

Memo to: Graduate Studies Committee and Graduate Faculty

From: Virginia Harvey

Date: June 12, 2009

Re: "University College"

As Chair of Graduate Studies, I was invited to meet with Provost Winston Langley and Faculty Council Chair Noushin Ashrafi regarding the proposal for the "University College." We met on May 20, 2009 for one hour, and I agreed to pass my notes from this meeting on to graduate faculty in order to help them understand this proposal. These notes have been reviewed for accuracy by Drs. Langley and Ashrafi. At this point, the proposal to develop "University College" is a preliminary proposal. It has not yet been presented at the President's Office. If approved, the proposal would create another UMass Boston college, "University College," which would assume the current functions of CCDE and offer undergraduate and graduate degree programs as well.

During this meeting Dr. Langley shared some history of the proposal and Dr. Ashrafi proposed a process for faculty involvement in the deliberations. Dr. Langley indicated that a similar proposal was first considered in 2004-2005 and that more recently, it has been under discussion at the administrative level since October, 2008. This spring the decision was made to make this proposal more public and to present it to the faculty. It is hoped that faculty will send questions to the Graduate Studies Committee ([Virginia.harvey@umb.edu](mailto:Virginia.harvey@umb.edu)) and the Undergraduate Academic Affairs Committee ([steven.ackerman@umb.edu](mailto:steven.ackerman@umb.edu)) over the summer. These two committees will meet to discuss the proposals and generate additional questions the first week of September and, hopefully, followed by an open meeting to discuss the proposal before 11<sup>th</sup>. The proposal will then be discussed at the first Faculty Council meeting of the '09-'10 academic year, on September 14th.

We discussed some concerns that have already been raised as the proposal has become more public. In particular, questions have been raised regarding how the quality of the University College would be

monitored. This is of particular concern in light of UMass Boston already having a less positive reputation than other institutions (e.g., Northeastern, Suffolk) among the general population; faculty want to ensure that this change enhances rather than diminishes our reputation.

Dr. Langley indicated that he was not aware of our having a less positive reputation among the general population, although he is aware that the Commonwealth's state legislators have very limited understanding of UMass Boston.

Dr. Langley feels that if we had not taken steps toward becoming a research university in 2001, we would now be a "glorified community college." He feels that developing University College is one of the next steps in UMass Boston's evolution because it would foster shifting our emphasis. One way the emphasis would be shifted would be to develop and locate some of the technical and professional development programs in University College, separate from the rest of the university. Dr. Langley feels that this would enable the rest of the university to focus its energies on obtaining and conducting funded research, and would position UMass Boston to have its research and reputations compared to other public research institutions such as UCLA, University of California San Diego, UMass Amherst, the University of Connecticut, and Rutgers.

Dr. Langley's intent is for the University College to offer professional and technical master's programs that respond to the needs of the Commonwealth's population. The rest of the university would be responding to the needs of the Commonwealth by offering quality undergraduate and graduate programs, procuring funded research, and generating new knowledge.

Examples of anticipated programs are Aging Studies and Pharmacology. When asked why these would not be offered by already existing colleges and departments (such as Gerontology and Nursing, respectively), Dr. Langley indicated that too many professional programs would divert energies away

from the main university's research agenda of generating new knowledge. He would prefer not to have too many professional master's degrees in the existing academic departments.

One important part of the proposal is to change the name of CCDE to something more generally respected both here and abroad than is the term "Continuing Education," hence the change to the name "University College."

Another intent of the proposal is to generate funds. Dr. Langley anticipates that these funds would then be distributed to the rest of the university by the Provost's office.

The current dean of CCDE, Dirk Messelaar, is retiring and so the University College would have a different dean.

The full-time faculty of the University College would be non-tenured clinical faculty with multi-year contracts. In addition, many would be part-time instructors, experts in their own fields. There may be a few joint appointments across colleges. The University College faculty would not be tenured or tenure-line.

The University College would have its own governance, and its courses and degree programs would have to be approved by the Faculty Council, as that body now does for all the other colleges. The University College programs would not be overseen by already existing colleges, programs, and faculty.