



# Self-Study Report

FOR THE MIDDLE STATES COMMISSION  
ON HIGHER EDUCATION

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# Executive Summary



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## SELF-STUDY PROCESS

University of Maryland University College (UMUC) selected the “comprehensive” model for its decennial reaccreditation self-study to allow examination of all aspects of the institution and critical evaluation of its success in meeting its mission. This approach is also appropriate because UMUC is undergoing an institutional transformation, including a re-envisioning of its core learning model and concomitant reshaping of its structures and processes. The transformation will affect educational offerings and learning assessments, resource allocation, structure, technology support, and data collection and dissemination. Therefore this comprehensive self-study not only confirms current compliance with the 14 Middle States standards for reaccreditation, but also describes the reorientation and reconfiguration at the heart of the institutional transformation and how UMUC will remain in compliance in the future.

The Coordinating Committee determined this design for the self-study and provided high-level guidance and support; a Steering Committee made up of the chairs of the seven working groups coordinated and monitored development of the content for the self-study. Each workgroup was charged with researching and developing draft language for specific standards. Support in document collection and analysis was provided from the Provost’s Office as well as from other offices, including the Business Office, Institutional Research, and the Office of Analytics, Planning, and Technology.

A website in ENGAGE, the university’s social media and communication platform, held background information and updates for the university community, including the list of workgroup members, Middle States documents, and other related documents. Sub-spaces in this site accessible only to workgroup members provided confidential documentation and places for workgroups to discuss and share drafts.

The draft of the self-study was shared with the university community. Comments invited via the university’s “Futures” webpage were collected and used in revision. Following review and approval by the Coordinating Committee and UMUC President Javier Miyares, the final document was prepared for submission to the

Middle States Commission on Higher Education for the decennial visit by the evaluation team in 2016.

## SUMMARY OF THE SELF-STUDY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The process produced a self-study report in which each section first considers the extent to which UMUC is meeting specific standards among the 14 accreditation standards detailed in *Characteristics of Excellence* (2011). Each section then describes the areas within which UMUC expects to change in its current transformation process, the institutional strengths and challenges related to those areas, and the opportunities that should be addressed (Table i.1). In addition to those findings and suggestions, formal recommendations are stated where applicable.

**Table i.1 Standards Addressed by Chapter**

Chapter	Standards	Topics
2	1	Mission and Goals
3	2, 3	Tying Resources to Priorities
4	4, 5, 6	Governance and Administration
5	10, 11, 12	Academic Programs and Faculty
6	8, 9	Positioning Students for Success
7	13	Serving All Students Worldwide
8	14	Assessment of Student Learning
9	7	Institutional Assessment

## Mission and Goals

The mission of University of Maryland University College is improving the lives of adult learners. We will accomplish this by:

1. Operating as Maryland’s open university, serving working adults, military servicemen and servicewomen and their families, and veterans who reside in Maryland, across the United States, and around the world;

## IN THIS CHAPTER

- Self-Study Process
- Summary of the Self-Study Findings and Recommendations
  - Mission and Goals
  - Tying Resources to Priorities
  - Governance and Administration
  - Academic Programs and Faculty
  - Positioning Students for Success
  - Serving All Students Worldwide
  - Measuring Student Learning and Improving the Curriculum
  - Assessing Institutional Effectiveness
- Conclusions and Recommendations

2. **Providing our students with affordable, open access to valued, quality higher education; and**
3. **Serving as a recognized leader in career-relevant education, embracing innovation and change aligned with our purpose and sharing our perspectives and expertise.**

Chapter 2 of this self-study describes UMUC's mission, goals, values, and strategic priorities, as well as their evolution, based on UMUC's identity as a state institution and open university and its communication with its constituencies. The basic mission and the emphasis on access and affordability for students, as well as educational quality and innovation, have remained constant throughout UMUC's history. In response to the rapidly changing educational environment and the envisioned evolution to a new learning model, UMUC has sharpened its focus on a limited number of strategic priorities: adopting a single global operational model, improving the student administrative experience, transforming the core learning model, diversifying the revenue model, and maintaining the university infrastructure.

To help the university community respond to the increasing pace and scale of change, while keeping focus on UMUC's mission and strategic priorities, Chapter 2 recommends increased internal communication of mission and goals with special emphasis on: how they drive the work of every unit; how decision-making takes into consideration the impact on students; new ways to solicit and receive feedback to encourage engagement among all constituencies; and communication of more concrete cases of where institutional decisions are determined by reference to mission and goals.

### **Tying Resources to Priorities**

UMUC's business model is based on global centralized management and is primarily reliant on tuition revenue. It is designed to serve adult learners through distributed education (mostly online) and a predominance of adjunct scholar-practitioners. This model requires careful tracking and frequent readjustment of strategies. UMUC's systems of planning and resource allocation provide ample resources and data to support the mission and continuing institutional renewal, and adequate control systems to ensure institutional integrity. However, both the limits of current student markets and the changing educational environment present challenges. UMUC has proposed and the state has

approved a modified business model that will allow more flexibility.

In light of the complex institutional transformation before the university, cross-functional coordination and appropriate resource allocation are critical. Chapter 3 ties resources to priorities. It makes no formal recommendations but calls for careful attention to clarity in measures for student success and improvement in the student experience, positioning both as guides in determining planning and resource allocation.

### **Governance and Administration**

As a member of the University System of Maryland, UMUC receives well-defined oversight from the State of Maryland and operates under an administrative structure with clear accountability and decision rules. It clearly and publicly addresses and adheres to both external and internal policies, and it communicates regularly—through multiple channels—with its constituencies. Its shared governance system conforms to state requirements and facilitates collaboration with students, staff, and faculty. Its academic governance system has recently been reshaped to encourage more faculty participation and to recognize the importance of collegiate (full-time) faculty in shaping the curriculum.

Chapter 4 describes the business model, leadership and governance structure, and current administrative initiatives. It makes no formal recommendations but suggests communication approaches and continuing initiatives that will help students, faculty, and staff accommodate the pace and magnitude of change underway at UMUC.

### **Academic Programs and Faculty**

UMUC's academic approach—driven by its mission—is globally distributed (largely online) and employs a faculty model that emphasizes and supports adjunct scholars who are also practitioners, working elsewhere in their professions. These faculty deliver a wide range of career-relevant programs, with curricular offerings that are consistent regardless of location or modality and supported by master syllabi, electronic course materials, and other resources. Review and oversight by the state, and by UMUC, ensure curriculum relevance, currency, and quality. Chapter 5 describes UMUC's model and how its tradition of curricular innovation and

rigorous reform positions UMUC well for the learning-model transformation now underway.

The many aspects of the new model drive not only curriculum revision but also a more seamless and continuous student experience, innovative approaches to advising, increased career relevance for students, program development including new learning outcomes and types of learning, and evolving faculty models. Chapter 5 particularly recommends detailed definition of the changes in faculty roles and appropriate training to deepen faculty understanding of the new model, including its team approaches, learning experiences, and curricular design.

### **Positioning Students for Success**

Students bring a rich range of backgrounds and preparation to UMUC, and its admission and student support services acknowledge that by aligning with stages in the student lifecycle and addressing the specific needs of divergent student populations. Chapter 6 describes UMUC's open admission policy—which embraces a motivation to learn rather than focusing on test scores or prior grade point average—and its support services, which are available primarily online, consistent for students in all locations and all formats. These services have been improved and streamlined through system assessments and technological support. Retention is a special concern for adult part-time students, and UMUC addresses it with a range of initiatives.

Chapter 6 makes no formal recommendations but calls for continuing attention to strategic decision-making, cross-departmental and cross-functional management and planning, appropriate and integrated systems and processes, coordinated and continuous student support, and clear standards of evidence and evaluation based on analyses of retention predictors and interventions.

### **Serving All Students Worldwide**

UMUC's other educational activities—including basic skills training, developmental courses, and alternative sources of credit—advance the mission, articulate appropriately with the curricula and credit, and meet pertinent standards of quality and transparency. Program and course learning outcomes, expectations of students and faculty, academic standards, and resource materials are consistent, regardless of location or delivery modality.

Chapter 7 offers an overview of additional locations and other educational activities. It makes no formal recommendations but emphasizes the need, as the new learning model develops, for better ways to evaluate and integrate experiential types of learning, to analyze how they contribute to student progress, and to identify how they should be supplemented by other sources of learning.

### **Measuring Student Learning and Improving the Curriculum**

Institutional student learning outcomes are assessed systematically and regularly, and the results are used to ensure that students acquire the knowledge, skills, and competencies consistent with UMUC goals. Chapter 8 summarizes the evolution of UMUC's approach to learning outcomes assessment and the current status, including both general education outcome assessments and discipline-specific knowledge. The chapter also addresses the ways in which assessment results are used to drive improvements and further assessments.

Chapter 8 also describes how learning outcomes assessment will change and improve as the new learning model develops. Emphasis is placed on the importance of more accessible reporting on assessment results, the redesign of the assessment website to better disseminate information, the deliberate use of assessment activities for longer-term planning, and the greater engagement of students. These issues are addressed in project planning for the learning model redesign.

### **Assessing Institutional Effectiveness**

UMUC's approach to institutional assessment begins with the reports mandated by and defined in collaboration with the University System of Maryland. These are supplemented by measures appropriate to UMUC's identity and conditions. Assessment is supported by a robust system of data infrastructure and analytics, which allows and integrates multiple measures. Each unit of the university concentrates on the metrics most meaningful for its goals as well as the overall measures that affect the enterprise as a whole.

Chapter 9 demonstrates UMUC's compliance with Standard 7. It also observes the increase in assessment measures that will accompany the transformation of the learning model, and it suggests that continued development of

communication tools like the dashboards will be important in helping the university community understand and participate in the transformational journey now underway.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

UMUC believes that it is in compliance with all 14 standards and their fundamental elements, as evidenced in this report and supporting documentation. This self-study points out areas of concern and recommends specific actions to improve performance and to support the institutional transformation UMUC is undergoing.

That transformation includes redesign of all academic curricula to focus more effectively on learning mastery, allow more detailed and immediate learning outcomes assessment, and provide more adaptive technologically-supported delivery. It includes changes that leverage data analytics in order to personalize student pathways and continuously monitor student progress, and it advances administrative streamlining to bring about seamless user-friendly systems of student support.

The continuing and accelerating pace of change at UMUC is perhaps the most important issue. Rapid large-scale change can cause dysfunction if members of the organization lose direction or feel excluded from decision-making. It is essential to keep the focus on how mission and goals drive decisions and actions.

Many of the suggestions in this report are already being enacted or considered. For that reason, they do not take the form of formal recommendations. However, since effective communication and coordination form a central and consistent theme throughout all sections of the self-study report, UMUC **recommends**:

- Increased internal communication of mission and goals with special emphasis on: how they drive the work of every unit; how decision-making takes into consideration the impact on students; new ways to solicit and receive feedback to encourage engagement among all constituencies; and communication of more concrete cases of where institutional decisions are determined by reference to mission and goals.
- Detailed definition of the changes in faculty roles and appropriate training to deepen faculty understanding of the elements of the model, including team approaches, learning experiences, and curricular design.

## CHAPTER ONE

# Introduction





# CHAPTER ONE

## Introduction

### BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF UMUC

University of Maryland University College (UMUC) is a public not-for-profit institution and one of 12 degree-granting institutions in the University System of Maryland (USM). In 1947, the State of Maryland established UMUC as the College of Special and Continuation Studies within the University of Maryland, with the goal of meeting the academic needs of working adults. By 1949, the College was also serving military students overseas through its European Division and, by 1956, in Asia. In 1959, its name was changed to “University College,” following the British term that captures what it does: take courses and programs from all academic departments and offer them beyond the university’s walls and outside normal class times.

In 1970, UMUC became a separately accredited degree-granting institution, and in 1988 it was included in the restructured 13-member USM governed by the USM Board of Regents.

In 2005, the Maryland General Assembly recognized UMUC’s status as “Maryland’s open university.” UMUC’s mission is rooted in its identity, as defined in State statute, as “Maryland’s open university, serving nontraditional students ... in Maryland, the United States and around the world” through “affordable, open access to higher education” and “distributed education” (Annotated Code of Maryland, 13.101).

UMUC’s mission statement (last revised in 2015) is derived directly from that status:

The mission of University of Maryland University College is improving the lives of adult learners. We will accomplish this by:

1. Operating as Maryland’s open university, serving working adults, military servicemen and servicewomen and their families, and veterans who reside in Maryland, across the United States, and around the world;
2. Providing our students with affordable, open access to valued, quality higher education; and
3. Serving as a recognized leader in career-relevant education, embracing innovation and change aligned with our purpose and sharing our perspectives and expertise.

### IDENTITY AND PURPOSE

Despite some shifts in wording and emphasis, UMUC’s identity and purpose have remained consistent through the years and are deeply embedded in its culture. The principles of high-quality service to career-oriented adult students, a global presence, affordability, and accessibility define UMUC. Staff, faculty, and students recognize UMUC as an institution that reaches out to students where they are, rather than drawing them to a central campus. They also acknowledge its commitment to minimize barriers and maximize access for students, to respect diversity and support students’ career aspirations, and to leverage multiple vehicles and tools, including state-of-the-art technology, to support student learning.

UMUC’s operations are marked by another historical determinant. Despite its key contribution to the state’s educational goals, UMUC receives minimal state support. It had no state funding before 1998, and state support currently accounts for less than 10 percent of UMUC’s annual total revenues. Necessarily self-sufficient and tuition driven, while mandated to provide affordable and accessible educational opportunities, UMUC finds careful monitoring of enrollments and wise use of resources to be critical.

UMUC’s identity and purpose produce the core values and strategic priorities (discussed in Chapter 2) that are shared among constituencies to guide decision-making, initiatives, interactions, and resource use. They explain the recurrent institutional themes of organizational agility, accountability, innovation, and career relevance.

### DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS

Because of its size and distributed nature, UMUC is a complex, multi-faceted institution. Its headquarters and central administration are located in Adelphi, Maryland, in the heart of UMUC’s Maryland instructional locations. The Academic Center at Largo, 12 miles away, contains classrooms and computer labs as well as offices for faculty and staff in the Graduate and Undergraduate Schools. It also houses academic support units, including library services, registration, advisement, admissions, and financial aid.

### IN THIS CHAPTER

- Background and History of UMUC
- Identity and Purpose
- Defining Characteristics
- Student Characteristics
- Position in the Educational Marketplace
- Challenges and Opportunities
- Planning for the Future
- Self-Study Process

In keeping with its global reach, UMUC is currently authorized by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) to operate at 174 “Additional Locations” and 41 “Other Instructional Sites.” These encompass more than 20 locations in the greater Washington, D.C., metropolitan area: a combination of leased space, military installations, shared facilities in higher education centers operated by the State or the USM, and space made available through UMUC’s partnerships with community colleges. These sites, as well as some at military locations across the United States, provide student services, classroom instruction, or both.

UMUC also has locations overseas. A few partnership programs, such as the Bachelor of Science dual degree with Irkutsk State University, allow students to combine UMUC’s online courses and degrees with degrees and onsite courses from overseas universities. However, nearly all of UMUC’s own overseas locations operate under U.S. Department of Defense contracts to provide onsite academic programs to the U.S. military in Europe and Asia. UMUC previously designated two overseas branch campuses—one in Japan and one in Germany—as headquarters for those overseas operations. However, UMUC is really one global university, and it recently submitted a substantive change request to MSCHE reclassifying the branch campuses as simply additional locations. Upon approval, Adelphi will formalize its de facto position as the central headquarters for the worldwide university.

Since launching its first online courses in the mid-1990s, UMUC has become one of the largest public providers of online education, offering undergraduate and graduate courses across the nation and around the world. Even when overseas sites are taken into consideration, online offerings far exceed onsite. In FY 2015, 86 percent of UMUC’s worldwide students took at least one course online; UMUC had more than 248,000 online course enrollments worldwide and offered 956 distinct courses online (UMUC FY 2015 Fact Book).<sup>1</sup> The vast majority of UMUC students worldwide complete their degrees predominantly online.

UMUC currently offers 75 undergraduate and graduate degree and certificate programs. Every program can be completed online, with the exception of the Doctor of Management, which carries weekend residency requirements. (See Table 1.1.)

UMUC’s online presence is integrated throughout its offerings and operations. No program is now offered entirely onsite, due to decreasing student demand, and all stateside onsite courses have been redesigned as hybrids (blended online/onsite delivery). Student support services are all available online and, unlike many traditional universities, UMUC does not house its online instruction in a separate administrative unit. For UMUC, online is simply a form of delivery, not a defining quality of curriculum.

For both online and onsite learning, UMUC provides a highly interactive environment that supports the development of skills in written communication, critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, scientific literacy, information literacy, and technology fluency—the six common learning areas identified as institution-level learning outcomes by the university’s *Institutional Plan for the Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes*.<sup>2</sup> In addition to these institution-wide outcomes, every program and every course at the undergraduate and graduate levels has defined student-learning outcomes. (See Chapters 5 and 8.) Since course designs begin with common outcomes, they can be offered in any format. Each course, regardless of modality, carries the same learning outcomes, basic syllabus, and content across sections. The entire structure of the institution is based upon its capability for delivering consistent online, onsite, and hybrid instruction and the support needed to meet student demand.

As an open university, UMUC does not restrict enrollment. Because of its online presence, it does not have a limited number of seats and can add class sections as needed to meet student demand. This responsiveness is central to UMUC’s model.

## STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

UMUC’s unduplicated worldwide headcount for Fiscal Year 2015 was 82,555 students; more than 80 percent were undergraduate students. For that year, UMUC conferred 5,285 bachelor’s, 3,710 master’s, and 36 doctoral degrees (FY 2015 Fact Book).

UMUC’s structure and approach result from its mission of service to adult students, most of whom are working. A survey in Spring 2014 found that 81 percent of stateside undergraduate respondents were employed full-time or part-time. Most students—80 percent of undergraduates and 98 percent of graduate students—attend UMUC on a part-time basis.

**Table 1.1 Academic Offerings 2015–2016**

Undergraduate		Graduate	
Degrees	Certificates	Degrees	Certificates
AA General Studies <sup>ab</sup> BA Communication Studies BA East Asian Studies BA English BA Graphic Communication BA History BA Humanities BS Accounting BS Biotechnology BS Business Administration BS Computer Networks and Cybersecurity BS Computer Science BS Criminal Justice BS Cybersecurity Management and Policy BS Digital Media and Web Technology BS Environmental Management BS Finance BS General Studies BS Gerontology and Aging Services BS Health Services Management BS Human Resource Management BS Information Systems Management BS Investigative Forensics BS Laboratory Management BS Legal Studies BS Management Studies BS Marketing BS Nursing for Registered Nurses BS Political Science BS Psychology BS Public Safety Administration BS Social Science BS Software Development and Security	Computer Networking Human Resource Management Management Foundations Project Management Spanish for Business and the Professions Language Area Studies <sup>a</sup>	MAT Master of Arts in Teaching MBA Master of Business Administration MS Accounting and Financial Management MS Accounting and Information Systems MS Biotechnology <sup>a</sup> MS Cybersecurity MS Cybersecurity Policy MS Data Analytics MS Digital Forensics and Cyber Investigation MS Environmental Management MS Financial Management and Information Systems MS Health Informatics Administration MS Health Care Administration MS Information Technology <sup>a</sup> MS Management <sup>a</sup> MDE Master of Distance Education and E-Learning <sup>a</sup> MEd Master of Education in Instructional Technology DM Doctor of Management <sup>a</sup>	Acquisition and Supply Chain Management Bioinformatics Cybersecurity Policy Cybersecurity Technology Database Systems Technology <sup>b</sup> Foundations in Business Analytics Foundations of Cybersecurity Foundations of Human Resource Management Foundations of Information Technology <sup>b</sup> Homeland Security Management Informatics <sup>b</sup> Information Assurance Instructional Technology Integration Leadership and Management Project Management Software Engineering <sup>b</sup> Systems Engineering <sup>b</sup> Telecommunications Management <sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Includes choice of specialized curricula.

<sup>b</sup> Available only to special populations (e.g., military, overseas students).

As an open-access university, UMUC admits all prospective undergraduates who have earned a high school diploma or equivalent and all prospective master's degree students who have earned a bachelor's degree. SAT, GRE, or GMAT scores are not required. However, many adult students have previous experience with higher education: 80 percent of UMUC's undergraduates in Fall 2013 entered as transfer students. In fact, UMUC is the largest recipient of transfer students in the state of Maryland (USM, Transfer

Students to the University System of Maryland, 2015). As a result, entering students bring widely varying levels of academic preparation and familiarity with higher education. This diversity helps drive UMUC's model for advisement and curriculum.

UMUC also attracts an exceptionally diverse student body when it comes to demographics, including age, ethnic background, and socio-economic circumstances. The median

age of stateside undergraduate students is 31 years old; for graduate students, it is 34. UMUC enrolls a substantial proportion of Maryland's nontraditional and underserved student populations. In FY 2014, minority students comprised more than 50 percent of the total enrollment of those of known race. As of Fall 2014, 29 percent of UMUC's worldwide students were African American. Indeed, UMUC enrolls more African American undergraduates than any other four-year institution in Maryland and almost twice the number of African-American graduate degree candidates than Maryland's four Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). In FY 2015, UMUC awarded 23 percent of its bachelor's degrees, 36 percent of its master's degrees, and 22 percent of its doctoral degrees to African American students (Fall 2014 and FY 2015 Fact Books).

Military students are especially well served by UMUC's flexible delivery and support systems, and active duty military, veterans, reservists, and dependents comprise well over half of UMUC's worldwide students. Continuous educational progress can be difficult for military students subject to repeated deployments and even for their dependents. Some enter UMUC for just one or two courses to transfer back to their home institutions, keeping up momentum toward their degrees while far from home. Others enroll to complete a degree, sometimes one begun years prior to enrollment at UMUC.

These and other adult students often must stop enrollment for one or more terms because of family and work commitments or financial considerations. The combination of "start and stop" re-enrollment and part-time study means that UMUC students take a longer time to degree completion than more traditional students. Because of this, UMUC uses a 10-year completion rate to monitor undergraduate student success. For the cohort entering in 2003, 22 percent completed a bachelor's degree in four years, 29 percent in six, and 34 percent in 10 years (UMUC Undergraduate Retention and Graduation Rate, 2013). With this extended time to degree, it is important to identify the most appropriate benchmarks and goals in order to inform UMUC's ongoing student support and retention efforts.

UMUC serves its students by focusing on support mechanisms that allow them to graduate with strong knowledge and competencies, as articulated in the degree outcomes. In keeping with its goal of serving learners where they live and work, UMUC offers a mix of hybrid and fully

online courses delivered in sessions of adult-appropriate lengths. Undergraduate courses are eight weeks in length, and graduate courses are 10 to 13 weeks in length. (The Graduate School will begin standardizing its course lengths to 11 weeks in Fall 2016.) UMUC optimizes course scheduling, including frequent session starts, so that students can fit the courses they need into their busy lives. To help students progress, UMUC has also improved and clarified its course sequences so that students can more easily plan for program completion.

## POSITION IN THE EDUCATIONAL MARKETPLACE

UMUC is one of the largest public universities in the United States. A leader among public institutions in providing quality and affordable online education, it has been providing distance education to residents of the state of Maryland, to the nation's service members, and to those who live outside of Maryland for nearly seven decades. UMUC was an early provider of off-campus educational opportunities for students and one of the first universities in Maryland to develop online education. Among its many recognitions, UMUC has received five Sloan Consortium (now OLC) Excellence Awards for online program quality and three IMS Global Learning Consortium awards for technology integration in the classroom environment. In 2015, it was named "Educator of the Year" by the World Affairs Council for its leadership in models of innovative education, named "#1 Best for Vets" by the *Military Times*, received the President's Award from the Open Education Consortium, and earned a WCET Outstanding Work (WOW) Award for its Open Educational Resources initiative that lowers cost and increases access to course materials for students.

UMUC has remained in the forefront of adult higher education because of its early innovation in distance education and continued development of programs offering advancement for adult students. But the educational marketplace is changing. With the advent of for-profit institutions tapping the adult student market—including military students—UMUC is operating in an increasingly competitive arena.

As traditional universities rapidly develop online offerings, online delivery is no longer a strong differentiator. And disruptions in the educational model, such as the move to competency-based approaches, continue to change the landscape. UMUC cannot rest on its prior successes in this rapidly changing environment.

Rather, to serve and support students, it must use this competition to spur its own continuous improvement.

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The current context in which UMUC functions—primarily online, serving adult students—changes daily with shifting demographics, a growing list of competitors, and innovations in the delivery of postsecondary education. Military drawdowns and cuts in funding for military education threaten UMUC's traditional student base, intensifying competition. Regulatory and funding environments are also creating greater demands on institutions operating both within and beyond state lines.

In this volatile environment, institutional agility is essential for tuition-driven institutions like UMUC. Excellent service and support are critical for attracting and retaining new students. To step up investment in serving students in timely and appropriate ways, UMUC must increase revenue. While remaining focused on its core mission and vision, and following through on its strategic priorities, UMUC must also be able to make rapid mid-course corrections in plans and operations. Four key operational metrics—total headcount, course completion rates, re-enrollment rates, and total revenues—are closely tracked to monitor organizational health and make prompt adjustments. They keep UMUC on course in service to its mission.

UMUC's unduplicated worldwide headcount on a fiscal year basis (82,555 in FY 2015) is almost double that of a decade ago. However, it is still below the FY 2012 peak of 97,001 students. UMUC has analyzed the causes for the decline and launched efforts to reverse the trend, including marketing adjustments, retention initiatives, restructuring, and changes in student services. Positive effects are visible in 2015 enrollments, recruitment and revenue, retention, course completion rates, and student re-enrollments. (See Chapters 6 and 9.)

Amid these challenges, there are clear opportunities. Nontraditional students are now the biggest and fastest-growing sector in higher education, and they are more comfortable with online education than ever before. UMUC's status as a nonprofit, public institution provides credibility at a time of negative sentiment about for-profit institutions. Military drawdowns are introducing growing numbers of veterans to the

civilian workforce, with concomitant demand for career-oriented education, and UMUC is a recognized leader in higher education for veterans. The "college completion agenda" is an important issue for both governments and private funders, reflecting national interest in nontraditional students, career preparation, and innovative forms of curriculum delivery and design. Technology advances allow new modes of instruction and offer opportunities for tracking, analyzing, and supporting student progress in more substantive ways.

For UMUC, these factors dovetail with an innovative spirit and institutional flexibility, enabling the university to improve the future of learning for a broader spectrum of students. Students enroll with increasingly diverse backgrounds, skills, readiness levels, and needs. To serve them, UMUC must transform its model—increasing access, flexibility, pathways to success, and use of learning science and technologies to support and empower students. Both administratively and academically, UMUC is on the threshold of changes as transformative as the integration of online learning was in the early 2000s.

## PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Online education opened up new worlds for UMUC and its students: new models of learning and teaching, new ways of serving and supporting students. The university is poised now for another transformation, one that is driven by the goal of high-quality education at an affordable price while maintaining UMUC's commitment to open access. As competition increases, technology advances, and innovation predominates, UMUC must continue to adapt and change as it has since 1947.

At the heart of the transformation is a new vision of UMUC's core learning model, with four interlocking objectives (*UMUC Strategic Plan 2015–2018*<sup>3</sup>):

- Redesigned learner experience
- Personalized learner support
- Workplace-relevant curricula and programs
- More rewarding roles for faculty

More personalized and relevant education for each student is consistent with UMUC's historical focus, but new means are needed to take advantage of emerging tools and achieve that goal. This recalibration will start with early assessment of competencies, using human and



technological support structures to enable students to set goals and choose educational pathways. Learning science will underpin the curriculum design and the pedagogical model. Appropriate educational technologies, such as cognitive tutors, will assist students in learning concepts and open the way for faculty to design learning experiences, mentor and coach students, and guide students to apply and synthesize their knowledge. The results will necessitate changes in areas such as admissions and advising, the registrar function, and the library.

The needed changes are bigger than the learning model alone. In fulfillment of its mission, UMUC is moving into new territory at almost every turn. Resource allocation, structure, technology support, and data collection and dissemination are being reshaped in important ways to support UMUC's goals. Indeed, all aspects of the university will need to reorient and reconfigure to support student learning and progress and to advance UMUC as an educational leader.

To bring about that transformation and continually ensure quality learning and open access for students, UMUC will need sufficient revenue. That means it must grow beyond its current student base, now concentrated mostly within Maryland and military populations. Following recommendations from a business advisory group, the USM Board of Regents has approved proposed changes in UMUC's business model to support that growth. (See Chapter 3.)

In UMUC's most current strategic plan (further discussed in Chapter 2), those interrelated factors drive a close relationship among key strategic initiatives in order to:

- Adopt a single global operational model.
- Improve the student administrative experience.
- Transform the core learning model.
- Diversify the revenue portfolio.
- Maintain the University infrastructure.

The learning model points toward a new academic approach and student service strategy, but the other initiatives are needed to achieve this and to realize the efficiencies that will strengthen UMUC's capacity to undertake such changes. The entire institution will need to align around the priorities.

This self-study outlines the nature of the needed adaptations and describes how UMUC will make this shift while continuing to meet and exceed MSCHE standards. Besides demonstrating ongoing compliance with the 14 Middle States standards for accreditation, this self-study also provides UMUC constituencies a view of its current state, what is needed to move forward, and ways to assess each group's effectiveness in reaching the university's goals.

## SELF-STUDY PROCESS

For its self-study, UMUC has chosen the comprehensive model. The full document roadmap will provide supporting evidence regarding UMUC's adherence to the Middle States standards, and each section of the self-study summarizes the current state. However, the primary focus of this report is on how UMUC will continue to meet the standards as it moves toward its fully realized future state.

In June 2014 the university established a set of committees to oversee and develop the self-study. (Committees and their charges are in Appendix 1.) A high-level Coordinating Committee, led by President Javier Miyares and including the Provost and senior-level department heads, identified the key issues and design for the self-study, approved major process decisions, and provided high-profile support. A Steering Committee, co-chaired by Assistant Program Chair and Collegiate Professor Rich Pauli and Vice Provost Marcia Watson, was made up of working group chairs.

Each of seven working groups was assigned one or more of the Middle States standards, along with the related Fundamental Principles. They were provided a detailed briefing and extensive documentation to use in their research and assigned specific charges and research questions as well as the template document map for the relevant standards. The working groups met in person and/or online. They were given private spaces in ENGAGE, UMUC's internal social media site, to hold virtual discussions and post documents. Staff in the Provost's Office provided support for the committees, including maintenance of the ENGAGE spaces, collection and dissemination of more than 800 documents from all units of the university, assistance with committee meetings, and responses to questions.

In addition to making available private online spaces for the working groups and providing

access to the voluminous documentation collected for the project, the ENGAGE site hosts messages and resources for the larger university community, including a timeline, background documents such as *Characteristics of Excellence* and the workgroup lists, and an informal list of resources related to future trends in higher education.

Each workgroup submitted outlines, document maps, and draft language for its section of the self-study in February and March 2015. Supporting staff used the workgroup reports to draft sections of the self-study for review and revision, consulting with the working groups as needed. This iterative process was completed and the full self-study draft report made available to the university community in September 2015. At that time, comments were invited and a number of discussion forums provided for input on the draft. After the feedback stage, the revised self-study document was submitted to President Miyares and the Coordinating Committee for approval. Then the final document was prepared for submission to the Middle States Commission on Higher Education for the decennial visit by the evaluation team in 2016.

Based on its document roadmap and the findings developed in the self-study process, UMUC believes that it is in compliance with the 14 standards for accreditation and that its plans for the future will maintain its compliance. This self-study report documents that compliance: each chapter in this self-study addresses specific standards, current compliance in context of recent changes and improvements, and future planning in relation to the standards. Each chapter also identifies further opportunities and, where appropriate, makes specific recommendations for improvement.





## CHAPTER TWO

# Mission and Goals

**STANDARD 1: MISSION AND GOALS**

The institution's mission clearly defines its purpose within the context of higher education and indicates whom the institution serves and what it intends to accomplish. The institution's stated goals, consistent with the aspirations and expectations of higher education, clearly specify how the institution will fulfill its mission. The mission and goals are developed and recognized by the institution with the participation of its members and its governing body and are utilized to develop and shape its programs and practices and to evaluate its effectiveness.

# CHAPTER TWO

## Mission and Goals

UMUC's mission and goals are at the heart of its identity, forming the foundation for its strategic planning, goal setting, and institutional positioning on the higher education landscape. UMUC's mission statement and accompanying statements of vision and values articulate the scope and critical attributes of the institution, the population served, the guiding principles, and how these principles will be implemented. They drive strategic planning and action, including vision and implementation of the new learning model.

### MISSION AND VALUES

As most recently articulated and approved in 2015:

**The mission of University of Maryland University College is improving the lives of adult learners. We will accomplish this by:**

1. **Operating as Maryland's open university, serving working adults, military servicemen and servicewomen and their families, and veterans who reside in Maryland, across the United States, and around the world;**
2. **Providing our students with affordable, open access to valued, quality higher education; and**
3. **Serving as a recognized leader in career-relevant education, embracing innovation and change aligned with our purpose and sharing our perspectives and expertise.**

This mission statement is in keeping with UMUC's identity as articulated in both Maryland state law and university policy. The Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Section 13.101, states the intent of the Maryland General Assembly that University of Maryland University College:

- Operate as Maryland's open university serving nontraditional students who reside in Maryland, the United States, and throughout the world;
- Provide the citizens of Maryland with affordable, open access higher education; and
- Continue as a leader in distributed higher education.

The code further states that:

- As a constituent institution of the University System of Maryland, the University of Maryland University College is an instrumentality of the State.
- The exercise by the University of Maryland University College of its powers, including its overseas operations, is the performance of an essential public function.

In the context of UMUC's mandated mission, the university has also articulated core values. First presented in the 2009 Strategic Plan, and repeated in the current 2015-2018 Strategic Plan (Appendix 4), these values continue to guide institutional and individual professional behaviors:

- **Students First**—these are the people who make our work possible.
- **Accountability**—we are each responsible for our overall success.
- **Diversity**—each individual brings value to our efforts and results.
- **Integrity**—our principles and standards are never compromised.
- **Excellence**—outstanding quality is the hallmark of our work.
- **Innovation**—we advance so others can benefit from our leadership.
- **Respect**—the rights and feelings of others are always considered.

A related set of cultural aspirations was articulated in the 2015–2018 Strategic Plan to guide UMUC's work in support of "an unrivaled and flawless student experience." These aspirations include "personal, thoughtful, and respectful" interaction; collaborative work; recognition and reward of positive performance and accountability for negative behaviors; active encouragement of innovation and risk-taking; worldwide alignment and fostering of positive relationships; and "passion for the work we do and ... fun doing it."

### IN THIS CHAPTER

- **Mission and Values**
- **Input and Strategic Plan Development**
- **Strategic Goals and Priorities**
  - 2009 Strategic Plan
  - 2015 Strategic Plan
- **Communication**
- **Vision for the Future**
  - Elements of the Future State
  - Strengths and Challenges
  - Conclusions
  - Recommendations

## INPUT AND STRATEGIC PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The mission and resulting goals and plans derive from UMUC's mandated identity and from extensive consultation and collaboration with its constituencies: students, employers, alumni, faculty and staff. Stakeholders are included in the formal strategic-planning process through public meetings and online communication as well as information and focus groups from different segments.

To begin the process that produced the 2015 strategic plan, a university-wide Town Hall meeting was held in November 2014, at which President Miyares shared draft mission and vision statements developed by an appointed task force. Shortly afterward, a website was created to share documents on the mission, vision, and strategic goals of the university.

Those documents drew on a wealth of information from UMUC's constituencies. For example:

- **Students:** Student focus groups and student engagement surveys inform the strategic goal-setting process, and the Student Advisory Council provides regular input on university issues.
- **Alumni:** Annually, alumni take part in focus groups and surveys, including recent focus groups to inform the discussion of UMUC's business model.
- **Faculty and Staff:** A survey of employee engagement was conducted in 2012. Its results confirmed that "there is clarity around and buy-in to the mission, strategy, and goals" and that "department goals are aligned with UMUC's mission" (Faculty and Staff Engagement Survey Results, 2013). Another survey will take place in spring 2016.
- **Employers:** Employers are represented on UMUC's Board of Visitors and participated in the re-imagination of the business model.

In early 2015, direct input on the draft documents was solicited from the university community, both online and through a series of meetings. In addition to the online "Futures" page,<sup>4</sup> which provided a feedback form and email address for inquiries, comments and discussion were received through 21 small group meetings encompassing all units of the university, two large open house information sessions, and 10 online information and discussion sessions. In all, the strategic plan task

force discussed the plan with approximately 750 people.

In addition to opportunities for input from the entire UMUC community, all three shared-governance groups—the Faculty Advisory Council (now the Academic Advisory Board), Student Advisory Council, and Global Staff Advisory Council—were consulted on the revision of the university mission and goals. Feedback was gathered and reported by themes, contributing to the revised plan released in May 2015.

## STRATEGIC GOALS AND PRIORITIES

The evolution of UMUC's strategic goals and priorities demonstrates how the mission drives UMUC's response to current conditions and also how UMUC has moved to a more focused and strategic approach to planning for the future.

### 2009 Strategic Plan

The mission statement in the 2009-2013 Strategic Plan was similar to the current statement, calling for "respected, affordable, and accessible" academic programs. That plan included 10 strategic goals for the university, ranging from developing "the next generation of adult higher education" and "differentiat[ing] UMUC's position in higher education" to diversity and size of the student body, leadership in military education, fiscal viability and incremental revenue, and faculty and staff recruitment. Because this was such a comprehensive list with goals at different levels of specificity, it was difficult to evaluate their effectiveness and their relationship to particular projects and initiatives, or to make choices among them.

When Javier Miyares became Interim President in 2012, he assigned a task group to develop a tighter set of strategic priorities to focus the university's work. These priorities, vetted by the larger UMUC community, were:

1. Research, develop, and implement transformational, next-generation learning.
2. Build processes to develop and support market-based, signature academic programs.
3. Provide career development support to students throughout their lifecycle.
4. Become an employer of choice.
5. Identify and develop new sources of revenue and enrollment streams.

On becoming permanent President in October 2012, he added a sixth priority:

6. Transform the overseas divisions into agile, light-footprint operations, consolidating all business processes in Adelphi, merging three distinct and parallel distance education operations into one worldwide operating unit, and adjusting the overseas faculty model to the new realities of a dramatically downsized military—in essence, to become truly one global university rather than three separate campuses.

Those goals and priorities have focused UMUC's work in recent years, and the university's senior leadership and their units have used them to generate and assess new initiatives in alignment with the mission. Each chapter of this self-study describes improvements that have occurred in response to the strategic priorities. For example:

- The academic roadmap discussed in Chapter 5 addresses the priority of “transformational, next-generation learning” as well as “processes to develop and support ... signature academic programs.”
- UMUC's Center for Innovation in Learning and Student Success (CILSS) supports “next-generation learning” and UMUC's focus on the scholarship of teaching and learning (Boyer, 1990) by exploring ways to improve online and distance learning outcomes based on breakthroughs in technology, data analytics, and learning science. CILSS also helps design evaluations for pilot projects in order to bring more rigor and to avoid the continuation of projects that do not contribute to student success. (See Chapters 5 and 6.)
- The expanded career services detailed in Chapter 5 flow from the priority of “career development to students throughout their lifecycle.”
- The leadership development program (see Chapter 4) supports the priority to become “an employer of choice.”
- New marketing initiatives and the recent creation of HelioCampus (see Chapter 9) reach for “new sources of revenue and enrollment streams.”
- The One Global University initiative discussed in Chapters 6 and 7 operationalizes the priority that was added in 2012.

As initiatives are implemented, UMUC's planning and management systems (discussed in Chapter 3) categorize projects by relationship to the strategic priorities and track their success.

## 2015 Strategic Plan

Continued strategic planning efforts have further refined the focus and advanced UMUC's vision of the future. The 2015 Strategic Plan maintains a focus on access, affordability, and quality, while a new vision statement sets its sights on essential, overall institutional transformation:

*UMUC will be a recognized leader in learner-centered adult education, focusing on career-relevant programs that build the skills, competencies, and capabilities our students need to realize their professional aspirations. We will transform ourselves to place student interests first in all things; support sustained quality academic innovation; and become more agile, efficient, and effective.*

The resulting strategic goals are reduced in number and more focused. They provide concrete actions and measures to better enable Executive Committee decision-making on initiatives and evaluation of success:

### STUDENT SUCCESS

Help students earn a degree or certificate and achieve their professional goals and successful employment. Engage alumni and business partners as mentors, coaches, and potential employers of our students.

### QUALITY EDUCATION

Provide innovative, career-relevant education in alignment with accreditation standards and help students build the competencies desired.

### RESPONSIBLE STEWARDSHIP

Serve as a responsible steward of all assets and resources, managing unit cost at or below inflation, to sustainably deliver affordable tuition for everyone.

### ENROLLMENT GROWTH

Grow enrollments by 5 to 7 percent annually, creating a sustainable revenue stream to support academic innovation and investment.

### EXCELLENT STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Improve the whole of the adult learner experience, commencing with first contact and following through all processes of enrollment, administration, learning, employment, and engagement as alumni.

## ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITY

Build our professional capability by investing in our people, processes, technology, and infrastructure and by leveraging our diversity to innovate and improve.

They are further elaborated into five strategic initiatives to focus and drive projects, emphasizing areas that will leverage technology, streamline systems, and provide resources to improve the student experience:

- Adopting a Single Global Operational Model
- Improving the Student Administrative Experience
- Transforming the Core Learning Model
- Diversifying the Revenue Portfolio
- Maintaining the University Infrastructure

These goals and initiatives now guide UMUC's transformation in the ways described for each of the areas in this report.

UMUC's progress over the last decade stems from focused planning driven by the mission and goals. The most recent iteration of the Strategic Plan builds on that progress, with a fresh vision of institutional transformation and goals and initiatives that outline the elements of that transformation. The envisioned future state encompasses not only the new learning model but also all the systems needed to support and enhance the student experience and the elements that UMUC requires to meet those goals.

## COMMUNICATION

The mission, vision, and values are communicated to the university community in publications, at events, and on the website. Staff members receive the mission, vision, and values during new-hire orientation, discuss them in a team activity during a welcoming event with the President, and review them in civility training. Briefing materials for new staff at the executive level also include the mission, vision, and values. New faculty go over them at their required orientation and discuss them in relation to professional experiences, learn about the diversity of UMUC students, and examine the value "Students First."

Reminders of the mission, vision, and values are frequent and, as the employee survey found, there is broad recognition of these foundational principles throughout UMUC. The values—especially "Students First"—are often cited and highlighted in Town Hall meetings. They also

underpin planning documents. For example, a "flip book" distributed in 2015 to all employees in ENGAGE illustrates how they inspire the current marketing campaign.

The mission and strategic plan are also communicated to external constituencies through UMUC publications. The plan is also approved by the state and used to establish metrics for institutional performance. (See Chapter 9.) UMUC's plan aligns with the Maryland State Plan for Postsecondary Education 2013-17,<sup>5</sup> which includes goals for quality and effectiveness; accessibility, affordability, and completion; diversity; innovation; economic growth, and vitality; and data use and distribution.

These are not only high-level statements of institutional purpose. The goals and elements of the strategic plan, especially the strategic initiatives, are used to organize and prioritize decision-making. The mission and goals drive decisions on tuition levels, which are held low to maximize access and affordability for students; new and revised programs, which are designed for career relevance and appropriateness to the needs of adult students; and academic policies, which support UMUC's identity as a university with global reach.

The awareness of mission, values, and strategic priorities is important for planning in this time of rapid change, and the more focused move to a limited number of strategic priorities helps units and individuals understand the role that they play in realizing the plan. Chapters 3 and 9 discuss the ways the priorities drive action and evaluation throughout the university.

## VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Priorities and specifics of the strategic plans have shifted over the years in response to current issues, but the focus has consistently remained on the three areas of service that anchor UMUC's mission: 1) access, 2) affordability, and 3) quality of learning for the nontraditional student, with special attention to career relevance. The new emphasis on institutional transformation reflects UMUC's response to challenges and opportunities in the current educational landscape.

A careful balance is needed to provide the best possible experience for students—including relevant curricula, appropriate support systems, and powerful learning experiences—while also maximizing access and controlling costs. Indeed, throughout the history of UMUC, and most of



higher education, those goals have often existed in tension. They formed an “iron triangle ... linked in an unbreakable reciprocal relationship, such that any change in one will inevitably impact the others” (Immerwhar, Johnson, and Gasbarra, 2008). In other words, broad student access in tandem with cost reduction (for students and the institution) demanded the sacrifice of quality. Said in another way, high quality required more time and investment than was compatible with low cost. UMUC worked hard, employing careful management and innovation to balance competing demands, but it seemed impossible to optimize all three sides of the triangle.

Recently, however, technology and online education have opened avenues for breaking the “iron triangle”—expanding access, offering new ways to speed and improve development of educational offerings, and providing tools for reducing cost (Jarret, 2013; Porto, 2013). Forward-looking institutions can now imagine ways to rapidly develop educational models with high quality and low cost, making them broadly available to students but with a more personalized experience. The “iron triangle” is becoming more flexible as:

- Online offerings drastically broaden student access without the expanded infrastructure of a physical campus.
- Scalability of the “classroom” setting—for example, through online course platforms and standardized design—reduces cost and improves quality.
- Technologically supported assessment and adaptive learning personalize learning pathways for better outcomes and reduced student time (and cost).
- Learning analytics and assessment tracking help target scarce faculty and curricular resources.

## Elements of the Future State

In pursuit of the mission, UMUC’s new strategic plan lays out interrelated strategies: adopting a global operational model, improving the student administrative experience, transforming the core learning model, diversifying the revenue portfolio, and maintaining the university infrastructure. Each of these strategic initiatives represents a way to “break the iron triangle” by leveraging planning and technology to allow UMUC to simultaneously control costs, increase

access, and improve learning outcomes and the student experience.

Subsequent chapters will describe these strategies further:

- **Adopting a Single Global Operational Model:** administrative streamlining made possible by common technology improves efficiency and consistency of operations (Chapters 4, 6 and 7).
- **Improving the Student Administrative Experience:** new processes and data analytics simplify students’ access to and use of information and assure a consistent student experience regardless of location or program (Chapters 3 and 6).
- **Transforming the Core Learning Model:** technologically supported learning experiences, educational resources, learning analytics, and assessments personalize the student learning experience in scalable ways (Chapters 3, 5, 6, and 8).
- **Diversifying the Revenue Portfolio:** data analytics guide adaptations in recruitment and marketing and offer possible new sources of revenue (Chapters 3 and 9).
- **Maintaining the University Infrastructure:** new technologies reduce the need for home-grown solutions and allow more collaborative and coordinated approaches (Chapters 3 and 6).

## Strengths and Challenges

Those strategic initiatives build on what has already been a period of rapid change for the university. This period produced major revisions of the curriculum (see Chapters 5 and 8), introduction of new academic technologies (Chapters 3 and 9), administrative streamlining (Chapters 4 and 6), and new kinds of outreach (Chapters 6 and 7)—all in service of an affordable and high-quality learning experience that supports career readiness.

Steep enrollment growth, which held fairly strong through 2012, enabled much of the change. But in 2012 a confluence of external factors, including shifts in competition and a reduced military, led to a substantial decline in enrollments. The institution had to make painful decisions affecting programs and personnel, including cuts of \$60 million and 300 staff and faculty positions. These realities provided much of the impetus for the move to a global operational model and a reduced overseas “footprint.”



Careful management succeeded in turning the situation around. By AY 2014-2015 enrollments had stabilized and, in 2015, they began to grow again. However, the experience was a wakeup call. Enrollment volatility is a continuing concern, reflecting an external environment that is changing rapidly. UMUC must accelerate its work to transform into the university of the future.

The transformation of UMUC's administrative structure and learning model will further advance institutional viability and service to adult students. This self-study documents UMUC's current success and plans for the future and discusses ways it will ensure that the future model aligns with MSCHE quality standards.

The goals and priorities in the new strategic plan lay out the areas in which the transformation will occur: a single global operational model, an improved student experience both administratively and academically, and fiscal and infrastructure changes to ensure UMUC viability. In this transformation, the university builds on its strengths, among them its experience with adult learners, its global outreach, and its online presence. It is well positioned to build a model that can leverage technology to enhance quality while controlling costs and that can integrate all parts of the student experience to better support learning and progress. However, the projected transformation is far-reaching and will require academic redesign and adjustments to administrative and support systems. It also will call for an unprecedented degree of collaboration and alignment across the university. What is more, it follows an extended period of major changes. UMUC recognizes the danger of unfocused or unguided change and of an over-emphasis on the pace of change at the expense of its reasons and purposes.

## Conclusions

UMUC is in compliance with Standard 1. The mission and strategic plan of the university are developed with collaborative participation. The goals, objectives, and resulting initiatives are consistent with the mission, formally approved and widely publicized to both external and internal constituencies. By providing the guiding principles for decision-making and planning, they support both administrative and academic planning, including scholarly and creative activity around the scholarship of teaching and learning, appropriate to UMUC's character.

The mission and goals play a key role in how resources are allocated, and this will be a theme in subsequent chapters. Throughout implementation of the strategic plan, UMUC continues to drive toward the triple goals of low cost, access, and student success.

In today's changing environment, the mission and plan should be consistently disseminated, cited frequently throughout the university, and advanced in more applied ways. Human Resources is already working on additional background materials that highlight the mission and values and the ways they are put into practice, such as UMUC's business model and employee training. Implementation will also include a review of official university policies and the revision, where appropriate, of policy statements. For example, as the learning model develops, it may necessitate changes in UMUC's policies on experiential credit or award of credit.

## Recommendation

A grounded and purposeful university is achieved through concentrated attention to strategic directions, detailed tracking of success metrics, and future-oriented investment. Clear and appropriate decisions and assessments must proceed from the mission and goals. Just as important, initiatives and decisions that do not relate to the mission and goals should be rejected.

Therefore, UMUC **recommends** increased internal communication of mission and goals with special emphasis on: how they drive the work of every unit; how decision-making takes into consideration the impact on students; new ways to solicit and receive feedback to encourage engagement among all constituencies; and communication of more concrete cases of where institutional decisions are determined by reference to mission and goals.

## CHAPTER THREE

# Tying Resources to Priorities

**STANDARD 2: PLANNING, RESOURCE ALLOCATION, AND INSTITUTIONAL RENEWAL**

An institution conducts ongoing planning and resource allocation based on its mission and goals, develops objectives to achieve them, and utilizes the results of its assessment activities for institutional renewal. Implementation and subsequent evaluation of the success of the strategic plan and resource allocation support the development and change necessary to improve and to maintain institutional quality.

**STANDARD 3: INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES**

The human, financial, technical, facilities, and other resources necessary to achieve an institution's mission and goals are available and accessible. In the context of the institution's mission, the effective and efficient uses of the institution's resources are analyzed as part of ongoing outcomes assessment.

# CHAPTER THREE

## Tying Resources to Priorities

UMUC's mission drives its strategic priorities, business model, and the resulting approach to its resource allocation and institutional renewal. This chapter describes the business model and resource planning systems; the way they are implemented, monitored, and evaluated; and the data and administrative systems that support continuous improvement. It also describes future challenges in these areas.

### UMUC'S BUSINESS MODEL

UMUC's mission as an open university serving adult learners, its worldwide and online presence, its educational delivery through distributed and technologically supported modalities, and its place within the University System of Maryland all inform its business model. UMUC's model includes:

- Global organization with centralized management and academic oversight.
- Revenue reliance primarily on tuition, with minimal state support.
- Faculty mix of full-time and part-time (adjunct), with full-time faculty leading a curriculum taught primarily by adjunct scholar-practitioners.
- Focus on adult part-time learners and an emphasis on career-oriented programs.
- Distributed education, centered heavily on online modalities but including onsite and hybrid delivery, especially at overseas sites.

UMUC systems, processes, and procedures for resource planning and allocation are anchored in this business model. They demand careful organization and data tracking, quality controls, and frequent recalibration of strategies to support viability, effectiveness, and efficiency.

### STRATEGIC PLANNING AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION

#### Strategic Plan

President Miyares has committed UMUC to academic integrity, transparency, and communication. In keeping with those values, the university draws its overall goals and objectives from its publicly available Strategic Plan, which is revised and updated approximately every five years. This plan, aligned with the University

System of Maryland (USM) Strategic Plan<sup>6</sup> and the Maryland State Plan for Postsecondary Education, outlines the mission of the university; articulates its commitment to open, low-cost, accessible education for adult students; identifies key strategies to achieve that commitment; and describes the core values that undergird institutional and individual behaviors.

UMUC's 2015–2018 Strategic Plan (Appendix 4) focuses on advancing the university's leadership in adult higher education as well as its fiscal viability. The plan reflects current conditions and priorities. In addition to strategies around revenue diversification and infrastructure, the emphasis is on improved student experience, a new core learning model, and streamlined global operations. In keeping with UMUC's identity as a teaching institution, research is not a major institutional commitment, but innovation in teaching and learning is.

As described in Chapter 2, the strategic-planning process is informed by input from both external and internal groups as well as extensive internal dialogue and benchmarking. The strategic plan is implemented and administered with oversight by the Executive Committee and President's Cabinet (unit and department heads from throughout the university). Departmental strategies, goals, and objectives further align with the strategic goals and initiatives, forming the basis for unit plans and roadmaps (discussed in Chapter 9) that—by identifying priorities and initiatives for the coming year(s)—inform budgeting, resource allocation, and performance evaluation.<sup>7</sup>

Worldwide financial resource allocation is tied to the mission and goals.<sup>8</sup> UMUC uses numerous methods to measure and assess the level and efficient utilization of resources, including budgeting, performance evaluation, a cabinet structure, and scientific measurements and statistical analysis by the Office of Analytics. UMUC also relies on the Chief Business Officer (CBO) to review, analyze, and optimize university operations from an operational and fiscal point of view. (See Chapter 9 for detailed discussion of institutional assessment.)

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- **UMUC's Business Model**
- **Strategic Planning and Resource Allocation**
  - Strategic Plan
  - Facilities and Technology Planning
  - Budget Cycle
  - Allocation
  - Multi-Year Projections
- **Institutional Controls and Strategies**
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## Facilities and Technology Planning

UMUC's Facilities Master Plan determines its operations and utilization of current and future space based on community input, Plan Maryland alignment, and environmental sustainability. The 2012-2022 updated Facilities Master Plan (FMP, Appendix 5) builds upon the previous 2003-2013 FMP, on UMUC's distinctive mission and strategic objectives, and on current institutional goals, changes in the context of higher education, and input from community stakeholders. Key concerns include continued leadership in sustainability, improved employee satisfaction, reduction of space needs per employee, expanded collaboration guidelines, and implementation of clear guidelines for the nature and use of instructional environments and campus and real estate space.

However, for UMUC physical space is an increasingly smaller planning concern. UMUC has no central campus location for students. Most classes are online, and onsite classes are delivered at distributed sites, largely in leased space or in space provided on military installations. (Chapter 7 describes the various types of locations.) Even overseas, where onsite classes predominate, many student services are delivered primarily online. That includes the full range of administrative functions, such as registration and advising, and academic support such as the library. Physical facilities are mostly important for housing staff, including those who provide online services. Even there, however, the FMP envisions a 20 percent remote workforce, which will reduce UMUC's footprint while providing for a wider pool of qualified job candidates and replicating the virtual experience it offers students within its own workforce.

Since UMUC's "facilities" are largely online, technology needs are broad and complex. Planning for technology support and renewal is an essential part of any major project at UMUC, and both budget development and initiative development include explicit consideration of technology needs. Technology roadmaps address technology trends and develop strategies for meeting UMUC goals through specific technologies and improvements. Iterative reviews update and extend plans for institutional technology improvement and renewal. (The most recent update is in Appendix 6.)

Since 2012, UMUC has significantly modernized its infrastructure in support of university goals, emphasizing ease of access and use. UMUC

replaced its proprietary Learning Management System (WebTycho) with a collection of best-of-breed academic technologies (Desire2Learn, Equella, Concourse Syllabus, Evaluation Kit) that will enable it to be more agile in supporting new learning models and tools. It also improved technological support for student service through use of Salesforce software, a common client-management system for student service departments including advising. It moved to more coordinated data and communication systems with Single Sign-On capability and the use of Google Apps, and it developed data analytics capabilities that allow more effective student targeting, support, and teaching. (See Chapters 6 and 9.) Like many improvements, the One Global University initiative has been made possible by the move to technologies that allow more seamless and consistent worldwide processes.

## Budget Cycle

UMUC's budget period runs from July 1 to June 30. Since UMUC is a tuition-driven institution, the initial step in the institutional planning and budgeting process is to set targets for worldwide student headcounts, which will be actualized into credits and tuition dollars. The first phase begins in the Office of Institutional Research (IR) and the Office of Analytics, which set the foundation for resources available for budget allocation by determining enrollment projections for the coming fiscal year. IR and Analytics work closely with the USM to assure that UMUC projections align with state enrollment goals.

UMUC's planning and projection model incorporates two key drivers: future term-to-term re-enrollment rates and the number of new students expected for each term. UMUC is generally conservative in its approach to enrollment targets. In fact, for the Asia and Europe divisions, which operate under contracts with the U.S. Department of Defense, UMUC assumes continued declining enrollment projections because of unpredictable deployment patterns for U.S. military overseas.

Using enrollment projections, target headcounts are converted to expected credits based on historical average course loads, and they are presented for review and formal approval by the university's Executive Committee. When approved, they form the basis for tuition and fee revenue projections developed by the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and CFO staff. Those and other revenue projections determine the

resource base available for the upcoming fiscal year and the state-approved asset base for allocation.

Other projected revenue includes a small level of state support. In the fall of each fiscal year, UMUC develops its Asking Budget request in which USM institutions outline the following fiscal year's budgetary needs based on increased mandatory costs. The USM then submits a combined budget (for all USM institutions) to the Maryland Department of Budget and Management. This becomes part of the Governor's Asking Budget, which the legislature can decrease but not increase in any part. Once approved, the USM presents each member institution with a final approved budget constituting the state funds base for allocation. These state funds (which remain static unless cut) are combined with tuition, fees, and other revenue from which UMUC plans expenses. (See Operating Budget Summary, Appendix 7.)

Other revenue sources are estimated internally and also authorized by the USM. Unlike traditional universities, UMUC has few external grants. Those targeted initiatives and high-level projects are supported by the Office of Institutional Advancement, which also conducts donor campaigns to raise revenue for discretionary funding and student scholarships.

Based on the anticipated level of resources, UMUC's Office of Budget and Financial Analysis then constructs an institutional budget with three main parts:

- UMUC resources are allocated to the various departmental units in the form of proposed expense budgets, with the previous year's budget serving as a base.
- Money is set aside in an investment account to fund strategic priorities throughout the fiscal year.
- An additional pool of non-allocated money (the "enrollment hedge") is set aside as a contingency fund in the event that projected enrollments fail to materialize.

In this way, resource needs are matched with available funds throughout the year. Unlike traditional institutions where a single enrollment target is based on a fall-entering class with one start date, UMUC's academic calendar has staggered start dates for courses within semesters, while enrollment and registration are in progress year-round. To monitor enrollments, annual targets are translated into daily

and weekly targets, and actual enrollments are captured in daily and weekly reports shared with the Executive Committee. If actual enrollments meet or exceed targets, funds from the "enrollment hedge" are transferred to augment the investment account for strategic initiatives. If enrollments fall below targets, funds from the "enrollment hedge" provide operating resources to meet departmental expense budgets.

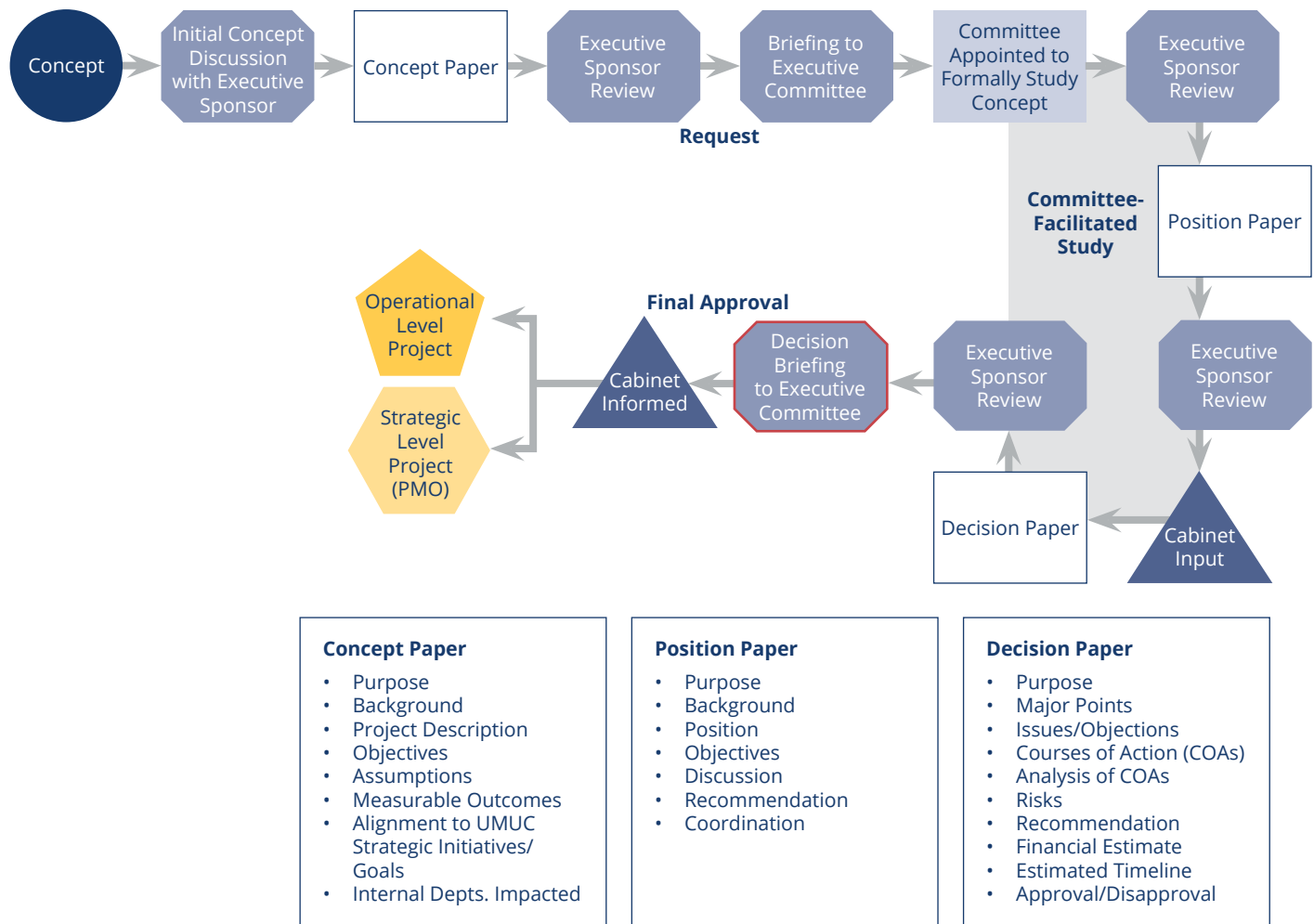
In general, core strategic priorities are funded through the base budget with the planning and goal-setting process described. All major initiatives outside that budget require an executive sponsor (a Senior Vice President, the head of a major unit). For example, when the decision was recently made to seek an additional site location in Hampton Roads, in alignment with UMUC's growth goals and targeted military students, the executive sponsor was the Senior Vice President for Global Military Operations. The sponsor works with the appropriate stakeholders to develop the initiative concept, recommendation, financial estimate, and timeline through a series of briefings and papers as shown in Figure 3.1. The Cabinet provides formal input to ensure necessary support across units, and the Executive Committee makes the final go/no-go decision. If approved, the additional investment funding is allocated to the appropriate units, and expenses are tracked against goals and objectives like other allocations.

## Allocation

Allocation of assets into departmental expense budgets is determined annually through a comprehensive, iterative process that includes the Office of Budget and Financial Analysis, department heads, and the Executive Committee:

1. Budget and Financial Analysis releases proposed "working budgets" to the various departmental units, inclusive of mandatory cost increases.
2. Department heads prepare an annual budget request based on current performance and projected needs of the sub-units, modifying their working budgets within the total budgeted amounts to more effectively align with objectives. Additional operational funding is tied to a goal or objective as defined by the UMUC strategic goal or plan.
3. Once requests are submitted, the Office of Budget and Financial Analysis determines the dollar amount available for funding the proposed initiatives.

**Figure 3.1 Initiative Approval Process**



4. Departments submit their re-allocated departmental budgets back to Budget and Financial Analysis, which reviews them for accuracy and creates a worldwide comprehensive report.
5. After review, the CFO presents the budget allocations to the Executive Committee for approval.
6. Final approved expense budgets are distributed to departments for the new fiscal year after being loaded into the financial system of record, currently PeopleSoft.

Budget tracking by the Office of Budget and Financial Analysis allows monitoring and analysis of project expenses against goals and estimates. To allow flexibility in responding to changes, Senior Vice Presidents have leeway in the use of resources to achieve the university's and their units' strategic goals. They are allowed to reallocate within their overall budget parameters, adjusting to departmental needs as long as no additional investment is needed.

At the conclusion of the annual resource allocation process, university stakeholders and customers are surveyed through informal outreach from the Office of Budget and Financial Analysis, including one-on-one meetings with department heads, in order to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the current fiscal year's resource-allocation process.

### Multi-Year Projections

Once the current-year budget is implemented and distributed, UMUC projects future enrollment to align with UMUC's financial plan. Again, that plan is predicated on UMUC's position as a tuition-driven institution. State funds account for a marginal amount—less than 10 percent—of total revenues. Since UMUC expects that this historical trend will continue during the next five-year period, its financial plan and multi-year budgeting process have been designed to meet two fiscal goals:



1. Achieve and maintain a certain level of out-of-state and graduate student enrollment, providing tuition dollars that help subsidize lower tuition for in-state undergraduates. Rather than relying on state dollars, UMUC's strategic plan for student recruitment aims to grow out-of-state and graduate student enrollments. This supports the Strategic Plan's goal of enrollment growth in ways that best contribute to revenue and keep tuition affordable for Maryland students and others.
2. Set aside funds from budgeted operations each year to invest in strategic initiatives. To maintain and increase student enrollments, UMUC must invest in administrative, academic, technological, and capital initiatives that continue to develop the infrastructure and resources needed to perpetuate UMUC's core values. The investment account allows UMUC to align its financial plan with the goal of being a "responsible steward of all assets and resources." The investment account also supports the organizational capacity goal of "investing in our people, processes, technology, and infrastructure."

As current-year revenues and expenditures actualize, the financial plan adjusts accordingly to give UMUC the flexibility to invest in itself and to continue to lead in access and quality.

## INSTITUTIONAL CONTROLS AND STRATEGIES

UMUC's fiscal health and the success of its academic enterprises depend on tight control of financial systems and processes through ongoing review and revision. UMUC's linked planning and budget processes, which allow adaptation to changing environments, have enabled the institution to remain financially sound despite a stressful economic climate.

### Institutional Controls

Once the annual budget is implemented, UMUC closely monitors revenues and expenditures. At an institutional level, daily tracking of key enrollment metrics provides a running picture of target attainment—allowing UMUC to adjust its budget, if needed, because of lower-than-expected enrollments, or to release more funds for investment if justified by higher enrollments.

On the expenditure side, continuous monitoring and quarterly resource assessment reviews of all departments assure that adequate resources

are available. Budget and Financial Analysis and the Office of the CFO act as a check-and-balance system to monitor usage of allocated resources. Individual analysts from Budget and Financial Analysis are assigned to specific departments to review and assess departmental expense trends and strategic plans. Collaboration between the departments and the analysts allows departmental resources to be employed effectively and in alignment with departmental and university goals.

On a quarterly basis, Budget and Financial Analysis completes thorough reviews and forecasts at the departmental and institutional levels to predict expenditures in relation to resources. Results are reviewed by the CFO's staff. Analysts from both offices scrutinize the departmental forecasts to identify emerging issues and devise preemptive resolutions.

This detailed system of monitoring and control helped UMUC identify and respond to the steep downturn in enrollment that began in 2012. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the immediate and projected impact on revenue forced an institutional downsizing (with cuts of \$60 million and 300 employees). Though painful, the adjustments were prioritized to minimize impact on student learning and support and to optimize outreach and marketing aimed at reversing the downturn.

Adequate institutional controls are administered worldwide in accordance with goals and objectives approved by UMUC's Executive Committee. In measuring the effectiveness of the institutional controls, the university employs both external and internal benchmarks to identify best practices. UMUC policies and procedures are available from the UMUC website ([www.umuc.edu/policies](http://www.umuc.edu/policies)). USM policies and procedures that govern the university are also online ([www.usmd.edu/regents/bylaws](http://www.usmd.edu/regents/bylaws)).

The university's finances are audited annually by an independent certified public accounting firm registered with the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board. UMUC is also subject to other financial audits including the Circular A-133 audit of federal awards; financial, operational and compliance audits conducted by the University System of Maryland (USM) Office of Internal Audits; and fiscal compliance audits conducted by the State of Maryland's Office of Legislative Audits. Audit results are reviewed and approved by the Board of Regents' Audit Committee, with any resulting recommendations or findings



addressed by the university and reported back to the USM Audit Committee.<sup>9</sup>

## Resource Strategies

UMUC's commitment to quality education—key to its mission—is evidenced by the amount of funding directed toward instruction and academic support. The educational mission is sustained through both instruction and educational resources, such as the UMUC Library, the online Effective Writing Center, and design and development of courses by the Learning Design & Solutions unit. Of UMUC's FY2016 Unrestricted State Budget Appropriation of \$356 million, \$178 million (50 percent) is allocated for instructional and academic support functions.

As noted, UMUC has supported distributed education and global delivery throughout its history, using a minimal set of owned facilities even when on-site, in-classroom teaching was UMUC's primary activity. As online classes and military drawdowns reduce UMUC's need for building space, modern telecommunications open the way for more teleworking for administration and for teaching. This allows some of the distance strategies in the Facilities Master Plan to supplement ongoing maintenance of existing facilities. On the other hand, since over 85 percent of UMUC's courses are taught online, technology represents a major financial commitment.

Costs have been contained in recent years by reducing administrative staff and faculty, limiting travel, and carefully managing new technology to avoid unproductive uses. Outsourcing is also employed to leverage and allocate resources more efficiently. Major noncore business functions, such as the operations and maintenance of the physical plant, IT servers and PeopleSoft support, Human Resources recruiting, and the handling of telephone, e-mail, and other inquiries through a call center are outsourced to business partners.

Outsourced services are managed by and accountable to an appropriate member of the UMUC administration, who is responsible for oversight of the service's quality and reliability. For example, the Office of the Chief Business Officer oversees operations of the Inn and Conference Center, for which daily management is outsourced to the Marriott Corporation through a management agreement. Aspects of faculty and staff recruitment are also outsourced, with oversight from the Office of

Human Resources and carefully defined internal and external roles.<sup>10</sup>

## Global Streamlining

One important approach to improving both administrative efficiency and student service has been the multi-phase project undertaken in 2012 to streamline and centralize many administrative functions. Previously all three divisions (Europe, Asia, and stateside) developed and handled their own student records, student accounts, Human Resources, scheduling, and other processes. Now, many of these are being simplified and centralized.

The university's global administrative structure has been simplified, not only for more efficient use of resources but also to produce consistency of practice and consistency in the student experience, regardless of location. The streamlining was accomplished largely by applying technology to processes that were formerly manual or inconsistent. Similarly, when recent enrollment declines made it necessary to reduce staff and expenses, many of the changes undertaken resulted in greater efficiency. (Some of this streamlining is discussed in Chapters 6 and 7.)

One example of improved efficiency is the implementation of transcript ordering via an online vendor (Parchment) overseen by the stateside Registrar's Office. Previously, each division had its own form and process for ordering transcripts. Now current students and alumni anywhere in the world can order a transcript anytime, have it delivered electronically in about 20 minutes, and track the transcript request from submission to sending.

Similarly, student course evaluations (conducted for each class), which had been administered on paper for many overseas courses, have been converted to electronic format using a new course-evaluation software (EvaluationKit). This shift increased efficiency, reduced cost and maintenance, and simplified reporting of evaluation data.

Greater efficiency was also achieved for online class scheduling. Separate online schedules for overseas and stateside courses sometimes caused duplication of classes, and ignored possible efficiencies from having (for example) one class of 24 students rather than two classes of 12. In Fall 2014, the Worldwide Distance Education project implemented one worldwide online schedule, made possible by

review and adjustments to curriculum, faculty assignments, and business and technological systems.

The current One Global University project is further aligning processes and procedures for more productive allocation of resources and a better student experience throughout the student life-cycle, regardless of location. UMUC continues to examine alternatives so that viable economies of scale and automation can be planned for and implemented appropriately. The quality and performance of any new solutions must, of course, meet UMUC needs and help to fulfill strategic priorities. Institutional assessment, continuing improvement, and evaluation of success are discussed in Chapter 9.

## VISION FOR THE FUTURE

### Elements of the Future State

Despite its basic institutional health, UMUC is currently limited by its primary focus on student markets in Maryland and the military, one of which is relatively small and the other shrinking. In order to invest in quality and keep tuition low, UMUC needs to grow beyond those parameters. That includes developing a model for entering the international civilian market. UMUC also needs to diversify its revenue streams in ways that are appropriate to its mission and strengths, such as the creation of HelioCampus discussed in Chapter 9.

While the basic characteristics and driving factors of the business model are not expected to change, UMUC does need ways to facilitate this growth. In 2014, it considered the recommendations of an advisory Ideation Group regarding UMUC's business model. After discussion with the university community, the USM Chancellor and UMUC President recommended that UMUC should remain a public institution and a full member of the USM while receiving greater flexibility from the State around regulations on procurement, personnel, protection of proprietary and competitive information, and creation of a managing board (Appendix 8). The recommendation was endorsed by the Board of Regents in February 2015, and UMUC can now propose adjustments in policies in those areas. That flexibility will support UMUC in fulfilling its new strategic plan. Currently, the focus is on academic governance and human resources policies (both discussed in Chapter 4).

The updated strategic plan presents an ambitious agenda for transforming UMUC's learning

model, adopting a single global operating model, and improving the student administrative experience. It also calls for UMUC to diversify its revenue portfolio and maintain the university infrastructure. As this plan is implemented, UMUC is organizing around these new goals and developing initiatives to achieve the desired outcomes. Key to this process will be the allocation of appropriate resources and the measurement of progress along the way.

### Strengths and Challenges

UMUC has documented, organized, and sustained processes for planning, resource allocation, and institutional renewal. These processes proceed from and measure achievement of the institutional mission and goals. As the university moves to a new model, many of the basic strategies and processes for budget development and resource allocation will continue. Concerns revolve around the new breadth and complexity of the initiatives needed to reach strategic goals.

The simultaneous redesign of both undergraduate and graduate curricula—along with the instructional and administrative services to support that redesign, the faculty training to implement it, and the technology to automate and scale the solution—requires advance deployment of human resources sufficient to carry out the task instead of a reactive approach. It will also require unprecedented collaboration between and among departments of the university and a constant stream of assessment data to confirm that outcomes are being met.

Working with the Project Management Office (PMO), the Academic Affairs unit is developing a three-year roadmap for achieving undergraduate and graduate programs that focus on learning mastery and are informed by leading employers and industry experts. This effort goes beyond curriculum and instructional reform. UMUC is developing a comprehensive “wrap-around” package to provide a personalized learning experience at scale for its students. The new model will assess students' skills at the outset, provide them with an individualized degree plan, and continually support their progress through completion, using focused advising and innovative technologies such as adaptive learning. UMUC's future technology platform will enable these concepts. Data and learner analytics will drive the student pathway and provide programs with the capacity for self-assessment and continuous improvement,

focusing on the aims of increased student retention and graduation rates. Building on lessons learned from recent enterprise-wide projects—including implementation of the new learning platform and the move to worldwide distance education—the roadmap addresses institutional resource allocation at the outset of the project to insure appropriate budgeting, staffing, and accountability.

Administrative streamlining also requires careful coordination and monitoring. The One Global University initiative continues to align processes and procedures regardless of location, facilitating effective allocation of resources and a better student experience. Initial priorities include simpler processes for escalation of student issues, user-friendly transfer for students from one division to another, and correction of service gaps. Coordination across units offers additional opportunities for assessment and improvement. For example, UMUC Vice Presidents, who meet regularly, identified needed actions to “operationalize” the cultural aspiration statement developed in strategic planning, including employee training and cross-departmental communications. The initiative approval process shown in Figure 3.1 also came out of ad hoc working groups that brought together stakeholders from across the university to discuss new initiatives, build coordinated efforts, and ensure that necessary elements are in place.

## Conclusions

UMUC is in compliance on Standards 2 and 3. Its planning and resource allocation are based on its mission and goals and on the strategic initiatives that will achieve them. Budget projections begin with the previous year’s base, with adjustments based on experience (including growth or structural shifts) and projected enrollment rates (the primary source of revenue). Investment funds and an “enrollment hedge” further ensure that needed resources are available and accessible to achieve the mission and goals. Facilities and technology plans are aligned with institutional goals. Institutional controls (including independent audits) and resource strategies maintain efficiency but also support institutional quality, including the technological adaptations that are central to UMUC’s ongoing development. Institutional goals and objectives guide the development of department and unit planning; clear decision-making processes, cyclical planning, and delegated authority ensure goal alignment and institutional renewal. Careful budget monitoring

and the project and goal level assessments described in Chapter 9 ensure effective use of resources and continuous improvement.

In all the ways discussed, concerns are being addressed and adjustments made to the planning process for the strategic initiatives, including changes in timelines and better coordination across departments. Since cross-functional coordination and appropriate resource allocation are more important than ever, they will need to be regularly revisited.

Increased internal communication of mission and goals and how they drive the work of every unit (recommended in Chapter 2) will support that coordination. To stay true to mission and goals for both the new learning model and administrative streamlining, it is important to have both budget efficiencies and clear measures of student success. It is also important to have adequate measures for improving the student experience. While the overall budget process may stay essentially the same, the determination of those measures will need to inform resource allocation, monitoring, and assessment (see Chapter 9).

## CHAPTER FOUR

# Governance and Administration

#### **STANDARD 4: LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE**

The institution's system of governance clearly defines the roles of institutional constituencies in policy development and decision-making. The governance structure includes an active governing body with sufficient autonomy to assure institutional integrity and to fulfill its responsibilities of policy and resource development, consistent with the mission of the institution.

#### **STANDARD 5: ADMINISTRATION**

The institution's administrative structure and services facilitate learning and research/scholarship, foster quality improvement, and support the institution's organization and governance.

#### **STANDARD 6: INTEGRITY**

In the conduct of its programs and activities involving the public and the constituencies it serves, the institution demonstrates adherence to ethical standards and its own stated policies, providing support for academic and intellectual freedom.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## Governance and Administration

UMUC's approach to leadership, administration, integrity, and governance derives from its identity as a public institution and its specific mission, business model, and conditions. Chapter 4 describes this approach and how UMUC maintains high levels of integrity and quality while moving toward its new model.

### UMUC AND THE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF MARYLAND

UMUC exists as a constituent institution of the University System of Maryland (USM)<sup>11</sup> under the statutory scheme in the Maryland Code (Title 12 of the Education Article) that defines the governance structure for the USM and its constituent institutions. This state law delineates the powers and duties of the USM Board of Regents (BOR), the USM Chancellor, and each constituent institution's President.

The 17-member BOR is appointed by the Governor and includes a student Regent from a USM institution. Its bylaws and policies,<sup>12</sup> which apply to all USM institutions, are approved by the BOR after an opportunity for input and discussion by the USM institutions and affinity groups.

UMUC's identity as "Maryland's open university" is further defined in Maryland statute (Education Article 13.101), which charges UMUC with providing open access to affordable higher education for nontraditional students worldwide and calls for it to lead in the arena of distributed education.

UMUC's President is the CEO of the university, responsible and accountable to the BOR for the operation of the institution. In accordance with the USM's Shared Governance policy (Policy I-6.00) and UMUC Policy 020.20, regular input is received from three internal stakeholder groups: the Student Advisory Council, Faculty Advisory Council (now the Academic Advisory Board), and Global Staff Advisory Council. Through these channels of shared governance, the President can solicit a wealth of feedback, suggestions, and/or recommendations and create a collaborative work environment for all. Representatives on the advisory councils are elected from among the relevant constituencies.

In addition to shared governance representation, non-exempt employees at UMUC are represented by the American Federation of State and Municipal Employees (Non-Exempt Bargaining Unit, 2013). Adjunct faculty members elect representatives to the Adjunct Faculty Association (AFA), which meets and confers with the President on terms and conditions of employment for adjunct faculty. In recent years, the AFA has conferred with the President on matters related to changes in teaching load, stipends for canceled classes, hoteling space for adjunct faculty, salary surveys and pay increases, and rewards for performance and longevity.

Presidents of USM institutions may also create advisory boards, including a Board of Visitors (BOV) that reports annually to the Governor, Chair of the BOR, and others on progress in meeting institutional goals and objectives. UMUC's BOV, which consists of 13 members and one emeritus member,<sup>13</sup> meets twice each year. All members of the BOR and BOV, as well as the President and university senior staff, are subject to Maryland state ethical requirements, including annual financial disclosures to the State Ethics Commission (USM Policy I-7.00 and Maryland Code, General Provisions 5-103, 5-601). UMUC's Board of Visitors played a key role in the leadership transition in 2012, advising on the selection and unanimously supporting the appointment of President Miyares. The chair of the Board of Visitors participated in the MSCHE reaffirmation visit, and BOV members were part of the 2014 ideation group advising UMUC on possible changes in the business model.

### LEADERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION

The BOR appointed President Miyares to lead UMUC on October 1, 2012. Since joining UMUC in 2001 he had served in several leadership roles, most recently as Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness before becoming acting president on February 22, 2012.

Previously, President Miyares was Associate Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration at the USM, where he had also served as Assistant Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. He was the lead staff member for the USM on issues

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- **UMUC and the University System of Maryland**
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- **Institutional Integrity**
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related to strategic planning, accountability, student learning assessment, and institutional research. President Miyares' more than 35 years of higher education experience also includes positions with the Maryland Higher Education Commission and the University of Maryland, College Park (UMCP). He earned bachelor's and master's degrees in sociology from UMCP.

The President is supported by a senior leadership team—the Executive Committee—which meets regularly and assists with development and implementation of university policies. The Executive Committee develops the strategic direction for the university, provides direct support and advice to the President, and has input on and influence over key decisions and issues of importance to UMUC. In addition to the President, the Executive Committee includes the Provost and Senior Vice President, Academic Affairs; Senior Vice President for Strategic Enrollment Management; Senior Vice President, Communications; Senior Vice President, Global Military Operations; Senior Vice President and Chief Business Officer; and Senior Vice President for Analytics, Planning, and Technology.<sup>14</sup>

The extended leadership team consists of the President's Cabinet, an advisory body whose members share information with the President and each other on key projects and initiatives taking place across the university. The Cabinet meets regularly and provides a forum through which the President can communicate critical information. It includes the members of the Executive Committee and many of their direct reports who are leaders at the Vice Presidential level (see Figure 4.1), and it represents a variety of departments and divisions across the university. The roughly 25 members of the President's Cabinet include a wide representation of university leadership such as the Ombudsman and Vice President, Diversity Programs; Vice Provost and Dean of The Graduate School; Vice Provost and Dean of The Undergraduate School; Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer; Vice Provost, Academic Affairs; and Vice Presidents of Institutional Advancement, Marketing, and Student Advising and Retention.<sup>15</sup>

All university leaders, faculty, and staff are hired in accordance with required skills, education, and experience. Formal job descriptions and search committees are used to ensure that appropriate and consistent standards are used. This process is guided by the Office of Human Resources (see the recruitment process

workflow referenced in Chapter 3) using pay scales and hiring criteria that comply with UMUC policy and State of Maryland requirements.

Each year, the university assesses the performance of its staff to determine whether assigned goals and objectives have been met. Human Resources has responsibility for oversight and coordination of this process. Exempt staff are evaluated annually through the Performance Assessment and Development (PAD) process and form, which defines and reviews performance expectations for each employee in relation to job description and university and unit goals and objectives. The PAD process is currently being reviewed for ways to improve consistency of use and benefit for both employer and supervisor. Non-exempt employees are evaluated through a similar system called the Performance Development Plan (PDP). Its cycle runs from January 1 through December 31. Full-time faculty are evaluated with the PAD system; their performance measures include the faculty evaluation criteria discussed in Chapter 5.

At UMUC, numerous systems are in place to support a climate that fosters respect for all individuals regardless of their backgrounds. The Office of Diversity and Equity is responsible for assuring that the Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity policy is maintained and enforced; it employs a Fair Practice Officer<sup>16</sup> who investigates claims of discrimination or harassment. Procedures have also been established to investigate faculty or staff grievances about behavior that may not violate EEO or Affirmative Action, but undermines the civility expected within the UMUC community. The University Ombuds Office provides confidential and informal assistance with information and conflict resolution.<sup>17</sup> The Diversity Office holds regular training and diversity awareness sessions for staff and uses its website, the ENGAGE site, and printed materials to disseminate information about events, resources, and training programs.

## COMMUNICATION

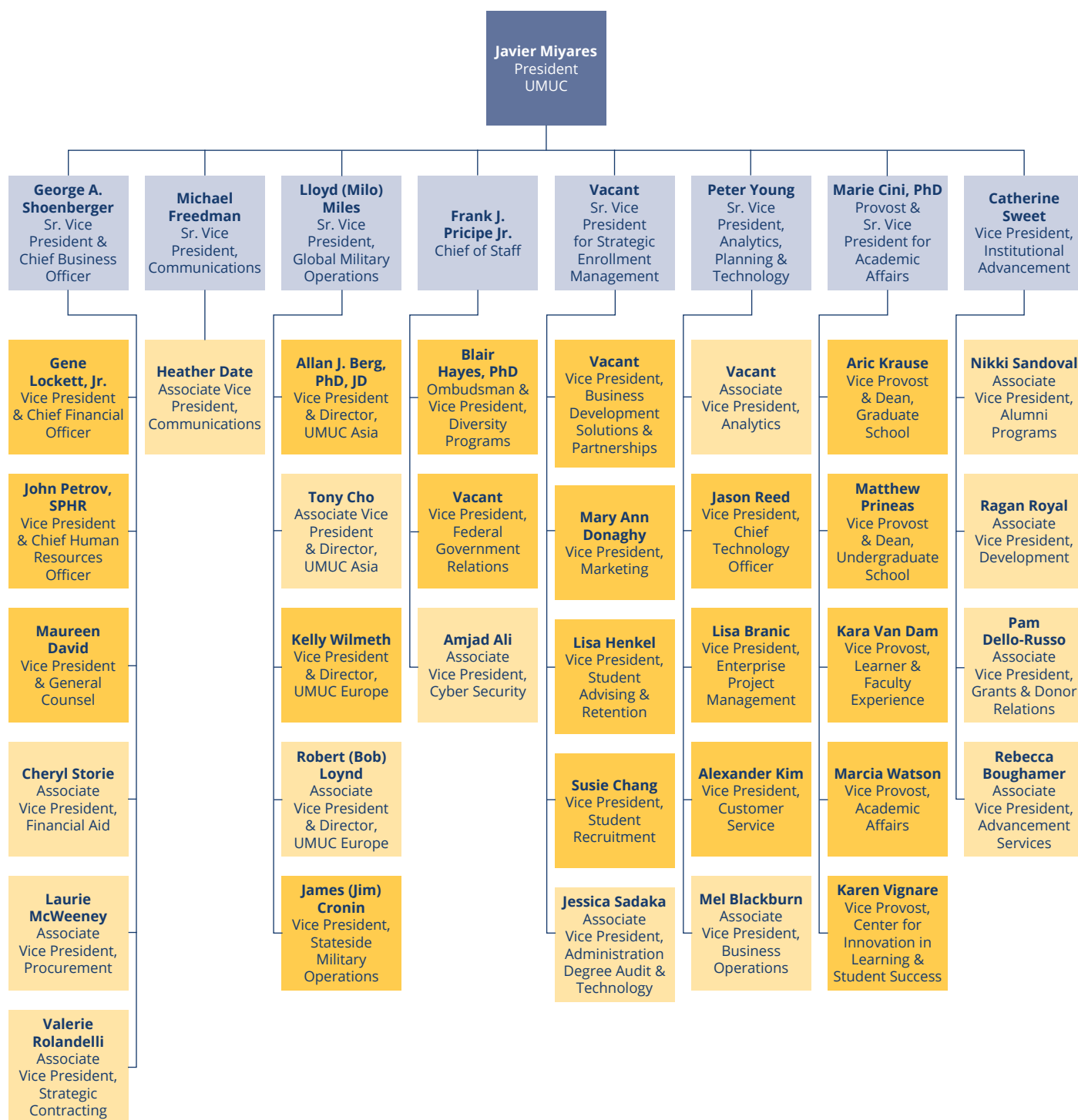
In addition to the Executive Committee and President's Cabinet, UMUC employs a variety of communication vehicles, forums, and methods. The President hosts semiannual Town Hall meetings to update the university community at large about key goals, objectives, projects, and challenges. Other communications to the University community occur through email

blasts and the bi-weekly electronic newsletter *What's Happening at UMUC*. The “Futures” web-page ([www.umuc.edu/UMUCfuture/](http://www.umuc.edu/UMUCfuture/)) is used to announce initiatives and invite comment on issues such as the strategic plan, the business model, and the academic governance framework. Shared governance committees provide

avenues for communication with the President and to and from their constituencies.

ENGAGE, the university’s online social media and community site to which all staff and faculty have access, serves as a central platform for communications with and among employees. It also offers a repository of university-wide

**Figure 4.1 UMUC Leadership Organizational Chart (December 2015)**





and department-specific information, updates, policies, procedures, and conversations. Many committees and task forces—including the workgroups for this self-study report—use ENGAGE to house documents and conduct discussions. As a university-wide social platform for information-sharing, ENGAGE has allowed access to a much broader scope of information than was previously possible. Examples of UMUC initiatives during the past two years and how they were communicated include:

- The shift to a new learning management system, known as LEO: both project progress and ongoing support communicated on the ENGAGE site.
- The E-Resources project, selecting and implementing electronic resources in place of conventional course textbooks: links, reports, and tips for resources in ENGAGE.
- The Syllabus Project, implementing a new tool for editing and publication of syllabi for all classes: managed and reported through the PMO, coordinated with the LEO project
- The Worldwide Distance Education project, moving to stateside delivery of all online courses: multiple working groups coordinated by the PMO.
- *UMUC: The Future of Learning*, a video describing elements of the future learning model: made available on UMUC's public "Futures" webpage.

The Human Resources Department serves as one source of information on the effectiveness of university communication channels. HR addresses complaints and questions on personnel matters and provides informational resources, support, and training on matters related to supervision, evaluation, hiring, promotion, and dismissal. The Undergraduate and Graduate Schools are the first contact points for student and faculty complaints and questions, and the Dean's Offices have designees responsible for ensuring that appropriate procedures and policies are followed. Formal grievances escalate to the Provost's Office and Legal Affairs. (This process is described in the compliance documentation.) All are used to identify general themes that need to be addressed by university leadership.

Those channels invite input on UMUC projects and processes. Department heads also contribute feedback and suggestions for improvement through their participation in the Presidential

Cabinet and through reports to their unit heads, the senior vice presidents on the Executive Committee.

## COLLEGIAL GOVERNANCE

In accordance with USM Policy I-6.00, UMUC in 2001 established three advisory councils—for faculty, students, and staff—to allow stakeholders to provide input and be informed about significant institutional decisions (UMUC Policy 020.20). Each advisory council works with and through a senior UMUC official to bring about change in response to issues brought to the councils through their constituencies: the Provost for academic and student matters, the Senior Vice President and Chief Business Officer for staff and administrative matters. The councils are encouraged to use standing or ad hoc committees in order to provide the best possible information and to facilitate decision-making.

Each advisory council has representatives elected by the appropriate stakeholders and bylaws outlining its representation, mission, and purpose. These bylaws may be modified by the councils with approval of the President. Councils meet regularly and their actions and recommendations are submitted to UMUC. In 2015, for example, the Student Advisory Council provided feedback on commencement planning, as well as on marketing to prospective students and use of alumni networks. The Staff Advisory Council sponsors workplace activities, among them Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day, and was involved in developing UMUC's telework policy. All three advisory councils reviewed and provided feedback on the draft 2015-2018 Strategic Plan. The President submits an annual report to the Chancellor describing the activities of the advisory councils during the previous year.

In April 2015, UMUC began a university-wide discussion of academic governance. The initiative began with an academic Town Hall with members of the collegiate faculty, followed by breakout sessions with the deans of The Undergraduate School and The Graduate School. The UMUC "Futures" webpage was updated with relevant information and resources, and the university community was invited to comment using the feedback form. In addition, nine facilitated small-group sessions for faculty—both collegiate and adjunct—solicited perspectives and feedback.

In September 2015, a recommendation was posted for an Academic Advisory Board (AAB) to replace the current Faculty Advisory Council. The recommendation emphasized the role of collegiate faculty in shaping the curriculum but called on the AAB to represent “far more participation from the entire UMUC faculty community” by “providing a conduit for advice from the full and total body of faculty to the provost and her/his representatives,” as well as “actively communicating with the full constituency of faculty on academic issues and perspectives” and “reviewing, suggesting, and recommending on topics related to the academic experience at UMUC” (Krause and Prineas, 2015). The recommendation was posted along with background material, including a historical summary of academic governance at UMUC and a draft white paper describing UMUC’s long history of using scholar-practitioner adjunct faculty, its current position, and its future challenges. The recommendation was modified during the comment period to guarantee at least one seat on the AAB for an adjunct and one for an overseas faculty member.

The new structure was submitted to and approved by the USM Board of Regents in Fall 2015 and enacted into policy (UMUC Policy 183.00). Elections were held in November 2015 to select the nine inaugural AAB members. The first meeting of the new AAB took place in December 2015.

## INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY

UMUC’s established policies and procedures are available through ENGAGE and UMUC’s online policy manual at the public website [www.umuc.edu/policies](http://www.umuc.edu/policies). They include a procedure for the development and revision of university policies in compliance with USM requirements, as well as applicable state and federal law and regulations (UMUC Policy 000.01). This procedure ensures that faculty, staff, and students can provide input on policies that affect them. Policies are discussed in new employee orientations and in online student and faculty handbooks. Related websites provide links to relevant policies.

University policies offer guidance in responding to complaints and questions from students, staff, and faculty. Faculty and student grievance procedures are described in policies 045.00 and 130.70. University departments are informed of policies within their scope of responsibility and have the opportunity to provide input when

policies are reviewed. Each department also has its own procedural guidelines and ENGAGE site where information and communication can be provided within the unit.

The Office of the Provost is responsible for keeping MSCHE and the State of Maryland updated on substantive changes in mission, programs, and operations, annually or as needed. Academic catalogs are revised annually to reflect current policy, academic requirements, and guidance to students. The catalogs are available through the UMUC website at <http://www.umuc.edu/students/catalogs/> and in print form at all UMUC student locations; they are maintained through the UMUC Marketing Department. Catalogs dating to 2002-2003 are posted on the website. Older catalogs have been digitized and are available in the UMUC Digital Repository.

Honesty and truthful communication are key to institutional integrity and provide important safeguards against complaints and grievances. They are especially important in public relations and marketing materials. The Global Media Center on UMUC’s public website (<http://www.umuc.edu/globalmedia/>) provides information about its achievements and access to the annual Fact Books, which include data on headcount, student characteristics, degrees awarded, tuition and fees, personnel, and distance education. The website also offers access to the *Institutional Plan for the Assessment of Student Learning* (discussed in Chapter 8). The Student Handbook online (Appendix 9) provides links to important information and policies.

The Legal Office plays a major role in ensuring that information displayed on websites and in publications is consistent with gainful employment standards and other regulations. Legal Affairs has developed procedures and guidelines for review of marketing and informational materials, and those guidelines are shared with the UMUC community (Marketing: Legal Review Process, 2013). Admissions and academic policies within The Undergraduate School and The Graduate School are also monitored to ensure that they are accurate and do not mislead prospective students. Advisors are trained on these policies and requirements. (For example, a Misrepresentation Assessment training for advisors raises awareness about what is or is not permissible in talking with prospective students.) In conformance with federal regulations, gainful employment information on UMUC’s certificate programs is disclosed on UMUC’s public website.<sup>18</sup> Institutional Research (IR) also

provides fuller information on how retention is defined and what student success measures UMUC employs.<sup>19</sup>

UMUC takes seriously its obligation to integrity and open disclosure. When the 2012 leadership change prompted serious questions from both internal and external constituencies, UMUC provided comprehensive information and data to the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (Kirwan and Miyares, 2012). Moreover, it voluntarily invited MSCHE to review and reaffirm its accreditation and integrity and prepared a supplemental information report for that purpose (Miyares and Watson, 2012). In response, the Senate Committee upheld the validity of UMUC's practices, and the MSCHE visiting team confirmed UMUC's alignment with its fundamental mission, goals, and priorities.

UMUC also periodically assesses its administrative structure, membership on the Executive Committee and Cabinet, and resources needed for decision-making. For example, the marketing and enrollment departments were originally in separate units. While this can create a healthy tension, the differences in their approaches were beginning to create unnecessary gaps in the pipeline from leads to applicants. Therefore, in 2012, these units were brought under the leadership of one Senior Vice President, who created a more seamless flow of leads to applicants to enrollment. In 2014, all three units handling military and veteran-related operations worldwide were similarly combined under one Senior Vice President of Global Military Operations in order to provide a standardized student support structure and encourage worldwide collaboration.

## VISION FOR THE FUTURE

### Elements of the Future State

UMUC understands the need for appropriate change in order to serve students optimally. At the same time, it is subject to multiple regulatory requirements that can limit the ability to respond to a volatile and competitive higher education environment. Further, although UMUC's flexibility has always been one of its strengths, the increasing pace of change can be disorienting and disruptive. The university recognizes that it is important to keep a solid sense of mission and goals even while restructuring and remodeling. Future planning will include the review and balancing of those multiple demands.

UMUC has always been willing to shift its structure and procedures in order to focus resources and attention on appropriate priorities. Its growth into an online university is a perfect example, as it demanded new job functions, educational environments, infrastructure, and services. The future of UMUC, including its organizational move to one global university and its new learning model, will require similar changes. To inform all constituencies, the changes will need to be explained and facilitated by the university's leadership at every level. In particular, the roles of Executive Committee and Cabinet will need to be articulated more clearly so that they can assume leadership in these areas. New curricular structure and content, learner experiences, and student support services will require retraining of faculty and staff as well as careful revision of job descriptions and criteria. Changes in multiple areas of the university will demand different functions and performance expectations as well as policy revisions. As noted in the new Strategic Plan, continued staff training in change management and leadership will be important to support the coming changes.

### Strengths and Challenges

As mentioned earlier, UMUC and the USM have agreed that UMUC should remain a public institution and a full member of the USM while receiving greater flexibility from the State of Maryland on aspects of its business model. The essential business model will remain focused on nontraditional students, global reach, and distributed education. Processes and leadership structures will continue to evolve to find new ways of getting the work done. Some structural changes have been made already. The strategic initiative for a single global operational model, for example, led to the position of Senior Vice President of Global Military Operations and the alignment of worldwide staff positions discussed in Chapter 7. Other changes will arise as unmet needs and opportunities for further streamlining are identified.

A "reimagination" of HR at UMUC is currently underway. The process, guided by a cross-functional steering committee with an 18-month timeline, is reviewing UMUC's human capital policies, processes and tools for performance management, and reward and recognition programs, with an emphasis on better alignment with organizational goals. The steering committee studied 24 "best in class" organizations for best practices that can enhance UMUC's

approaches. A 2016 updated employee engagement survey will also contribute to planning.

UMUC's shared governance model, procedures, and principles will continue to be mandated by UMUC's place in the USM, respecting the USM's fundamental principles and providing all constituencies with opportunities for participation and collaboration. The recent change in the academic governance model gives collegiate faculty a broader leadership role in the development and improvement of academic programs, and it will encourage the formation of "communities of practice" around each program to collect and incorporate faculty feedback.

## Conclusions

UMUC is in compliance on Standards 4, 5, and 6. Its place in the University System of Maryland, governance by the USM Board of Regents, input from the UMUC Board of Visitors, written USM and UMUC policies and governing documents, and its own leadership structure assure oversight and institutional integrity; input from diverse viewpoints and constituencies provides additional checks and balances. In all its activities, UMUC adheres to principles of integrity and complies with its own stated policies, ensuring fair and impartial processes for all constituencies. Further, it provides open access to catalogs, policies, and other information about the institution and its practices. UMUC's own system of governance clearly defines the roles of staff, faculty, and student constituencies and offers a climate of inquiry and engagement, including multiple channels for them to contribute to and discuss relevant policies and decisions. The administrative structure and services support the structure and governance, and the lines of authority are clearly delineated. Structures and communication systems encourage continuous improvement and align with UMUC's role as a teaching and learning institution.

The pace of change—both external and internal—is a major concern at UMUC, with broad implications for plans and roles. Consistent with an overarching recommendation deriving from this self-study, clear communication of changes, as well as careful prioritization, will be essential to ensure that students, faculty, and staff understand the university's direction and retain confidence in its unwavering commitment to its mission. This communication cannot be only one way. Given UMUC's size and range, it is critical to nurture communication and exchange of views and to find the best forums and platforms

to achieve this important goal. The current redesigns of academic governance and HR functions at UMUC are major vehicles for this communication. They should be carefully managed for alignment with strategic goals and evaluated for effectiveness in supporting and rewarding excellence.



## CHAPTER FIVE

# Academic Programs and Faculty

#### **STANDARD 10: FACULTY**

The institution's instructional, research, and service programs are devised, developed, monitored, and supported by qualified professionals.

#### **STANDARD 11: EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS**

The institution's educational offerings display academic content, rigor, and coherence that are appropriate to its higher education mission. The institution identifies student learning goals and objectives, including knowledge and skills, for its educational offerings.

#### **STANDARD 12: GENERAL EDUCATION**

The institution's curricula are designed so that students acquire and demonstrate college-level proficiency in general education and essential skills, including at least oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and reasoning, and technological competency.



# CHAPTER FIVE

## Academic Programs and Faculty

UMUC delivers top-quality education to its worldwide students through a rigorous, current, and relevant curriculum; strong academic services; and excellent academic management.

UMUC is unique in serving as a State of Maryland public institution with a globally distributed student body, staff, and faculty. It has a public service mandate to serve military service members and their families, veterans of the armed forces, and other nontraditional, career-oriented adult students. As a result, the UMUC model is inverted: instead of students, staff, and faculty coming to a shared physical location, the university goes where adult learners are located. These factors shape UMUC's approach to faculty hiring, training, and evaluation, as well as development and design of its educational offerings and programs.

### FACULTY

UMUC's model employs full-time faculty (known as collegiate faculty) in faculty leadership roles, such as Vice Deans and Program Chairs, who have responsibility for the overall intellectual coherence and integrity of the program. Other collegiate faculty teach and serve in other roles that maintain and support the academic programs, providing input into the design and content of the program and their courses.

This core group of collegiate faculty is small (about 10 percent of the total faculty). In keeping with UMUC's emphasis on workplace relevance, most teaching faculty are professionals in their field who teach part-time for UMUC. These adjunct faculty provide instruction for the great majority of courses at all levels and in all programs. This model is responsible for one of UMUC's greatest strengths: scholar-practitioner faculty who have solid academic credentials but continue to work outside the university, providing a continuous infusion of current workplace knowledge as well as maximum flexibility for adapting to changing student demand. In this way, UMUC supports students in a learning experience that is practical and relevant to today's competitive and evolving global marketplace.<sup>20</sup> Many adjuncts have considerable experience with UMUC. The average longevity for an adjunct faculty member is six years, and 17 percent of current adjunct faculty have been with UMUC more than 10 years.

Collegiate and adjunct faculty both hold academic rank and title, based on their academic qualifications and professional experience, including teaching experience at UMUC. Advancement is governed by UMUC policy on rank and promotion (Policy 181.00). The same criteria apply to collegiate and adjunct faculty. However, because collegiate faculty often have more longevity with UMUC and more extensive professional and academic credentials, a higher proportion of collegiates hold the rank of full professor, as Table 5.1 illustrates.

Table 5.1 Faculty Rank (August 2015)		
Rank and Category	Adjunct	Collegiate
Instructor	425 (9.4%)	4 (1.3%)
Assistant Professor	1,582 (35.2%)	30 (10.0%)
Associate Professor	1,286 (28.5%)	79 (26.4%)
Professor	942 (20.9%)	186 (62.2%)
Pending (hired but not yet ranked)	263 (5.8%)	0 (0.0%)

Adjunct faculty are contracted per class, according to a pay scale based on rank, academic degree, and longevity with UMUC. They have a maximum annual teaching load of 18 credits. The adjunct role is solely teaching, and any other institutional service (such as committee service or course development) is compensated separately.

Collegiate faculty receive yearly or multi-year renewable 12-month contracts, with compensation similarly based on academic qualifications and professional experience but also including non-teaching responsibilities. Traveling collegiate faculty—employed overseas, moving from site to site in response to the shifting needs of the military—serve on one-year contracts, renewable up to four times based on need and the faculty member's performance. Their non-teaching responsibilities are more limited in order to ensure that they are available for overload teaching if needed.

The Program Chairs and Assistant Program Chairs who guide academic programs are collegiate faculty with both teaching and administrative responsibilities, carefully selected for their relevant knowledge and experience. They teach one to three courses in their program each year and have primary responsibility for

### IN THIS CHAPTER

- **Faculty**
  - Faculty Recruitment and Development
  - Review and Evaluation
  - Communication Channels
- **Educational Offerings and Programs**
  - Review and Oversight
  - Alumni Input and Support
  - Curriculum Structure and Reform
    - Undergraduate Curriculum
    - Graduate Curriculum
  - Curriculum Resources
- **Vision for the Future**
  - Elements of the Future State
  - Strengths and Challenges
  - Conclusions and Recommendations



the hiring, supervising, and professional development of the faculty in their programs. They also oversee curriculum development, maintenance, and assessment.

See Table 5.2 for more information on faculty roles.

UMUC faculty have expertise in their fields and understanding of adult learners. Graduate degrees are required and most have terminal degrees.<sup>21</sup> With adjunct faculty especially, UMUC seeks scholar-practitioners with current career-related experience. Many collegiate faculty also bring similar professional experience.

Faculty are hired to teach where the need exists. Most teach online; others are hired close to UMUC locations where classes are taught onsite. Overseas faculty are mostly traveling faculty who move to different onsite locations according to need.

## Faculty Recruitment and Development

UMUC faculty provide an effective, career-relevant educational experience for students through online, onsite, and hybrid learning models. Faculty support UMUC's mission through:

- Careful and effective classroom planning and organization.
- Engagement with the topic and ability to create a stimulating learning environment.
- Communication and relevant application of knowledge.

- A high level of faculty-to-student and student-to-student interaction, including rich and timely feedback on assignments and responses to questions and requests.
- Faculty presence (energetic and visible) in the online classroom, as evidenced by frequent and regular new messages and responses.
- Empathy with students and commitment to their success, as demonstrated by meaningful, personalized support (*Worldwide Faculty Handbook*, 2011, p. 7).<sup>22</sup>

UMUC has recruited and retained excellent faculty for almost 70 years, bringing education to student locations around the world. Faculty recruitment and training processes place the UMUC mission and its students front and center. Each faculty job description begins with an overview of the university and the students it serves. (Sample job descriptions are in the document inventory.) Recruitment materials include additional information about students and explain that they often have “years of workplace or military experience and are truly diverse in terms of ethnicity, gender, life experience, and professional/educational backgrounds. They are motivated by common personal and professional goals and share challenges of limited time and the demands of job and family” (UMUC, *Faculty Careers: Frequently Asked Questions*).

Faculty roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and all UMUC faculty members have access to the Faculty Handbook online. This detailed manual (currently undergoing review and revision) contains information on a wide range

**Table 5.2 Faculty Roles at UMUC**

Faculty Role	Total (February 2015)	Position Type	Length of Contract	Institutional Service
Program Chair and Assistant Program Chair	63	Full-time faculty	1-3 years	Part of job responsibilities
12-month Collegiate Faculty	46	Full-time faculty	1-3 years	Part of job responsibilities
Collegiate Librarian <sup>a</sup>	12	Full-time faculty	2-5 years	Part of job responsibilities
Traveling and Residential Faculty (Overseas) <sup>b</sup>	95	Full-time faculty	1 year	Limited, allowing overload teaching to accommodate needs of military students
9-month (NOL) Collegiate Faculty <sup>c</sup>	66	Full-time adjunct faculty	1 year	Separate stipend
Adjunct Faculty	3100 (varies)	Part-time adjunct faculty	Per course	Separate contract

<sup>a</sup> Librarians in the ranks of Librarian II, III, or IV are eligible for permanent status. See UMUC Policy 181.00.

<sup>b</sup> Traveling Collegiate Faculty are further discussed in Chapter 7.

<sup>c</sup> NOL (Not On Line) status was created in the early 2000s as a short-term solution to rapid enrollment growth. The NOL faculty role ends August 2016.

of topics, including best instructional practices; instructional support services and resources; grading standards, policies, and procedures; and how faculty performance is measured and evaluated. Supplementary versions for Europe and Asia, also available online, provide additional information about overseas procedures and military requirements.<sup>23</sup> UMUC supports and abides by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) 1940 statement on academic freedom.<sup>24</sup>

Faculty orientation, training, and development programs ensure that the UMUC mission, vision, educational technology, and classroom expectations are defined and clarified. UMUC prepares faculty to teach beyond the boundaries of time and space—rooted in best practices in adult learning theory and online pedagogy—through continuous customized education and development programs as well as specialized training in topics such as hybrid teaching and support for military learners.<sup>25</sup> In addition to a welcoming overview online,<sup>26</sup> all new faculty members must successfully complete FACDEV411 New Faculty Academic Orientation prior to teaching with UMUC. To pass this course, new faculty candidates must demonstrate mastery in the following outcomes:

- Apply the UMUC approach to effective online, learner-focused teaching.
- Promote student success through interaction, feedback, assessment, and support.
- Utilize UMUC technology to create an engaging course experience.
- Articulate your program's outcomes and school's goals.
- Create an ongoing professional development plan.

That “UMUC approach” makes student engagement a priority since individualized learning interaction is a cornerstone of the UMUC teaching model.<sup>27</sup> FACDEV411 models this approach and what UMUC expects of faculty. It is designed to be interactive and engaging, requiring new faculty candidates to demonstrate their ability to teach and reach diverse students using best practices in adult learning theory. Faculty learn how to facilitate effective and engaging discussions, use rubrics and provide constructive feedback, and connect students to support services such as the Effective Writing Center. They also learn how to effectively use UMUC's Learning Management System (LEO), and review the standards for faculty evaluation.

Faculty teaching hybrid courses may also complete FACDEV 212 Effective Teaching of Hybrid Courses. Other training and development opportunities include informational webinars, online Skillsoft training, and specialized preparation in areas such as support for military learners and effective grading.<sup>28</sup>

## Review and Evaluation

UMUC seeks to assign the most effective faculty to teach its courses. With its large faculty numbers worldwide, careful and coordinated approaches to faculty review and support are essential. Faculty performance is evaluated using several sources and methods, including (at a minimum) syllabus review, annual classroom visits (online or onsite), and student course evaluations. Program Chairs prepare a master course syllabus each term, and individual faculty members are expected to personalize that syllabus for their section of the course. Chairs or their designees review section-specific class syllabi before the start of each session to confirm alignment with policies and curricular outcomes.

The classroom visit uses a standardized form that includes open-ended comments as well as checklists on classroom readiness and organization, grading, and feedback. Additional classroom visits (online or onsite) further support and develop faculty, assess class readiness, and evaluate faculty performance. All faculty members teaching their first UMUC course are visited at least once that session for mentoring and evaluation purposes. Classroom visits then continue on a regular basis, rotating among faculty, with additional visits as needed. In Academic Year (AY) 2014-2015, The Undergraduate School (TUS) had 2,324 faculty members and conducted classroom visits for 758 of them (i.e., nearly 33 percent). The criteria for measuring faculty performance and the observations made during such visits are made available to faculty members (UMUC Policy 185.00 Class Visitation).

Students have the opportunity to assess each class they take and provide feedback on curriculum and instruction through online evaluations administered and managed by the Office of Institutional Research (IR). Results, reported in aggregate for the entire class, are given to both the faculty member and the program chair after the faculty member has submitted grades. Scores are broken out to group items related to instruction and, separately, those related to course design. On a five-point scale, the average

score for undergraduate faculty worldwide in Fall 2014 was 4.17 on overall instructor-related items and 4.10 on overall course items. For graduate faculty, the overall instructor average was 4.18 with an overall course score of 4.08.

With the goal of continuous improvement, faculty are encouraged to use evaluation feedback to review and reflect on their teaching. Where needed, the supervisor can direct a faculty member to take corrective actions, such as participation in a faculty development workshop or clarification of syllabus content. Program chairs review this information in annual performance evaluations for collegiate faculty. For both collegiate contract renewal and adjunct rehiring, it is considered along with program needs and enrollment demand.

UMUC emphasizes teaching and learning approaches that integrate the workplace perspective with best practices in curriculum, course design, and instruction. This aspect of scholarly activity was evidenced in 2010 when The Undergraduate School revised its entire curriculum, newly defining program- and course-level outcomes. Undergraduate faculty members across UMUC were involved in this scholarly activity, developing curricula based on employer-identified outcomes with teams that included faculty and instructional designers. Such scholarly and curricular contributions may be included in responsibilities for collegiate faculty members and are separately compensated for adjunct faculty. They are also considered in evaluation and promotion reviews.

## Communication Channels

Communication among faculty and between faculty and departmental leaders is challenging given UMUC's widespread locations and schedules, and it is consistently raised as a concern in faculty focus groups and surveys. UMUC continues to address this issue, exploring and testing additional mechanisms for ensuring timely and effective communication across a large and geographically distributed faculty. Both The Undergraduate School and The Graduate School hold semiannual faculty meetings, and academic departments schedule regular meetings with faculty in their programs. These gatherings are accessible online for faculty at a distance. UMUC Europe and UMUC Asia also hold regular faculty meetings. All of these events help to introduce initiatives, clarify policies and procedures, and encourage faculty engagement.

UMUC's tradition of twice-annual face-to-face faculty meetings stateside has provided valuable opportunities for the exchange of ideas as well as occasions for networking among faculty in attendance. However, given the increase in online faculty, often located out of the Maryland area, there has been a steady decline in the number and proportion of faculty attending the Saturday meetings. From Fall 2012 to Fall 2014, the percentage of total undergraduate faculty (all faculty teaching stateside onsite, hybrid, or online courses) who attended the meetings in person dropped to 16 percent from 22 percent, and many faculty joining at a distance indicated that they felt disadvantaged because the "real" conversations occurred within the room. As a result, such meetings have been moved online to provide equal opportunity to faculty outside the region. The first completely virtual general faculty meetings for both The Undergraduate School and The Graduate School took place in Spring 2015. Attendance was comparable to that of the face-to-face meetings. As the schools gain experience with the format, they will evaluate faculty attendance and satisfaction.

Much communication with and among faculty also takes place through the ENGAGE internal social media site, with the schools and departments posting information and facilitating discussion on events and resources, assessment results, curriculum changes, and other topics of interest. The Faculty Advisory Council (FAC), now the Academic Advisory Board or AAB, as well as Faculty Development and other UMUC units, also have ENGAGE sites to disseminate information and host discussions. Email is used to announce elections of faculty representatives and upcoming faculty meetings, and faculty receive UMUC newsletters and announcements.

UMUC continues to seek new methods and vehicles for communication that can engage faculty without burdening the large majority who have full-time responsibilities elsewhere. In planning for revision of the governance structure (see Chapter 4), focus groups were held in Summer 2015 with all categories of faculty. More than 330 faculty members—collegiate and adjunct, stateside and overseas, and members of the Faculty Advisory Council (FAC)—were invited, and 74 participated in nine sessions conducted by an external moderator. Notes were compiled and participants were encouraged to follow up with written comments after the sessions ended. While the focus groups were held primarily to elicit ideas on how to improve academic governance, the discussions

produced many suggestions for operational improvements unrelated to governance that will be addressed separately. Among the suggestions were calls for better communication and for program chair leadership and management development. Both of these will be addressed in AY 2015-2016. Plans include the establishment of communities of practice for program faculty with clear processes for regular input to program improvement. A professional development plan for program chairs is also being created.

## EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS AND PROGRAMS

UMUC offers more than 70 academic programs at the certificate, associate, baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral levels (see Table 1.1 in Chapter 1) taught by scholar-practitioner faculty with deep experience in their fields. The programs integrate discipline-specific expertise with the critical skills of a general education. At the undergraduate level, degrees provide an educational foundation with cross-curricular breadth as well as focused study in an academic discipline. Curricula are designed so that students develop and demonstrate the hallmarks of the educated person: fundamental skills in reasoning, analysis, investigation, and expression; understanding of the principles of scientific and intellectual inquiry; awareness of global and historical context; and civic and ethical responsibility. At the graduate level, programs further this commitment to professional development through their interdisciplinary, integrated, and applied design, with a focus on key competencies including critical thinking, systems thinking, team building, decision-making, and ethical leadership.

Each of these programs has been reviewed and approved by the University System of Maryland and the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC), and each follows applicable standards such as those set forth by the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) and the Middle States Higher Education Commission. Where appropriate, they are also reviewed by program-specific accrediting and review bodies. Examples include review of the Master of Business Administration by the International Assembly for Collegiate Business Education (IACBE), the Master of Science in Health Informatics Administration by the Commission for Health Informatics and Information Management Education (CAHIIM), and the Bachelor of Science in Nursing for Registered

Nurses by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE).

UMUC's educational programs are supported by an array of academic resources and services, including an extensive library that serves as an integral part of the online university's presence. The UMUC Library (<http://www.umuc.edu/library/>) relies heavily on technology as its main mechanism for supporting the curriculum, providing access to resources and services for a dispersed, nontraditional student population. The library works closely with The Undergraduate School and The Graduate School, the Learning Design & Solutions unit, and other university departments to support the curriculum, supply e-resources critical to student success in courses, and provide information literacy-related instruction for online courses. Staffed by highly qualified and credentialed faculty librarians and paraprofessional support staff, the library provides access to resources and services that meet the research and educational needs of UMUC students, faculty, and staff worldwide. Library services include online chat, e-mail, and phone reference; collaborative development of instructional content; electronic reserves in UMUC online classes; and document delivery/interlibrary loan for materials not otherwise available in the library collection. Resources include e-books, journal articles, reports, cases, and other materials available electronically through a curated collection of online academic research databases as well as open access journals, e-books, and web resources that are selected and managed with input from the academic departments and faculty. UMUC's relationship with the University System of Maryland and Affiliated Institutions (USMAI) library consortium (<http://usmai.org/>) provides students, faculty, and staff with access to more than 9 million physical volumes from the 16 USMAI libraries. The consortium relationship also offers a shared technological infrastructure and collaborative training and professional support for UMUC librarians and library staff.

## Review and Oversight

Other systems of oversight and review further confirm that UMUC curricula and programs are high quality, aligned to professional standards, rigorous and industry-relevant, and grounded in the strong tradition of liberal education. Assessment of student learning outcomes, both across and within specific programs, is discussed in Chapter 8. Academic Program Dashboards (see Chapter 9) help to monitor



enrollment trends, student outcomes, and faculty performance for each school and program.

Oversight also includes regular academic program review and curriculum councils at the graduate and undergraduate levels. Five-year academic program reviews (APRs) for every program examine their health and currency of the program. State mandate requires the APR process to include an external reviewer, and APRs are reviewed by the USM Board of Regents.<sup>29</sup> Curriculum councils for each school consider and approve the APRs as well as any proposed changes in curriculum and requirements. In this way, they provide a venue for programs to consider common issues and receive feedback on proposed program changes: for example, changes in course content or sequencing, additions to the curriculum, and changes in assessment tools and strategies. APRs include recommendations and implementation plans. The following year, each plan is reviewed and appropriate follow-up is verified.

Beyond those cycles, UMUC relies on a continuous validation model to ensure that new and current programs meet student needs. As programs are designed, advisory boards and focus groups—representing employers, professional organizations, and accrediting bodies—are used to validate program learning goals, competencies, and learning demonstrations. Active programs can continue to consult with advisory boards and use reviews of program outcomes and curricula as an opportunity to engage employers again in such validation. (Sample agendas and other materials from advisory boards are in the document inventory.)

Some advisory boards serve single programs. In other cases, an advisory board serves a portfolio of programs. The Graduate School's Professional Sciences Advisory Board, for example, serves several programs: biotechnology, information technology, and regulatory affairs. Cybersecurity advisory boards also serve the full range of cybersecurity programs, both undergraduate and graduate. On the other hand, the MBA advisory board considers only the MBA. These activities are supplemented by reviews of national standards and competency frameworks undertaken by employer associations and specialized accreditation bodies.

Academic Affairs has developed another employer outreach initiative (known internally as "Employer Ecosystems"): a team of senior faculty trained in customer relationship management

reaches out to employers to validate programs, identify trends in particular industries, and determine career opportunities so as to inform future revision of the programs. Several UMUC units also regularly engage with employers. For example, Corporate Learning Solutions identifies employers interested in educational development for their employees, Marketing seeks opportunities for employer sponsorships and customized marketing and communication, and Institutional Advancement conducts outreach to influential alumni and encourages alumni networking in career fields. These employers often offer information about training and educational needs or share their competency frameworks so as to align them with academic programs.

UMUC uses this input in two ways: to develop crosswalks from employer-specific job competencies to degree and certificate programs (see Chapter 7) and to provide the schools with employer feedback about recruitment issues and evolving job competencies. In biweekly Strategic Employer Alliance Team (SEAT) meetings, chaired by the Vice President of Business Development Solutions and Partnerships, information on employer needs from all of the UMUC departments is considered.<sup>30</sup> The Academic Schools are represented at SEAT meetings by the "ecosystems" senior faculty outreach liaisons, who take the formal and informal employer input back to inform programs and offerings. UMUC is assessing how best to formalize this feedback to inform program revisions.

Sometimes, the overview and validation process leads to the elimination of programs. The 2012 decision to discontinue the undergraduate Global Business and Public Policy degree began with observations of weak enrollments, which prompted an analysis conducted by an outside research firm (Rosenthal, 2011). The study found that employer support for the degree was weak—they preferred global perspectives to be integrated throughout business programs rather than in a separate program—and that student interest was focused more on public policy than global business. As a result, the program was discontinued, global content in the Business Administration degree was reviewed and strengthened, and public policy offerings were enhanced. Eduventures, a research and advisory firm that concentrates on changes in higher education, is currently conducting a similar analysis of UMUC's entire program portfolio to help in decision-making about programs to

add, programs that need more support, and programs that may be discontinued.

## Alumni Input and Support

Alumni can serve as important sources of information about career relevance and student needs. Each month, UMUC connects graduates to valuable resources and information through program-specific e-newsletters and social media channels. Annual surveys help to ascertain overall alumni satisfaction when it comes to their academic preparation and their specific programs; survey information is shared with academic leaders. Alumni-generated information also helps the university consider the types of positions for which its programs are preparing students. Further, it can connect supportive alumni to academic programs in their professions and open the way for them to provide advice, review curriculum, become adjunct faculty, or bring real-world experience into the classroom through webinars and mentoring.

To strengthen those connections with alumni, the Alumni and Career Services unit was created to combine career-related services for past and future students and offer lifelong connections between UMUC and its graduates. The introduction of initiatives, from enhanced data management to expansion of career programming and networking support, has brought a measurable increase in alumni giving, volunteering, mentoring, and participation in career and mixer activities. In FY 2015, the university obtained valid contact information for 84 percent of the alumni community and launched a social media program, powering a 149 percent increase in engagement on UMUC's Alumni Facebook page and Alumni LinkedIn Group. It also created career and networking activities, both in-person and online.<sup>31</sup> The UMUC Alumni Career Mentor Program, launched in FY 2015 to connect alumni with students for valuable career and networking tips, drew more than 520 alumni volunteers willing to mentor. All of these connections support current and past students and strengthen UMUC's mission as a "leader in career-relevant education."

## Curriculum Structure and Reform

UMUC academic programs are divided between The Undergraduate School and The Graduate School, each headed by a Vice Provost and Dean. Vice Deans within the schools oversee academic departments made up of related programs, such as business and management,

information technology, and natural and social sciences. In both schools, UMUC courses and programs worldwide are designed through a holistic "backwards design" process, beginning with defined learning outcomes that drive curriculum, course design, and assessments. This is true of all offerings regardless of level or delivery mode. Courses and programs have the same outcomes and learning resources whether they are taught online, face-to-face, or in hybrid format, and their alignment is supported by standard course descriptions, syllabus templates, review of class syllabi, and teaching guides.

UMUC departments such as the Library and Learning Design & Solutions support and maintain these curricular resources and their integration into the course and the electronic classroom. When UMUC committed to moving from textbooks to open educational resources (OERs), for example, a cross-functional team of librarians, faculty, and instructional designers collaborated to curate the new learning resources for quality and scope. In keeping with the learning outcomes, individual faculty members are also expected to integrate relevant or updated content through their interactions with students, including discussions, lectures, assignment feedback, and/or supplemental course content.

## UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM

Curricular review and reform are central to UMUC's outcomes-based approach to program design. Updates occur continuously at the program level but also in broader initiatives. In The Undergraduate School, the 2010 curriculum redesign known as SEGUE (Supporting Educational Goals for Undergraduate Excellence) included redefinition of the learning outcomes for every program, mapping of course sequences to align with those outcomes, and redesign of courses (using teams of faculty and instructional designers) around those sequences and outcomes. SEGUE also included development of the undergraduate learning model, creation of program and course outcomes guides, and redesign of faculty training.<sup>32</sup>

Another consequence of SEGUE was revision of the undergraduate approach to general education. UMUC requires 41 credits in General Education coursework in conformance with Maryland regulations mandating a traditional "distribution" model (Code of Maryland Regulations 13B.06.01.03). To maximize use

of transfer credit and satisfy the rule requiring acceptance of general education coursework from any Maryland public institution (USM Policy III.7.20), UMUC allows in most of these categories a wide range of courses—for example, “a science lecture course with related laboratory course” and “any other science course.” Model degree plans recommend specific courses for students who do not bring them in transfer. Those were, at first, simply selected from available courses, but in 2012, TUS created courses specifically for general education, integrating a common theme of “technological transformation.” Nevertheless, many transfer students still bypass those UMUC courses.

With SEGUE, general education outcomes (known in TUS as “hallmarks”) are also embedded in every academic program, where they are now represented in program-level outcomes and mapped to major-required courses. This approach allows assessment of general education abilities not only at beginning generic levels, but also at intermediate and advanced levels and with direct relationship to the major field, as is done for other program learning outcomes. Thus students iteratively practice and improve skills and abilities such as critical thinking, writing, and information literacy. (Full discussion of the general education outcomes and their assessment is found in Chapter 8.)

Academic support services such as the library and Effective Writing Center also contribute.<sup>33</sup> For example, students not only take LIBS 150 Information Literacy and Research Methods as a required general education course, they also build information literacy skills through courses in their majors, in the context of their chosen field. As they progress and acquire more advanced skills, they can access ongoing help from library tutorials and resources. The Undergraduate School is now conducting another review of general education aimed at strengthening the sequential and integrated approach. The resulting redesign is expected in 2016-2017.

Building on the success of this approach is the 2014-2015 Straightline Path Project. A review of the required courses in UMUC’s undergraduate academic majors found that while the programs were strong, students could follow numerous curricular paths in pursuit of a single degree—choosing, for example, from six or more courses to fulfill a single requirement. Research<sup>34</sup> and UMUC’s own observations indicated that this

openness, while intended to accommodate transfer students, could confuse rather than enable students. It also made it more difficult to determine student competency at the end of the program. Additionally, the very large course catalog made it more complicated and resource-intensive to ensure excellence across the curriculum.

The Straightline Path Project determined the best path for each degree program, as identified by program chairs and other collegiate faculty with subject matter expertise. Students now have a clearer route to graduation (although still with enough electives to accommodate transfer credit) and can be more confident that they have achieved the required competencies for their degrees.<sup>35</sup> The project has also reduced the undergraduate course inventory by over a third, freeing resources to manage and improve all courses.

Transfer credit is still extremely important for UMUC’s undergraduate students, and programs and degrees are designed to allow students to optimize their use of transfer credit. Transfer credit policies are articulated in the catalog and on UMUC’s website.<sup>36</sup> Articulation agreements with every community college in Maryland and many across the nation<sup>37</sup> simplify transfer and make community college students aware of the opportunity.

## GRADUATE CURRICULUM

The Graduate School (TGS), similarly, maps courses and course assignments to program-level learning outcomes, and all programs embed foundational skills and expectations, including independent and critical thinking, technology fluency, and information literacy and research skills. In 2007–2008, TGS conducted a comprehensive review of all its graduate degree programs in order to streamline requirements and strengthen the focus on the educational and professional needs of adult learners. The redesign reduced the inventory of obsolete courses and degrees, added more discipline-specific courses to increase program relevance, and offered ways to leverage course development and maintenance by sharing courses across degree programs.

The elimination of electives and the more clearly structured degree programs resulted in a streamlined and optimized portfolio of graduate degrees. For example, in the Master of Science in Management degree, which has 12 specializations, the management core was reduced

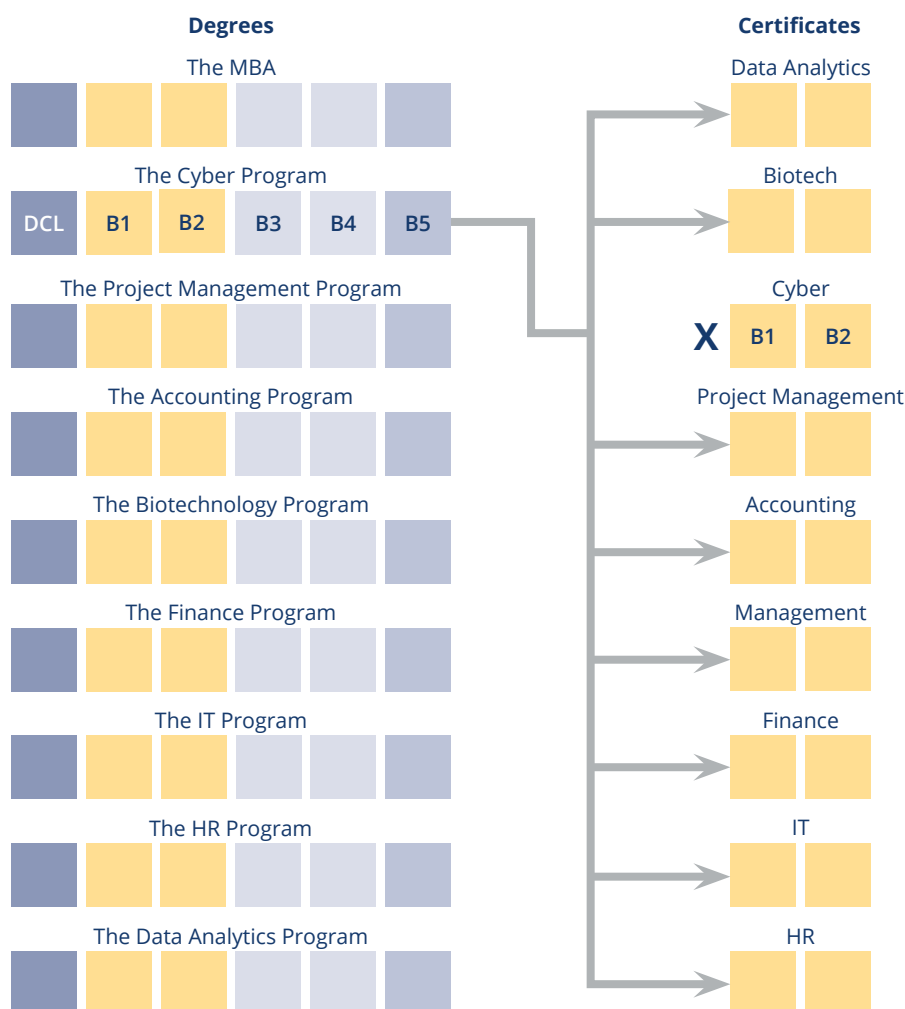
from six to five courses and the specialization portion of the degree increased from six to seven. Four separate master's degrees—Computer Science Management, Telecommunications Management, E-Commerce Management, and Software Engineering—were consolidated as specializations under the Master of Information Technology and now share five core courses in information systems and technologies. The Master of Distance Education and E-Learning was redesigned to include three specializations—Distance Education Teaching and Training (DETT), Distance Education Technology (DETC), and Distance Education Policy and Management (DEPM)—that share five core courses and a final capstone, in addition to having six specialization courses each. The Master in Environmental Management program, revised to strengthen the focus on essential skills, eliminated two concentration tracks.

As UMUC moves toward the future learning model, curriculum structure builds on these

past curriculum reforms and what they reveal about learning-outcome definition, clear sequencing and pathways, authentic assessments, and assessment tools. The Graduate School, with the goals of a clearer path to degree and more post-graduation options to update skills, has laid out the curricular path for the new model by further outlining and simplifying its portfolio of degrees and related career-relevant certificates. Under this design, which begins to take effect in Fall 2016, all TGS degree programs are based on a foundational course, “Decisive Communications and Leadership” (DCL). DCL will refresh and refine student learning in the core competencies of communications, critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, and leadership/teamwork. All certificates are then based on the second and third courses of a full degree.

Figure 5.1 shows this relationship. The blocks aligned with “Degrees” are courses for each degree, beginning with DCL (the foundational course) then followed by program courses in

**Figure 5.1 Example of TGS Degree-Certificate Design**





sequence (B1 through the capstone B5). The second and third courses—B1 and B2—make up the certificates. Thus students may begin with a certificate and decide to go on for the full degree. Alternatively, students in one degree program can expand their skill sets by mastering competencies in other programs. In this example, students in the cybersecurity program take cyber courses but might also reach out for courses and certificates in eight other programs.

The structure for undergraduate programs will differ in learning outcomes, as well as in the number of credits, sequencing, and prior learning recognition, as appropriate for its student population. However, the basic principles for targeting, constructing, and evaluating student learning are shared. While the undergraduate model is currently in process, TUS has identified parameters, including a holistic design structure that includes both broad integrative knowledge and specialized program domain knowledge, maximum opportunities for prior learning credit, design that allows for the current eight-week course format but can be ready for future formats, curriculum that incorporates real-world activities and is structured around cornerstone and capstone learning experiences, and guided pathways that ask students to make program choices early and then provide a default sequence of prescribed learning demonstrations.

### Curriculum Resources

Another curriculum-related project affecting both schools is also changing the student experience. In 2013, UMUC committed to moving its learning resources from primarily textbooks to open educational resources (OER). The new resources are identified and fitted to courses by teams from the schools, the library, and Learning Design & Solutions. The same units are responsible for monitoring and maintenance of the resources. By Fall 2015, all undergraduate courses converted to the OER model; by Fall 2016, all graduate courses will.

One reason for this decision was physical access. UMUC serves many deployed military students, and textbooks are difficult to deliver quickly to a globally distributed student body. OER principles of intellectual access were also important, building on the academic tradition of openly sharing and extending knowledge (OECD, 2007). OER amplifies the concept of the public commons and the principles of open source software into education (Udas, 2007).

Another driving factor was cost. According to the College Board (2015), a student's average annual cost for college textbooks and materials is \$1,200; many students do poorly because they do not purchase assigned materials. The OER initiative offers a no-cost model for students, embedding courses with carefully curated, high-quality open educational resources. The financial impact of the OER project has been immediate and striking: in Spring and Summer 2014, by which point 41 percent of undergraduate courses were using OERs, cumulative student savings had already exceeded \$2 million (UMUC, E-Resources: Celebrating a Successful First Year, 2014).

Even more, OERs do not simply replace textbooks. They can be far more creative and innovative, spanning text, videos, simulations, games, podcasts, labs, open source software, and other emerging media. They are often updated quickly to match developments in the field, and they are portable, going where students go.

An evaluation of the project in June 2015 (Hawthorne, 2015) looked at 92 of the courses and found a potential savings in excess of \$1.6 million for the more than 16,000 students in just those courses. It found no negative effect on grade distribution or course completion.

## VISION FOR THE FUTURE

### Elements of the Future State

Shifting demographics, the global knowledge economy, and new access to information are changing the higher education space in which UMUC operates. The concepts of “adult” learners or “nontraditional” students taking “online” classes are no longer differentiators in a world where campus-based universities offer online courses, open admissions institutions abound, and even the most prominent traditional institutions—private and public—are offering open admission and online programs to increasing numbers of adult students. UMUC does not view itself as solely an online, open admission, or working adult institution. It is an “open university,” for which openness means both student access and institutional openness to change, including new models for learning and teaching.

The new learning model draws on UMUC's innovative nature and its understanding of student needs and ways of learning. The academic

roadmap for the model has four pillars: a redesigned learner experience, more personalized learner support, more workplace-relevant curricula and programs, and new roles for faculty. The Enhancing the Learning Model (ELM) initiative in Academic Affairs builds those characteristics by articulating some basic principles:

- UMUC defines learning in terms of what the learner can do, and mastery in terms of a learner's ability to apply knowledge in real-world and career-relevant contexts.
- Academic programs are continuously updated to ensure that learners are prepared for current and future changes in their field, and learning activities are sequenced across programs to ensure learners' progressive development.
- Learners have successfully completed their programs when all learning outcomes and competencies have been mastered.
- Faculty members enhance learner progress by providing an active and motivating presence, personal outreach, and mentorship to enhance and deepen learning. The student experience is further enhanced by appropriate academic support and extracurricular engagement.
- Learning spaces are designed to enhance collaboration, communication, and affinity in order to enable learning anytime, anywhere, seamlessly across platforms.
- Innovative technology will support the future learning model in multiple ways, including through data analytics that inform continuous improvement of learner engagement, program design and quality, and learner support, as well as tools that personalize learning by adapting activities and resources based on dynamic information about the learner.

In this vision, learning goals, competencies, and descriptors guide student learning and serve as measures for assessing student performance through well-designed and highly authentic learning demonstrations. Descriptors aggregate under each competency, and competencies aggregate under learning goals. In combination, learning goals, competencies, and descriptors/evaluation criteria form a competency profile for a degree program: the inventory of knowledge and skills that students must be able to demonstrate in order to graduate. (A sample competency map is found in Appendix 11.)

Learning demonstrations are the opportunities for students to demonstrate their mastery of

various combinations of competencies (and related descriptors). The learning demonstration is presented in the context of a career or field-relevant scenario. Students engage with learning resources (including open resources, software applications, library resources, and others) as they proceed through rich immersive-learning demonstrations. They also have opportunities to seek help and connect with peers and faculty via robust on-demand collaboration tools that facilitate synchronous and asynchronous interactions. Rubrics, built and maintained in the system, closely align to learning demonstrations to provide students with guidance and to give faculty a means of evaluating student performance. Students may revise and resubmit work (with previous versions retained), receive real-time progress updates, and tap on-demand resources that enhance their ability to self-direct and manage learning. Students must demonstrate mastery in all key learning demonstrations within a course in order to advance to the next course, and they must master all key learning demonstrations in a program to earn a degree.

As it considers new and redesigned academic programs and initiatives in light of these principles, UMUC will continue to serve the academic and professional needs of students by meeting the above guidelines, by continuing to engage in active and ongoing program review, and by productively assessing learning outcomes.

## Strengths and Challenges

Developing faculty expertise for the new model is essential. The schools and their faculty are working closely with a cross-functional group from the Learner & Faculty Experience unit to think through the implications for faculty members, their roles and responsibilities, and the required expertise.

One key implication is that faculty members will become more program-focused rather than course-focused, helping students connect knowledge and applied practice across their program, not just within a specific course. Environmental management students, for example, will complete an environmental impact statement (EIS), a document often required by regulatory bodies. The EIS is a decision-making tool<sup>38</sup> that demonstrates mastery of multiple competencies. Faculty must be able to guide students across the competencies, helping them to synthesize their knowledge into applied behavior and demonstrate their ability to

create the type of work products used in their professions.

The requirement that students achieve mastery prior to moving on will obligate faculty to mentor and guide students along the path until they demonstrate this mastery. Allowing students to practice and repeat until they achieve mastery has always been an educational best practice, yet higher education has too often remained the realm of high-stakes, one-shot assessment. (For additional information on learning outcomes assessment in this model, see Chapter 8.)

Continued recruitment, training, and support of effective faculty are critical for the success of this model. Updated recruitment practices, including revision of the job description template for adjunct faculty, will ensure that new faculty understand this approach and feel it is the right fit for them. The Office of Faculty Development is reinforcing this philosophy through new faculty training (FACDEV 411), as well as training for faculty members who teach hybrid courses. A recently re-launched mentoring program matches new UMUC faculty with longtime faculty members who work with them through their second term of teaching. For existing faculty, a new training course (Orientation to the Enhanced Learning Model) was launched in June 2015. UMUC continues to support faculty through development opportunities, including workshops and weekly live webinars.

The new model also emphasizes career-relevant curricula and support for students' career aspirations. Beyond the Career Services activities discussed in Chapter 6, career relevance will be highlighted within the academic experience. Embedded career development and activities, including "soft skills" such as team building, will appear throughout the curriculum of graduate and undergraduate programs. UMUC will seek expanded opportunities for experiential education such as internships, capstone projects with employers, and internal consulting firms with real clients. In this way, the university will help students graduate with relevant experience, prepared to compete in the job market. UMUC will also partner with employers to establish direct and exclusive connections for students to career opportunities. (See Chapter 7.)

Finally, extensive technological support is essential for the success of this model, which demands growth and adjustment of current capabilities and builds on the enhancements and upgrades undertaken to date. Beyond

current learning management and technological support systems, new needs include:

- Program design to ascertain and create the essential data elements necessary to track student performance on learning demonstrations within the curriculum.
- Analytic systems and resulting reports for students, faculty, and Program Chairs in order to identify patterns of progress, as well as problems and successes in student learning.
- Content management and tracking for all the resources and assessments that are created.
- Mechanisms for student collaboration and engagement beyond the current online discussion threads.
- Data storage for the wealth of new assessment data that will be available.
- A seamless digital experience that surpasses the current electronic classroom to connect and support all student learning experiences and contacts with UMUC.

## Conclusions

UMUC is in compliance on Standards 10, 11, and 12. Its faculty are appropriately prepared and qualified, with academic credentials and professional experience appropriate to their disciplines. Public and consistent policies and procedures for hiring and evaluation assure fairness and equity. Faculty development is encouraged through regular evaluation, opportunities to contribute to the scholarship of teaching and learning, and recognition of faculty service. Collegiate faculty members guide and maintain curricula with extensive university support for pedagogical best practices, course design, technological access, and educational resources; master syllabi and electronic resources allow adjunct faculty to focus on teaching while still allowing opportunities for individual pedagogical contributions and academic freedom. Consistency and rigor of educational outcomes across all locations and delivery modes are assured by coherent program and course design, careful definition of learning outcomes, and the learning outcomes assessments described in Chapter 8. Both program-specific and general education learning outcomes are defined and supported at multiple levels and included in regular learning outcomes assessments.

Moving forward, the new learning model not only requires adjustments within the academic units, but also calls for others across the

university to work closely so that advising, career services, communication, technology, and student support are aligned. The ramifications of the new model (often referred to as the Enhanced Learning Model, or ELM, but really including a wide variety of changes and projects) outlined in this self-study will need to be comprehensively identified.

Teamwork and coordination, essential in accomplishing all these changes and ensuring student success, are increasingly visible, from academic program design and advising to retention interventions. Their importance will grow even more in relation to several critical clusters of activities:

- New approaches to advising, beginning with earlier assessments of student interests and capabilities, extending to continuous tracking of progress that includes not just re-enrollment and passing grades but also success on learning demonstrations, and resulting in more personalized and timely interventions based on data analytics and reporting.
- A more seamless and continuous student experience, including streamlined administrative systems and student access to university services, to be addressed through further simplification and technological support.
- Increased career relevance, to be enhanced for students both within the curriculum and in career support from other units in the university.
- Better ways to develop new programs that prepare students for careers that may not yet exist, and new forms of educational programs that allow students to seek discrete chunks of learning at disparate times in their lifespan (for example, modules or stackable credentials).
- Learning outcomes that correspond to new kinds of learning and thinking. The P21 Framework,<sup>39</sup> representing new types of outcomes and their interconnection with support systems, has been useful in envisioning these kinds of changes.
- Evolving faculty models to respond to new kinds of curricular design and learning experiences.

The elements of these changes are traced in succeeding chapters of this self-study, as are the ways in which they are already beginning to be addressed in design of student services, curriculum, planning, and assessment.

## Recommendation

For faculty and curricula in particular, the delineation of new faculty models and plans for helping faculty deal with the changes are paramount considerations. UMUC **recommends** detailed definition of the changes in faculty roles and appropriate training to deepen faculty understanding of the elements of the model, including team approaches, learning experiences, and curricular design.



## CHAPTER SIX

# Positioning Students for Success

#### **STANDARD 8: STUDENT ADMISSIONS AND RETENTION**

The institution seeks to admit students whose interests, goals, and abilities are congruent with its mission and seeks to retain them through the pursuit of the student's educational goals.

#### **STANDARD 9: STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES**

The institution provides student support services reasonably necessary to enable each student to achieve the institution's goals for students.

# CHAPTER SIX

## Positioning Students for Success

From admissions throughout the student lifecycle, UMUC is guided by its mission of open access, affordability, and quality. This chapter traces the way that mission is realized in student advising and support, how the focus on retention and student success is producing new systems and ways of supporting student progress, and how that support can continue into the future.

### UMUC STUDENTS

UMUC is a large, global institution. Its students—primarily working adults who take classes part-time—bring to UMUC a wide range of backgrounds and experiences. Student diversity is both ethnic and cultural: more than half of UMUC students come from ethnic minority groups, and a high proportion are the first in their families to attend college. It also encompasses wide variation in academic preparation, including many recent transfer students as well as those with significant gaps in their educational progress. A large proportion of students also have military experience. In 2015, UMUC enrolled around 52,000 active-duty military, reserves, dependents, and veterans (Facts about UMUC, 2015).

UMUC welcomes this diversity, recognizing that adult students bring learning from many sources and that their real-world experiences strengthen student learning. The university's approach to admissions, retention, and student support is designed to address the needs of many types of students within UMUC's overarching service to adult learners.

UMUC's analysis of the student lifecycle has identified critical stages and milestones for both the academic and the administrative student experience, beginning with first connection to UMUC and enrollment, continuing with academic progress, and through to completion. The characteristics of UMUC students and this analysis of the lifecycle inform student support systems, data collection, and strategies to enhance student success.

### ADMISSIONS POLICY AND PRACTICE

UMUC does not require the ACT, SAT, GMAT, GRE, or any other form of standardized testing as a condition for admission. A number of studies have found that these kinds of tests are not strong predictors of college success for undergraduate or graduate students, particularly in the case of adult students. Other factors play a more important role, among them financial resources, experience and skills, and clarity of educational goals (Moffatt, 1993; Lucas, 1986; Fincher, 1990; Hartnett and Oltman, 1984).

Underlying the mandated mission of UMUC is a philosophical justification for admissions that are open to the maximum extent possible: UMUC's primary focus is on learning. It does not assume that, owing to external measures or life history, any student is incapable of reaching learning expectations. Any students can enter a program; if they are willing to invest their time and energy and they master program learning goals, they will be able to graduate. This belief keeps the focus squarely on **learning** as the measure for program completion. It does not mean that no student will ever fail. It places the burden on UMUC to provide appropriate support, but also sets high expectations for the student.

The open admissions approach guides policy development at UMUC. Admission categories for the stateside division diverge in minor ways from those in Europe and Asia (for example, the overseas divisions are part of a consortium that allows admission status for students from other educational institutions that contract with the U.S. military), but there are no fundamental differences in admission criteria.

The Office of Admissions processes undergraduate and graduate applications submitted for all three divisions: stateside, Europe, and Asia. Applicants can find admissions information on UMUC's webpages ([www.umuc.edu/students/admissions](http://www.umuc.edu/students/admissions)) as well as policies, procedures, requirements, programs, and services. Figure 6.1 gives an overview of UMUC's admissions process.

### IN THIS CHAPTER

- **UMUC Students**
- **Admissions Policy and Practice**
  - Undergraduate Admissions
  - Graduate Admissions
- **Student Advising**
  - New Student Outreach
  - Advising Teams
  - Transfer Credit and Degree Planning
- **Student Support Services**
  - Web and Other Support Services
  - Student Accounts
  - Financial Aid
  - Student Support Technology Improvements
- **Academic Support and First Courses**
  - UMUC 411 Online Classroom
  - EDCP 100 Principles and Strategies of Successful Learning
  - Jumpstart (CAPL 101 Creating Your Learning Plan)
- **Retention**
- **Vision for the Future**
  - Elements of the Future State
  - Strengths and Challenges
  - Conclusions

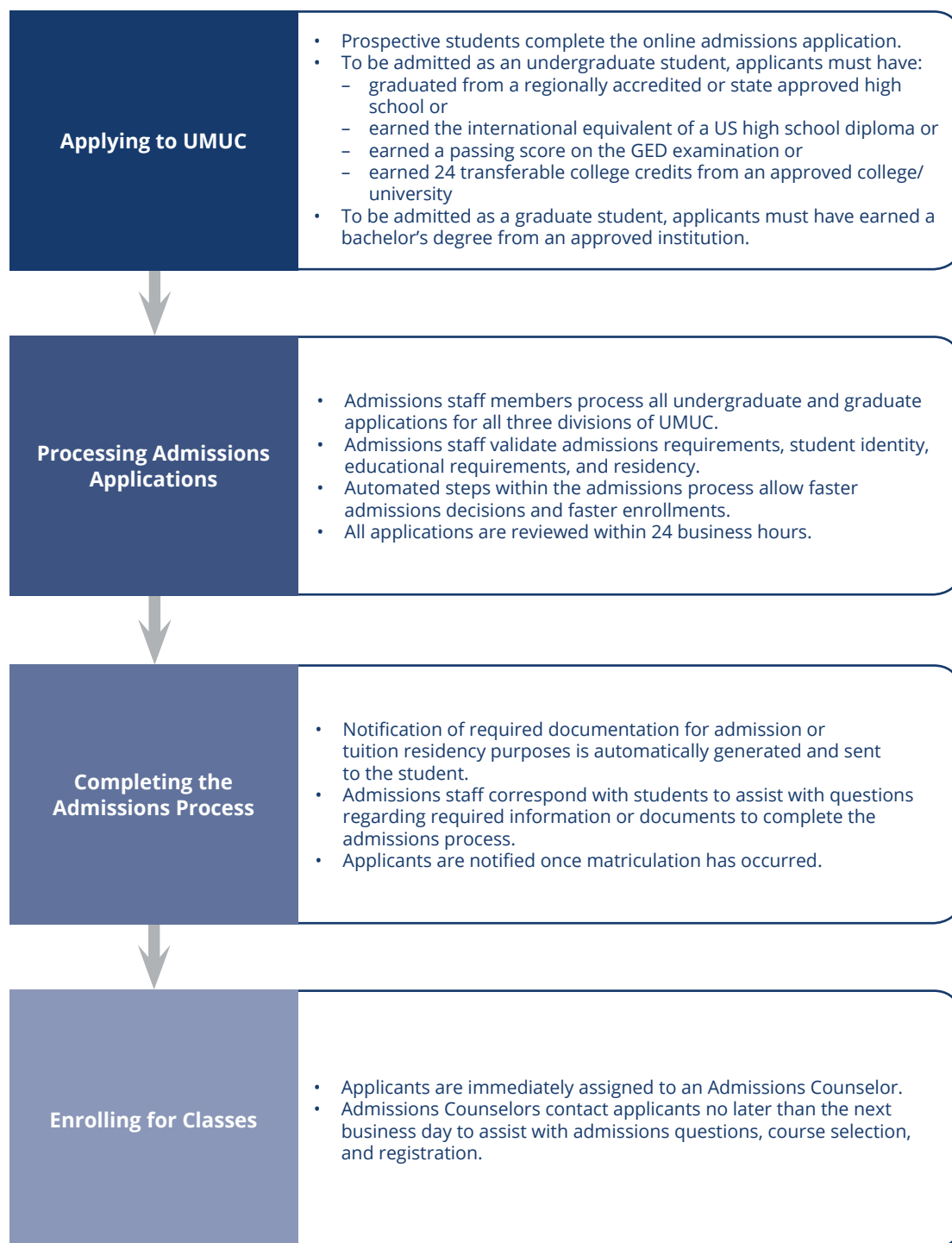


## Undergraduate Admissions

In keeping with the commitment to open access, applicants for undergraduate admission must have only a high school diploma or equivalent (such as a GED, or for home-schooled students, evidence of compliance with state and local education regulations). Three programs, designed solely for transfer because of the need for clinical or laboratory coursework, have additional

requisites: the Bachelor of Science in Nursing for Registered Nurses (BSN) program requires an associate degree and active unencumbered nurse licensure, and the BS programs in biotechnology and laboratory management require an associate degree and specific lower-level coursework. All other undergraduate programs may be completed solely at UMUC or with a combination of transfer and resident courses.

**Figure 6.1 Admissions Process at UMUC**



UMUC requires that students who previously attended other higher education institutions be in good academic standing at those institutions. Undergraduate applicants who fail to meet the criteria can be admitted on a provisional basis. The university also has special admissions provisions for gifted high school students who want to take courses (UMUC Policy 210.00 Undergraduate Admissions Policy). Students on provisional status are limited in the number of credit hours they may take until they qualify for regular status based on cumulative grade point average and number of credits at UMUC. However, few students are admitted provisionally (less than 1 percent in FY 2015). The primary focus of student services is on the adult students who make up the bulk of the student body.

## Graduate Admissions

The Graduate School at UMUC also observes an open admissions policy in keeping with the mission of UMUC. Again, standardized entry exams are not required, both because such exams are not strong predictors of success for adult students and because older graduate students are even more likely to be seeking professional advancement in a field in which they may have gained related experience. Graduate admission is thus generally open to applicants who can document completion of at least a bachelor's degree. The exceptions are select programs in which specific admissions criteria or prerequisites are required in order to meet accreditation and/or professional standards: for example, accounting and technology-related degrees.

The doctoral program also maintains specific admissions criteria. However, these involve professional experience and academic capacity as demonstrated by writing and research samples, not standardized tests. Applicants for the Doctor of Management must have a master's degree, a résumé, a personal statement, and two letters of reference. Applicants must also successfully complete the course DMGT 600. (A qualifying GMAT or GRE score can substitute.) By state regulation, the Doctor of Management in Community College Policy and Administration (DMCCPA) option is not available to Maryland residents, in order to avoid duplication with Morgan State University, a Historically Black University in Maryland.

Over the years, complications stemming from multiple sites and policies resulted in an admissions process at UMUC that was disjointed

and unnecessarily arduous for students. The goal of seamless and efficient student service led to several technology-supported improvements, most beginning with the 2012 upgrade to PeopleSoft 9.0 that offered an opportunity to scrutinize and simplify processes. The resulting changes allowed faster student service and access; for example, manual review of every application was replaced with consistent centralized processing. Other admissions process improvements resulting from institutional assessments are discussed in Chapter 9.

## STUDENT ADVISING

UMUC designs student support in Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) to align with the stages of the student lifecycle. As a student selects UMUC, applies for admission, and then begins a course of study, Student Recruitment (SR) and Student Advising and Retention (SAR) within SEM provide primary contacts to help the student move forward.

First, admissions counselors in SR are responsible for recruiting prospective students who have identified themselves as interested in UMUC, guiding them through the admissions application process and enrollment in their first courses. The SR team assists with admission status, program selection, registration, and questions about financial aid, online study and beginning a new program. After enrollment, each new student is “warmly handed off” to a student advisor in SAR for retention. This handoff process includes a final email communication from the admissions counselor followed by an introductory phone call and email from a student advisor.

## New Student Outreach

New students are introduced to the Get Started website as part of the “New Enroll Welcome” process in SR. The welcome email (sent by a retention advisor 48 hours after a student enrolls) lets them know about the site and that the advisor will follow up with a phone call to answer questions and begin condition-driven advising discussions (i.e., drawing on resources related to the student's individual situation and needs). This email also exposes new students to UMUC's social media channels (Facebook and Twitter feeds).

One week before classes start, another email reminds new students about the Get Started site and encourages them to develop the plan

for their first semester and to contact an advisor with questions. They are also advised to log in to their classroom, download the syllabus, and post an introduction—best practices of successful students. The email includes links to the library, Effective Writing Center, financial aid resources, and other services.

In this first year, analysis of the data for these more targeted early messages—students viewing and following up by connecting to the links provided—shows improvement over previous email communications.

## Advising Teams

Throughout students' time with UMUC, teams in Student Advising and Retention (SAR) assist with course selection, finding information in the MyUMUC online student portal, awareness of academic policies and programs, identification of resources and problem-solving, and ways to accelerate degree completion through transfer credit and experiential learning.

To respond to the specific needs of different student populations, advisors are organized into three areas: Graduate Student Advising (GSA), Undergraduate Student Advising (UGSA), and Military and Veteran Student Advising (MVSA) for those using military or veteran's benefits. GSA advisors are trained to be knowledgeable about all graduate program content. MVSA advisors are prepared to address the military population's distinct circumstances and

funding sources. Because of the wider variety of undergraduate programs, UGSA takes a discipline-specific approach, dividing into four groups: Communications (COMM), Computing (CITE), Business Administration and Professional Programs (BAPP), and Sciences (SCIP). All advisors go through extensive training, mentorship, and regular updates on both academic and procedural matters.

Most advising is by email and phone. A week-day on-site advising center at Largo also serves the few prospective and current students who come in person. Onsite staff assist students with recruitment and admissions, Accuplacer (placement) testing, and military and veteran's benefits. The staff also acts as a resource for basic financial aid, career services, student accounts, and registration. (This one-stop advising is similar to that at UMUC's other locations under the management of College and University Partnerships and Military Partnerships, which are discussed in Chapter 7.)

Current advising and retention initiatives in SAR's outreach calendar, which often occur in consultation with other units, including the schools and the Degree Audit Team (DAT), are listed in Table 6.1.

These efforts are mostly opt-in for students. They offer outreach to keep students connected and provide individualized advising. Student participation is monitored and advising issues are tracked.

**Table 6.1 Student Advising and Retention Initiatives**

Initiative	Modality	Description
Jumpstart	Course in LEO	Undergraduate course focused on development of a learning plan for degree completion and strategies for carrying out the plan.
One Step Away	Call E-mail Webinar	Partnering with TUS and DAT, a grant used to help students who have stopped out for more than six terms, are within 30 credits of graduating, and are not using federal financial aid or military/veteran tuition assistance benefits. A dedicated advisor identifies eligible students and assists them with mapping needed credits, registration, applying the grant, check-in for course completion, and follow-up to graduation.
Dean's Meet and Greet	Webinar On-site in Largo	Partnering with TUS and TGS deans, targets students enrolled in or completing their first term with UMUC.
Preparing for Graduation	Webinar	Targets students near completion of their degree requirements.
Academic Success Planning Forum	Webinar	Targets readmitted and new undergraduate students.
Academic Success Planning Forum for the Readmitted Student	Webinar	Targets reinstated and readmitted undergraduate students.

With implementation of the Salesforce client-relations management system, all student support areas gained access to more robust reporting of student interactions and case-tracking over the student lifecycle. SAR conducted a technology review in 2015, soliciting suggestions from advisors and managers on the current and desired functionality of Salesforce. As a result, initiatives are being implemented to strengthen the use of this tool, including “milestone-based outreach,” using automated processes to trigger outreach activities (such as email or a phone call) based on specific events in the student lifecycle.

## Transfer Credit and Degree Planning

Most UMUC students have previous college-level learning since adult students are likely to attend multiple institutions and take breaks in their educational progress. UMUC welcomes transfer credit, applying up to 90 credits from all sources (including up to 70 from a community college) toward its undergraduate degrees. This means that transcripts for thousands of courses are received annually and evaluated for credit transfer by faculty with the appropriate expertise. An automated workflow is coordinated by Transfer Credit Clearinghouse staff in the Office of the Registrar. Award of transfer credit is based on review of the course outcomes, level, and focus in comparison to UMUC courses. Equivalencies (dated to allow for changing requirements and content) are entered into the PeopleSoft database, which currently includes over 875,000 equivalencies. The database provides consistency and correct application within the student’s degree.

UMUC actively recruits community college students. Alliance agreements with more than 80 community colleges throughout the United States allow students to transfer their associate degrees seamlessly into bachelor’s degree programs through articulated curricula, with UMUC accepting up to 70 applicable community college credits in transfer.<sup>40</sup> Because UMUC already has a liberal transfer-credit policy, these agreements grant no special exceptions. However, they do promote transfer and make it simpler for students to understand how their community college credits may apply toward UMUC degrees.

Given the sheer number of community college alliances, UMUC has no presence on most campuses outside of Maryland. Because of its role as a major transfer institution in Maryland, however, it has more detailed alliances with all

16 community colleges in the state and provides onsite advising services at those sites. The advisors assigned to these sites have responsibilities similar to those at other civilian locations, but they also have special expertise as to which community college programs best align with UMUC’s bachelor’s degrees. The number and frequency of advisors at each site is determined by the size of the transfer population.

UMUC has also developed a reverse-transfer program with Maryland community colleges, actively encouraging community college students who come to UMUC without an associate degree to transfer UMUC credits back to the community college and take additional community college coursework, completing both associate and baccalaureate degrees through dual enrollment. As a rule, however, UMUC encourages students to complete their associate degrees before transferring to UMUC. This responds not only to UMUC’s strong relationships with community college partners but also to its own success data: students who transfer to UMUC from community colleges are at least twice as likely to graduate from UMUC. At the 10-year mark for the cohort entering in Fall 2005, nearly 47 percent of community college transfers had graduated, compared to fewer than 22 percent of others. To underscore the importance of the associate degree, UMUC created the Maryland Completion Scholarship in 2014, offering any Maryland community college graduate the opportunity to complete a bachelor’s degree at very low cost: \$199 per credit. This opens the way for completion of a bachelor’s degree for no more than \$12,000 and means most students can complete the full bachelor’s degree for about \$20,000.<sup>41</sup>

Because of the large size and distribution of the student body, the goal of more personalized advising demands effective technological support and self-service functions. The Academic Advisement Report (AAR), provided to students through the MyUMUC student portal, shows detailed information about courses completed (including transfer credit) and remaining requirements. The Degree Audit Quick View offers a summary of degree progress, and a Student Planner tool helps to plan and register for classes. Guides and tutorials in the portal help students to interpret their AAR and to use the student planner. These resources allow advisors to focus personal contacts on areas where student most need advice and clarification.

## STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

### Web and Other Support Services

Throughout the student's lifecycle, UMUC provides essential support services online 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Through MyUMUC, the academic and administrative portal, students have around-the-clock access to self-services including registering, reviewing academic history, building a completion plan, paying tuition, applying for financial aid, and ordering course materials. MyUMUC also coordinates with the GoArmyEd virtual gateway, which active-duty U.S. Army members use in order to receive military tuition assistance for their coursework.

Students can also access advising and career services, financial aid counseling, and other support via UMUC's websites or by phone, email, or walk-in at a headquarter campus or regional location during business hours. The UMUC Library, best understood as an online service rather than a physical location, offers student support, including an "Ask a Librarian" service featuring live chat, as well as e-mail and phone reference help, tutorials on information literacy and citation skills, and extensive library research databases and research support (see Chapter 5). The university maintains several websites, each tailored to the needs of specific populations.<sup>42</sup> Distance live support (advising, registration, financial aid, graduation services, and technical support) is also available through *Help@umuc*.

Other support services include:

- The Effective Writing Center (EWC, available at <http://www.umuc.edu/writingcenter>), offering online interaction with a writing advisor. (About 9,000 individual coaching sessions were provided in 2014-2015). The center also offers feedback on paper drafts, responds to writing-related questions, provides an online Guide to Writing and Research and resources for faculty, and presents writing workshops in UMUC classes at faculty request. (Some 500 workshops were offered in 2014-2015.)
- Tutoring for some math and computing courses.
- Peer mentors and alumni mentors in specific fields as well as individualized peer support for veterans, service members, and their families.

- Resources from the Office of Career Services (<http://www.umuc.edu/students/support/career-services/index.cfm>), including job search tools, career advisor support, and tips for resumes and interviews.
- Extracurricular organizations (<http://www.umuc.edu/students/support/studentlife/clubs.cfm>): three student chapters of professional/national organizations, 13 honor societies, 16 other academic clubs, an award-winning cybersecurity competition team, and two sports teams for students and staff.
- A Veterans Resource Center (<http://www.umuc.edu/military-veterans/about/veterans-resource-center/>) and a Student Veterans Lounge at the Academic Center in Largo.
- The Office of Accessibility Services (<http://www.umuc.edu/students/support/accessibility/>) and Ombuds Office (<http://www.umuc.edu/students/support/ombuds.cfm>) to assist with equal opportunity and other student concerns. (Further information on the handling of student issues is provided in the compliance documentation.)

### Student Accounts

For adult students, often solely responsible for their own support, timely and accurate student financial services are particularly important. The Student Accounts and Financial Aid offices, under the purview of the CBO, are both represented in the Student Center, and their representatives address student inquiries in an integrated manner. These units, too, have undergone significant changes aimed at improving and simplifying student support.

Student Accounts, the billing and collection arm of the university, handles student accounts and third-party account billing. Since a 2011 "Going Green" initiative, all student-billing notifications are distributed electronically, and students can opt to receive refunds by direct deposit. Also in 2011, Service Center and Student Accounts teams were integrated and given training, tools, and resources to provide a more seamless, accurate flow of communication.

In 2013, to improve administrative efficiency and consistency, UMUC centralized all student and third-party account services at the stateside location, structuring the unit around service to specific populations: military, non-military, and veterans. Other service improvements came with the use of Salesforce, as well as automated



electronic interfaces with GoArmyEd and the Air Force.

Financial Aid

The Financial Aid office annually awards and disburses roughly \$250 million in federal, state, and institutional funds to approximately 50,000 applicants. It does this in compliance with all laws and regulations applicable to each fund. Since the last Middle States review, many changes have been implemented to improve speed, simplification, and communication with students:

- In 2008, Adelphi assumed responsibility for Financial Aid processing for the Europe and Asia campuses. The time needed for awarding students in Europe and Asia decreased by about three months.
- In 2010, Financial Aid TV (FATV)—a series of brief videos explaining aspects of federal financial aid processes and programs<sup>43</sup>—was introduced as a student service tool. To date 177,299 videos have been viewed, freeing staff time for more individualized student service.
- With the PeopleSoft 9.0 upgrade, the scholarship application became an online form. Scholarships also added a scholarship packaging model that communicates with PeopleSoft, as well as a database on UMUC’s website to help answer student questions about the wide array of scholarships available through UMUC.

These changes along with careful attention to staffing levels and workloads, technology, and redesigned workflows have brought tremendous efficiencies and service improvements. By Fall 2014, about 70 percent of students were awarded within 48 hours of receipt of their FAFSA (Free Application for Student Financial Aid). Awarding of students now begins annually in March, three to four months earlier than

previously. At the end of August, only 315 files still needed verification, compared with thousands in 2006.

Student Support Technology Improvements

To improve and personalize the student experience and avoid disincentives that can result from difficult administrative processes, UMUC conducts regular surveys and system analyses. In addition to the student surveys discussed earlier, an external assessment of student advising in 2014 identified “pain points and opportunities to improve efficiency and impact of advising processes” (Vantage Point Consulting, 2014). These assessments identified priorities for improving advising and the student experience, including knowledge-base integration, alignment across departments, and support for student self-service. The introduction of Salesforce as the client management tool for all student support departments has been one approach to addressing issues of alignment and knowledge base. Other initiatives are in progress to leverage technology in order to enhance the student experience.

The multi-phase Campus project focuses on access, with the goal of creating “a single, seamless, and intuitive user experience for students, allowing them to become more engaged and self-sufficient in accessing their administrative, academic, and communication functions from one environment” (Campus Phase 2 Kickoff Meeting, 2014). Campus will provide a single point of entry for the learning platform (LEO), email, Google Apps, and MyUMUC/PeopleSoft functionality, and a foundation for future functionality in keeping with the “Digital First” vision. Campus initiatives now underway are listed in Table 6.2.

These projects support student progress and the learner experience by reducing the time

Table 6.2 Student Support Technology Initiatives

<b>Personalized Campus Messaging:</b> Will identify the top 10 high-value student action triggers, develop student-facing personalized messages and associated knowledge articles, deliver messages with links to the knowledge base articles through the campus environment, and create triggers for advisors to act upon based on the student’s inaction to the message.
<b>Student, Faculty, and Administrative Content Redesign:</b> Will redesign content to align with the new design and information architecture, creating an improved digital-user experience, increasing the website’s maintainability, and implementing business process and governance structure for content updates.
<b>Corporate Landing Sites:</b> Will migrate the 90+ sites and over 500+ CLS webpages into a new template that incorporates a database-driven back-end with certain variables that differ for each alliance (alliance name, logo, percent discount, contact, recommended programs, etc.). This will significantly decrease the operational upkeep.

students must spend on administrative tasks, navigation of UMUC systems, and retrieval of information.

## ACADEMIC SUPPORT AND FIRST COURSES

Because of the wide range of student abilities and academic backgrounds on entry, UMUC gives special attention to early support for learning, including general education and foundational coursework. For undergraduates, each program's recommended degree plan spells out requirements and options, including courses required within the first 18 credit hours: LIBS 150 Introduction to Research, WRTG 101 or 101S Introduction to Writing, and MATH 106 Finite Mathematics or 107 College Algebra. Placement testing (Accuplacer) is mandatory before undergraduate students can enroll in the first writing and/or math class(es). (Writing and math initiatives and support are further discussed in Chapter 7.)

For all graduate students, UCSP 615 Introduction to Graduate Studies at UMUC is currently required within the first six credits of graduate study. (The new introductory course in Decisive Communications and Leadership described in Chapter 5 will replace UCSP 615.) All doctoral students must take UCSP 815 Introduction to Library Research Skills for Doctoral Studies within their first six credits of study. Optional and supplemental skill-development courses offered to students on the graduate level include COMM 600 Academic Writing for Graduate Students, UCSP 620 Financial Accounting, UCSP 621 Economics, and UCSP 630 Introduction to Research Methods. (The UCSP courses, designed to address foundational skills and knowledge, are noncredit; the others are introductory credit courses.) The Graduate School provides embedded teaching assistants and writing coaches for its first courses.

Beyond those first courses, UMUC has tested a number of learner-readiness initiatives to help students who are not fully prepared for college-level study and to improve retention rates:

### UMUC 411 Online Classroom

UMUC 411 was developed in 2006 with the idea that early familiarity with the online UMUC environment could help students get off to a strong start. It presented a simulated online classroom—free and open to the public—as a

“test-drive” for new and prospective students. Over time, UMUC 411 developed into an extensive week-long orientation to UMUC’s learning environment and support services.

Observational data from UMUC 411 (UMUC, Achievement Gap Status Report, 2014) found that retention rates for UMUC 411 students as a whole, when compared to similar students, were slightly higher for classes entering in Fall 2006, 2007, and 2010. However, for Fall 2008 and 2009, retention rates appeared lower, and graduation rates for UMUC 411 students were lower than similar students in the same entering classes. Given the lack of evidence for lasting positive impact, UMUC 411 was discontinued after February 2014.

### EDCP 100 Principles and Strategies of Successful Learning

Another early experience designed in 2005, EDCP 100 Principles and Strategies of Successful Learning was a three-credit elective course intended to have particular efficacy for first-in-family and returning adult students. It aimed to help them develop skills needed to succeed in higher education.

EDCP 100 ran from Summer 2005 to Summer 2014. Again, data identified negative trends. For all but one entering class (Fall 2009), retention rates for EDCP100 students were lower than the comparison group, and for all entering classes, graduation rates were lower for EDCP students. EDCP 100 was discontinued in 2014 and resources were shifted to other retention initiatives.

### Jumpstart (CAPL 101 Creating Your Learning Plan)

UMUC began piloting a new course, originally known as Jumpstart, in Fall 2013. It was conceived as a result of UMUC’s participation in the Breakthrough Model Incubator program funded by the Gates Foundation through Educause. Like EDCP 100 and UMUC 411, this project considered evidence that term-to-term re-enrollment is a positive indicator of degree completion, that early success is a significant factor in adult student retention, and that students need non-academic skills to successfully complete their degrees. But Jumpstart took a new approach.

Jumpstart became a four-week online course designed to help new students create

personalized learning plans, with a focus on assessment of skills and personality variables related to success in higher education and on-line learning. It also helped students clarify life and educational goals. It differed from traditional orientation programs—and from earlier attempts—in that, instead of orienting the student to UMUC, UMUC orients to the student by clarifying students' goals and identifying pathways to reach them.

Results from the Fall 2013 pilot found that students who completed Jumpstart, as compared to control groups of students who did not take or did not complete the course, had statistically significantly higher re-enrollment rates, semester GPAs, and successful course-completion rates (where success is defined as the proportion of all classes in a semester completed with a grade of C or better). These findings seemed to support the expansion of access to the (now one-credit) course, which became CAPL 101 Creating Your Learning Plan. CAPL 101 is now available to all undergraduate students as an elective.

While initial research showed correlation with positive outcomes, it did not determine the role played by student motivation or explore which students might benefit most from the experience. In 2015-2016, a randomized, quasi-experimental test with new applicants will look more deeply at CAPL 101's relationship to successful course completion and term-to-term re-enrollment. It will examine the demographics and incoming predictive risk scores for students who elect to take CAPL 101, versus a control group, and track their reenrollment and successful course-completion rates. The results will be used to determine whether the course should continue and be extended to

more students and may possibly identify target groups that would most benefit.

## RETENTION

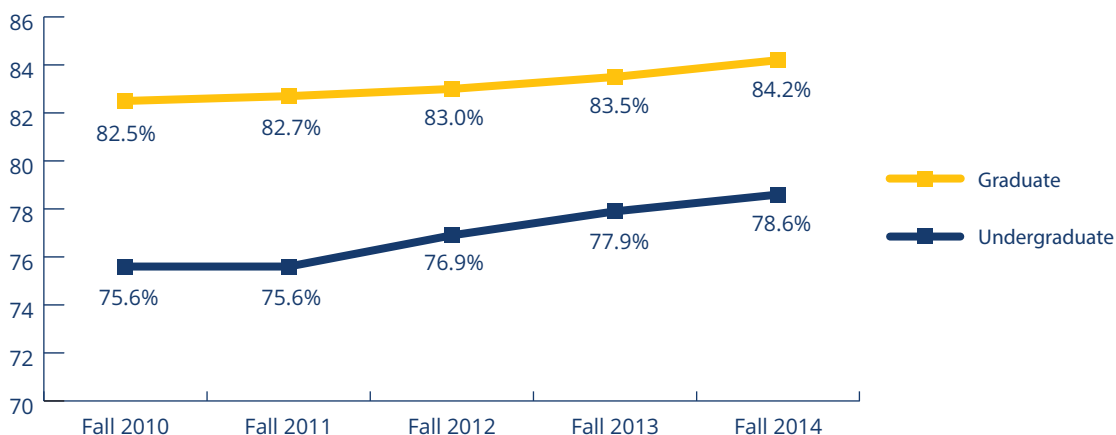
As all these efforts reflect, retention is a prime concern for the University, and retention metrics are tracked and made available to administrators through dashboards. In FY 2014, 77 percent of enrolled students successfully completed their courses, 80 percent re-enrolled from fall to spring terms, and 69 percent re-enrolled from spring to fall. In addition, 68 percent of new undergraduate students and 76 percent of new graduate students were retained after one year (Retention Committee kickoff, 2014).

Many efforts in recent years, from curriculum reconfiguration to advising initiatives, have helped improve course completion and retention. Figure 6.2 shows the upward trend in re-enrollment from fall to spring, a key metric for retention.

There is still progress to be made. UMUC has identified major problem areas for retention, including lower course-completion rates for new students and lower re-enrollment rates for military students and those in their first two years. To develop and evaluate more proactive and strategic retention efforts, accurate and timely data are increasingly critical.

In 2014, analyses of student data, including survey data and student characteristics, identified “retention drivers,” in the context of student support, in order to prioritize initiatives and determine which metrics to track on an ongoing basis (UMUC, Assessing the Key Drivers of Student Retention, 2014). The two most important drivers were found to be administrative

**Figure 6.2 Re-Enrollment Trends (Stateside Fall Students Re-Enrolling for Spring Term)**





experience and cost and financial aid. They were important in producing student support improvements discussed earlier.

Other analytics are being used to identify opportunities to proactively assist students throughout their lifecycle at UMUC (Figure 6.3). By focusing on critical milestones in student progress—points where students may become discouraged and decide to drop out—these analytics offer tools for improving UMUC’s retention efforts.

Despite advances, retention efforts are too often uncoordinated and not evaluated systematically. In 2015, the University’s Retention Committee was charged with building a more systematic and holistic retention framework. To ensure coordination, the cross-functional committee includes representatives from Administration, Academic Affairs, Strategic Enrollment Management, and Military Partnerships, and it is working with the university’s Project Management Office. Its plans include use of data analytics to improve completion rates for UMUC students by developing a retention model to identify where students are at greatest risk, determine what changes are needed to help students stay on track, assess and evaluate changes in order to continuously improve the overall experience, and involve all departments of the university in the process.

To provide additional conceptual support for this effort, the Center for Innovation in Learning and Student Success (CILSS) conducted a review of the literature on factors affecting college retention and persistence. It confirmed that the primary factors are learner characteristics, learner behavior, “fit” with the institution, and academic progress (Ford, 2013).<sup>44</sup> UMUC

participates in the Predictive Analytics Report (PAR) Framework<sup>45</sup> and review of data definitions from other member institutions helped to refine these concepts, define the stages of the academic cycle where strategies may be addressed, and suggest retention predictors at each stage, thus offering a way to connect analytics and interventions around the idea of the milestones and lifecycle (Figure 6.4).

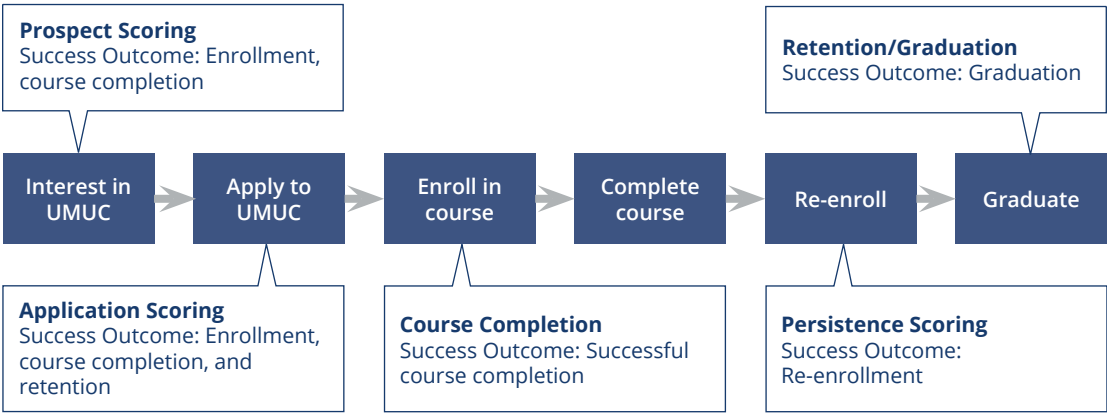
Based on this analysis, the Retention Committee will create an intake process for new interventions, establish selection criteria, benchmark student retention outcomes in key areas against select peer institutions, and document and evaluate student supports using the PAR Framework. This will allow UMUC to choose the most effective strategies so that resources are invested wisely. It will also support collaboration across the university in connecting and integrating efforts. The project roadmap will be implemented for 2016-2017.

## VISION FOR THE FUTURE

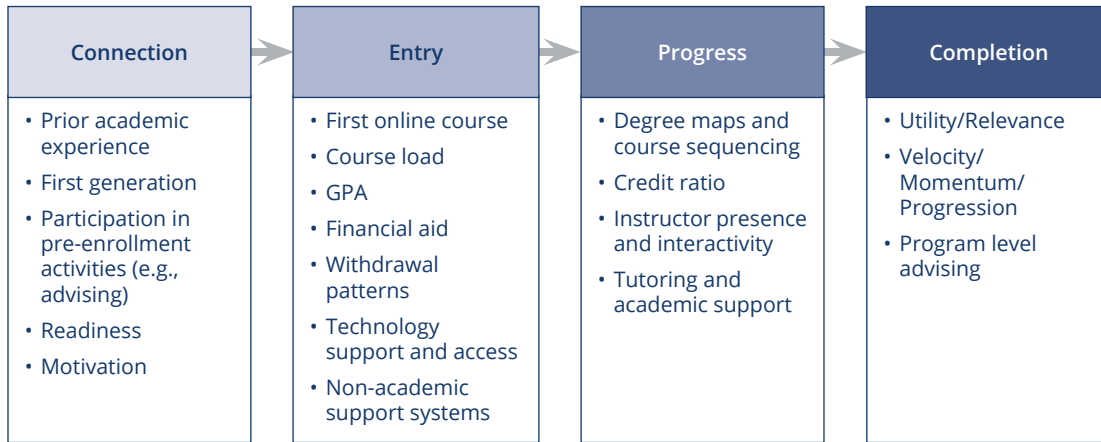
### Elements of the Future State

The goals of the university’s envisioned learning model include reduced time to degree, increased degree completion, increased student engagement, simplified processes for students, and improved retention. UMUC confirms its commitment to open admissions and early advising, admissions consultation, and career exploration for applicants and newly matriculated students. As more students seek career-advancing credentials and UMUC’s systems continue to improve, changes will need to be supported through academic advising, resources, and support services.

Figure 6.3 Analytics at Lifecycle Milestones



**Figure 6.4 Potential Retention Predictors Across Academic Cycle**



## Strengths and Challenges

UMUC has nurtured a strong culture of data and evidence throughout the university. In the future, it will leverage data even more systematically to auto-populate the eApp with student information as students interact with UMUC, and it will tailor onboarding to student needs based on assessments and predictive indicators. Advising and student support services will be able to provide more personalized service as a result of more nuanced segmentation of students at entry. Technology will support scaled, personalized analysis, course sequencing, and early interventions to maximize student retention and success. Technology also contributes to improving alignment and consistency across student support units and around the world, as seen in the improvements already evidenced.

A Spring 2015 study of Student Advising and Retention (SAR) structure and operations based on the student lifecycle suggested adding graduation and career placement to the lifecycle stages as well as modifying the SAR structure (Gilfus Education Group, 2015). SAR is considering a pilot of new approaches around these recommendations and is in discussion with Career Services.

The timing for that career connection is good: UMUC is becoming much more active in providing career services to students and alumni. Although webinars, career fairs, and other recent offerings have increased the number of students served, Career Services has not been an integral part of the student experience. In the future, Career Services will offer more personalized and continuous support and will be available to alumni throughout their professional lives. In concert with other efforts,

like the Ecosystems initiative (see Chapter 5) and more career-relevant curricular content, services and online tools will expand to help students with career planning and job searches. Prior to enrollment, prospective students will use appropriate assessments to determine their career development needs. Once registered, they will receive targeted content and activities from Career Services and be made aware of interactive options available on the Career Services webpage. Career Services support for students will follow a pyramid approach with online generic content, résumé and interview preparation, and one-on-one advising. This categorization and tailored messaging will dovetail with the support systems discussed here and in Chapter 7.

As observed earlier, the lack of a university retention plan has often led to an uncoordinated, ad hoc approach to the student academic experience. Some current systems and processes already draw on data and technology to personalize the student experience. However, UMUC is not yet certain which types of interventions or support services work best for which students, how to personalize the new student experience to promote retention, what may be the retention rate ceiling for each of the student segments, what level of interaction is required to promote retention, and how much increased engagement would improve retention. Under the new retention model, future retention efforts will be more strategic and holistic. Current retention initiatives across the university will be analyzed for alignment with strategic priorities, resources, and outcomes, and the committee will provide a structured forum for decision-making and prioritization of retention initiatives.

## Conclusions

UMUC is in compliance with Standards 8 and 9. Its admissions policies reflect its mission and are publicly available. Full information on student learning outcomes is available in catalogs and on websites, as is information on financial aid and policies. Student success is supported through a wide range of services, and recent changes resulting from assessments of success have substantially improved retention. Processes for student support and handling of complaints or grievances are regularly monitored and reviewed and ensure student privacy as well as appropriate response. Services are well aligned and structurally supported.

The vision of the new learning model—a technologically enabled, continuously supported and coherent outcomes-based learning experience—demands continued integration and alignment of all university activities and stakeholders. The Retention Committee’s work will be critical, as will be universal understanding of the model and its goals for students.

For a common focus and alignment across all student support and retention activities, UMUC must continue to be vigilant in ensuring:

- Strategic decision-making that flows from the strategic plan, research findings, and careful project design.
- Cross-departmental and cross-functional decision-making and planning, as exemplified in the Retention Committee and the Jumpstart project.
- Appropriate and integrated systems and processes, supported by technology and maximizing student self-service as well as individualized guidance.
- Emphasis on coordinated and continuous efforts that support the student throughout the learning life cycle rather than isolated interventions.
- Clear standards of evidence and evaluation for projects based on the analyses of retention predictors and interventions, with willingness to end unsuccessful projects and devote resources to other possibilities.

Current planning includes these elements. The increased internal communication recommended in Chapter 2, especially the communication of concrete cases in which institutional decisions are determined by reference to mission and goals, will support this process of coordination and evaluation.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

# Serving All Students Worldwide

### **STANDARD 13: RELATED EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

The institution's programs or activities that are characterized by particular content, focus, location, mode of delivery, or sponsorship meet appropriate standards.

# CHAPTER SEVEN

## Serving All Students Worldwide

Response to student needs is a distinguishing characteristic at UMUC. Within the context of UMUC's worldwide presence and technology-supported approach, those needs can vary widely and require institutional adaptation—but also special attention to academic and administrative consistency. In its various delivery modes, locations, and specialized programs and activities, UMUC preserves a consistent focus on access, affordability, and quality standards.

### DELIVERY MODES

UMUC's many locations and instructional sites in Maryland and across the nation, as well as its programs for the U.S. military overseas, share a common mission, curriculum, and approach to serving students. The same is true of online delivery, now UMUC's dominant mode for both instruction and support services.

In the past, each of UMUC's three divisions—Europe, Asia, and stateside—developed and offered its own online schedule of classes. This allowed quick schedule adjustments (for example, to provide an online offering for military students deployed away from their home base), but it also produced duplication, with multiple divisions running small sections of the same course. Overseas students were allowed to register for stateside online classes, but overseas classes (because of limitations in the military contract) were not open to stateside students. To improve access and efficiency, UMUC moved to worldwide distance education. Since 2014, all online classes have been offered from stateside. While overseas students have access to those online offerings, UMUC's Europe and Asia divisions offer hybrid and onsite classes to fulfill contract requirements and meet the needs of military students overseas. Stateside, all onsite classes, with the exception of an occasional accelerated offering, are in hybrid format, blending onsite and online delivery.

Program and course learning outcomes, expectations for students and faculty, academic standards, and resource materials for every course and program at UMUC are the same, regardless of delivery format. This means that students can mix online with onsite and hybrid modes or complete full programs online, regardless of location, with confidence that the

programs will be coherent and the quality high. Since online delivery is fully integrated into curriculum and offerings, discussions throughout this report—for example, the academic standards discussed in Chapter 5 and the support services in Chapter 6—include this modality. Online education is not discussed separately unless there is a particular issue being addressed.

### BRANCH CAMPUSES, ADDITIONAL LOCATIONS, AND OTHER INSTRUCTIONAL SITES

UMUC offers onsite and hybrid classes at several different kinds of locations, each with its own special conditions and requirements. The four basic types of locations are: 1) civilian locations within the home region (Maryland, D.C., and Virginia); 2) other U.S. civilian locations that primarily serve military-related students, including veterans; 3) sites on military installations in the United States governed by agreements with the Department of Defense (DoD); and 4) locations on overseas military installations covered by contractual agreements with the DoD.

Despite variations among these locations, their management and oversight align with consistent UMUC policies and procedures and conform to UMUC's mission and academic standards.

#### Civilian Locations in the Maryland Region

At leased locations in the region, as well as Maryland higher education centers and UMUC's own Academic Center at Largo, UMUC provides a variety of services to meet students' educational needs, including onsite classroom instruction. In addition to the Largo Academic Center, UMUC:

- Operates a facility with classrooms and student support services in Dorsey, Maryland.
- Operates another full-service educational center at Quantico, Virginia.
- With the College of Southern Maryland, operates the Waldorf Center for Higher Education in Waldorf, Maryland.

### IN THIS CHAPTER

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- **Branch Campuses, Additional Locations, and Other Instructional Sites**
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    - UMUC Europe Offerings
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- **Pre-College, Basic Skills, and Developmental Courses**
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- Participates in a consortium of universities led by Anne Arundel Community College to operate a higher education center in Hanover, Maryland.
- With other Maryland institutions, offers courses and degree programs at Maryland higher education centers including USM centers at Shady Grove and Hagerstown.

Under the management of College and University Partnerships, planning at these civilian locations begins with UMUC's strategic plan and goals and an understanding of the nature of the local student population, so as to define and align each site's three- to five-year goals, activities, student services, and staff training.<sup>46</sup> The site directors collaborate closely with UMUC's course-scheduling office and each other to devise a three-year schedule of classes that considers degree program requirements, prerequisites, and appropriate sequencing while avoiding overlap with other locations.<sup>47</sup>

In addition to classes, UMUC provides advisors at these facilities for "one-stop" student services. They meet with students onsite, and communicate through phone and email. They assist with course selection, registration and withdrawals; offer information on university resources; provide necessary forms, policy information, and options for action; help interpret degree requirements, policies, and Academic Advisement Reports; serve as liaisons between students and various internal departments;

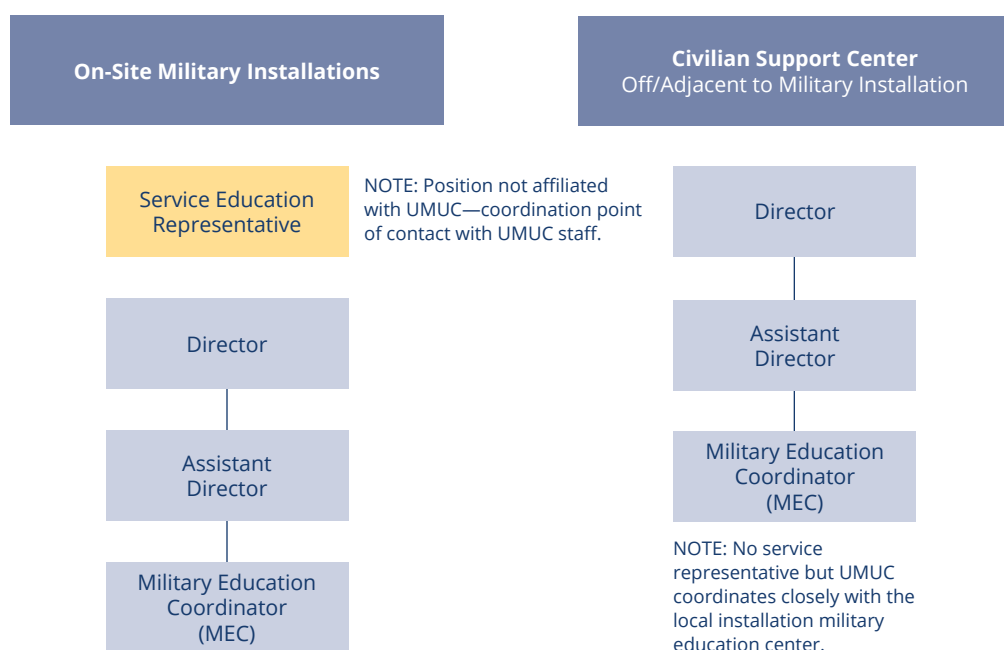
and support student academic development. Regional advisors (including the advisors described in Chapter 6 who visit Maryland community colleges) attend the regularly scheduled academic updates for all advisors as well as training and information sessions for their regions. Their performance is evaluated and coaching provided based on the same criteria as the other advising teams.

## Stateside Military-Related Locations

Military service members and their families represent about 56 percent of UMUC's worldwide student population. Since civilian locations outside the region as well as all locations on military installations serve primarily military-related students, they are managed by Military Partnerships through the Associate Vice President for Military Operations, and have similar staffing structures (Figure 7.1). At these locations, the role of advisor is filled by Military Education Coordinators (MECs).

The civilian locations include leased facilities in Fayetteville, North Carolina, and San Diego, California, that support students who do not have access to military installations to meet with UMUC advisors. In San Diego, where student services had been provided only to students enrolled in UMUC online courses, UMUC recently added onsite instruction, including computing-related programs and lower-level general education courses to assist

**Figure 7.1 Military Operations Structure (as of August 2015)**





students who may not have been accepted to the California state community college system. UMUC is also researching an appropriate civilian location in Hampton Roads, Virginia, because of that area's large community of veterans.

UMUC provides even more support for military-related students, with locations on about 100 military installations across the United States. All UMUC operations on U.S. military installations operate under a Department of Defense (DoD) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that regulates university operations and interactions with military students and their families. The most current MOU went into effect in July 2014. At these sites, UMUC is also governed by local military installation MOUs, which specify the types of activities (e.g., recruitment, promotion, marketing, and student services) that UMUC staff may provide and which degree programs the university may offer onsite. In addition, UMUC hosts six National Test Centers (NTCs) on military installations in the United States, each governed by a separate MOU.<sup>48</sup>

At all these locations, both civilian and military, the onsite Military Education Coordinators (MECs)—much like regional advisors—provide a “one stop shop” for students, including information and support for application and registration; academic advising; student orientations; hybrid course scheduling; financial aid and scholarship resources; GI Bill application procedures, processes and guidance; information technology assistance; graduation assistance; community outreach; and career services. Additionally, MECs provide a local link to the military's Education Service Officers (ESOs)—government employees assigned to facilitate cooperation between the military base commands and the university, provide oversight, and ensure contract compliance—and other military partners and stakeholders onsite. In locations with NTCs, the National Test Center Administrators also provide direct student contact and access to testing for placement, nationally standardized exams, and certifications.

MECs must possess a wide range of knowledge in order to assist students and coordinate student support with other units, among them Admissions, Student Accounts, Student Records, Military Support Services, Veterans Certification Office, Office of the Registrar, academic departments, Information Technology, and local military partners who approve tuition assistance

requests. All front-line staff in Stateside Military Support come to the Largo Academic Center for two weeks of new-hire training overseen by Military Partnerships. They are then assigned an experienced MEC as mentor. Regular staff meetings, onsite or online, are held in each region to provide additional training, policy, and information updates; collaboration and team-building activities; and discussion of best practices. MECs also participate in the regular academic updates delivered to all advising groups. Performance is evaluated and coaching is provided based on feedback from internal and external constituents (e.g., ESO reports, student feedback), escalations and policy inquiries, compliance tracking, and data in reports, such as those from the National Testing Centers.

As with the regional sites, these civilian and military sites are overseen by regional directors and assistant directors who serve as liaisons to headquarters and manage staff and operations within their areas. Locations with hybrid-course offerings are also assigned a site coordinator to assist with scheduling and coordinate other issues related to site readiness and student access.

In addition to management by Military Partnerships, military locations have another layer of oversight: UMUC policies, procedures, and business processes must comply with all terms and conditions of the MOU with the Department of Defense, including participation in Third Party Educational Reviews of UMUC's operations both at the institutional level and on specific installations. UMUC as an institution was inspected in June 2014 by a third-party assessment team hired by the Department of Defense and was found in compliance on all 15 areas required, including the character of the partnership and services, educational-needs assessment, consistency of programs offered with those from the home campus, responsiveness to student and military needs, faculty qualifications, and institutional outcomes.

## Overseas Military Locations

UMUC serves students not only online and at stateside civilian and military locations, but also at designated locations overseas. Overseas—where most students are in the military, sometimes serving in hostile locations—UMUC can play a special role in helping students focus on long-term objectives and improve their daily lives and career opportunities. This role stems from UMUC's mission and its

long-standing tradition of directly serving the Armed Forces abroad. The tuition established in the DoD contract is very affordable, and UMUC helps students find solutions for financing their education if their needs exceed military tuition-assistance limits.<sup>49</sup> UMUC programs are accessible, with flexible and appropriate course schedules created with input from a variety of sources including the military, UMUC field staff, university data, and community surveys.

In the past, UMUC designated the Europe and Asia headquarters for the overseas operations as its branch campuses. As noted in Chapter 1, it has requested reclassification of the Ramstein and Yokota locations from “branch campuses” to “additional locations” in recognition of UMUC’s status as one worldwide university with common standards and central oversight. (Distance, the number of overseas sites, and DoD requirements do still mean that there are more extensive staff and operations overseas than at regional sites in the United States.)

UMUC’s overseas programs and classes are offered under provisions of DoD contracts awarded as the result of competitive proposals. These operations are overseen by the Vice President and Director of Europe and the Vice President and Director of Asia, both of whom report to the Senior Vice President of Global Military Operations. (Organization charts for Europe and Asia headquarters are found in the document inventory.) Each is divided into regions:

- UMUC Europe, with headquarters in Kaiserslautern, Germany, includes six regions comprising Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, Spain, Greece, Turkey, Portugal, and England. UMUC Europe also provides education at downrange sites (i.e., locations where military are deployed) in Kuwait, Djibouti, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, and Egypt.
- UMUC Asia, with headquarters at Yokota Air Base, near Tokyo, Japan, has 37 instructional sites in four main regions: Mainland Japan and Okinawa, Korea, Guam, and outlying islands.

These UMUC locations are all staffed with qualified, trained personnel who provide “one-stop” services similar to those at stateside military locations. These personnel are prepared, supervised, and evaluated by managers based on overall quality standards as well as site-specific criteria. The basic functions are

parallel to stateside military sites. Operations for each region are managed by a Regional Director at a major site who verifies that appropriate standards are maintained at all sites within the region. Each Regional Director works closely with headquarters staff to generate an appropriate schedule and communicates with military personnel on schedules, student concerns, and site issues. Downrange locations also have an enrollment manager and a director. Depending on the size of the location, there may be a field enrollment manager and one or several field representatives to assist students with administrative matters.

As at stateside locations, trained frontline staff provide academic and administrative services to students throughout the regions. Every site is assigned one or more advisors or MECs to assist students with degree plans and academic issues, help them select courses, and facilitate student entry, progression, retention, and timely degree completion. Most sites have a computer lab; many are equipped to offer standardized tests (e.g., CLEP, DSST, and PearsonVue certification exams) at NTCs staffed with certified test administrators. Staff performance is evaluated on a continuing basis through the PAD form (see Chapter 4) and through feedback from students and ESOs, observations by supervisors, and regular update meetings.

All sites follow university procedures and policies, with onsite responsibility by field staff and regional managers, monitoring from staff at Asia or Europe headquarters and, ultimately, oversight by Global Military Operations. As with other military sites, the DoD contract further regulates and monitors operations through the ESOs or other military or government personnel designated by the Contracting Officer’s Representative. Military and site-specific regulations are monitored by Europe and Asia headquarters.

To provide students at different locations with a selection of courses appropriate to their needs, as well as with qualified faculty, UMUC has recently restructured its overseas faculty model to include traveling collegiate faculty members who move from site to site. These faculty members, appointed on an annual basis, provide the university with the necessary flexibility to establish programs and offer courses even with short notice at locations where the Armed Forces may request UMUC’s presence and services.

Overseas faculty are hired and promoted based on the same requirements that are used stateside, although overseas faculty often teach a wider range of courses. These faculty are subject to the same university policies and standards (as detailed in the Faculty Handbook), their classes are evaluated by students using the same evaluation model, and student learning outcomes are reviewed using the same assessment measures embedded in courses. Faculty are appointed by the Vice President and Director of Europe or Vice President and Director of Asia and assigned to courses by the overseas Associate Vice Provosts, based on the standards set by the relevant departments stateside. Undergraduate faculty must have a master's degree in a related area and, preferably, professional experience in the field and teaching experience with adult students. Graduate faculty must have the terminal degree and, in applied fields such as the MBA or MS in Cybersecurity, recent industry experience.

Academic and faculty support are managed by the overseas Associate Vice Provosts in Europe and Asia. The Associate Vice Provosts report to the stateside Vice Provost for Learner and Faculty Experience, with a matrix reporting relationship to the Europe or Asia Vice President and Director. Curriculum content, creation, and oversight (course and program descriptions and approvals, learning outcomes, assessment design, master syllabi) are managed state-side, but performance monitoring (class visits, complaints) is conducted by the Associate Vice Provosts, who also work with faculty coordinators or program experts to make sure that advisors and MECs are well informed on academic rules and curricular changes.

### UMUC EUROPE OFFERINGS

UMUC programs and courses offered overseas are the same as those offered stateside, with consistency protected by worldwide curriculum councils, master syllabi and common learning outcomes, and a catalog maintained in the PeopleSoft database. In Europe and Asia, UMUC offers face-to-face and hybrid courses from that worldwide catalog at military locations wherever requested and possible.

In Europe, undergraduate offerings focus on a limited number of bachelor's and associate degree programs specified in the military contract.<sup>50</sup> (Associate degrees, all fully articulated with appropriate UMUC bachelor's degrees, are offered only to active-duty military and their

spouses, veterans, reservists, and members of the National Guard.) UMUC also has a partnership agreement with a USM partner institution, Salisbury University, for Salisbury's BA in Social Work (BASW), incorporating Salisbury's courses with UMUC's transferable general education coursework. A partnership with Frostburg State University (FSU) provides FSU's secondary teacher education curriculum, allowing students pursuing certain UMUC majors and minors to qualify for secondary teaching certification in Maryland. In both cases, the programs are operationally administered by UMUC on behalf of the partners, who oversee quality of the curriculum and faculty credentials and effectiveness.

Beginning with the new military contract awarded in 2014, UMUC Europe also offers five master's degree options. Four are UMUC degrees: the MBA, MS in Management, MS in Cybersecurity, and MS in Information Technology. In addition, the Master of Social Work (MSW) is offered in conjunction with Salisbury. Like the BASW, the MSW is conferred and overseen by Salisbury, but operationally administered by UMUC.

The new military contract did not include two prior graduate programs that had been offered in conjunction with another partner school, Bowie State University. These programs are now in "teach-out" status: no new student applications are being accepted, but active students are given the opportunity to complete their programs.

Even with traveling faculty, a shortage of available faculty can make it difficult to offer onsite classes at some sites. As a result, Europe has also begun to provide courses via live-streaming in order to reach students at very remote locations where offering an onsite course may prove challenging. Live streaming allows students to use video and web technology to attend classes from a different location but in real time. This supports a larger selection of classes for sites with limited faculty availability, reduces course cancellation rates, and minimizes students' commuting costs.

### UMUC ASIA OFFERINGS

UMUC Asia offerings also focus on bachelor's and associate degrees that are of particular interest in the region and to the military.<sup>51</sup> With the new contract awarded in spring 2015, UMUC will also offer the MBA program.

Although a partnership agreement with Bowie State University (BSU) has allowed students in Okinawa to pursue a BS in Elementary Education or a BS in Secondary Education, these degrees are not included in the new DoD contract. By agreement with BSU and the military, these programs are in “teach-out” status, under which needed courses can be offered for the next two years to allow students already in the programs to finish.

The Bridge Program for Academic ESL (English as a Second Language) is unique to UMUC Asia and is offered only in the Mainland Japan and Okinawa regions. It serves military spouses and dependents, Japanese citizens who work on military installations, and Japanese and other foreign citizens from the prefectural areas with which UMUC Asia has agreements. The program, which includes two noncredit and four credit courses in English writing and speech, is designed for ESL learners who do not yet meet proficiency scores required for admission as “regular” undergraduate students but who wish to start or continue undergraduate education with a U.S. university. The program is offered primarily as a service to the community, having proven to be a strong source of partnership and cooperation for UMUC with the U.S. military, the U.S. Consulate, and the Japanese prefectural agencies.

Like UMUC Europe, UMUC Asia’s classes are in a variety of formats, including live-streaming and also “unit classes,” which allow military organizations and units to host a UMUC course at their preferred time and place. UMUC works closely with a representative to determine a suitable course (usually a general education requirement), class location (Education Center or other military facility), and schedule. This is ideal for units on temporary assignments, shifting work hours, or changes in operational tempo; it allows students to study alongside fellow service members in a familiar environment while reducing commuting costs and time.

## One Global University

Over the years, UMUC has increasingly aligned its structure and systems around the world to support a more consistent student experience free of unnecessary barriers and gaps. President Miyares identified creating “one global university” as a priority in order to bring more consistency to services, clarity to the mission, and efficiency to UMUC’s operations in order to reach the goals of access, affordability and

quality. With new technologies and global conditions, it has become even more important and possible.

Streamlined and standardized structure and processes help ensure that changes in military deployments do not lead to unnecessary disconnects in students’ educational experience with UMUC. Under a worldwide support project, service gaps between stateside and overseas were identified. Staff in Europe and Asia worked closely with their stateside counterparts, and as discussed in Chapter 6, many procedures and processes have been centralized to lighten the administrative burden overseas and build consistency.

To follow up further, Strategic Enrollment Management houses a unit called One Global University that is charged with ensuring that all students—through global systems and processes enhanced by locally delivered services—have a common UMUC experience regardless of geographic location. When an existing process does not resolve a concern, the One Global University Team can assist by researching the issue and seeking a resolution.

However, One Global University is much more than this single unit or initiative. It is a strategic priority guiding many projects, such as the technical advances that are helping to build a more seamless and coherent experience for UMUC students worldwide. UMUC’s Single-Sign On (SSO) offers a one-stop access point for the MyUMUC student center, LEO classrooms, the UMUC Library, the Help Desk, and other university tools. The 24-hour Help Desk connects students in Asia and Europe with stateside support services for frequently asked questions across time zones.

To further streamline and standardize student support, in 2015 UMUC created the position of Senior Vice President of Global Military Operations, filled by a retired Army major general with over 32 years of active duty, including as deputy commanding general of the U.S. Army Infantry School and Center. This experience enables him to manage a large educational delivery unit as well as understand the unique needs of military and veteran student learners. The Senior Vice President position now oversees worldwide military and veteran-related operations, including Europe, Asia, and the stateside Department of Military Partnerships. By aligning all three areas under one Senior Vice President, UMUC is providing a seamless and standardized



student support structure for military students, their families, and veterans. The move has helped staff worldwide to collaborate, share ideas and best practices, design optimal schedules of classes, and develop innovative student support services.

One result of this alignment has been standardization of titles and roles. The field staff titles in Europe and Asia are changing to Military Education Coordinators (MECs) in alignment with stateside, and titles of Regional Enrollment Managers have changed to Director. Assistant Director positions have been added where needed overseas to provide more supervisory support. Europe and Asia have also added positions for CRM Coordinators, who are being trained by stateside staff to work with Salesforce, the customer relations management (CRM) system used to record interactions with students. For all of these positions, job descriptions are standardized and UMUC will be building worldwide career ladders.

Collaboration and coordination worldwide are also being addressed with staff exchanges and conferences. In April 2015, a worldwide conference for field staff was held in Germany and taped, reaching beyond Europe to significant numbers of MECs from Asia and stateside. In July 2015, Asia and Europe personnel attended the stateside field staff conference. The next worldwide conference will be in Japan in June 2016.

## **PRE-COLLEGE, BASIC SKILLS, AND DEVELOPMENTAL COURSES**

Around the world, UMUC's open access policies attract a broad spectrum of students, including those with long breaks in study and those with varying levels of academic preparation. This makes early academic assessment and support imperative for basic skills development.

### **Placement Tests and First Writing and Mathematics Courses**

UMUC does not require standardized exams for undergraduate admission, but acceptable scores on placement exams or prerequisite coursework have been required for enrollment in beginning writing and mathematics. For freshman composition (WRTG 101 Introduction to Writing), students were required to complete EDCP 103 Fundamentals of Writing and Grammar or to achieve the appropriate Accuplacer score. For the General Education

mathematics course (MATH 106 Finite Mathematics or 107 College Algebra), students without the appropriate Accuplacer score had to complete MATH 009 Introductory Algebra and/or 012 Intermediate Algebra. Accuplacer scores are aligned with those at other Maryland institutions, including community colleges.

Considerable research has shown that developmental education can become a significant barrier for students: long sequences of required developmental coursework discourage and slow student progress.<sup>52</sup> UMUC has explored several alternatives.

In some cases, students may fail to place into college-level courses simply because they are unprepared for the exam. This can be especially true for adult students whose skills are "rusty." In Fall 2015, UMUC began testing a pilot program for some students taking the math placement test. Those who place into developmental math courses are offered the opportunity to improve their scores and, possibly, place into a higher-level math course by using EdReady,<sup>53</sup> an adaptive learning platform that creates a personalized study path to fill in knowledge gaps based on Accuplacer content. Success will be measured in relation to math confidence (through student surveys and math enrollment rates) and Accuplacer prep scores compared to control groups. A similar pilot is planned for the writing placement test.

It may also be that students become discouraged by the inability to start with coursework that interests them, instead of low-level pre-college courses that have a negative image. For a more engaged and personalized learning experience, EdReady content is also being used in pilot sections of MATH 009. Evaluation of the pilot will consider course-completion rates, student achievement, student surveys, and the relationship between time spent on EdReady and student achievement.

Many universities are piloting innovative approaches to developmental courses, including the integration of developmental content into college-level coursework. This has been implemented for a decade in UMUC overseas, where students may take MATH 103 College Mathematics with the placement exam generally waived. MATH 103 combines additional developmental instruction and support with learning outcomes comparable to MATH 106. Student performance has reached the desired outcomes with this approach; however, MATH

103 is offered only onsite. Results of the math pilots will help determine strategies for online mathematics.

For writing, an integrated alternative similar to the MATH 103 approach was developed in 2012-2013 to replace the sequence EDCP 103 (the developmental course) followed by WRTG 101 (the introductory writing course). WRTG 101S Introduction to Writing, which does not require Accuplacer, combined content from WRTG 101 with additional developmental support similar to EDCP 103.

A study in Fall 2012 found that students in WRTG 101 with Accuplacer scores of 90 or above had higher levels of competency on integration of research sources than students with lower scores or students in 101S. As a result, more resources were integrated into the course. Additionally, both WRTG 101 and 101S underwent redesign in 2014-2015. They were converted to open learning resources, assignments were refocused, evaluation instruments were refined to provide more specific feedback, and online tools were added to support individual development.

While students could choose WRTG 101S at will, the premise had been that these were, primarily, students who would otherwise place into EDCP 103. However, by 2015, more than 70 percent of students were choosing WRTG 101S, sometimes even after taking the Accuplacer test. Given the alignment of the two courses and the lack of differentiation between their student populations, they were consolidated into one open-access course for this general education requirement. Fall 2015 assessment of the consolidated course (numbered WRTG 101 stateside and 101S overseas because face-to-face supplemental activities overseas are delivered in separate sections) is analyzing student demographics by location, the online learning tool and its use by students and faculty, and student performance on standardized assignments. Assessment and identification of subgroups will be an important part of further course design aimed at allowing more explicit competency identification and self-paced student progress.

Since writing is both a basic foundational skill and a cumulative ability developed throughout a student's progress, other writing courses are required throughout all academic programs. Additional support is provided through the

Effective Writing Center (EWC), as discussed in Chapter 6.

## CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

To help students achieve milestone credentials before or on the way to their degrees, UMUC offers a range of certificates. Certificate courses fit within larger degree programs (requiring 16 to 18 credits for undergraduate certificates and 15 for graduate certificates) and are concentrated in a particular area of interest.

Like UMUC's degree programs, certificate programs have defined learning outcomes. Full details on graduate and undergraduate certificates are available in the stateside and Europe catalogs, both printed and online. Required gainful employment disclosures are also found online.<sup>54</sup>

In 2012, there were over 40 undergraduate certificates. However, a detailed review found a history of low enrollments—even in the most common certificates, the majority of students were completing the certificate simultaneously with the degree because they already had taken the courses, not as a milestone or separate credential. As a result, 33 undergraduate certificates were discontinued.

Five undergraduate certificates were retained and revised to target employer needs and workplace opportunities: Computer Networking, Human Resource Management, Management Foundations, Project Management, and Spanish for Business and the Professions. Corporate Learning Solutions took part in identifying which to retain, taking into account their usefulness for employers seeking to support their employees' professional development. In addition, several versions of the Foreign Language Area Studies certificate offered in the overseas divisions—Japanese, Korean, Arabic and the Middle East, German, Spanish, and Italian—were retained to enable students stationed overseas to expand their knowledge of language and culture in the area.

The Graduate School offers 18 certificates (of which six are offered only overseas), having discontinued another 25 in 2015 after a similar review during the process of curriculum reform (see Table 1.1 in Chapter 1). As explained earlier, certificates were aligned with redesigned programs and can be fulfilled within a master's degree or as a supplement to a different degree (see Figure 5.1 in Chapter 5).

At present, only about 1 percent of currently enrolled undergraduate students and 7 percent of graduate students are pursuing certificates. This confirms both the limited demand and their higher value at the graduate level. UMUC continues to monitor student demand and completion to determine whether and how certificates serve students. It will include this consideration in the learning model redesign.

## EXPERIENTIAL AND PRIOR LEARNING

UMUC has long recognized that adult students bring prior college-level learning when they enter higher education, and that there are benefits to recognizing that learning, validating the skills and knowledge gained both inside and outside of the college classroom. Recognizing college-level learning from sources such as transfer credit, portfolio assessment, noncollegiate instruction, external exams and certifications, and workplace-based learning can allow a shorter pathway to the degree, saving students both time and money.

In addition to acceptance and articulation of traditional collegiate credit from other institutions, UMUC recognizes and validates college-level learning gained outside the classroom through:

- Credit for standardized exams such as DSST, CLEP (College Level Examination Program), and some industry certification exams.
- Noncollegiate learning (military and corporate) evaluated by ACE (American Council on Education) and NCCRS (the University of the State of New York National College Credit Recommendation Service).
- Course Challenge, based on UMUC-designed assessments.
- UMUC's Prior Learning portfolio assessment program.
- Workplace Learning, which identifies and evaluates learning gained on the job.

UMUC faculty members evaluate these sources of college-level learning based on the same learning outcomes as undergraduate coursework. That foundation was strengthened in the 2010 redesign of the undergraduate curriculum, which identified and mapped real-world learning outcomes for every program and course. (See Chapters 5 and 8.) As a result, all methods of fulfilling degree requirements—experiential learning, transfer and externally evaluated credit, and classroom instruction—can be aligned

to the same outcomes, with different modes of learning recognized within an overall competency framework. The formal curriculum, thus, is the standard by which any form of learning can be honored. Students must demonstrate their proficiency in program and course outcomes no matter how they learned the content.

## Credit by Examination

Students can earn undergraduate credit by taking standardized exams administered by external sources, including the College Board and College-Level Examination Program. UMUC also accepts credit for professional examinations listed in the ACE Guide to Credit by Examinations and, in a few cases, awards credit for industry-recognized certification exams such as Microsoft Certification.

Like transfer credit, credit by examination is articulated by faculty to UMUC courses for applicability to a student's degree program. The articulation is entered into the PeopleSoft database to ensure consistent application for all students. A list of college-level exams and how they articulate for credit can be found on the UMUC website.<sup>55</sup>

Credit by exam is widely used, especially because the military encourages students to take standardized exams prior to receiving tuition assistance for coursework. In FY 2015, 3,304 students brought external exam credit, resulting in 21,790 credits applied toward their degree progress.

## Noncollegiate Learning

UMUC's acceptance of ACE-evaluated and NCSSE-evaluated credit allows the application of appropriate noncollegiate, but college-level, learning to degree progress. Like other external sources of credit, ACE and NCSSE credit recommendations are articulated after a review by appropriate faculty to ensure that the content meets the requirements of degree plans and courses.

Credit for military education and experience is important for many UMUC students. Specific ACE recommendations (especially in management, computing, and the sciences) and faculty review sometimes allow placement of the credit even for major and minor requirements. Additional credits, such as in military science and basic training, can assist students in meeting the elective areas of all degree plans. All



military and veteran students can obtain a Joint Service Transcript (JST) documenting occupational skill and military school training that has been evaluated, as well as the corresponding ACE credit recommendations.

Corporate training that has been evaluated as college level can also be articulated and applied. For example, the training offered by Jiffy Lube to its franchise managers has been ACE-evaluated and articulated; those who complete the training have a head start on UMUC's Management Foundations undergraduate certificate and related bachelor's degrees.

In FY 2015, UMUC had 128 students receive ACE-evaluated credit, for a total of 1,070 credits. UMUC, along with 24 other institutions, has joined the ACE Alternative Credit Project, which is creating a consortium to identify and maximize the transferability of selected lower-level general education online courses offered in noncollegiate settings (American Council on Education, 2014). This project will track retention and attainment rates of students transferring in credit for such courses, which has not been done systematically at UMUC in the past.

## Course Challenge

Students can apply to challenge a specific UMUC course. (Some, such as capstone courses, are not eligible for challenge.) Many course challenges consist of comprehensive final exams, but others may require small projects or portfolios. UMUC's website contains detailed information on the course challenge procedure as well as criteria for application.<sup>56</sup> Course challenge is rarely used: in FY 2015, only five students completed course challenges, earning a total of 27 credits. With the new learning model, however, the assessments developed for curriculum may support a higher level of course challenge for students with sufficient prior learning.

## Prior Learning Portfolio

In the Portfolio program, students may earn credit for more than one course, based on college-level learning gained through previous experience.<sup>57</sup> Students seeking portfolio credit take EXCL301 Learning Analysis and Planning, a three-credit course in which an instructor facilitates the student's creation of a portfolio describing and documenting prior learning experiences and their alignment with the learning outcomes for targeted courses. Students who

have taken EXCL 301 and wish to target additional courses have the option of EXCL 001, a noncredit course in which they work at their own pace to create additional portfolios.

Students may submit their portfolios only if they receive an EXCL course grade of Satisfactory, meaning that all required work was submitted and the portfolio contains at least the minimum elements. The portfolio is then reviewed by faculty from the appropriate disciplines, who determine what credit should be awarded.

In 2014, UMUC examined the amount of prior learning credit from all three sources awarded to a cohort of students who were new to UMUC in FY 2011, then tracked the students for two years (UMUC, CAEL Prior Learning Assessment Report, 2014). The cohort of 2,191 students—about 20 percent of UMUC's new students—earned a total of 41,209 PLA credits. The results showed that:

- 90 percent of the PLA credits were earned through externally evaluated training (e.g., ACE evaluation).
- 9 percent of the PLA credits were earned through standardized exams.
- 1 percent of the PLA credits awarded came through portfolio assessment.

As that study indicates, EXCL301 enrollment is relatively low—in FY 2015, only 124 students. However, students who do attempt to get PLA credit using EXCL301 are likely to receive it. For instance, in Fall 2011, an average of 15.73 credits were attempted, with an average of 14.87 credits awarded. This suggests that Portfolio Assessment may be underutilized for UMUC students, who often have significant experience in the work world. It is desirable to encourage more eligible students to apply, perhaps by simplifying the process and increasing outreach.

## Workplace Learning

The Workplace Learning program allows students to demonstrate new skills learned on the job while also studying at UMUC.<sup>58</sup> Students may be working full- or part-time, paid or in a volunteer capacity. The work position must offer an opportunity to apply academic theory from a specific discipline to practical projects requiring analysis and problem solving. Students may earn three or six credits during each 15-week session, based on minimum hours on task and learning objectives. The program requires a learning agreement with the employer, an

assigned faculty mentor, and reflective academic assignments that augment the tasks and demonstrate college-level learning.

Several undergraduate degrees (biotechnology, gerontology and aging services, laboratory management) require Workplace Learning internships through UMUC. The directors of those programs work closely with Workplace Learning to identify internship placements and faculty mentors. Other programs allow Workplace Learning credit but, because of the additional administrative burden for those requirements, most do not promote this opportunity for students. As a result, Workplace Learning is underutilized. In FY 2015, a total of 86 students earned 375 credits through this format. Workplace Learning is now under new leadership and will be reorganized, with the goal of advancing workplace-related learning in this and other formats and streamlining the process.

## CONTRACTUAL RELATIONSHIPS

UMUC's contractual relationships for outsourced services (e.g., faculty recruitment and the call center), and the required accountability in alignment with mission and goals, are discussed in Chapter 3. The other important area for contractual relationships is with employers desiring educational programs for their employees.

The Business Development Solutions and Partnerships unit includes staff functions for business development (identifying new employer relationships) and strategy and solutions (formalizing replicable client solutions and improving business processes). Within this unit, Corporate Learning Solutions (CLS) pursues its mission to provide concierge services for employers through its client-facing account-management function and its account-management operations function.

Within client-facing account management, CLS finalizes MOUs with clients (using a standardized template developed with Legal Affairs) and develops customized marketing and communication plans (typically including a microsite, online open houses, education fairs, and digital and print materials). The "operations" portion of client services answers prospective student inquiries, verifies employment to confirm eligibility for a discount, works with student accounts on billing, and produces reports for account managers.

Strategy and solutions staff, along with client-facing account managers, focus on deepening the value of UMUC's programs to employers and creating a more strategic relationship. For example, for the federal Office of Personnel Management (OPM), specific job roles were mapped to UMUC degree and certificate programs and, specifically, to the Human Resources Management program (UMUC-OPM HRM Competency Map, 2014). For the Baltimore Police Department, where UMUC designed a leadership program around UMUC courses, the program was recently revised to align more closely with the new commissioner's strategic plan and add an evaluation component (Criminal Justice Leadership Program: Evaluation Strategy, 2014).

Most employer relationships currently involve existing credit-bearing offerings. The standard benefit that employers receive in exchange for co-marketing UMUC programs to their employees is a 25 percent discount on out-of-state tuition—often extended to spouses and dependents—and sometimes the waiver of the application fee. There is no discount for special tuition (e.g., graduate MBA and cybersecurity) programs.

One successful alliance has been the OPM/federal government alliance (launched April 2014), now available to 2.7 million non-military government employees and their spouses and dependents. UMUC was the first university selected by OPM as an education partner to: 1) provide access to quality education, 2) close critical skills gaps (e.g., cyber/IT, human resources, and acquisitions), and 3) embed a federal perspective into UMUC's programs (especially appropriate for its student body in the D.C. region). Since its inception, this program has attracted over 1,900 students.

CLS is developing plans for "preferred provider projects" with a goal of becoming the preferred higher education provider to specific industries and employer groups through development of a continuum of noncredit and credit certificate and degree offerings and by integrating career services into strategic relationships. Currently in its initiation stage is the acquisition project, in which UMUC will partner with the Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI), Defense Acquisition University (DAU), and the General Services Administration (GSA) to identify credit equivalencies, create articulation agreements, and align academic and experiential offerings with certification requirements. This will meet the

goal of career-relevant curricula, contribute to career prospects for UMUC graduates, and speed time to completion for students who already have achieved certification competencies. Similar projects in homeland security and cyber-security are in concept stage.

CLS interfaces with many departments: Marketing for advertising, resources, and strategy assistance; Military Partnerships and College and University Partnerships for coordination and collaboration; Student Accounts and the Registrar for customized systems; student support offices, including Career Services, advising, Student Success, and the Service Center for communications and student assistance; Legal Affairs for MOUs; Alumni Affairs and Institutional Advancement for referrals of employers and alumni; and CILSS for pilot projects with employer cohorts. To facilitate collaboration and reduce conflicts or duplication, UMUC is increasingly coordinating employer outreach for all departments interfacing with employers through Salesforce, a centralized customer relationship management system.

## NONCREDIT OFFERINGS

The National Leadership Institute (NLI)<sup>59</sup> currently provides UMUC's only noncredit offerings (other than the pre-college and UCSP courses discussed earlier). NLI, created in 1979, is affiliated with the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL). Its Leadership Development Program and Maximizing Your Leadership Potential program are standardized to CCL requirements.

NLI's professional development programs for managers and leaders employ recognized assessment tools and experienced faculty, and they offer individualized assessments and executive coaching. NLI programs are available on an open-enrollment basis, mostly in Maryland and Virginia. Some are offered online or at business locations.

## VISION FOR THE FUTURE

### Elements of the Future State

The new learning model will affect the entire student pathway, all of UMUC's educational activities, and its presence worldwide. From advising to teaching and delivery at all locations and in all formats, the increasingly personalized and workplace-relevant model will demand systemic changes to add value to a UMUC education. But the changes go beyond the learning

model. The key strategic initiatives lay out the areas of change:

- Achieving a single global operational model.
- Improving the student administrative experience.
- Transforming the core learning model.
- Diversifying the revenue portfolio.
- Maintaining the university infrastructure.

For the educational activities described in this chapter, the changes will affect how UMUC structures and conducts its work.

## Strengths and Challenges

One significant change will be in the role of prior and experiential learning. UMUC accepts prior and experiential learning credit to the maximum allowed by the State of Maryland and USM policy. However, those rules are undergoing change. The policy approved by the Board of Regents in 1990 (former USM Policy III-1.140) limited credits from prior learning (standardized or institutional examinations and portfolio assessment), with additional limits on each type of credit, including 30 from portfolio assessment. However, the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) was revised in 2014 to remove the 30-credit limit, and the USM policy has also been changed in accordance (USM Policy III-1.141). UMUC is currently revising its own practices and policies to allow recognition of prior learning to the maximum possible as long as it is validated and integrated within the appropriate program as meeting learning outcomes.

The fuller integration of prior learning and development of more workplace-relevant curricular assessment will also support employer outreach. The "preferred provider" initiative is identifying more opportunities for noncredit/for-credit articulations and employer input into learning outcomes than had previously been explored.

Other changes already occurring, such as the global initiative to streamline processes and the increasing use of data analytics, will make space for more personalized and targeted student support. Current pilots and evaluations will provide better information on the new student experience, while ongoing analytics and data from the learning platform and new forms of assessment will offer even more substantive information to support learning and degree progress.

At present, except for a few cohort projects, UMUC does not have specific employer information on its students. Clearly, this information would be extremely valuable. UMUC is in the strategy phase of identifying the stakeholders, the business processes that will be affected, and the technology solutions for capturing this valuable information.

## Conclusions

UMUC is in compliance with Standard 13. Curricula, regardless of delivery mode or location, have the same learning outcomes, expectations of students and faculty, academic standards, and resource materials. Support for all modes and locations includes access to consistent information. Common standards are further facilitated by centralized support from headquarters and increased consistency of structure and job titles worldwide. Basic skills courses have been evaluated and revised to improve student success. Certificate programs align with degrees, have defined learning outcomes, and are evaluated within program review. Experiential learning programs have policies and procedures that are clear and publicly available, with learning for academic credit determined by qualified faculty. Noncredit offerings, though limited, are consistent with the mission. Contractual relationships are largely limited to agreements with employers for provision of educational offerings to their employees and analysis of congruence between UMUC's existing offerings and employer needs.

UMUC is a complicated institution, in large part because it accepts credit from so many sources and recognizes so many types of learning. This openness is important to adult students and should be retained. However, the different categories of noncollegiate learning at UMUC currently reside in isolated programs and informational sites. This disconnection makes it difficult for students (and those who advise them) to understand how they can leverage their prior learning, translate it into credit, and fit it into their educational pathways. It is critical to construct better ways of evaluating and integrating that learning, analyzing how it contributes to student progress, and determining where it must be supplemented with other sources. The transformation of the learning model offers the opportunity to achieve that integration, which will further inform the redefinition of faculty roles recommended in Chapter 5.

The two overarching recommendations of this self-study—increased internal communication and detailed role definitions and training for faculty—are both relevant to UMUC's continued compliance with Standard 13. In moving to the new learning model and explaining it to students and other constituencies, UMUC will need clear messages and rationales. The careful communication strategy for all constituencies should be constructed at the same time as development of the learning model, while necessary systems changes to support the model must be identified university-wide.



## CHAPTER EIGHT

# Measuring Student Learning and Improving the Curriculum

#### **STANDARD 14: ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING**

Assessment of student learning demonstrates that, at graduation, or other appropriate points, the institution's students have knowledge, skills, and competencies consistent with institutional and appropriate higher education goals.



# CHAPTER EIGHT

## Measuring Student Learning and Improving the Curriculum

UMUC's approach to assessment of student learning outcomes has evolved since its beginnings in 2002 and the last Middle States reviews in 2006 and 2011. As its processes have become more systematic and robust and its administrative structures more effective, learning outcomes assessment has emerged as an important driver for evaluation and modification of UMUC's educational approaches, and it will be an important component of the new learning model.

### UMUC'S APPROACH TO LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT

#### Evolution of UMUC's Approach

UMUC's assessment of student learning outcomes, beginning with the first plan in 2003 and later updated in the 2006 and 2010 plans,<sup>60</sup> was initially envisioned as a centrally organized activity led at the institutional level. The challenges of organizing and implementing assessment activities on such a large and centralized scale were cited in the UMUC 2006 Self-Study Report to the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE), including:

- Feasibility of designing institution-wide learning assessment processes.
- Appropriateness of assessment measures and processes for UMUC's diverse student population.
- Involvement of all key stakeholders in the learning assessment process.
- Communication of processes and results.
- Ensuring that results inform curriculum improvement and institutional decision-making.

As UMUC grappled with those challenges, its assessment approach evolved. Most significantly over the past 10 years, UMUC moved away from its initial centralized vision to one that assigns the principal responsibility to the schools, closer to where learning occurs. This decentralization, beginning in 2008, allowed the schools to address many of the issues cited in the 2006 report. For example, previous institution-level efforts to create universal rubrics for communications, critical thinking, technology fluency,

and information literacy created problems in aligning assessment activities to assessment tools as well as scaling of assessment processes. Placement of the design of assessment activities and evaluation instruments under the control of the programs and schools offers more agile implementation of assessment activities and is more responsive to the level of learning targeted within Schools and programs. It also facilitates faculty participation and improved communication among stakeholders, as well as timely program changes, since they can be built into the programmatic planning cycle. Revised roles and responsibilities are detailed in the updated 2015 *Institutional Plan for the Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes* (IAP), which is in Appendix 10.<sup>61</sup>

Movement over the last decade toward a more distributed model of assessment management has strengthened UMUC's assessment processes and encouraged curricular solutions for improving student learning. It does this by placing accountability for assessment implementation and action planning with the units responsible for program design and oversight of teaching. Assessment and continuous improvement are still institutional priorities and have additional support outside the academic departments. However, the embedding of assessments in the curriculum—and action on the results—is now more clearly the responsibility of those who maintain and develop the curriculum.

Each school has designed and implemented effective structures, training, and processes for assessment. Approaches vary according to the needs and nature of the unit, but they are consistently based on learning-outcomes assessment principles and best practices, which are disseminated by the assessment administrators in the schools. Assessment data are now used more effectively for curriculum change and program improvement; appropriate technologies are employed to manage and communicate assessment information; and assessment documentation provides clear guidelines, expectations, and timelines.

Recommendations from the prior report and the status of each are summarized in Table 8.1.

#### IN THIS CHAPTER

##### ■ UMUC's Approach to Learning Outcomes Assessment

Evolution of UMUC's Approach

Plans and Processes

*Assessment of General Education*

*Assessment of Discipline-Specific Knowledge*

Evidence, Oversight, and Reporting

##### ■ Use of Assessment Results

##### ■ Assessment Compliance in the Current Framework

##### ■ Vision for the Future

Elements of the Future State

Strengths and Challenges

Conclusions

## Plans and Processes

Review and enhancement of assessment at UMUC continues. As described in the updated IAP, UMUC continues to develop and conduct assessment plans and activities at the institution, school, and program levels. Institution-wide Student Learning Expectations (SLEs) are assessed and reported, including in mandated reports to the State of Maryland. These include SLEs in written communication (COMM), technology fluency (TECH), information literacy (INFO), critical thinking (THIN), and discipline-specific knowledge (SPEC or KNOW). Institution-level definitions are found in Table 8.2.

In The Undergraduate School (TUS), four additional SLEs (which, along with the first five, are called undergraduate “hallmarks”) are also embedded and assessed: quantitative reasoning (QUAN), scientific literacy (SCIE), historical and cultural perspectives (HIST), and ethics (ETH). See Table 8.3 for definitions.

Even more importantly, the SLEs are also translated into competencies at school and program

levels, embedded throughout graduate and undergraduate curricula, and assessed appropriately. Assessments are created and administered by appropriate faculty.

## ASSESSMENT OF GENERAL EDUCATION

The SLEs identify common areas across the institution and across programs in which students are expected to demonstrate college-level proficiency; they encompass the general education areas identified in *Characteristics of Excellence*.<sup>62</sup> Both schools map the SLEs to curriculum and related assessments, creating annual plans and timetables to assess student competency at appropriate places in the curriculum and with appropriate tools. The Program Chairs work with the assessment administrator in each school to design and validate tools as well as to analyze the results.

Because of differences in the structure of graduate and undergraduate degrees, the approach toward assessing the SLEs at school and program levels differs between the schools. The Graduate School (TGS) shares an SLE assessment across programs, using a common

**Table 8.1 2006 Recommendations for Improving Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes**

#	Recommendation	Status/Actions
1.	Develop a central assessment website.	Complete. Public site at <a href="http://www.umuc.edu/visitors/about/ipra/learning-outcomes.cfm">http://www.umuc.edu/visitors/about/ipra/learning-outcomes.cfm</a> Internal site at <a href="https://engage.umuc.edu/community/institutional-research/outcomes-assessment">https://engage.umuc.edu/community/institutional-research/outcomes-assessment</a>
2.	Increase professional development opportunities for both faculty and staff in the area of assessment.	Ongoing (e.g., faculty development workshops, resource materials, departmental workshops on assessment).
3.	Revise and incorporate school plans into IAP.	Complete through Spring 2016, regularly updated.
4.	Formulate periodic institution-wide reporting plan for sharing student-learning activities and results with UMUC units and divisions. Include in IAP.	On-demand reporting for dissemination to specific stakeholders plus use in regular Academic Program Reviews.
5.	Adhere to agreed-upon patterns of communication to ensure that consistent and reliable information is uniformly distributed.	Results disseminated by IR, program chairs, and deans, both within formal reports and in ENGAGE for faculty discussion.
6.	Create an advisory committee that supports the Office of Outcomes Assessment and facilitates communication and logistics with the schools and their faculty for implementing worldwide learning assessment activities.	Complete. <i>Note: Responsibility for assessment of student learning now falls under the UMUC Provost. Planning and implementation are handled by representatives of the schools, with assistance from the Institutional Research Office and oversight by the Assessment Steering Committee.</i>
7.	Establish mechanisms that ensure that curricular and administrative decisions are explicitly linked to assessment findings in order to demonstrate the feedback loop inherent within an assessment cycle.	Established. Close-the-loop plans including curricular adjustments; assessment findings used in academic program reviews and resulting decision-making.

**Table 8.2 Institution-Level Learning Outcomes: Student Learning Expectations (SLEs)**

Definitions of Student Learning Expectations (SLEs)	
Written Communication (COMM)	Produce writing that meets expectations for format, organization, content, purpose, and audience.
Technology Fluency (TECH)	Demonstrate an understanding of information technology broad enough to apply technology productively to academic studies, work, and everyday life.
Information Literacy (INFO)	Demonstrate the ability to use libraries and other information resources to effectively locate, select, and evaluate needed information.
Critical Thinking (THIN)	Demonstrate the use of analytical skills and reflective processing of information.
Content/Discipline-Specific Knowledge (SPEC/KNOW)	Demonstrate knowledge and competencies specific to program or major area of study.

activity to evaluate student learning. The essay is scored by independent raters using a rubric. This assessment is conducted annually, alternating between a beginning-level and a concluding course, and requires an essay designed by representatives of all departments. (More detail is found in Appendix D of the 2015 IAP.)

Meanwhile, for most of the SLEs, The Undergraduate School conducts course-embedded assessment, both in coursework filling the General Education degree requirement and in coursework within major programs. (Only critical thinking and ethics, because their definitions are highly contextual, are assessed within major courses for each program and not in General Education courses.) In addition to course-based assessments, the ETS Proficiency Profile (EPP) is also used for institution-level assessment of writing, quantitative skills, and critical thinking. Table 8.4 shows this distribution of assessment points. For example, quantitative literacy (QUAN) is assessed at course and program levels with assessments embedded in courses aligned with program outcomes, at the General Education level in the required mathematics course, and at the institutional level through both those assessments and the relevant data from the EPP.

### ASSESSMENT OF DISCIPLINE-SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE

The SLE for discipline-specific knowledge (SPEC or KNOW) is especially important for programmatic currency and relevance. With assessment more directly under their control, the schools are proactive in developing student learning outcomes informed by the demands of the workplace. Both schools define learning outcomes and activities with the input of employers, professional associations, and industry experts to ensure that program curricula prepare students for work in their fields of study. As part of the process for curriculum development and evaluation of program outcomes, the faculty work with specialists and subject matter experts to confirm that assessment practices and curricula focus on current workplace competencies.

Both the curriculum and assessment frameworks emphasize connection with the professional field and the workplace. For example, in TUS, the faculty deconstructed course outcomes into competencies, following the same process used for course and program design (including the overall undergraduate curriculum redesign in 2010) that originally produced the outcome statements. Specialists in

**Table 8.3 TUS Additional School-Level Learning Expectations (SLEs)/Hallmarks**

Definitions of Student-Learning Expectations	
Quantitative Reasoning (QUAN)	Demonstrate the application of mathematical and numerical reasoning skills.
Scientific Literacy (SCIE)	Demonstrate the ability to understand key concepts and principles of the natural, social, and behavioral sciences and to apply these principles appropriately within personal lives.
Historical and Cultural Perspectives (HIST)	Knowledge of diverse cultures and historical periods.
Ethics (ETH)	Understanding of and ability to apply frameworks for ethical decision-making.

Table 8.4 TUS Hallmark (SLE) Alignment					
TUS Hallmarks	Course	Program MAJOR (courses aligned to Program Outcomes)	GENERAL EDUCATION Courses	Institutional	ETS Proficiency Profile (EPP) <sup>a</sup>
Content/Discipline (SPEC) <sup>a</sup>	X	X			
Written Communication (COMM) <sup>a</sup> —Introductory & Advanced Levels	X	X	X	X	X
Technology Fluency (TECH) <sup>a</sup>	X	X	X	X	
Information Literacy (INFO) <sup>a</sup>	X	X	X	X	
Quantitative Literacy (QUAN)	X	X	X	X	X
Critical Thinking (THIN) <sup>a</sup>	X	X			X
Scientific Literacy (SCIE)	X	X	X		
Historical and Cultural Perspectives (HIST)	X	X	X		
Ethics (ETH)	X	X			

<sup>a</sup> Corresponds to institution-level SLEs (i.e., not TUS alone).

the field and subject matter experts participated in these sessions and provided feedback on the final set of competencies to ensure that they were applicable and current. Similarly, most programs in TGS rely on active networks of industry advisors to inform their program missions and student learning outcomes. Several programs work closely with these advisors to provide UMUC students with real-world, project-based learning activities for the purpose of gaining industry-specific experience. The Master in Biotechnology degree program, for example, employs real-world projects in its capstone course. The Program Chair works with an advisory network to arrange short discrete projects with local industries; these projects require students to assist the organizations in analyzing and solving problems as well as to actively apply their new discipline-specific knowledge. In another example, the Master of Public Relations program provides students with opportunities to develop public relations campaigns for existing organizations.

While importance is already placed on aligning student learning outcomes with workplace needs, UMUC's move to its new learning model will further strengthen and refine this focus. Even greater emphasis will be placed on developing curricula and naturally embedded continuous evaluation processes that align to employer needs and career readiness, with ultimate emphasis on student engagement in demonstrable competencies rather than solely theoretical understanding.

## Evidence, Oversight, and Reporting

Across the university, UMUC assessment activities are coordinated and advised by the Assessment Steering Committee (ASC), which includes the associate deans, representative faculty, and assessment administrators from both schools, along with other representatives, including from UMUC's Institutional Research Office (IR). Deans in the schools and their designees oversee assessment planning and implementation. The ASC and the responsible parties in each school ensure that appropriate process and reporting are in place, assessment information is shared and acted on, and exemplary assessment practices are disseminated and followed.

Using Taskstream or TK20 software, the schools and IR enter and maintain data from the assessments. IR analyzes and produces findings that show how students performed on defined criteria. Program Chairs review assessment results, discuss them with IR—as well as with their school and faculty—and develop action plans to address the findings. Over the assessment cycle, all the relevant outcomes are reviewed and analyzed for each program and school and for the institution. Reports address the specific outcome, assessment tool, timing, and result. The sample report summary in Table 8.5 details findings for the MS in Instructional Technology based on the rubric for the KNOW (discipline-specific knowledge) learning outcome. Other reports are provided in the document inventory.

Currently, summative analysis of program results is a manual process, and the results are not immediately available after the term ends. In addition, the schools rely on the next round of assessment activities to demonstrate the effectiveness of their closing-the-loop plans. Tools for timelier reporting and analysis would help convert data into information for more meaningful programmatic change at multiple levels within the program. Some technology improvements are currently under consideration that will provide assessment results more quickly, including: creation of data reports on faculty assessment activities to help identify faculty training needs, charts with a simple overview of program outcomes to complement academic dashboards for Program Chairs, calculation reports that will allow automated summary of performance across course sections (currently calculated manually), tables in EDWARDS (the data warehouse) to automate program outcomes reporting, and improvements in Taskstream reporting. The schools, the Office of Analytics, and Institutional Research are discussing these improvements, with decisions and timelines expected in 2016.

In its learning-model redesign process, UMUC will continue to focus on improving areas of student learning outcomes assessment. The changes to support the competency-based model will provide more real-time data on student learning from sequenced assessments and directly from classrooms, and will improve UMUC's ability to monitor and evaluate its curricular and support interventions.

## USE OF ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Both TUS and TGS use results from learning outcomes assessment activities to improve curriculum and support within their respective programs. Program Chairs regularly review assessment results after each term and, when appropriate, engage faculty in conversations about current student performance as it relates to course and program outcomes. Since many faculty are part-time and at a distance, Program Chairs hold discussions through WebEx or ENGAGE to gain feedback for improvement of curricula. Program Chairs are able to incorporate faculty feedback throughout the year and, when needed, make responsive changes to curriculum. The schools' assessment administrators assist in reviewing the results and developing action plans.

Closing-the-loop action plan strategies include: revised course sequences, changed course design, revised assessments, modified resources or classroom activities, and new information and training for faculty. Following are examples of actual assessments and the resulting action plans and changes at various stages in the assessment cycle:

- In IFSM 201 (the general education course for technology fluency), assessment based on a common final exam whose items are aligned to course learning outcomes found low performance scores on questions related to security-related outcomes. As a result, a new learning module was developed that focused on security issues. The common exam again provides the measure for success for the new content, relative to those outcomes.

**Table 8.5 Sample Program Findings from Taskstream**

Program Findings for KNOW Rubric – TGS MS in Instructional Technology – Spring 2013			
<b>Description/Details of Measure:</b> Course assignment measured with associated TGS KNOW rubric overlapping with certain criteria in Phase III of the "Data-Driven Decision Making Project."			
<b>Acceptable Target/Benchmark:</b> Completing the assignment at least at the "Proficient" level according to the rubric is acceptable. Therefore, our acceptable target is at least 80% of the students receiving at least a "B" on the assignment.			
<b>Summary of Findings:</b> Student learning was at a competent or exemplary level on all three dimensions of content knowledge.			
<b>Detailed Analysis:</b> There were three sections in the analysis. There were 36 students in the data set. Five were not in the major. They were removed from the data set. There were 31 students in the analysis			
Conceptual Understanding	Theory Application	Knowledge Integration	Overall
1 = 0.0% Unsatisfactory 2 = 19.4% Marginal 3 = 32.3% Competent 4 = 48.4% Exemplary	1 = 3.2% Unsatisfactory 2 = 3.2% Marginal 3 = 35.5% Competent 4 = 58.1% Exemplary	1 = 6.5% Unsatisfactory 2 = 0.0% Marginal 3 = 32.3% Competent 4 = 61.3% Exemplary	Target of 80% of all students earning a B or better in all three criteria was achieved.



- In the MBA program, the common C2 assessment for institution-level outcomes (described earlier) found that the only competency for which students were not meeting the goal was Written Communication, Sources (identification and use). Under the resulting action plan, a list of pre-approved sources was posted and students were required to submit papers to Turnitin.com.
- HRMN 406 is an assessment point for the undergraduate Human Resource Management program outcome related to training, development, and total rewards programs. Assessment results revealed weak student performance on evaluation skills. After revision of course materials, the assessment found greater weakness on “implementation” than “evaluation,” suggesting that students needed more guidance on applying evaluation principles to real-world organizations. As a result, HRMN 406 was redesigned as an application course with a performance-based assessment approach based on a student needs analysis. Evaluation of student performance on the needs analysis in the redesigned course is being conducted in 2015-2016.
- Performance data on candidates for the graduate education degrees (MAT and MEd) helped lead to the decision to conduct annual norming sessions with faculty from both programs. The sessions, held virtually, review faculty grading of two common assignments using the same rubric. Summaries of the grading data inform faculty discussions to support peer exchange, common rubric interpretations and expectations, and consistent assessment.
- LIBS 150, the general education course for information literacy, had used a common final exam to assess student competency and performance. Over the past decade, the psychometrics of the exam have been regularly evaluated, producing several revisions in curriculum and assignments to strengthen student guidance in areas of identified weakness. Finding that an automated exam provides only limited information on student competencies, faculty added an additional assessment: a research log evaluated by a rubric. More recently, in 2014, the learning outcome in LIBS 150 was deconstructed into five competencies, and all assessments redesigned to reflect balance among them, ensuring that each competency is addressed more meaningfully. The sequence of quizzes

in the course was revised so that each of the first four competencies is evaluated by two quizzes. The research log was also revised to sharpen the focus on these competencies, and points were redistributed to give appropriate weight to each. For both semesters following the Fall 2014 implementation of these changes, the number of students not successfully completing the course (withdrawing or failing) fell approximately 2 percent (nearly 200 students) compared with the previous year.

Other examples are included in Appendix H of the 2015 IAP, and data on assessments and the results for programs are in the document inventory. Following is more detail on how one “loop” was closed in the undergraduate criminal justice program (Criminal Justice mini-paper/final project analysis, 2015):

1. To assess the program-embedded hallmark and learning outcome of written communication, a mini-paper assignment was integrated into the criminal justice curriculum to improve students’ writing skills by providing practice and feedback before the final longer paper.
2. Courses requiring mini-paper assignments were compared to courses without the requirement, using common rubrics to determine the impact on final paper performance.
3. After the first trial in Spring 2014, the rubrics and requirements were revised to address concerns revealed in the assessment, among them areas of student weakness and issues around assignment clarity.
4. In Spring 2015, comparison was again made with the rubrics and assignments. The resulting analysis demonstrated improvement in student performance between Spring 2014 and Spring 2015.
5. Both analyses helped to evaluate specific areas of student performance: content, application of theory and knowledge, APA format, terminology, organization and style, and grammar/mechanics. Responsiveness to the topic was the weakest area, while sentence structure was the strongest. These delineations aid faculty in focusing on specific areas that require further support.

As this and the other examples illustrate, the iterative nature of the process—revising the instrument and assignment as well as analyzing

results for other curricular changes—is a key part of the assessment cycle.

Learning outcomes assessment data also intersect with more indirect evidence to provide ideas for continuous improvement. As described throughout this report, UMUC carefully monitors trends on student enrollment, retention and success. In addition to overall trends, UMUC often pulls data to identify courses with high non-completion rates, especially those that students tend to take early in their careers at UMUC. Those high-failure courses are analyzed for learning outcomes and student success issues. Many such courses have been redesigned to sharpen learning outcomes and activities (e.g., PSYC 100 Introduction to Psychology was redesigned to make it more appropriate for non-majors), and others may be discontinued (e.g., EDCP 103, discussed in Chapter 7) and replaced with courses whose goals and outcomes are more appropriate in focus, level, or program sequence. In the future, the new Academic Program Dashboards will further assist in pinpointing places in the curriculum where more support is needed, and combine with learning outcomes data to suggest strategies. The predictive models generated in the Civitas Learning project (see Chapter 9) also identify variables related to student success. They can help to inform the learning activities that address student needs in those areas.

Combined results from all these sources feed into the planning and budget process in several ways. They can produce (and then draw more data from) special university initiatives that receive investment funding (like the Jumpstart project discussed in Chapters 6 and 7) or foundation and grant funding (like the Kresge, Carnegie, and Gates grants projects). Assessment results also guide resource allocation within Academic Affairs. For example, when a course needs redesign to address student performance issues around learning outcomes, as happened with the re-sequencing and quiz redesign for LIBS 100, that course gains priority in the Learning Design & Solutions' timetable and budget (developed in consultation with the schools), the school obtains an appropriate faculty subject matter expert to participate in the design (contracted by LD&S), and the library provides help to identify new electronic resources. Going forward, it may require a new assessment that, in turn, needs resources for design and results analysis. The devolution of assessment to the schools makes it possible for these needs and requests to roll up through the

normal process of prioritization and coordination with other departments.

The most comprehensive place where learning outcomes assessment data combines with other analysis to effect changes is in the Academic Program Review that all programs undergo every five years (see Chapter 5). In that review, assessment results are considered along with other data—such as grade distribution trends, enrollment growth, and changing content of the field. Over the period of review, it is possible to observe assessment results along with external trends and the impact of changes in curriculum and assignments. For example, the 2014-2015 APR summary for the undergraduate Computing and Information Science program noted assessment results showing acceptable demonstration of knowledge in the areas of programming and testing, but lower performance in security-threat reduction and emerging technologies—both increasingly important areas in the field. Because of those findings over the years and the program review, more focus was placed on those areas, and the program was redesigned as a major in Software Development and Security.

## **ASSESSMENT COMPLIANCE IN THE CURRENT FRAMEWORK**

UMUC continues to show strong commitment to the systematic, sustained, and meaningful assessment of student learning outcomes and the four-step teaching-learning-assessment cycle detailed in Standard 14, Assessment of Student Learning. At the institution, school, and program levels, clearly articulated learning outcomes define what the UMUC learning community identifies as “essential knowledge, skills and abilities (attitudes, dispositions, values, and habits of mind) for success in a profession or area of study” (2015 IAP, page 7). These student learning outcomes are developed in context of the institution, school, and program missions for the purpose of guiding and evaluating student learning. They are created with input from employers, professional associations, and industry experts so that program curricula appropriately prepare students for work in their fields of study.

Programs, courses, and learning activities are designed intentionally to provide students with opportunities to meet specific student learning expectations. UMUC courses are built around course-specific student learning outcomes, which in turn align with program-level



outcomes. Assessments are designed to monitor student achievement of learning expectations and inform improvements to curriculum and student learning. Student performance is observed and measured through course-specific activities and evaluated using custom rubrics and/or standardized tests that align to the outcomes.

As documented in UMUC's *Institutional Assessment Plan* and summarized in Table 8.6, UMUC's assessment framework incorporates the following fundamental elements of student learning outcomes assessment underlying Standard 14.

## VISION FOR THE FUTURE

### Elements of the Future State

UMUC is focused on transforming its learning model so that the university will be able to offer high-quality education at an affordable price while maintaining its mission of providing access. The new learning model—which will personalize education for each student through early assessment of competencies, human and technological support, and curriculum and pedagogical strategies based on learning science—will also drive the evolution of learning outcomes assessment.

The vision for the new learning model begins with each degree program, building on earlier outcomes-based curricula but now developing more detailed competency profiles—including skill sets and descriptors—for professionals in the relevant career fields. (A sample competency map is found in Appendix 11.) Individual student progression in the program will be based on successful demonstration of learning in applied contexts; each learning demonstration will integrate multiple competencies, all built into a careful sequence that is from less to more challenging as the student progresses. Competencies will be assessed at developing, progressing, and achieving stages, and immediate performance feedback will be available to students and faculty. Assessment plans will compile the results of student performance on key learning demonstrations, thus allowing both individual progress reporting and overall program assessment.<sup>63</sup>

### Strengths and Challenges

Many elements of the new learning model are yet to be designed, but based on that

fundamental vision, it will strengthen UMUC's assessment approach and understanding of student performance.

- Student performance will be assessed at the course level and aggregate to the program and school levels for reporting. In many cases individual courses have already embedded assessments to measure program-level outcomes. However, the new learning model will allow more finely detailed competency definition and more sequential learning demonstrations. As illustrated in Figure 8.1, the descriptors (detailed definitions) of the competencies are used to design the learning demonstrations (assignments) in courses. In turn, the evaluation of student performance on the learning demonstrations provides the assessment data. Goals for student performance (e.g., the expected score that will show competency, based on a rubric or other assessment instrument) provide the measures for achievement of the learning outcome.

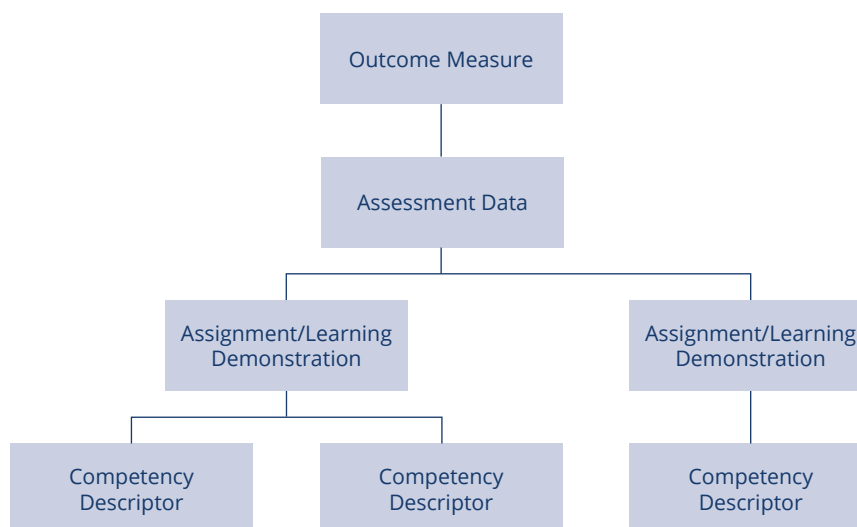
For example, for a learning goal in graduate marketing, the competency (learning outcome) statement “analyze customer markets” produces these descriptors: 1) evaluate the critical factors influencing consumer behavior for a select product/service and recommend action steps to leverage opportunities and mitigate risks, 2) develop appropriate and effective customer segmentation criteria to identify target markets for a product or service, and 3) identify target markets and recommend action steps for a select product/service to leverage opportunities and mitigate risks. The learning demonstration—the assignment in which the student demonstrates the learning described—can combine those descriptors in the requirement of a marketing plan. (The descriptors help to identify the elements of that plan and develop a rubric for evaluating it.) In turn, the rubric score becomes the data for the outcome measure: did the student show the necessary competency to advance?

- Sequencing will be more deliberate throughout the program, as well as in individual courses. Guidelines for the new model require programs to assess schools' core competencies and major program competencies at least three times during the program—at an early, mid, and end stage of the program life-cycle—to capture students in the developing, progressing, and achieving stages of proficiency/mastery. Again, this is already done in

**Table 8.6 Fundamental Elements of Standard 14 and UMUC Process**

Element	UMUC Process
1. Clearly articulated statements of expected student learning outcomes appropriately integrated with one another; consonant with the institution's mission; and consonant with the standards of higher education and of the relevant disciplines.	Student learning expectations are informed by the institution and school missions, and are articulated at the institution-, school-, program- and course-levels. Specific outcomes correspond to competency areas identified in Standard 12 of the Middle States Commission's <i>Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education</i> (2006 edition; revised online 2009) and those adopted by the Maryland Higher Education Commission.
2. A documented, organized, and sustained assessment process to evaluate and improve student learning that meets the following criteria: systematic, sustained, and thorough use of multiple qualitative and/or quantitative measures that: maximize the use of existing data and information; clearly and purposefully relate to the goals they are assessing; are of sufficient quality that results can be used with confidence to inform decisions; and include direct evidence of student learning.	Documented in UMUC's <i>Institutional Assessment Plan</i> and corresponding School and program plans. Process includes assessment at institution, School, and program levels, based on actual student assignments embedded in courses; data analysis and tracking using Trackstream, including mapping of assessments to outcomes; assessment at multiple points in the programs aligned to specific learning outcomes.
3. Support and collaboration of faculty and administration in assessing student learning and responding to assessment results.	Faculty are involved in developing and administering School- and program-level assessment plans. They participate on special teams tasked with improving assessment practices. They are engaged through School websites and active interaction with Program Chairs and those responsible for assessment in each school. Both adjunct and collegiate faculty are engaged in assessments in the courses they teach and discussion of results with other faculty.
4. Clear, realistic guidelines and timetable, supported by appropriate investment of institutional resources.	Documented in the <i>Institutional Assessment Plan</i> and corresponding School and program plans.
5. Sufficient simplicity, practicality, detail, and ownership to be sustainable.	Demonstrated significant improvement in the last ten years with the move from a centralized to a decentralized model for conducting assessment processes.
6. Periodic evaluation of the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of the institution's student learning assessment processes.	Under the guidance of the Assessment Steering Committee. Institution's focus on continuous improvement results in ongoing evaluation. Upcoming learning model redesign provides opportunity for re-envisioning.
7. Assessment results that provide sufficient, convincing evidence that students are achieving key institutional and program learning outcomes.	As documented in the TaskStream and TK20 systems.
8. Evidence that student learning assessment information is shared and discussed with appropriate constituents and is used to improve teaching and learning.	As documented in the TaskStream and TK20 systems and as used by programs to create action plans to improve curricula. Also visible in assessment websites and faculty discussions in ENGAGE.
9. Documented use of student learning assessment information as part of institutional assessment.	Documented in periodic institution-level reports and program-level reviews, and used to support academic initiatives. More continuous and integrated use to be addressed under the redesign of UMUC's learning model and related assessment practices .

**Figure 8.1 Alignment of Descriptors, Learning Demonstrations, Assessment, and Outcomes**



some cases but will become bedrock practice, with more extensive data gathered and analyzed at the student, course, program, and school levels.

- The new model will also allow closer alignment of learning outcomes (competencies being measured) and learning activities. Because student progression is based on successful demonstration of learning in applied contexts, this design will allow assessment to emerge as a natural, ongoing part of the learning environment (e.g., when a student conducts a needs analysis or constructs an organizational plan) as opposed to a process inserted into an environment (e.g., a research paper at the end of the semester).
- Assessment will improve, moving closer to real-time feedback.
- Since learning outcomes, activities, and assessments will become more closely related, the new design has potential for greater faculty involvement in the evaluation of student learning and more meaningful interactions with students around learning experiences. Faculty will be able to explain the activities in the course in terms of outcomes and competencies, as well as how rubrics and other evaluation tools dovetail with competencies and provide measures of very specific competencies. In this way, more detailed feedback will be available to support learning.
- Technology will enable UMUC to track student performance on learning demonstrations (activities) and provide students with a summary of their progress toward mastery of school- and program-level competencies related

to their degrees. Through careful, routine monitoring of the evaluation of key learning demonstrations and the use of rubrics, UMUC will equip students with the best possible feedback on how they are progressing toward the mastery of program competencies. This will provide more continuous results than annual assessments, allowing for mid-course adjustments and enhanced individual support.

- Assessment findings, through broader and timelier dissemination, become a more powerful data point to inform decisions on academic quality and institutional effectiveness. As UMUC builds its competency-based learning model to include robust data collection and analytic technologies, it will be better able to summarize learning-outcome results from across the university. This information will allow UMUC to better evaluate overall student success in identified competency areas and, when necessary, to formulate broader, more robust institution-level interventions. For example, aggregated information that alerts the university to decreasing performance across both schools in writing competency might be used to drive institutional plans for investment in the Effective Writing Center or other interventions to support students in this fundamental competency.

Assessment of student learning plays a significant role in continuously monitoring and improving UMUC curricula and student learning. The new learning model not only will build on what UMUC has learned from its current assessment model about the efficacy of alignment, definition, and measurement in support

of student learning, but it will carry it to a new level. Founded on the evaluation of student learning for each learning demonstration, the new assessment plan becomes a natural extension of the teaching process, providing close alignment of activities to evaluation and improving overall reliability.

UMUC is addressing these issues during project planning for the redesign of its learning model. Both institutional assessments and learning outcomes assessments will help to evaluate success and make mid-course adjustments in the model.

## Conclusions

UMUC is in compliance on Standard 14. Student learning expectations—both general education and program-specific—are articulated at the institution, school, and degree/program level; are consistent with UMUC’s mission and the nature of its students; and are assessed regularly based on detailed plans overseen by an Assessment Steering Committee and representatives in the schools. Assessments are designed appropriate to the learning outcomes, curriculum structure, and delivery modes, and they align from course to program to school to institution levels. Assessments are documented, analyzed, and used to improve teaching and learning. They are also considered along with other, indirect, indicators to influence the planning and budget processes in support of student success.

As UMUC moves forward, both now and as the new learning model is instituted, it is important to continue to attend to the central challenges in student learning assessment in the following ways:

- Make reporting of student learning assessment results more accessible, understandable, and useful to UMUC stakeholders, including students, faculty, administrators, and other units of the university.
- Redesign the UMUC learning outcomes assessment website to ensure broader and more up-to-date dissemination of information about assessment activities and learning outcomes.
- Employ the results of assessment activities, not only to inform immediate changes to course curricula but also to inform larger, long-term institution-level strategies and processes.
- Engage students in understanding why they are being assessed to help them recognize what is expected in learning activities, to encourage them to discuss these expectations with their peers and faculty, and to aid them in envisioning approaches for achieving competencies.



## CHAPTER NINE

# Assessing Institutional Effectiveness

## **STANDARD 7: INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT**

The institution has developed and implemented an assessment process that evaluates its overall effectiveness in achieving its mission and goals and its compliance with accreditation standards.



# CHAPTER NINE

## Assessing Institutional Effectiveness

UMUC has become increasingly systematic and evidence-driven in its approach to institutional effectiveness. Its systems for monitoring and analysis, as well as its processes for accountability and improvement, are founded in its mission and goals and form the basis of its continuous innovation and improvement. As discussed in Chapter 8, UMUC supports a rigorous, carefully planned, and comprehensive program of learning outcomes assessment. In addition, it maintains other measures of institutional efficiency and effectiveness. For UMUC, the institutional assessment plan and process consist of: the state framework and goals for institutional assessment, supplemented by its own strategic plan, strategic initiatives, and the implementation plans related to those initiatives; resulting data collection and monitoring, including a robust system of data infrastructure and analytics; reporting and ongoing use of results for evaluation of implementation activities and the adjustment of the strategic plan; and continuing innovation and experimentation. Together, these elements provide multiple and varied measures by which to evaluate and improve institutional activities, planning, and resource allocation.

### UMUC APPROACH TO INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT

UMUC's approach to institutional assessment begins with its identity as a member of the University System of Maryland (USM). Assessment by each constituent institution in the USM is conducted through a range of mandated reports, including the annual Managing for Results report (MFR, Appendix 12), also called the Performance Accountability Report, to the Maryland Department of Management and Budget and the Peer Performance Report (PPR, Appendix 13) to the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC).

The MFR is designed to assess each institution in Maryland against the state's strategic goals and the goals established by each institution to meet its mission. UMUC's MFR has 21 metrics as institutional assessment indicators, which were developed with the USM Board of Regents and MHEC. The MFR contains indicators about enrollment and degree trends institution-wide and for specific disciplines that address

workforce needs, overall employment rates, student satisfaction, indicators of institutional efficiency, and access for minorities, military members, and economically disadvantaged students. Every five years, UMUC identifies and is held accountable for specific targets for each indicator. In addition, UMUC writes a narrative assessment of how the institution is doing in each of the areas addressed by the State Plan for Postsecondary Education. These areas center around: 1) increasing access to students, 2) providing a set of programs that meet workforce needs, 3) promoting economic growth and maintaining a well-educated workforce, and 4) creating institutional efficiency and effectiveness.

The PPR concentrates on affordability, access for underrepresented students, and degree progress and completion. It provides a snapshot of how the institution is doing in comparison to other institutions that have been identified as its peers—based on the institution's profile, financial model, and the demographics of the study populations. The PPR offers indicators related to access, particularly when it comes to minority and African-American students, and to degrees awarded, especially in technology and management.

Other regular reports to MHEC address enrollment and degree trends, student learning outcomes, transfer and retention rates, and graduation numbers.<sup>64</sup> State assessment reporting includes many of the broad measures reviewed in determining institutional trends and operational health: for example, enrollment trends including the dip in 2012, the subsequent gradual recovery to the current state of growth, and the financial accommodations made to maintain fiscal stability in light of those trends. UMUC's very detailed tracking of operational metrics—total headcount, course-completion rates, re-enrollment rates, and total revenues—feeds into this assessment framework and the overall picture of its institutional health and stability.

UMUC supplements these assessments with additional measures appropriate to its identity and conditions. Operating in a dynamic segment of higher education, the university must correct course and adapt its plans and structures more frequently than many traditional institutions.

### IN THIS CHAPTER

- **UMUC Approach to Institutional Assessment**
  - Alignment of Plans and Assessments
  - Data Infrastructure and Analytics
- **Performance Monitoring and Analysis**
- **Using Assessments for Performance Improvement**
- **Innovation and Experimentation**
- **Vision for the Future**
  - Elements of the Future State
  - Strengths and Challenges
  - Conclusions

Detailed systems of institutional controls, resource strategies, and performance assessment measures, as well as an extensive set of data reports and analyses, allow for both continuous and cyclical monitoring of institutional effectiveness and efficiency at UMUC.

The Strategic Plan serves as the guiding star to keep those changes on target and in harmony with the mission. Accountability is assured through goal setting and budget development processes (discussed in Chapters 2 and 3), as Senior Vice Presidents align the goals of the major units with the goals of the university and, in turn, develop the goals and metrics for new initiatives as well as ongoing activities. As a result, the implementation and evaluation flowing from the strategic plan drive additional measures through which institutional effectiveness is gauged. These go beyond enrollment expansion and revenue to include growth in new student markets, efficiency with an emphasis on global streamlining and increased access for students, learning outcomes supplemented by more detailed information from learning analytics, and technologically-supported assessments.

Thus, institutional information combines with data collected for specific initiatives: for example, conversion of inquiries (leads) to admission and subsequent registration, success of specific marketing and outreach campaigns, effects of specific changes (e.g., term length, registration deadlines, or redesign of academic programs) in terms of student success, and comparative performance of particular groups of students.

These goals and metrics underscore what is important to assess in each area, again in alignment with strategic goals. The new initiative approval process (see Chapter 3) further demands measurable outcomes and criteria. All these elements of the institutional assessment process allow evaluation of overall effectiveness as well as individual activities.

### **Alignment of Plans and Assessments**

UMUC's organizational structure and lines of authority facilitate decision-making and accountability for improvements at unit and institutional levels, as well as individual responsibility. In addition to alignment with the State Plan for Postsecondary Education, the Executive Committee and Cabinet consider how well initiatives align with UMUC's mission and strategic priorities. Long-term plans for major

departments also align, defining direction and specific responsibilities based on the strategic goals and values as translated into unit, department, and individual outcomes. For example, as mentioned in Chapter 3, the Information Technology Roadmap from the Office of Analytics, Planning, and Technology (Appendix 6) integrates UMUC's strategic priorities and learning principles with a review of technological trends to outline its plans for technology improvement.

Although formats vary by department, this alignment has become more deliberate and consistent. In Global Military Operations, for example, mission and vision statements and strategic goals align with UMUC goals but with the narrower focus on military students; in turn, each division (stateside, Europe, and Asia operations) develops versions of the mission, vision and strategic goals appropriate to its positioning.<sup>65</sup> These goals provide the basis for plans and measures, including metrics and actions for specific sites (e.g., the multi-year site schedules described in Chapter 7, for which enrollments provide success metrics).

Global Military Operations' goals and measures generally focus on the strategic goals of student success and an improved student experience. In Marketing, on the other hand, the goals of "responsible stewardship" and "enrollment growth" are paramount, along with the strategic initiative of "diversifying the revenue portfolio." These elements, similarly, translate into more specific strategies at the unit level. In this case, measures of growth and visibility include not only overall student numbers but diversification through growth of new non-military students, as well as identification and testing of new audience and media opportunities. Metrics include lead identification and conversion, response from new outreach tools, and growth in specific student segments (Marketing FY 2016 presentation, 2015).

To further align initiatives, identify performance improvements, and allocate university resources within the broad directions of the strategic plan, UMUC leverages project and portfolio management methodology. The Project Management Office (PMO) plays a significant role in tracking initiatives that are approved as appropriate to the mission and priorities. The Enterprise PMO process for planning and executing priority projects<sup>66</sup> helps to ensure that the organization successfully completes initiatives, mitigates the risk of failure, coordinates across

units, and uses standardized processes and tools. Strategic initiatives are aligned with priorities, tracked centrally by the PMO, and reported in weekly meetings. The PMO also assists in resource allocation to support project deadlines and appropriate staffing levels. Findings are documented in the Strategic Projects Report. (A sample report, including some projects described in this self-study, is found in Appendix 14.) As projects close out, a final report is issued, often accompanied by a Lessons Learned summary<sup>67</sup> assessing project success and identifying improvements that will help subsequent projects refine their outcomes and processes.

All these forecasts and reports are used in the context of a performance management framework that both guides and implements decision-making. With the Project Management Office, Provost's Council, Executive Committee, and other guiding groups, the university has established a regular meeting cadence—daily, weekly, monthly, term-based, and annual—to review data, develop action plans, and assess the impact of previous initiatives in light of strategic goals and priorities. (Examples of process documents illustrating this flow are in the document inventory: Cabinet notes, approval process, categorization of strategic priorities, strategic projects report, Executive Committee agenda, and decision paper.)

By combining a robust data infrastructure with a rigorous performance-management process, UMUC is able to closely monitor and oversee enrollment and financial performance. The results can be seen in such areas as Marketing and Student Recruitment, which have improved enrollment and retention while lowering marketing costs. In FY 2015, spending on Marketing decreased by 15 percent and the number of leads (prospective applicants) reduced by 5 percent, while actual applications for admission rose more than 3 percent and new student headcount by 11 percent. (See Table 9.1.)

To guide individual performance in support of university and unit outcomes, annual performance reviews for all employees (see Chapter 4) include individual goals and objectives tied to departmental and university-wide priorities. In Strategic Enrollment Management, for example, the institutional goal of improving the student administrative experience leads to a department goal of “creating a world-class service culture” which, in turn, forms the basis for criteria and processes for performance management and coaching (Office of Advising, Quality Assurance Model, 2013). UMUC's Leadership Development program also provides competencies and tools to develop and assess the effectiveness of university leadership.

## Data Infrastructure and Analytics

Given the alignment of goals and strategies, much monitoring and assessment is ongoing, as continuing data collection allows observers to step back at any point to observe current state and trends. This culture of continuous and multifaceted institutional monitoring and assessment contributes to service and efficiency and allows refocusing as needed to fulfill the university's goals. Assessment includes external reports on the state assessment framework (degrees awarded, retention and graduation rates, student headcount, enrollment projections, learning assessments, surveys, academic program reviews) and more specific internal reports (data on specific programs, measures of progress on projects, research analyses on pilot projects) for management and decision-making by task groups and units.

This robust system of assessment and continuous improvement, both for monitoring trends and for evaluating success on strategic goals, draws on UMUC's growing culture of data analytics. UMUC has always focused on institutional effectiveness. It built a data warehouse and reporting tool (EDWARDS) to aggregate data from across the university and developed

**Table 9.1 Marketing Results FY 2015**

	<b>FY 2014</b>	<b>FY 2015 (Projected Year-End)</b>	<b>Variance</b>	<b>% Variance</b>
Applications	36,969	38,185	1,216	3.29
New Headcount	16,563	18,390	1,827	11.03
Total Headcount	56,144	57,668	1,524	2.71
Total Enrollments	215,776	224,014	8,238	3.82
Total Credit Hours	643,450	665,489	22,039	3.43

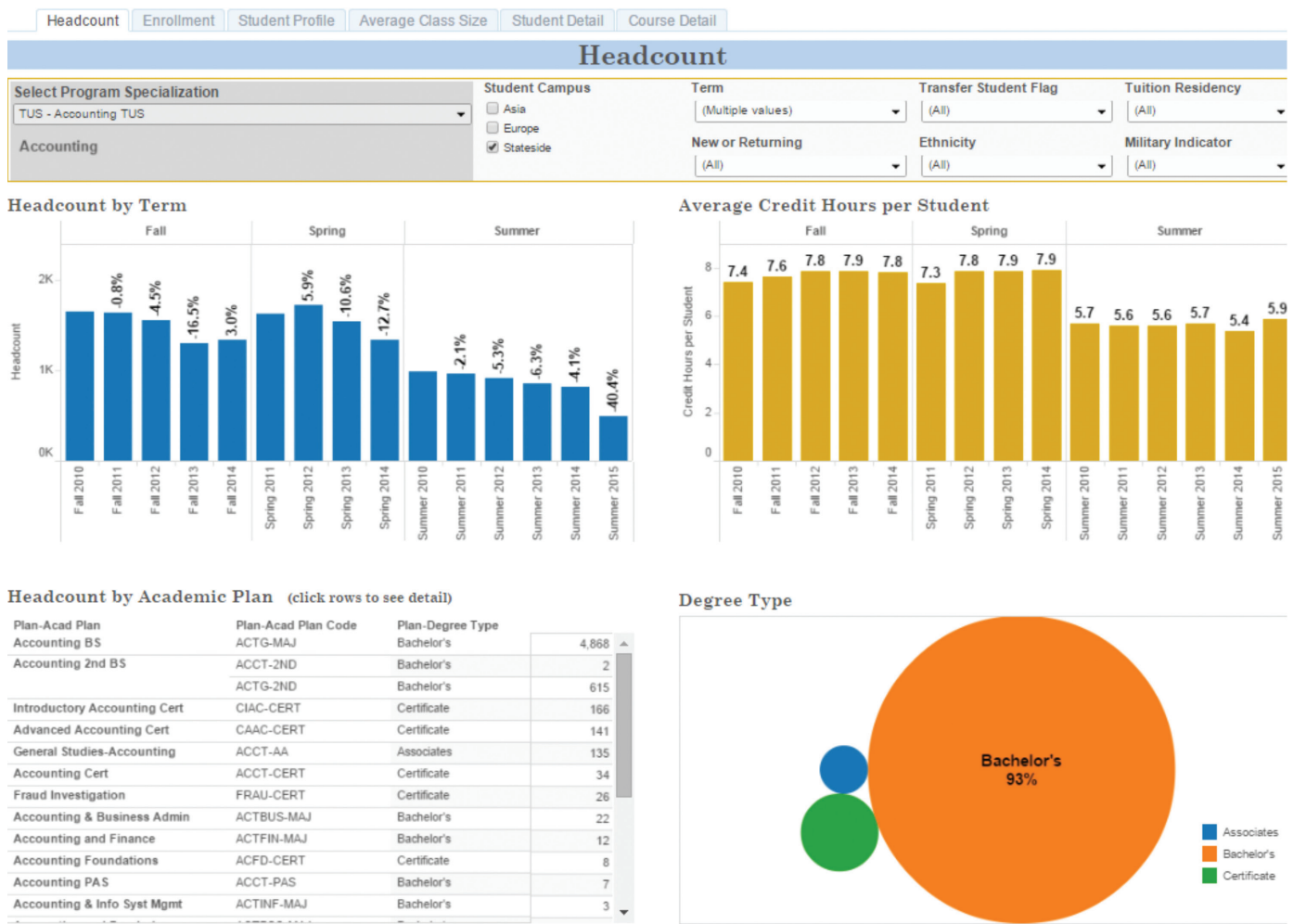
a single integrated source for institutional information. More recently, the university created an Office of Analytics and invested in a sophisticated data infrastructure to support decision-making. This third-generation data warehouse (Hercules) contains a wealth of detail from throughout the university—including financial, student applications, enrollment, marketing, course/faculty, and learning management system (LMS) activity data. It supports analysis on key metrics such as enrollment trends, degrees awarded, and retention rates.

Drawing on this data, information is increasingly provided through “dashboards” of administrative and academic information, organized and disseminated in visually accessible format. For example, the Executive Dashboard for unit heads combines enrollment, financial, and student success metrics as well as marketing analytics that track spending, applications, enrollments, and conversion rates for new students. Academic Program Dashboards for

Program Chairs and Deans (examples are in Figure 9.1) help to monitor enrollment trends, student outcomes, and faculty performance for each school and program.

These broad data analytics capabilities assist the university in managing and monitoring not only institutional performance and financial viability, but also the effectiveness of student success efforts. The university's multi-year financial forecast considers macro factors affecting the industry, as well as internal initiatives to improve effectiveness and efficiency, and UMUC tracks enrollments very closely to ensure they are in alignment with the fiscal budget. The dashboards dedicated to student recruitment and retention allow for even deeper analysis. These analytics tools have been so successful that, in September 2015, UMUC created a company, HelioCampus,<sup>68</sup> to offer them to other universities. The resulting revenue source will help to underwrite scholarships for UMUC students.

**Figure 9.1 Example of Academic Dashboards**



## PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND ANALYSIS

Performance—overall and within academic units—is assessed not only through learning outcomes assessment but also through metrics including course completion, grade distributions, and course evaluations. In addition, each major academic program undergoes a full Academic Program Review (APR) every five years. The data studied include enrollment and graduation rates, faculty demographics, grade distributions, course evaluations, and employment trends. The APR includes a report from an external reviewer, and concludes with recommendations and action plans that are reviewed by the Curriculum Council and Provost. The APR is sent to the state for review and response. (Sample APRs for undergraduate and graduate programs are available in the document inventory.)

Performance of administrative units is assessed through measures of effectiveness and efficiency: response time, cost-benefit, customer satisfaction, and complaints. These data are obtained through means such as surveys, logs and usage data. For example, UMUC collects data on students' academic experiences and overall student satisfaction from the Noel Levitz Priority Survey of Online Learners, which has been administered since 2012 and provides peer comparisons. Institutional Research also conducts an internal current student survey that provides trend analysis of overall satisfaction and satisfaction with specific student service areas. In general, the surveys have found satisfaction with services such as the library (where student satisfaction is above the national average), technical assistance, billing, and registration. Areas of concern include timeliness of

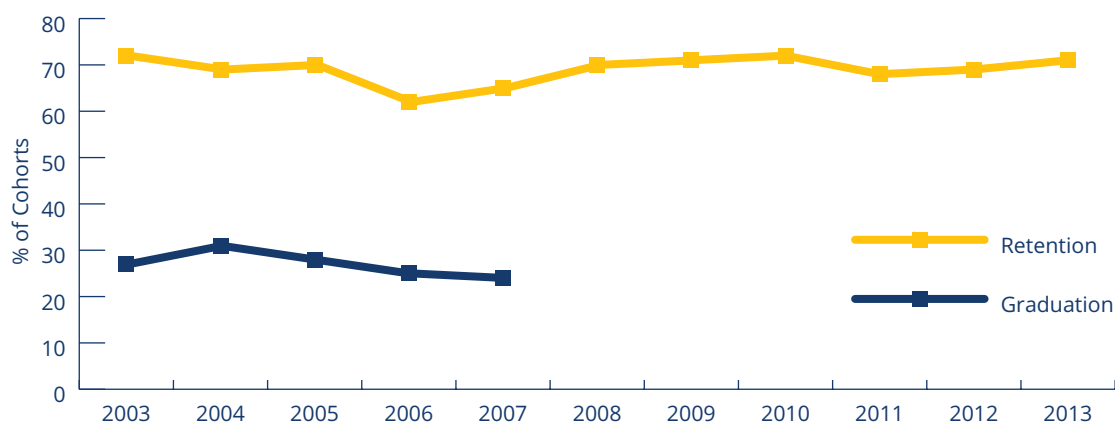
response on informational requests. The results are used to address areas of weakness and identify predictors of student satisfaction.

Other metrics specific to units and goals include performance on growth goals. As described earlier, careful use and analysis of applicant data have allowed Marketing to improve recruitment strategies and processes, so that it now yields more applicants and new students with lower costs.

Retention is a special issue for UMUC, given its part-time adult population, and a success indicator for both academic and administrative goals. Because of the in-and-out pattern of adult students, retention at UMUC is often measured in return of students from one year to the next (see Chapter 6). Longer-term retention and completion rates look at “cohorts” that began at the same time. Although there are no true cohorts (since students enter with different amounts of credit and progress at disparate rates), this analysis can help to discern trends. Since 1998, UMUC has been tracking entering students over a ten-year period to examine their success. As Figure 9.2 shows, the slowdown in retention that surfaced about 2006 and again around 2011 is reflected in lower one-year retention rates and, over the longer term, in declining completion rates. An adult student's long pathway to a degree extends that trend even after recruitment and retention improve. However, the steady rise in retention since 2011 (to 78.6 percent, from 75.6 percent, as shown in Chapter 6), along with the improvement in recruitment, helps to explain current enrollment growth and to support projections for rising completion rates over time as the new cohorts progress.

The retention picture is further complicated by the fact that many students leave UMUC

**Figure 9.2 One-Year Retention and Eight-Year Graduation Rates for 2003-2013 Cohorts**

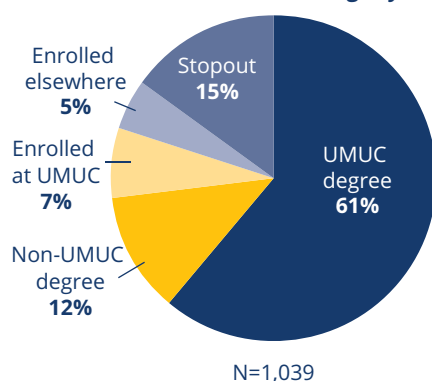




to complete their degrees at other universities. Analyzing data from the National Student Clearinghouse, UMUC found that approximately 12 percent of students who leave UMUC go on to complete a degree elsewhere. This pattern is especially common among military students, who may choose to attend the universities nearest their locations or to complete their degrees at home when deployments end. Using the Servicemember's Opportunity College (SOC) cohort of military students, UMUC found that the eight-year graduation rate for UMUC's FY 2006 cohort was 72 percent when those graduating from non-UMUC institutions were included. See Figure 9.3.

**Figure 9.3 SOC Cohort**

UMUC FY 2006 SOC Cohort eight years later



## USING ASSESSMENTS FOR PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT

Examples of how these assessments support and inform multiple strategic goals and initiatives are shown in Table 9.2.

Institutional improvements arise from this continuous collection and analysis of assessment data. For example, the following analyses led to improvements in the student experience from outreach and recruitment through the lifecycle. The resulting changes affected work processes, technological support, and academic policies.

- In partnership with Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM), the Office of Analytics, Planning, and Technology developed models to improve collection and analysis of applicant data (Civitas Learning, 2014). The *Lead to Application Score* model scores and categorizes leads (prospective students) based on their likelihood of applying to UMUC, using variables captured on the lead forms (e.g., program of interest, how they heard of UMUC, whether they are military) as well

as marketing campaign attributes and census data for socioeconomic variables. The *Application to Success* model similarly scores and categorizes applicants based on their probability of enrolling and successfully completing their first term at the university. Data include those from the *Lead to Application Score* model, plus additional data from the application (e.g., prior academic work, residency and payment method, high school and test scores) and census data. With this modeling approach, the university will be able to develop specialized support for students with specific needs. At present, the approach is being used primarily to prioritize student calls and measure the relative “quality” of the applications in terms of predicted success.

- In 2014, Student Enrollment Management (SEM) created an “onboarding” initiative in response to internal research about challenges faced by new UMUC students. The process synthesized data from multiple sources to identify organizing principles for new student initiatives (UMUC, Onboarding Program Recommendations, 2015). The data included qualitative analysis and input from internal student support units, the survey of priorities for online learners, and an environmental scan. The resulting “Get Started” website (discussed in Chapter 6), for all students in their first semester at UMUC, includes contacts, checklists, deadlines, information on how to access UMUC’s online resources, a tutorial on LEO (the online learning management system), and best academic practices of successful students. The site has further evolved based on feedback from students (undergraduate, graduate, and military) in online focus groups.
- When analysis revealed that 50 percent of applicants did not finish the online form in one attempt, and 33 percent of those who started the application did not finish at all, research was initiated to examine and address the issues. It was found that degrees, tuition, costs, and flexibility were the most important questions for prospective students. In light of that, the website was revamped in Spring 2015 with greater focus on these student concerns, more self-service functionality to assist in decision-making, more personalized messaging throughout the application and enrollment process, and facilitation of higher-value advising sessions (UMUC, Prospect Website and eApp Project Background). The new website design includes microsites that simplify

**Table 9.2 Examples of Metrics, Goals, and Initiatives**

	Examples of Metrics	Initiative 1: Single Global Operational Model	Initiative 2: Improving Student Administrative Experience	Initiative 3: Transforming Core Learning Model	Initiative 4: Diversifying the Revenue Portfolio	Initiative 5: Maintaining the University Infrastructure
<b>Goal 1: Student Success</b>	Retention/graduation rates		X	X		
	Time to degree		X	X		
	Alumni engagement		X	X		
	Rate of student employment		X	X		
	Course completion rates	X	X	X		
	Withdrawal rates	X	X	X		
	Average GPA			X		
<b>Goal 2: Quality Education</b>	Learning outcomes assessment results	X		X		
	Academic program reviews	X	X	X		
	Credits received in transfer and experiential learning	X	X	X		
	Course evaluations	X		X		
	Library holdings			X		X
<b>Goal 3: Responsible Stewardship</b>	Audits	X			X	X
	Budget projections and financial statements	X			X	X
	Tuition and fees	X			X	X
	Strategic projects reports	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Goal 4: Enrollment Growth</b>	Enrollments overall and by subsets of students	X		X	X	
	Enrollments by delivery method and location	X			X	
	Number of credits taken per student			X	X	X
	Inquiries, conversion to leads, conversion to enrollment	X	X		X	X
	Lead scores		X		X	X
<b>Goal 5: Excellent Student Experience</b>	Student complaints	X	X			X
	Turnaround time on inquiries	X	X			X
	Student and alumni surveys	X	X	X		
	Advising and call center logs					X
<b>Goal 6: Organizational Capability</b>	Employee engagement survey	X				X
	Technology conversion timelines	X	X	X		X



access by grouping information around related academic programs (e.g., business, cybersecurity), as well as a site for military prospects. The sites include comprehensive academic program information such as career prospects, faculty profiles, student perspectives, and intended program outcomes.<sup>69</sup>

- Student satisfaction surveys conducted by Institutional Research join trend records in the service center as regular sources of information used to inform staff training. They led recently to more detailed assessment of “pain points” for students and ways that student service structures could be reformed. (See Chapter 6.)
- When analysis of student success data showed that those who registered late for classes had a significantly lower probability of success, UMUC changed its late registration and drop deadlines.<sup>70</sup> That change contributed to improved completion and retention rates.
- Tracking of registration patterns also improved scheduling stateside, leading to fewer late class cancellations (with the positive corollary of savings in fees paid to faculty members whose courses are canceled less than one month before the start of the course). Work continues on longer-term scheduling strategies (Shendy, Strategic Scheduling).

## INNOVATION AND EXPERIMENTATION

Institutional assessment goes even further, to support innovations in the learning model. In 2014, UMUC formed the Center for Innovation in Learning and Student Success (CILSS) to drive adoption of next-generation transformational online learning for UMUC’s adult students. CILSS serves as UMUC’s research and development arm, looking for possible improvements from advances in data science, cognitive science applied to learning, systems thinking, the field of innovation, business processes and models, workforce development, and educational technologies. CILSS also leads evaluation of pilots to test and replicate these improvements.

CILSS is involved in multiple projects to improve student success and retention, including eight in collaboration with the schools to test and evaluate different technologies for adaptive learning and four grant projects. They include initiatives such as courseware design; Project Jumpstart,

in collaboration with The Undergraduate School and Academic Advising, to introduce new strategies for student onboarding; and the comprehensive retention plan and strategy, in partnership with SEM, that is described in Chapter 6. CILSS is also supporting The Undergraduate School and The Graduate School on the new learning model by coordinating potential pilots, integrating the model into grant work, and providing student support.

Especially important, making data analytics a key component of the student success strategy has resulted in a practice of “learner analytics.” UMUC began early to leverage predictive analytics to improve student success, and it has engaged in three primary initiatives:

- UMUC established a relationship with Civitas Learning to develop predictive models to identify at-risk students (Civitas Learning, February 2014). Through a series of pilots, UMUC was able to achieve a statistically significant increase in undergraduate course-completion rates. Ongoing efforts are focused on scoring applicants’ likelihood of succeeding at UMUC in order to understand the variables that influence student persistence and retention and build multiple pathways on entering the university.
- The university is also a member of the Predictive Analytics Reporting (PAR) Framework.<sup>71</sup> Work with PAR focuses on establishing common data definitions to be used for predictive modeling, creating informative benchmarks for key metrics across established peer groups, and developing a student success matrix to inventory, organize, and conceptualize supports aimed at improving student outcomes. Once validated, UMUC will use the benchmarks in Academic Program Dashboards to provide additional context for program performance and student outcomes. The matrix is also being used to categorize and evaluate ongoing intervention strategies.
- In late 2010, UMUC received a \$1.2 million grant from the Kresge Foundation to measure and improve student success. The grant funded the development of a database that integrates student information across institutions to generate statistical models to predict student success and, subsequently, to design interventions to help close the achievement gap for underserved adult students in Maryland, specifically those who pursue a bachelor’s degree after community college (Lee, 2013). UMUC and its community college partners implemented a three-stage process

to extract and analyze student data from each school, create evidence-based approaches to maximize student success, and develop and disseminate the results. The grant also enabled UMUC and its partners to develop an integrated database system to build predictive models that will yield replicable practices to increase student persistence and graduation rates.

Increased use of data and learning analytics to predict student success and tailor early interventions has become important in UMUC’s fulfillment of its mission. UMUC is exploring adaptive learning strategies to help assess when students are unable to achieve mastery of specific topics so that it can intervene with supporting or remedial materials (e.g., interactive aspects of online course modules). In addition, UMUC has adopted technology allowing analysis of learner instrumentation, and it is studying how best to use that to understand and monitor what students do in the online learning

environment—content they access and interactions they have with mentors, other students, or support teams (e.g., librarians, tutors). These approaches will open the way to better understanding of success factors and criteria that benefit students. (See also Chapter 6.)

All these characteristics of UMUC’s institutional assessment process align with the fundamental elements of institutional assessment underlying Standard 7 (Table 9.3).

## VISION FOR THE FUTURE

### Elements of the Future State

The future for assessment of learning outcomes as described in Chapter 8 offers more detailed and immediate assessment data and new possibilities for tracking both individual student progress and overall program outcomes. Similarly, the vision of institutional assessment includes expanded ability to collect data from

**Table 9.3 Fundamental Elements of Standard 7 and UMUC Process**

Element	UMUC Process
<p>Written assessment plan and process that meet the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Foundation in the institution’s mission, goals, and objectives</li> <li>Periodic assessment of institutional effectiveness that addresses the total range of educational offerings, services, and processes, including planning, resource allocation, and institutional renewal processes; institutional resources; leadership and governance; administration; institutional integrity; and student learning outcomes</li> <li>Systematic and thorough use of multiple qualitative and/or quantitative measures, which maximize the use of existing data and information</li> <li>Evaluative approaches that yield results that are useful in institutional planning, resource allocation, and renewal</li> <li>Realistic goals and a timetable, supported by appropriate investment of institutional resources</li> <li>Periodic evaluation of the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of the institution’s assessment plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State-mandated assessment plan with required reporting</li> <li>Additional strategic plan with goals, objectives, and measures, devolving into department and unit plans with aligned goals, objectives, and measures</li> <li>Regular assessments and reports, including overall status and trends for enrollments, degree completion, and retention; academic program reviews; reports on projects and initiatives aligned with strategic goals; budget allocation by strategic goal; marketing response rates; individual performance measures at all levels; legal review of all publications and websites; audits; student satisfaction surveys; and student learning outcomes</li> <li>Detailed reporting of operational metrics and targeted outcomes through academic and administrative dashboards; analytical reports in academic program reviews and strategic planning processes at unit and institutional levels</li> <li>Reports and discussion through communication channels including Executive Committee, Cabinet, University Town Halls, the UMUC future website, ENGAGE, and individual unit planning</li> <li>Cyclical planning process including overall strategic plan every five years with annual updates and unit alignment, annual Executive Committee implementation planning, and summary and evaluation of major projects and their contribution goals and effectiveness</li> </ul>
Use of assessment results to improve and gain efficiencies in administrative services and processes, including activities specific to the institution’s mission (e.g., service, outreach, research)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data-driven project identification and planning</li> <li>Analysis for process and service improvements, including student advisement, support services, marketing, faculty training, and development</li> </ul>
A written institutional (strategic) plan that reflects consideration of data from assessment	Done. Last revised 2015.

more sources, tools to combine and analyze information from those sources, and more nuanced and helpful pictures of institutional strengths and weaknesses.

## **Strengths and Challenges**

UMUC has documented, organized, and sustained processes for assessment to support planning, resource allocation, and institutional renewal based on the institutional mission and goals. In response to President Miyares' call to be a data-driven university, powered by teaching and learning analytics (Global Town Hall, 2014), UMUC is strengthening these processes through the growing use of data analytics and learner analytics, which support new analyses and new models. Many improvements have already resulted from data-driven analyses of enrollments and student progress. Implementation of the new competency-based learning model will go even further, integrating curriculum with analytics to evaluate and track student mastery. At the same time, the university is developing a more scientific approach to student support and retention to better measure its efforts, as discussed in Chapter 6. The Center for Innovation and Student Success (CILSS) is leading pilot projects that can inform UMUC's vision of the future for learning, leveraging that data and technological advances.

## **Conclusions**

UMUC is in compliance on Standard 7. Its institutional assessment framework is clearly articulated and guides assessment at all levels, involves all constituencies, includes multiple measures and useful evaluations, and uses results fruitfully for administrative efficiencies and success in strategic outcomes.

As observed in Chapter 3, the scope of the institutional transformation now underway will demand careful definition of goals and assessment measures. Current assessment processes proceed from and measure success at achieving institutional goals. Performance at all levels is documented and evaluated, and results are used for continuous improvement, including identification of new areas where assessments are needed. However, it is sometimes difficult to view results and bring them into change recommendations in a coordinated way.

As identified and recommended in other areas of this self-study, as UMUC moves forward on its institutional transformation, it will be important

to communicate across the organization the evidence behind decisions and improvements and to train staff in how to obtain and interpret the data that are available. Along with the communication of mission and goals discussed in Chapter 2, the continued development of communication tools like the dashboards and training in how to use them will be essential, both for recognizing progress and problems and for bringing everyone along on the journey of transformation.

# Self-Study Conclusion



# SELF-STUDY CONCLUSION

UMUC believes that it is in compliance with all 14 standards and their fundamental elements, as evidenced in this report and supporting documentation. This self-study points out areas of concern and suggests areas of emphasis for the future. It also recommends specific actions in order to further improve UMUC's performance and to support its institutional transformation.

That transformation addresses the needs of UMUC's adult students through a comprehensive approach that will assess student skills at the onset, provide individualized degree plans, and offer continuous support of student progress. It encompasses redesign of all academic curricula to focus more effectively on learning mastery, allow more detailed and immediate learning outcomes assessment, and provide more adaptive delivery supported by technology. It also includes changes in advisement to take advantage of data analytics in order to personalize student pathways and to continuously monitor student progress, as well as administrative streamlining to advance increasingly seamless and user-friendly systems of student support. The new technological framework and data analytics will allow a personalized learning experience at scale for students and will support more detailed assessments and continuous improvement.

Given these far-reaching and complex redesigns, the continuing and accelerating pace of change at UMUC may be its most important challenge. Rapid large-scale change can cause dysfunction if members of the organization lose direction or feel excluded from decision-making. It is essential that UMUC keep the focus on how mission and goals drive decisions and actions.

Many of the suggestions in this report are already being enacted. The initiatives incorporating those suggestions are described throughout the self-study, with reminders of areas of concern and/or emphasis as they progress. However, effective communication and coordination form a central and consistent theme throughout all sections of the self-study report. To ensure appropriate communication and coordination, UMUC makes two formal **recommendations**, calling for:

- Increased internal communication of mission and goals with special emphasis on: how they drive the work of every unit; how decision-making takes into consideration the impact on students; new ways to solicit and receive feedback to encourage engagement among all constituencies; and communication of more concrete cases of where institutional decisions are determined by reference to mission and goals.
- Detailed definition of the changes in faculty roles and appropriate training to deepen faculty understanding of the elements of the model, including team approaches, learning experiences, and curricular design.





Notes



## CHAPTER 1

- 1 UMUC Fact Books are available online at <http://www.umuc.edu/visitors/about/ipra/factbook.cfm>.
- 2 Available online at <http://www.umuc.edu/visitors/about/ipra/learning-outcomes.cfm>.
- 3 UMUC Strategic Plan 2015-2018 is available at <https://www.umuc.edu/visitors/president/strategicplan/>.

## CHAPTER 2

- 4 The “Futures” webpage at [www.umuc.edu/UMUCfuture/](http://www.umuc.edu/UMUCfuture/) is used for information and discussion from the university community on current developments.
- 5 Available at [http://www.mhec.state.md.us/highered/2004plan/2013%20Maryland%20State%20Plan/MHECStatePlan\\_2014.pdf](http://www.mhec.state.md.us/highered/2004plan/2013%20Maryland%20State%20Plan/MHECStatePlan_2014.pdf).

## CHAPTER 3

- 6 Available at [www.usmd.edu/10yrplan/USM2020.pdf](http://www.usmd.edu/10yrplan/USM2020.pdf).
- 7 See for example, the 2013-2015 Academic Technology and Administrative Technology Roadmaps and the UMUC Library Strategic Plan for 2015-2017.
- 8 See for example the *Managing for Results Report*, further discussed in Chapter 9.
- 9 Audits and financial reports are included in the compliance documentation and document inventory.
- 10 See, for example: *UMUC Process Flows Faculty and Staff Recruitment*.

## CHAPTER 4

- 11 See <http://www.usmd.edu/>.
- 12 Board of Regents Bylaws, Policies and Procedures are available at [www.usmd.edu/regents/bylaws/](http://www.usmd.edu/regents/bylaws/).
- 13 For a list of members, see <https://www.umuc.edu/visitors/president/board.cfm>.
- 14 See [https://www.umuc.edu/visitors/president/exec\\_committee.cfm](https://www.umuc.edu/visitors/president/exec_committee.cfm).
- 15 For the full list, see <https://www.umuc.edu/visitors/president/cabinet.cfm>.
- 16 See <http://www.umuc.edu/diversity/fpu.cfm>.
- 17 See <https://www.umuc.edu/students/support/ombuds.cfm>.

- 18 See [www.umuc.edu/students/aid/fapolicies/consumerdisclosure/certificate-disclosures.cfm](http://www.umuc.edu/students/aid/fapolicies/consumerdisclosure/certificate-disclosures.cfm).
- 19 See [www.umuc.edu/visitors/about/ipra/upload/student-profile-and-graduation-rates.pdf](http://www.umuc.edu/visitors/about/ipra/upload/student-profile-and-graduation-rates.pdf).

## CHAPTER 5

- 20 As one student commented: “[My faculty member] uses his professional experience in the business world to help us better grasp concepts and to show us how they apply in the real world, and then encourages us to think critically about how to apply them on our own.” (Faculty Spotlight, Academic Affairs ENGAGE page August 2014.)
- 21 See faculty list at <http://www.umuc.edu/faculty/facsupport/facservices/faculty-list.cfm>.
- 22 *The Faculty Handbook* is being updated; the new version will be reviewed and approved by the Academic Advisory Board and made available in 2016.
- 23 All three faculty handbooks are available at <https://www.umuc.edu/faculty/handbook.cfm>.
- 24 See <http://www.aaup.org/report/1940-state-ment-principles-academic-freedom-and-tenure>, “Academic Freedom” section.
- 25 See [www.umuc.edu/facultydevelopment/development.cfm](http://www.umuc.edu/facultydevelopment/development.cfm).
- 26 New Faculty Orientation webpage, <http://www.umuc.edu/visitors/careers/NFO/>.
- 27 See Expectations for Faculty Teaching at UMUC, <https://www.umuc.edu/facultydevelopment/expectations.cfm>.
- 28 Available to faculty through <https://www.umuc.edu/facultydevelopment/development.cfm> and <https://engage.umuc.edu/community/faculty-development>.
- 29 Samples of recent APRs are in the appendices for the undergraduate History and graduate MDE programs.
- 30 Sample SEAT meeting notes are in the document inventory.
- 31 See <http://www.umuc.edu/alumni/careerdevelopment/>.
- 32 A full description of SEGUE is in UMUC’s 2011 *Periodic Review Report* to MSCHE.
- 33 Support services are discussed in Chapter 6.
- 34 For example, Couturier, 2012; Complete College America, 2014; Davis and Cho, 2014; McKinsey & Company, 2010.

- 35 A comparison of the old and new version of each program is in the document inventory.
- 36 At <http://www.umuc.edu/students/admissions/transfer/transfer-policies.cfm>.
- 37 Listed at [http://www.umuc.edu/students/admissions/transfer/ccalliances/alliances\\_md.cfm](http://www.umuc.edu/students/admissions/transfer/ccalliances/alliances_md.cfm) and [http://www.umuc.edu/students/admissions/transfer/ccalliances/alliances\\_other.cfm](http://www.umuc.edu/students/admissions/transfer/ccalliances/alliances_other.cfm).
- 38 See for instance [http://www.nature.nps.gov/protectingrestoring/DO12site/04\\_EISs/045\\_EISformat.htm](http://www.nature.nps.gov/protectingrestoring/DO12site/04_EISs/045_EISformat.htm).
- 39 See <http://www.p21.org/our-work/p21-framework>.
- 51 See <https://www.asia.umuc.edu/undergraduate/undergraduate-programs> and <https://www.asia.umuc.edu/graduate/masters/master-business-administration-mba>.
- 52 For example, Bailey and Cho, 2010.
- 53 See <http://edready.org>.
- 54 Available at <http://www.umuc.edu/students/aid/fapolicies/consumerdisclosure/certificate-disclosures.cfm>.
- 55 See <http://www.umuc.edu/undergrad/creditoptions/creditbyexam/>.
- 56 See [https://www.umuc.edu/undergrad/creditoptions/priorlearning/coursechallenge\\_criteria.cfm](https://www.umuc.edu/undergrad/creditoptions/priorlearning/coursechallenge_criteria.cfm).
- 57 See <http://www.umuc.edu/undergrad/creditoptions/priorlearning/>.
- 58 See <https://www.umuc.edu/undergrad/creditoptions/coop/>.
- 59 See <http://www.umuc.edu/nli/>.

## CHAPTER 6

- 40 Community college alliances are listed at <http://www.umuc.edu/students/admissions/transfer/ccalliances/>.
- 41 In FY 2015, 684 students received a total of \$611,031 under this program.
- 42 [www.umuc.edu](http://www.umuc.edu) for stateside as well as worldwide online students; [www.umuc.edu/active-duty-military](http://www.umuc.edu/active-duty-military) for military students; [www.umuc.edu/military-veterans](http://www.umuc.edu/military-veterans) for veterans; [www.asia.umuc.edu](http://www.asia.umuc.edu) for students attending UMUC Asia; [www.europe.umuc.edu](http://www.europe.umuc.edu) for students attending UMUC Europe; and [www.umuc.edu/military-spouses-and-families](http://www.umuc.edu/military-spouses-and-families) to serve students who are military spouses or military family members.
- 43 See [www.financialaidtv.com](http://www.financialaidtv.com).
- 44 Available at <http://www.umuc.edu/innovatelearning/upload/factors-in-college-retention-and-persistence-annotated-research-bibliography.pdf>.
- 45 See <http://www.parframework.org/>.

## CHAPTER 7

- 46 See for example, *Waldorf Center for Higher Education: FY 14-16 Strategic Plan*, 2014.
- 47 Examples in the document inventory include Shady Grove, Waldorf and Southern Maryland Higher Education Center.
- 48 For example, Department of the Army, MOU (UMUC-Fort Meade), 2013.
- 49 See for example “10 Ways to Pay for Your Education Tip Sheet,” UMUC Financial Aid Office, 2014.
- 50 See <https://www.europe.umuc.edu/undergraduate/undergraduate-programs> and <https://www.europe.umuc.edu/graduate/graduate-programs>.

## CHAPTER 8

- 60 UMUC, Institutional Plan for the Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes through 2010 (IAP 2010).
- 61 Publicly available at <http://www.umuc.edu/outcomes/upload/ipra-student-learning-outcomes.pdf>.
- 62 Middle States Commission Higher Education Characteristics of Excellence, revised March 2009. Available at [http://www.msche.org/publications/CHX06\\_Aug08REVMarch09.pdf](http://www.msche.org/publications/CHX06_Aug08REVMarch09.pdf).
- 63 See section 9 of the 2015 IAP.

## CHAPTER 9

- 64 See <http://www.mhec.state.md.us/publications/research/index.asp#AnnualReports>.
- 65 E.g., Cronin, Department of Military Partnerships mission and vision statements, 2015.
- 66 See Enterprise PMO 101; Enterprise PMO Guidebook.
- 67 See for example World Wide Distance Education Lessons Learned, 2014.
- 68 <http://www.heliocampus.com/>.
- 69 See for example [www.umuc.edu/cybersecurity/academics/index.cfm](http://www.umuc.edu/cybersecurity/academics/index.cfm).
- 70 See Shendy, *Registration Deadline Policy*, All 4U, 2013; and UMUC, 4xMore Communication Plan, 2012.
- 71 [www.parframework.org](http://www.parframework.org).

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