June 8, 2010

External and Community Relations Committee
Co-chairs: John Ciccarelli and Paul Watanabe
Members: Darrell Byers
Beth Clemens
Carroy Ferguson
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Ken Lachlan
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Jack Looney
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Provost’s charge: To build on our current standing to strengthen: 1) the ways we secure information that is likely to affect or to be used by the university; 2) the quality of information about the university and the manner in which that information is disseminated; 3) the scope and variety of networking, collaborative, partnership, consortia, and other relationships the university has or will develop to support its mission.

Committee meetings: March 24, 2010
April 6, 2010
April 13, 2010
April 26, 2010
May 7, 2010
May 26, 2010

Major goals and objectives:

As the University of Massachusetts Boston transforms itself over the next decade and a half and more immediately in the five years ahead, it is essential in this strategic plan, as it did in the previous one, for the campus to reaffirm and further strengthen community engagement – across all levels, from local to global, and across all sectors – as a core value and to develop a strategic approach to enhance communications around these efforts and the broader values and endeavors of the university.

- The identity of the University of Massachusetts Boston will be defined by the vibrant integration of knowledge from all sources and at all levels, by facilitating
student learning opportunities centered in communities, by service in settings near and far, and by research that is broadly defined and whose impact is measured in diverse and innovative ways. For faculty, this will mean the integration of connections across the boundaries of the campus and community and across faculty roles (research, teaching, and service), encouraging connections and collaborations across disciplines. Community-engaged research will advance the university’s efforts to achieve a higher Carnegie research classification. The University of Massachusetts Boston will exist in partnership with Boston, the Commonwealth, the nation, and the world to contribute to the public good. All of the university’s colleges, divisions, center and institutes, programs, and individuals that embrace the core value of community engagement will be appropriately recognized, and their efforts sustained and supported. In short, the University of Massachusetts Boston will be a national leader in the promotion, recognition, and support of meaningful, broad-based community engagement. This engagement, along with its status as a major research university with a student-centered focus, will be central to the campus’s identity.

• By strategically expanding the scope and effectiveness of our external relations operations – including government relations, community partnerships, and communications – the university will reach new and existing audiences with more compelling and articulate messages about the University of Massachusetts Boston’s many assets and contributions. It is only natural to expect that this higher profile will result in more entities seeking not only to support the university’s far-reaching academic and other engaged efforts but also to partner with the university in a wide range of endeavors. As the campus extends itself deeper into the realm of enhanced public awareness and engagement, we will be prepared to respond to this outreach strategically and meaningfully through the design and support of appropriate infrastructures and policies institution-wide to facilitate and recognize excellence in outreach and engagement.

• The University Massachusetts Boston’s community engagements will be acknowledged and promoted through a new strategic, integrated marketing and communications program that employs best industry practices to promote coordinated key messages across all media and communications platforms. Those involved in external relations work will be fully equipped to further their responsibility to create opportunities, solve problems, and build on community-based strengths through multifaceted partnerships that advance the overall goals, mission, vision, and strategic priorities of both the university and its community partners. In addition, accomplishing and promoting high-impact community programs will strengthen the university’s relations with government, the non-profit and private sectors, and the philanthropic community to secure the financial support to grow our vision of a public research university dedicated to community-engaged scholarship, teaching, and service.
Recommendations:

To further the preceding goals and objectives, the University of Massachusetts Boston in the next five years will:

• Develop a comprehensive integrated marketing communications plan that has as a primary objective the support of the university strategic plan and that draws together the many disparate endeavors and accomplishments of the university into a cohesive messaging, marketing, and communications approach—an approach that heightens the university’s standing locally, regionally, nationally, and globally. Toward this end, the plan should pay increased attention to integrating academic, faculty, student, and research accomplishments as well as enhanced community engagement efforts. Success in this area will be measured by such factors as continued enrollment growth, expanded alumni support, enhanced public exposure, and quality media placement.

• Create a university-wide communications and marketing staffing and support model that best accomplishes the integrated marketing communications plan and connects colleges, schools, divisions, and centers and institutes, devoting appropriate resources to staffing enhanced communications/marketing efforts and to coordinating with the campus-wide community. Success in this area will be measured by greater exposure of the university’s diverse endeavors via enhanced collaboration among university communications and marketing staff.

• Commit to, and devote resources for, being an early adopter of technology advancements that support and enhance communications efforts across the university’s various platforms and to its myriad constituents, including but not limited to website capabilities and web-based technologies, video/TV, radio, and supporting infrastructure. Of immediate concern, however, is the successful implementation of the web re-design project.

• Continue and strengthen support for university-run media facilities such as WUMB radio and develop new ways to leverage the broad communications power and worldwide reach of these facilities. These efforts should include exploring opportunities for the development of television and/or internet-based TV capabilities for the university.

• Create a data-gathering system for regular reporting and cataloging of community engagement activities of faculty and professional staff. Research-, service-, and teaching-related activities will be reported. This effort may include continued exploration of a revised electronic Annual Faculty Report for reporting this information with respect to faculty.

• Establish a Chancellor’s Council on Community Engagement, which will include the vice chancellors for academic affairs, student affairs, and enrollment
management, and the associate vice chancellor for government relations and public affairs. In addition, a representative from each college and school and a representative from the centers and institutes will be appointed. The council’s responsibilities will include but not be limited to assisting in carrying out the goals, objectives, and recommendations identified by this committee and in the Report of the Working Group on Civic Engagement.

- Engage the campus in a thorough examination of academic privileges and standards, including the treatment of community-engaged research in the assessment of faculty scholarship and creative activity, with the goal of clarifying expectations and creating an environment that supports, recognizes, and validates community engagement. Furtherance of this recommendation will help to sustain and support the reporting system identified previously.

- Include language that identifies the University of Massachusetts Boston’s core value of community engagement in all communications. In addition, this language should be included in announcements for administrative, faculty, and professional staff positions and in information provided to prospective undergraduate and graduate students.

- Involvement of external relations, communications, and governmental affairs staff in the development of strategies to increase our influence with public and private funding sources. This involvement, coordinated with the efforts of university advancement, colleges, centers and institutes, and others will assist the campus in securing the maximum level of resources needed to further the University of Massachusetts Boston’s identity as a community-engaged public research university dedicated to excellent teaching.