

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS
AMHERST•BOSTON•DARTMOUTH•LOWELL•WORCESTER

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

Tuesday, September 18, 2012; 4:30 p.m.
University of Massachusetts
Faculty Conference Room
55 Lake Avenue North
Worcester, Massachusetts

Trustees Present: Chair Thomas; Trustees Campbell, Collins, Encarnacion, Geoffroy, Gomez, Johnston, Karam, Lee, Marvel, Mullan, Osterhaus-Houle, Peters, Quattrochi, Woolridge and Xifaras; Ms. Lee (representing Trustee Reville)

Trustees Absent: Vice Chair King-Shaw; Trustees Carpman, DiBiaggio, Furman, Healey, and Reville

University Administration: President Caret; General Counsel Heatwole; Chancellors Subbaswamy, Motley, Grossman, Meehan, and Collins

Chair Thomas convened the meeting at 4:41 p.m.

Reports:

Chair's Report:

Chair Thomas welcomed the Board and stated that the Committee of the Whole was convening to focus on a specific topic—a draft UMass Report Card. The Report Card builds on a concept that was used as a successful marketing effort by President Caret while he was President of Towson University in Maryland and it incorporates data from UMass' current Performance Measurement System. The Report Card is intended as a marketing tool for the University and is part of ongoing efforts to measure progress in a transparent way, hold ourselves accountable and communicate to key University constituencies.

Chair Thomas reiterated that the document is still in draft form and welcomed feedback on how it might best be used by the University. He described the Board as one of many focus groups the University is using to get feedback.

President's Report:

President Caret began by stating the importance of telling the University's story of efficiency and effectiveness. The University is spending 22 percent fewer dollars than it was ten years ago. While costs have decreased, the University's quality has risen. Further, the University has 12,000 more students than a decade ago and substantially less state support. President Caret

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stated that it was important for the University to present these efficiencies and to measure itself with both an accountability tool and a marketing tool.

Discussion Item:

University of Massachusetts Report Card:

President Caret reported that the University's Performance Measurement System has been in use for 15 years and the data to be presented in the Report Card is already being collected and disseminated through this tool. However, questions remain including a descriptive title, how we grade ourselves and how goals are set. He described the organization of the Report Card using a thematic approach which includes six central themes: Student Experience and Success; Producing an Educated and Engaged Citizenry; World Class Research & Development Enterprise; Enhancing Social Well-Being; Good Stewards for State Resources; and Telling and Selling the UMass Story.

President Caret described a variety of ways goals and grading could be approached, including numerical goals or trends as well as letter grades, colors, or up, down or side arrows.

Trustee Quattrochi inquired about the outcome if a metric was not met. President Caret commented that the purpose of such a tool was to identify challenges, refocus, and make authentic efforts for improvement. Further, the Board of Higher Education Vision Project has reported a number of improvement areas, including achievement gaps between African American students and white students, as well as Latino students and white students. He stated that it was important to focus on our challenges and weaknesses.

Trustee Karam asked if the bonuses for Chancellors would be tied to the metrics. President Caret commented that they would be part of the accountability measures and goal setting and that these efforts would be an iterative process. Trustee Karam added that the Report Card needs to come out right or else it could backfire.

Trustee Encarnacion inquired as to whether each campus would have a Report Card. President Caret responded that he would like to see an aggregate of some kind. Trustee Marvel asked about the student retention and graduation rate metrics and suggested decisions whether to include transfer students would lead to different outcomes. President Caret stated that all metrics need to be looked at carefully and that transfers were important.

Trustee Campbell asked if the standards would be self-selected or commonly used criteria. President Caret responded that the campuses could be compared to their peer groups and aspirant groups. Trustee Karam commented that measuring against the University's aspirant group might be dangerous.

Chancellor Meehan commented that the Lowell campus was supportive and that it had produced its own report card last June as part of its Strategic Plan. There was a whole campus

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buy-in and it was a very successful effort. He added that this was a trend nationally in higher education. Chair Thomas inquired about Lowell's decision regarding grading. Chancellor Meehan responded that the campus used a ranking as to where it stands with regard to each metric.

Trustee Woolridge asked if the same measurements would be used across campuses. President Caret stated that the appropriate Vice President would work with his or her counterparts to establish goals that were appropriate for each campus. Additionally, there would be dry runs to ensure that the right message is being sent. Trustee Xifaras inquired as to whether this undertaking would be connected in any way to the University's 150th celebration, as it is such an important event and could be used as an interesting marketing opportunity. President Caret commented that the Amherst campus was planning a signature event commemorating the 150th anniversary.

Trustee Encarnacion inquired as to whether or not campuses would be compared. President Caret reiterated that each campus has a different mission, different target measures and different peer groups. He further stated that at Towson, one of the goals was to close the gap between white and minority students and the accountability helped keep up the pressure on the goal at hand.

Chair Thomas stated that calling the Report a 'Report Card' begs for a letter grade and asked if perhaps using a different title, like Progress Report; would alleviate that issue. Several names were suggested including: UMass Outcomes; UMass Index; UMass Today, UMass Tomorrow; UMass Message, UMass Statement. Trustee Karam suggested enlisting a marketing consultant that is working on other UMass projects to help with the naming.

Trustees Mullan, Campbell, and Marvel agreed that the University shouldn't be fearful about measuring itself and to focus on the journey to where the University aspires to be. Chair Thomas commented that some would argue that a grade doesn't tell the whole story and that adding a descriptive aspect to each category would give a more realistic picture.

Trustee Johnston inquired about what other universities were doing. Associate Vice President Banks responded that many universities took a lengthy approach and that their approach to "grading" varied. Trustee Lee commented that measuring the University against set goals would be useful, but taking a long approach, say 10 years, would be helpful to show the great progress that has been made.

Chancellor Meehan stated that he thought the Vision Project unfairly tied the University in with the state and community colleges, which are less expensive to run and have completely different missions. Trustee Karam stated that UMass is very efficient when compared to any public university in New England and should be proud of its numbers, but those numbers don't make the headlines. Trustee Xifaras suggested creativity using social media, online, and other packaging to help disseminate the story.

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Ms. Lee stated that the Vision Project Report would be released later in the week and provides a segment-by-segment breakdown and speaks to a variety of audiences: students, faculty/staff, elected officials and other constituents.

Chancellor Meehan stated that a report card could be a great marketing tool and that the University can't let the press frame the story. It needs to be credible and express that the University has a much higher level of excellence than most people know.

Trustees Mullan and Quattrochi agreed that a short takeaway, backed up by a longer report would be useful. Discussion ensued about how to measure the University against a set of goals and how to set the standard for that measurement. Trustee Campbell inquired about national standards as the benchmark. Trustee Lee suggested identifying system goals instead of grades. Trustee Karam suggested careful consideration of the particular measurements. Trustee Johnston stated that it should be a standard that is impressive because it could backfire, otherwise.

President Caret stated that each campus must decide about standards and the appropriate peer institutions. Chair Thomas added that Senior Vice President Williams asks the campuses to regularly re-evaluate their peer group. President Caret stated that he and his staff would continue to work on this undertaking and would come back to the Board with another version at a later date.

Chair Thomas stated that this topic was important and that the goal was to use information responsibly, not naively and to not be defensive, but responsive. He thanked the group for going through the exercise.

There being no other business the meeting adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

Kate Wilkinson
Staff Assistant