

STANDARD THREE—ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE

DESCRIPTION

The University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, formerly Southeastern Massachusetts University, was incorporated into the [University of Massachusetts](#) System in 1991, joining the Amherst, Boston, and Lowell campuses, and the UMass Medical School in Worcester. Authorized by [Chapter 75 of Massachusetts General Laws](#), the University’s Board of Trustees holds authority to grant degrees and oversee all educational programs. The Massachusetts [Department of Higher Education](#) (DHE) is the statutorily constituted agency responsible for coordinating some activities of the UMass system; DHE impacts the operation of the University directly through its power to set tuition and its authority to approve all new degree programs upon receiving specific recommendations on these issues from the UMass Board of Trustees.

The UMass [Board of Trustees](#) (BOT) is the legally constituted body responsible for governing the University system, maintaining the quality and integrity of the institution, and ensuring public accountability. The BOT is a system-wide board with twenty-two members, seventeen appointed by the Governor of the Commonwealth, and five students – with two votes rotating among them – elected by the students on the respective campuses. A state-wide Nominating Committee, which must include an alumni member from each of the five campuses, advises the Governor on appointments.

The BOT has sufficient independence to ensure the members can act in the institution’s best interest. The BOT creates general policy for the UMass system, approves academic programs, decides applications for tenure and honorary degrees, and delegates broad authority to the UMass President. The President delegates authority to the chancellor of each campus for the management of continuing operations and for policy-making consistent with system-wide mandates. Campus administrators and the President are accountable to the BOT and report to them on administrative practices, financial management, and implementation of Trustee policies. The Board of Trustees deliberates through its standing committees and in quarterly meetings rotated among the campuses. The BOT reviews its effectiveness at annual retreats.

The Chancellors of the five UMass system campuses attend the meetings of the Board of Trustees and its Committees. The Vice Chancellors attend the Board’s committee meetings related to their respective areas of responsibility, as well as meetings of the full Board. Elected faculty representatives from each campus also attend these meetings.

The [Board of Trustees Statement on University Governance](#), initially adopted in 1973 and amended in 1975, 1988, and 1993, affirms the concept of shared governance – the right of faculty and students to initiate recommendations in areas where they have “primary responsibility.” The statement acknowledges that the complexity and variety of tasks undertaken by the University require “...the interdependence of the governing board, the administration, the faculty and the students, as well as other groups.” The policy formalizes the right of faculty and students to participate in governing bodies, approved by the Trustees, and notes that, “When appropriate, governing bodies shall have the privilege of recommending policies and procedures affecting the campus and the University as a whole, including, among other issues, academic matters, matters of faculty status, and student affairs. Also, when appropriate, governing bodies

will have the privilege of contributing to long-range planning, the preparation of the annual budget request, and the allocation of available resources.”

The University System Board of Trustees and UMass Dartmouth’s administration, staff, and faculty understand and fulfill their respective roles as set forth in the institution’s official documents and are provided with pertinent information to conduct business. The institution’s organizational structure, decision-making processes, and policies are consistent with its Mission and quality management.

The Board of Trustees appoints and periodically reviews the performance of the Chancellor, who is the chief executive officer of the UMass Dartmouth campus and has primary responsibility for the management of the institution. The Chancellor reports to and is evaluated annually by the University President; she meets monthly with the President and the other campus chancellors at the President’s Council.

The Chancellor, through the administrative structure of her office, manages the institution so as to fulfill its purposes and objectives and establishes the means to assess the effectiveness of the institution. The Office of the Chancellor also includes units that provide leadership on economic development, public affairs, and equal opportunity/affirmative action. The Chancellor meets weekly with the Vice Chancellors and Assistant Chancellors to provide strategic and operational leadership to the campus.

The academic leadership at UMass Dartmouth is directly responsible to the Chancellor, and in concert with the faculty, is responsible for the quality of the academic programs. The Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs, the Vice Chancellor for Administrative and Fiscal Affairs, the Assistant Chancellor for Advancement, and the Assistant Chancellor for Equal Opportunity & Outreach, as well as senior staff responsible for Economic Development, and Public Affairs report to the Chancellor. The deans provide management and leadership for the faculty and departments in their colleges, schools, and the library. The deans meet both individually and in bi-weekly Deans’ Council meetings with the Provost. Recently, Student Affairs was integrated into Academic Affairs, with the Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs reporting directly to the Provost. The Chancellor and the Vice Chancellors also meet monthly with the Senior Leadership Team, comprised of the academic deans and senior administrative staff. Professional and Continuing Education (which includes online education, evening, summer, and weekend sessions) and Library Services are also integrated into the policy formation, academic oversight and evaluation systems of the University.

The five colleges, listed in order of student enrollment, are: [Arts and Sciences](#), [Charlton College of Business](#), [Engineering](#), [Visual and Performing Arts](#), and [Nursing](#). The [School for Marine Science and Technology](#) and the [School of Education, Public Policy and Civic Engagement](#) focus on graduate education; the latter was created since the last NEASC accreditation cycle. The academic departments are the basic units of campus academic organization and are overseen by chairpersons, elected to four-year terms by the full-time faculty and professional technicians in their departments and approved for appointment by the deans. Deans meet with their department chairpersons both individually and in department chairs’ group meetings. Faculty regularly contribute to programmatic revisions and innovations at the department, college and University levels through their representation on the various committees.

The [Student Senate](#) is the formal body representing student views and judgments in those matters in which students have a direct and reasonable interest. The Student Senate leadership meets regularly with University administrative executives including the Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs. The Student Senate serves both to disseminate information to the students and to provide their input as appropriate. Students are represented on departmental, college and university curriculum committees, as well as on the Student/Faculty Academic Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate. They also serve on search committees for academic deans, vice chancellors, and the chancellor. As noted previously, there is an elected student representative on the Board of Trustees.

Almost from its inception in the 1960s, the University's faculty governance structure has been included in the negotiated [Faculty Federation Agreement](#), which describes academic organizational units from colleges to departments and centers, sets the parameters for working conditions, and outlines personnel evaluation and grievance procedures. It also defines the membership of search and screen committees for positions from chancellor to faculty, the budget review committee, and a number of faculty committees concerned with aspects of academic program governance, such as the department, college, and university curriculum committees; the Honors Program Committee; the General Education Committee; the Graduate Council; Professional Leave Committee (Professional Technicians only); and Continuing Education and Distance Learning Committees. It includes the Constitution of the [Faculty Senate](#), which encompasses a further set of committees by which faculty, librarians and professional technicians participate in appropriate areas of University governance.

The Faculty Senate reviews academic policies, programs, and issues and makes recommendations to the Provost and Chancellor. The Senate is led by a President and Steering Committee elected by the faculty; the Steering Committee and Senate President meet regularly with the Provost to confer on academic matters and shape the Senate agenda. Fifteen standing committees cover the gamut of curricular, student, research and institutional concerns. The Senate meets once each month during the academic year.

The Senate leadership also participates in the [Intercampus Faculty Council](#) (IFC). This informal group meets quarterly when the BOT meets and also holds special meetings once per year with the President's Office to discuss system-wide governance concerns. The membership of the IFC includes both the elected governance representatives (Senate Presidents and/or leadership team members) and faculty elected as campus representatives who attend Board of Trustees meetings as observers and report to their respective faculty senates.

APPRAISAL

Overall, UMass Dartmouth has an effective organizational structure in place to advance the campus' Mission. The systems of governance on campus ensure accountability for performance and mechanisms for policy and programmatic change and review in all areas of teaching, research, and service. The various governance structures provide many opportunities for involvement of campus constituencies (student, faculty, and staff) in University affairs.

As a function of shared governance, the faculty's primary responsibility is to formulate recommendations on issues of curriculum, student academic standards, faculty hiring, promotion and tenure, peer review, and similar concerns. The Chancellor and senior campus administration,

with advice and input from faculty, bear major responsibility on issues of budget, administrative appointments, and other such matters. After the President's review and approval, final authority for budget and tenure rests with the Board of Trustees.

The composition of the UMass System Board of Trustees is designed to represent the public interest and provide the competence needed to fulfill the Board's responsibilities. Utilizing the institutional governance structure, the Board establishes and maintains appropriate and productive channels of communication among its members. Campus administrators and the President's office are accountable to the BOT and report to them on administrative practices, financial management, and implementation of the Board's policies. The University President and the Board of Trustees have a clear understanding of the distinctive mission and purposes of UMass Dartmouth. Recent examples of support include the approvals for specific budget and capital priorities of the campus; the creation of the School of Education, Public Policy and Civic Engagement, and doctoral programs in Luso-Afro-Brazilian Studies and Theory, Math Education, and Nursing, and undergraduate majors in Crime and Justice Studies and Women's Studies.

UMass Dartmouth has had one Chancellor during the past 10 years. The Chancellor manages institutional structures and resources to advance the University's Mission. For example, creation of the positions of Associate Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management and Assistant Vice Chancellor for Research Development as well as the appointment of both the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Studies and the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies increased focus on strategic goals to increase enrollment, grow graduate programs and research, and improve outcomes assessment. Key areas to which the Chancellor has brought both leadership and stability, and in which faculty have contributed at various levels of involvement, are enrollment growth, academic program mix, expansion of the research enterprise, major infrastructure improvements and new facilities, enhanced finance and administrative structures, community engagement and embeddedness, strategic planning, institutional advancement, and institutional accountability and outreach.

Reorganizations have taken place to advance the strategic plan, more effectively respond to student and community needs, and address decreased state financial support. As noted, the appointment of Associate Provosts for Undergraduate and Graduate Studies supports strategic goals for enrollment growth and retention. Similarly, the integration of Student Affairs under the Provost aligns with strategic goals while also responding to the current fiscal environment. Although these reorganizations were planned by the Chancellor with extensive input from the Cabinet and the Senior Leadership Team, the number, pace, and reach of the reorganizations has had an impact on the campus' sense of community voiced by some at campus 'town meetings' and in the online UMDForum. In addition, there have been interim appointments to positions important to strategic goals. As is often the case with changes in institutional structure, these reconfigurations, when coupled with staff layoffs due to significant budget reductions, have contributed to a sense of uncertainty about what the future might hold on both an institutional and individual level.

The system of governance described in the collective bargaining agreement involves the participation of many constituencies and provides for communication among them through representative bodies. Faculty at UMass Dartmouth exercise an appropriate role in assuring the

integrity and quality of the academic programs, which is viewed as the principal purview of faculty. Processes for establishment of new programs characteristically involve faculty in formulating curriculum and determining associated faculty qualifications, student admission criteria, and resource needs. Curriculum approval follows a parallel process through department, college, and University curriculum committees, although a lack of clarity in what constitutes a new program, particularly in consideration of certificate programs, has sometimes led to conflicts among those involved in this process.

After a period of relatively little activity, the Graduate Council, now under the leadership of the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies, is meeting regularly to discuss and review guidelines and procedures with respect to administration of graduate programs. As UMass Dartmouth continues to pursue one of its chief strategic goals, raising graduate enrollments to 2000 students, the representation of graduate student needs on campus will become increasingly important. A Graduate Student Senate is an accepted governance structure at other universities and may be something UMass Dartmouth needs to consider adopting in the future as part of its ongoing self-reflection on the effectiveness of its governance structures. Likewise, a Graduate Curriculum Committee may also be necessary to effectively administer graduate programs.

UMass Dartmouth has made a commitment to self-reflection and assessment of the effectiveness of all of its programs. A relatively recent example of self-reflection with the objective of improvement in the governance process was the forum, “Shared Governance: Campus Decision Making in the 21st Century,” held in April 2006. Co-sponsored by the Faculty Federation and the Office of the Provost, the forum illustrated that a collegial approach to shared governance has great potential. The forum included presentations on best practices by outside experts and governance representatives from UMass sister campuses, but at this point, the next step, a thorough exploration of potential changes to the current governance structure and recommendation as to those most promising for the future, is yet to be taken.

Perceptions of the effectiveness of governance structures predictably vary depending on the constituency. Both faculty and administration acknowledge that progress has been made toward effective, shared governance. Examples of successful efforts include the collaborative development of several new graduate programs since 1999; the recently implemented departmental standards for tenure, developed by faculty with input from the Provost and Deans; and the work of the task force on improving K-12 education in the South Coast area, which led to the development of the School of Education, Public Policy, and Civic Engagement. Evidence that the administration values the vital role of faculty in maintaining academic integrity is reflected by the appointment of highly regarded faculty members to the positions of Associate Provost for Undergraduates Studies, Associate Provost for Graduate Studies, and Academic Director of Online Education. While some members of the faculty have expressed concern regarding administrative decisions that ran counter to faculty recommendation, such as the development of the University’s Master of Public Policy program (which received negative recommendations in some stages of the curricular process) such disagreements on issues of curriculum are not prevalent practices.

The appraisal of the effectiveness of governance has revealed a difference of opinion with regard to the appropriateness of the current governance structure, which embeds academic governance in the Faculty Federation Agreement. As structured, several key committees responsible for

shared governance are not under the purview of the Faculty Senate, but instead fall under the Federation contract. These include the department, college, and University curriculum committees, the Honors Committee, and the General Education Committee. The Faculty Senate has consistently affirmed its desire to maintain the current structure, stating that its Constitution and committee structures are approved by the Board of Trustees in concert with approval of the negotiated collective bargaining agreement. Among the administration's concerns with this structure, however, are that the mechanisms to amend governance structures and procedures are subject to contract negotiation and not to action by the Faculty Senate, which the administration believes should be the steward of faculty shared governance. These different perspectives regarding the fundamental structure of shared governance have led to tensions that occasionally impede effective collaboration in addressing the goals and objectives of the institution.

There are a number of processes and policies in place to monitor the effectiveness of organization and governance at the University, both system-wide and at UMass Dartmouth in particular. These activities provide information and data that are used to improve effectiveness of organization and governance, and include:

- The Board of Trustees's Governance Committee, described in the Trustee Bylaws Article IV, has the responsibility to ensure that the composition and activities of the Board advance the Mission of the University. The Committee is further charged to "undertake a self-assessment of the effectiveness of the Board."
- [University Guidelines on the Review and Evaluation of Senior Administrators](#) clearly specify the schedule and criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of the University's President and Vice Presidents, and each campus's Chancellor, Provost/Vice Chancellor, Vice Chancellors, and Deans.
- The University's Academic Quality, Assessment and Development (AQAD) program, described in Standard Four, is intended to "assess and improve the core academic function of teaching and learning, research/professional/creative activity, and public service/academic outreach through an ongoing system of quality control/program assessment at the unit level (i.e., department or program)."
- The [Faculty Senate's Steering Committee](#) meets annually for the express purpose of reviewing the structure and composition of its existing committees. It also develops ad-hoc committees that respond to pertinent issues that do not fit into existing committee structure. The Steering Committee also recommends to the Faculty Federation any changes to the Senate's *Constitution and Roles* that it feels will enhance their effectiveness. These changes are then negotiated through the collective bargaining process by the faculty's bargaining agent.
- In 2008 the Chancellor appointed a Diversity Council as part of the University's implementation strategy for that part of its Strategic Plan. Their [charge](#) was to pay particular attention to the broad issue of increasing diversity on campus and to date they have developed a Diversity Strategic Plan and a campus-wide survey measuring Diversity Climate.
- The [Student Senate's](#) Policy Committee is charged with reviewing and revising the Constitution and By-Laws. The last review took place two years ago and made significant changes, which were brought to the Trustees for approval. The Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs works with the Senate each year on a mid-year evaluation of the Executive

Board and the Senate in general. The results of these reviews are used to recommend changes to positions, goals, and when appropriate, the Constitution and By Laws.

- Non-academic units periodically undertake assessment activities. As described in Standard Six, all departments in Student Affairs undertook an assessment of infrastructure, staffing, and resources in Fall 2007. The Claire T. Carney Library participates in the LibQual+ assessment, and the Office of Information Technology surveys its clients to monitor the effectiveness of services. These efforts are described further in Standard Seven.

PROJECTION

Acknowledging that an effective governance system is essential for the University to reach its full potential, UMass Dartmouth is at a pivotal point as it pursues strategic goals for enrollment growth, especially at the graduate level; attainment of Carnegie Doctoral designation with the enhanced focus on research activity; and substantive increases in external funding. It is evident from the appraisal that stakeholders could substantively improve governance through more transparent two-way channels of communication, easier access to institutional information and data, and strengthened commitment to shared responsibility. In turn, a more effective partnership would enhance the quality of decisions, citizen participation and commitment, and institutional impact and progress. Such a partnership is essential as the community adjusts to the pace and scale of change that has occurred over the last ten years and will continue into the future.

To this end, a University Task Force on Academic Governance will be established. The Task Force, comprised of faculty and representatives of the administration, will be appointed by the Chancellor; significant leadership will be provided by the Provost and Deans.

Schedule and Activities:

- In AY 2010-11, the Task Force will be charged with evaluating current governance structures, policies and procedures, researching models of governance used at other institutions; clarifying expectations and approvals needed by the BOT; and presenting recommendations for improving governance at UMass Dartmouth to both the Faculty Senate and the administration for further actions if appropriate.

Institutional Effectiveness

The overall effectiveness of UMass Dartmouth's organization and governance structures is reflected in the quality of its academic programs, the strength of its faculty, the success of its alumni, and its fiscal well-being despite challenging economic conditions. Faculty, staff and students actively participate on committees, councils and boards through which governance is shared, and collegial debate is encouraged. Continued dialogue founded upon mutual respect and the common goal of strengthening the institution ensure an effective partnership to lead the University into the future.