

UNIVERSITY OF BALTIMORE

MISSION

The University of Baltimore offers career-focused education for aspiring and current professionals, providing the region with highly educated leaders who make distinctive contributions to the broader community.

This new mission and strategic plan is the result of an 18-month process undertaken by the Strategic Planning and Budgeting Committee, a committee comprised of a cross-section of the institution with representation from the University Faculty Senate, the University Staff Senate and the Student Government Association. The committee solicited feedback via a confidential website and shared multiple drafts of the mission, vision and values at University-wide town hall events and governance meetings; it was approved in January 2018.

STRATEGIC PLAN

The new strategic plan supports our mission to become the regional leader in educating students who seek undergraduate, graduate and professional programs that advance careers, provide opportunities in applied research and experiential learning, and prepare people to be leaders in their chosen fields and communities. Six strategic priorities provide direction and an invitation to the community to create an ambitious future together as UB approaches its centennial in 2025. Critical to the effective implementation of our plan is setting appropriate targets and assessing our strategy. The University of Baltimore has a strong intuitional assessment approach that supports university wide initiatives. Our goals which are aligned with both the states and USM plans are:

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.

INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT

Using our new Strategic Plan as a guide, UB continues to strengthen how we evaluate and improve institutional activities, planning, resource allocation and student learning. UB continues to assess the impact of all that we do, is restructuring and aligning its resources to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness, and revises its strategies as appropriate. Consequently, in 2018 the responsibilities in the Office of the Provost in close alignment with the Office of Administration and Finance, expanded its institutional effectiveness efforts 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. In addition, UB has reorganized its Student Affairs function to include a more targeted focus on student success. The new unit is now the Division of Student Success and Support Services, which includes a dedicated data analysis unit. The Office of Institutional Research, working in tandem with the Student Support Data Analytics unit, provides relevant metrics to guide the work of intuitional assessment. Together these unit provides data to guide the strategic direction and impact of student success initiates and results.

UB Strategic Plan Aligned with Key Aspects of the State Plan

UB’s mission and new strategic plan is aligned with the 2017-2021 State Plan for Postsecondary Education. Key initiatives are summarized below. Specifically, Goals 2, 4 and 5 of UB’s Strategic Plan align with the Maryland State Plan. After one year of implementation of several new initiatives, FTFT (first time full time students) retention has increased 9% in one year from 68% in 2016 to 77% in 2017.

| State Plan | UB Strategic Plan (SP) – Initiatives Aligned with State Plan |
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| <p>Access: Ensure equitable access to affordable and quality postsecondary education for all Maryland residents.</p> | <p>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 on the institution. Goal 3: Expand engagement with public-school systems to ensure more students are prepared for college (e.g., dual enrollments, community college pipelines).</p> |
| <p>Success: Promote and implement practices and policies that will ensure student success.</p> | <p>Goal 2: Increase degree completion rates and shorten time to degree. Goal 2: Mine academic performance data to identify and support student success. Goal 2: Close the 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 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.</p> |

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| <p>Innovation: Foster innovation in all aspects of Maryland higher education to improve access and student success.</p> | <p>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.</p> |
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Supporting Access

We continue to revise financial aid processes to ensure clarity, consistency and ease for students and to enhance the strategic use of funds for improving student outcomes and reducing negative financial impacts on students and on the institution. The Office of Financial Aid has been transferred from the enrollment division to the Division of Administration and Finance to better align this function with the Bursar thus creating a one-stop shop under the Division of Financial Planning and Operations for students' financial concerns.

Financial reasons continue to be why a high percentage of our students stop-out or leave UB. In Fall 2017 and Spring 2018 UB saw a greater number of students in financial difficulty than in previous years. This resulted in an increase in the number of students on financial hold and ineligible to re-enroll; a record number of students were sent to collections. University-wide initiatives to promote financial literacy and assist students in making prudent financial decisions are under way.

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. A new scholarship strategy is under development to award stronger achieving student aid. UB is revising its institutional scholarship model to support recruitment efforts to enroll a stronger freshmen class for Fall 2019. This strategy will support more first-time, full-time freshmen with a higher academic caliber (3.0 GPA or higher). Financial aid will shift away from students with GPAs under 3.0, with a few possible exceptions for students with high SAT's but GPAs under 3.0.

In addition, UB has been reviewing program structures and courses, streamlining program offerings, developing optimal course sequencing, and assessing the number of credits needed for degrees to ensure both rigor and student success.

The USM B-Power effort — short for Baltimore Power — is an initiative to work with Baltimore City-serving organizations to increase education and career opportunities for the city's students. In its commitment to this goal, the USM Chancellor's Office invested \$233,000 in the University of Baltimore's (UB) Early College Initiatives for fiscal years 2017 through 2018. UB used this investment to grow its college readiness and dual enrollment programs for Baltimore City Public Schools students, form new partnerships with non-profits to support students, and fund a full-time Academic Program Specialist to enable operation at a larger scale. As a result, dual enrollment headcount at UB has grown twentyfold since 2016, and partner high schools and community-based partners have increased tenfold. Growth has included the participation of

middle school students in the College Readiness Academy for the first time as well. As a result of this growth, we are now at the cusp of reaching nearly every eligible public high school in Baltimore with B-Power dual enrollment.

The program continues to grow. In the 2017-18 Academic Year UB partnered with 13 high schools, 3 middle schools and 228 students were in 3-credit dual enrollment. Presently, for the 2018-19 Academic Year we are partnering with 18 partner high schools, 7 middle schools and 340 students are in 3-credit dual enrollment. For our dual enrollment students who were in Baltimore City Public Schools high school graduating class of 2017, 65% were enrolled in college in Fall 2017 (compared to 43% of all BCPS grads in 2017).

Supporting Student Success:

Freshmen: A new more focused first-year program is being implemented with a focus around meta-majors -- structured, professional pathways to help students stay on track, even if they choose a different major within a path. We continue to develop a strong and proactive approach to academic advising that focuses on academic pathways and timely student completion; enhance career and related support services, and to monitoring students progression in terms of students' credits earned versus credits attempted. In fact, for the first time since tracking, there was an increase in freshmen student attempted credits verses earned, positioning first-time full time students to have a high second year return rate. This activity is paying dividends: FTFT (first time full time students) retention has increased 9% in one year from 68% in 2016 to 77% in 2017.

DFW Courses: UB has addressed the DFW rate in highly enrolled courses. Deans now routinely receive information about high DFW course in their colleges and develop retention plans and initiatives. One example is a summer workgroup where faculty used data to identify key factors that influenced student success in their courses. Revisions were made and we are currently assessing the impact of these changes. Particular emphasis has been placed on foundational math in terms of appropriate placement, math pedagogy and the establishment of a summer "boot camp" for admitted students who need support in math. UB participated in the First-in the World grant to redesign foundational math. Post redesign pass rates increased by 11%.

Advising and Student Outreach: Milestone advising has also been initiated. Historically, UB provided mandatory advising only for freshmen and transfer students in their first semester and to students with academic difficulties. Utilizing best practices, in fall 2017 UB initiated mandatory milestone advising at 45, 60, and 90 credit completion. Milestone advising is now anchored by three specific touch points and aligned with personal, professional and academic goals.

UB is one of nearly 500 universities that is part of the Education Advisory Board's Student Success Collaborative (EAB SSC), which enables us to use the SSC, a tool that combines technology, research, process improvement, and predictive analytics to help institutions positively impact outcomes for at-risk students. The UB advising team launched five student communication campaigns through EAB year to help our students stay on track.

Academic Tutoring: Spring 2018 saw the creation of a new drop-in math tutoring center in the library to support students needing assistance in developmental and general education math and statistics. Previously, tutoring was provided only to students in developmental math. The expansion of the new center was a response to increased demand for strong and widely available math support. Peer tutors are trained and certified to provide support for math and also support upper-division courses using quantitative literacy skills that are traditionally challenging.

A new focus on peer-based embedded support programs provides 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:

- Supplemental Instruction for challenging courses, like statistics and accounting
- Coaching in the First-Year Seminar
- Writing Fellows in writing-intensive courses (see below)

For the first time, Writing Fellows are embedded in undergraduate courses in the College of Arts and Sciences and the Merrick School of Business. Early focused writing support improves outcomes immediately and reduces writing-related barriers to graduation in future semesters. Concurrently, a new partnership between the Writing Center and Writing Faculty provides multiple avenues of in-class writing support to students in quasi-developmental WRIT 200. The goal of this partnership is to improve student success and matriculation into WRIT 300.

Early Alert: UB expanded Early Alert support to 200-level General Education courses. Early Alert has been in place for 100-level courses and learning communities for some time. Faculty use the Early Alert platform to report attendance until midterm grades are posted which alerts the advising team that a student is experiencing potential problems such as excessive absences, late or missed assignments, poor performance on assignments, or other difficulties.

Bar Passage Rate: The focus on student success continues to be a priority for UB's School of Law. A new course, Essential Skills for the Bar Exam, was launched. In 2017, bar passage rate increased by 1% from the previous year and has maintained that gain for 2018.

Admission Standards: Key to increasing graduation rates is admitting students with reasonable chances for success. After reviewing student entering characteristics and graduation, recommendations were made to increase SAT scores which were moderately predictive of student success. In addition, recommendations include more careful monitoring of SAT scores and to reduce the interquartile variance; UB has the highest interquartile range in USM. We believe these recommendations will result in less student attrition.

An additional goal under this strategy is to close the gap in educational achievement among all undergraduates. The six-year graduation rate for African-American students has dropped by more than 5% from 2017 to 2018. Given the small numbers of first-time freshmen large changes are a result of a small number of students. However, when examining the entering characteristics of this class, they had the lowest average high school GPA (2.79) in ten years. Additional details are provided in the response to institution specific question of this report.

Supporting Innovation

We have revitalized the Center for Excellence in Learning, Teaching and Technology (CELTT) by developing a new structure that includes a Director of Online Learning, and a more intentional focus of using our own expert faculty to lead initiatives. With support from UB's teaching and learning center (CELTT), the Library led a faculty cohort to redesign curriculum incorporating Open Education Resources – free online textbooks. Studies indicate that free or low-cost textbooks allow some students to take an extra class every couple of semester and there shorten time to completion. One of the classes in the cohort is WRIT 300, which is a university-wide required course

Finally, in order to flourish, UB must be financially secure. UB is maximizing our institutional capabilities, building efficiencies, strategizing ways to grow revenue and increasing the University's endowment. We have expanded our Research Scholarship and Creative Activity (RSCA) partnerships and sponsored research with industry, government and community organizations and other academic institutions. UB's entrepreneurial revenue increased from \$220,634 in 2017 to \$269,273 in 2018 as did the number of federal awards from 6 to 9 and percentage of research dollars from federal sources increased by 33.7% in the same time frame.

UB continues to evaluate opportunities to improve efficiencies and support student achievement. We have implemented a shared services model for business practices and as previously indicated, reorganized Student Affairs and Financial Aid. We are aligning our first-year academic structures around pathways to provide students with focused early course work and streamlined General Education while providing targeted support for student success.

Commission Request

Objective 1.4: Annually maintain the second-year retention rate of all students and African-American students at 70 percent or greater.

Objective 1.6: Annually, UB will exceed the national benchmark six-year graduation rate for similar selective institutions of first-time, full-time degree seeking for all undergraduate students and African-American students.

Commission Assessment: In response to the 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the Commissioners expressed concern about the persistent statewide gaps in college success and completion when comparing African American students with their peers. To better understand the contributing factors and institutional responses to these persistent gaps, the Commission seeks additional insight from institutions tied to these indicators.

In its 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the University reported trend data showing that its second-year retention rate for African American students has fluctuated over the past five years, sometimes exceeding the rate for all students.

Yet, the University also reported that its most recent [2010] six-year graduation rate for African American students (30.9%) lagged behind the rate for the total student population (36.1%).

This graduation rate gap has fluctuated between 12.6 percentage points (2015) and 5.2 percentage points (2017).

Describe the factors the University has identified that affect both these **trends**: the success in retaining African American students at rates comparable to all students and the challenges faced in sustaining enrolled students' progress to graduation.

What strategies are in place to maintain success and address graduation gaps?

University of Baltimore Response

The University of Baltimore endeavors to give every admitted student an optimal opportunity to be successful in completing a UB degree. In this respect, the University provides services to a full range of students who qualify for additional educational support—including tutoring, collaborative learning, mentors, support groups, etc. Notwithstanding these efforts, our research has shown for students with multiple academic risk factors (i.e., very low SAT Math and SAT Reading scores, Pell eligibility, or does not have at least one parent who has attended college) present significant remediation challenges. This is demonstrated in the higher failure rates in remediation coursework, and consequently, lower retention rates as early as the second year. We acknowledge that these risk factors are more often associated with students in the minority student achievement gap groups.

The University is making progress in assisting student at risk to complete successfully the first year. The ratio of hours attempted to hours completed in the first year is rising sharply. Issues of student finances, however, present a different challenge to ameliorate, and this continues to be a challenge in retention. We have found that even if we can successfully assist the student in continuing to the 2nd year, the 3rd year retention proves challenging and we continue to identify barriers both financial and academic that impede student success.

As a consequence of this trend, the University is moving towards admitting students within its own ability to successful triage to academic support services. This will mean some reduction in admissions for some high-risk applicants to the University of Baltimore, but we believe that such an adjustment will provide for better and fairer academic opportunities for all students.