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

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- 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