**UNIVERSITY OF BALTIMORE**

**Managing for Results**

**Academic Year 2021-22**

**Mission**

The University of Baltimore (UB) offers career-focused education for aspiring and current professionals, providing the region with highly educated leaders who make distinctive contributions to the broader community. UBalt has a long history of providing quality, professional undergraduate and graduate education for working adults who aspire to advance in their careers.

**Institutional Assessment**

UB’s strategic plan supports our mission and six strategic priorities guide our direction.

**Goal 1**: Position UB as the region’s premier professional, career-focused university

**Goal 2:** Strengthen student success

**Goal 3:** Solidify UB’s commitment to community engagement and service

**Goal 4:** Organize for long-term financial stability

**Goal 5:** Achieve excellence in research, scholarship, and creative activity

**Goal 6:** Strengthen UB’s commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

UB’s mission and implementation of the strategic plan is consistent with the 2017-2021 State Plan for Postsecondary Education: Student Success with Less Debt, the 2022 Plan for Postsecondary Education, and the goals are listed below. Specifically, Goals 2, 4, and 5 of UB’s Strategic Plan align with the Maryland State Plan. UB assesses impact and aligns and revises strategies as appropriate.

| **State Plan** | **UB Strategic Plan (SP) – Initiatives Aligned with State Plan** |
| --- | --- |
| **Access**: Ensure equitable access to affordable and quality postsecondary education for all Maryland residents. | **Goal 2:** Enhance affordability and student financial literacy.  **Goal 2:** Evaluate the tuition structure for all programs to ensure market competitiveness.  **Goal 2**: Increase need-based financial aid.  **Goal 2**: Revise financial aid processes to ensure clarity, consistency, and ease for students.  **Goal 2**: Enhance strategic use of funds for improving student outcomes and reducing negative financial impacts on students and the institution.  **Goal 3**: Expand engagement with public-school systems to ensure more students are prepared for college (e.g., dual enrollments) |
| **Success:** Promote and implement practices and policies that will ensure student success. | **Goal 2:** Increase degree completion rates and shorten time to degree.  **Goal 2:** Mine academic data to identify and support student success.  **Goal 2:** Close gap in educational achievement among all undergraduates.  **Goal 2:** Maximize flexible course delivery, enhance winter and summer offerings, and develop multi-semester course schedules.  **Goal 2:** Enhance opportunities for awarding credit via transfer institutions, early college admittance, dual high school enrollment and military credit; create a campus-wide structure and institute policies and procedures for awarding Prior Learning credit.  **Goal 2:** Develop a strong and proactive approach to academic advising that focuses on academic pathways and timely student completion.  **Goal 2:** Develop a University-wide initiative to assist students in making prudent financial decisions. |
| **Innovation**: Foster innovation in all aspects of Maryland higher education to improve access and student success. | **Goal 2**: Strengthen excellence in teaching and learning.  **Goal 2**: Grow student participation in high-impact practices.  **Goal 4**: Reorganize academic structures to better support academic excellence and student success.  **Goal 5**: Expand RSCA partnerships and sponsored research with industry, government and community organizations, and other academic institutions. |

Guided by our strategic plan and aligned with university and college retention plans, we carefully track retention, graduation, attrition, and student success rates. We use evidence to guide our initiatives and direct and indirect measures to chart our progress. And we implement best practices and enhance existing services based on student feedback. Over the past several years, UBalt has implemented many new initiatives while enhancing others in order to strengthen our focus on student success and the student experience. Additionally, the University engaged in the important work set out in the Board of Regents USM/UB Task Force Report. In particular, the Student Experience Workgroup carefully reviewed the student experience at the University and made several suggestions to senior executive leadership that would positively impact recruitment, student success, retention, and degree completion.

**Performance Accountability Metrics Supporting Access, Success, Innovation, Financial Resources, and Institutional Capabilities**

* FTFT (first-time full-time students) retention is 68%.
* FTFT (first-time full-time students) retention for African American students is 58%.
* The six-year graduation rate for undergraduate students is 38%.
* The six-year graduation rate for African American students is 27%.
* Law graduates who pass the bar exam on first attempt remains stable at 70%.
* Percentage of African American undergraduates remains at 47%.
* Percentage of economically disadvantaged students enrolled continues to increase from 70% to 74%.

It is important to note that the average freshmen retention rate for the entire period that UBalt has had freshmen is 73%.  The range is wide: 67%-87%, but this difference is partially due to the fluctuation of the small numbers of first-time freshmen.  The pandemic has posed multiple challenges for our diverse student population and the institution continues to monitor student needs and preferences and implement changes based on this information.

74% of UBalt students are economically disadvantaged. Financial assistance and need remain the top issue for our student population. UBalt continues to revise its need- based financial aid strategy to support recruitment and retention. We continue to leverage the Bob Parsons Scholarship Fund for Pell Grant eligible transfer students who maintain full-time enrollment, a 2.0 cumulative GPA, and Pell Grant eligibility. This scholarship allows eligible students to complete their degree debt free by covering the remaining tuition and fees after the Pell Grant is applied. The Sam Rose Scholarship Fund supports newly admitted full- and part-time undergraduate students with 24 credits, a 2.0 cumulative GPA, and in-state residency status. UBalt continues to offer a Near Completion Grant for undergraduates within 30 credits of graduation with either no remaining financial aid eligibility or hardship. Merit scholarships are incremental to need-based aid.

**Prompts from the Commission**

The Commission requested that institutions respond to two prompts. The prompts and responses are below.

* What is the biggest challenge your institution faces as it attempts to equitably meet the goals, objectives, and performance measures in the 2017-2021 State Plan for Postsecondary Education?
  + Like many universities in the northeast with similar student demographics as the University of Baltimore, we have experienced several years of enrollment decline. This has recently increased due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact on our students who work and take care of families. Also, while we have effectively leveraged funds from the Federal Government, still about 1/3 of our eligible to enroll students did not return this fall due to financial issues. The resulting impact on revenue has challenged us to provide more support for students when resources are already thin.
* Has your institution used disaggregated data to identify equity issues in students’ educational opportunities and outcomes? If so, how has this disaggregation of data provided insight into your institution’s educational equities and inequities? If not, what data has been used to understand student outcomes?
  + We continue to analyze student success, retention, and degree completions by various student demographic variables in order to develop new programs, initiatives, and make enhancements to existing supports. The university has been recognized as a Primarily Black Institution (PBI). UBalt recently applied for and received a grant for Primarily Black Institutions (PBI) and Student Success. We secured a $250,000 per year grant for five years to support undergraduate student success. Two positions were hired: one to recruit students and another to support them once on campus. In addition, grant dollars are also funding Open Educational Resources (OER), embedded tutors, and software to support students learning in the field of accounting.

**Specific UBalt Initiatives and Enhanced Initiatives Supporting Access, Equity, and Student Success**

UBalt continues to use direct and indirect measures, including student feedback, to develop and enhance initiatives focused on student success. UBalt continuously assesses the impact of the pandemic as well as course and service modality. UBalt has operated in a hybrid fashion over the past year and continues to do so. Some initiatives and examples are below.

1. **Enhanced Credit for Prior Learning**: In addition to expanding the credit options for students to earn prior learning credit, a course was developed to allow students to build a portfolio of work products and documented experiences to be reviewed by faculty to earn credit. The goal is to shorten the degree completion time.
2. **Shortened Credits to Degree Completion:** Several programs have shortened the number of credits to degree while still maintaining excellence in the curriculum and meeting accreditation standards. Health Systems Managements and the MBA are developing 4 by 1 programs to accelerate programs to the master’s degree and incentivizing students to complete the B.A.
3. **Redesigned the Interdisciplinary Degree with Tracks for Degree Completers:** This program is designed to help students who have accumulated a certain number of credits without completing a degree to reformulate credits in tracks that support an area of interest in a multidisciplinary format.
4. **Expanded Mandatory Milestone Advising Initiative:** This initiative requires students to see an advisor at distinct and critical times in their academic careers (45, 60, and 90 credits).  Specific advising syllabi are used at each touch point and include topics such as academic progression, support services, career and internship opportunities, financial aid and graduate school preparation.  As of 2017, milestone advising includes all undergraduate students. As of fall 2022, this initiative has expanded to include graduate students in specific programs.
5. **Implementation of Salesforce Advisor Link (SAL) and Development of the Student Success Hub:** In 2017, UBalt initiated a Student Success Team initiative. Each student is assigned an academic advisor and career coach and this information is listed in the student portal. In spring 2021, UBalt implemented SAL, a software platform that focuses on advisor and student success engagement. Students can interact with their academic advisors to make an advising appointment, review and handle academic to-do items, and learn more about their Student Success Team. This is Balt’s main student communication platform and system of engagement. Other offices will be incorporated into the platform to improve engagement and communication.
6. **Developed a Math & Statistics Center:** The pandemic focus of the renamed Math & Statistics Center (MSC) has been outreaching to students and development of online tutoring protocols. In summer 2019, math support services were combined into a single math center within the RLB Library, providing drop-in math tutoring for all quantitative courses. The expansion of services was a response to increased demand. Peer tutors are trained and certified to provide support for general education math and challenging upper-division quantitative literacy courses.
7. **Expanded Embedded Peer-Support Programs:** Peer-based embedded support programs provide scalable academic support from a staff of trained peer tutors, coaches, and writing consultants entering classes and bringing support directly to individual sections of challenging courses. Embedded programs include:
   1. Supplemental instruction-style review sessions for challenging courses, like statistics and accounting, available in person and recorded for online access.
   2. Embedded tutoring in quantitative courses expands with the core sequence of psychology course and business statistics courses.
   3. Coaching in the First-Year Seminar; and
   4. Writing Fellows in writing-intensive courses.
8. **Expanded Writing Center Outreach and the Writing Fellows Program:** Writing Fellows continue to be embedded in undergraduate courses in all three colleges. Early focus on writing support improves outcomes immediately and reduces writing-related barriers to graduation in future semesters. Data from the first full-year Writing Fellows faculty cohort demonstrated remarkable faculty and student satisfaction and student success. Currently, a new partnership between the Writing Center and Writing Faculty increases collaboration regarding the upper division writing placement to allow for better support of students preparing for that placement process. The Fellows program continues to expand, now serving a high-enrollment general education ethics course that all undergraduate students must complete.
9. **Expanded Use of Open Educational Resources:**With support from the Center for Excellence in Learning Teaching and Technology (CELTT), the Library led a faculty cohort to redesign curriculum incorporating Open Education Resources – free online textbooks. Currently, a team consisting of faculty, staff and one USM representative are representing UBalt in a yearlong AAC&U OER Institute to: 1. develop a sustainable support system for OER use; 2. identify and build a database of all OER-related courses; 3. identify the cost-saving for OER related course text; and 4. garner continued university-wide support of OER initiatives.
10. **Development of Student Online Learning Preparedness Resources:** In response to the pandemic, RLB Library, CELTT, and Academic Success created the Student Quickstart, an online resource providing students the opportunity to learn about being a successful online student as well as introductions and tutorials on educational technologies. The Quickstart was redesigned with additional tutorials in spring 2021. Currently, the Quickstart is being redeveloped as an enhanced OER to provide a more structured experience for students requiring support as they embark on online learning, both synchronous and asynchronous modalities.
11. **Challenging Courses**: Continued focus on courses with high D (C for graduate programs) grades and failure rates. Using six-year course by level data, worked with colleges to develop ways to increase success in targeted courses.  The Office of Institutional Research (OIR) provides data by semester to look at highly enrolled courses with a high failure rates. Faculty work with instructional designers in CELTT and support services in library to address problem courses that persistently challenge instructional and student success. Early evidence indicates that courses with high quantitative requirements area showing higher success rates.
12. **Graduate CFW Rate:** Since 2018, the average graduate CFW has remained steady, albeit with a modality transition to online learning in Fall 2020. The percentage of classes with a CFW rate of 25% or more reduced by 1%, from 8.2% in fall 2018 to 7.0% in fall 2020, while the overall CFW rate was 12% in 2018 and fell by 1% to 11% in 2020.
13. **New Foundational Math Model:**UBalt developed a partnership with the Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC) to offer their nationally recognized Accelerated Math Program (AMP) at UBalt in fall 2019.  The AMP combines the co-requisite foundational course with the corresponding General Education math course to support student understanding and assimilation of math concepts.
14. **Increased Focus on Financial Literacy:**  UBalt implemented a new strategy for financial literacy and payment planning by providing a financial literacy tool to help students understand the best ways to cover expenses and remain in control of their financial health.  Financial Literacy: TV [[https://ubalt.financialaidtv.com](https://ubalt.financialaidtv.com/)] is an online library of video clips, which address popular financial aid questions. UBalt established a Financial Clearance Initiative: An initiative to ensure students can cover their tuition (via direct payment, financial aid or third-party support) each semester.  The goal is to encourage students to plan how to cover the cost of education.  Also, the Bob Parsons Veterans Center is sponsoring a series of financial literacy workshops in fall 2022. (Note: Need to monitor the current offerings and may need to revise as appropriate.)
15. **Enhance Mental Health and Wellness Resources:** Our Student Assistance Program (SAP) is designed to provide students with an easily accessible, safe and confidential means to assist with issues that may interfere with school, work or family responsibilities 24/7 365 days a year.  UBalt’s Clinical Case Manager provides on-campus threat monitoring, assessment and response when needed and serves as the on-campus triage resource.  In spring 2022, UBalt was awarded an AmeriCORPS VISTA to launch our Bee Well Initiative to enhance health and wellness resources. In summer 2022, UBalt launched the nationally recognized Mental Health First Aid initiative with a goal of expansion to key staff and faculty groups during AY2022-23. (Note: This is identified as an effective set of initiatives.)
16. **Launch of a Student Mentoring Program:**In fall 2019, UBalt launched a mentoring program – UBalt Connects -- focused on lower division transfer students.  Over the past two years, 35-50 mentees each year were assigned a mentor who will meet with them in a mentoring relationship to complement intrusive academic advising and ensure students are on track for timely degree completion. Mentors from around the institution help support our students.
17. **Career and Internship Center’s (CIC) Intrusive Outreach Approach:** At the start of the pandemic, the CIC initiated outreach calls to two distinct student populations. The CIC reached out to new students at the University to inquire how their semester was going and also to remind them of the available resources in the CIC. CIC staff also reached out to graduating seniors to inquire about their career plans and to encourage them to take advantage of the resources in the CIC. This practice has continued over the past two years. Also, the CIC continues to work with employers and non-profit agencies to proactively convert unpaid internships to paid opportunities to benefit our students.
18. **Implementation of the LiveChat feature in the Office of Student Support (OSS):** In spring 2022, the OSS implemented this feature to allow students a nearly real-time opportunity to ask questions, connect with resources, and express concerns. OSS team members staff the LiveChat by responding to questions and concerns as soon as they are received. Students simply go to the OSS website and click on the LiveChat icon to engage with a staff member who can assist them.
19. **The Division of Student Success & Support Services developed a Basic Needs Virtual Resource Center in fall 2022**. The focus of the Basic Needs Virtual Resource Center is to provide every student with real support as they pursue their educational goals. The most important thing we want students visiting this site to know is that there are resources and services available to help meet their needs and that there is a team of individuals committed to providing this support. Important resources such as the Campus Pantry, Career Closet, the UB Student Emergency Assistance Fund, and the Student Assistance Program are featured. The virtual resource center can be accessed here: <http://www.ubalt.edu/basic-needs/> .
20. **Enhanced Integration Between the UBalt CARE Team and Early Alert:** The CARE Team is UBalt’s cross-divisional team that focuses on students of concern. The important and sensitive work of this group has been aligned to the University’s Early Alert system which is now part of all undergraduate courses. This integration allows for a more holistic approach to working with students who find themselves in difficult personal and academic situations.
21. **New Test Optional Admission Component:** After increasing the admission standards, the University of Baltimore revised its admission requirements for fall 2021 to include a test optional component in response to the COVID.  The test optional criteria include: a minimum 2.67 (weighted) GPA, positive grade progression in core courses (math and English), a personal statement or essay and letters of recommendation and remain eligible for merit-based scholarships.