Meeting Notes

Attendees: Kristy Alster, Elsa Auerbach, Patrick Barron, Aimee Blaquiere, Caroline Coscia, Diane D’Arrigo, Christine DePalma, John Drews, Margaret Hart, Gail Hobin, Peter Langer, Winston Langley, Peter McClure, Anita Miller, Ellen O’Connor, Julie Sanabria, Amy Smith, Kathy Teehan, Jack Wiggin, Sue Wolfson

The meeting convened at 11:00am. Sue Wolfson welcomed steering committee members to the meeting.

1. Master Plan Update

Sue Wolfson provided the steering committee with an update on master planning efforts.

Integrated Sciences Complex (ISC)

Pre-construction activities have begun on Site A (geotechnical and environmental subsurface testing) and will continue throughout the spring. The campus is working closely with the Division of Capital Asset Management (DCAM) on finalizing the utility plan for the ISC. UMass Boston’s strong commitment to environmental protection and sustainability is integral to these planning efforts. The campus desires to continue to utilize seawater pumping as a cooling method (capacity exists within the seawater pumping station). Seawater pumping provides sustainable benefits to the campus including reduced electricity use and savings on associated building maintenance and operating costs. Utilizing additional seawater pumping capacity as a cooling method for the ISC will require approval from the Environmental Protection Agency. If the campus cannot move forward with this option, another less favorable option is the possibility of the ISC having stand alone utilities (this would require a cooling tower to be located on the building’s rooftop). The steering committee will be provided with additional information on the ISC’s utility plan as it becomes available. It is also anticipated that the building’s study will be certified by the Commonwealth’s Designer Selection Board by the end of February. Following study certification, design will begin (an estimated 12 month process). The Master Planning Office is looking forward to educating the campus community about the Integrated Sciences Complex (including information on its program, benefits to the campus, and sustainable features) following study certification. It is expected that construction (an estimated 24 month process) for the ISC will be completed in fall 2013.
Utility and Road Projects

The campus continues to collaborate with DCAM and the UMass Building Authority (UMBA) on advancing utility and roadwork projects. Arup, an engineering and planning firm, has completed a utilities master plan for the campus. Highlights include recommendations for the campus to use solar and wind energy. Once the report is printed, it will be made available to the steering committee. The campus is also currently providing final comments to UMBA on a Request for Proposals for programming and conceptual design services for a utility corridor and roadway loop.

General Academic Building

Planning for the General Academic Building continues and the steering committee (comprised of most of the deans, the vice provost for information technology, and the provost) is currently meeting biweekly. The steering committee’s work is closely tied to space planning efforts (see notes on space planning below).

Edward M. Kennedy Institute

The Edward M. Kennedy Institute (EMK) for the United States Senate is currently in the conceptual design project development phase. The 40,000 square-foot Institute will have museum and exhibit space, ceremonial and reception spaces, a library, research area, and several classrooms. The Institute will be dedicated to educating the general public and others about the role and importance of the Senate. A major goal of the Institute will be to improve civic education in the nation. The Institute will also host a "Summer Senate" for high school students. Two students from each state will come to the Institute each year to study a topic, hold mock hearings, draft legislation, and debate the topic.

EMK planners continue to explore the topics of building placement and parking. Some geotechnical and environmental subsurface testing is also occurring at the EMK site. UMass Boston continues to engage in conversations with EMK planners regarding how to physically integrate the EMK facility into the campus. The EMK project will be funded through the UMass Building Authority and the EMK Institute will be responsible for paying the debt (principal and interest). A steering committee member suggested that the campus progressively propose programmatic ideas to EMK planners. It is expecting that pre-construction activities at the EMK site will continue throughout the spring with construction activity beginning by the end of 2010.

2. Space allocation planning update

UMass Boston’s strategic and academic goals and priorities will serve as the foundation for campus-wide space planning. The campus is working with Goody Clancy and Rickes Associates in collaboration with DCAM on academic space planning efforts. There are three main
components to these initial efforts, including a general classroom study, a specialized instructional space and departmental space analysis, and a code analysis on McCormack and Wheatley Halls. The general classroom study will yield a recommended plan for classroom distribution by room type, seat count, and occupancy percentage in existing and new general academic buildings based on 15,000 and 18,000 (planning numbers) enrollment scenarios. The analysis on specialized instructional space and departmental space will provide the campus with the tools it needs to prioritize specialized instructional and departmental spaces for relocation or repurposing in existing facilities and new general academic buildings. The code analysis on McCormack and Wheatley Halls will inform the strategic approach that the campus will take to planning renovations in these buildings based on code trigger thresholds and available resources.

The General Academic Building steering committee has been focusing its attention on the process for campus community input on the space planning process. It is important to continue a broad and inclusive planning process that engages faculty, students, and staff. The steering committee has discussed a variety of mechanisms for reaching out to the campus including meetings with existing groups at regular meetings (for example, faculty meetings, department meetings, and all college meetings), and the possibility of using surveys to solicit feedback. Sue Wolfson asked the Master Planning steering committee for its input on this topic. Steering committee members noted that it would be important to reach out to students on their higher education experience. One steering committee member noted that one mechanism for soliciting feedback from students could be an online survey or questionnaire. Another steering committee member noted that it would be important to target junior faculty members in an attempt to understand their vision of future needs of their programs, pedagogy, and departments. Another steering committee member noted that it would be equally as important to reach out to all faculty members (from junior faculty members to tenured faculty members) in an effort to reinvigorate them about the future of the campus. A steering committee member noted that it will be important for all planning on campus to be grounded within an academic plan. She also noted that planning activities should inspire approaches that explore the campus as a whole.

3. Bayside Exposition Center Update

The campus has reached a significant point in the process and has completed an agreement for the sale and purchase of the property. This agreement, signed by the UMass Building Authority on behalf of the campus, initiates a due diligence period during which the building authority and UMass Boston will examine all aspects of the property and the existing facility to fully understand their conditions and to identify any problems that may affect the value of the property and our liability in acquiring it.

The acquisition of the Bayside Exposition Center will help to facilitate our on-campus construction of new academic buildings by providing swing space to compensate for the loss of
parking, athletic fields, and offices and classrooms during construction and renovation activity. As we use this property to meet our near-term objectives, the campus will initiate a university-led planning process in cooperation with the city, state, neighbors, and surrounding communities that will form a vision for redeveloping this unique and valuable site.

A steering committee member asked if the acquisition of the Bayside Property would affect the Columbia Point Master Plan. When the Columbia Point Master Plan was being developed, Corcoran Jennison was planning on redoing its property (it is a neighbor of the Bayside Exposition Center) by creating retail spaces as well as high end housing. Corcoran Jennison has abandoned these plans. UMass Boston is hopeful that the acquisition of the Bayside Exposition Center will inspire dialogue between the campus, campus neighbors, the City of Boston, the Boston Redevelopment Authority, and the broader community about how to make Columbia Point an attractive destination.

4. Strategic Planning Master Plan Subcommittee

The Chancellor has announced a new strategic planning initiative for the campus that will focus on the next five years (FY 11- FY 15). Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Winston Langley will serve as the chair of the Strategic Planning Task Force.

For the duration of the 2010 strategic planning process, the master plan steering committee will function as a subcommittee of the Strategic Planning Task Force. The provost will also be asking additional faculty, students, and staff to serve as members of this subcommittee. The provost is not asking that steering committee members serve on an additional committee, but rather to continue the work that they have been doing within the context of the strategic planning process. The provost will be sending steering committee members a formal invitation to serve as members of the subcommittee shortly.