

**Chancellor's Strategic Planning Task Force
Interim Report of the External Relations Sub-committee
January 19, 2007**

Since the convening of this effort in September of 2006, the External Relations sub-committee has met six times to deliberate on how the University can become “bigger, better and more engaged” with our external constituencies.

From the outset, the sub-committee was charged with recognizing the various stakeholders present to the UMB community (including but not limited to students, prospective students, federal, state and local elected officials, trustees, President's office, employees, neighbors, K-12 school partners, community college partners, business partners, service and community organizations and alumni), this group will develop a plan to position and promote UMass Boston outreach in all avenues, including increasing the visibility of collaborations with key external stakeholders that advance the university's urban, educational and research mission. In addition, attention will be given to continuous improvement in the outreach, coordination, quality and impact of the University's civic engagement and community partnerships, including but not limited to:

- Ties with the business community
- Ties with the “neighborhood”
- Branding of UMB and communication of mission
- Communications (internal and external and use of vehicles, including the website and other electronic vehicles)
- Government Relations
- “Master Plan” communications: future campus changes and impact on community
- Communication with employees
- Marketing and communication for the university (how take advantage of value proposition)
- Aligning the perception of the university with the reality—the quality of our programs and services is better than people perceive it to be.
- Providing a comprehensive and coordinated effort to advance the University in various forms of media.
- Maximizing the connection between our faculty student staff and facilities with the needs and demands of the metropolitan region.

I. Vision Statement

The sub-committee also deliberated over the “value proposition” for the University's “external world.” The initial draft of which follows:

“In 2010, external relations at UMass Boston are coordinated with multi-faceted partnerships that advance the overall goals and strategic priorities of the university. These external relations will be organized, accountable, transparent, cohesive, and effective. The impact of UMass Boston's external partnerships are well-known, well-respected, and contribute to the knowledge of effective strategies for addressing the economic and social needs of metropolitan regions. The

high quality of the university's programs and services is widely recognized by internal and external constituents.”

The sub-committee's further deliberations on the vision statement included the potential need for the following considerations:

- Provides students, at moderate cost, the resources of a research university with the opportunity to engage in meaningful external project and internships to enhance their educational offerings
- Has special expertise and success in promoting the intellectual, professional, civic and personal growth of students from diverse backgrounds.
- Collaborates with partners – especially in urban communities – to create opportunities, solve problems and build on community strengths.
- Focuses its research capacity on creating new knowledge and technological advances; supporting social justice; informing public policy; and promoting the wellness of individuals, families and communities and preparing students to fully participate in Massachusetts “knowledge based economy”.

While there is obviously much material from which to work, there remains a critical need for the sub-committee to finalize the vision statement. Doing so remains one of the initial goals for the beginning of the second half of this work.

II. Priorities, Goals, and Recommendations

Beyond a clearly defined vision statement, there is a recognized need to bring “cohesion and coordination” into all of the external efforts of the University – academic, administrative, athletic and otherwise. However, any concerted effort to reconcile the work the University does outside of its four walls cannot take place without the ability to first reconcile what it is doing internally. Consequently, much of our discussion during the first half of this process centered on the inevitable development of a clearly defined structure through which all community efforts and external partnerships are managed. We have not yet reached consensus about the purpose of this structure. Should it be a “clearinghouse” which collects and disseminates information about external partnerships and relations? Or, should it manage and coordinate partnerships which promote institutional priorities as well as nurture, promote, and coordinate grassroots efforts?

There are currently several larger and many smaller external efforts around the University which might fit into this new structure – the Urban Mission Coordinating Committee, the College of Public and Community Service, the Office of Service-Learning and Community Outreach, the Venture Development Center and our collaboration with the Dorchester Educational Complex. Bringing them into a complete collaborative atmosphere would truly be an ambitious undertaking. Nearly one entire subcommittee meeting was devoted to exploring the achievement of “cohesion and coordination” through a clearly defined structure. Some of this discussion was devoted to what exists at other institutions – the University of Pennsylvania, Georgia State University and Portland State University, to name a few, but the group was somewhat universal

in its individual responses that political challenges – both internal and external to the University – would present as potential obstacles to establishing this type of structure.

Given the need for oversight, direction and the sorting-through of such obstacles, there is a need for a board or some decision making body to preside over the University's external efforts and a reporting requirement that acknowledges it critical component to the universities overall goals.

Finally, there is the need for academic “buy in.” All of the University's external efforts must have academic credibility and contribute to service, research and scholarship for faculty members, staff, and students. Any defined structure which comes as a result of this process will consequently need to be sanctioned by the Provost's Office, and would require that ongoing support and involvement of the Provost's staff.

III. Plan for Completion

- Finalize the vision statement.
- Reach consensus on what structure is necessary for the needs of this University and this community. Estimate the resources – human, financial and otherwise – by which the structure can be brought about. Develop the blueprint and timeframe for implementation.
- Consider identifying a major corporate or media sponsor with which we can engage in highly visible community service events.
- Consider developing a plan to link our community service and service-learning work with the new governor's community service agenda.
- Develop goals and recommendations for internal and external communication and governmental relations.