

**Chancellor's Strategic Planning Task Force**  
**Student Life Sub-Committee**  
**Patrick Day, Co-Chairperson**  
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**Interim Report**

The task of the Student Life Sub-Committee of the Chancellor's Strategic Planning Task Force is to comprehensively examine the co-curricular experience and quality of student life at the University of Massachusetts Boston students. In the deliberations of the September Strategic Planning Retreat, the Task Force considered the future of the student experience at the University in the areas of learning and engagement, emotional growth, residential life, and academic achievement. The vision of the Sub-Committee focuses on these and other critical themes to create a stronger future for the UMass Boston student experience.

**VISION**

Recognizing the need and opportunity for significant improvement, the Student Life Sub-Committee will outline a thematic and structural framework to create a nationally recognized agenda for student learning and development on the campus of the University of Massachusetts Boston. This framework will provide for a vibrant and multifaceted coordination of programs, services, activities, and organizations designed to engage students as well as other members of the University community. As such, Student Affairs and related student life units of the campus will become supporters and partners with Academic Affairs in the educational experience of the University. Through this deliberate and continuous program of co-curricular education, students will be engaged at the University and in the community at high levels. The building of this experience outside of the classroom will provide value added education and will positively impact academic achievement and graduation.

**PRIORITIES**

While the vision of the Student Life Sub-Committee supposes a comprehensive examination and improvement of student life at the University, the group has identified priority areas of focus. These priority areas identify the most critical domains of the student co-curricular experience targeted by the Sub-Committee for broad and complex enhancement.

**Priority 1: Living and Learning Communities**

This Priority will address the possibility of creating a student residential living experience on the campus of the University Massachusetts Boston. Toward this end, the Student Life Sub-Committee will assess the market demand for residence halls with current and prospective students. In addition, the Sub-Committee will assess the presence and role of residence halls at benchmark institutions to determine institutional positioning of the University of Massachusetts Boston, impact of residence halls on the respective University and community, and innovative models for on-campus residential communities.

**Priority 2: Organization and Delivery of Student Life**

This Priority focuses the work of the Sub-Committee on the institutional infrastructures and methods of implementing/facilitating student life programs and services. The examination in this domain will assess the viability of the current organizational structure

of the Division of Student Affairs relative to benchmark institutions and “best practices” across American higher education. In addition, non-Division of Student Affairs functional areas that contribute to student life will be considered for their effectiveness. Use of technology, collaboration with Academic Affairs, scheduling of programs, office hours, and advertising/marketing will also be examined.

#### Priority 3: Student Life Principles

This Priority will address the creation of a conceptually structured co-curricular experience for student learning and development outside of the classroom. A set of principles and learning outcomes will guide the work of student life on campus. Through a substantial literature review, along with targeted focus groups of faculty, staff, and students, the Sub-Committee will outline this set of learning principles.

### GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are a series of preliminary goals and recommendations that have emerged from the discussions in the Student Life Sub-Committee meetings. Each goal is followed by critical success factors needed to complete the aforementioned goal. While these are not final goals, they do represent a logical linkage to both the previously identified *priorities* and the *future considerations* of the Strategic Planning Task Force.

**Goal 1** To provide on-campus housing and off-campus housing resources, consistent with the identified need of current and prospective University of Massachusetts Boston students. The provision of housing and housing resources will strongly consider the role of the University as a valued neighbor in Dorchester at-large and on the Columbia Point peninsula specifically.

**Critical Success Factor 1.1** A demand for on-campus housing will be substantiated through the results of a market study administered to current and prospective students.

**Critical Success Factor 1.2** Continuous improvement of the established and cooperative relationship with the Harbor Point and Peninsula Apartment Communities.

**Critical Success Factor 1.3** Creation of a staffing and financial infrastructure to support the growing housing needs of current and prospective students for both on and off campus housing options.

**Goal 2** To provide physical facilities, space, and staffing appropriate to the needs of departments responsible for the implementation and facilitation of student life and student development.

**Critical Success Factor 2.1** Identification of gap between the spatial and staffing levels at the University of Massachusetts Boston and benchmark institutions and “best practices.”

**Critical Success Factor 2.2** Collaboration with the Master Plan Sub-Committee in the identification of physical considerations for student life in the Master Plan.

**Goal 3** To improve the current portfolio of the Division of Student Affairs consistent with the needs of current and prospective University of Massachusetts Boston students. The enhancement of this portfolio will also occur in consideration of the structure of Student Affairs organizations at benchmark institutions, and of “best practices.”

**Critical Success Factor 3.1** Identification of gap between the organizational structure of the Division of Student Affairs at the University of Massachusetts Boston and benchmark institutions.

**Critical Success Factor 3.2** Identification of “best practices” and opportunities for innovation in the strengthening of the Division of Student Affairs.

**Goal 4** To create a framework for assessing learning outcomes and organizational effectiveness throughout programs, services, activities, and organizations in student life at the University of Massachusetts Boston.

**Critical Success Factor 4.1** Identification of clear learning domains for all programs, services, activities, and organizations.

**Critical Success Factor 4.2** Recommendation of macro-level and program-based assessments of student learning outcomes and development.

**Critical Success Factor 4.3** Creation of a staffing infrastructure to facilitate implementation of a comprehensive assessment program and of a program of competency and professional development for staff members working in the area of Student Life.

**Goal 5** To coordinate a program of student life off-campus through the engagement of students living in Harbor Point, Peninsula, as well as in other Boston area communities.

**Critical Success Factor 5.1** Enhancement of the quality and quantity of student life programs, services, activities, and organizations at the Harbor Point Apartment and Peninsula communities.

**Critical Success Factor 5.2** Increase in the level of student life programs and activities occurring in local Boston area communities.

## **PLAN FOR COMPLETION**

Over the remainder of the academic year, the Student Life Sub-Committee will complete the previously outlined tasks through five simultaneous processes.

- The Student Life Sub-Committee will contract with internal and external survey research agencies to conduct surveys and focus groups of University of Massachusetts Boston students to assess the current market demand for residence halls on campus.
- A Work Group of the Sub-Committee will continue an assessment of student life at thirty benchmark institutions.
- A Work Group of the Task Force will continue a literature review and conduct focus groups to identify a set of learning principles for student life
- In collaboration with the Master Plan Sub-Committee, selected members of the Student Life Sub-Committee will make a series of campus visitations to examine residence life programs at benchmark coastal, urban, and innovative/“green” campuses.
- The Sub-Committee will conduct two open meetings for the University of Massachusetts Boston campus community during the Spring Semester.

## **NECESSARY RESOURCES**

In addition to information and cooperation from colleagues at benchmark institutions, the Sub-Committee will need technical support Institutional Research and the Office of Information Technology to administer surveys online.