



Office of the President

June 18, 2010

The Honorable Governor Martin O'Malley
100 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr.
Senate President
State House, H-107
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Michael E. Busch
House Speaker, House of Delegates
State House, H-101
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dr. James E. Lyons, Secretary
Maryland Higher Education Commission
839 Bestgate Road, Suite 400
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Governor O'Malley, Senator Miller, Delegate Busch and Secretary Lyons:

Please find enclosed a copy of the report on the *Annual Review of Morgan State University's Strategic Plan* as required by **Section 14-104(1)(3)** of the Education Article and in accordance with Section 2-1246 of the State Government Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,


Earl S. Richardson
President

ESR/kcg

Enclosure

cc: T. Eloise Foster, Kristy Michel, Sara Baker, Joseph Popovich, Ray Vollmer, Sarah Albert

***Annual Review of the
Morgan State University
Strategic Plan: 2008-2012***

June 2010

Morgan's Strategic Plan for 2008 thru 2012, was adopted by the Board of Regents in November 2007. The period since has been one of the most fiscally difficult eras in the state's history. State budgetary problems have translated into significant constraints for all campuses in the state. Unlike in most prior periods of state budgetary difficulty, Maryland campuses were not able to raise their tuition charges to students. Thus, it was not possible to offset reductions in state revenues by charging students more. Morgan and other historically black campuses were particularly affected because their students and their families, on average, face significant challenges in paying for colleges even under more favorable circumstances and their missions of providing extra student support services are more costly than those of the typical public campus.

Despite the fiscal issues faced by the campus, it was able to make progress on some of the key elements of its Strategic Plan, primarily through cost containing measures and reliance on federal funding support. Progress on each of the eight strategic objectives of the Plan is summarized below. Areas in which progress was not made are noted as well.

1. Develop an infrastructure permitting significant growth, capable of supporting other strategic goals, and supporting the mission of the University as a Doctoral Research Institution.

One of the objectives of the University is to create academic units that are large enough to support an increased number of specialties. The University created two new colleges from what formerly were academic departments: The School of Social Work and the School of Architecture and Planning. Further development of these schools is dependent on the availability of additional resources. The creation of a school of journalism has been deferred until the University's budgetary situation changes for the better.

Another objective is to create interdisciplinary institutes and centers for instruction, research, and service. Morgan recently created the Center for Civil Rights in Education to focus on equity issues in schools and colleges. The Center has received the first donation for building an endowment to support it.

An important goal is to continue to upgrade the information technology infrastructure and to develop methods for keeping it up to date as funding permits. The University's *Infrastructure for Success Plan* details the major changes that the campus needs to make to its IT assets in order to support a doctoral research mission. This year, the campus was able to replace all out-of-date faculty and lab computers through federal grants for this purpose. It also brought on-line two new buildings that provide wireless access. These are, however, relatively modest improvements among the total requirements for IT infrastructure.

In terms of facilities, the campus has been able to continue to build its academic infrastructure. The new library has opened and groundbreaking has been held for a new facility that will house architecture, civil engineering, and transportation studies.

With respect to other strategies for achieving this objective that are resource dependent, little or no progress is evident. For example, the campus has not been able to reduce its student-faculty ratio,

its teaching loads, or decrease its reliance on adjuncts. It has not been able to improve its infrastructure for supporting faculty, including additional administrative support, more professional development opportunities, and increased support for faculty research.

2. Offer high quality academic programs and effective support programs and services that promote student academic success.

Over the past two years, the campus has embarked on an extensive program for assessing student learning outcomes. In each case the University has relied on standardized assessment instruments to measure learning outcomes. Because many of its students enter college with deficits in their academic preparation, its general approach is to measure value added in academic achievement.

The campus has been using the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) for a number of years. This assessment measures analytical capabilities at the freshman and senior levels and compares outcomes to those that would be predicted based on student SAT scores. Morgan entering freshman score below the level expected. However, by their senior year, they perform at the level predicted. Hence, the campus has been successful in compensating for gaps in student preparation.

Other measures for which the campus has pre-data but does not yet have post-data include: ETS' assessment of general education skills (MAPP), the ETS information literacy assessment, and ETS subject matter mastery for graduating seniors in a number of fields.

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) is used by the University to compare the responses by its students to those of students nationwide. Morgan's students report above-average levels of academic challenge in their coursework on a number of measures.

While Morgan students rate administrative services on campus about the same on the NSSE as students nationwide, in a number of areas efforts are underway to improve customer service and the effectiveness of processes. These are areas in which customers have identified the need for improved services via surveys such as those of graduating seniors and recent alumni.

Information technology services have experienced significant gains in customer services over the past few years as measured by a number of surveys. For example, HELP desk services and computer lab services have had large gains in customer satisfaction over the past three years. The HELP desk has sustained satisfaction levels above its benchmark while computer lab services is approaching its benchmark. Technology training services, management reporting services, and administrative computing services consistently have achieved their benchmarks since performance measurement instruments were introduced.

Retention and graduation rates have declined in recent years. Over the short term, the campus is attempting to deal with this trend by allocating additional funding to financial aid. Its retention program consistently has utilized recognized best practices to try to improve student success. The campus currently performs slightly below the level expected based on entering student SAT scores and the financial need of its student body. Its goal is to exceed expected rates. For the past two years, the one-year retention rate moved upward to its historical average, an indication that the additional financial aid may have been effective in increasing retention. Unfortunately, financial aid and many other budgets were reduced this year as a result of state cuts and the inability to increase tuition.

Retention and graduation rates may very well be affected. Over the longer term, the University needs to become more competitive in attracting well-prepared students in order to change the mix of its undergraduate student body.

3. Provide students with a variety of options and a reasonable degree of flexibility in their academic programs.

Morgan initiated its first on-line courses this year. The vast majority of faculty on campus already utilize on-line instruction as part of their regular coursework, but a good deal of training was required in order to prepare faculty to use best practices for courses offered entirely on-line. Currently, on-line instruction is to be used for selected programs of study.

Morgan also has initiated seven post-baccalaureate certificate programs. These are the University's first such programs. They are designed to address specific needs, particularly career-related requirements, without requiring students to complete a full program of study.

The campus has not been able to add enough additional courses in high demand fields to keep pace with student requests. This has been due to insufficient numbers of full-time faculty.

4. Differentiate the University's mission from that of other campuses in terms of academic offerings, research priorities, service emphasis, and the quality of programs and services offered to students.

The University has continued to adhere to a policy of not developing academic programs that duplicate those offered by neighboring institutions.

The campus also has ensured that its on-line courses are differentiated from many others offered by other campuses by requiring that they conform to a best practices format in their development.

The University has continued to market itself as an institution that provides a supportive environment that promotes success, particularly for students with some deficiencies in their pre-college preparation. However, its marketing efforts are modest in comparison to most other campuses due to budgetary constraints.

Morgan also differentiates itself from other campuses in that the thrust of its research is on problems of urban areas and of its service programs focus on under-served communities. Its Urban Research Institute has long focused on the issues of Baltimore City while its new Center for Civil rights in Education will focus on the needs of under-served populations nationally. Morgan has a variety of community service programs that assist the local community. Some of the departments that have such are thrust include public health, social work, business, teacher education, architecture, and transportation studies.

5. *Where desirable and feasible, organize degree offerings, research, and service programs around interdisciplinary and problem-oriented themes.*

The University's newest schools, Architecture and Planning and Social Work, draw on different disciplines for their academic programs, their research, and their service programs. The planned School of Journalism will focus on using media for a variety of different purposes.

The new undergraduate programs in communications studies, which will eventually be part of a school of journalism, provide examples of interdisciplinary combinations as well as of programs with multiple concentrations. The Journalism program includes concentrations in print journalism, broadcast journalism, and converged media. The Public Relations, Advertising, Media Sales and Ratings, and Public Relations programs offers concentrations in each of those fields. The Screenwriting and Animation program has concentrations in computer animation, film and TV writing, and Integrated Media Writing and Animation.

All seven of the University's new certificate programs are interdisciplinary in nature.

Two recently implemented doctoral programs draw on a variety of disciplines: Bioenvironmental Sciences and bioinformatics.

6. *Extend recruitment and community service programs beyond the University's traditional service areas to strengthen its competitive position and attract a racially diverse student body.*

The rationale for the development of the University's new certificate programs was to become competitive for students throughout the state. These courses initially are designed to serve the needs of employees affected by the Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC). Likewise, the doctoral program in community college leadership is being offered throughout the state both through off-campus classes and on-line.

The campus has met with some success in recruiting students from a broader in-state pool. In 2005, 39% of entering freshmen were from Maryland jurisdictions other than Baltimore City. By 2009, this had risen to 47%. At the same time, the percentage of students coming from other states and other countries declined slightly over the same period.

7. *Maintain the enterprising culture and infrastructure to enable the University to respond rapidly and effectively to changes in its environment.*

The University has made some progress in systematically becoming better informed about the needs of its students, faculty, and staff. A variety of surveys are regularly carried out on-line to facilitate responses and data analysis. However, the campus is in the relatively early stages of learning how to use this information to change processes and improve services.

The same is true for assessments of student achievement. The campus now has a good deal of baseline data on student performance due to its use of standardized assessment instruments. It is now gathering re-test results to enable it to assess value added information.

The University is handicapped in attempting to take advantage of new and emerging opportunities. This is due in large measure to lack of adequate resources to be able to allocate funding to new projects as they are needed. This will continue to be a challenge for the University due to the wide variety of basic needs it must address.

8. Serve as a catalyst for the improvement of the surrounding community and of the City of Baltimore.

The campus has been successful in setting a high standard for attractive and functional facilities. Its new library already is considered a prominent landmark in the northeastern part of the city. It recently has been selected for a national award among educational institutions. The newly-renovated Banneker Hall, while not visible from outside the campus, hosts many school system personnel and is under consideration for a national award. The new architecture building, which is under construction, will add another highly visible facility along Perring Parkway.

The new building for the School of Business and Management will add to the University's profile along the Hillen Road/Perring Parkway corridor. It will be built on an abandoned part of the Northwood Shopping Center. It will significantly improve the appearance of that part of the community and is expected to be a catalyst in the revitalization of adjacent properties.