

STANDARD SIX—STUDENTS

DESCRIPTION

Over the past decade, the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth successfully met the challenge of managing the significant growth of its undergraduate and graduate student populations while maintaining a quality admissions profile and providing all appropriate support services. In Fall 1997, UMass Dartmouth enrolled 6,366 students, and by Fall 2008, that number had risen to 9,374. Graduate enrollment increased from 711 to 1,179 (+66%), and undergraduate enrollment from 5,655 to 8,195 (+45%). The University also evolved from a primarily commuter campus to one that houses 57% of its students. In addition, the diversity profile of the student body, as well as the faculty and staff, was greatly enhanced; students of color make up 15.3% of undergraduates and 14.9% of all students; and 20.3% of the staff and 19.0% of the faculty serve as diverse role models for students.

Admissions and Enrollment

The University of Massachusetts Dartmouth is committed to enrolling a student body that is talented, engaged and reflective of the diversity of the Commonwealth and the Southcoast region of Massachusetts. Admissions and enrollment planning are under the purview of the Associate Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management, who works in collaboration with the Associate Provost of Undergraduate Studies to integrate all aspects of the educational experience. Admissions criteria for undergraduate programs are clearly stated in the [Undergraduate Catalog](#) and on the [Admissions](#) website. Standards for admission adhere to the overall admissions policies set by the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education (DHE) for the UMass System. In June 2008, the DHE accepted the Final Report of the Commonwealth Transfer Advisory Group and approved a new statewide transfer policy. [MassTransfer](#) increases access for Massachusetts community college students who complete approved associate degrees by granting full transfer and applicability of credit, guaranteed admission, and a tuition discount. In Fall 2009, first time, full-time freshmen had an average SAT score of 1059 and an average, weighted GPA of 3.08. See Series S for additional student information.

Graduate admissions and enrollment planning are the responsibility of the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies. Criteria for admission, which vary by program, are plainly noted in the [Graduate Catalog](#) and on the [Graduate Studies](#) website. Applications are processed by the Graduate Studies Office. Department faculty review applications and make recommendations for approval by the college dean. The Division of Professional and Continuing Education (PCE) offers undergraduate- and graduate-level credit programs as well as non-credit programs to provide greater access to area residents.

[College Now](#) and [START](#) are alternative admissions programs that require the completion of prescribed academic work and co-curricular participation during one semester of conditional admission to the University. College Now focuses on underserved populations, including first-generation and low-income students; START, in close collaboration with College Now, provides instruction in math, science, and study skills to assist women, minorities, and other individuals interested in engineering and technical programs. These programs provide freshman success and introduction to disciplines courses as well as mandatory tutoring. Students in these alternative admissions programs are integrated into the University community and participate in student

activities and programs. In addition, PCE conducts Pathways, a special program that provides access and support in the form of special advising and peer mentors to students who must successfully complete 24 credits during two semesters as a condition of admission.

All first-year students take Accuplacer placement tests in writing, reading and math. Students whose placement scores are below college level in math are placed into MTH 100, Basic Algebra. Until recently, students with English scores below the criterion were enrolled in specially designated sections of English 101 and were required to attend a writing tutorial session as a fourth class hour. This is no longer the practice and students now enroll in standard classes, with the exception of College Now students who enroll in English 100. Some individual programs have additional placement standards, such as those in Visual and Performing Arts, which require an audition or submission of a portfolio.

Student support is offered through the [Academic Resources Center](#), the [Learning Commons](#) in the Claire T. Carney Library, the [Academic Advising Center](#), and the [Center for Access and Success](#) (disability services program). These support systems are also available to graduate students. Additional support programs include the College of Engineering's [IMPULSE](#) (Integrated Math, Physics, Undergraduate Laboratory Science & Engineering) Program and the LSAMP Program (Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation) for minorities in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM).

Retention and Graduation

Comprehensive outreach, placement, and support systems demonstrate the institution's commitment to admitting students with the potential to succeed. These resources are readily accessible, and information about them is provided at several points in the admissions, orientation, placement, and registration processes. The policy on academic standing was recently revised with input from faculty and administration and approved by the Faculty Senate. The policy is disseminated at New Student Orientation and published in the [Undergraduate Catalog](#).

UMass Dartmouth's goals of 80% for retention and 55% for six-year graduation are included in the Strategic Plan and the UMass System's Performance Measurement System Report, which compares these retention and graduation rates to those of the other campuses in the UMass System on a yearly basis. In Fall 2008, the Division of Student Affairs conducted exit interviews with students leaving the University. In addition, retention and graduation rate data are collected and analyzed for the specifically recruited populations in College Now and the Pathways Program. The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA) publishes and distributes detailed retention and graduation data. There are no comparable graduate student retention-graduation institutional reports at this time. The Series S Table documents some initial efforts.

Student Services

The University's [Mission Statement](#) and the Division of Student Affairs focus on empowering students to reach their potential. The current [Strategic Planning Goals](#) for the Division represent a subset of the current strategic goals of the University. In addition, the [Integrated Student Learning Outcomes](#) (ISLO) statement emphasizes the integration of academic learning with knowledge and skills acquired in other aspects of the college experience.

UMass Dartmouth provides a wide range of student services on the main campus; most services are also either provided at the various off-campus locations or may be accessed online. Among the available online resources are the [Claire T. Carney Library](#), [Computing and Information Technology Services](#), and the [Career Resource Center](#). The [Counseling Center](#), the [Health Services Office](#), and the [Public Safety Department](#) may be accessed online and work to provide appropriate services off-site.

The [Academic Advising Center](#) provides formal academic advising to all undeclared Arts and Sciences students, Liberal Arts majors in their first year, freshmen and sophomore Business students, and students in transition. The Center is staffed by three professional advisors and volunteer faculty, and in addition to serving the groups identified above, offers walk-in and referral services to all undergraduate students. The [Academic Resource Center](#) provides tutoring and academic support through the Math and Business Center, Science and Engineering Center, and Writing and Reading Center. Peer tutors provide extensive one-on-one and group tutoring both in the centers and at other campus sites including the Library's Learning Commons and some residence halls. The [Center for Access and Success](#) provides a range of services and arranges appropriate accommodations for individuals with disabilities.

UMass Dartmouth values diversity in its many aspects and provides services through its EEO Office, [Frederick Douglass Unity House](#), [College Now](#), [Women's Resource Center](#), [International Students and Scholars Office](#), Center for Access and Success, and many other [campus programs](#). Reflecting a strategic goal of integrating service learning into the student life and the curriculum, the [Center for Civic Engagement](#) and the [Community Service and Partnerships Office](#) coordinate community service and service-learning opportunities for students, faculty and staff. The program develops training and resources for community service activities such as the annual community service fair and alternative spring break opportunities. The [International Programs Office](#) provides support for both faculty and students planning to study abroad. Pre-collegiate programs include [Upward Bound](#), a federally funded TRIO program serving students with disabilities as well as those who are low-income or the first-generation in their families to attend college, and [Spotlight](#), an exploratory educational and cultural enrichment program for high school students interested in attending college.

The [Student Activities, Involvement and Leadership \(SAIL\) Office](#) coordinates a variety of social and cultural programs, including more than 70 student clubs and organizations, the Greek life community and student publications. Students have input into allocation of the \$1 million annual budget generated by fees through service on the Student Fee Allocation Committee.

Residential students now make up 57% of the entire undergraduate enrollment. Support programs are available through resident advisors, who offer personal support, serve as referral agents, and sponsor programs designed to develop a sense of community in each hall and floor. The Residence Hall Congress works with residence hall leaders to develop a sense of community by offering programs that help to develop community standards in each residence hall.

The [Orientation program](#) was redesigned in the past two years to better prepare new students for the academic rigor and developmental issues they will experience as well as provide basic information. A special Transfer Orientation is conducted to facilitate the transition to UMass Dartmouth and the university setting. There are also specialized orientation sessions for

international students and for parents of entering students.

The [Office of Financial Aid Services](#) provides information sessions to high school students and parents; financial aid workshops for current students; financial advising activities to address specific family financial concerns; and a full program of financial aid, from grants and scholarships to loans and student employment. Approximately 70% of undergraduate and graduate students receive financial aid from federal, state, University, and private sources. Over \$70 million in aid was disbursed in FY 09.

In addition to supporting student organizations, the SAIL office coordinates leadership development symposia and workshops for emerging student leaders, as do the [Frederick Douglass Unity House](#), Health Education office, and the Office of Housing and Residential Life.

The 36 members of the [Student Senate](#) represent each of the five colleges, the four undergraduate classes, residential students, commuter students and graduate students. The Senate Executive Board is a five-member leadership team. Advised by the Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, the Senate periodically meets with the Chancellor, the Provost or other administrators. Senators are often asked to serve on campus committees. A Student Trustee serves ex-officio on the Student Senate and is an active member of the University's Board of Trustees. Additionally, each class has elected officers to provide leadership for class activities and projects.

The [Athletics Department](#) supports intercollegiate varsity teams, campus intramural programs, and various fitness and aquatics programs. As an NCAA Division III institution, UMass Dartmouth is committed to the academic as well as athletic development of the 570 student athletes presently taking part in 25 varsity sports. Of that total, 336 are male and 234 female. Student athletes are subject to all NCAA rules and regulations, as well as University regulations regarding eligibility to participate in extracurricular activities. Funding for Athletics comes from a separate Athletics fee charged to all students. The Director of Athletics oversees this budget according to all University and NCAA guidelines and assures equitable spending for programs designed for male and for female student athletes.

All staff in student services functions are qualified by experience, formal training, and where appropriate, by certification and/or degree attainment. Searches to fill vacant positions follow guidelines prescribed by the Office of Equal Opportunity, Diversity & Outreach (EEO) and the Office of Human Resources to ensure that all new hires are also qualified by training and experience. The facilities, technology, and funding associated with each student service is adequate to meet the needs of the function and student population.

The [Code of Student Conduct](#) is administered by the Office of Student Conduct and Dispute Resolution. The [Student Handbook](#) includes a description of community expectations, student rights, student appeal processes, and the policies and procedures utilized to respond to alleged violations of defined community standards.

The University has clear policies regarding the retention, safety and security, and disposal of records. Its information-release policies respect the rights of individual privacy, the confidentiality of records, and the best interests of students and the institution. The Office of the Registrar is the principal office for interpreting requests for records or information based on the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The same office maintains all transcripts

indefinitely, and all such information entered into the data system is backed up daily and secured at an off-site facility. All paper records are maintained and double-locked in a storage room. Information not germane to the transcript is shredded after a student graduates. Financial Aid folders are held for seven years after a student’s last date of attendance and are then shredded. Computer records pertaining to Financial Aid, such as information about the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and student award information, are kept. Student disciplinary records are maintained in a double-locked facility and retained for seven years after a student graduates or has left the University. Health-related records are also double-locked. Students must sign a release allowing access to their records by others. All students who are seen by Health Services must sign a privacy notice. Health records are scanned and stored on discs and maintained in a locked facility for 10 years. Records in the Center for Access and Success (Disability Services Office) are secured in a locked file inside of a locked office. Counseling records are kept for seven years after a student separates from the University, according to state regulations and International Association of Counseling Services standards. Permission is requested from the State Division of Records before records are shredded. Electronic files are maintained in a locked off-site facility.

APPRAISAL

Admissions/Enrollment Management

Undergraduate enrollment planning efforts have been centralized and better coordinated in recent years. The University is framing its enrollment objectives within the context of its strategic academic goals and its long-term budgetary objectives.

Recruitment of African American, Latino, Asian, Native American (ALANA) students is an ongoing challenge, with a goal at 17% of the overall student population; this target was realized for the entering 2009 class as shown in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 ALANA Student Representation in Student Body

ALANA Students:	Fall 2008	Fall 2009
Entering freshmen	13.7%	16.6%
Entering transfers	16.1%	20.5%
All entering students	14.2%	17.6%
All undergraduate students	13.6%	15.6%

A significant number of ALANA students matriculate through College Now, START, and the Pathways program; these students achieve academic performance levels comparable to regularly admitted students. The freshman-to-sophomore-year [retention rate for College Now](#) students who complete the prescribed first year program ranged from 93.5% to 97.9% over the past three years, significantly higher than the student population as a whole, which ranged from 73% to 76%. The graduation rate of College Now students is comparable to that of the general population, ranging from 34.3% to 51.3% compared to a range of 46% to 48% for the general population.

The University has a small Honors Program and hopes to expand it and to have it act as a signature option and a catalyst for enrollment for talented students. The resources needed to expand this program will need to be identified.

Over the last ten years, there has been a substantial increase in overall graduate student enrollments. Despite financial difficulties, resources have been directed to enhancing graduate assistantships both in terms of number of awards and award amount. Planning is ongoing to develop programs that resonate with students' interests and the Commonwealth's needs, while maintaining quality standards. Improving the range and variety of support services for graduate students is a challenge that must be addressed as their numbers increase.

Program planning has been strengthened recently through re-organization of PCE. Development of strategic goals with short- and long-term budgetary objectives has begun and is ongoing. Providing access to adult learners in a region with low educational expectations and attainment continues to be a challenge for PCE.

Although the University's undergraduate [admissions standards](#) adhere to Department of Higher Education minimum entrance requirements, the requirements of some individual programs are more rigorous. These [admissions policies](#) are scheduled for review on a five-year cycle; however, administrative support for the review and timely cooperation from the faculty committee responsible for its execution need to be strengthened.

While the academic sanctions policy has recently been revised for clarity, dissemination of this and other policies needs to improve. The transition from a print to online catalog resulted in a gap in the level of understanding of academic policies. The publication of the 2009-2010 Undergraduate Catalog has begun to address this issue. Similarly, a lack of timeliness in the submission of fall semester grades to the Registrar's Office, which interferes with the mid-year dismissal process, is being addressed at the dean's level.

At this time, testing and remediation receive sufficient budgetary support for placement testing. Students register for testing and access their test results online. The information provided with their test results includes courses they may be required to complete prior to enrolling in courses in their programs of study; this allows students to make better decisions about whether to remediate, especially in math, before attending the University. Nevertheless, there are logistical problems associated with the DHE-mandated Accuplacer testing, which requires proctors for all testing, whether on campus or at off-site locations. The financial commitment escalates yearly with increases in the cost of the test itself multiplied by the increased number of admitted students. Accuplacer's in-person proctoring requirement creates a bottleneck. The institution is currently addressing this issue through the UMass system office. The OIRA collects data about the need for remediation based on placement test scores; however, the effectiveness of remediation has not been formally studied over time.

College Now complements the placement test with extensive interviews of applicants, which provide important information about the student's academic skills, ability to respond to adversity, willingness to persevere, and commitment to education. However, the enhanced placement process is frequently incomplete on the traditional May 1st deadline for securing enrollment at the institution.

A wide range of academic and student support services is available to undergraduate and graduate students. Although these services are promoted in the [Campus Experience: Services and Support](#) section of the catalog, in brochures distributed each semester, and by faculty

announcements and referrals, new strategies to encourage students to utilize these valuable resources are needed. Graduate students in particular frequently do not avail themselves of academic and student support services. Providing appropriate services for graduate students, informing students of their availability, and encouraging their use will be important factors in the graduate enrollment plan.

The University regularly assesses student satisfaction with academic and personal support services through a [survey](#) conducted by the Division of Student Affairs. Results from 2008 indicated that more than three-quarters of respondents were generally satisfied with the services provided by the Library, the Academic Resource Center, which includes the Writing and Reading Center, Math and Business Center, and Science and Engineering Center. Students' responses to a survey about the services of the Academic Advising Center revealed that two-thirds were satisfied with services provided. In addition to student satisfaction surveys, the OIRA conducts a survey of seniors at graduation, and the Division of Student Affairs surveys students who leave prior to graduation. Data from these and other measures inform decision-making with regard to enrollment management.

Retention and Graduation

The University's PMS Report is a high-level accountability process designed to keep the Board of Trustees and state officials informed of the University's performance. Data collected for this reporting period showed that UMass Dartmouth was below the average both for first year retention and the six-year graduation rate when compared to the institution's peers. The retention rate from Fall 2008 to Fall 2009 was 73%, compared to our peer institution's average of 78%. The graduation rate for the cohort entering in Fall 2003 and graduating by June 2009 was 48%, compared to 56% for our peers and our goal of 55%. (See [PMS Report](#).) Consequently, significantly improving retention and graduation is a focal point in enrollment and strategic planning.

Transfer student data showed that 75% of transfer students who entered in Fall 2007 were either still enrolled or had completed their programs in Fall 2008, a retention rate consistent with the previous five years. However, the graduation rate of full-time upper-division transfer students was 60%, a decline from 77% in the same period. Although the number of full-time transfer students is low (only 158), the decline is a matter of concern that is being studied.

The STEM enrollment data from the PMS report show that enrollment has been steady since Fall 2004, with a slight decrease in Fall 2008. However, the STEM graduation rate, which had declined from 21% to 16% in AY 2005-06, rebounded to 18% in AY 2006-07. These retention issues are being addressed by new leadership in the College of Engineering and by the appointment of an Assistant to the Dean for Research and Graduate Studies in the College of Arts and Sciences.

In Fall 2008, the Division of Student Affairs instituted an interview process for students who left the University without graduating. Both the interview data and the retention statistics produced by the OIRA show that attrition follows the national norms of freshmen leaving in the highest numbers, followed by sophomores. Survey data also revealed that students who transferred generally left to attend similar institutions and that academic performance and the desire to be closer to home were primary reasons for leaving.

The Division of Student Affairs assesses its effectiveness through a five-year cycle of program reviews for all departments initiated in 2009 and by analyzing data from UMass Dartmouth's annual student satisfaction survey. Each year, a team consisting of external experts and internal faculty and staff evaluates three departments; these evaluations as well as the data collected through the surveys are used to strengthen the programs. The survey results are also shared with Senior Leadership and with individual department heads, who are encouraged to discuss student responses and to develop strategies to improve services. In Spring 2009, a Diversity Climate Survey was conducted, and the findings will be shared with appropriate governance bodies and Senior Leadership in Spring 2010. The results will be used to develop strategies for interventions in targeted areas. Oversight of student requests for leaves of absence and withdrawal from classes or the University is assigned to Student Affairs. This system provided a collection point for data on students' reasons for leaving. The analysis of this data was shared with the campus Enrollment Management Team, Senior Leadership, and appropriate departments.

The Financial Aid Office is generally well respected across campus for its level of positive customer service and the range of financing options provided. There is a fair and equitable awarding process, and a federal audit in June 2007 confirmed that awards are made in compliance with federal and state regulations. Significant institutional aid has been added to the financial aid portfolio to ensure that low income students are not impacted by increased fee levels. Currently the University is meeting 92% of need of students from all sources.

Student Services

The Division of Student Affairs' mission and vision statements guide services, activities, and programs. This developmental approach emphasizes a retention-focused relationship with students.

The safety resources of the campus have been greatly improved over the past five years. With guidance from the Director of Public Safety and the implementation of a new Student Parking Fee, the budget allocated to safety needs was increased. Specific improvements include an increase in the number of Campus Safety Officers, improved campus lighting--particularly in parking lot areas, the addition of many new blue-light emergency call boxes, and increased availability of Dart Vans (University transportation), which has increased student ridership.

The Academic Advising Center has approximately 8,500 student visits annually. The Center, under a recent reorganization, reports to the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Studies, and one result of this new structure was the administration of an [Academic Advising Survey](#) in Spring 2009. There were 1,121 responses to the survey, with 22% rating the overall quality of academic advising as excellent, 44.1% as good, 21.1% as fair, and 10.2% as poor. The survey also identified several aspects of advising in need of improvement at the department level, such as improved communication the advisors.

The Academic Resource Center (ARC), overseen by the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Studies, provides a range of tutoring services. The 2008 Student Satisfaction Survey also revealed very low levels of use of the ARC and the Career Development Center, although users expressed high levels of satisfaction with the services. However, assessment of the effectiveness of tutorial services has not been systematically addressed in the same fashion as has student

satisfaction. Efforts are underway to better integrate career and academic advising services across the colleges, including the assignment of a Career Resource Specialist to each college. In 2008, the New Student Orientation Program was reviewed and reorganized to enhance its focus on the academic aspects of attending college as well as the social aspects. In early June, students and their families attend an introductory orientation with advising and registration sessions for students and a separate session for parents. Students are also assigned a common book for summer reading. When students return for the three-day, comprehensive developmental program in August, they attend a variety of workshops and participate in activities, led both by professional staff and by currently enrolled students, covering issues such as alcohol use, relationships, violence, and study skills. Residential students also attend sessions on interacting with roommates. Faculty and staff lead student discussions of the assigned book, sharing a common experience that helps them develop a sense of community. Transfer students participate in an orientation program designed to meet their specific needs, and international students are provided with an expanded orientation program to help them navigate cultural changes and comply with visa requirements in addition to the academic and social challenges and opportunities they will experience. Evaluation and feedback loops are built into the Orientation program to drive future improvements in the program. Some data about the [Orientation program](#) have been gathered, but there is little data available from previous years for comparison.

The [SAIL Office](#) presently coordinates the support for approximately 70 student organizations annually. While funding has been judged to be generous and the process fair by student groups, the SAIL staff have identified the need for improvement in the process for identifying potential faculty/staff advisors and for providing them with support in the oversight of student groups.

As the residential population has nearly doubled over the past five years, several groups, including the Frederick Douglass Unity House, Women’s Center, and Health Education, have contributed greatly to the overall campus efforts to offer educational, social, and cultural programs. The residence halls themselves have served as living-and-learning environments through the educational, recreational, and social programs sponsored by each resident advisor. Several halls have thematic floors, and the Foreign Languages Department and the College of Nursing have expressed great interest in developing thematic housing based on academic interests. The success of leadership programs is mixed. Some (such as Emerging Leaders and the Summer Leadership Institute) are well attended but inconsistently offered; while others (such as those for residential life leaders) are consistently offered and receive high evaluations by participating staff. A new leadership program piloted in 2009 by Unity House called “Lessons in Leadership” is a welcome addition.

Opportunities to engage with the community are offered to residential and commuter students alike through the [Center for Civic Engagement](#) and the [Community Service and Partnerships Office](#). America Reads, for example, attracts between 60 and 100 students annually and provides more than 4,000 hours of instruction through partnerships with several local schools; other programs allow students to serve as tutors, big brothers/sisters, and mentors. As the University continues to pursue its strategic goal to integrate service learning into every student’s learning experience, these opportunities for students to serve will also facilitate achieving the goals of the ISLO statement. During AY 2008-09, 53 University professors utilized Service Learning as pedagogy, and 2,030 students participated in these engagement activities.

The [Athletics Program](#) is meeting its goals for academic success and athletic development. Student athlete GPAs are essentially equal to those of the general student population; likewise, student athletes are just as likely to achieve academic honors as all students.

During Fall 2007, Student Affairs departments conducted Infrastructure Assessments to review staffing, space, budgets, and goals and compare them with those of peer institutions. The results of the assessments documented both strengths and areas for improvement. For example, most of the Student Affairs departments at UMass Dartmouth were adequately staffed and funded in comparison with their peers; 2,000 of the 4,500 housing units in the residence halls are either new or have been renovated over the past five years. On the other hand, space was identified as a concern for the Women's Center, the International Students and Scholar Center, and the Center for Access and Success (Disability Services). Although some of these space issues were addressed in Fall 2009, additional work remains. The assessment also identified the need for significant repairs and renovation work in four of the first-year student residence halls.

The ethical standards for the [Division of Student Affairs](#) are presented on the website. The core value of integrity is the foundation of the division's ethical standards. Policies regarding students' rights and responsibilities, grievance procedures, and appeals processes are explicitly enumerated in the [Student Handbook](#) in the sections on the Student Code of Conduct and Student Judicial Policies and Procedures.

In defining the educated person, UMass Dartmouth's [Integrated Student Learning Outcomes](#) (ISLO) encompasses both academic and co-curricular aspects of the learning experience. ISLO's implementation will facilitate the development of co-curricular learning goals throughout Student Affairs. Some departments and programs have begun the process. For example, the Career Resource Center assesses achievement of co-curricular learning goals of the Experience Program by outlining experiential learning objectives in the contract between the student and the faculty sponsor and assessing the student's progress and determining award of academic credit at the end of the experience. A similar process is followed for all Service Learning classes that collaborate with the Community Service and Partnerships Office.

PROJECTIONS

Admissions/Enrollment: Activities to achieve the Strategic Plan goal of an enrollment of 10,000 students, including 8,000 undergraduates, have been implemented under the direction of the Provost's Senior Enrollment Management Committee, composed of the Associate Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management, the Vice Chancellor and Associate Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance, the Associate Provosts of Undergraduate and Graduate Studies, the Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, and the Assistant Chancellor for Institutional Research and Assessment. Activities will occur in both the admissions and retention areas.

Schedule and Activities:

Undergraduate Level

- In AY 2009-10, the Office of Undergraduate Admissions will launch re-designed undergraduate admissions and recruitment strategies.
- During Spring 2010, final recommendations of the Diversity and Pluralism Council will be reviewed and approved for implementation by the Chancellor.

- In AY 2010-11, the Faculty Senate Admissions Committee will update admissions policies and consider ways to increase department faculty involvement in setting admissions criteria for the academic fields.

Graduate Level:

- In AY 2009-10, the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies, the Office of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Council will update the current plan to increase graduate enrollment to 2,000 students by Fall 2013.

Retention: Academic and student support services have been integrated more effectively through the re-organization in 2009-2010 that placed Student Affairs, the Library, and academic support services in the Division of Academic Affairs. Initiatives to strengthen services will be overseen by the Associate Provosts for Undergraduate and Graduate Studies and the Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, with support from the Office of Institutional Research.

Schedule and Activities:

- In Spring 2010, a task force will explore how to focus and expand retention strategies across academic and co-curricular support services.
- Beginning in AY 2009-10 and continuing through AY 2010-11, a review of the effectiveness of Academic Resource Center services will be undertaken, and a strategic plan for enhancement of services will be developed.
- In AY 2009-10, the support services offered in the Learning Commons will be expanded to include tutoring services provided by the Writing and Reading Center, the Math and Business Center, and the Science and Engineering Center.
- In AY 2010-11, an assessment of the effectiveness of DHE placement testing policies and UMass Dartmouth practices will be conducted. The Academic Advising Center, the English and Mathematics Departments, and the OIRA will collaborate to: (1) design a pilot program to use placement tests results to provide additional learning support to low-testing students in freshman composition classes, and (2) conduct a study of student achievement in math as a function of math course placement based on the Accuplacer.
- Beginning in AY 2010-2011, benchmarking and intervention studies will be used to improve the first-year retention and six-year graduation rates, especially those of upper-division transfer and STEM students.
- In AY 2010-11, a plan to improve graduate student support services will be finalized and implemented, under leadership of the Director of Graduate Studies and Admissions and the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.

Advising

Efforts to improve the program of academic advising will be continued. The Associate Provost for Undergraduate Studies and the Director of Advising will lead this initiative in collaboration with the Assistant/Associate Deans Council and the First Year Experience committee.

Schedule and Activities:

- In AY 2009-10, CITS will complete the upgrade of PeopleSoft 9.0 and provide training in the improved degree audit function to faculty and staff advisors as well as to students.
- In AY 2010-11, the Academic Advising Center will conduct a pilot of MAP-Works retention software in the College of Arts and Sciences.

Financial Aid: Services in the Financial Aid Office will be enhanced in both high tech and “high touch” aspects. The Director of Financial Aid will lead this initiative with support from the Associate Vice Chancellor of Enrollment Management, CITS, the Public Affairs Office, and the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Studies. The Chancellor will continue to make additional resources available for institutional aid and for privately funded scholarships to ensure affordable access to students with financial need.

Schedule and Activities:

- In AY 2009-10, a unified approach will be developed to institutional marketing of aid programs emphasizing value and affordability as primary foci.
- In AY 2010-11, financial aid counseling will be expanded to help students and families develop strategies for college affordability while continuing to provide assistance with the financial aid application and award process itself.
- Beginning in AY 2009-10 and continuing through 2011-12, the Financial Aid Peer Counselor Program will be expanded to provide information and assistance in a more timely manner.
- In AY 2010-11, the use of electronic communication to notify students of their financial aid awards will be implemented.

Cross-Departmental Initiatives: Focused collaboration among departments and offices that provide student support programs will be led by the Associate and Assistant Vice Chancellors of Student Affairs and the Associate Provosts for Undergraduate and Graduate Studies.

Schedule and Activities: (All activities begin in AY 2009-2010 and are ongoing.)

- In AY 2009-11, student engagement programs will be enhanced by providing increased connections among students, faculty and staff:
 - SAIL will increase support for official student organizations by offering advisor training; and
 - A Career Development Specialist will be assigned to each college.
- In AY 2009-11, Residential Life and Housing Operations will collaborate with academic programs to expand thematic housing options
- In AY 2011-12, the appropriate Student Affairs office will develop a First Year Experience program to support the development and retention of first-year students in all colleges

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

UMass Dartmouth has sharpened its focus on obtaining, analyzing, and sharing data pertaining to enrollment trends and projections and student characteristics and student satisfaction. The institution uses an array of continually updated enrollment and retention data to assist with short and long-term planning. Student Affairs conducts targeted surveys to better understand students, their perceived needs and progress. Analysis of the resultant data has led to better decision-making with regard to strengthening support services necessary for student success. The newly developed Integrated Student Learning Outcomes statement embodies both the focus on and the commitment to assessment of student learning outcomes in and out of the classroom and will assist in further identifying areas in which additional student services are required.