

MISSION

The University of Baltimore provides innovative education in business, public affairs, the applied liberal arts and sciences, and law to serve the needs of a diverse population in an urban setting. A public university, UB offers excellent teaching and a supportive community for undergraduate, graduate and professional students in an environment distinguished by academic research and public service. The University makes excellence accessible to traditional and nontraditional students motivated by professional advancement and civic awareness; establishes a foundation for lifelong learning, personal development, and social responsibility; combines theory and practice to create meaningful, real-world solutions to 21st-century urban challenges; and is an anchor institution, regional steward and integral partner in the culture, commerce, and future development of Baltimore and the region.”

INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT

Overview

With guidance from our own institutional assessment plan, restructuring and aligning of resources, externally mandated reporting and programs with external accreditation, UB has strengthened how we evaluate and improve institutional activities, planning, resource allocation and student learning. Consequently, in 2016 the responsibilities of the vice provost expanded to support institutional effectiveness by bringing together disparate functions into one unit.

Responsibilities include strategic planning; assisting academic and nonacademic units in the assessment of student learning and unit effectiveness; coordinating and monitoring compliance activities for program, unit and institutional accreditations; meeting all mandatory and expected data reporting requirements of governmental, nongovernmental and commercial organizations; and providing data and analytics for decision-making and action-planning

UB assesses institutional effectiveness and student learning collaboratively with two groups: the Academic Core Assessment Team (ACAT), begun in 2015, and the Administrative Unit Core Assessment Team (ADCAT), begun in 2016. These two distinct yet related arms of institutional effectiveness provide the structure for departmental and centralized analysis of outcomes, development of recommendations and clear links to annual budget and planning cycles for review, reflection and continuous improvement. ACAT is co-chaired by assistant provost for undergraduate studies and academic affairs and assistant provost for student assessment, advising and retention; ADCAT is co-chaired by the senior administrator for academic affairs and the assistant vice president for institutional research. The Institutional Assessment Plan outlines ACAT and ADCAT membership, responsibilities and assessment cycles.

Goal 1. The University of Baltimore will enhance the quality of learning, teaching and research (Objectives 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, and 1.6). The 2013 Maryland State Plan Goal 1: Quality and Effectiveness.

2013 Maryland State Plan for Postsecondary Education is to develop in students “the academic skills and knowledge necessary to succeed at postsecondary-level learning. **(MSP Goal 1).** The

student body is diverse in all schools. We are aware that in this report some of our key indicators have declined, while others have increased. Students earning credit outside of the traditional classroom has increased due to our emphasis in this area. Experiential Learning is considered an important element of both undergraduate and graduate degree programs in support of UB's *Knowledge that Works* mission. We continue to have over 100 students participate each year in both programs and Service Learning projects. Including UB's Service Learning project to West Virginia, which is a hallmark of the university's co-curricular leadership program. These out-of-class opportunities support explicit student learning outcomes at either the course or university level. Community Engagements programs that immerse students in civic issues such as community reentry from prisons, sustainability, homelessness, immigration rights, design learning, the Chesapeake Bay, Applied Research projects and over 400 enrolled in an Honor's Enhanced Course, all of which have an experiential learning component. There are approximately 100 different Experiential Learning opportunities that take place each year for students at the University of Baltimore to conduct research, work on community projects, have internships, participate in study abroad/global field study, and give back to the community.

UB is also aware that one key metric is bar pass rates. Potential students look for this when deciding where to attend or stay. Bar passage rates at UB, in Maryland and across the country have declined in the past two years. The Law School has taken three steps in response:

- Forming the Bar Passage Task Force to investigate reasons for the decline and to propose strategies
- Appointing a special assistant to the dean for Bar Readiness, who works with the task force to develop and implement recommendations
- Offering Strategies for the Bar, a course that had previously been part of the law curriculum but had not been offered for several years

As a result, in 2017 Law School students increased their passage of the bar by 1% from the previous year. The Law School offered a new course, Essential Skills for the Bar Exam, in spring 2017 in efforts to further improve the pass rate.

Six-year graduation rates have increased for all students, including an increase of 4% for African American students. Preliminary evidence points to improved pass rates for students in developmental courses. We also see an increase in second year retention for all students, with a slight decrease of 1.5% for African American students. We continue to monitor and assess this decrease.

Goal 2. The University of Baltimore will increase student enrollment in response to state and regional demand. MSP Goal 2 objectives, 2.1 and 2.2 and The 2013 Maryland State Plan Goal 2: Access, Affordability and Completion

UB is increasingly diverse with 47.1% of our undergraduates African-American and 49% economically disadvantaged. There is a growing priority in securing need-based support for a diverse student body. The *2013 Maryland State Plan* notes that institutions of higher education “play an important role in meeting the (State’s) completion goal and must work together to create an educational environment that supports all students’ attainment of education goals” (MSP Goal 2). As the demographics of the State change and the number of first-generation

college student increases, the University understands that there is a growing need to assist families in supporting them through the admission process and financial aid. Similar to last year, there is a drop in the percentage of economically disadvantaged students from the previous year, yet 49% is still a significant number.

According to a 2014 University of Baltimore Student Success Survey, financial reasons are also why a high percentage of our students stop-out or leave UB, although according to the family responsibilities and job responsibilities are also responsible for students stopping out. Fall 2017, more students than in previous years, were in financial difficulty and not able to re-enroll with a record number of students being sent to collections. A strategic priority moving forward is to identify ways to secure additional need-based financial aid and to revise the processes and advising for students prior to financial difficulty.

Examples of specific student success initiatives this year include:

Implemented mandatory milestone advising for all new undergraduate students beginning Fall 2017. Milestone advising is anchored by three specific touch points and aligned with the personal, professional and academic goals of students at those points. (45, 60 and 90 credits).

Continue to address courses with a higher than average DFW (Undergraduate)/CFW (graduate) rates.

Developed an adviser-advisee mapping initiative. Advisers are now able to access a complete list of their advisees in one central location and can conduct outreach with their students from their “My Advisees” PeopleSoft screen.

Expanded early alert. UB is expanding the Early Alert support system to 200-level General Education courses. Early Alert has been in place for 100-level courses and learning communities for some time. This expansion will support student retention because it provides faculty with a simple way to alert advisers about potential problems students may be experiencing, so advisers can follow up with students about those issues.

Simplified and streamlined General Education requirements by making them easy to navigate by students and easy to communicate by faculty and advisors, UB’s 2016 GE curriculum reform not only maintained UB compliance with changing COMAR, MHEC, and MSCHE GE guidelines but also enhanced transfer-friendliness for our sizable non-traditional, transfer student population.

We will continue to enhance all student success initiatives.

Goal 3 The University of Baltimore meets community, business, government and not-for-profit needs in the Baltimore metropolitan area and Maryland. (MSP Goal 3). Objective 3.1. The 2013 Maryland State Plan Goal 5: Economic Growth and Vitality.

UB's entrepreneurial revenue increased from \$194,192 in 2016 to \$220,634 in 2017 as did the number of federal awards from 4 to 6 and percentage of research dollars from federal sources increased by 10% in the same time frame. At the University for Baltimore, our commitment to the greater needs of the region and state is steadfast as we continue to strive towards increased engagement and entrepreneurial opportunities particularly in the city.

Commission Request

Commission Assessment (not tied to a specific indicator): In its 2016 Performance Accountability Report, the University shared preliminary information on two initiatives tied to financial aid and student recruitment and retention. One initiative altered the timing of scholarship award offers to new students from mid-summer to the time of admission as a means of helping recruit undecided students. The second initiative aligned the packaging of financial aid for returning students with the timing for new students; by moving the packaging to earlier in the year; the hope was that returning students would have more time (and information) to make their financial plans. Although the University makes it clear that these initiatives are in their early stages and long-term effects or outcomes cannot be fully assessed, please inform the Commission on any short-term outcomes or findings from these recent efforts.

University of Baltimore Response.

During the 2016/2017 AY there were a number of vacancies in the Enrollment Management and Marketing division, including the Director of Financial Aid. This position, vacant for a number of months, was recently filled. However, in spite of this vacancy, two initiatives were addressed.

The first change implemented was the timing of financial aid awards. Prior to the 2016/2017AY financial aid awards were made during the summer immediately prior to the start of the fall semester. During the 2016/2017 AY scholarships for new students were awarded during the course of the application cycle. This strategic awarding of aid for new students at the time of admission was used as a means of helping to recruit undecided students.

At this same time, another change was made. Students with existing scholarships were allowed to keep the full amount of the scholarship and University of Baltimore Foundation (UBF) scholarships awards were included in aid packages. Previously, dollars were swapped out of institutional scholarships when a UBF scholarship was awarded.

The stacking of awards was well received among students and may have impacted our slightly improved retention rate for second year students. however, the practice of using financial aid to increase new enrollments, did not results in increased new student numbers. We are hopeful with a stable Financial Aid Office and the continued assessment of our strategies we will better leverage our student financial aid.