

 **OUR UMBC**

50 AND FORWARD

2015 University Retreat Summary Report

RETREAT OBJECTIVES

- **Strategic Planning:** Update participants on the University strategic planning process and gather feedback about strategic plan recommendations and measures of success.
- **Middle States Self-Study:** Orient participants to the Middle States Self-Study accreditation process and how the process aligns with implementation of the strategic plan.
- **50th Anniversary:** Engage faculty, staff, student, and alumni leaders as participants in the 50th anniversary celebration.
- **UMBC & Baltimore:** Document and share UMBC's connections to Baltimore across research, scholarship, creative achievement, and civic engagement activities. Inform campus of additional opportunities for engagement in Baltimore.

RETREAT PARTICIPATION

A total of 224 people attended the retreat, most for both days. Of those, 5 were undergraduate students, 6 were graduate students, 86 were faculty members, and 134 were staff members.

Three people attended as alumni. Among the distinguished guests who attended were Dr. Robert Caret, the newly named chancellor of the University System of Maryland; Del. Adrienne Jones '76; Dr. Jay Perman, president of the University of Maryland, Baltimore; Dr. Albert Reece, dean of the University of Maryland School of Medicine; Dr. Bruce Jarrell, chief academic and research officer of the University of Maryland School of Medicine and dean of the University of Maryland, Baltimore Graduate School; Dr. Natalie Eddington, dean of the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy; and Dr. Mark Reynolds '78, M.S., '82, dean of the University of Maryland School of Dentistry.

UNIVERSITY RETREAT - AUGUST 18, 2015

OPENING SESSION

Provost Philip Rous welcomed retreat participants and noted the retreat's role as a vital forum for the development of the university's 2016 strategic plan. President Hrabowski introduced Delegate Adrienne Jones '76, and after Delegate Jones spoke, University System of Maryland Chancellor Robert Caret.

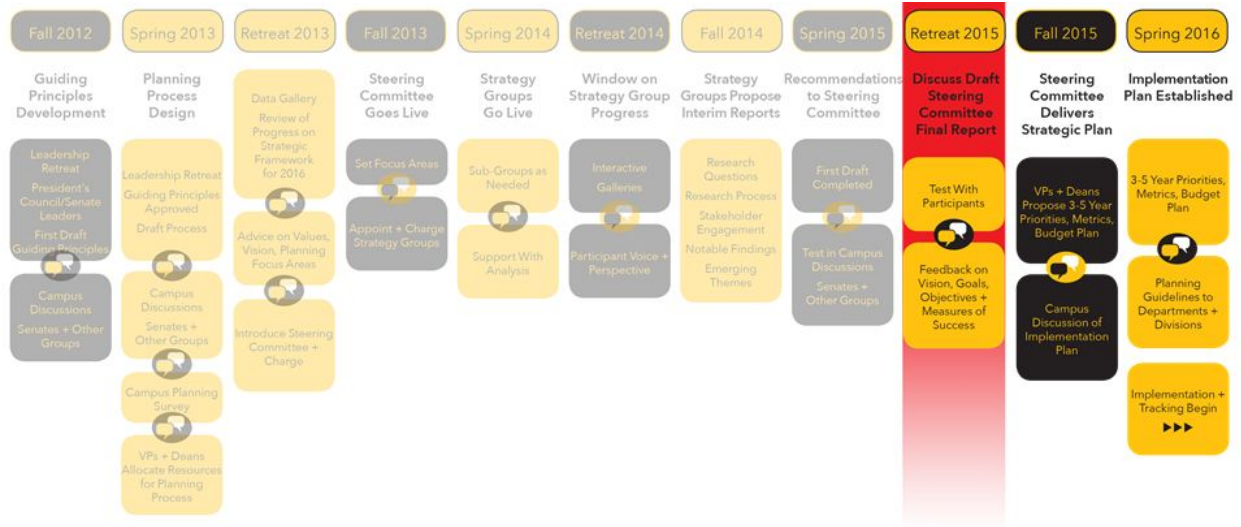
Delegate Jones, who serves as the speaker pro tem in the Maryland House of Delegates, told the audience that "everybody loves UMBC and it crosses party lines." She said that she expected a push for a merger of the University of Maryland, Baltimore with the University of Maryland, College Park in the coming legislative session and that she will fight such a move.



University System of Maryland Chancellor Robert Caret complimented UMBC on "being ahead of most in using data" to track student success. He said that while the state was looking to its universities to improve college completion rates, foster the workforce of the future, and carefully steward resources, it was up to academic leaders to uphold a "quality agenda." "...State legislators will tend to default to access, but we must never give up on the quality piece."



Strategic Planning Steering Committee Co-chair Bruce Walz recapped the principles that have guided the three-year process leading up to a new plan.



A Note About Communication: Inclusive stakeholder engagement and two-way communication throughout the planning process are responsibilities of planning leadership groups including the Council of Deans and Vice Presidents, the Strategic Planning Steering Committee, and Focus Area Strategy Groups.

August 2015

Professor Walz outlined the agenda for the rest of the day, including breakout sessions allowing for feedback on the draft final strategic plan, lunchtime tours of new and planned community spaces, and an introduction to the Middle States Self-Study and 50th Anniversary alumni engagement efforts, including a look at Middle States benchmark data and a “living timeline” featuring alumni across the decades. Associate Vice President Lisa Akchin gave a preview of second-day activities focused on UMBC’s connections to Baltimore.

The feedback on the draft plan from the breakout sessions is to be analyzed and provided to the Council of Deans and Vice Presidents and then to the Strategic Planning Steering Committee this fall. The steering committee is set to deliver the final plan by the new year.

[Opening Session Video](#)

BREAKOUT SESSIONS ON DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN

The breakout discussion and feedback groups intentionally mixed faculty, staff, students, and alumni. Each group discussion was facilitated by two steering committee members. Prompts asked about the focus-area report, as well as the proposed vision. Technology provided by Covision allowed individual participants to type in answers that were then compiled by a dedicated “theme team,” who used the compilations to provide an initial look at what people were saying about the recommendations.

The first breakout question was “Taken as a whole, how well does the draft final report reflect our vision and the challenges ahead of us -- does it make intuitive sense? Why or why not?” The responses showed considerable support for the vision and for the plan as a whole. Participants seemed less sure, however, that the plan articulated well enough the challenges UMBC will face. Concern was expressed about how the goals and objectives would be prioritized and about the resources available for implementation of the plan. A number of comments reflected the difficulty those who hadn’t been involved in the planning process faced in grasping the whole, and about a half-dozen people asked for an executive summary or some other means of more tightly integrating the content.

Among the specific comments about the vision statement:

- “Vision is clear and was done concurrently [with the plan] so there is a good match.”
- “[The plan] does a good job representing collective vision I’ve heard.”
- “Inspirational and aspirational. Speaks to the knowledge that new staff members have about the culture of the university upon entering the community.”

Among the specific comments about the report as a whole:

- “Felt report was comprehensive but was hard to see relationships among the pieces. It is there but not easy to connect.”
- “Recommendations seem to reflect current status of things at UMBC, not as strong as it could be in planning for what will be significant changes in the demographics and funding for higher ed.”
- “Draft report is substantive, grounded in data, and has drawn wide contributions and feedback from the campus community.”

The succeeding questions were directed at each of the four focus areas, asking whether the draft addresses the challenges and opportunities in that area and whether all matters of strategic importance were addressed. Participants generally applauded each of the sections but did find missing elements. Among the specific comments and the sentiments expressed:

The Student Experience

- “Specific recommendations seem very actionable.”
- “Kudos for thinking about the whole student.”

Community and Extended Connections

- “These are great goals, if we could really do all this it would be terrific!”

- Many participants endorsed the need for documenting and communicating UMBC's extended connections.

Innovative Curriculum and Pedagogy

- "Great recommendations on space and pedagogical support."
- "Good concrete recommendations in this report"
- "There is good content in the plan to support faculty to do innovative interactive or experiential teaching methods ..."
- "This section needs to be integrated into the student experience ... these are not separate but connected."

Collective Impact in Research, Scholarship and Creative Achievement (CIRSCA)

- "A good start in discussing balance in research, teaching & service."
- "Really like the emphasis on interdisciplinary. Next step is building infrastructure to support it across teaching, advising, research and [promotion and tenure]."

The top matters cited as missing from the **Student Experience** report were these:

- Financial aid/student financial support/student debt (12 mentions);
- Special student populations: nontraditional, special needs, transfer, international (7 mentions);
- Limited access to required courses as impediment to shortening time to degree (6 mentions);
- Graduate student needs as distinct from undergraduate student needs (6 mentions).

Cited as missing from **Community and Extended Connections**:

- Global/international connections, collaborations, and prestige (14 mentions);
- Breaking Ground/current culture of community engagement as inadequate a la Breaking Ground/social justice (11 mentions);
- Catonsville, Arbutus, Halethorpe/UMBC's college town (8 mentions);
- Baltimore City (6 mentions).

Cited as missing from **Collective Impact of Research, Scholarship and Creative Achievement**:

- Research infrastructure/research staff/staff to free up time for research/staff roles (14 mentions);
- Steps to removing barriers to interdisciplinary research (12 mentions);
- Conflict between increased enrollment requiring more teaching and increased research activity/need for more tenure-track faculty (6 mentions);
- Graduate education/graduate assistant roles/the doctoral program experience (6 mentions);
- Creative achievement (5 mentions).

Cited as missing from **Innovative Curriculum and Pedagogy**:

- New programs/majors (5 mentions).

Asked "Which objectives do you feel will provide the greatest momentum in achieving the strategic goals?" some 50 participants mentioned hiring more faculty who are both diverse and excellent or adjusting faculty workloads to better meet goals. Mentioned about as often was

improving student advising, course planning, and course scheduling to help students meet course requirements and shorten their time to graduation. Mentioned almost 30 times was aligning the demands of active, civically engaged learning with the system for faculty rewards and recognition. Mentioned more than 25 times was adding to and improving the quality of the campus's designated learning spaces.

DATA GALLERY

To close out the first day of the retreat, participants were invited to visit the Data Gallery, where members of the Middle States Self-Study presented posters highlighting key benchmarks, measures, and recommendations driving the ongoing Middle States accreditation process. Visitors were encouraged to engage with the members to share their perspectives and experiences while reviewing the robust and detailed information under each Middle States standard used to guide the overall process.

[Middle States Data Gallery Posters](#)

Data Gallery visitors also had the opportunity to engage in conversation about 50th anniversary planning, including the evolution of the 50th anniversary logo and branding process, as well as a live demonstration of the Digital Space, a social sharing space that brings together faculty, staff, students, and alumni to connect and share their experiences at UMBC. Participants also conversed with alumni along an interactive 50th anniversary timeline.

[Branding UMBC's 50th Anniversary](#)

[50th Anniversary Presentation: goals, approach, success measures, timeline](#)

UMBC & BALTIMORE - AUGUST 19, 2015

An important part of this year's retreat was to discuss, share, and analyze our connections in the Baltimore region, and how we have, and continue to, respond to the critical challenges facing the Baltimore community.

As part of the second day of the retreat, the UMBC community, partners, and alumni thought leaders met in downtown Baltimore at the Institute for Marine and Environmental Technology (IMET) to participate in active sessions on UMBC's engagement with Baltimore. Retreat participants also heard from University of Maryland, Baltimore's Dean of the School of Medicine Albert Reece, who highlighted the importance of its partnership with UMBC in positively impacting research, education, and service in Baltimore's healthcare and biosciences industries.

CONNECTING THE DOTS SESSION

The day opened with a presentation led by Scott Casper, Dean, College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences and Kathy O'Dell, Associate Professor, Visual Arts and Special Assistant to the Dean for Education and Arts Partnerships, revealing how UMBC's engaged scholarship, teaching, and community partnerships are changing minds and lives in Baltimore.

During the presentation Dr. Casper and Dr. O'Dell polled the room to gain a deeper understanding of the existing connections to Baltimore that already exist across campus.

WHAT IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO BALTIMORE?

What is your relationship to Baltimore? (select as many as apply)

(161 Participants chose up to 13 items)

<i>Item</i>	<i>Checks</i>	<i>Percentage of Checks</i>
Live here	48	9%
Grew up here	16	3%
Attended school (K-12)	12	2%
Attended college/university	33	6%
Children attend school (K-12)	22	4%
Children attend college/university	3	1%
Worship	26	5%
Attend cultural/sports events	132	24%
Shop/dine	129	23%
Conduct research	26	5%
Provide volunteer or professional services	63	11%
Teach	16	3%
Other	32	6%

Total Checks: 558

Dr. Casper and Dr. O'Dell shared results from a recent campus-wide inventory of resources and existing connections faculty and staff have in and around the Baltimore region. Dr.Casper and

Dr. O'Dell then introduced several members of the campus to speak in greater detail about their work and partnerships in the surrounding communities. These projects and programs span the range of UMBC's community and exemplify how the campus's relationships with Baltimore embrace its research, teaching, and service.

Following the presentation, an interactive session was held to elicit participant feedback, ideas, and examples of strong partnerships in the community and to suggest next steps in further building community engagement.

WHAT SHOULD OUR GOALS BE IN KEEPING AN INVENTORY?

Several themes emerged from the group conversations regarding the goals in keeping an inventory of programs and projects connected to the community.

Goals and Ideas:

- Material collected and shared in the inventory should be added to Digital Measures.
- The inventory needs to be expanded beyond academic initiatives. It needs to incorporate staff projects and programs.
- Use the inventory as a way to connect with others on campus doing similar work, and as a way to understand the work of others across campus. This will lead to further collaboration and reduce redundancy in programs, projects, and research.
- Inventory must have a formalized process for maintenance, updates, and additions. Campus needs to establish the owner of the database to ensure uniform data entry and centralized access.
- Campus community should use the inventory to promote UMBC's work and its commitment to the Baltimore area. It can also be used as a recruitment tool to secure talent for UMBC, in terms of faculty, staff--but also students.
- Campus should be mindful of the dangers of oversaturation and the potential perception of exploiting certain communities or demographics.
- Should have geographic/geolocation tagging to easily map work and identify areas of overlapping.

The group also discussed the ways in which the inventory could be organized or categorized in order to quickly find information and display relationships between the work the campus community is doing.

Tags and Categorization:

- Tagging based on student classification (graduate, undergraduate) would be important to note--and measure.
- Faculty and staff attribution.
- Prospective outside partnerships interested in collaborating.
- Student groups/activism and other non-academic groups involved in work in and around the city.
- Research interests.
- Expand "impact" to include measures of success.
- Need geographic location to determine overlapping and measure overall reach.
- Status of project.
- Alumni participation should be documented and tagged.

- Environment, sustainability, and climate.

CONNECTING THE DOTS POLL QUESTIONS

Following questions and discussion about the process of keeping an inventory, the conversation moved to specific questions concerning the work of the UMBC community and how it engages faculty, staff, and students in scholarship and learning and in understanding inequality and disparities.

On a scale of 1 to 5 ranging from “not very well” to “very well,” 55 participants rated the work of the inventory a 3.1 in engaging the UMBC community in scholarship and learning. Qualitative feedback from the participants displayed overwhelming support for the inventory, with many sharing particular interest in increasing the visibility of the work to faculty and staff. Additionally, participants saw much value in programs within the inventory to students but were concerned how UMBC might engage other students unaware of these opportunities.

Participants were then asked to rate how well the work on campus (and beyond) engages UMBC students in understanding inequality and disparities in society. On a scale of 1 to 5 ranging from 'not very well' to 'very well,' 49 participants responded with an average rating of 2.9. When asked to elaborate qualitatively and anecdotally, participants shared concerns over faculty diversity and its impact in classroom settings. Participants felt there is a significant divide in the awareness and engagement of students spanning the disciplines. More effort should be made to educate students on diversity, disparities, and inequality more broadly.

WHAT RESOURCES ARE NEEDED?

To close out the Connecting the Dots session, retreat participants were asked to share thoughts on the resources needed to ensure the campus community’s current efforts are sustainable and goals reached.

Overwhelmingly, participants commented on the importance of a dedicated position, such as a “community engagement officer” to lead this effort. This would make a statement to the community and UMBC partners that the university is willing to invest in strengthening its connections to the community and Baltimore. Other themes that emerged from the discussions included:

- Increasing media awareness, marketing, promotion, and compelling storytelling;
- Developing incentives and rewards to encourage faculty and staff adoption and involvement;
- Engaging existing campus groups, such as the Shriver Center, which is already doing this work, and develop ways other areas of campus can contribute and support campus engagement;
- Create grant opportunities and sponsorship opportunities to support this work;
- Support for better connections and transportation to and from the city and surrounding communities.

LUNCHTIME PRESENTATION ON UMB

UMBC hosted University of Maryland, Baltimore leaders for a networking lunch at the Pier 5 Hotel. The UMB guests included President Jay Perman; Dean of the School of Medicine Albert Reece; Dean of the School of Pharmacy Natalie Eddington; Dean of the School of Dentistry Mark Reynolds '78, M.S. '82; Bruce Jarrell, the chief academic and research officer of UMB and dean of its graduate school; and Jennifer Litchman, the chief communications officer and vice president of UMB.

In a [slide-illustrated talk](#), Dean Reece pointed to multiple ways in which the partnerships between UMB and UMBC have created synergy. The collaborations include sharing infrastructure, running joint degree and research training programs, and awarding grants.

More on Dean Reece's talk is [here](#).

ALUMNI VIEWS: INEQUALITY IN BALTIMORE

Participants also heard from alumni thought leaders on their engagement with the city and to better understand the role of the University in preparing students to meet the challenge of social and economic disparities.

Six alumni who work for the betterment of Baltimore responded to questions about their work, their experiences during the April unrest this year, and their views on how to better prepare students to meet the challenges of inequality. The [panel discussion](#) was moderated by Professor Kimberly Moffit.

POLL ON DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN

Throughout the retreat, participants were asked to respond to questions about the draft strategic plan using a scale of 1-5. Provost Rous reported the results toward the end of the second day. Asked how well the plan aligns with our vision for UMBC, the 159 participants who took the poll gave an average response of 4.1 with 5 representing "very good alignment" and 1 being "does not align." The standard deviation was 0.6. Asked how they rated the overall ambition of the plan, participants gave an average rating of 3.7, with 5 representing "attainable with commitment and focus" and 1 representing "unrealistic." The standard deviation was 0.8. Of the 159 participants who responded, 52% were staff members and 42% were faculty members, with nearly 75 percent having been at UMBC longer than 5 years.

NEXT STEPS FOR THE STRATEGIC PLAN

All of the strategic plan poll results and comments entered into the Covision system will be made available to both the Council of Vice Presidents and Deans and to the Strategic Planning Steering Committee, who together have responsibility for inclusive stakeholder engagement and two-way communication. The council will be able to make recommendations to the steering committee, which approves the final plan in conjunction with President Hrabowski.

To develop a 3 to 5 year implementation plan, the vice presidents and deans will be asked to propose priorities, metrics, and budgets. The plan, due by spring 2016, will result in planning guidelines to department and divisions in time to partially influence FY 2017 budget requests

and more fully affect the FY 2018 budget. Tracking the measures of success is an integral part of the implementation plan and will begin in FY 2017.