THE ROLE OF MASTER’S EDUCATION IN REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

Academic Partnerships for Applied Master's Programs

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Goals for Applied Master's Programs

• Provide education that allows graduates to advance in their careers
• Align with the needs of area employers
• Have flexibility to respond to changing needs
• Self supporting: revenue covers all program expenses (state of Maryland not providing funding for new programs)
• Offered during hours that accommodate schedules of working professionals
Challenges to Overcome

• Limited workload capacity available for tenured faculty to create new programs or teach additional courses

• Alignment between areas of interest of prospective students and employers vis-à-vis faculty expertise and interests

• Incentives for academic departments to participate
Solution: Academic Partnerships

Program Development

Division of Professional Studies

• Market research on viability of proposed new programs
• Convening employer advisory board to work with faculty
• Assistance with development of new program proposals, including new courses, and campus review process
Ongoing Program Support

Division of Professional Studies

• Recruiting students

• Recruiting adjunct faculty (as needed) who are approved and supervised by an academic department

• Managing administrative tasks such as scheduling classes and adjunct payroll

• Providing evening support for students and faculty
Financial Model

- Tuition revenue from course sections managed by the Division of Professional Studies (DPS) is held separate from general tuition revenue
- Fixed percentage allocated to administrative offices (e.g. Student Business Services, Registrar) to cover their costs
- Fixed percentage allocated to DPS to cover their costs
- Adjunct faculty paid
- Net funds shared between Provost and home academic department
Master’s in Professional Studies

- Template for applied master’s programs that allows flexibility to respond to opportunities
- Tracks in disciplinary areas
- Core with common professional elements such as
  - Management, Leadership and Communications
  - Law, Policy and Ethics
  - Analysis
  - Operations and Project Management
- Required and elective courses in the disciplinary areas
Self-Supporting Applied Programs at UMBC

Master’s in Professional Studies (MPS) Tracks:

- Biotechnology (PSM Certified)
- Cybersecurity
- Geographic Information Systems
- Health Information Technology
- Industrial & Organizational Psychology

Other partnership programs with similar financial model:

- Engineering Management
- Systems Engineering (Developed with industry funding)
Other Models of Applied Programs at UMBC

• Online program in Information Systems: developed with assistance from outside group 15 years ago. Now self-supporting and run completely by department faculty

• Assistance from Division of Professional Studies for program administration but not financially self-supporting:
  • Master of Arts in Education (experienced teachers)
  • Teaching English for Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) online
  • Instructional Systems Development
Traditional Master’s Program with Connections to Region

Master of Fine Arts in Intermedia and Digital Arts:

- Space is leased in downtown Baltimore arts district to encourage interactions with professional artists
- MFA theses exhibited in professional art gallery for students to gain real-world experience
Certificates and Certifications

- Most applied master’s programs have a companion 12 to 15 credit hour certificate program
  - Certificate diploma and notation on transcript
  - Self-supporting with cost sharing associated with courses so students from traditional programs or not in a degree program can take them
  - Credits transfer into master’s program

- UMBC Training Centers
  - Non-degree professional development
  - Some linkages to degree programs (e.g. biotechnology and cybersecurity)
  - Certifications (e.g. Certified Financial Planner, Project Management Professional, Certificate in Network Administration)
Concluding Remarks: Necessary Elements

- Academic partnerships with area employers
  - Advisory boards
  - Alumni connections
  - Regular meetings between faculty, administrators and employers (both on campus and at employer facility)
- Academic partnerships with campus administrative support unit
- Financial model for self support allows growth during times of tight budgets
- Cost-sharing allows greater flexibility for departments and creates incentives for faculty involvement