

Foundations Work Group Report

Introduction and Work Group Charge

The Foundations Work Group was formed as part of the Strategic Planning Process in recognition of the essential role of People, Funding, Information Technology/Business Processes, Facilities, and Environmental Sustainability in building a strong future for UMBC. A list of Work Group members can be found in Attachment A.

Foundations Over-Arching Strategic Goal: Continue to build and support the five foundational elements of Investing in People; Funding; Information Technology/Business Processes; Facilities; and Environmental Sustainability, to both maintain current operations and enable advancement. A strong foundation requires that all resources be used strategically, effectively, efficiently, and sustainably.

Work Group Actions

1. Data Gathering – An extensive array of campus data and information, best practices and benchmarks, thought leadership materials, and more were assembled, and then disseminated to the Strategic Planning Steering Committee and the Strategic Focus Area work groups' chairs.
2. Opportunities and Challenges – The Work Group developed a list of the most significant opportunities and challenges in each of the five foundational elements. The list, found in Attachment B, is based on input from the campus community, including consultation at the 2014 University Retreat, Feb. 2015 Data Gallery, and other outreach efforts. It will be important to keep these opportunities and challenges in mind, as strategic initiatives are established.
3. Key Opportunities Identified and Evaluated – One key opportunity was selected from each element in an effort to jumpstart a focus on building our strong foundation. Considerations used to select the five included a sense of the urgency of an issue, whether the group thought there could be actionable and concrete recommendations, importance to realizing strategic priorities, current level of attention given to an issue, and campus input.

Campus experts in the five key opportunities were engaged to deliver a preliminary “deep dive” into the issues, and to make recommendations for next steps. The five key opportunities are the following:

- a. Recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty and staff
- b. Identifying new revenues
- c. Improving space utilization and allocation
- d. Expanding use of analytics for decision making
- e. Reducing energy use through concerted action

An executive summary of each key opportunity report follows in Attachment C.

Foundations Work Group Membership

Lynne C. Schaefer, Work Group Chair, VP Administration and Finance

Dottie Caplan, Exec Asst, CNMS, Non-Exempt Staff Senate, Strat Plan Steering Comm.

Tanvi Gadhia, Environmental Sustainability Coordinator

Laila Shishineh, Asst Dir., First-Year Experience, PSS, Strat Plan Steering Comm.

Julianne Simpson, Asst. Director, Facilities Management Planning

Jack Suess, VP, Information Technology

Valerie Thomas, Assoc, VP, Human Resources

Charlene Uhl, Director, Budget and Resource Analysis

Building a Strong Foundation Opportunities and Challenges

Investing in People

- Recruitment, hiring, payroll on-line
- More self-serve resources on HR website
- Leadership and professional development opportunities
- Recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty and staff

Facilities:

- Space allocation
- Space utilization
- Aging facilities
- Space to expand research activities

Resources:

- Insufficient funds to support all campus priorities
- Costs associated with enrollment growth
- Pressure to hold tuition rate increases down
- Identifying new revenues

Information Technology

- Expand data analytics
- Leverage value-added cloud-based solutions
- Functional expert involvement to improve IT implementation
- Cybersecurity risk management

Sustainability

- Extend learning opportunities
- Reduce energy use through concerted action
- Create accountability and incentives
- Transportation alternatives

1. Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Faculty and Staff

UMBC continues to be recognized as a great place to work and a leader in higher education and research. We are, therefore, able to attract the best faculty and staff. UMBC has the opportunity to be recognized as a national model for inclusive excellence in the recruitment, retention, and advancement of a diverse workforce (ethnicities, genders, sexual orientations, creeds, disabilities, veterans). To attain these advantages, the focus on diversity needs to be an integral part of every recruitment effort.

In doing so, we create tremendous advantages that allow for:

- Increased productivity;
- Global viewpoints and understanding; and
- New and innovative solutions that will place the University at the forefront of its research endeavors.

Industry trends and best practices related to attracting and retaining a diverse workforce were reviewed using information and resources offered at colleges and universities nationwide, College and University Professional Association (CUPA), and the Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM). The success of these efforts were attributed to: focused diversity statement in advertising; enhanced internal recruitment education; data/statistics related to institution diversity goals; robust applicant tracking systems; and external partnerships with peer institutions and discipline-specific associations.

Recommendations for Moving Forward

- **Diversity Statement:** review and re-define current UMBC diversity statement.
- **Data Gathering, Analysis and Reporting:** define UMBC diversity goal through analysis of existing workforce and determine baseline(s) for departments. Require departments to outline diversity goals and submit progress reports in a specified timeline.
- **Communicate** broadly and often, the commitment to and value of achieving the diversity goal. HR and Human Relations reps meet with Chair of search committee to review strategies for conducting a successful search geared toward diversity goals.
- **Training:** offer University leaders diversity training centered upon recognizing and eliminating implicit bias, compliance regulations, and University resources for attracting, retaining and advancing a diverse workforce. Possible tools could include a video such as [*Inclusion Cultivates Excellence*](#). (approximately 4 minutes).
- **Mentorship Opportunities:** enhance programs offered through Professional Staff Senate and Eminent Scholar Mentoring Program to facilitate relationships between new faculty/staff and seasoned individuals in their field/discipline.

2. Improve Space Utilization and Allocation

In an era of increasingly scarce resources and calls for higher education institutions to become more efficient and effective, the historical pattern of “build to grow” is no longer a common strategy, with new construction nationally peaking in 2006 and since declining. Building, operating, and maintaining classrooms, laboratories, offices, and libraries represent a growing proportion of universities’ annual budgets. Higher education leaders are recognizing the value and cost of their existing space and are taking steps to more effectively utilize and manage this valuable and finite resource. Colleges and Universities are challenged to find enough classrooms, labs and offices to meet current needs and satisfy future growth. Yet, surveys and reports show that space would not be a problem at many institutions if their existing space were more effectively used. Existing space allocation and utilization policies and practices typically are not designed to promote efficient and effective management of this resource. Furthermore, as campus sustainability has become a core value, greater emphasis is being placed on maximizing space utilization as a strategy for campus climate action planning. Institutions recognize that poorly utilized classrooms, laboratories, or other space still require power, consume heat, need air conditioning, and add to a campus’s carbon footprint.

Four barriers to improved utilization are lack of actionable data, lack of enforceable space standards, lack of incentives, and developing achievable strategies to redeploy space. These have led to the following leading practices which, if deployed at UMBC, would result in more effective space utilization:

1. Track space in a database that is regularly maintained and includes the amount, type, capacity, and assignment of each room.
2. Assess condition and suitability of existing space.
3. Assess the utilization of space at the university, division, college, and department/unit level.
4. Formulate understandable, easy to implement, and distortion-proof methodology for measuring use of space to guide space management and capital allocation decisions.
5. Establish productivity targets and monitor through integration of space and activity data.
6. Widely share space utilization data, including what-if scenarios for better decision-making.
7. Establish space requirements to meet present circumstances and identify future needs.
8. Develop robust space management policies, guidelines, and utilization targets.
9. Implement space guidelines and standards based upon clearly defined performance metrics and consensus utilization targets that have sufficient flexibility to support campus priorities.
10. Develop and deploy enforcement strategies focused on compliance with space guidelines and utilization targets.
11. Create unit level incentives to maximize space utilization.

3. Identify New Revenues to Support Priorities

The historical funding model for public higher education has strong reliance on State funding and tuition. These revenue sources will not be able to keep pace with on-going expenses or support the growth and innovation arising from UMBC's strategic planning process. The university needs to develop a ***financially sustainable economic model*** that will support our campus in the future.

Major areas of potential revenue growth or expansion were discussed with a broad cross-section of the campus. The following revenue-generating areas were identified as having the most potential for the university:

- Expand educational programming and delivery methods (e.g., professional masters, certificate programs, corporate training, online and hybrid classes) in response to students' needs and space limitations
- Build capacity to implement best practices by the fund-raising arm of the campus
- Maximize use of existing space through increased use during non-peak times, evenings and weekends and consider opportunities to expand educational programming off-site
- Build on current UMBC revenue strategies to realize full revenue attainment

Recommendations and Next Steps

1. Assess penetration rate in use of online and hybrid course delivery, off-campus programs and diversity of educational programming to target opportunities for expansion and growth.
2. Compare UMBC fund-raising infrastructure with peer institutions to guide university resource allocation to best practices.
3. Evaluate current resources (notably space utilization and faculty and staff assignments and responsibilities) to maximize capacity in the most effective and efficient manner.
4. Develop a comprehensive catalog of UMBC's current revenue-generating strategies target areas where capacity exists to expand attainment.

4. Expanding Use of Analytics for Decision-Making

A robust analytics framework will allow UMBC to regularly assess the impact of projects and efforts undertaken as part of strategic planning or Middle States to determine whether our efforts are having success.

A strength of UMBC is that over the last five years the campus has developed a strong partnership across units that include DoIT, IRADS, Enrollment Management, Financial Services, and DPS with regards to creating the right institutional culture, expertise, processes and procedures, data reporting tools and technologies, and governance and data management. As a result, UMBC has a great deal of strength in analytics around student success and learning analytics.

Opportunities for expanded use of analytics identified during strategic planning include space utilization, alumni involvement, personnel information, faculty productivity, and financial reporting..

Recommendations and Next Steps

1. Prioritize efforts around business analytics, especially providing more information for financial analysis of auxiliary funds and grants, facilities and space utilization, and human resources and personnel.
2. Working with IRADS and the Deans, develop a model to integrate Digital Measures data into our data warehousing efforts to support academic analytics and strategic planning.
3. Collaborating across DoIT, DPS and HR, provide professional development programs so that staff can use to be trained and supported in the use of analytics within their work environment.
4. Partnering with IRADS and DoIT partner with faculty partners to work on predictive modeling algorithms and develop innovative new approaches to visualizing information for academic units and administrators.

5. Reduce Energy Use Through Concerted Action

UMBC has joined the USM and state of Maryland in committing to ambitious climate action goals. Major facilities upgrades and investments have resulted in long term energy savings, helping UMBC to reduce the campus carbon footprint while minimizing wasted energy. UMBC spent \$10.2 million on electricity in 2014. Through smart design, efficiency upgrades, and behavior change, UMBC can reduce this energy use while also reducing carbon emissions and setting an example of energy efficiency and conservation practices to inspire environmental responsibility in students and the broader community.

Major areas of potential resource conservation or efficiency investments were discussed with a broad cross-section of the campus. The following areas were identified as having the most potential for the university:

1. Identify alternative funding methods and criteria, to take into account long-term savings from investments in energy efficiency.
2. In the classroom, students can take on campus sustainability challenges, and gain hands on experience with critical thinking and problem solving through project-based learning that improves UMBC's carbon footprint.
3. Faculty can have better access to opportunities where their areas of expertise can support improvements to the campus infrastructure, policies, and practices.
4. Increasing signage, visibility and institutional communication can promote climate action goals and sustainable behavior changes.

Recommendations and Next Steps

1. Conduct life cycle analyses when making building efficiency upgrade decisions.
2. Secure funding and resources, develop policy and leadership to prioritize energy efficiency in buildings and systems at the state, USM and campus levels.
3. Ensure high level, consistent, and vocal leadership from campus leaders.
4. Develop communications, mandates and incentives to promote a spirit of sustainability and mindfulness towards conserving resources.
5. Write sustainability into job descriptions where appropriate, and reward individuals and departments who take initiative to improve and optimize resources efficiency.
6. Increase support and opportunities for eco-ambassadors and green offices through integrated partnerships.
7. Invest in renewable technologies using internal or external funding sources.