the campus budget development process. The 2006 *UMBC Self Study* for Middle States noted that, "following a period of dissatisfaction with the role of the campus community in the budget process, there is now a stronger commitment from the administration to make the budget process more transparent, with 'transparency' defined as broader participation and clearer presentation of account information. . . . There is also a stronger and more formal connection between the annual budget process and the longer range planning process." These efforts have intensified in recent years, and the University has continued to more closely integrate planning and budgeting. Collectively, these changes have resulted in greater transparency and reliability of budget data, better synergy between the planning and budgeting processes, and an overall resource-allocation process that is better defined, institutionalized, and operationalized than it was in 2006.

The Vice Presidents and Deans have attempted, as much as the current budget stringency permits, to incorporate the priorities and their associated initiatives in FY 2010, FY 2011, and FY 2012 budget planning. As recounted in the *Update on Initiatives to Advance UMBC* (March 2010), "continued progress on strategic priorities has been possible through a combination of focused attention, proactive cost management, and development of new revenue. Cost-management strategies for FY 2011 include: a hiring freeze and hiring exception process; reductions in merit aid and facilities renewal funds; utility savings through new procurement contracts; a Blue Ribbon Committee developing recommendations regarding the future of the Library; a work group assessing strategies to increase efficiencies in IT support; an effort to identify and reduce low-enrollment classes; and a corollary effort to improve the

process of funding enrollment growth in high-demand courses. On the revenue side, enrollment growth will help support strategic priorities going forward. Other new revenue opportunities include growth in out-of-state enrollment, growth in selected master's programs and summer/winter session offerings, and increased student retention. Increasing revenues from research grants and contracts and from fundraising will also be very important to our continued progress." Further details on actions to make progress on the four priorities can be found in the March 2010 *Update*.

Both of the *Focusing Our Resources for Results* documents amply illustrate UMBC's commitment to integration of planning and budgeting. These linked processes represent improvements in how the University allocates resources. Perhaps the most important change is that the Council is now the institutional body where most significant budget decisions are made, as well as the locus of integration between the strategic planning and budget development processes. Among its other critical roles are cross-division coordination to facilitate the accomplishment of the University's academic and administrative strategic goals and priorities; creation of consensus views on University priorities and budget allocations; assessment and evaluation of progress toward the University's academic and administrative goals and priorities; and review and re-design of administrative and budgetary processes to facilitate accomplishment of academic and administrative priorities. In sum, the Council plays a central role today in all significant changes of the University's policies and procedures, and is vital to the outreach, deliberation, and review processes that are the hallmarks of shared governance at UMBC.

A related improvement is that there is more transparency of data and information related to strategic planning and budget development available to various stakeholders, including upper-level administrators, APB, the Faculty Senate, and department chairs. To a greater extent than in the past, these constituencies can see the relevant budget data and ask clarifying questions of Division of Administration and Finance staff. Furthermore, there is a well-structured and -understood method for budget requests, anchored in the Council. When the Vice Presidents and Deans present their requests, they must be tied to the four strategic priorities. In this context, while budget "requesters" do not get everything they ask for, they at least understand why.

The faculty hiring process is also improved. Unlike in the past, hiring requests must be aligned with a strategic priority. The process is better structured by a new "hiring organizer." Department chairs know at the outset of their searches what the salary range will be and what the start-up parameters are. Faculty hiring is more closely linked to student/faculty ratios and research infrastructural needs. Searches are more likely to be approved for programs and departments identified as strategically important.

There have also been improvements in the area of new program planning and budgeting. Foremost among these are revisions in the template used by APB to review new program proposals. There is also a new template for non-standard programs, as well as a committee to evaluate their feasibility. Because of these innovations, the data available to

decision-makers considering new programs is more reliable, decision-making processes are more transparent, real costs are better anticipated, and decisions are better supported by data. Another improvement in this process is that both the Provost and the VPAF now sign off on new programs, giving formal expressions of the administration's commitment to new initiatives.

The document entitled "Multi-Year Budget Priorities Allocation Plan" is an excellent illustration of how UMBC links planning and budgeting. It represents cooperative planning at the highest levels between the University's academic and administrative functions. Specific initiatives are prioritized over a three-year period with the "comments" column tying each initiative to one of the University's four strategic priorities. Along with the *Focusing Our Resources for Results* documents, the "Multi-Year Budget Priorities Allocation Plan" document illustrates the processes we have used to thrive even in the challenging fiscal context of the last few years. This "academic-core" approach links planning and budgeting more effectively. Because cuts come in the context of sound academic planning, rather than simple uniformity across programs. Budget decisions are better tied to University priorities.

#### **IV. LOOKING TOWARD THE FUTURE**

It is essential that UMBC continue to leverage the synergy between its strategic planning and budget development processes. The University must use the planning process to develop goals and objectives, identify initiatives to achieve them, reconcile its goals and objectives with resource constraints, and prioritize accordingly. In lean times, it is all the more important that budget decisions be linked to strategic priorities. In particular, we need to keep moving in the direction of greater transparency.

According to the Division of Administration and Finance, transparency will continue to improve with the implementation of T-REX (Transactional Report Exchange) and new financial reporting and analytics tools. Once fully implemented, T-REX will enable analysts to run reports on the fly, review "dashboard" information daily, and create additional analytical reports that meet constituents' needs and assist in answering questions regarding actual financial performance. Dashboard technology is a particularly valuable tool as it can easily be made available to senior administrators who may not previously have had the tools to track fiscal performance on a daily basis. We will then have more current and incisive data, which can be incorporated into our future budget planning. When administrators are dealing with mid-year budget cuts and adjustments, such information could be extremely useful in identifying sources of possible budgetary savings. Initial reports in T-REX were rolled out to departmental end-users in early 2011. Additional reports and dashboards will be developed on a rolling basis over the next two years.

Throughout the recession, the University's planning and budgeting processes have been conservative and focused. We have effectively managed operating budget and fund balance cuts of \$18 million over the past two-and-a-half years. Working through these challenges together, we have raised the campus's national profile, enrollment, selectivity, tuition revenue,

and research grants and contracts. Looking to the future, we are confident that UMBC will continue to excel as we stay focused on protecting the academic program, supporting people, and pursuing our strategic priorities of student success, infrastructure for research and creative achievement, environment and sustainability, and safety and security. A continuing context of economic sluggishness will make it even more vital that UMBC's budget decisions are carefully aligned with planning recommendations and strategic priorities.

## ADDENDUM A

### UMBC Distance Education Student Verification Policy *DRAFT*

All members of the UMBC community, including all students that take courses at UMBC, are part of the Retriever Community System (RCS). The Retriever Community System is the centralized, enterprise-wide identity management system that stores identifying information about people who are, or were, affiliated with UMBC, whether their affiliation is temporary, such as a summer program participant, or permanent, such as a faculty member or degree-seeking student. It associates identifying information about each person with a *myUMBC* username that allows its owner to access UMBC-wide and departmental computing resources commensurate with their role within the UMBC community. It also manages and preserves the online identity of UMBC students, faculty, staff, alumnae, emeritus faculty and staff, contractors, visitors, or guests.

UMBC students who take online classes through UMBC must use their official *myUMBC* account to enroll in the class. Once enrolled, they must use their official *myUMBC* username and associated *myUMBC* email address to communicate with their instructor, submit their course work, and perform UMBC administrative services.

UMBC students agree to abide by our UMBC acceptable use policy, <http://www.umbc.edu/oit/sans/security/policy/2-UMBC/IT-01-final.html>. In addition, as part of creating their account they agree to never share their *myUMBC* account information when they first establish their *myUMBC* account. They are required by our account system to establish a password that conforms to the NIST 800-63 assurance level 2. They are advised to protect their *myUMBC* account because it could be used to access their confidential personal information. These warnings are re-enforced each time they use their account through the *myUMBC* login screen.

In order to register for distance education courses at UMBC, an applicant student must first formally apply to the university. The admissions process is the same for online and on-campus. All applicants submit an application that includes personal confidential information such as name, address, date of birth, and appropriate academic documentation (such as a transcript - HS and/or higher education). This information is reviewed by the appropriate graduate program director (for online graduate programs) or by the office of summer and winter programs for students registering for summer or winter session.

All distance education coursework must be submitted either through their *myUMBC* email account or through the university's official learning management software system (currently Blackboard) using the student's *myUMBC* username and password. Although this system of required password verification for all distance work does not preclude the registered student from receiving assistance as he/she completes his/her online work, instructors teaching online courses at UMBC routinely use a mixture of assignments and classroom techniques to

prevent cheating, plagiarism, and another student's work being turned in as the registered student's own work.

## **ADDENDUM B**

### **UMBC Transfer Credit Policies**

*UMBC's transfer credit policy is detailed in our Undergraduate Catalog at <http://www.umbc.edu/catalog/pages/admission.html>. In addition to the university's transfer credit policy, we also include in our Undergraduate Catalog the MHEC Transfer Policy: [http://www.umbc.edu/catalog/appendices/Appendix\\_I.pdf](http://www.umbc.edu/catalog/appendices/Appendix_I.pdf) with which UMBC fully complies.*

UMBC will transfer credits for academic courses taken at institutions of higher education accredited by the Regional Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Higher Education, in subject areas that are considered part of the student's university program and in which he or she has earned a grade of "C" or better. From Maryland public institutions, courses with grades of "D" may transfer; however, a minimum grade of "C-" may be required in courses applied toward a major, minor, certificate program or toward general requirements.

A student may transfer a maximum of 90 credits from all previous institutions toward a UMBC undergraduate degree.

A maximum of 60 credits — or 65 credits for engineering majors — are transferable from a two-year program or institution. UMBC's graduation policy stipulates that the final 30 hours toward a bachelor's degree must be completed on campus. The Registrar's Office may approve a request to complete a maximum of two courses within the final 30 credits at another institution.

Credit from foreign institutions that are recognized by the Ministries of Education in their respective countries will be considered for transfer to UMBC. Students who have attended college or university outside the United States must Submit a course-by-course credential evaluation prepared by a credential evaluation service. We strongly recommend:

#### **AACRAO**

Foreign Credentials Evaluation Service,  
One Dupont Circle, NW,  
Suite 520, Washington,  
D.C. 20036-1135  
[www.aacrao.org/international/foreignEdCred.cfm](http://www.aacrao.org/international/foreignEdCred.cfm)

The evaluation of transfer credit also will reflect a conversion of non-semester credit to semester-hour equivalents. (For example one-quarter hour is considered to be equivalent to two-thirds of a semester hour.) The applicability of courses to a specific major then is determined by the appropriate academic department.

UMBC does not award credit for military work or classroom experience, with the exception of certain courses offered by the Defense Language Institute, the National Cryptologic School and the Community College of the Air Force. In addition, no credit is given for life experience or for credit-by-examination awarded from another institution.

Students may pursue credit through UMBC-administered departmental exams or by the College Level Examination Program (CLEP), Advanced Placement (AP) Program or International Baccalaureate (IB) Program. To receive credit for CLEP, AP or IB, official scores must be sent directly from the testing agency to UMBC's Office of Undergraduate Admissions and Orientation.

Appendix II lists the CLEP, IB and AP examinations for which UMBC awards credit. A maximum of 60 credits may be earned through departmental, CLEP, AP and IB examinations. Credit awarded through a UMBC departmental exam is not applicable toward the general requirements for graduation.

Upper-level coursework at UMBC is defined as 300- and 400-level courses. Courses from community and junior colleges will not count as upper-level courses. Students who receive credit from a four-year institution that operates under a different course-numbering system may wish to forward a description of that numbering system to the Registrar's Office to assist with evaluation.

### **Maryland Public Colleges and Universities**

The State Board for Higher Education Transfer Credit Policy is outlined in Appendix I.

### **Maryland Community College Recommended Transfer Programs**

The Recommended Transfer Programs (RTP) provides a list of community college courses that will best prepare students for UMBC's course of study. Transfer students with acceptable grades in courses specified in the UMBC Recommended Transfer Program Guide are assured transfer with no loss of credit. These program guides are available in the transfer advisors' offices at all Maryland community colleges or via the Web at <http://artweb.usmd.edu> . More information can also be found through the Maryland Transfer Web site, <http://mdtransfer.usmd.edu> .

## ADDENDUM C

### UMBC Middle States *Periodic Review Report* – Structure/Participants

#### Executive Steering Committee:

Elliot Hirshman, Committee Chair  
*Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs*

Terry Aylsworth  
*President, Non-Exempt Staff Senate*

Warren DeVries  
*Dean of Engineering and Information Technology*

Devin Hagerty\*  
*Professor and Chair, Political Science*

John Jeffries  
*Dean of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*

Yasmin Karimian  
*President, Student Government Association*

Diane Lee  
*Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education*

Patrice McDermott\*  
*Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs*

Philip Rous\*\*  
*Dean of Natural and Mathematical Sciences*

Judah Ronch  
*Dean of the Erickson School*

Janet Rutledge\*  
*Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education*

Lynne Schaefer  
*Vice President for Administration and Finance*

Andrew Sears\*  
*Professor and Chair, Information Systems*

Greg Simmons  
*Vice President for Institutional Advancement*

Tim Sparklin  
*President, Professional Staff Senate*

Rachel Sturge  
*President, Graduate Student Association*

Jack Suess  
*Vice President for Information Technology*

Geoffrey Summers  
*Vice President for Research*

L.D. Timmie Topoleski  
*President, Faculty Senate*

Nancy Young  
*Vice President for Student Affairs*

\*PRR Co-Chairs

\*\* Executive Committee Liaison to the PRR Co-Chairs

### **Co-Chairs - *Periodic Review Report***

Devin Hagerty – Chair and Professor of Political Science  
Patrice McDermott – Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs  
Janet Rutledge – Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies  
Andrew Sears – Chair and Professor of Information Systems

### **Work Group Participants:**

#### **1. Response to Reviewers' Recommendation on Library Resources**

Lead: Tony Moreira Vice Provost for Academic Affairs

Members: Faculty, staff and student members of the Library Blue Ribbon Committee

#### **2. Major Challenges and Opportunities**

Leads: Andrew Sears/Janet Rutledge

Members:

Geoff Summers Vice President for Research - Research Infrastructure

Mike Carlin Assistant VP for Information Technology - IT Infrastructure

Andy Miller Chair, Geography & Environmental Sciences - Environmental Programs

Linda Baker Chair, Psychology - Research Council

Kim Leisey Associate VP for Student Affairs - Safety

Virginia McConnell Professor, Economics - Planning Leadership Team

#### **3. Linked Institutional Budget and Planning**

Leads: Devin Hagerty/ Patrice McDermott

Members:

Bruce Walz Chair, Emergency Health Services - Academic Program and Budget Committee

Ben Lowenthal Associate Vice President for Administration & Finance

Marv Mandell Professor, Public Policy - Co-Chair of 2006 UMBC Self-Study

Kevin Eckert Chair, Sociology/ Anthropology - Research Infrastructure Committee

Yvette Mozie-Ross Associate Provost for Enrollment Management

#### **4. Organized and Sustained Processes to Assess Institutional Effectiveness and Student Learning**

Leads: Patrice McDermott/Linda Hodges Director, Faculty Development Center

Members:

Cheryl Miller Associate Dean, CAHSS Assessment

Marilyn Goldberg Chair, Ancient Studies - GEC/Assessment Committee

Jill Randles Assistant Vice Provost, Office of Undergraduate Education

Michael Dillon Director, Office of Institutional Research - Assessment Committee

Chris Steele Associate Vice Provost, College of Professional Studies

Marilyn Demorest Professor *Emerita*, Psychology

## APPENDICES

- Appendix A – UMBC Undergraduate Catalog 2010,  
<http://www.umbc.edu/catalog/2010/index.php>
- Appendix B – UMBC Graduate Catalog, <http://www.umbc.edu/gradschool/gradcatalog/>
- Appendix C – Periodic Review Report Structure/Participants
- Appendix D – Blue Ribbon Committee Report on the Library, March 24, 2010,  
[http://www.umbc.edu/provost/planning/LBRC\\_Report\\_March\\_24\\_2010.pdf](http://www.umbc.edu/provost/planning/LBRC_Report_March_24_2010.pdf)
- Appendix E – Powering Maryland Forward: USM's 2020 Plan for More Degrees, A Stronger Innovation Economy, A Higher Quality of Life,  
<http://www.usmd.edu/10yrplan/index.html>
- Appendix F – UMBC Strategic Framework for 2016,  
<http://www.umbc.edu/provost/PDFs/frameworkfinal.pdf>
- Appendix G – UMBC 2008 Progress Report,  
<http://www.umbc.edu/provost/Middle%20States/Assessment%20Report.pdf>
- Appendix H – Figure 1 - Tracking the Flow of Information and Decisions,  
[http://www.umbc.edu/provost/Assessment\\_Figure\\_1.pdf](http://www.umbc.edu/provost/Assessment_Figure_1.pdf)
- Appendix I – Focusing Our Resources for Results: Collaborative Initiatives to Advance the University's Strategic Plan, July 2009,  
<http://www.umbc.edu/provost/planning/RetreatStrategicPlanningDocumentFinal.pdf>
- Appendix J – Focusing Our Resources: Update on Initiatives to Advance UMBC (March 2010),  
<http://www.umbc.edu/provost/planning/MemoFocusingOurResourcesforResults.pdf>
- Appendix K – UMBC Assessment Plan, April 2009,  
[http://www.umbc.edu/provost/Assessment\\_Plan\\_Outline\\_2009.pdf](http://www.umbc.edu/provost/Assessment_Plan_Outline_2009.pdf)
- Appendix L – General Education and Assessment: A Streamlined Process, (*Approved by the Provost April 2009; Amended by GEC March 2010*),  
[http://www.umbc.edu/provost/General\\_Education\\_Assessment-A\\_Streamlined\\_Process.pdf](http://www.umbc.edu/provost/General_Education_Assessment-A_Streamlined_Process.pdf)
- Appendix M – Post Award Enhancement Initiative
- Appendix N – Report of the IT Restructuring Work Group,  
<http://www.umbc.edu/provost/planning/ReportoftheITRestructuringWorkGroupFinal352010.pdf>

Appendix O – Facilities Master Plan,  
<http://www.umbc.edu/campusplan/documents/CommunityMeeting2.18.10.pdf>

Appendix P – UMBC Progress Report on Institutional Programs of Cultural Diversity,  
[http://www.umbc.edu/provost/PDFs/Diversity\\_Report022511.pdf](http://www.umbc.edu/provost/PDFs/Diversity_Report022511.pdf)

Appendix Q – Academic Plan Cluster Proposals,  
[http://www.umbc.edu/provost/planning/Academic\\_Cluster\\_Recommendations.pdf](http://www.umbc.edu/provost/planning/Academic_Cluster_Recommendations.pdf)

Appendix R – Middle States Institutional Profiles

Appendix S – Financials

Appendix T – UMBC Middle States 2006 Self-Study,  
<http://www.umbc.edu/provost/PDFs/UMBC2006Selfstudy.pdf>

Appendix U – UMBC APR Guidelines,  
[http://www.umbc.edu/provost/AcademicPolicies/APR\\_Guidelines\\_110910.pdf](http://www.umbc.edu/provost/AcademicPolicies/APR_Guidelines_110910.pdf)