UMC Compact Objectives and Initiatives – 2005

2. **Student Retention** – UMC will develop a five-year strategic plan for the systematic improvement of student retention and graduation rates as we secure the financial and human resources essential to develop and implement intervention programs and services.

2.1 Document the early identification of students who are essentially disengaged, or at-risk for drop-out, and our campus attempts to intervene with educationally purposeful activities.  
♦ Purchase the Noel Levitz retention management system as a comprehensive mechanism for collecting and sharing information to facilitate timely intervention.
♦ Review current practices such as mid-term grade notification.
♦ Strengthen the academic contract process.
♦ Pursue the offering of a one (1) credit career clarification course for undecided students.

2.2 Initiate and support the intentional collaboration of academic professionals and student affairs professionals in an effort to reflect the joint and synergistic effects of students’ in and out-of-class learning experiences. Scholarly support for this powerful partnership is found with academic and student affairs leaders (Astin, Hutchings, Terenzini, Baxter Magolda) and with national higher education organizations (AAHE, ACPA, and NASPA).
♦ Appoint dedicated coordinator(s) to provide leadership for this systemic change in current academic and institutional cultures. Coordinator will work with campus community to integrate academic learning and student development with a comprehensive and holistic approach to teaching and learning. Dialogue among faculty and student affairs professionals is essential.
♦ Build successful models for Student Orientation, Internship, First Year Experience, International Programs, Study Abroad and academic clubs.

2.3 Apply what we’ve learned about student engagement from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), supported by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the PEW Forum on Undergraduate Learning.
♦ Communicate with students the positive correlates of time on task to educational and personal growth.
♦ Study the NSSE findings on Student – Faculty Interaction benchmarks. Analyze current advising practices as we renew our commitment to the value of face-to-face interaction between faculty members and students.
♦ Strengthen and increase our provision of educationally enriching activities. Financial support for the continuation of our Service Learning Program would be essential based on national studies and campus surveys. In the Fall of 2004, seventy-three percent (73%) of the student participants in this program said that they “would continue their enrollment and not drop or cancel courses integrating service learning activities.” New program offerings, such as an Honors program, will also be pursued.

2.4 Initiate the systematic and consistent assessment of student learning for all programs, activities, and services delivered outside the classroom. Assessment methods will focus primarily on student learning, rather than only student satisfaction.