

Satellite Campus Committee¹ **Interim Report, June, 2007**

Background: During the fall semester of 2006, the George Mason University faculty senate adopted a resolution creating a committee to review several aspects of satellite campus committee activities. Subsequently, the faculty senate elected the three members noted below to serve on the committee. The committee first met during the spring semester and drafted an initial set of questions focusing upon two broad areas: the decision processes for the establishment of a satellite campus and the evaluation criteria for satellite campuses.

The committee shared these initial questions with Provost's Peter Stearns. In response, Provost Stearns suggested that the committee meet with him regarding the first of these and V.P. for the RAK campus, Sharon Siverts, for the second. The committee did meet with both Provost Stearns and V.P. Siverts. Following these meetings, the committee prepared summary notes and shared these notes with Provost Stearns and V.P. Siverts. Copies these notes are attached as appendices.

Primary Initial Findings

Working Definition of a Satellite Campus: As the university does not have an official definition of a satellite campus, the committee has adopted the following one: *"A campus or location outside of the Commonwealth of Virginia where students may earn a George Mason University academic degree."*

Initial Screening Criteria of Satellite Campus Opportunities

- a) Must not cost George Mason University any money. (There are some indirect costs of the time of GMU administrators, faculty and staff.)
- b) No Commonwealth of Virginia funds may be committed or used.
- c) Needs to include educational opportunities for our students from our Northern Virginia campuses.
- d) Must be of interest to the academic areas that would be part of the satellite campus academic programs.
- e) Research opportunities for faculty are also considered.

2) Financial Feasibility Analysis Components

- a) Types of faculty to be involved
- b) Feasible tuition rates for students
- c) Expected contributions from partners (government and private)
- d) This is a multiple year analysis; however, it does not include adjustments to reconcile differences by period.
- e) Annual cash flows to GMU are always to be positive.
- f) All sources of "start up" capital are external to George Mason University. The University does not incur any debt as a source of funding for a satellite campus.

¹ Aimee Flannery, Civil Engineering, IT&E, Gerald Hanweck, Finance, SOM, Robert Johnston, Finance, SOM

3) Recommendation to Establish a Satellite Campus

- a) The formal recommendation to establish a satellite campus is from the Provost's Office with concurrence from the President.
- b) Faculty Senate vetting is included as part of this recommendation process.
- c) Clearance is sought from SCHEV. (SCHEV does not formally approve such programs.)
- d) The recommendation is presented to the Board of Visitors who must provide final approval. (Board approval is not necessarily sought for locations offering only certificates or courses. Their approval is sought when a full degree program is to be offered at a satellite campus.)

4) On-going evaluation processes of a satellite campus

- a) To V.P. Sharon Siverts' knowledge there was no internal process for the on-going evaluation of a satellite campus. However, SACS (Southern Association of Colleges and Universities) has a requirement to review a branch campus within its first 6 months of operation and has criteria for that evaluation. In the case of GMU, RAK Campus, such review occurred in March, 2007.
- b) In the UAE, there is a licensure process for non-federal institutions. This process is based on SACS but is more comprehensive. GMU, RAK Campus is developing an application for licensure. Embedded within the application is an Institutional Effectiveness Manual that is required; this Manual requires very comprehensive system of institutional review of all processes, procedures in all areas of the Campus.

5) Annual reporting for satellite campuses:

- a) V.P. Sharon Siverts is not aware of any requirement for annual reporting but an annual report of the GMU, RAK Campus will be presented to the Board of Governors at the end 2008, the end of the fiscal year. This report will cover academic and administrative functions.
- b) There is a six person Board of Governors which oversees the GMU, RAK Campus, three appointees from Mason and three from EDRAK. The Provost, the Senior VP for Finance and the VP for GMU, RAK Campus are the Mason representatives. The Board meets quarterly and will receive the Annual Report.
- c) An international accounting firm has been engaged to prepare the annual financial audit for the GMU, RAK campus which will be received by the Board of Governors.

Future Committee Tasks

- 1) Meet with Deans of Schools and Colleges offering degree programs at satellite campuses to discuss the recommendation and approval processes within their schools and colleges.
- 2) Meet the department chairs of the degree programs at the satellite campus to discuss their involvement with faculty recruitment, selection, and appointment.

- 3) Meet with the Senior Vice President for finance regarding the financial performance financial reporting, and internal controls for satellite campuses.

Appendix 1

Up Dated Notes from March 26, 2007 Meeting with Sharon Siverts Regarding Evaluation Processes for a Satellite Campus

Attending: Sharon Siverts, VP George Mason University, Ras al Khaimah Campus, Aimee Flannery, IT&E, Gerald Hanweck, SOM, Robert Johnston, SOM

- 1. What is the process for the on-going evaluation of a satellite campus?**
 - a. First, it might be noted that to my knowledge (Sharon Siverts) there was no internal process for the on-going evaluation of a satellite campus. However, SACS (Southern Association of Colleges and Universities) has a requirement to review a branch campus within its first 6 months of operation and has criteria for that evaluation. In the case of GMU, RAK Campus, such review occurred in March, 2007. The SACS team was impressed with the work of the campus and the support of its initial efforts by Mason, Fairfax, having 3 recommendations and a number of commendations.
 - b. In the UAE, there is a licensure process for non-federal institutions. This process is based on SACS but is more comprehensive. GMU, RAK Campus is developing an application for licensure. Embedded within the application is an Institutional Effectiveness Manual that is required; this Manual requires very comprehensive system of institutional review of all processes, procedures in all areas of the Campus.
 - c. Institutions in 'free zones' are not required to have a license but to have credibility within the country, to have students be able to attend and get sponsored, and to have students be able to work for Government upon graduation, a license is required. Both of these processes contain aspects of on-going evaluation.

- 2. What is the evaluation cycle? How frequently are evaluations conducted?**
 - a. The initial license from the Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA), UAE is for 5 years, maximum. SACS, when awarded for the campus, will be in line with the cycle for Mason, Fairfax.
 - b. In addition to licensure, the CAA requires all academic programs to be accredited by them. This accreditation lasts up to two years following the first set of graduates and then extends for 3-5 years before re-accreditation is required for each program.
 - c. In terms of SACS, the Campus will follow the Mason plan for evaluation of programs and other services, while at the same time, accommodate the CAA, assuming licensure is given.

- 3. Are annual reports (academic, administrative, and/or financial) prepared for satellite campuses? If so, who prepares each of these and what offices receives them?**
 - a. Sharon Siverts is not aware of any requirement for annual reporting but an annual report of the GMU, RAK Campus will be presented to the Board of Governors at the end 2008, the end of the fiscal year. This report will cover academic and administrative functions.
 - b. There is a six person Board of Governors which oversees the GMU, RAK Campus, three appointees from Mason and three from EDRAK. The Provost, the Senior VP for Finance and the VP for GMU, RAK Campus are the Mason representatives. The Board meets quarterly and will receive the Annual Report.
 - c. An international accounting firm has been engaged to prepare the annual financial audit for the GMU, RAK campus which will be received by the Board of Governors.

- 4. When a decision to establish a satellite campus is made, are evaluation criteria defined at that point? Are these then used to evaluate the progress of the campus? If so, what are these criteria?**
 - a. It is unknown whether there were evaluation criteria defined when the decision was made to establish a satellite campus.

5. **If the evaluation criteria are defined subsequent to the establishment of the campus, how are these developed and by whom?? What are these criteria?**
 - a. Sharon Siverts is not able to answer this question. GMU, RAK Campus did establish goals and objectives for 2008 which will be used to evaluate the actions of all units during this year.
 - b. While not related to this question, the RAK government is funding the operations of GMU, RAK Campus and also are providing the funding for the development of the new campus.

6. **What is the on going process for reviewing and updating these evaluation criteria?**
 - a. Sharon Siverts is not aware of process for reviewing and updating evaluation criteria, if such exist. On the Campus level, goals and objectives will be reviewed at the end of the year, and through the institutional effectiveness process, the Campus will analyze how well it performed and what needs to be followed and what new things need to be added as goals and objectives for the next cycle.

Appendix 2

Notes from April 18, 2007 Meeting with Peter Stearns Regarding Establishing a Satellite Campus

Attending: Peter Stearns, Provost, Aimee Flannery, IT&E, Gerald Hanweck, SOM, Robert Johnston, SOM

6) Definition of a Satellite Campus (outside of the Commonwealth of Virginia)

- a) The university does not have an official definition of a satellite campus.
- b) We have suggested the following one: *“A campus or location outside of the Commonwealth of Virginia where students may earn a George Mason University academic degree.”*
- c) Peter Stearns did note that we may have in the future “locations” in contrast to a campus where a student might earn a specialized degree. For example, a specialized graduate degree in a science program located within a major scientific center outside of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

7) Decision to Establish a Satellite Campus

a) Discovery Process for a Possible Satellite Campus

- i) With the RAK campus, we were approached by a potential business partner in the UAE initially. Yehuda Lukacs was the first person from GMU involved with the UAE possible satellite campus.
- ii) For other potential programs, the initial contacts have been initiated by faculty with relationships to the specific area. This has been the case with two South Korean initiatives.
- iii) In general, George Mason has not searched for these opportunities, but responded to them as they have emerged. The process has been very idiosyncratic.

b) Initial Screening of Satellite Campus Opportunities

- i) This is conducted by the Provost’s office. Wendy Peyton is specifically involved regarding accreditation issues.
- ii) The Office of the President and Legal Affairs are kept informed at this initial screening phase.
- iii) Standard Criteria
 - (1) Must not cost George Mason University any money. (There are some indirect costs of the time of GMU administrators, faculty and staff.)
 - (2) No Commonwealth of Virginia funds may be committed or used.
 - (3) Needs to include educational opportunities for our students from our Northern Virginia campuses.
 - (4) Must be of interest to the academic areas that would be part of the satellite campus academic programs.
 - (5) Research opportunities for faculty are also considered.

c) Evaluation of those Satellite Campus Opportunities that Pass the Initial Screen

- i) The initial planning horizon for a satellite campus is 5 to 10 years.
- ii) It is anticipated that this horizon will be revised as a specific satellite campus opportunities develop.

d) Academic Programs Decisions

- i) For degree programs to be offered, we would like market analysis studies. So far these have been mostly trial and error efforts and not more formal market analysis projects.
- ii) Enrollment projections are a part of this process. They are initially developed by GMU in conjunction with our local partners and other resources we may be able to use in the area. For example, the U.S. Department of State personnel in the region.
- iii) Enrollment projections are based upon expected admissions results. As these are new initiatives, there are some “guesses” and recognition that there is uncertainty in early enrollment projections.
- iv) Dean’s are initially involved at an early stage in this process of determining which programs will be offered. We must have the Dean’s support for programs in an area. Dean’s are to

follow up and consult with directors, department chairs and area faculty. If Provost feels that a particular program is needed and home department in Northern Virginia not enthusiastic about the project, more persuading may occur from the Provost.

e) Financial Feasibility Analysis

- i) A financial feasibility analysis undertaken for a satellite campus. This analysis does include:
 - (1) Types of faculty to be involved
 - (2) Feasible tuition rates for students
 - (3) Expected contributions from partners (government and private)
 - (4) This is a multiple year analysis; however, it does not include adjustments to reconcile differences by period.
 - (5) Annual cash flows to GMU are always to be positive.
- ii) All sources of “start up” capital are external to George Mason University. The University does not incur any debt as a source of funding for a satellite campus.
- iii) Surplus projected cash flows will first be used to replace the partner’s contributions to defer costs incurred on the Fairfax campus related to satellite campus programs. For example, additional costs of the registrar’s office and admissions. These are approximately \$300,000. Beyond replacing these contributions, additional surplus funds would be allocated in relation to enrollment patterns by program at the satellite campus.

f) Potential Partner(s) Evaluation

- i) Dun and Bradstreet is used to assess the financial viability of a potential private partner.
- ii) The U.S. Department of State is consulted regarding the government entity.
- iii) If we have faculty with significant experience and contacts in the area, we seek their assistance and advice.
- iv) We have consulted with other U.S. universities with campus in the region. VCU for example with their Qatar campus.

g) Decision to Proceed with Negotiations for a Satellite Campus

- i) This is a decision made by the Provost and the President.
- ii) There will have been consultation with the Faculty Senate and the Board of Visitors will be kept informed.
- iii) The following parties will be involved in the negotiations:
 - (1) Provost and the Provost’s staff
 - (2) Senior V. P. for Finance
 - (3) University Legal Affairs
 - (4) Admissions Office
- iv) These negotiations will include specific performance goals with time lines for projected enrollments and finances. In the case of RAK an extensive amount of time of GMU senior management and staff was used.

h) Recommendation to Establish a Satellite Campus

- i) The formal recommendation to establish a satellite campus is from the Provost’s Office with concurrence from the President.
- ii) Faculty Senate vetting is included as part of this recommendation process.
- iii) Clearance is sought from SCHEV. (SCHEV does not formally approve such programs.)
- iv) The recommendation is presented to the Board of Visitors who must provide final approval. (Board approval is not necessarily sought for locations offering only certificates or courses. Their approval is sought when a full degree program is to be offered at a satellite campus.)