

UGC Report Office of Undergraduate Education Program Review – DRAFT

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Introduction.

The Office of Undergraduate Education is a college-level organization headed by Intern-Dean Dr. Simon Stacey. Its stated core mission is: "... to lead and connect to the UMBC community by coordinating university-wide initiatives designed to support students toward successful completion of their academic journey at UMBC and to ensure they are prepared to meet the challenges of the future." This mission has led OUE to cover a very large number of areas associated with undergraduate education at UMBC. These break into three major pieces: academic programs administered by OUE, course offerings by OUE, and undergraduate academic policy-based items. The following table is a brief guide to these areas.

Table 1. Overview of the Office of Undergraduate Education

Academic Programs	Curriculum	Academic Standards & Policies
Honors College	First-Year Seminars	Academic Policies
Interdisciplinary Studies Program	Transfer Student Seminars	Academic Procedures
Learning Resource Center	IHU Course Components	Academic Standards
UG Program Directors	Writing Intensive Program	Academic Integrity Office
Meyerhoff Scholars Program		First-Year Placement Testing
Sherman Scholars Program		
Discovery Scholars		
Women's Center		
Undergraduate Research		
Transfer Students		
New-Student Book Experience		
Collegiate Success Institute		

As can be seen from this table, there are a large number of units with very different needs and goals. These were distributed geographically across many parts of the campus; however, they have recently had a number of the units concentrate into areas of Sherman Hall and the Library Building.

The OEU office and its units have very dedicate and hard-working staffs, who strive to make an academically rich undergraduate experience at UMBC. OUE receives funding through a variety of mechanisms, although outside of the scholars programs the bulk of the funds are provided by the Provost's Office. The core OUE Office has ten state-supported positons and supplements this with contractual and student employees. Each of the units that report to the Dean have their own staff that are supported in various ways. Also, the organization works with the academic departments and Student Affairs on campus-wide programs, goals, and initiatives.

In AY 2012, OUE programs served approximately 5,800 undergraduate students. Table 2 gives an abbreviated view of some of the breadth of the direct student impact that OUE has through some of their course offerings and programs throughout the University. This lists the approximate number of students involved in each of the areas.

Table 2. List of Student Numbers in Several of the OUE Programs

Item	Students
First-Year Seminars	400
IHU (Y-sections of courses)	600
LRC Tutoring	1700
Undergraduate Research Conference and Research Support	400
LRC Pre-College Courses	400

In the review, the external reviewers were particularly impressed by the leadership OUE provides in creating a distinctive undergraduate experience at UMBC through the various scholars programs and its focus on supporting undergraduate research and scholarship. They strongly supported the OUE efforts to reach the unaffiliated students across the campus and to draw them into extra-Departmental academic activities.

Issues

The external reviewers and the internal report highlighted various issues that were seen in hampering OUE from accomplishing its mission. It was stated that the goals of the Office are appropriate for UMBC, however the wide range of programs and responsibilities leads to a lack of focus. This has been compounded by the addition of new responsibilities since the program review. The key point stated by the external reviewers was that an ever-increasing number of options were being offered with thin resources. In addition, there were organizational issues raised by the reviewers. Specifically they pointed to the need for a full-time associate dean to direct the academic standards and policy administration, as well as additional staff in that area. Also, they questioned the fit of the Women’s Center within OUE. Dr. Diane Lee, Dean of OUE at the time, responded that the top priority was to establish an associate dean for academic standards and policies, and that the inclusion of the Women’s Center in OUE was part of the UMBC culture. The post-APR action plan included approval to create an associate dean position, although there was no clear plan as to how this would be funded.

The review expressed concern about the assessment of First-Year Seminars, TRS Seminars, and Introduction to Honors University sections. As part of this, there questions on the goals of these courses and if the goals are adequately articulated to students and instructors. The post-APR action plan included a process for increasing funds to cover increasing assessment work within OUE.

Other specific issues highlighted by the review have been addressed, such as evaluating the effectiveness of the First-Year Intervention alerts and Supplemental Instruction programs. OUE has increased its focus on evaluation of most of its programs, and with this information it is examining prioritizing its program options.

Summary

The review pointed out the tremendous job that the Office for Undergraduate Education does in supporting the undergraduate academic programs and enhancing the undergraduate experience at UMBC. It found that the staff works tirelessly with thin resources to accomplish its mission. There is a need to focus efforts and acquire additional resources to support the programs already in place in OUE.