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The UMass Integrated Sciences Center in Boston opened at the start of the spring semester in January.

By **Matt Rocheleau**

The University of Massachusetts last year strengthened its research partnerships and improved conditions for its workers, but its progress slowed on efforts to bolster the campuses' academic profiles and to become more affordable, according to a [new self-assessment](#) released this week.

The performance report is the second annual assessment, launched by outgoing UMass president Robert Caret, as part of a frank attempt to inform the public where the institution is and where it should be.

“You will see that, as a university system, we continue to make progress toward achieving our long-term goals, as exemplified through key metrics such as the increased number of degrees awarded, the steady improvement in graduation rates, and our ability to maintain our strong credit rating,” Caret, who is leaving later this year to head Maryland’s university system, wrote in the report.

But, he said, “there is more to be done as each campus works to implement its strategic plan, reach its five-year targets, and achieve its vision for the future.”

The report lists 21 goals UMass has identified as its most important. They span six broad categories: students, workforce, research and development, social well-being, management of funds and resources, and communications.

Using metrics and data from each of the university’s five campuses, the report applies a rating to each goal. The four possible ratings from best to worst are: excellent, good, some, or limited progress.

Scores rose from “some progress” to “good progress” for three goals: improving research partnerships; promoting a positive, supportive, and diverse work environment; and engaging key constituencies through targeted communications, the report said.

Meanwhile, UMass’s progress toward developing nationally and regionally significant research and development centers improved from “good” a year ago to “excellent” this year — the only goal where “excellent progress” was made this year.

But ratings dropped from “excellent progress” last year to “good progress” for three goals: admitting high-quality students and increasing the academic profiles of its campuses; serving the state’s workforce and economic needs; and better incorporating internships and other experiential opportunities.

Progress also slowed in the university's efforts to improve accessibility and affordability, the report found, as the rating for that goal dropped from "good progress" last year to "some progress" this year.

UMass debuted the simplified annual performance review last year, promoting the 10-page assessments as more user friendly than the 100-plus page reports the university has traditionally relied on to monitor progress.

While last year's ratings were based on performance over the three previous years, this year's scores were measured against newly set targets that each campus hopes to achieve, said Matthew Gorzkowicz, who as associate vice president for administration and finance, oversaw production of the accountability report.

Volumes 1 and 2 of the reports "UMass Performance: Accountable and on the Move," are published online at www.massachusetts.edu.

UMass system rates its own progress toward meeting key goals

The best possible score is 4, signifying 'excellent' progress; 3 means 'good' progress; 2 means 'some.'

Goal	2015	2014	Change
Admit high-quality students, striving to increase the academic profiles across all campuses.	3	4	-1
Provide an accessible and affordable education of high quality.	2	3	-1
Improve student success, retention, and graduation rates.	3	3	0
Foster supportive, diverse campus environments, where students can do their very best work.	3	3	0
Represent all regions and demographics of the Commonwealth, particularly those in under-served or under-represented segments of society.	3	3	0
Serve the workforce needs and economic development of the Commonwealth by focusing on strategically important areas such as STEM (science, technology, engineering and math), IT and Health Care fields.	3	4	-1
Incorporate experiential learning opportunities that complement classroom learning, such as service learning and internships.	3	4	-1
Build on our reputation as an R&D leader.	3	3	0
Develop nationally and regionally significant R&D centers in strategic areas.	4	3	1
Commercialize technology, generate license income and start up new companies with a Massachusetts presence.	3	3	0
Work collaboratively to form new vehicles and partnerships to help grow the research enterprise.	3	2	1
Increase the numbers of collaborations and partnerships between the University and its larger communities (local, national, and global) for the exchange of knowledge and resources.	3	3	0
Promote a positive, supportive, and diverse work environment by employing a diverse faculty and staff and providing incentives for professional growth.	3	2	1

Develop, support, and sustain special programs and pipelines promoting the transition of students across all educational sectors.	3	3	0
Manage limited financial resources efficiently to achieve long-term success.	3	3	0
Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the University's operations.	3	3	0
Increase external support from alumni, corporate partners, and friends.	3	3	0
Invest in campus facilities to support the University's mission, reduce maintenance costs and be environmentally responsible.	2	2	0
Spread the message in a compelling, purposeful way.	3	3	0
Share our successes with online, digital and mobile audiences.	3	3	0
Engage key constituencies through targeted communications efforts.	3	2	1

SOURCE: University of Massachusetts

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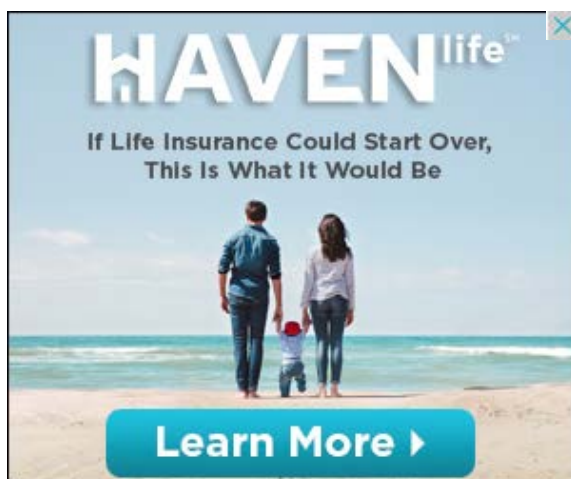
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