



UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
GLOBAL CAMPUS

THE DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION **STRATEGIC PLAN** 2021–2023



DIVERSITY IN ACTION

Initiatives for Change and Opportunities for Growth

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STATEMENT FROM THE PRESIDENT



At University of Maryland Global Campus (UMGC), diversity lies at the foundation of all that we do. We recognize that learning happens in different ways for different individuals, and every day we seek to bring the right experience to the right student at the right time and in the right way.

This embrace of diversity also represents a primary institutional strength and competitive advantage. It encourages a culture that is agile, creative, open-minded, and resilient.

Now, we seek to broaden and strengthen our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion across every facet of our institution, guided by this Diversity and Equity Strategic Plan.

It is designed to serve as a roadmap and also as the beginning of a broader conversation that will invite and introduce voices and viewpoints from increasingly rich and diverse populations at every level of our organization.

We are truly stronger together, and we are best equipped to navigate a world marked by increasingly complex challenges when we embrace and leverage the strengths and viewpoints of every stakeholder.

I thank you for your commitment to an institution that expands opportunities for every learner, and for your willingness to embrace our similarities and differences alike. I look forward to working with you as we seek always to change lives and strengthen communities here in Maryland, across the country, and around the world.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Gregory Fowler, PhD". The signature is stylized and fluid, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Gregory Fowler, PhD
President
University of Maryland Global Campus

STATEMENT FROM THE CHIEF DIVERSITY OFFICER



We are at a critical moment in the history of our university, during which we have the opportunity to not only change the diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) landscape for our students, faculty, and staff, but we can also set the standard for DEI efforts throughout higher education. This opportunity is not solely due to the work of the dedicated Diversity and Equity team, but it is also attributable to the talent and commitment of the UMGC community.

The foundation that we have built over the years has positioned us well to execute a plan that includes the members of our community and seeks to improve the situations for all individuals who have previously been underrepresented in higher education and in communities across the world. The plan that follows is a call to action. Taking the next step forward will require that all members of the community be committed to embedding these strategic efforts in their day-to-day work and interactions with one another.

From the beginning, our mission has been to meet students where they are and to expand global access to education. This expanded access is critical to closing financial and career gaps that so many underrepresented groups face. As we continue to reach out to the broader communities to best determine how to meet their needs, we will be better from hearing their voices and learning from their experiences.

I believe that we will look back on this plan and the work that follows as a key part of the future success of UMGC.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Blair Hayes". The signature is stylized with a large, flowing "B" and "H".

Blair H. Hayes, PhD
Vice President, Chief Diversity Officer, and Ombudsman
University of Maryland Global Campus

UMGC DIVERSITY AT A GLANCE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Office of Diversity and Equity was established in April 2000 to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion among the students, faculty, and staff of UMGc. Every day we drive UMGc's commitment to fostering diverse and inclusive working and learning environments.

This strategic plan celebrates differences in race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, military experience, etc. that have been part of UMGc since it was founded in 1947. In fact, UMGc was enrolling minority students in integrated classrooms on military bases long before the Supreme Court declared segregation unconstitutional in 1954.



DIVERSITY PLANNING AND STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

We at UMGc have long understood that the cultural diversity of students, faculty, and staff is integral to a strong institutional foundation. Our core value of diversity states, "Each individual brings value to our efforts and results," and our commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equity will shape this institution as we continue to lead in higher education and work to educate the next generation of learners. Our unique approach to education and learning positions us to offer opportunities to students and their families that can change the trajectory of lives for generations to come.

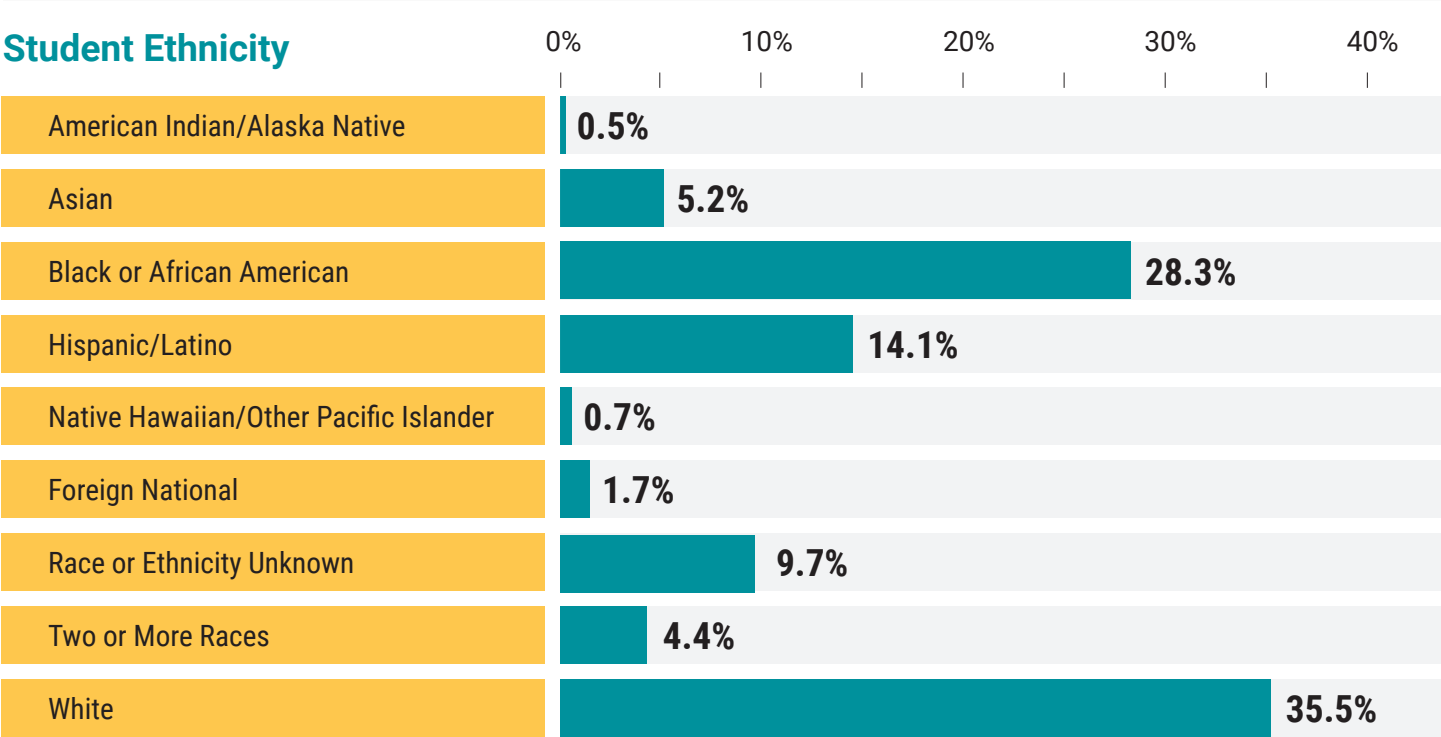
This plan is designed to strategically align diversity with initiatives, processes, and programmatic plans across the university while simultaneously supporting, expanding on, and aligning with work currently underway in key functional areas.

ULTIMATELY, THIS PLAN WILL POSITION UMGc TO

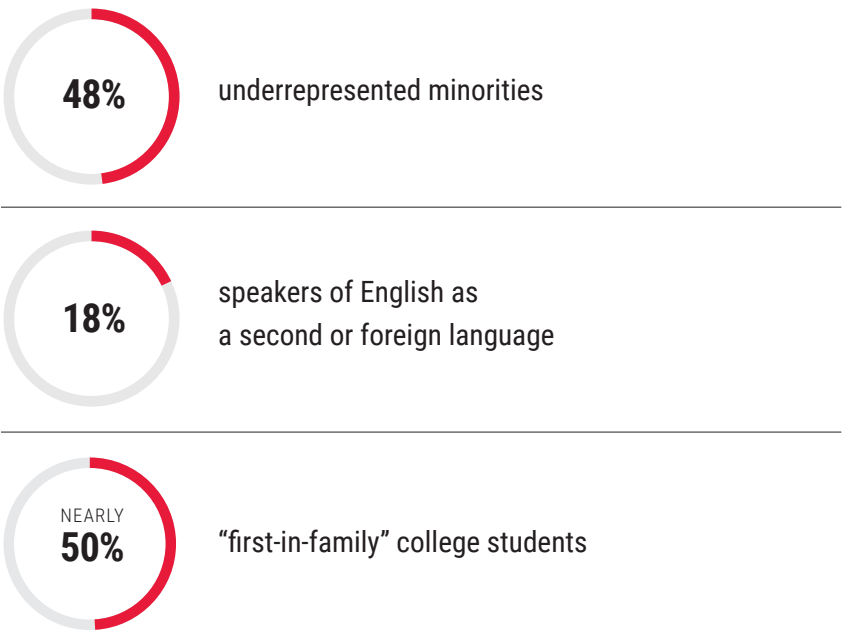
- Become a leading advocate for improved learning environments for communities and cultures worldwide
- Adopt a vision that combines attention to previously underrepresented groups with aspirations for creating a more globally inclusive environment
- Apply a comprehensive accountability system for diversity initiatives that offers transparency for individuals and groups
- Establish additional oversights and feedback channels by increasing engagement with students, faculty, and staff
- Expand guidelines and frameworks that ensure that all programs are intentional and include performance metrics
- Build the workforce of the future, focused on inclusive excellence and cultural intelligence

CURRENT STATE OF DIVERSITY

UMGC benefits from a student body consisting of the largest population of underrepresented students within the entire University System of Maryland. The UMGc student body comprises individuals from all backgrounds, cultures, and life experiences. These students come together to learn and share the rich and varied perspectives they bring to the classroom.



Student Facts at a Glance



DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION GOALS AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

THE DIVERSITY AND EQUITY STRATEGIC PLAN FOCUSES ON FOUR KEY STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

- ▶ **Student Life, Support, and Advocacy**
- ▶ **Workplace, Classroom, and Community Inclusivity**
- ▶ **Recruitment, Retention, and Development of Diverse Faculty and Staff**
- ▶ **Outreach and Community Engagement**

These priorities are in response to many factors, including the changing landscape in higher education, the changing face and expectations of students, the global reach of online education, and expanding opportunities for educational and career growth.

STUDENT LIFE, SUPPORT, AND ADVOCACY

One of UMGC's core values is "Students First." This is at the heart of the UMGC mission and is key to our continued growth and success. Through various units, the university will integrate diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts into programs across UMGC to reach students across the globe.

The strategic initiatives that the university will undertake as part of our efforts toward being truly student-centric include the following:

1. **Providing a culturally relevant and student-focused curriculum**
 - a. The academic schools will review curriculum across departments to integrate education related to cultural competence, race, and society.
 - b. The university will establish a Student Diversity Council to engage with students in conversations related to diversity, equity, and inclusion within the classroom.
2. **Removing barriers to education and career success**
 - a. The university will audit, review, and enhance systems and programs to ensure all areas of the university and the classroom are accessible for all students, staff, and faculty.
 - b. The university will expand mental health resources and counseling support for UMGC students to better support their mental health and wellness.

WORKPLACE, CLASSROOM, AND COMMUNITY INCLUSIVITY

The commitment to diversity and inclusion begins with a clear vision and strategy but must be felt in the workplace and classroom where staff, faculty, and students experience UMGC. Whether physically proximal to one another or in a virtual space, individuals can use skills, tools, and resources to further champion diversity within their spheres.

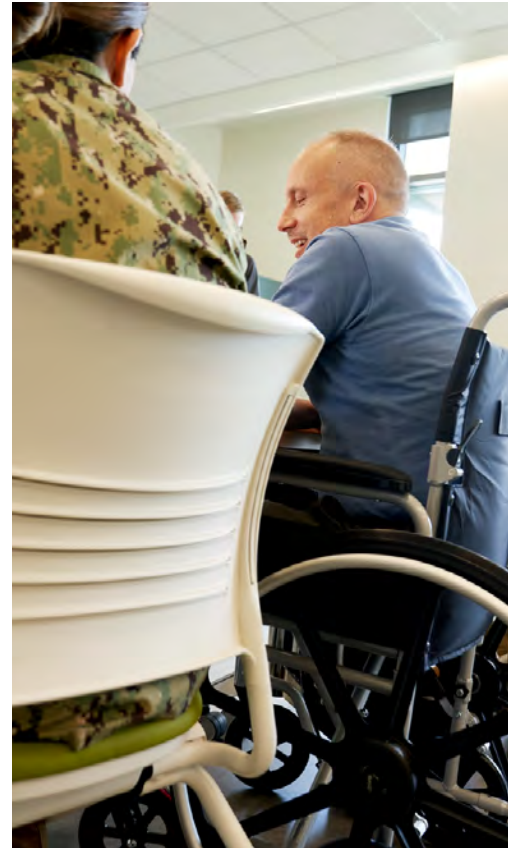
Achieving workplace, classroom, and community inclusivity requires engagement across all sectors of the UMGC community and will be accomplished through the following:

1. Advisory councils and community feedback

- a. The university will create a diversity advisory council that comprises individuals across departments, divisions, and work streams to advise university leadership on matters related to diversity, equity, and inclusion and university culture.
- b. The university will create a faculty diversity advisory council to engage faculty in discussions related to the management of the classroom environment and the faculty experience.

2. Workplace equity and awareness

- a. The university will expand opportunities for training, development, and cultural dialogues to engage the UMGC community in critical discussions of race, culture, and belonging.
- b. The university will develop a comprehensive communication strategy to provide diversity and equity information, disseminate examples of best practices for promoting diversity and inclusion, and share dashboards for the communication and recognition of key diversity metrics.
- c. The university leadership will work to establish measurable goals for diversity and inclusion at the division, school, and department/unit levels that will also include accountability measures.



EXPANDING ACCESS THROUGH UNIVERSITY SUPPORT

118

**Employee accommodations
made since June 2020**

624

**Students accommodated
as of October 2021**

RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, AND DEVELOPMENT OF DIVERSE FACULTY AND STAFF

To ensure that UMGC is meeting the current needs of our diverse workforce and is equipped for the workforce of the future, it is imperative that the talent pipeline of staff and faculty be equitable and free of systemic barriers. Maintaining an equitable talent pipeline involves practices that ensure that the selection process for staff and faculty at all levels is open to a diverse group of candidates. In addition, it requires that the UMGC culture be welcoming while also offering developmental resources and access to opportunities that lead to career advancement.

By attending to the following areas in the recruitment, retention, and development of diverse faculty and staff, UMGC will build and nurture a workforce that reflects the communities in which students, faculty, and staff live and work.

1. Workforce demographics

- a. The university leadership will commit to increasing the diversity of the leadership ranks across divisions, schools, and departments.
- b. The university will monitor staff retention, promotion, and turnover rates to identify and remove barriers to career advancement.

2. Professional growth and advancement

- a. The university will establish a UMGC diversity certificate program to track and celebrate participation in diversity events and training.
- b. The Office of Human Resources will connect diversity competencies and values to performance reviews and expectations.
- c. The Multicultural Training team will offer regular training that prepares faculty and staff to lead, influence, and advocate for diversity change.





COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

The UMGC community has engaged in discussions about

- Using gender pronouns
- Avoiding microaggressions
- Practicing inclusive behaviors
- Understanding privilege

OUTREACH AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

While we continue to build engagement and strengthen our internal community, we must also engage with communities outside our walls to build better connections and support their educational goals and pursuits. As we reach out and open our arms to communities that have not always had access to or been included in higher education, we will be better equipped to build systems, curricula, and structures that meet their needs.

We must be active members of the communities around us to meet their needs and respond to issues that they may face. We will accomplish the necessary outreach and community engagement through the following:

1. External community connectivity

- a. The university will partner with community organizations and leaders to ensure that we are appropriately and effectively educating and supporting underserved communities on their path to education.
- b. The university will expand multicultural programs and initiatives to further the intercultural relations and functions within the university.

2. Strategic collaborations and support

- a. The university will partner with community colleges and minority-serving institutions to better enhance their reach and to improve our ability to educate the students they serve.
- b. University leadership will lead the identification and development of strategic opportunities with external organizations and groups that aim to increase the access to education for previously underserved populations.

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS



IMPLEMENTATION AND UMGC COMMUNITY ADOPTION AND BUY-IN

This plan represents the strategic direction and guiding principles for diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts across the university. As the world continues to change and evolve, we will update and adapt this plan to ensure that it aligns with the role we play in changing lives and influencing the global education landscape. It will remain accessible via the online portal, and we will continue to host forums and opportunities for all members of the community to engage with us to share resources, suggestions, and recommendations. The inclusion networks and forthcoming faculty, staff, and student diversity boards will be beneficial to ensure that the voice of the community continues to be heard and shared.

FUTURE-FOCUSED EXPECTATIONS

Our future is shaped by the foundation that has been laid over the past 75 years. And while we are proud of how far we have come, we must continue to make strides if we want UMGC to become the university that we aspire to create. Our future will be made better by the many faces, voices, experiences, and perspectives of the people who are working and learning alongside one another around the world.

PROGRESS TRACKING AND COMMUNITY UPDATES

Successfully implementing this plan will require tracking and continued reflection to ensure that we are meeting our goals and strategic objectives. Through dashboards, key performance indicators (KPIs), and effective project tracking, we will measure and celebrate success while looking for areas that require additional attention. Because the entire UMGC community is on this journey together, transparency will be key, allowing the community to celebrate our collective achievements while also encouraging accountability. With that in mind, we will provide updates to the community through focused discussions, leadership presentations, and other university communications.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION MISSION STATEMENT

University of Maryland Global Campus (UMGC) seeks to reflect the diversity of the global community within which it exists. Cultural differences are recognized, valued, and considered essential to the educational process and working environment. Therefore, the university promotes understanding of and mutual respect for all members of the community. The university provides an academic and social environment that encourages new ideas, an eagerness to learn, and positive working conditions.

The Office of Diversity and Equity exemplifies UMGC's commitment to providing resources that promote access, equality, and inclusiveness to all members of its community.