

## INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW

UMass Dartmouth has undergone significant growth and development over the ten year period since its last accreditation review. This transformation has been driven by the University's 2000-2010 Strategic Plan, *Engaged, Embedded and Evolving*, which is also the organizing theme of this Self-Study. The plan calls upon the University to optimize its intellectual engagement by creating and sustaining a climate that is active, engaged and excited about the University's work at every level; that envisions work being done in synergy and partnership within the region and the Commonwealth; that honors our duty as stewards of "our place" but also pushes perspectives and impacts to be global, and respond to current and emerging trends; and that views change as a constant that will help the campus evolve. The Mission Statement that evolved from the Strategic Plan describes UMass Dartmouth as a vibrant public university, engaged in personalized teaching and innovative research, and an institution that serves as an intellectual catalyst for the region. The Vision Statement articulates the University's aspirations to become a regional research university with greater diversity, enhanced engagement in the community, and expanded master's and doctoral programs.

UMass Dartmouth's 2010 NEASC Self-Study demonstrates the institution's ability to adapt to ever decreasing levels of state funding, replacing these revenues largely by revenue streams generated through growth in its undergraduate and residential student populations; increases in selected fees; grant and contract funding that flows from the innovative research and scholarly activity of its faculty; and greatly expanded and successful efforts to obtain private donations. Increased external research funding has fueled steady growth in graduate student enrollments at both the master's and doctoral levels. The Self-Study highlights how deeply the University is embedded in the region's economy and creative arts through programmatic initiatives and the creation of off-campus locations developed since the last NEASC review. These include the Advanced Technology and Manufacturing Center in Fall River; the School for Marine Science and Technology and the College of Visual and Performing Arts' Star Store building, both in New Bedford; and the Professional and Continuing Education Center in Fall River. The University's engagement in addressing the needs of K-12 education in the community is evidenced in the recently developed School of Education, Public Policy, and Civic Engagement, which includes the Center for University School and Community Partnerships and the Kaput Center for Research and Innovation in STEM Education.

The Self-Study assesses how growth has been achieved at UMass Dartmouth within the requirements of NEASC's accreditation standards and projects how areas of concern will be addressed as the institution continues to evolve as a regional research university committed to interdisciplinary and innovative education, engaged in innovative research and scholarship, and committed to meeting regional and national needs.

Looking forward, the University is approaching the limits to which the undergraduate population will grow and is focusing on growth in graduate programs over the next ten years. At the same time, diversifying and internationalizing the student body at both the undergraduate and graduate levels remains an important goal. And, as the nature of state-based support for higher education changes from a model of high state subsidy to one of higher costs and increased financial aid to maintain access and excellence, institutions will be ever more reliant on alternative revenue streams to sustain their mission. UMass Dartmouth anticipates growth of revenues through a variety of initiatives including online education, more aggressive pursuit of grants and contracts

with higher indirect cost rates, professional and continuing education programs, and private donations.

Finally, it must be noted here that on February 2, 2010, the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education approved UMass Dartmouth's proposal to offer the Juris Doctorate (JD) degree and the creation of the first public law school in the Commonwealth. The University has submitted a report to the CIHE of NEASC notifying them of this substantive change to the institution's degree offerings and of plans to enroll the first students in this program in Fall 2010. Given the late date of this change, the JD program is not discussed in this Self-Study; however, the addition of these graduate student enrollments is captured in our long-range enrollment projections and is reflected in the Data First tables.

**Standard One: Mission and Purpose** — The University's current mission statement was developed through the strategic planning process initiated in 1999 that produced the strategic plan, *Engaged, Embedded and Evolving, 2000-2010*, and was reaffirmed in the 2007 update of the plan. The planning process led to the current Vision Statement that commits to creating a "personalized academic environment where scholarly research and creative activities of faculty and graduate students are interwoven with the undergraduate experience." The Vision Statement further reaffirms the commitment to develop additional master's and doctoral programs and to enhance the capacity to deliver educational and outreach programs. Despite declining state revenues, progress continues to be made toward meeting the goals and objectives of the strategic plan, although the timelines for achieving some of these goals will have to be extended. The University is committed to making greater efforts to raise awareness, among all constituents, of the Mission, Vision and strategic objectives of the University and to continue to refresh the Strategic Plan to reflect progress in meeting goals, changes in strategies, and in particular changes in the fiscal environment.

**Standard Two: Planning and Evaluation** — UMass Dartmouth has devoted considerable energy to developing and maintaining an active strategic plan, which is tightly linked to the Mission and Vision Statements, and which drives decisions and resource allocation. A Facilities Master Plan has been developed and implemented and a budget planning process is in place, both of which address short-term and long-term planning objectives. And, while there is still work to be done, considerable progress has been made in developing an assessment-based culture using the UMass system's Academic Quality and Development (AQAD) program, together with accreditation-mandated outcomes assessment of all professional degree programs and a focus on the review and assessment of general education. A statement of Integrated Student Learning Outcomes (ISLO), which represents UMass Dartmouth's concept of an educated person, has been developed and endorsed by the Faculty Senate and Student Senate. The University will focus on the implementation of the recommendations developed by the ISLO and General Education Task Forces, which are expected to be presented by the end of the coming academic year. An agreement has also been reached, through negotiations with the Faculty Federation, on a common course evaluation form, a long-standing objective since the last NEASC visit. A variety of data reports and activity inventories necessary for better informed decision-making processes continue to be improved.

**Standard Three: Organization and Governance** — UMass Dartmouth is part of the five campus UMass system organized under the UMass Board of Trustees, which creates general policy for the system, decides on applications for tenure and honorary degrees, and delegates

broad authority to the system President, who reports directly to the Board. The President gives the Campus Chancellors the authority for the management and operation of their respective campuses through the delegation of his authority. The Board's Statement on University Governance confirms the concept of shared governance – the right of faculty and students to initiate recommendations in areas where they have “primary responsibility.” The UMass Dartmouth Chancellor oversees an administrative team that in concert with the faculty is responsible for the quality of the University's academic programs. The University's five colleges and two professional schools, each of which is headed by a Dean who reports to the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs, deliver these programs. Student views and judgments are voiced through the Student Senate. Faculty governance, including the organization and constitution of the Faculty Senate, is embedded in the faculty collective bargaining agreement. The Faculty Senate is led by a Steering Committee elected by the faculty. Overall, the Self-Study shows that the University has an effective organizational structure in place to advance the campus mission and that its systems of governance ensure accountability and mechanisms for policy and programmatic change and review in all areas of teaching, research and service. Nevertheless, there is a difference of opinion with regard to the appropriateness of the current governance structure, which embeds academic governance in the collective bargaining agreement. Acknowledging that an effective governance system is essential for the University to reach its full potential and that the University is at a pivotal point as it pursues its strategic goals for enrollment growth, particularly at the graduate level, and attainment of Carnegie Doctoral designation and expansion of its research and creative activities portfolio, the Chancellor will appoint a Task Force on Academic Governance, charged with evaluating the current governance structures and developing recommendations for improving governance at UMass Dartmouth.

**Standard Four: The Academic Program** — UMass Dartmouth's Mission and Vision, both committed to excellence in teaching, research, and community engagement, provide the foundation for the undergraduate and graduate programs. Academic oversight and outcomes assessment, and long strengths of the professional degree programs, have been extended to the general education program and majors in the liberal arts and sciences through the development of learning objectives for each general education topic area and integrated student learning outcomes for all UMass Dartmouth graduates. With the goal of improving undergraduate offerings and using information garnered through AQAD reviews, several new undergraduate majors and minors have been developed, including majors in Women's Studies and Crime and Justice Studies, and interdisciplinary minors in Religious Studies and Sustainability, the former based in the Philosophy Department and the latter in Engineering. Of particular note, and consistent with the University's recent selection by the Carnegie Institute for the Advancement of Teaching's Community Engagement Classification, the University is expanding its opportunities for internships, service learning, and community research in its undergraduate programs as it works toward the goal to have all undergraduates participate in a service learning experience by 2012. The Honors Program, which provides a valuable opportunity to promote undergraduate research and to integrate faculty scholarship into teaching, is using newly gathered data to make program improvements. Many of these initiatives are under the leadership of the newly created office of the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Studies.

Clearly, the expansion of graduate offerings is the most significant academic development since the last NEASC review. The long-term goal is for graduate students to make up approximately

20% of a total population of 10,000 students and to achieve Carnegie Doctoral/Research University status, which would require that an average of twenty doctoral students graduate per year. Toward this goal, UMass Dartmouth now offers twenty-six master's degrees and seven independent and collaborative PhD programs. The most recently added Master's programs include those in Public Policy and Applied Behavioral Analysis. Several professional science master's degrees are under development, reflecting the need for additional training in the science-based professions as described and supported by the National Science Foundation. Doctoral programs added since the last NEASC review include Biomedical Engineering and Bio-Technology (an intercampus program); Marine Science (offered in collaboration with the four campuses of the University through the intercampus UMass School of Marine Sciences); Chemistry (offered in collaboration with UMass Lowell); and the three UMass Dartmouth PhD programs (approved in the last two years) in Nursing, Mathematics Education, and Luso-Afro-Brazilian Studies and Theory. The latter is the first doctoral program in the humanities on campus. Doctoral programs under development, which will become active over the next two to three years, include: a PhD. and Ed.D. in Education Leadership; the advanced practice nursing DNP degree; a PhD. in Biochemistry; and a PhD. in Engineering and Applied Sciences. To provide leadership for this focus on graduate program expansion, the new administrative position of Associate Provost for Graduate Studies was created.

The University also has expanded its outreach through programs offered under the auspices of Professional and Continuing Education and is making significant effort to expand its online certificate and degree program offerings. The Women's Studies BA and a certificate in Sustainability Policies became fully online offerings in the past year, and programs under development, including a BA in Liberal Arts and an RN to BS program in Nursing, are expected to become available within the next year. To support the development of online program expansion, the University has developed additional administrative structures including the appointment of an Academic Director of Online Education and a Director of Online Operations and Marketing.

**Standard Five: Faculty** — UMass Dartmouth's faculty is its strongest asset. The University's academic programs are delivered by its 368 full time faculty (218 tenured, 95 tenure-track and 55 full-time lecturers) and 252 part-time lecturers. At this time, approximately 30% of the full-time faculty have been hired within the last five years. This follows the loss of approximately 15% of the tenured faculty through an early retirement program in 2001, which necessitated the commitment of extensive University resources to rebuild the faculty. Despite an approximate 45% increase in the overall student body since 1999, the University has been able to maintain a student to faculty ratio of 17.7 to 1. The faculty are committed to the University's mission of personalized teaching, innovative research, scholarship and creative works, and community engagement. Across all disciplines, faculty are widely published scholars, frequently sought consultants, particularly in the sciences and engineering, and highly esteemed writers and artists. The University commits significant resources to professional development of faculty starting with the New Faculty Institute, which all new full-time faculty attend throughout their first year; the Center for Teaching Excellence, which provides funding for development of innovative pedagogies; opportunities for intramural grants that provide seed funding for faculty in the Sciences and Social Sciences; grant workshops and other support services provided by the Office of Research Administration; and travel grants supported by the Provost's and deans' offices. Computer Information and Technology Services supports an Instructional Development Program

for faculty interested in online learning and provides laptops for all faculty who incorporate the use of technology in the classroom. In Fall 2009, these initiatives were brought together under the Office of Faculty Development, directed by a tenured faculty member.

In the years ahead the University will be challenged by the reduction in state resources to maintain the small class sizes that have been one of the hallmarks of UMass Dartmouth's personalized education. The impact of increased class sizes, decreased resources to support part-time faculty, and the ability to meet rising expectations for research and scholarship are concerns that arise from the change process on campus and will need to be addressed effectively.

**Standard Six: Students** — Over the past decade, UMass Dartmouth purposely expanded its undergraduate and graduate student populations while it maintained a quality admissions profile and continued to provide appropriate support services. Both undergraduate and graduate students are admitted to the University's colleges and schools under well-defined admissions standards. Several undergraduate alternative admissions programs have been developed, which require completion of prescribed academic work and other prerequisites for continued enrollment. These include College Now and START, which provide increased access to underserved populations. Students in these alternative admissions programs are fully integrated into the University Community and achieve virtually the same success rates as the regularly admitted students. In addition to these two alternative admissions programs, the Division of Professional and Continuing Education conducts Pathways, a special program that provides access to students during a year of conditional admission. The Division of Professional and Continuing Education also provides access at off-campus locations to non-traditional students seeking both undergraduate and graduate degrees. A full range of student services is available through both Academic Affairs and Student Affairs, both on-site and through a variety of access points. Support services include advising, academic support, health services, counseling services and career development. To enhance the integration of these services, all academic and student services support functions are now organized under the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs. UMass Dartmouth is an NCAA Division III institution and is committed to the academic and athletic development of the nearly 600 student athlete/scholars on its campus.

Looking to the future, the University recognizes a need to improve both retention and six-year graduation rates and is examining strategies to improve these metrics. Academic support and student services are being enhanced for the growing number of graduate students, and this is a major responsibility of the newly appointed Associate Provost for Graduate Studies. Initiatives to increase student diversity continue, particularly at the undergraduate level, both with respect to underrepresented minorities and international students. The strategic commitment to diversity stems from the belief that the best way to prepare students to work in a highly diversified global environment is to create a University environment that mirrors this diversity.

**Standard Seven: Library and Other Information Resources** — The UMass Dartmouth Library has expanded its services to meet the demands of its growing undergraduate and graduate student bodies and the evolution of a more research-oriented faculty. The Library is supported primarily through state funding and student fees, but in recognition of the need for access to research data bases, five percent of all research indirect costs is now allocated to the Library and IT Services. The Library also has benefited from two substantial private donations, a \$4 million commitment, which served as the underpinning for the \$44 million Library expansion

and renovation projects, and resulted in the naming of the Library as the Claire T. Carney Library. The other, a \$1.5 million endowment, was used to establish the Ferreira Mendes Portuguese-American Archives.

Computer and Information Technology Services (CITS) was established in 2005 to provide support for all classroom related technology. This unit has been responsible for converting more than 88% of all classrooms to technology-enabled classrooms. CITS also runs the Faculty Instructional Laptop Program (FILP), which provides faculty with laptops on a 3-4 year refreshment cycle, as well as Instructional Development Services for Online Learning. The 2007 update of the Strategic Plan calls for creating an “IT Savvy” 21<sup>st</sup> century campus community, and these efforts are being led by the Associate Vice Chancellor for Information Technology, who oversees a staff of approximately 40 IT professionals.

The Library is about to undergo a significant capital renovation that will expand the library space, establish a new Learning Commons, and provide significant infrastructure improvements. The Library is well prepared for the significant challenge of operating the facility during this construction project, which is likely to impact every service point and office space at various times during the phased construction.

**Standard Eight: Physical and Technological Infrastructure** — The main UMass Dartmouth campus is architecturally unique, designed by the renowned architect Paul Rudolph, known internationally for his development of the Brutalism School of Architecture. While striking in appearance, the buildings present several challenges to efficient operation and maintenance. While many improvements have been completed during this ten year period, deferred maintenance remains a significant issue. Over the last ten years, UMass Dartmouth has also significantly expanded its physical plant, with the construction of eight new residence halls on the main campus and the development of off-campus locations that fully embed the University in the region’s economy. These off-campus sites include the School for Marine Sciences and Technology (SMAST), with a primary site at the head of Clark’s Cove in New Bedford and an expansion facility in Fairhaven; the Advanced Technology and Manufacturing Center in Fall River; and the College of Visual and Performing Arts Star Store in the center of New Bedford. The Fairhaven facility, which houses approximately half of SMAST’s faculty and graduate student population, also is the home of several major UMass Dartmouth Centers including the Center for University, School and Community Partnerships; the Center for Marketing Research; and the Kaput Center for Research and Innovation in STEM Education. The Division of Professional and Continuing Education also offers classes in rented facilities located in Fall River and at Cape Cod Community College.

Capital initiatives currently in various stages of planning and development include expansion of the Charlton College of Business, supported by a lead gift from the Charlton Family Trust; expansion of SMAST to accommodate one of the institution’s most successful graduate programs; and projects addressing energy conservation and infrastructure repairs, particularly of the residence halls.

**Standard Nine: Financial Resources** — UMass Dartmouth has effectively managed its fiscal resources, and over the last ten years, has successfully addressed the concerns raised during the 2000 NEASC site visit. As a result of improved resource management and the development of student-based revenue streams, the University has achieved financial stability and implemented a

debt reduction plan, which has successfully addressed accrued liability debt to produce a positive fund balance. The importance of the student-based revenues perhaps is best illustrated by the fact that in FY09, for the first time, these revenues exceeded the state appropriation and this most certainly will be the case into the future. In response to major reductions in state support, which now comprises only about 22% of the overall operating budget, the University appreciably lessened its dependence on part-time faculty and reduced staff through administrative reorganizations undertaken to improve the efficiency of services across the campus. Understandably, this was a difficult process and the University administration is taking steps to address the concerns of faculty and staff by increasing the transparency of all budget planning and through greater involvement of faculty and staff in “big picture” issues.

Recognizing the ongoing need to expand alternative revenue streams, the University is focusing on expansion of graduate programs in fields such as education that will generate tuition and fee revenues; enhancement of grant-based research programs in the sciences and engineering that will generate greater indirect cost revenues; development of online learning opportunities and other programs offered through the Division of Professional and Continuing Education; and augmentation of revenues through private gifts and foundation grants.

**Standard Ten: Public Disclosure** — The University’s website is the primary outlet through which it provides information to the public. The website provides information about the University’s Mission and purposes, student enrollment and demographics, academic programs, tuition and fees, and other information of interest to prospective students, faculty, staff and the general public. Students are able to apply for admission and register for classes online and obtain a clear picture of student life and academic support services. The University also has instituted online General and Graduate catalogs, which provide details regarding current programs, program requirements and policies, and procedures for admissions and financial aid. Other venues for communication include: *UMass Dartmouth Magazine*, a 32 page, full color, biannual publication, which highlights the activities of faculty, students, staff and alumni; *The Campanile* (Campanil-E), an electronic publication providing updates to alumni and community partners, and WUMD-FM (89.3), a 10,000 watt University-owned and licensed FM radio station. The University also supports a variety of Web 2.0 social networking tools including, I-TunesU, Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, and YouTube as well as a variety of blogs.

Beginning this academic year and continuing over an established three-year schedule, the University will implement the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA) program, which will make available to the public: (1) learning and educational outcomes, (2) reports on the range and impact of students’ educational engagement and enrichment activities, and (3) information to convey UMass Dartmouth’s specific emphases and qualities.

**Standard Eleven: Integrity** — UMass Dartmouth adheres to its stated Mission and aspires to achieve the objectives of its Vision statement. As a member of the UMass system, UMass Dartmouth adheres to all the policies of the system and the UMass Board of Trustees. The University has created and implemented policies and procedures that express the University’s values and goals and has created a website to inform the campus community of these policies and procedures. The University is committed to ongoing assessment and improvement of the policies and practices that embody the institution’s commitment to integrity.