

**UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS
AMHERST•BOSTON•DARTMOUTH•LOWELL•MEDICAL SCHOOL•UMASSONLINE**

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

**Wednesday, September 16, 2015; 11:00 a.m.
University of Massachusetts Boston
Alumni Lounge
Campus Center – 2nd Floor
100 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Massachusetts**

Trustees Present: Chair Woolridge; Vice Chair Furman; Trustees Buonomo, Campbell, Carpman, Collins, Epstein, Johnston, Lee, Manning, O'Brien, O'Neil, Peyser, Robinson, Roh, Thomas and Xifaras

Trustees Absent: Trustee Fubini, Mullan, Miller, Osterhaus-Houle and Peters

University Administration: President Meehan; General Counsel Heatwole; Senior Vice Presidents Williams and Wilda; Chancellors Subbaswamy, Motley, Grossman, Moloney and Collins; Associate Vice President Preble, Executive Director Filippone; Director Healey

Guests: Matt Pellish, Education Advisory Board (EAB)

Faculty Representatives: Professor Whitbourne, UMass Amherst; Professor Tirrell, UMass Boston; Professor Buzawa, UMass Lowell

Documents Used: -Meeting Minutes: June 16, 2015
-Current Issues and Trends Impacting Student Debt, Doc. T15-084
-Diversity and Inclusion Efforts Taking Place throughout the UMass System, Doc. T15-085

Chair Woolridge convened the meeting at 11:22 a.m. and stated that the Committee had been provided with draft minutes for the June 16, 2015 meeting and asked for any corrections. With no corrections, the minutes were approved.

Reports:

Chair's Report

Chair Woolridge reminded the Committee of the Administration's commitment to use time each quarter at the Committee of the Whole meeting to review key metrics to allow the Board an opportunity to participate in these efforts. He stated that financial metrics will be reviewed and discussed at the next meeting.

Chair Woolridge noted that the meeting's discussion will focus on student debt and diversity and the work being done by the University to foster business relationships and promote opportunities with Massachusetts-based and minority owned businesses.

President's Report

President Meehan provided an overview of the student debt discussion. He noted that the discussion would be first of many to help the Board understand what measures they can take to help the campuses succeed in keeping student debt as low as possible without impacting the diversity of the student body. He also stated that state and national fiscal policies along with factors beyond that contribute to rising student debt. President Meehan commented on the importance of understanding the public's misperception about student debt and its causes.

President Meehan also stated that the University is engaging in active conversations within the administration and with the Legislature on efforts for lowering student debt, maintaining affordability, improving quality, and continuing to improve diversity while improving quality. He noted that as a result of these active conversations the University of Massachusetts has been ranked one of the world's best universities.

Discussion Item:

Current Issues and Trends Impacting Student Debt

Matt Pellish, Senior Director of EAB Strategic Research reported on data and analysis related to student debt. He discussed the factors that contribute to student debt, questioning the value of student investment in their education, and public perception versus reality.

Mr. Pellish noted that most Americans that consider pursuing a college education believe that it is unaffordable and increasingly inaccessible due to too much funding spent on facilities, administration, and faculty. Students are now discovering and opting for cheaper alternatives than the traditional institutions through platforms like edX or online courses and degrees.

Mr. Pellish reported that studies show that lack of understanding contributes significantly to the misconception that college is unaffordable and inaccessible. He then provided an account of actual cost versus price and how the media's portrayal of colleges and universities actually focuses on a small number of students with larger than normal amounts of debt. Among other contributing factors driving student debt, weakening family finances and non-tuition costs are also driving debt growth. Discussion ensued around measures the University can make to rebuild confidence in affordability and accessibility in traditional institutions.

Diversity and Inclusion Efforts Taking Place throughout the UMass System

Senior Vice President Williams provided an update on changes to the Board selected metrics for this quarter and presented new data related to the diversity of the University's students. She commented that 7 metrics have changed since the last quarter; one of which does not relate to students and faculty. Senior Vice President Williams also provided data updates from the Annual Indicators Report and reported on the individual campus summary profiles.

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Discussion ensued, and Trustees questioned comparative data to the state and peer University's. Trustees expressed concern over low percentages shown for enrollment by race/ethnicity. Trustee Thomas stated that demographic realities of the university shouldn't be reflective of just the Commonwealth but of a National and International University and that the University should focus efforts geared toward increasing these figures system-wide.

Chancellor Motley stated that it was important to note that the University of Massachusetts is no longer a 'back up plan' school for students, but is being considered a 'top choice' university.

Chair Woolridge then announced that due to time constraints, the discussion on the University's Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action Plans and the discussion on the work being done to build relationships with Massachusetts based and minority-owned businesses will be deferred until the December meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 1:17 p.m.

Christina Kelley
Assistant Secretary to the Board