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2013 Review and Progress Update of the 2006 UMM Strategic Plan

Planning Committee

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2014 Review and Progress Update of the 2006 UMM Strategic Plan

Conducted by the UMM Planning Committee
Fall 2013-Spring 2014

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Final Report: March, 2014

Background: In the fall of 2013, at the request of Chancellor Johnson, the UMM Planning Committee began a review of the most recent campus strategic plan.¹ The primary purpose was not to undertake a renewed, full-fledged strategic planning initiative, but rather to evaluate UMM's progress towards the aspirations enumerated in the 2006 plan. The secondary goal was to issue recommendations regarding future commitments to the goals hitherto unattained. Finally, this review served to focus the Planning Committee itself on a rather narrow range of topics which would form the basis for its own agenda in the months to come.

Methodology: Chancellor Johnson combed through the 2006 strategic plan and identified several dozen individual objectives, which she itemized in a spreadsheet (here presented in Appendix A). The Chancellor and the Planning Committee have independently "scored" campus progress (on a 1-5 scale; see Appendix A) with respect to each of these goals. The Planning Committee has further scored the goals with respect to a recommended course of action.² The "Narrative" section, below, fleshes out some of the discussion which led the Planning Committee to its scoring and its recommendations.

¹ UMM Strategic Positioning Task Force (Nov., 2006): "Final Recommendations of the System Task Force -- Coordinate Campus: University of Minnesota Morris."

² Note that some of these goals lie sufficiently far outside of the domain of the Planning Committee that our scoring rubric has a category whereby we abstain from making any recommendation.

Narrative:

The first set of goals are in some ways the most ambitious. Falling under the category "Ensuring the Future: Viability and Appeal," a series of strategic goals deal with curriculum in a liberal arts context. The Planning Committee (PC) concluded that some considerable, appropriate progress has been made in recent years.

Goal: Restructure academic programs to better support our liberal arts focus and current strengths as well as recognize changing demands and needs.

PC: Several new and thriving academic programs have been introduced, while others have been modified in significant and appropriate ways. We have new academic programs in Environmental Science, Environmental Studies, and Sports Management. The German major has been substantively reorganized as German Studies. Our first-year seminar has been significantly revised in the new Intellectual Community format. Campus commitment to writing has been significantly enhanced by replacing the College Writing general education requirement with Writing for the Liberal Arts. Individual disciplines have steadily updated their curriculum to reflect changing faculty capacity and interests, as well as new developments in their respective fields. New academic programming is anticipated soon in the areas of Creative Writing and Data Science. PC judges progress across the board as very significant and appropriately building on the institution's strengths.

Recommendation: The Planning Committee believes progress towards this goal is well underway, and that the current approach is appropriate and should be continued. On-going efforts in pursuit of this goal are fundamental feature of the work at a liberal arts college.

Goal: Leverage green campus initiatives and partnerships to integrate environmental issues into the curriculum and campus opportunities, while becoming an energy self-sufficient campus.

PC: Several developments strongly support this goal. On the academic side, these include the launching of Environmental Science and Environmental Studies majors, supported by 1.25 FTE new faculty in this area. The Environmental Studies discipline was recipient of a significant grant from the Margaret A. Cargill Foundation, which has made possible a prominent speaker series, funded student internships domestically as well as internationally. On the energy self-sufficiency front, the campus commissioned a new biomass gasification facility, a second wind turbine, and introduced several smaller initiatives relating to renewable energy and/or energy conservation. In 2012, we cut our campus carbon footprint by 40% and 25% of our energy came from renewable sources. On the campus opportunities front, we helped create GreenCorps program in Minnesota, and we

have hosted GreenCorps members the past six years. We also: funded a Sustainability Coordinator who spearheads a variety of student-engagement opportunities in the environmental field; opened the Green Prairie Living and Learning residence hall; launched campus composting; expanded healthy eating initiatives on campus and in the community via Morris Healthy Eating. Morris community engagement units, including the Center for Small Towns and Office of Community Engagement, have connected students with sustainability projects. Finally, we have received significant recognition from many sectors for our accomplishments. Recognition includes awards for our construction practices, our student leadership initiatives, and the energy transformation that has occurred. A major grant proposal has been submitted to reinforce student leadership opportunities in the environmental field. Our Chancellor was recently named Chair of the Board of the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education. PC judges progress across the board as very significant.

Recommendation: The Planning Committee believes progress towards this goal is well underway, and that the current approach is appropriate and should be continued.

Goal: Formally restructure the curriculum to reflect rich international and multicultural perspectives in response to student and faculty needs, changing demographics and global expectations, while reaching out to the region and community.

PC: Multicultural and international perspectives have been justly integral to UMM academic programming for many years, through (for example) modern foreign languages, faculty lines in Asian and Latin American history, active study abroad opportunities for our students (including UMM faculty-led programs in England, Egypt, Germany, Brazil, Belize, Morocco, Portugal, and elsewhere) in all four divisions, a Global Business track in the Management major, a Latin American Area Studies major, a Gender, Women and Sexuality Studies major, and in many other ways. PC sees some significant campus progress reaching out to immigrant communities in the region, via the Jane Addams Project, ESL courses taught by students, and certain other initiatives promoted by the Office of Community Engagement. PC also recognizes very important and significant on-going work appropriately incorporated in our existing curriculum.

Recommendation: The Planning Committee believes some progress towards this goal has been made, and that the current approach is appropriate and should be continued. The goal seems to be premised on the notion that international and multicultural perspectives are insufficiently represented in the curriculum, which is not transparently the case.

The next set of goals deals with student enrollment. Again PC can point to some significant achievements, but must also acknowledge the increasingly competitive context for

recruitment. Furthermore, it seems that some of the objectives in the 2006 plan were not carefully considered in terms of feasibility and resource consequences.

Goal: Achieve and maintain a student body of a) 2100 b) highly qualified students, and c) more diversity in the mix. And d) Increase student from outside Minnesota from 13-25%.

PC: Enrollments have improved gradually, from the 1600 (total headcount) range to approximately 1900, but that still leaves the campus about 10% below the targeted 2100 students. It bears note that the 2006 strategic plan gives no guidance on important questions like the size of the first-year class, even though such a number directly impacts relatively hard capacity constraints in the classroom (e.g. chemistry lab seats available), in the residence halls, and in various support services. Nor does the 2006 plan consider the expansion of recruitment efforts that might be necessary to meet such a target. These are very serious questions that the PC plans to take up in the months to come. With regard to (b), we seem to be holding relatively steady, in terms of the statistical profile of the academic qualifications of our students. In light of increased competition in the recruitment field, this itself is a significant achievement. With respect to diversity: the campus has done quite well, particularly with respect to building our enrollments from among the Native American community. With respect to out-of-state enrollment, including international, our 2012 enrollment was approximately 19%.

Recommendation: The Planning Committee believes the campus needs to reassess the 2100-student goal, and plans to pursue this question during spring semester, 2014. PC believes that in terms of finding “highly-qualified” students, some (but not much) progress has been made, and that the current approach is appropriate and should be continued. PC believes that progress towards the diversity goal is well underway, and that the current approach is appropriate and should be continued. Finally, PC believes that some (but not much) progress has been made toward the goal of 25% out-of-state student enrollment. PC recommends dropping the 25% target as a separate goal.

Goal: Meet enrollment goals while maintaining access by leveraging increased scholarship funds; holding tuition increases to less than 6%/year; and focus on closing the gap for a higher percentage of low and middle income students.

PC: Comprehensive costs have risen an average of 2.92% annually over the last seven years. By way of contrast: the average increase from 2002-2006 was 8.8%. At the same time, the campus has made a significant commitment to funding scholarships, through direct outlays as well as through coordinated appeals to campus donors.

Recommendation: PC believes this goal has largely been met, and that the current approach is appropriate and should be continued. Maintaining economic access to a UMM education is a fundamental part of our on-going work as a public liberal arts institution.

Goal: Retain a significantly higher proportion of students by reducing transfers and dropouts. Increase first year retention from 86% to 90%; second year from 77 to 85%; four year graduation rates from 40-60%; five year from 56 to 75%; and six year from 57-80%.

PC: These goals remain unmet, and are likely not feasible. While our four-year graduation rates have improved somewhat (to 50%), and our six-year rates have improved somewhat (to 62%), the three-year rolling average for 1st and 2nd year retention are respectively 80.7% and 73%.

Recommendation: PC believes that the campus needs to reassess this goal. PC will study this question beginning spring, 2014.

The next set of goals falls under the heading "Development and Revenue Enhancement." We focus here on what we consider the most relevant elements in the 2006 plan. (Appendix A includes a comprehensive list, including our scoring and recommendation).

Goal: Strengthen private philanthropic support: increase endowment contributions from \$6 to \$20 M; overall endowment from \$9 to 28M; hire additional staff and renovate community services bldg.

PC: The endowment stands at \$11 M in the most recent Data Book. New commitments have averaged approximately \$1.5 M annually since 2007, but of course the collapse of asset values in the global economic downturn 2007-9 worked strongly against attainment of UMM's endowment target. The Community Services building was successfully renovated (and staffed), and now appears to be a significant asset to our Admissions, Alumni Relations, and community outreach functions.

Recommendation: PC believes that some (but not much) progress has been made towards the endowment goals, and that no change of course is indicated. PC believes the renovation and staffing of the Welcome Center has been accomplished, and the campus can now turn its attention to other projects.

Goal: Increase and strengthen relationships with potential benefactors and prominent alumni.

PC: Great strides have been made in this regard. Alumni Networking Days, an active Chancellor's Advisory Group, "Morris on the Move" and the addition of

one FTE Major Gift Officer are some of the most evident initiatives. The re-naming of the Morrison Art Gallery is another.

Recommendation: The Planning Committee believes progress towards this goal is well underway, and that no change of course is indicated.

Goal: Develop sufficient capital building matching funds to meet legislative requirements.

PC: UMM has not been included in the last four bonding bills, largely due to our inability to contribute the "match" required by state law. There is ample need on-campus for major renovations including classroom space, climate control, and accessibility. Beyond that there are facilities additions that would make us more appealing to students and competitive with our peers (HFA III; PE Center renovation), but that have price tags well beyond our current reach. VC Rasmussen has proposed essentially annuitizing UMM's would-be "lumpy" bonding requests, in exchange for a steady stream of resources sufficient to gradually enhance the safety and viability of our mall buildings. PC approved this approach in the spring of 2013, and is waiting for confirmation from Rasmussen and U of M system CFO Pfitzenreuter.

Recommendation: PC believes that some (but not much) progress has been made towards the capital building matching fund goals. Until such time as endowment and gift income grow substantially, PC recommends dropping this goal in favor of the Vice Chancellor of Finance and Facilities plan to annuitize UMM's bonding request.

Goal: Seek full U support for the unfunded Native American Tuition waiver.

PC: UMM's success in recruiting Native American students has not been matched by equivalent increases in support from the U of M system. We currently await the outcome of a federal process.

Recommendation: PC believes some (but not much) progress has been made towards this goal, and that the current approach is appropriate and should be continued.

Goal: Achieve energy self-sufficiency through wind, biomass, local foods, green vehicles, recycling and conservation.

PC: "Self-sufficiency" is too strong to be a realistic goal, yet the campus *has* made great strides in all of these areas in well-documented ways.

Recommendation: PC believes progress towards this goal is well underway, and that the current approach is appropriate and should be continued. The campus should seek resource-neutral ways to build on and expand our strengths and our "brand" in this area.

The next set of goals falls under the category "Faculty and staff recruitment, retention, alignment and diversity." Again, in this narrative section we focus on a subset of the goals. Our comprehensive scoring appears in Appendix A.

Goal: Institute a more rigorous system for aligning and allocating faculty and staff with U needs and student body size. Regularly compile and analyze class sizes and student faculty ratios in all disciplines to ensure efficiency and effectiveness and use this data to define priorities in hiring new faculty and staff. Support small class sizes by limiting classes with 50+ students to 5% of total course offerings.

PC: UMM has a much improved process for aligning faculty hires with demonstrable needs. Classes are much closer to capacity in most disciplines than they were at the time of the 2006 strategic plan. The process for requesting faculty and staff hires has become formalized, as has the process for approving them (involving the Division Chairs). Care should be taken that an onerous burden of proof does not fall entirely upon the discipline seeking to replace a departed colleague.

Recommendation: The Planning Committee believes progress towards this goal is well underway, and that the current approach is appropriate and should be continued.

Goal: Maintain at least 85% tenure-track positions.

PC: While there has been a significant increase in tenure-track hiring over the last three years, we are not near 85% at present. In fact the percentage has fallen from the low 70% range to the low 60% range since the last strategic plan, according to the UMM Data Book. Much of this is due to the hiring freeze during the recent economic crisis, coupled with resignations and retirements.

The Dean has a developed gradual and yet aggressive hiring plan that would bring the campus to 85% by 2018, given no change in attrition rates. The hiring plan works as follows:) it assumes a student body size of 1950, and an optimal student/faculty ratio of 15:1. Thus the size of the faculty should be 130, 85% of which is 110. The number of planned annual additions (through tenure-track searches) is calibrated to be greater than the average attrition rate (roughly 6 per year), by enough to bring the size of the tenure/tenure-track faculty to 110 by 2018. It should be noted that in an average year approximately 11 tenure/tenure-

track faculty are on leave, so even by 2018 the percent of coursework offered by tenure/tenure-track faculty will be well below 85%.

The gradual pace of hiring is intended to respect the significant service that search committees entail, and not to overburden the campus in any particular year. PC notes that the goal has been made more difficult by the introduction of WLA and ESL (one FTE non-permanent faculty position in each case) and the continuing challenge of staffing IC courses. The Dean points out that AAUP recommends 85% as a “best practice,” and that this figure is also significant to some of the ranking agencies (e.g. USNWR).

Recommendation: PC will consider the question, beginning spring 2014.

Goal: Provide salaries comparable to the upper tier of the Morris 14.

As the salary data provided last year by the Faculty and P&A Affairs Committee indicated, UMM faculty salaries are still quite low, demonstrating a failure to meet this goal. Yet circumstances have changed since 2006, most significantly in the switch to a new UMM comparison group. Furthermore, despite a consistent lack of support from the University's Central Administration, the UMM administration has made efforts to address the issue. In 2011, Chancellor Johnson charged the Faculty and P&A Affairs Committee with compiling data on UMM faculty salaries, resulting in an annual report that the Chancellor consistently includes in her Campus Compact request to the University system. Additionally, UMM's administration in FYs 13 and 14 found funds (\$117,781 and \$28,231, respectively) to try to address faculty and staff salaries with small increases. Even with this funding, however, UMM's faculty salaries are not keeping up with market value.

Recommendation: PC believes the campus needs to reassess the goal in light of the new UMM comparison group and the relative failure of efforts to secure support from Central Administration. On-going efforts in pursuit of decent compensation for faculty and staff are a fundamental feature of the work of top administration at a liberal arts college.

The next set of goals relate to capital improvements. Again, in this narrative section we focus on a subset of the goals. Our comprehensive scoring appears in Appendix A.

Goal: Update and modernize residential life facilities

PC: Significant resources have been devoted to this objective, not only as regards the Green Prairie Living and Learning Center. Technology fees and the "Campus fee" have been used for further improvements.

Recommendation: PC believes progress towards this goal is well underway, and that the current approach is appropriate and should be continued. On-going efforts in pursuit of this goal are fundamental feature of the work at a residential liberal arts college.

Goal: Locate external units in the Welcome Center

PC: Mission accomplished. Recommendation: N/A

Goal: Renovate and modernize the food services building

PC: Mission accomplished. Recommendation: N/A

Goal: Renovate Briggs Library

PC: This has not been done, although there is clearly need for it.

Recommendation: PC believes the campus needs to reassess this goal, in light of the lack of progress. PC plans to begin study of the issue in spring, 2014.

Goal: Complete HFA III

PC: This has not been done.

Recommendation: PC believes the campus needs to reassess this goal, in light of the lack of progress. PC recommends retaining the commitment, but rethinking the approach.

The next set of goals pertain to visibility. Again, in this narrative section we focus on a subset of the goals. Our comprehensive scoring appears in Appendix A.

Goal: Brand UMM a top tier nationally recognized public honors liberal arts college

PC: This goal has been vetoed at the system level.

Recommendation: PC believes this goal is unlikely to be met, due to external circumstance. PC recommends dropping this goal.

Goal: Increase levels of faculty participation and success in external scholarly awards, honors, and grants

PC: There are many examples of faculty and campus achievement in each of the areas. Representative examples: three faculty have received prestigious NEH Summer fellowships in recent years; one was named a Fulbright Scholar; one was

honored with the Wilde Award for Outstanding Contributions to Michigan Theater (Best Director); another faculty was named for the International Humanist Award for 2011 by the International Humanist and Ethical Union at the August 2011 World Humanist Congress in Oslo, Norway. In addition to the prestigious awards, UMM faculty have been increasingly active in obtaining external grants to support research and teaching at UMM. The number of external grant proposals increased from 16 to 28, 2007-2012, while the dollar amounts applied for increased from \$2.2 m. to approximately \$6 m. Actual annual grant expenditures increased from \$645 k to \$1.45 m., 2007-2012.

Recommendation: PC believes progress is well underway towards this goal, and the current approach is appropriate and should be continued. On-going efforts in pursuit of this goal are fundamental feature of the work at a liberal arts college.

Goal: Enhance summer and break programs

PC: The campus dismantled Continuing Education and Summer Programs shortly after the 2006 strategic plan was completed. Summer Programs has been reconstituted, but currently operates on a smaller scale than pre-2007. A significant investment in infrastructure (specifically food services building renovation and construction of the GPLLC) and staffing (a 2-person special events staff) make it more possible now to attract and adequately serve the needs of special summer programming. Recent examples include the Rural Arts and Culture Summit (summer, 2013), the Chatauqua on Rural Leadership Development/Symposium on Small Towns (summer 2012), and a variety of summer camps.

Recommendation: PC believes some (but not much) progress has been made towards this goal, though the groundwork has been laid for future progress. The current approach is appropriate and should be continued.

The next set of goals pertain to “Academic Rigor and Innovation.” Again, in this narrative section we focus on a subset of the goals. Our comprehensive scoring appears in Appendix A.

Goal: Improve student academic profile: admit students in top quarter with average ACT scores of at least 25 and increase diversity.

PC: According to the UMM Data Book, the academic profile of our student body has remained very nearly constant since 2007. The median ACT remains steady at 25. This itself is an achievement, in light of the increased competition for a slightly shrinking pool of MN high school graduates. Diversity has been significantly boosted, especially in terms of Native American students and

international students. “Students of color” have increased from 18.5-22.3% of the degree-seeking student population, since 2008, while “International” students have increased from 3.8-9.8%.

Recommendation: PC believes some (but not much) progress has been made towards the goal of improving student academic profile, and that the current approach is appropriate and should be continued. Diversity is dealt with elsewhere in this review.

Goal: Create Academic Center for Enrichment (ACE).

PC: Mission accomplished. Recommendation: PC believes this goal has been met, and that the campus can shift focus to other priorities (while continuing to fund ACE).

Goal: Expect all students to participate in first-year and senior capstone experiences.

PC: The First-Year Seminar (FYS) has been revised, evolving into the new Intellectual Community (IC) requirement. While being more amenable to a disciplinary focus, IC still retains a significant openness to interdisciplinary inquiry. The institutional commitment remains intact for a small, discussion-friendly first-year classroom experience for all entering students. The campus also adopted a more comprehensively required first-year Writing for the Liberal Arts course, in place of the College Writing general education requirement that applied to only about half of our students. Capstone experiences, meanwhile, remain the norm across disciplines, though the strength of the commitment varies substantially from one to the next.

Recommendation: PC believes progress is well underway towards this goal, and the current approach is appropriate and should be continued. On-going efforts in pursuit of this goal are fundamental feature of the work at a liberal arts college.

Goal: Create a new scholarship initiative to provide opportunities for outstanding students: Morris and Prairie enacted; current revamping of merit scholarship programs

PC: UMM has made a significant commitment to merit-based scholarships, via the Prairie and Morris Scholars initiatives. “Institutional Scholarships” and “Institutional Donor-Funded Scholarships” have increased from approximately \$1.7 M. to approximately 2.9 M., between 2007-8 and 2011-12.

Recommendation: The PC believes this goal has been successfully accomplished, and recommends continued commitment to this initiative in the future.

The next category pertains to “Faculty Scholarship and Creative Activity.” Again, in this narrative section we focus on a subset of the goals. Our comprehensive scoring appears in Appendix A.

Goal: Provide institutional funding to assist and expand faculty scholarship and creative activity.

Significant progress has been made through the FREF (Faculty Research Enhancement Funds) initiative, with funds provided by the University of MN Office of the Vice President for Research. In sum, this office has provided \$900,000 to the FREF program since 2006 (to support a variety of research initiatives, travel support, and collaboration) and another \$50,000 for a new one-time course-release program. UMM’s Office of Grants Development has played a critical role in making the case for this support and coordinating the campus stakeholders into a coherent and successful lobbying force. Meanwhile, Out-of-State Travel (OST) funds provided by UMM have increased only minimally in several years, having increased from \$500 to \$700 in 2006 and then decreased to \$650 in 2010. On the other hand, the Dean has revised the Indirect Cost Recovery policy in order to (1) make more money available to disciplines to support their faculty members' research and (2) fund or partially fund positions that enable, assist and expand faculty scholarship and creative activity.

Recommendation: PC believes progress is well underway towards this goal, and the current approach is appropriate and should be continued. On-going efforts in pursuit of this goal are a fundamental feature of the work at a liberal arts college.

Goal: Improve opportunities for sabbatical and single-semester leaves (SSLs).

There have been minimal increases in funding for sabbaticals and SSLs. In the first case, the University provided \$40,000 for sabbaticals for the 2013-14 academic year (an increase from the traditional \$30,000). Divided among 10 sabbaticants (in a typical year), however, the sabbatical supplement remains too small of an incentive to meaningfully affect the cost to a faculty member of taking either a full or a half-year sabbatical. Relative to the sabbatical support elsewhere in the University system, UMM is far behind.

In the case of SSLs, however, UMM is traditionally given 4 or, as this year, 3, and the Dean goes to the System to request an extra leave or two. Typically, he is successful in this endeavor. Furthermore, UMM has been extremely supportive of its faculty getting fellowships from the Institute of Advanced Studies, and UMM faculty have been very successful winning fellowships in this competitive program. In terms of sheer numbers, there have been generally more sabbatical leaves since 2006, about the same number of SSLs (though lower in two cases),

and consistently more IAS fellowships (as there were none before the 2006-2007 academic year).

Recommendation: The PC believes that retaining this objective is essential, but recommends renewed and/or novel approaches, in light of the modest progress to date.

The next category pertains to “Commitment to Diversity.” Again, in this narrative section we focus on a subset of the goals. Our comprehensive scoring appears in Appendix A.

Goal: Affirm campus mission statement that more specifically articulates our commitment to diversity.

PC: Both the campus mission statement (adopted 2008) and the campus recruiting statement explicitly express the commitment to diversity.

Recommendation: The PC believes this objective has been met. A continuing commitment to diversity is fundamental to the UMM mission.

Goal: Provide respectful and comfortable environment that fosters diversity.

PC: Since the last strategic plan, the Minority Student Program was reorganized and is now called the Multi-Ethnic Student Program (MSP) and is part of the umbrella department of Equity, Diversity and Intercultural (EDI) Programs which also includes the International Student Program (ISP). The campus hired an Assistant to the Chancellor for Equity and Diversity, and upgraded a coordinator position in MSP to Assistant Director. In 2013 a 25% GLBT programs coordinator was also added to the area. EDI provides numerous programs focused on expanding intercultural competence for students, staff and faculty; some examples include, Elder in Residence program, Exploring Privilege (for all entering students in orientation), faculty and staff trainings on working with specific diverse student populations, and World Touch Cultural Heritage Week. EDI also partners with other campus units to offer programs and events that contribute to the goal. Human Resources provided 13 new programs for staff and supervisors, including Harassment and Discrimination training, Leading Up! and conflict resolution training. Diversity continues to be a theme highlighted in the Convocation Speakers series, as well as, for example, the recent extended visit of Gloria Ladson Billings (distinguished visiting professor of the liberal arts).

Recommendation: The PC believes that progress is well established towards this goal. A commitment to provide a comfortable and respectful environment that fosters diversity is fundamental to UMM’s ongoing mission.

The final category pertains to “Organizations and Structure.” Again, in this narrative section we focus on a subset of the goals. Our comprehensive scoring appears in Appendix A.

Goal: Strategically reallocate resources in key areas and seek new sources of revenue.

PC: The campus has nearly completed a 2-year resource allocation process (RAR: Resource Allocation Review). While it has not resulted in a substantial reallocation of resources across units, it has focused attention in certain areas and led to reorganizations on a more or less rolling basis. Here we quote extensively from the Final Report of the RAR Phase III committee (Brook Miller, Chair):

Across campus and throughout this process, campus stakeholders have expressed support for improved strategic planning via a holistic review of resource allocation. However, there is a high degree of public skepticism about the process. While RAR may usefully prepare us to do more strategic planning in the future, there are strong technical reasons for this skepticism. There is considerable skepticism from this committee, the RAR Phase II Über group, Jon Anderson, and other parties on campus about the validity of the program scores, based upon critiques of the original reporting instrument, the inputs into the reporting instrument, and the processes for evaluating the data.

...

Keys to Successful Future RAR:

The measures employed in this RAR, which focused upon overall “costs” and “benefits” of programs, do not provide a strong indication of reallocation potentials. Instead, the costs and benefits of one additional unit of resources (funding, employees, SEE, etc.) versus the costs and benefits of one fewer additional unit of resources would be more appropriate. These questions should be at the center of redesigned future RAR processes:

1) For a given program, what would be the marginal cost of losing one “unit of resource” or the marginal gain that would come from being allocated an additional unit of resource? Only by answering that question can we have a rational basis for moving resources from one program to another. Put more simply, “where can I put in \$5 and get a utility of \$10?”

2) Is a given program of high quality and efficient compared to a theoretical “ideal” version of the program or to similar programs at peer institutions?

3) A key question to ask, and to investigate thoroughly when recommending eliminating or defunding programs is how many and which (i.e., students that meet which profiles) students would we risk losing. This requires different data from those collected in RAR. Additionally, in the context of recent budget cuts, one of the key questions

(though this also raises fairness issues) is how programs that have seen cuts have fared in terms of their previous performances. That is to say, where did the previous budget cuts really impact program performance, and what is the value of that gap in performance? (On fairness: actions related to these assessments might punish programs that have worked hard to maintain their workloads even in the face of reduced resources). Also, the process should be designed to identify unnecessarily redundant or duplicated services (this was brought up in relation to administrative programs, but could apply to all three program categories). At the same time, we should avoid what might be called the 'hard data fallacy': idealizing the acquisition of perfect data and writing off assessment because of imperfect data. The attempt to create a "numbers driven" analysis of resource allocation should be clearly framed in terms of the ultimate outcome, which is to make data-informed qualitative judgments.

Recommendation: While recognizing the importance of continually prioritizing resource allocation, the PC has serious reservations about the recent RAR process itself as a means to achieve this goal. Nevertheless, we support a process of regular decentralized reporting on efficiency and benchmark indicators, so that resource allocation decisions can be better informed in the future. This is part of the on-going work of a liberal arts college.

Goal: Continue to renovate and modernize buildings.

PC: Serious challenges remain in terms of providing accessibility to all buildings, providing appropriate classroom spaces for students (particularly in Humanities; Education), and in terms of basic climate control in certain office spaces.

Recommendation: The PC believes that insufficient progress made to date, and intends to study the issue further during spring semester, 2014.

Conclusion:

The Planning Committee has attempted in this report to document some of the most important accomplishments as well as unfinished business with respect to the goals enumerated in the 2006 campus strategic plan. In spite of the unfavorable macro/budgetary environment of the last several years, this report points to substantial progress on many fronts, including: i) stabilizing and expanding enrollments; ii) evolving the curriculum in ways that are consistent with our mission, and that take advantage of our existing strengths; iii) laying the foundation for improved alumni relations and community outreach; iv) leveraging the "green" initiatives; v) improving support for faculty development.

The most pressing continuing challenges arise in the areas of capital funds for facilities renovation and upgrades, and salaries for recruiting and retaining highly-productive faculty and staff.

The campus faces serious challenges to update and renovate existing mall buildings in terms of climate control and accessibility issues. Classroom space in the Humanities building is clearly substandard, and does not serve our students well. Many of our competitor schools also have library, performance spaces, and physical education facilities that humble those on this campus.

Low salaries pose perennial problems for recruitment and retention of qualified faculty and staff. The number of failed searches and the high turnover rates generally are costs not directly and immediately registered on the bottom line, but that nevertheless take their toll in terms of faculty and staff productivity and morale, as well as in terms of the quality of the educational experience for students.

Interestingly, the progress (and lack thereof) that this retrospective has brought to light actually says little about the continuing core activities that make up the most essential part of what we do. Much of the framing in the 2006 Strategic Plan focuses on change, administrative organization, and one or another deficits or opportunities confronting the institution. This review dutifully documents various important efforts that have been made in recent years to improve the situation, and attempts to focus attention on the challenges that remain. We shouldn't lose sight in this process of the fact that our commitment to the core tenets of liberal education is more timely than ever: UMM should continue to teach and to model careful reading, critical thinking, effective communication, understanding and respect for the conventions of evidence and substantiation, pathways to creativity, and the great traditions in human thought and imagination. We should continue to prepare students for lives of meaningful work, in a world characterized by technological and cultural complexity. As ever, these are the essential tasks that are fundamental to the project of a liberal arts college.

Appendix 1: Scoring
 (See Appendix 2 for keys to scoring)

	(Key #1) JJ's Rating	(Key #1) PC Rating	(Key #2) PC Action
I. Ensuring the future: viability, sustainability, and visibility			
a. Viability and appeal			
i. Restructure academic programs to better support our liberal arts focus and current strengths as well as recognize changing demands and needs.	4	2	2
ii. Leverage green campus initiatives and partnerships to integrate environmental issues into the curriculum and campus opportunities, while becoming an energy self-sufficient campus.	2	2	2
iii. Formally restructure the curriculum to reflect rich international and multicultural perspectives in response to student and faculty needs, changing demographics and global expectations, while reaching out to region and community.	4	3	2
b. Sustainability			
i. Student enrollment			

1	<p>Achieve and maintain a student body of a) 2100 b) highly qualified students, and c) more diversity in the mix. And d) Increase student from outside Minnesota from 13-25%.</p>	4, 2, 2, 4	4,3,2,4	3,2,2,5
2	<p>Meet enrollment goals while maintaining access by leveraging increased scholarship funds; holding tuition increases to less than 6%/year; and focus on closing the gap for a higher percentage of low and middle income students.</p>	2	1	2
3	<p>Retain a significantly higher proportion of students by reducing transfers and dropouts. Increase first year retention from 86% to 90%; second year from 77 to 85%; four year graduation rates from 40-60%; five year from 56 to 75%; and six year from 57-80%.</p>	3	4	3

ii. Development and revenue enhancement

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1	Strengthen private philanthropic support: increase endowment contributions from \$6 to \$20 M; overall endowment from \$9 to 28M; hire additional staff and renovate community services bldg.	2	3; 1; 1	2,1,1
2	Seek additional state support.	5	5	2
3	Increase and strengthen relationships with potential benefactors and prominent alumni:	2	2	2
4	Develop sufficient capital building matching funds to meet legislative requirements.	3	3	6
5	Seek full U support for the unfunded Native American Tuition waiver:	3	3	2
6	Achieve energy self-sufficiency through wind, biomass, local foods, green vehicles, recycle and conservation.	2	2	2

(Key #1) (Key #1) (Key #2)
 JJ's Rating PC Rating PC Action

Appendix 1

7	Aggressively pursue non-traditional revenue sources: wind farm; summer programming; increased facility rentals.	3	3	2
8	Seek external grants to support increased levels of faculty and student research. #2	3	3	2
iii. Faculty and staff recruitment, retention, alignment, and diversity				
1	Institute a more rigorous system for aligning and allocating faculty and staff with U needs and student body size. Regularly compile and analyse class sizes and student faculty ratios in all disciplines to ensure efficiency and effectiveness and use this data to define priorities in hiring new faculty and staff. Support small class sizes by limiting classes with 50+ students to 5% of total course offerings:	2	2	2
2	Maintain at least 85% tenure track positions.	2	4	3
3	Attract diverse faculty and staff	4	3	2

(Key #1) (Key #1) (Key #2)
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4	Creatively consider joint appointments; spousal and partner needs, etc	3	4	2
5	Provide salaries comparable to upper tier of the Morris 14	4	4	6
iv. Partnerships				
1	Leverage regional and international academic partnerships	2	2	2
2	Enhance existing research partnerships with federal, state and U efforts	2	2	2
3	Meet needs of our community by developing partnerships with regional organizations	2	2	2
v. Capital investments				
1	Update and modernize residential life facilities	2	2	2
2	Locate external units in Welcome Center	1	1	1
3	Renovate and modernize food services bldg.	1	1	1
4	Renovate Briggs Library	4	4	3
5	Complete HFA III	5	4	6
6	Update campus master plan	1	2	2
c. Visibility				

(Key #1) (Key #1) (Key #2)
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i.	Brand UMM a top tier national recognized public honors liberal arts college:	2	5	5
ii.	Increase levels of student participation and success in national scholarships	2	2	2
iii.	Increase publicity for faculty and student research efforts and successes	2	2	2
iv.	Increase levels of faculty participation and success in external scholarly awards, honors, and grants	2	2	2
v.	Enhance summer and break programs	3	3	2
II. Doing it right: teaching, research and outreach				
a. Academic rigor and innovation				
i.	Improve student academic profile: admit students in top quarter with average ACT scores of at least 25 and increase diversity	2	3	2
ii.	Create Academic Center for Enrichment	1	1	1
iii.	Expect all UMM students to participate in first year and senior capstone experiences	2	2	2
iv.	Provide opportunities (and increase funding) for all students to study abroad	2	3	6

(Key #1) (Key #1) (Key #2)
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v.	Sustain high teaching quality by hiring and supporting faculty with outstanding credentials and terminal degrees ; support new faculty to improve teaching skills	2,4	2,3	2
vi.	Regularly evaluate all coursework to include effective written and oral communication skills across the disciplines; promote service learning, study abroad and undergraduate research in all disciplines; integrate sustainability and multicultural and international perspectives across the curriculum	4	4	4
vii.	Support interdisciplinary students who pursue multiple majors and minors:	??	4	4
viii.	Create a new scholarship initiative to provide opportunities for outstanding students: Morris and Prairie enacted; current revamping of merit scholarship programs	1	1	1
ix.	Provide institutional support to expand and improve the undergraduate research symposium; promote giving to Bos and Tate	1	1	2
x.	Provide institutional support to assist and expand research and creative activity	2	2	2

(Key #1) (Key #1) (Key #2)
 JJ's Rating PC Rating PC Action

b. Faculty scholarship and creative activity

i.	Provide institutional funding to assist and expand faculty scholarship and creative activity	2	2	2
ii.	Improve opportunities for sabbatical and single semester leaves	2	3	6
iii.	Expand travel support and support for collaborative work	2	2	2

c. Outreach: relationships, connections and contributions

i.	Increase U.S students of color from 15 to 25%	2	2	2
ii.	Actively recruit more international students and visiting faculty	2	2	2
iii.	Integrate civic engagement into teaching, learning and research responsibilities	2.5	3	4
iv.	Explore opportunities for a cultural center for west central Minnesota	5	5	5
v.	Provide opportunities to meet current and lifelong educational goals of area residents, high school students and other stakeholders	5	4	6
vi.	Provide outreach through CST	2	2	2

vii.	Provide academic support and mentoring relationships by UMM students to PK-12 students	3	2	2
III. Making it happen: organization and operations				
a. Organization				
i. Faculty and staff support				
1	Promote intercultural awareness, respect and appreciation through the campus community	3	2	2
2	Offer in depth opportunities for professional development	3	4	6
3	Provide effective mentoring for faculty and staff	3	3	6
ii. Student support				
1	Offer life-planning support to students--deciding project; career guidance; internships; mentoring programs; alumni networking	3	3	2
2	Promote intercultural awareness, respect and appreciation	2	2	2

Appendix 1

3	Develop campus and community partnerships to meet needs of students, faculty and staff from communities underrepresented in western Minnesota	4	2	2
4	Enhance academic support and environmental transition services for international students	2	2	2
5	Promote activities that meet needs of contemporary students	2	2	2
6	Evaluate and improve effectiveness of modernity of student life services	2	2	2
7	Offer student involvement portfolio	5	4	4
iii. Commitment to diversity				
1	Affirm campus mission statement that more specifically articulates our commitment to diversity	1	1	1
2	Endorse the idea that bridging together academic and student life is necessary	3	2	2

(Key #1) (Key #1) (Key #2)
 JJ's Rating PC Rating PC Action

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3	Operational goal to bring diversity from 15 to 25%	2	2	1
4	Provide respectful and comfortable environment that fosters diversity	?	2	2
5		3	2	4
b. Operations and structure				
i.	Strategically reallocate resources in key areas and seek new sources of revenue	3	3	6
ii.	Continue to renovate and modernize buildings	2.5	3	3
iii.	Better utilize existing facilities during summer and breaks	3	2	2
iv.	Analyze and update a technology plan	2	3	2

(Key #1) (Key #1) (Key #2)
 JJ's Rating PC Rating PC Action

Appendix 2: Scoring Keys

Key #1

- 1 Goal accomplished
- 2 Progress toward goal well underway
- 3 Some but not much progress made toward goal
- 4 Campus needs to reassess goal
- 5 Goal unlikely to be met, due to external or other intervening circumstances

Key #2

- 1 Success meeting this goal means the campus can now shift focus elsewhere
- 2 PC recommends continuation of current approach
- 3 PC will study and make recommendations by May, 2014
- 4 This goal is outside the domain of PC deliberations
- 5 PC recommends dropping this goal
- 6 Retain commitment, rethink approach