

# INSTITUTIONAL SELF-STUDY

SPRING 2026

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PREPARED FOR:  
**THE MIDDLE STATES  
COMMISSION ON  
HIGHER EDUCATION**



UNIVERSITY OF  
MARYLAND

**FEARLESSLY  
FORWARD**

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## SELF-STUDY PROCESS AND ORGANIZATION

The University of Maryland, College Park (UMD) undertook its Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) self-study through a standards-based, evidence-informed, and mission-aligned process designed to provide a rigorous appraisal of institutional effectiveness. Each of the seven MSCHE Standards for Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliation, Fourteenth Edition (2023) was explicitly linked to *Fearlessly Forward: In Pursuit of Excellence and Impact for the Public Good* (2022), UMD's strategic plan that defines its commitments to reimagining learning, addressing humanity's grand challenges, investing in people and communities, and partnering to advance the public good.

### **GOVERNANCE AND STRUCTURE**

The process, launched in early 2024, was guided by a steering committee representing governance leaders, staff, faculty, students, senior administrators, and external partners. The committee set goals, ensured broad engagement, and coordinated development of the final report. Seven working groups, one for each MSCHE standard, were composed of faculty, staff, and students, supported by senior leaders and members of the Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment (IRPA)'s management team. Each group developed guiding questions, collected and analyzed evidence, consulted stakeholders, and drafted findings and recommendations.

### **TRANSPARENCY AND ENGAGEMENT**

Transparency was reinforced through shared digital workspaces, campus forums, and regular updates. Cross-group meetings ensured coherence across findings, while IRPA's involvement guaranteed that evidence was comprehensive, accurate, and actionable.

### **INTENDED OUTCOMES**

The self-study was designed to achieve five outcomes:

1. Demonstrate compliance with MSCHE Standards and Requirements of Affiliation.
2. Evaluate the effectiveness of operations and support structures in promoting student success and achieving institutional goals.
3. Evaluate progress on *Fearlessly Forward* commitments, assessing their influence on institutional culture and planning, and demonstrate alignment of strategic plan progress with MSCHE standards and mission expectations.
4. Strengthen the university-wide culture of evidence, accountability, and continuous improvement.
5. Foster inclusive institutional reflection that promotes transparency, shared ownership, and broad engagement.

## DESIGN APPROACH

UMD's standards-based design ensured comprehensive coverage of all MSCHE expectations while keeping mission and strategy at the forefront. This approach enabled the university to:

- ▶ Align accreditation criteria with institutional structures, planning, and governance.
- ▶ Integrate *Fearlessly Forward* commitments and metrics into each chapter's analysis.
- ▶ Identify strengths and opportunities for growth through systematic use of evidence.
- ▶ Highlight cross-cutting themes such as fairness, shared governance, and resource alignment across standards.

## FRAMING COMMITMENTS

The self-study is anchored by the four commitments of *Fearlessly Forward*, which serve as thematic threads throughout the report:

- ▶ **Reimagine Learning**— inclusive, integrative, transformational, and experiential education.
- ▶ **Take on Humanity's Grand Challenges**— interdisciplinary research, scholarship, and partnerships that address urgent global issues.
- ▶ **Invest in People and Communities**— a culture of care, community, belonging, and opportunity for students, faculty, and staff.
- ▶ **Partner to Advance the Public Good**— collaborations that strengthen civic engagement and shared prosperity.

These commitments provide the overarching context for UMD's planning, decision-making, and assessment practices, ensuring that the self-study reflects not only compliance but also the university's distinctive identity as Maryland's flagship, public, land-grant research university.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

UMD submits this institutional self-study in fulfillment of reaffirmation of accreditation by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE). Framed by MSCHE's Standards for Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliation, Fourteenth Edition (2023) and UMD's 2022 strategic plan, *Fearlessly Forward: In Pursuit of Excellence and Impact for the Public Good*, this report demonstrates how the university meets and, in many areas, exceeds accreditation expectations.

Guided by *Fearlessly Forward*'s four commitments — Reimagine Learning, Take on Humanity's Grand Challenges, Invest in People and Communities, and Partner to Advance the Public Good — the self-study provided an opportunity to assess institutional strengths, address challenges, and chart priorities for improvement. Broad engagement of faculty, staff, students, and leadership ensured a process that was transparent, inclusive, and evidence-based.

## HIGHLIGHTS BY STANDARD

- ▶ **Standard I: Mission and Goals** — UMD's mission emphasizes inclusive excellence, public impact, and innovation. It is tightly integrated with *Fearlessly Forward* and reviewed through governance, planning, accountability, and resource alignment processes.
- ▶ **Standard II: Ethics and Integrity** — Academic freedom, transparency, and equity are safeguarded through clear policies, inclusive onboarding (e.g., TerrapinSTRONG), and long-term equity investments.
- ▶ **Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience** — UMD delivers rigorous, inclusive, and experientially rich programs. High-impact practices, such as undergraduate experiential scholarship opportunities, living-learning communities, and distinctive general education courses, engage students early in scholarship, innovation, entrepreneurship, and civic inquiry.
- ▶ **Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience** — A comprehensive ecosystem supports academic success, well-being, and a sense of belonging. Initiatives such as the Terrapin Commitment, Uwill teletherapy, and data-informed advising exemplify UMD's strategic priority to invest in people and communities.
- ▶ **Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment** — Systematic learning assessment spans academic and co-curricular domains. Evidence of student learning informs curriculum redesigns, targeted advising, and equity-centered interventions, demonstrating a culture of continuous improvement.
- ▶ **Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement** — Planning processes are transparent, inclusive, and evidence-based. Investments in the Terrapin Commitment, sustainability initiatives, and modernization of facilities illustrate alignment of resources with mission priorities.
- ▶ **Standard VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration** — UMD's governance structures strike a balance between accountability and inclusion. In addition to the University Senate, which engages 200-plus representatives in shared governance, the university maintains numerous mechanisms for

stakeholder consultation, such as committees, commissions, advisory boards, leadership councils, and community boards, that ensure broad input into decision-making. Leadership advances *Fearlessly Forward* as a unifying institutional vision, informed by these inclusive processes.

### **REGULATORY AND ACCREDITATION COMPLIANCE**

This document demonstrates UMD's full compliance with the MSCHE Requirements of Affiliation and accreditation-relevant federal regulations. Evidence of legal authority, institutional integrity, financial stewardship, qualified leadership, codified academic and administrative policies, and required public disclosures, including consumer information, student complaint processes, student identity verification, and accreditation status, is documented throughout Standards II, VI, and VII and in the accompanying evidence inventory.

### **CONCLUSION**

The self-study affirms UMD's standing as Maryland's flagship, public, land-grant research university. It highlights how *Fearlessly Forward* commitments animate decision-making, planning, and assessment across all standards.

### **LOOKING AHEAD, UMD IS COMMITTED TO:**

- ▶ Expanding the use of metrics and community input to inform planning and resource decisions;
- ▶ Strengthening integration across academic and student support services; and,
- ▶ Reexamining institutional policies, practices, and resource allocation to ensure alignment with our mission and values; and,
- ▶ Enhancing communication of mission and priorities at unit and institutional levels.

More than a compliance exercise, the self-study reflects UMD's culture of evidence, inclusivity, and public impact. Accreditation provides an opportunity not only to demonstrate effectiveness but also to reaffirm the university's bold vision.

### **TOGETHER, WE ARE MOVING FEARLESSLY FORWARD.**

## INTRODUCTION

### **INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW**

Founded in 1856 as the Maryland Agricultural College, UMD has grown into the state's flagship, public research university and a globally recognized leader in higher education. Its location just outside Washington, D.C., positions the institution as a hub of innovation, discovery, and global engagement.

UMD is a member of the Big Ten Academic Alliance and the Association of American Universities. It is classified by the Carnegie Foundation as Research 1 (Very High Research Spending and Doctorate Production) and received the elective Community Engagement classification in January 2026. Guided by its land-grant mission, the university advances teaching, research, and service for the benefit of the state, the nation, and the world.

### **DISTINCTIVE STRENGTHS**

- ▶ **Inclusive excellence** — An exceptional student body supported by a culture of fairness and belonging, with a commitment to expanding educational opportunities and access in service to the state and its communities.
- ▶ **Transformative learning** — Experiential, interdisciplinary, and high-impact education that prepares graduates for the workforce as innovators and entrepreneurs, for advanced study, and for active engagement in civic leadership.
- ▶ **Research with impact** — World-class scholarship addressing humanity's challenges in climate, health, literacy, ethics, quantum science, and artificial intelligence.
- ▶ **Community integration** — Partnerships such as Greater College Park and *MPowering the State*, along with University of Maryland Extension's presence in every Maryland county and Baltimore and more than 1,200 community partners, that connect scholarship to economic and civic vitality.
- ▶ **Holistic student support** — Coordinated services in academic success, mental and physical health, financial wellness, and mentoring.

### **PROFILE**

- ▶ **Enrollment and Demographics** — In Fall 2025, UMD enrolled 31,875 undergraduates and 10,415 graduate students. The undergraduate population is a rich blend of cultures, with strong representation of first-generation, Pell-eligible, and military-connected students. About one-third of the graduate student population comes from international enrollment.
- ▶ **Academic Programs** — UMD offers over 300 degree and certificate programs. Signature initiatives include the Honors College, the Do Good Institute, the First-Year Innovation and Research Experience (FIRE), and more than 25 living-learning communities.
- ▶ **Student Success** — First-year retention exceeds 95%, four-year graduation surpasses 75%, and six-year graduation exceeds 88%. Targeted initiatives such as the Terrapin Commitment and expanded advising infrastructure reinforce equity-driven achievement.

- ▶ **Research and Partnerships** — With annual expenditures above \$700 million as a campus and over \$1.5 billion across the *MPowering the State* partnership with the University of Maryland, Baltimore, UMD drives discovery through partnerships with federal agencies, foundations, nonprofit organizations, schools and school districts, state and local governments, and peer institutions.
- ▶ **Financial Profile** — UMD operates on a \$2.8 billion (FY23) budget, balancing tuition and fees (25%), state appropriations (17%), and research grants and contracts (20%), as well as auxiliaries, philanthropy, and investment income. An all-funds model prioritizes affordability, access, and stewardship.
- ▶ **Leadership** — President **Darryll J. Pines** and Senior Vice President and Provost **Jennifer King Rice** are leading a bold strategic transformation under the *Fearlessly Forward* initiative, emphasizing public impact and excellence in all that we do.

### **PLANNING AND IMPROVEMENT**

Institutional planning is guided by shared governance, evidence-based decision-making, and transparent accountability structures. Strategic dashboards, annual reporting, and accreditation reviews ensure alignment between mission, resources, and outcomes.

Our self-study incorporates brief narrative vignettes that offer concrete illustrations of how the university translates its mission and strategic commitments into practice. These examples highlight how UMD responds to emerging needs, applies evidence to guide decision-making, and strengthens campus practices through collaboration and reflection. Each vignette follows a simple arc: context/challenge, response, outcome, and learning, providing readers with a clear sense of how institutional improvement unfolds in day-to-day operations.

Together, the vignettes included in this self-study offer a window into how UMD enacts the principles contained in each MSCHE standard, linking mission to practice, evidence to improvement, and institutional commitments to measurable outcomes.

In recent years, the university has also engaged in occasional exchanges with the Middle States Commission around requests for clarification or additional context related to institutional policies and the student experience. These requests underscored broader themes that continue to guide UMD's work: the importance of transparent communication, consistent application of policy, and clearly articulated governance responsibilities. The insights gained through these interactions helped reinforce practices that shape UMD's ongoing commitment to accountability and continuous improvement.

In sum, this self-study demonstrates that UMD fully meets MSCHE standards for accreditation while advancing its mission as Maryland's flagship, public, land-grant research university.



## CHAPTER 1

### VIGNETTE: REFRAMING A FLAGSHIP MISSION THROUGH *FEARLESSLY FORWARD*

#### *A MOMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL INFLECTION*

UMD's already-planned leadership transition took place in the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic. Like institutions across the country then, UMD faced a rapidly shifting landscape: changing student needs and a national call for public institutions to confront urgent societal challenges. As university leaders prepared to develop a new strategic plan, faculty, staff, and student stakeholders participated in listening sessions. Across governance groups, colleges, and student organizations, the community voiced a consistent theme: The university needed to be more explicit about inclusion, interdisciplinary collaboration, and UMD's role as a flagship, land-grant institution serving the public good.

#### *CO-CREATING A MISSION-DRIVEN STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK*

In 2021-22, UMD launched a collaborative, yearlong process to rearticulate the institution's direction. More than 6,000 students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community partners participated through town halls, surveys, focus groups, and unit-level deliberations. This inclusive design produced *Fearlessly Forward*, a strategic plan with four commitments—Reimagine Learning, Take on Humanity's Grand Challenges, Invest in People and Communities, and Partner to Advance the Public Good—that now serve as the functional expression of UMD's mission. The plan was intentionally crafted to be widely understood, easily communicated, measurable, and embedded in campus culture.

#### *MISSION ALIGNMENT ACROSS THE INSTITUTION*

Implementation extended far beyond publishing a strategic document. Academic colleges incorporated the commitments into their local strategic plans; departments began aligning program reviews, curriculum updates, and learning goals to the new mission language; and administrative units recalibrated priorities around belonging, innovation, sustainability, and public impact. These shifts generated tangible initiatives, including:

- ▶ the Grand Challenges Grants Program, catalyzing interdisciplinary research for public impact and community partnerships;
- ▶ the Teaching Innovation Grants, Office of Undergraduate Research, expansion of experiential learning and modernization of teaching spaces;
- ▶ strengthened equity and well-being investments, such as TerrapinSTRONG, mental health support, and the Terrapin Commitment;
- ▶ enhanced communication that increased campus-wide awareness of UMD's mission and strategic commitments as well as renewed focus on community-engaged work through the new Center for Community Engagement.

Together, these changes produced greater coherence across planning, governance, and resource allocation, enabling units to anchor decisions in a shared institutional direction.



*TREATING THE MISSION AS A LIVING, CO-CREATED FRAMEWORK*

The strategic planning process taught UMD that mission effectiveness depends on collaboration, clear communication, and continuous renewal. By engaging broad constituencies and building a shared vocabulary for institutional priorities, the university strengthened its identity as a flagship, public, land-grant, research university and deepened its accountability to the communities it serves. This experience now shapes ongoing planning cycles, ensuring that the mission remains dynamic, adaptable, and reflective of evolving societal needs.

This example shows how UMD fulfills Standard I by treating its mission as a living framework, one that guides decision-making, engages stakeholders, and evolves in response to the needs of the state and the broader public.

**UMD'S INSTITUTIONAL PHILOSOPHY AND APPROACH TO STANDARD I**

As Maryland's flagship, public, land-grant research university, UMD sustains a mission rooted in academic excellence, service, and entrepreneurship and innovation. UMD's approach to Standard I reflects the conviction that a clearly defined and widely embraced mission, grounded in shared governance, inclusivity, and evidence-informed planning, is essential to institutional effectiveness.

Through *Fearlessly Forward: In Pursuit of Excellence and Impact for the Public Good (2022)*, UMD translates its mission into four institutional commitments: Reimagine Learning, Take on Humanity's Grand Challenges, Invest in People and Communities, and Partner to Advance the Public Good. These commitments guide decisions, resource allocation, and assessment practices, ensuring that the university remains responsive to societal needs and the public good while advancing equitable outcomes for students and communities.

**STANDARD I: MISSION AND GOALS**

UMD's mission and goals are formally reviewed and approved by the University System of Maryland (USM) Board of Regents and filed with the Maryland Higher Education Commission as required by the Annotated Code of Maryland. The Mission Statement was last filed with MHEC in 2018. A revision to the mission statement is currently under consideration to reflect UMD's evolving aspirations and will be formally drafted and submitted following release of MHEC's new State Plan for Education, per Maryland regulations.

The mission is widely communicated through the Mission and Values webpage, faculty and staff onboarding, and the strategic plan itself. It is further reinforced by the fact that all UMD job advertisements prominently reference the university's mission and the core commitments of *Fearlessly Forward*, signaling, from the outset, our expectations for public impact, inclusive excellence, and alignment with institutional values.

Institutional goals are developed through broad stakeholder engagement, including forums, surveys, working groups, and Senate-led processes. These goals are aspirational yet measurable, with progress reported publicly through the Strategic Plan Impact website and governance structures such as the Provost's Senate Report.

Mission-driven initiatives demonstrate how strategic priorities are operationalized. For example, the first round of the Grand Challenges Grants program invested more than \$30 million in interdisciplinary research projects, while the Teaching and Learning Grants initiative has since 2022 invested \$4.4 million in 187 projects advancing experiential, technology-rich, inclusive, and accessible education. These initiatives demonstrate how the mission is integrated into academic programming, research priorities, and administrative decision-making. These efforts and their impacts are included in the provost's annual report to the Senate.

Regular and systematic assessment, coordinated by the Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment (IRPA), ensures that the mission and goals remain aligned with evolving institutional and statewide priorities. The campus annually submits a Managing For Results report to USM and to MHEC that tracks performance on institution-specific metrics that reflect how well UMD fulfills its mission in support of the State Plan for Higher Education. External accreditation processes and internal reviews, such as the General Education Assessment Report, reinforce accountability and continuous improvement.

Collectively, these processes demonstrate UMD's deep institutional commitment to mission-centered planning, inclusive governance, and evidence-based decision-making. Through intentional investment, broad engagement, and continuous assessment, UMD meets the expectations of MSCHE Standard I and affirms its leadership as a public, flagship, land-grant research university.

**COMPLIANCE STATEMENT**

UMD advances its *Fearlessly Forward* commitments and meets MSCHE expectations for Standard I by sustaining a mission and goals framework that is clear, inclusive, and systematically assessed to ensure alignment with academic excellence, equity, and public impact.

**CRITERION 1: MISSION CLARITY • INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT • DECISION GUIDANCE**

UMD has a clearly defined mission that articulates its purpose, identifies the students it serves, and specifies the outcomes it seeks to achieve. As Maryland's flagship public research university and land-grant institution, UMD advances excellence in teaching, research, and service while contributing to the public good at the state, national, and global levels.

**MISSION DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL**

UMD's mission is reviewed and approved under Maryland law (Maryland Code, Education, §11-302), which requires filing with the University System of Maryland (USM) Board of Regents and the MHEC every four years. The current statement, approved in 2018, reflects statewide priorities and institutional goals; a revised version is under consideration to align with UMD's evolving role and aspirations.

**PUBLIC COMMUNICATION OF MISSION**

The mission is prominently displayed on the university's website and embedded in institutional documents, such as *Fearlessly Forward: In Pursuit of Excellence and Impact for the Public Good (2022)*. It is reinforced in recruitment materials; faculty, staff, and student onboarding; and governance reports, ensuring broad visibility and shared understanding across the campus community.

**MISSION AS A FOUNDATION FOR INSTITUTIONAL IDENTITY**

The mission underscores UMD's dual responsibility as a state-serving land-grant institution and a globally recognized research university. It guides commitments to:

- ▶ **Access and equity** through high-quality, affordable learning opportunities;
- ▶ **Knowledge creation** through world-class research and creative activity; and,
- ▶ **Public service** to local, state, national, and global communities.

These commitments shape UMD's academic identity, ensuring that institutional goals remain mission-driven, realistic, and responsive to the broader higher education context.

### CRITERION 2: GOALS • STANDARDS • MISSION ALIGNMENT

UMD has institutional goals that are realistic, mission-driven, and appropriate to the context of higher education. These goals reflect UMD's role as Maryland's flagship, public land-grant research university and member of the Big Ten Academic Alliance and the Association of American Universities.

#### STRATEGIC PLANNING GROUNDED IN MISSION

UMD's goals are articulated in *Fearlessly Forward: In Pursuit of Excellence and Impact for the Public Good* (2022), which translates the mission into four commitments: Reimagine Learning, Take on Humanity's Grand Challenges, Invest in People and Communities, and Partner to Advance the Public Good. The plan was shaped through broad engagement with faculty, staff, students, alumni, and external stakeholders.

#### ALIGNMENT WITH PLANNING AND RESOURCES

Institutional goals directly shape planning, resource allocation, and program development. Examples include:

- ▶ **Grand Challenges Grants:** \$30 million in seed funding to launch interdisciplinary research addressing societal priorities.
- ▶ **Teaching Innovation Grants:** projects expanding experiential and active learning, technology-rich instruction, and inclusive and accessible learning environments across colleges and units/divisions.
- ▶ **Learning Environment Modernization:** Major investments in modern classroom, technology, and accessibility upgrades.

These examples illustrate how mission priorities are translated into measurable goals, supported by financial and structural commitments.

#### ONGOING ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

UMD regularly reviews and updates its goals. Annual Strategic Plan Progress Reports track indicators across the four commitments, and are the foundation of the Provost's Senate Report, documenting assessment through shared governance. Public implementation and impact websites provide stakeholders with accessible reporting on *Fearlessly Forward*.

Through these efforts, UMD demonstrates that its institutional goals are mission-aligned, aspirational yet achievable, and consistent with its public role in higher education.

### CRITERION 3: STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT • ACCESS • IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES

UMD establishes institutional goals that support its mission and guide planning, resource allocation, and assessment. These goals are embedded in *Fearlessly Forward: In Pursuit of Excellence and Impact for the Public Good* (2022), which translates the mission into four strategic commitments.

#### INTEGRATION INTO PLANNING AND BUDGETING

Institutional goals are embedded in campus planning and directly drive resource allocation. Budget presentations to deans, governance bodies, and leadership demonstrate this alignment (Budget Overview, 2024). Examples include:

- ▶ **Reimagine Learning:** Nearly 200 Teaching Innovation Grants (2023) modernizing curricula and expanding experiential learning.
- ▶ **Take on Humanity's Grand Challenges:** \$30 million investment (2023) spurring external funding, interdisciplinary research, and public impact.
- ▶ **Invest in People and Communities:** Affordability expanded through initiatives such as the Terrapin Commitment (2023).
- ▶ **Partner to Advance the Public Good:** Collaborations like *MPowering the State* and the Do Good Campus initiative.

#### ONGOING EVALUATION OF PROGRESS

Goals are assessed and refined through public reporting and governance review. The annual assessment cycle feeds the Provost's Senate Report, informs summer planning meetings with each college dean and leadership team, and then is refined prior to the beginning of the next data collection cycle. These processes ensure goals remain relevant, transparent, and aligned with institutional priorities.

#### ALIGNMENT WITH OUTCOMES AND STUDENT SUCCESS

UMD's goals produce measurable outcomes in student success and institutional impact. The IRPA Campus Counts: Campus Overview indicates a six-year graduation rate of over 88% for the fall 2019 cohort and a four-year graduation rate of almost 80% for the fall 2021 cohort. More than 90% of bachelor's degree recipients are employed and/or pursuing continuing education within six months of graduation. Mission-aligned initiatives also advance student well-being and learning and are documented in reports to leadership:

- ▶ **Mental Health & Well-being at UMD** website documents expanded counseling and crisis support that grew from the Mental Health Task Force.
- ▶ **Campus Assessment Working Group** surveys inform continuous improvement in academic and co-curricular life.

Through this integrated framework of planning, budgeting, assessment, and reporting, UMD ensures that institutional goals are mission-driven, measurable, and effective in advancing student success, scholarly impact, and public service.

### CRITERION 4: PERIODIC REVIEW • RELEVANCE • ACHIEVABILITY

UMD regularly evaluates and, when appropriate, revises its mission and goals to ensure continued relevance, alignment with institutional priorities, and responsiveness to external expectations.

#### GOVERNANCE AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Maryland law (§11-302) requires public institutions to review mission statements every four years, with approval by the University System of Maryland (USM) Board of Regents and filing with the MHEC. UMD's

current mission was approved in 2018, and a revised draft reflecting evolving priorities for UMD and the state will be submitted after adoption of the State Plan for Higher Education.

**INTEGRATION WITH STRATEGIC PLANNING CYCLES**

Mission review is embedded in strategic planning. The launch of *Fearlessly Forward* reaffirmed UMD’s mission and translated it into four commitments with measurable outcomes. Progress is tracked through the Strategic Plan Progress Report (2022, 2023, 2024, 2025), documenting advances in teaching innovation, research impact, student success, and community engagement.

**SHARED GOVERNANCE AND STAKEHOLDER INPUT**

Robust governance processes guided the campus development and implementation of *Fearlessly Forward*. The Moving Forward: Implementing our Strategic Plan report, as well as the implementation website, document the inclusive processes used to develop the plan and its goals. Annual reports to the Senate ensure accountability and transparency.

**COMMITMENT TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

Annual strategic plan updates, as well as internal and public dashboards (reports.umd.edu), provide ongoing evaluation and transparency. Each college and division also maintains a strategic plan aligned with the campus plan and engages in annual strategic planning meetings with the provost to chart progress and establish goals. Together, these mechanisms enable UMD to adapt its priorities to emerging needs while sustaining its role as Maryland’s flagship, public land-grant, research institution.

**KEY FINDINGS**

UMD’s mission is widely understood, embedded in planning processes, and regularly reviewed through shared governance. The institution demonstrates coherence in aligning academic programs, research, and service with its land-grant mandate and *Fearlessly Forward* commitments. The chapter highlights how the mission clarity supports accountability, equity, and public impact.

- ▶ **Reimagine Learning:** UMD’s mission is widely understood and operationalized through innovative teaching and learning. Initiatives such as the Teaching Innovation Grants, the FIRE program, and the new Vertically Integrated Projects (VIP) demonstrate how the mission informs curricular renewal and experiential learning across disciplines.
- ▶ **Take on Humanity’s Grand Challenges:** The mission’s coherence is demonstrated in research and engagement efforts such as the Grand Challenges Grants Program and interdisciplinary institutes that directly advance UMD’s land-grant responsibility to address pressing societal issues.
- ▶ **Invest in People and Communities:** UMD’s identity as Maryland’s flagship, public, land-grant, research institution is legislatively recognized, and the mission is regularly reviewed through shared governance. This clarity fosters accountability, equity, and community impact, as reflected in programs such as the Terrapin Commitment and an expansion of graduate assistant support.
- ▶ **Partner to Advance the Public Good:** *Fearlessly Forward* provides a mission-driven framework consistently referenced in external engagement. Partnerships such as *MPowering the State*, the Capital of Quantum anchored in the Discovery District, and the Center for Community Engagement exemplify how the mission translates into public service and civic impact.

**OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH**

An opportunity for continued improvement lies in strengthening how UMD documents and communicates the translation of its mission into public-facing impact, particularly at the unit level. While the mission and *Fearlessly Forward* commitments are well articulated institutionally, clearer and more consistent articulation of how colleges, departments, and administrative units advance the public good through partnerships, engagement, and service would further reinforce mission coherence and accountability. UMD is also reexamining institutional policies, practices, and resource allocation to ensure alignment with our mission and values.

**CONCLUSION**

UMD meets and, in many areas, exceeds the expectations of MSCHE Standard I through a mission-driven and evidence-informed approach to planning, goal-setting, and assessment. The mission is clearly defined, widely communicated, and regularly reviewed through inclusive governance, ensuring consistency between institutional identity, strategic priorities, and resource allocation.

Key accomplishments highlight this alignment:

- ▶ A six-year graduation rate above 88%, including strong outcomes for lower-income students.
- ▶ More than \$30 million invested in the Grand Challenges Grants Program to advance interdisciplinary research and engagement.
- ▶ Expanded affordability and access through the Terrapin Commitment, cutting the tuition gap in half for Maryland students with the greatest financial need.

Regular progress reporting through the University Senate and the strategic plan dashboard reinforce accountability and continuous improvement. Together, these accomplishments demonstrate UMD’s fulfillment of MSCHE Standard I and its commitment to sustaining excellence, equity, and impact as Maryland’s flagship, public, land-grant university.

**EVIDENCE INDEX**

EVIDENCE TITLE	DESCRIPTION	CRITERION
Mission Statement filed with MHEC	Official mission statement approved by the USM Board of Regents and filed with MHEC; articulates UMD’s flagship, land-grant mission.	C1, C2
Mission & Values Webpage	Public webpage communicating UMD’s mission and institutional identity.	C1
<i>Fearlessly Forward</i> Strategic Plan	Strategic plan translating mission into four institutional commitments.	C2, C3
Moving Fearlessly Forward: Implementing our Strategic Plan	Documents the process of identifying goals for the strategic plan.	C2, C4
Strategic Plan Impact Website	Public updates tracking progress, metrics, and accomplishments.	C3, C4

2024 Provost's Senate Report	Governance report demonstrating mission-aligned progress reviews.	C3, C4
New Faculty/Admin Budget Overview	Budget presentation linking allocations to mission priorities.	C3
Grand Challenges Grants Impact Report	\$30M interdisciplinary investment advancing public mission.	C2, C3
Teaching and Learning Grants Report	Executive Summary outlining activities from the Teaching and Learning Grants for Experiential Learning.	C2, C3
2023 Strategic Plan Progress Report	Includes information about faculty projects expanding experiential and active learning.	C2, C3
Managing for Results Report	State-mandated accountability report with measures selected by UMD that reflect the intersection of Fearlessly Forward and State Plan metrics	C3, C4
IPEDS Graduation Rates	Federal six-year graduation data, disaggregated by demographics.	C2, C3
Terrapin Commitment Overview	Expansion of need-based aid reducing financial barriers.	C2, C3
General Education Assessment Rubrics	Evaluation of general education learning outcomes.	C3
Mental Health & Well-being at UMD, Task Force Final Report	Initiatives to strengthen student well-being.	C3
Campus Assessment Working Group	Annual surveys of first semester students and professional (junior level) writing students on a variety of topics.	C3

## CHAPTER 2

### VIGNETTE: TERRAPINSTRONG – BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF CARE AND INTEGRITY FROM DAY ONE

#### *A CHANGING STUDENT POPULATION AND A NEED FOR SHARED NORMS*

By 2021, campus leaders observed a recurring pattern in student feedback and national research: Many new students, arriving from increasingly diverse educational, cultural, and geographic backgrounds, began their UMD experience without a clear appreciation of the university's values, community expectations, and support structures. This pattern, accelerated by the pandemic, highlighted the need for a unified orientation that could foster belonging, strengthen ethical awareness, and establish a common foundation for community life.

#### *A COMPREHENSIVE ONBOARDING FRAMEWORK GROUNDED IN SHARED VALUES*

UMD launched TerrapinSTRONG, a university-wide onboarding initiative for all new students, faculty, and staff. Rooted in the *Fearlessly Forward* commitment to Invest in People and Communities, the program introduces core expectations related to inclusion, respect, academic integrity, community engagement, and shared responsibility. Rather than relying on decentralized unit-level orientations, TerrapinSTRONG established a campus-wide ethical framework that reinforces consistency and transparency across divisions.

Implementation required collaboration among the Division of Student Affairs, the Office of Undergraduate Studies, Belonging and Community, the Division of Information Technology, and academic colleges. TerrapinSTRONG's multimedia modules, reflection activities, and follow-up engagement opportunities were designed to reach learners with varied backgrounds and experiences. The initiative soon expanded to include new-employee onboarding, ensuring that faculty and staff also received consistent grounding in UMD's values, reporting mechanisms, and expectations for ethical conduct.

#### *STRENGTHENED AWARENESS, SHARED NORMS, AND AN INTEGRATED CULTURE OF INTEGRITY*

Since its launch, TerrapinSTRONG has reached tens of thousands of community members and is now a *Fearlessly Forward* strategic plan measure, monitored annually. Feedback indicates increased understanding of:

- ▶ community standards and expectations;
- ▶ reporting pathways for misconduct and support resources;
- ▶ the university's commitments to community and belonging.

The initiative has reduced variability in onboarding experiences across colleges and departments and has improved awareness of how to seek help, report concerns, and engage responsibly in the university community.

#### *INTENTIONAL, COORDINATED PRACTICES THAT BUILD ETHICS AND INTEGRITY*

The development and scaling of TerrapinSTRONG demonstrated that fostering a culture of ethics, integrity, and respect requires deliberate, consistent messaging across all entry points into the institution. UMD learned that shared values must be clearly communicated, reinforced through structured programming, and integrated across academic and administrative units. By embedding these principles into the earliest stages of the student, faculty, and staff

experience, UMD strengthened trust, accountability, and a cohesive community aligned with its mission as a flagship public university.

This example demonstrates how UMD meets Standard II by embedding ethical principles into daily practice, reinforcing transparency, and cultivating a community grounded in trust and responsibility.

### UMD'S INSTITUTIONAL PHILOSOPHY AND APPROACH TO STANDARD II

UMD's ethical foundation is built on principles of accountability, equity, transparency, and respect, principles that are actively embedded in its policies, leadership, and practices. We view ethics and integrity as indispensable to fulfilling our public mission. Our approach emphasizes a culture of care, inclusive excellence, and robust compliance, supported by strong governance structures and proactive communication. The university's strategic commitment to Investing in People and Communities shapes our systems for academic freedom, grievance processes, inclusive hiring, and fair employment practices.

## STANDARD II: ETHICS AND INTEGRITY

UMD approaches Standard II with a sustained commitment to fostering an academic and operational environment grounded in ethics, integrity, respect, and inclusion. As Maryland's flagship public institution and a land-grant university, UMD's mission to serve the public good is inseparable from its obligation to uphold the highest ethical standards. These values permeate institutional life through codified policies, leadership practices, personnel development, inclusive governance, and transparent communication.

UMD's strategic plan, *Fearlessly Forward*, anchors this commitment by translating mission-driven values into four guiding commitments. Each MSCHE criterion for Standard II is directly supported by one or more of these commitments:

- ▶ **Reimagine Learning** sustains academic freedom and freedom of expression, supports informed decision-making through financial literacy, and ensures transparent pathways for transfer students.
- ▶ **Take on Humanity's Grand Challenges** underscores the importance of ethical conduct and integrity in research, scholarship, and civic engagement.
- ▶ **Invest in People and Communities** provides the foundation for inclusion, fair grievance processes, fair employment practices, and affordability initiatives.
- ▶ **Partner to Advance the Public Good** emphasizes the importance of honesty in communications, mutually beneficial partnerships, the avoidance of conflicts of interest, and accountability to external stakeholders.

### COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

UMD advances its *Fearlessly Forward* commitments, particularly Invest in People and Communities, and meets MSCHE expectations for Standard II by upholding policies and practices that ensure ethical conduct, academic freedom, transparency, equity, and accountability in all aspects of institutional life.

### CRITERION 1: ACADEMIC FREEDOM • INTELLECTUAL EXPRESSION • INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

UMD affirms and protects academic freedom, freedom of expression, and intellectual property rights as foundational to its mission as Maryland's flagship, public, land-grant research university. These principles are embedded in institutional values, codified in policy, and reinforced through governance, education, and daily practice.

#### COMMITMENT TO ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND EXPRESSION

UMD's Statement on Free Speech Values and Statement on University Values, developed through the Joint President/Senate Inclusion and Respect Task Force, affirm the university's responsibility to safeguard inquiry while fostering mutual respect. Guidance from the president, the Office of General Counsel, and the Senate Faculty Affairs Committee reinforces this commitment.

#### STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Code of Student Conduct and Code of Academic Integrity safeguard free inquiry and honesty, setting transparent expectations for students. Co-curricular programs such as Civic Engagement for Social Good (within College Park Scholars) and initiatives like the Center for Democracy and Civic Engagement and the Maryland Democracy Initiative extend these principles into civic participation and experiential learning.

#### INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND DIGITAL RIGHTS

UMD's Intellectual Property Policy defines ownership and dissemination rights, while the Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources policy extends protections to digital environments. The University Libraries further supports ethical scholarship through open-access, copyright, and author-rights resources.

### CRITERION 2: CLIMATE OF RESPECT • CULTURE OF CARE • BELONGING

UMD fosters a campus climate grounded in respect, inclusion, and equity for all members of its diverse community. These values are embedded in policy, enacted through shared governance, and reinforced through education, training, and continuous assessment.

#### INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES AND OVERSIGHT

UMD maintains transparent policies governing faculty appointment, promotion, tenure, and grievance processes (USM APT Policy; UMD APT Policy; PTK Faculty Policy). These frameworks ensure equity in hiring, renewal, and advancement across all faculty categories; UHR maintains policies governing staff advancement. Additional policies on conflict of interest and commitment, responsible conduct of research, and equitable treatment reinforce ethical standards in faculty management and uphold institutional integrity.

#### GOVERNANCE AND TASK FORCES

Shared governance bodies regularly address issues of equity and respect. Recent examples include recommendations from the Inclusion and Respect Task Force and the Joint President-Senate Task Force on Antisemitism and Islamophobia, which have informed campus policy and practice.

#### ASSESSMENT AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

UMD regularly assesses campus climate through instruments such as the Belonging and Community Survey (and prior to that, the Thriving Workplace survey), using findings to guide institutional strategies for

inclusion and equity. The Center for Leadership and Organizational Change assists units and individuals in understanding their strengths and navigating organizational change.

### CRITERION 3: GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES • FAIR PROCESS • TIMELY RESOLUTION

UMD ensures that students, faculty, and staff have access to transparent, documented, and fair grievance procedures. These mechanisms reinforce accountability, protect rights, and sustain a respectful campus climate, reflecting UMD's commitment to a culture of care and integrity.

#### FACULTY GRIEVANCE PROCESSES

Faculty members may pursue informal mediation or formal hearings under the Faculty Grievance Policy, which the Faculty Ombuds Office administers. The office provides confidential assistance and produces annual reports that inform policy refinement, while the Senate Faculty Affairs Committee provides governance oversight.

#### STAFF GRIEVANCE PROCESSES

Staff grievances are coordinated by the university's Human Resources Staff Relations department, which addresses workplace conflicts, performance concerns, and claims of unfair treatment. Protections include the Workplace Violence and Risk Assessment Policy and access to the Conflict Resolvers Network, which provides cross-campus mediation and support. In addition, the Staff Ombuds Office offers a confidential, impartial resource to help staff navigate concerns and explore options for resolution.

#### STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCESSES

Students have clear channels for concerns related to advising, conduct, or grading. University policies govern undergraduate and graduate processes, including the Graduate Students' Rights and Responsibilities and the Arbitrary and Capricious Grading Policy. Centralized resources, including the Course-Related Policies website, ensure accessibility and transparency. Additional supports include the undergraduate student ombuds officer and the Dean of Students Office, which provide confidential guidance and advocacy for students navigating concerns.

#### SPECIALIZED GRIEVANCE SYSTEMS

Additional structures address equity, accessibility, and research integrity. The Office of Civil Rights and Sexual Misconduct oversees Title IX and related investigations, while the Office of Integrity and Responsible Conduct manages scholarly misconduct and faculty conduct cases. The Accessibility and Disability Service ensures equitable access to programs and services for students with disabilities and operates independently of the ADA Compliance Office. Culture-building initiatives such as TerrapinSTRONG further reinforce shared accountability.

#### ACCESSIBILITY AND EDUCATION

Grievance procedures are widely communicated through orientations, handbooks, and online resources. Training initiatives such as the Red Folder equip faculty and staff to support students in distress and escalate concerns appropriately.

### CRITERION 4: CONFLICT OF INTEREST • ETHICAL CONDUCT • IMPARTIALITY

UMD safeguards institutional integrity through robust policies that prevent, disclose, and manage conflicts of interest (COI), conflicts of commitment (COC), financial conflicts of interest (FCOI), and institutional conflicts of interest (ICOI). These measures ensure transparency, accountability, and fidelity to the university's public mission.

#### POLICY FRAMEWORK

UMD's Policy on Conflict of Interest and Conflict of Commitment establishes expectations for all employees to disclose and manage potential conflicts of interest. Complementary policies address specialized areas, including:

- ▶ **Institutional COI Policy**, governing cases involving senior leadership or commercialization agreements.
- ▶ **Consulting and Organizational COI Policies**, clarifying boundaries for external engagements and federal contracting.
- ▶ **Financial COI in U.S. Public Health Service-Funded Research**, ensuring compliance with federal requirements.

#### INFRASTRUCTURE AND OVERSIGHT

The Division of Research administers the inTERP online disclosure system, enabling annual and event-based reporting. Submissions are reviewed by the COI Committee and relevant units, with training and resources provided to help faculty and staff meet evolving standards.

#### BENCHMARKING AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

UMD aligns practices with national standards such as the Council on Governmental Relations guidance on COI and COC, ensuring policies remain current and effective in safeguarding research integrity.

### CRITERION 5: EMPLOYMENT • FAIR PRACTICES • NONDISCRIMINATION

UMD demonstrates its commitment to fairness and equity in employment through policies and initiatives that span the employee lifecycle, from recruitment and hiring to advancement, professional development, and retirement. These practices embody transparency, accountability, and inclusion as core values of the institution.

#### EQUITABLE RECRUITMENT AND HIRING

UMD ensures equitable hiring through standardized processes managed by University Human Resources (UHR), including the Applicant Tracking and Position Description System. UHR's Talent Acquisition Team partners with units to strengthen inclusive job descriptions and ensure consistency across searches.

#### SUPPORT FOR PROFESSIONAL TRACK FACULTY

UMD adopted the Appointments, Evaluation, and Promotion Manual based on the PTK Faculty Working Group Report, standardizing advancement and significantly increasing PTK promotion rates across instructional and research roles. In partnership with PTK faculty, UMD implemented several administrative reforms related to appointment, evaluation, and promotion, salary guidelines, and instructional workload.

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND LEADERSHIP

The Office of Faculty Affairs provides structured programs for new faculty, department chairs, and emerging leaders. A series of Provost Dialogues is informing work to align UMD's promotion and tenure criteria with our mission and values. The Center for Leadership and Organizational Change offers coaching and organizational development services, training over 200 leaders annually. UMD also participates in Big Ten Academic Alliance programs such as the Department Executive Officers Seminar and the Academic Leadership Program, which further develop the leadership capacity of department chairs and senior faculty.

### COMPREHENSIVE WORKFORCE SUPPORT

Staff are supported through UHR's Labor and Staff Relations units, collective bargaining, and conflict resolution resources. Postdoctoral researchers receive mentorship and career support through the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs. Retired faculty remain engaged through the University of Maryland Retired Faculty Association.

#### CRITERION 6: HONEST COMMUNICATIONS • TRANSPARENCY • TRUTHFULNESS

UMD demonstrates a sustained commitment to honesty and truthfulness in all institutional communications. Accuracy and transparency are essential for maintaining public trust, serving students and families, and upholding UMD's role as Maryland's flagship, public, land-grant university.

### PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND POLICIES

The university is committed to engaging in honest, truthful and transparent communications with internal and external communities. Its practices and policies align with the Code of Ethics set forth by the Public Relations Society of America. The Office of Marketing and Communications' Social Media Guidelines establish expectations for civility and integrity on university-affiliated social media accounts.

### TRANSPARENCY IN ADMISSIONS

Admissions communications emphasize clarity and fairness. The Statement of Philosophy of Undergraduate Admissions affirms a holistic, mission-aligned review process. At the same time, the Office of Undergraduate Admissions website provides transparent information on criteria, deadlines, and pathways for transfer, veteran, and nontraditional students. Graduate programs are required to post parallel admissions expectations and timelines, ensuring consistency and accessibility.

### PUBLIC NEWS AND LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION

UMD ensures accuracy in news and storytelling through *Maryland Today*, the university's official news site; UMD Right Now, its online resource for media; and the Office of the President's online communications archive. All highlight institutional priorities and provide timely updates on research, teaching, inclusion, and well-being.

#### CRITERION 7: ACCESS • AFFORDABILITY • INFORMED FINANCIAL DECISIONS

UMD upholds its land-grant and flagship mission by ensuring that higher education remains affordable, transparent, and accessible. Affordability is advanced not only through tuition and aid policy, but also by equipping students and families with the tools to make informed financial decisions.

### POLICIES GOVERNING TUITION AND AID

UMD follows clear, published, system-wide policies that govern residency, tuition setting, financial aid allocation, graduate fellowships, and application fee waivers. Together, these policies ensure equitable access and mission-driven use of tuition revenue.

### FINANCIAL AID PROGRAMS AND SUPPORT SERVICES

The Office of Student Financial Aid serves as the hub for counseling, scholarships, loans, and grants. Signature programs include the Terrapin Commitment, a \$20 million annual investment that cut unmet need in half for over 4,500 Pell-eligible Maryland students in its first year, and Scholarship Universe, an online platform that matched more than 12,000 students to internal and external scholarships in 2024.

### FINANCIAL LITERACY AND WELLNESS INITIATIVES

UMD complements aid with extensive financial education:

- ▶ **iGrad tools and LinkedIn Learning modules**, reaching 7,000-plus students in 2024.
- ▶ **State-funded Financial Well-Being Pilot**, providing one-on-one coaching to more than 600 students since launch.
- ▶ **Thrive Center for Essential Needs** includes resources such as consultations and peer coaching sessions.
- ▶ **Financial Wellness Center**, providing students with the financial knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to make informed financial judgments.

### ACCESSIBILITY AND DISABILITY RESOURCES

UMD ensures equitable access through its Digital Accessibility Policy as well as the Accessibility and Disability Service (ADS), which supported more than 3,800 students in 2023-24 with classroom accommodations, adaptive technology, and housing support. Accessibility resources and accommodations are also available for faculty and staff through ADS and University Human Resources (UHR), ensuring that the entire campus community can participate fully in academic and workplace activities.

The Office of Faculty Affairs (OFA), in collaboration with UHR, supports faculty with their accommodation requests, and UHR supports staff with their accommodation needs. OFA, UHR, and ADS collaborate and ensure members of the community are supported in meeting cross-jurisdictional accommodation requests (e.g., staff who teach a course).

### ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

These initiatives advance *Fearlessly Forward* by:

- ▶ **Investing in People and Communities**: expanding affordability, aid, and financial wellness support.
- ▶ **Partnering to Advance the Public Good**: aligning resources with state priorities to expand equitable access.

Through coordinated policies, targeted aid, robust literacy programs, and accessibility resources, UMD ensures affordability and empowers students to make informed choices. These efforts directly benefit thousands of students each year and fully meet MSCHE expectations for Criterion 7.

Together, these policies and practices ensure transparent, ethical, and accountable institutional decision-making. They demonstrate UMD's consistent alignment with expectations for integrity and responsibility.

#### CRITERION 8: REGULATORY COMPLIANCE • DISCLOSURE • ACCREDITATION INTEGRITY

UMD upholds institutional integrity and public trust by making accreditation, degree authority, student records, and consumer information readily accessible. These disclosures ensure compliance with federal, state, and accreditation requirements while helping students and families make informed decisions.

##### ACCREDITATION TRANSPARENCY

UMD maintains a public accreditation status webpage that affirms its standing with MSCHE and provides links to specialized and program-level accreditations. This resource reinforces accountability, enabling students, faculty, and external stakeholders to verify the institution's credentials.

##### LEGAL AUTHORITY TO CONFER DEGREES

The Code of Maryland Regulations codifies UMD's legal authority as Maryland's flagship, public university and degree-granting institution, anchoring its compliance with state and federal requirements.

##### CONSUMER INFORMATION AND STUDENT DISCLOSURES

UMD provides a centralized Higher Education Opportunity Act/Consumer Information portal, linked to the campus homepage, consolidating federally required disclosures on privacy rights, financial aid, health and safety, drug and alcohol prevention, and student outcomes (retention, graduation, and more). This structure ensures equitable, transparent access and easy navigation to critical information.

##### STUDENT PRIVACY AND FERPA COMPLIANCE

The Policy on the Disclosure of Student Education Records affirms compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), defining student rights to access and amend records, outlining consent and disclosure procedures, and safeguarding privacy while enabling secure operational use of information.

#### CRITERION 9: ETHICAL ASSESSMENT • POLICY IMPLEMENTATION • CONTINUOUS REVIEW

UMD ensures fairness, due process, and equitable treatment for students, faculty, and staff through transparent policies, inclusive governance, and robust compliance mechanisms. These practices reflect UMD's mission and its responsibility to foster a respectful and accountable campus climate.

##### SHARED GOVERNANCE AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT

The University Senate promotes fairness through representative governance that includes faculty, staff, students, and administrators. Senate proposals follow a transparent pathway of committee review and campus consultation, resulting in policies that are widely vetted and clearly communicated. Recent actions include revisions to the Codes of Academic Integrity and Student Conduct (2023), which emphasize due process and restorative practices, as well as updates to the Faculty Grievance Policy to ensure procedural clarity.

##### STUDENT, FACULTY, AND STAFF PROTECTIONS

Equitable grievance and conduct systems, including transparent complaint resolution and appeals processes, support students. Policies such as the Interim Policy on Use of Facilities and Outdoor Spaces balance expressive rights with equitable access. Faculty and staff protections are reinforced through the Policy on Faculty Professional Conduct, the Interim Policy on Consulting, and statewide workplace standards, which collectively promote integrity, collegiality, and a safe working environment.

##### COMPLIANCE AND EXTERNAL OBLIGATIONS

UMD aligns institutional practices with evolving federal and state requirements. Policies such as the Non-Discrimination Policy, Policy on Sexual Harassment and Other Sexual Misconduct, and the Policy on Malign Foreign Talent Recruitment Programs demonstrate responsiveness to compliance obligations while reinforcing institutional accountability and research integrity.

#### KEY FINDINGS

UMD sustains a strong culture of ethics and integrity anchored in transparency, equity, and accountability. Policies, practices, and governance processes are clearly documented, broadly communicated, and supported by training and oversight. This environment fosters institutional trust, respect, and responsible conduct across academic and administrative domains.

- ▶ **Invest in People and Communities:** UMD is committed to transparency, equity, accountability, and integrity in its relationships with members of the community. Policies supporting academic freedom, intellectual property, Title IX, and accessibility reflect a commitment to fostering inclusive, supportive, and respectful communities.
- ▶ **Partner to Advance the Public Good:** Shared governance, led by the University Senate, exemplifies transparent decision-making and inclusive participation, reinforcing trust and collaboration in institutional leadership.
- ▶ **Reimagine Learning:** A climate of integrity is reinforced through ethics training, professional development, and compliance education that equip students, faculty, and staff with the tools to engage responsibly in teaching, learning, and research.
- ▶ **Take on Humanity's Grand Challenges:** UMD maintains strong ethical standards in research practices, compliance reviews, and legal oversight, ensuring that discovery and innovation are conducted responsibly and in service to the public good.

#### OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH

UMD has established strong policies and structures supporting ethics, integrity, and compliance. A key opportunity is to deepen shared understanding and lived experience of these commitments across campus, particularly through enhanced training, feedback mechanisms, and documentation of how ethical concerns inform institutional improvement. Continued attention to how policies are experienced by faculty, staff, and students would further strengthen trust, transparency, and institutional culture.

**CONCLUSION**

UMD meets and, in many respects, exceeds the expectations of MSCHE Standard II. Ethical principles are codified in university policies and actively reinforced through inclusive governance, transparent communication, and accountability mechanisms.

Key accomplishments underscore this commitment:

- ▶ TerrapinSTRONG onboarding has engaged nearly 30,000 community members in fostering respect and belonging.
- ▶ Comprehensive grievance systems and climate assessments ensure that community input informs policies and practices.

These efforts demonstrate UMD’s ability to operationalize ethics and integrity as dynamic, living commitments. Through principled leadership, evidence-based assessment, and intentional investment, the university sustains a campus culture of trust, accountability, and inclusive excellence. Together, these accomplishments affirm UMD’s fulfillment of MSCHE Standard II and its role as a flagship, land-grant public research university.

**EVIDENCE INDEX**

EVIDENCE TITLE	DESCRIPTION	CRITERION
Statement on Free Speech Values	Affirms institutional commitment to academic freedom and free expression.	C1
Statement on University Values	Defines core principles of accountability, equity, transparency, and respect.	C1
Policy and Procedures for the Use of Facilities and Outdoor Spaces	Governs use of campus spaces while upholding expressive rights and safety.	C1, C9
Freedom of Speech on Campus - Legal Guidance	Provides public guidance on First Amendment protections at UMD.	C1
Code of Student Conduct	Defines student rights and responsibilities related to behavior and free inquiry.	C1, C9
Code of Academic Integrity	Codifies expectations for academic honesty and responsible scholarship.	C1, C9
Open Access Publishing Guide	Supports ethical publishing and protection of author rights.	C1
Author Rights Guide	Provides guidance on retaining copyright and author rights in publishing.	C1
Copyright & Fair Use Guides	Define fair use and copyright expectations for teaching and scholarship.	C1
Acceptable Use Policy (IT Resources)	Extends free expression principles to IT environments while ensuring compliance.	C1

Intellectual Property Policy	Defines ownership, use, and dissemination rights for scholarly works and inventions.	C1
Non-Discrimination Policy and Procedures	Prohibits discrimination and harassment; outlines reporting and resolution process.	C2, C9
ADA/504 Accommodations Policy and Resources	Website for the ADA Coordinator - Ensures equitable access to facilities, programs, and services for individuals with disabilities.	C2, C7
Sexual Harassment and Other Sexual Misconduct Policy	Defines prohibited sexual misconduct; outlines rights, reporting, and investigation procedures.	C2, C9
Office of Civil Rights & Sexual Misconduct (OCRSM)	Centralized resource for discrimination, harassment, and sexual misconduct reporting.	C2, C3
Inclusion and Respect Task Force Report	Provides recommendations to promote respectful campus climate and free expression.	C2
Bias Incident Support Services (BISS)	Coordinates bias incident response, prevention education, and trend analysis.	C2
TerrapinSTRONG	Onboarding program promoting respect, inclusion, and belonging; reached ~30,000 participants.	C2
TerrapinSTRONG Symposium	Annual event advancing inclusive leadership.	C2
Terrapin Strong Survey Results	Results from the Terrapin Strong feedback survey	C2
Belonging and Community Survey Website	Measures campus climate and belonging; informs institutional equity planning.	C2
Belonging and Community Survey Report	Report produced by Rankin and Associates, posted on campus webpage	C2
Faculty Grievance Policy	Outlines procedures for resolving faculty workplace and academic concerns.	C3
Faculty Ombuds Office Annual Reports	Provide confidential support and systemic insights on faculty concerns.	C3
Graduate Students' Rights and Responsibilities	Defines graduate student policies, grievance pathways, and academic rights.	C3
Capricious Grading Policy (Undergraduate)	Appeals process for reviewing undergraduate grade disputes.	C3
Capricious Grading Policy (Graduate)	Appeals process for reviewing graduate grade disputes.	C3
Course-Related Policies (Undergraduate)	Aggregated resource for undergraduate academic policies and procedures.	C3
Red Folder Initiative	Training and resources for faculty/staff to support students in distress.	C3
Workplace Violence and Risk Assessment Policy	Prevents workplace violence and outlines reporting/mitigation procedures.	C3

Policy on Scholarly Misconduct	Governs investigation of fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism in research.	C3
Policy on Conflict of Interest and Conflict of Commitment (COI/COC)	Main COI/COC disclosure, review, and management policy for all employees.	C4
Financial Conflict of Interest Policy - PHS Research	Implements federal regulations for managing financial COI in PHS-funded research.	C4
Policy on Institutional Conflicts of Interest	Establishes procedures for managing institutional-level financial conflicts.	C4
Policy on Consulting	Defines parameters for permissible consulting activities and required disclosures.	C4, C9
Policy on Organizational Conflicts of Interest	Prevents organizational COI risks in sponsored projects and federal contracts.	C4
COGR Principles on COI/COC	National benchmarking guidelines for conflict of commitment in research.	C4
Applicant Tracking & Position Description System (UHR)	Standardized job posting, recruitment, and screening platform.	C5
Equal Employment Council	Advises leadership on workforce diversity and equitable hiring practices.	C5
ADVANCE Program	Faculty leadership development and equity initiative.	C5
PTK Faculty AEP Manual	Codifies appointments, evaluation, and promotion processes for PTK faculty.	C5
Center for Leadership and Organizational Change (CLOC)	Provides equity-driven leadership coaching and organizational development.	C2, C5
Conflict Resolvers Network	Supports informal resolution and mediation for workplace disputes.	C3, C5
Office of Postdoctoral Affairs	Provides mentoring, professional development, and inclusive programming for postdocs.	C5
UMDRFA (Retired Faculty Association)	Supports continued engagement and intellectual exchange for retired faculty.	C5
PRSA Code of Ethics	National professional standards guiding advocacy, honesty, and transparency in PR.	C6
Media and Public Relations Practices and Policies	Establishes procedures for official communications and spokespersons.	C6
Social Media Values Statement	Clarifies expectations for official vs. personal social media use.	C6
Statement of Philosophy of Undergraduate Admissions	Defines mission-aligned, holistic admissions approach.	C6
Undergraduate Admissions Website	Provides admissions policies, criteria, timelines, and resources.	C6

Admissions Review Process and Factors	Transparent criteria for admissions decision-making.	C6
Graduate Admissions Policy	Requires graduate programs to publish admissions expectations and timelines.	C6
Maryland Today	Official university news digest with professional review for accuracy.	C6
Office of the President - Campus Messages Archive	Repository of official presidential announcements to the community.	C6
Policy on Student Classification for Admission and Tuition Purposes	Defines residency determination for tuition purposes.	C7
Policy on Tuition (VIII-2.01)	Establishes affordability and accessibility as guiding tuition principles.	C7
Policy on Institutional Student Financial Aid (Undergraduates)	Directs tuition revenue to need-based and mission-aligned student aid.	C7
Policy on Tuition Fellowships for Graduate Students	Provides tuition support without service obligations.	C7
Policy on Waiver of Application Fees	Allows students with financial hardship to apply without fees.	C7
Terrapin Commitment	\$20M program closing tuition gaps; served 4,500+ Pell-eligible students in 2023-24.	C7
Scholarship Universe	AI-driven scholarship matching platform; connected 12,000 students to awards in 2024.	C7
Financial Literacy Resources (Libraries)	Budgeting tools, debt management guides, and literacy modules.	C7
Make Sense of Your Money (Graduate School)	Financial wellness workshops for graduate students.	C7
Thrive Center for Essential Needs	Newly established center to connect students with finance resources including consultation and peer coaching.	C7
Financial Well-Being Pilot Program	State-funded financial coaching; supported 600+ students since launch.	C7
Disability & Accessibility Policy and Procedures	Establishes equitable accommodations for students with disabilities.	C7
Accessibility and Disability Service (ADS)	Provides accommodations in housing, testing, and academics.	C7
Disability Support at USG	Extends disability services at the Universities at Shady Grove.	C7
Accreditation Status	Public page listing institutional and programmatic accreditations.	C8
Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) Charter	Establishes UMD's legal authority as Maryland's flagship public university.	C8

HEOA/Consumer Information Portal	Centralized disclosure of federally required consumer information.	C8
Policy on Disclosure of Student Education Records (FERPA)	Defines student rights and institutional obligations under FERPA.	C8
Senate Constituencies Representation	Documents Senate's representative structure across all campus groups.	C9
Senate Proposal Pathway Flowchart	Outlines the process of vetting and approving Senate proposals.	C9
Standing Committees of the University Senate	Ensure inclusive review and expertise-based governance.	C9
Review of the Student Codes of Conduct	Senate-led revision emphasizing restorative practices and due process.	C9
Review of Faculty Grievance Policy	Updates to ensure procedural consistency and timely resolution.	C9
Policy on Faculty Professional Conduct	Establishes expectations for collegiality, respect, and academic integrity.	C9
Workplace Bullying Policy (State of Maryland DBM)	Defines prohibited workplace behaviors and reporting procedures.	C9
Policy on Malign Foreign Talent Recruitment Programs	Prohibits participation in federally designated high-risk talent programs.	C9
Non-Discrimination Policy	Reinforces equity, inclusion, and fairness in institutional operations.	C2, C9

## CHAPTER 3

### VIGNETTE: MODERNIZING LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS TO SUPPORT EVIDENCE-BASED TEACHING

#### *ADDRESSING PHYSICAL SPACES THAT DON'T SERVE MODERN LEARNING PEDAGOGY*

By 2017, faculty and student feedback pointed to a recurring concern: Many of UMD's classrooms no longer supported the active, collaborative, and technology-enabled teaching practices that were becoming central to undergraduate education. As instructors adopted flipped learning, inquiry-based activities, and multimodal engagement, it became clear that physical spaces, designed decades earlier for lecture-based instruction, began to constrain innovation and inclusivity.

#### *A COORDINATED, CAMPUS-WIDE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT MODERNIZATION INITIATIVE*

UMD launched a multiyear effort to redesign general-purpose classrooms in alignment with evidence-informed instructional practices and the *Fearlessly Forward* commitment to Reimagine Learning. The Division of Academic Affairs, Facilities Management, the Teaching and Learning Transformation Center (TLTC), the Office of the Registrar, and the Division of Information Technology (DIT) collaborated to identify priority spaces and gather extensive faculty and student input.

Renovated classrooms incorporated flexible, movable furniture; writable surfaces; improved lighting; upgraded audio systems; and accessible seating and presentation options. Technology standards were modernized through a transition from analog to digital connectivity, ensuring reliable HDMI and DisplayPort compatibility, consistent projection systems, and multimedia support across all rooms. Faculty development accompanied the upgrades: TLTC offered workshops on teaching in active learning spaces, and DIT implemented rapid-response support protocols, resulting in classroom technician arrival times averaging under four minutes.

#### *INCREASED ENGAGEMENT AND INSTRUCTIONAL INNOVATION*

The impact was visible across redesigned spaces. Students reported stronger engagement and a better match between classroom design and collaborative learning expectations. Faculty increased their use of active learning strategies, supported by spaces that enabled group work, interactive problem-solving, and flexible seating arrangements. Reliable, standardized technology significantly reduced instructional disruptions and improved access for students using a range of devices and accommodations.

The initiative also strengthened cross-campus governance of learning environments. Faculty committees, student representatives, and instructional support units were consulted regularly, improving transparency and fostering shared ownership of classroom design and instructional quality.

#### *SPACE, PEDAGOGY, AND TECHNOLOGY EVOLVING TOGETHER*

Through this initiative, UMD confirmed a core institutional insight: High-quality learning requires intentional alignment between pedagogy, physical space, and technology. The modernization effort established a sustainable model for continuous improvement, one that centers on user experience, evidence from teaching and learning research, and collaborative stewardship of the campus learning environment. By investing in adaptable, inclusive classrooms, UMD advanced its mission to deliver a rigorous and student-centered academic experience.

This example reflects UMD's commitment to Standard III by demonstrating how evidence-informed improvements to learning environments strengthen educational quality and expand opportunities for student engagement and success.

### UMD'S INSTITUTIONAL PHILOSOPHY AND APPROACH TO STANDARD III

As Maryland's flagship, public, land-grant research university, UMD designs and delivers a student learning experience that is inclusive, rigorous, and future-facing. Our approach to Standard III reflects the conviction that high-quality learning must be accessible, evidence-based, and aligned with societal needs. Guided by the *Fearlessly Forward* strategic plan, UMD cultivates innovative teaching, interdisciplinary learning, and equitable access to ensure that all students graduate prepared to make meaningful contributions in a complex and global world.

## STANDARD III: DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF THE STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCE

At UMD, academic programs are designed to integrate disciplinary depth with interdisciplinary breadth, experiential learning, and civic engagement. With more than 300 degree and certificate programs across undergraduate, graduate, and professional levels, UMD provides a coherent and mission-aligned academic journey regardless of modality or location. Programs are developed and assessed through rigorous shared governance processes, including the Programs, Curricula, and Courses Committee, the Vice President's Advisory Committee, and the Graduate Council, and reviewed regularly by the USM and MHEC.

*Fearlessly Forward* commits the institution to Reimagine Learning, Invest in People and Communities, Take on Humanity's Grand Challenges, and Partner to Advance the Public Good. These pillars frame UMD's design and delivery of the student learning experience, ensuring continuous improvement through curricular innovation, inclusive pedagogy, and robust assessment systems.

### COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

UMD advances its *Fearlessly Forward* commitments, particularly Reimagine Learning, and meets MSCHE expectations for Standard III by providing rigorous, innovative, and inclusive learning opportunities, supported by qualified faculty, well-designed curricula, and robust learning resources.

### CRITERION 1: PROGRAM COHERENCE • CREDIT INTEGRITY • APPROPRIATE SCOPE

UMD ensures that all certificate, undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs are of sufficient breadth, depth, length, and rigor to meet the expectations of higher education and foster a coherent, developmental, and integrated student learning experience. All programs are aligned with the institutional mission and strategic goals and are grounded in state, system, and institutional policies that uphold academic quality across delivery modalities and levels.

### UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAMS

UMD's undergraduate programs adhere to a clearly defined structure anchored in University System of Maryland (USM) policy and the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR), which require a minimum of 120

credit hours for the baccalaureate degree (USM Standard Credit Requirements; COMAR 13B.02.02.16.B). Exceptions, typically tied to professional accreditation or certification, must be explicitly justified and approved.

Program approval follows a multi-level shared governance process that includes review by departments, colleges, the Senate Programs, Curricula, and Courses (PCC) Committee, and the Vice President's Advisory Committee (VPAC), before final approval by the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) (Office of the Provost, Course and Program Change Policies).

To ensure academic coherence, undergraduate majors are required to complete at least 30 credits in the discipline, with a minimum of 15 credits at the 300 level or higher. Programs must also provide at least 12 credits of free electives unless otherwise justified (Office of the Provost, Bachelor's Degree Programs). Students complete a minimum of 40 general education credits distributed across communication, mathematics, sciences, arts and humanities, and social sciences, as defined in university policy and state regulation (COMAR 13B.02.02.16.E).

Structured and timely degree completion is supported through four-year academic plans that all students develop in their first semester, using templates provided by each college (Office of Undergraduate Studies, UMD Four-Year Plans). For example, the Psychology B.A./B.S. integrates gateway requirements, thematic clusters, multicultural coursework, and capstone experiences to scaffold learning (Department of Psychology, Major Checklist).

### GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMS

Graduate programs are governed by Graduate School policies that ensure coherence, rigor, and appropriate credentialing. Master's programs require a minimum of 30 credits, with 12-18 credits at the 600 level or higher, depending on thesis or nonthesis pathways (Office of the Provost, Master's Degree Programs). Professional practice doctorates, such as the Ed.D. or Au.D., encompass advanced coursework, mid-program evaluations, and a culminating project that demonstrates the synthesis and application of learning (Graduate Catalog, Professional Practice Doctoral Degree Policies). Research doctorates, including the Ph.D., emphasize original scholarship through comprehensive examinations, dissertation research, and defense, preparing graduates to contribute new knowledge in their fields (Graduate Catalog, Research Doctoral Degree Policies).

Graduate academic policies align with national best practices and COMAR requirements for credit thresholds and time-to-degree standards (COMAR 13B.02.02.16.I).

Undergraduate and graduate programs undergo periodic review at least every seven years, as required by the University Policy on the Review of Academic Units (2021). Reviews include a self-study, external peer evaluation, and a written action plan for improvement. Additionally, programs submit periodic review reports to MHEC, which documents enrollment trends, degree productivity, and responsiveness to disciplinary standards (MHEC, Format for Reports on Periodic Review of Academic Programs, 2022).

### INSTRUCTIONAL STANDARDS AND CREDIT HOUR INTEGRITY

UMD enforces strict standards for credit hour integrity across all programs and modalities. In alignment with COMAR 13B.02.02.16.D MHEC is in the process of revising its credit-hour policy to align with federal and MSCHE requirements and institutional policy.

Course syllabi and formats are reviewed for compliance through VPAC and PCC approval processes, and expectations are outlined in campus-wide Course Policies and Practices (Office of the Provost). Courses that

enroll both undergraduate and graduate students (e.g., 400-/600-level joint offerings) must differentiate their learning objectives and assessments to ensure consistency with USM and Graduate School standards.

### OFF-CAMPUS AND ONLINE INSTRUCTION

UMD offers a limited number of programs in online and off-campus formats. These undergo the same approval processes as on-campus offerings and require substantive change approval from MHEC and MSCHE when more than 50% of the program is delivered at a new site (Office of the Provost, Off-Campus and Online Programs).

All online programs comply with Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions guidelines and demonstrate equivalent rigor, faculty oversight, and access to support services (National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements Compliance Guidelines). Off-campus instruction is delivered by a mix of full- and part-time faculty who meet the same qualification, appointment, and evaluation standards as faculty teaching on the College Park campus, with appropriate oversight by academic units. Centralized oversight, advising equivalence, and full access to library resources ensure quality across locations and modalities.

### CRITERION 2: QUALIFIED FACULTY • SUFFICIENT STAFFING • PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

UMD ensures that its faculty are appropriately qualified, sufficiently numerous, and adequately supported in their instructional roles, enabling them to deliver high-quality programs at all levels.

### FACULTY QUALIFICATIONS AND POLICIES

Within the policy framework described in Standard II, UMD ensures that faculty are highly qualified and sufficient in number to deliver a rigorous, mission-aligned student learning experience. Nearly all tenure-track faculty hold terminal degrees appropriate to their discipline, consistent with institutional and accreditation expectations. Overall, 80% of all instructional faculty possess the highest credential appropriate to their discipline, and 99% of tenure-track faculty hold terminal degrees (Instructional Faculty by Highest Degree Level). The campus boasts more than 100 National Academy memberships held by over 80 faculty members.

Faculty sufficiency is demonstrated by a student-to-faculty ratio of 17:1, with the majority of courses offered in small or medium formats that support interactive learning (Course Counts by Class Size IRPA report).

UMD invests significantly in faculty teaching excellence through programs offered by the Teaching and Learning Transformation Center (TLTC), ADVANCE, and the Office of Faculty Affairs. These programs provide workshops, grants, and consultations that promote inclusive pedagogy, high-impact practices, and instructional innovation. The TLTC's Teaching Academy offers meta- and micro-credentialing to faculty in areas such as generative AI-informed pedagogy, universal design for learning, and evidence-based course design. In addition, several colleges maintain their own centers for teaching excellence and instructional design support, such as the College of Arts and Humanities' Teaching and Learning Center and the College of Education's Office of Instructional Design, further expanding resources available to faculty across disciplines.

All faculty are subject to regular review, including five-year periodic post-tenure reviews, ensuring continuous feedback for the improvement in teaching and learning. The Student Feedback on Course Experiences instrument was revised to emphasize concrete, formative feedback aligned with best practices in teaching effectiveness.

Together, these structures demonstrate that UMD faculty are not only well-qualified but also actively supported and evaluated in their role as stewards of student learning.

### FACULTY CAPACITY AND WORKLOAD

UMD employs over 2,600 instructional faculty across tenure-track and professional-track roles, supporting a 17:1 student-to-faculty ratio (CDS Instructional Faculty Headcount, Student-to-Faculty Ratio). The majority of courses enroll fewer than 100 undergraduates or 30 graduate students, reflecting a consistent commitment to student-faculty engagement. Departmental reviews and enrollment monitoring guide hiring and workload adjustments.

### FACULTY DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION

UMD invests heavily in faculty development through the TLTC and the Office of Faculty Affairs. Initiatives include workshops on inclusive pedagogy, the annual PTK Symposium, and targeted support for instructional innovation. Evaluation is holistic, developmental, transparent, and grounded in UMD policy:

- ▶ Annual reviews and promotion processes consider teaching, research, and service.
- ▶ A redesigned student survey on course experiences system emphasizes formative feedback aligned with effective teaching practices.
- ▶ A comprehensive review of all faculty is conducted at least once every five years, ensuring alignment with institutional goals.

Together, these policies and practices ensure that UMD maintains a qualified, sufficient, and continuously supported faculty body to deliver high-quality instruction across undergraduate and graduate levels.

### CRITERION 3: PROGRAM INFORMATION • DEGREE CLARITY • TIME TO COMPLETION

At UMD, faculty are the primary stewards of academic quality, assuming central responsibility for the design, delivery, and evaluation of educational programs. Their work spans curricular development, program design, advising, inclusive pedagogy, and program-level assessment, ensuring alignment with institutional learning goals and supporting student success across all populations.

### CURRICULAR DESIGN AND ADVISING

UMD's academic programs of study are clearly and accurately described in official university publications, ensuring that students have a comprehensive understanding of their degree requirements, pathways, and expected time to completion. UMD's Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs are the primary record of detailed information on academic programs and are widely referenced across campus, college, and departmental websites.

Faculty across UMD's 12 colleges and schools lead the development of undergraduate four-year plans that scaffold student progression toward degree completion. These plans integrate general education, major coursework, and benchmark requirements and are made publicly accessible to students and advisors (Undergraduate 4-Year Plans website). Advising is delivered through a collaborative model that pairs professional advisors with faculty mentors, supported by clear protocols for plan approval, academic intervention, and benchmarking.

Graduate students can access similar resources, including program-specific handbooks and degree timelines that provide clear expectations for coursework, research milestones, and dissertation or thesis completion.

#### ADDITIONAL PROGRAM DELIVERY AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

UMD faculty deliver instruction across a wide array of undergraduate and graduate programs, including specialized support for international students. In addition to the complement of approved courses that support degree and general education requirements, the campus provides credit-bearing English as a Second Language (ESL) and related courses via the intensive Maryland English Institute offerings.

Faculty also create open-access instructional content to extend learning beyond the classroom. Between 2019 and 2024, more than 50 faculty-developed open learning courses were launched through UMD's Canvas Open Learning platform, spanning subjects such as academic writing, data analytics, and instructional design, and reaching both global and campus audiences.

#### PROGRAM ASSESSMENT AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Faculty-led learning outcomes assessment is central to maintaining program quality and advancing student outcomes. Retention and graduation rates demonstrate the success of students across multiple levels:

- ▶ **Undergraduate retention:** First-year retention for new first-time students consistently exceeds 95%.
- ▶ **Undergraduate graduation:** Four-year graduation rates surpass 75% overall, while six-year rates approach or exceed 90% across most groups.
- ▶ **Transfer students:** Full-time cohorts achieved 79% four-year and 83% six-year graduation rates at UMD.
- ▶ **Graduate education:** More than 90% of master's and doctoral students persist or complete their degrees within established timeframes.

These student success outcomes reflect the faculty's continuous engagement in assessment, curricular refinement, and the implementation of retention-focused interventions.

#### FACULTY OVERSIGHT AND PROGRAM RESPONSIVENESS

Faculty remain deeply engaged in reviewing program enrollment, assessing student needs, and adapting curricula to reflect disciplinary and workforce trends. Departments and colleges regularly work with an Enrollment Management Team composed of members of the provost's senior staff to address issues related to changes in enrollment demand. Analyses conducted as part of strategic enrollment planning confirmed steady enrollment across more than 200 active programs, demonstrating both sustained student interest and program relevance.

Through mechanisms such as departmental self-studies, periodic program reviews, and institutional learning improvement plans, faculty ensure that academic offerings remain coherent, current, and consistent with institutional learning outcomes. These efforts affirm UMD's commitment to inclusive academic excellence and student-centered design.

#### CRITERION 4: LEARNING RESOURCES • STUDENT SUPPORT • ACADEMIC PROGRESS

UMD designs, delivers, and assesses a broad spectrum of academically rigorous and experientially rich learning opportunities across in-person, hybrid, and fully online environments. Guided by its mission as a flagship, public, land-grant university, UMD ensures that all students, regardless of program, modality, or location, benefit from high-quality instruction, structured academic pathways, and robust support services that foster inquiry, collaboration, and student success.

#### ENRICHMENT AND APPLIED LEARNING PROGRAMS

UMD complements traditional degree programs with signature initiatives that advance interdisciplinary learning, civic engagement, and career readiness through high-impact practices:

- ▶ **Honors College:** Eight highly acclaimed living-learning programs across disciplines, including cybersecurity, global affairs, life sciences, humanities, business, and more.
- ▶ **College Park Scholars:** A two-year living-learning community featuring colloquia, faculty mentorship, and capstone experiences in research, service, or global engagement.
- ▶ **First-Year Innovation and Research Experience (FIRE):** Multisemester, faculty-led research projects beginning in students' first semester, fulfilling general education requirements and building transferable skills.
- ▶ **UMD Fellows Program: (Maryland, Federal, and Global)** Policy-focused seminars combined with credit-bearing internships in federal, state, and international contexts.
- ▶ **Gemstone Honors Program:** A four-year, team-based undergraduate research program emphasizing multidisciplinary collaboration and societal impact.
- ▶ **Vertically Integrated Projects:** Long-term, large-scale projects that unite undergraduate education and faculty research, innovation, design, and entrepreneurship through multidisciplinary teams.

#### PROGRAM STRUCTURE AND DELIVERY

UMD supports academic progression through structured planning tools and transparent expectations. All undergraduates complete a four-year plan in their first semester to scaffold timely degree completion. Consistency in instructional delivery is reinforced through university-wide syllabus standards developed by the Teaching and Learning Transformation Center, including an accessible syllabus template to promote equity and compliance (Syllabus Guidance; Accessible Syllabus Template). These efforts are complemented by the Course-Related Policies and Resources site, which provides students with a centralized reference to academic policies and support services, and by the university's online Syllabus Repository, which enhances transparency and access to course expectations across the curriculum.

#### ONLINE AND DISTANCE EDUCATION

To increase access and flexibility, UMD has steadily expanded online programs and courses:

- ▶ UMD currently offers 44 fully online graduate programs, primarily master's degrees and graduate certificates in high-demand fields such as business analytics, information systems, education, and public health. While modest in scale compared to UMD's overall academic portfolio, these programs expand access and flexibility for working professionals and nontraditional learners.

- ▶ About 15% of graduate students and less than 1% of undergraduates enroll exclusively online. Over 10,000 students (grad and undergrad) enrolled in at least one online course (IPEDS Enrollment by Distance Education Status).
- ▶ UMD delivers over 400 online courses annually, supported by centralized instructional design, faculty training, and accessible content development (Distance Education Courses).

These programs undergo the same rigorous review as in-person offerings and comply with Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions guidelines and national standards to ensure equivalence in rigor, oversight, and access to student services.

### INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES AND INVESTMENT

UMD prioritizes direct investment in instructional quality. In FY22, 33.1% of core expenditures, the largest single category, was allocated to instruction, with per-student FTE instructional spending of \$16,385 (Expense Analysis). These funds support faculty salaries, academic advisors, instructional technologies, and program delivery across all modalities.

### LIBRARY RESOURCES AND STUDENT SUPPORT

The University Libraries ensure equitable access to learning resources across modalities. As of FY22, holdings included 8.7 million physical and electronic resources, 826 databases, and a professional staff of nearly 200, including more than 50 librarians. Students in online and off-campus programs receive the same access to digital collections, research support, and consultation services as those on campus.

### CRITERION 5: GENERAL EDUCATION • ESSENTIAL SKILLS • GLOBAL AWARENESS

The UMD General Education Program engages students in broad intellectual exploration, fosters cultural and global awareness, and develops the capacity to make well-reasoned judgments within and beyond academic disciplines. Re-envisioned in 2012 through a campus-wide initiative, the program reflects the institution's land-grant mission and its strategic plan, *Fearlessly Forward*, by balancing disciplinary depth with integrative, experiential, and inclusive learning approaches (Transforming General Education at the University of Maryland).

### PROGRAM STRUCTURE AND CATEGORIES

UMD's General Education Program ensures that all undergraduates cultivate essential skills and habits of mind, critical thinking, ethical reasoning, communication, and cultural fluency, through five curricular categories:

- ▶ **Fundamental Studies:** courses in writing, mathematics, oral communication.
- ▶ **Distributive Studies:** courses in arts, humanities, natural and social sciences.
- ▶ **I-Series (Big Question):** courses that encourage inquiry into complex, interdisciplinary issues such as sustainability, AI, or ethics in science (Proposing a General Education or Big Question Course).
- ▶ **Understanding Plural Societies and Cultural Competence:** courses that develop intercultural awareness and civic responsibility (General Education Learning Outcomes and Rubrics).

- ▶ **Scholarship in Practice:** experiential and applied learning, including undergraduate research, internships, civic engagement, and entrepreneurial activities.

### LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT

Faculty-developed learning outcomes and rubrics provide consistency and transparency across categories. For example:

- ▶ **Cultural Competence:** Students “demonstrate self-awareness about identity and culture” and analyze how cultural beliefs shape social structures.
- ▶ **Understanding Plural Societies:** Students explain how diverse perspectives and historical experiences influence contemporary social dynamics.

Assessment is systematic and faculty-led. Selected courses are reviewed annually using shared rubrics with four levels of performance (Advanced, Proficient, Beginning, Unacceptable). Outcomes data is aggregated by the Office of Undergraduate Studies and shared with academic units for curriculum design, advising, and continuous improvement (General Education Learning Outcomes and Rubrics; General Education Summary Chart).

### ALIGNMENT WITH CAREER AND CIVIC READINESS

General education outcomes are intentionally mapped to the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) Career Readiness Competencies, including teamwork, critical thinking, professionalism, and global fluency. This alignment ensures that UMD graduates master content knowledge while also developing transferable skills essential for career success and civic engagement.

### FACULTY OVERSIGHT AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

Faculty play a central role in the program's integrity. All new general education proposals must articulate outcomes, assessment strategies, and rubric alignment. The General Education Faculty Boards review proposals and oversee quality assurance (Proposing a General Education or Big Question Course).

### EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Experiential learning is a hallmark of the program. For example, the Scholarship in Practice requirement integrates classroom and real-world application, advancing UMD's commitment to community engagement and public impact. Projects often involve interdisciplinary teams and culminate in applied solutions that demonstrate the relevance of academic learning to societal challenges (Transforming General Education at the University of Maryland). This commitment is further reinforced by the establishment of the Center for Community Engagement within the Office of the Provost, which expands and supports partnerships and infrastructure for community-engaged teaching and learning. In addition, new systems implemented through the Office of the Registrar now allow courses to be tagged as involving experiential learning, improving transparency for students and enabling better tracking of participation in high-impact practices.

### CRITERION 6: GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP • RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES • INDEPENDENT THINKING

UMD ensures that graduate education maintains rigorous academic standards, systematic learning outcomes assessment, and sustained institutional investment. These efforts ensure that graduate students develop the knowledge, skills, and competencies appropriate to their degree level and discipline.

### GRADUATE OVERSIGHT AND OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT

Graduate education is overseen by the Graduate Council, a faculty-led governance body that establishes policies, reviews programs, and supports academic quality. UMD's Graduate Learning Outcomes Assessment framework empowers programs to define discipline-specific outcomes and evaluate student achievement through capstones, portfolios, theses, and dissertations.

### GRADUATE FACULTY APPOINTMENTS

Graduate education is supported by faculty with advanced disciplinary expertise. Graduate faculty appointments (full, associate, teaching, special) define clear roles and privileges, e.g., only full members may chair doctoral committees. The Graduate School vets all appointments to ensure appropriate expertise for graduate-level mentoring. This framework builds on UMD's broader faculty credentialing standards (see Criterion 2) and provides additional oversight specific to graduate education.

### GRADUATE STUDENT SUPPORT

Graduate assistantships provide both financial support and mentored professional experience. Policies define workload, performance expectations, and mentoring practices, formalized through a required Statement of Mutual Expectations. In addition to assistantships, numerous fellowships and awards are available to graduate students at both the college and campus levels, further expanding opportunities for financial support and academic recognition.

### INSTITUTIONAL INVESTMENT IN GRADUATE EDUCATION

Between FY18 and FY22, UMD increased graduate assistant stipends by 52%, expanded Flagship and President's Fellowships, and added nearly \$6.5 million in temporary COVID-delay fellowships. Instructional resources and support structures, such as fellowship administration, stipend and tuition remission processing, advising oversight, research administration, and related academic support functions, are deployed through institutionally coordinated systems and, where applicable, extend to additional instructional locations, ensuring consistent academic quality and learning experiences.

#### CRITERION 7: THIRD-PARTY OVERSIGHT • INSTITUTIONAL APPROVAL • ACADEMIC QUALITY

UMD maintains rigorous standards and multilayered oversight to ensure that any student learning opportunities involving third-party providers meet institutional expectations for academic quality, integrity, and student success. These mechanisms ensure that such experiences are fully integrated into UMD's curriculum and subject to the same review processes as all university-sponsored learning opportunities.

### INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW AND APPROVAL

All credit-bearing programs and learning experiences are reviewed through UMD's shared governance structures. Proposals undergo review by the departmental and college-level Programs, Curricula, and Courses Committee, followed by campus-level PCC review, and, when required, by the University System of Maryland (USM) and the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC). This ensures alignment with UMD's mission, curricular coherence, and accreditation standards.

### STUDY ABROAD AND GLOBAL EXPERIENCES

The Education Abroad office formally vets learning opportunities abroad in collaboration with academic units. Programs undergo review to confirm that syllabi, faculty oversight, and assessment methods are

consistent with UMD standards. Academic credit earned abroad is approved by the faculty and applied toward degree requirements only after it has been verified that the course learning outcomes align with the credit.

### INTERNSHIPS AND COOPERATIVE EDUCATION

Academic internships facilitated by external organizations are subject to departmental approval and the supervision of faculty. Students complete structured learning contracts that define their responsibilities, intended outcomes, and evaluation criteria. Faculty coordinators oversee student progress, assess performance, and assign final grades, ensuring that externally facilitated experiences reinforce UMD's academic expectations.

### VENDOR-PROVIDED INSTRUCTIONAL CONTENT

UMD has established policies for the limited use of vendor-provided modules and platforms in hybrid and online instruction. Such arrangements are rare, and in most cases course content is developed and delivered directly by UMD faculty. When vendor materials are used, faculty members remain the instructors of record and are responsible for overseeing content integration, outcome assessment, and compliance with accessibility standards. The final evaluation of student achievement and the assignment of grades always rest with UMD faculty.

### CONTRACTS AND COMPLIANCE

All agreements with external providers are subject to review by the Office of General Counsel, the Office of the Provost, and relevant academic deans. This process ensures compliance with university policies, FERPA protections, and accreditation requirements. In cases where external entities contribute to assessment, UMD requires clear articulation of standards, transparency in data sharing, and faculty oversight of all final determinations of student achievement.

#### CRITERION 8: LEARNING ASSESSMENT • EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW • ALL POPULATIONS

UMD employs a comprehensive, faculty-led, and evidence-informed process to assess student learning outcomes across all programs and instructional modalities. Rooted in shared governance and institutional accountability, this approach ensures that assessment meaningfully enhances teaching, informs curricular improvements, and advances student success.

### INSTITUTIONAL OVERSIGHT

The Provost's Commission on Learning Outcomes Assessment (PCLOA) serves as the central coordinating body for undergraduate learning assessment. Comprising faculty representatives, college-based coordinators, and assessment experts, PCLOA reviews annual reports from every undergraduate program and submits a summary of findings to the provost. In FY24, 94 of 96 undergraduate programs (97.9%) submitted reports that documented program-specific outcomes, direct and indirect measures, and curricular or pedagogical changes made in response to findings.

Each program maps its learning outcomes to curriculum structures and identifies where outcomes are introduced, reinforced, and assessed. PCLOA employs a standardized rubric to review reports, providing detailed feedback to deans and department chairs, thereby reinforcing a continuous improvement loop.

### INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE OUTCOMES

UMD has integrated student preparedness for engagement in a diverse and interconnected society into its assessment framework through the Learning Outcomes Initiative. As of FY24, 98.9% of undergraduate programs had developed outcomes that emphasize cultural understanding, effective communication across differences, and civic responsibility. Academic units, such as Philosophy, Cinema and Media Studies, and Persian Studies, were recognized for their exemplary integration of these outcomes into student assessment (FY24 PCLOA Report).

### METHODS OF ASSESSMENT

UMD's decentralized academic culture allows disciplinary flexibility while ensuring institutional coherence. Programs employ a range of direct measures, portfolios, embedded assignments, capstones, and normed rubrics, often complemented by indirect measures, such as surveys and reflections.

Professional programs align their assessments with external standards, e.g., ABET in Engineering, AAQEP in Education, while retaining program-level outcome specificity. This dual alignment ensures rigor, comparability, and alignment with the mission.

### GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT

General education outcomes are assessed in collaboration with the Office of Undergraduate Studies and the Teaching and Learning Transformation Center (TLTC). Categories such as Academic Writing, Professional Writing, and Oral Communication undergo structured, biannual assessments. For instance, in FY24, 69 instructors submitted assessment data for 169 sections of two general education communications courses, supplemented by 26 instructors using digital tools like SpeedGrader for outcome-based evidence collection.

### FACULTY ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

Faculty capacity is supported through PCLOA-led workshops, consultations, and resources. In FY24, training emphasized curriculum mapping, outcome measurement, and equity-informed assessment practices. New onboarding materials and digital reporting tools are being developed to streamline reporting, particularly for new program leads.

### KEY FINDINGS

UMD ensures that students encounter a rigorous, inclusive, and well-supported learning experience across modalities and levels. Academic programs are designed through faculty governance, supported by qualified instructors, and enriched by experiential and co-curricular opportunities. Ongoing investments in pedagogy, advising, and learning technologies strengthen access, quality, and equity in student learning.

- ▶ **Reimagine Learning:** Signature initiatives such as the First-Year Innovation and Research Experience (FIRE) and living-learning programs including College Park Scholars provide high-impact, experiential education that distinguishes UMD nationally and advances innovation in teaching and learning.
- ▶ **Invest in People and Communities:** Faculty are highly qualified (99% of full-time tenure/tenure-track hold terminal degrees) and supported through professional development, instructional technology, and the TLTC. These investments strengthen instructional quality and equity across programs.

- ▶ **Partner to Advance the Public Good:** UMD has expanded 44 fully online programs, extending access to mission-driven education and amplifying the university's role in serving broader communities. The establishment of the Center for Community Engagement further strengthens campus-community partnerships by facilitating teaching, research, and service collaborations that advance the public good.
- ▶ **Take on Humanity's Grand Challenges:** Systematic, faculty-led assessment ensures continuous improvement and academic rigor. Nearly all undergraduate programs (94 out of 96) engage in outcomes-based reporting, and curricular innovations are increasingly connecting student learning to pressing societal issues, preparing graduates to address global challenges.

### OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH

An opportunity for growth lies in strengthening institutional coherence across curricular and co-curricular learning pathways, particularly by more clearly articulating how high-impact practices, experiential learning, and interdisciplinary opportunities are intentionally scaffolded over time. While innovation is widespread, more consistent documentation of barriers to interdisciplinary programs would further demonstrate intentional design and equity of access.

### CONCLUSION

UMD meets and exceeds the expectations of MSCHE Standard III through a mission-driven approach to designing and delivering the student learning experience. Academic programs are intentionally structured to be rigorous, inclusive, and responsive to societal needs, with quality assured through shared governance bodies such as the PCC Committee, the Graduate Council, and VPAC.

Key accomplishments underscore this excellence:

- ▶ Nearly 200 Teaching Innovation Grants have modernized instruction across disciplines, benefiting over 10,000 students.
- ▶ The Learning Environment Modernization Program has invested \$11 million to enhance accessibility and support multimodal engagement.
- ▶ Signature initiatives such as FIRE, VIPs, and over 25 living-learning programs provide high-impact, integrative educational experiences.

Through continuous assessment cycles, expanded support for inclusive pedagogy, and sustained investment in faculty development, UMD fosters a culture of academic excellence and innovation. These efforts ensure quality and coherence as the university expands hybrid and online modalities, underscoring its role as a national leader in transformative, equitable, and future-facing education. Together, these accomplishments affirm UMD's commitment to continuous improvement and fulfillment of MSCHE Standard III.

## EVIDENCE INDEX

EVIDENCE TITLE	DESCRIPTION	CRITERION
Undergraduate Catalog	Official documentation of degree and program requirements.	C1, C3
Graduate Catalog	Graduate-level catalog describing academic offerings and policies.	C1, C3
Course and Program Change Policies Slide Deck	Outlines multi-level governance review process for curricular development and approval.	C1, C7
COMAR 13B.02.02 Regulations	Maryland state regulations establishing degree credit thresholds, credit-hour standards, and graduate degree requirements.	C1
USM Standard Credit Requirements	Defines minimum credit-hour requirements for undergraduate programs across the system.	C1
Course Policies and Practices - Office of the Provost Website	Institutional policy defining credit-hour expectations across modalities.	C1
Policy on the Review of Academic Units	Outlines process for the review of undergraduate and graduate programs at least every seven years.	C1
Undergraduate Four-Year Plans Website	Templates guiding students' structured academic progress toward degree completion.	C1, C3, C4
Department of Psychology BA/BS Checklist	Example of major-specific requirements integrating gateway, thematic, multicultural, and capstone elements.	C1
Instructional Faculty by Highest Degree Level	Aggregate data on faculty credentials by discipline and appointment type.	C2, C6
USM Policy on Appointment, Rank, and Tenure of Faculty	Governs appointment and tenure standards system-wide.	C2
UMD Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure Policy	Institutional faculty standards for tenure-track appointments and advancement.	C2
Policy on Professional Track Faculty	Defines appointment and advancement pathways for professional-track faculty.	C2
Policy on Appointment, Promotion, and Permanent Status of Library Faculty	Establishes standards for library faculty appointments and promotion.	C2
UMD Policy on Periodic Evaluation of Faculty Performance	Outlines processes for the review of all faculty at least once per five years.	C2
Student Course Evaluation Improvement Project (University Senate Documentation)	Senate reform that established the Student Feedback on Course Experiences instrument.	C2
Course Evaluation Implementation Update (Presentation to the University Senate)	Update on implementation and outcomes of the new course evaluation system.	C2

2023 CDS Instructional Faculty Headcount & Student-to-Faculty Ratio	Data on faculty sufficiency and instructional capacity.	C2
UG & GR Course Counts by Class Size IRPA report	Evidence of interactive student-faculty engagement through section size analysis.	C2
Periodic Review of Academic Programs - Sociology	Example of unit-level review identifying instructional needs.	C2
Expense Analysis	Data on instructional spending, expenditures per FTE, and trends.	C2, C6
TLTC Syllabus Template	Syllabus template provided by TLTC.	C2, C4
Distance Education Programs	List of approved online courses in CourseLeaf catalog system.	C4
Distance Education Courses	Data on number of courses and sections delivered via Distance Education.	C4
IPEDS Enrollment by Distance Education	Number of students enrolled in varying distance offerings.	C4
Graduate Council Policies & Membership	Governance body overseeing graduate programs and policies.	C6
Graduate Learning Outcomes Assessment (GLOA) Pilot Report	Evidence of graduate program-level outcomes assessment.	C6
Graduate Learning Outcomes Assessment Template	Standardized reporting tool for documenting outcomes, assessment methods, and improvements.	C6
Graduate Faculty Membership Policies	Defines categories of Graduate Faculty (Full, Associate, Teaching, Special) and associated privileges.	C6
Policies for Graduate Assistantships	Guidelines governing graduate assistantship roles, workload, and expectations.	C6
Statement of Mutual Expectations (Graduate School)	Required agreement outlining roles and mentoring expectations for GAs.	C6
Investments in Graduate Study and Students	Documentation of stipend increases, fellowships, and financial support expansions.	C6
General Education Learning Outcomes and Rubrics	Faculty-developed outcomes and rubrics for assessing GenEd categories.	C5, C8
General Education Summary Chart	Mapping of GenEd learning outcomes to categories and curriculum.	C5
Proposing a General Education or Big Question Course (Faculty Board Guide)	Requirements and review process for GenEd proposals.	C5
NACE Career Readiness Competencies	Framework aligning GenEd outcomes with transferable skills.	C5
Transforming General Education at the University of Maryland	Campus-wide initiative establishing the re-envisioned GenEd program.	C5
Provost's Commission on Learning Outcomes Assessment Annual Report	Report documenting undergraduate program and general education learning outcomes, including inclusive excellence.	C8

## CHAPTER 4

### VIGNETTE: INVESTING IN PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES: BUILDING A COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

#### *RISING STUDENT NEEDS THAT REQUIRED INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE*

Over the last decade, UMD has seen a sustained rise in student mental health needs. During this period, the number of students seeking services from the Counseling Center increased significantly, and reports of anxiety, depression, and suicidality rose sharply. Service requests in Fall 2021, during the pandemic, exceeded the prior three-year average by more than 30%. These trends raised broader questions about capacity, coordination, and access, and how a modern research university supports the well-being that undergirds academic success.

#### *A COORDINATED, CAMPUSWIDE COMMITMENT TO EXPAND AND INTEGRATE CARE*

The growing demand mobilized a comprehensive response across the Counseling Center, the University Health Center, the Division of Student Affairs, academic leadership, and campus safety partners. Guided by a commitment to supporting the whole student, UMD undertook a significant expansion and redesign of its mental health infrastructure.

The Counseling Center increased clinical staffing by nearly 50% and strengthened coordination with primary care and psychiatric services. The university established the Initial Access Team, staffed by dedicated clinicians who provide same-week assessments, thereby reducing wait times and ensuring students can enter care promptly. UMD also expanded prevention programming, outreach initiatives, and training for faculty and staff to better recognize and respond to students in distress.

In parallel, the university implemented a comprehensive system of care to coordinate support for students experiencing acute crises. The Mental Health Emergency Assessment and Response Team now co-responds with campus police during evenings and weekends to provide trauma-informed assessment and reduce unnecessary hospitalizations. Embedded clinicians were placed within selected academic units and living-learning programs, improving access and reducing stigma through proximity and partnership.

#### *A PREVENTION-FOCUSED, INTEGRATED MODEL OF STUDENT WELL-BEING*

These reforms reshaped UMD's approach from a primarily reactive counseling model to an integrated, prevention-focused system grounded in collaboration and clinical best practices. Students now have clearer entry pathways, faster access to assessment, and coordinated follow-up across units. Faculty and staff operate under more defined protocols, and clinical authority is reinforced through structured oversight and cross-divisional alignment. The expanded system strengthened student trust and reinforced a campuswide culture of care and transparency.

#### *CONTINUOUS INVESTMENT IN WELL-BEING ADVANCES THE ACADEMIC MISSION*

The past decade has affirmed that academic success and mental health are inseparable. Supporting student success requires coordinated infrastructure, transparent workflows, and sustained investment in prevention and response. The system developed in response to rising demand now serves as a model for how UMD addresses complex student well-being challenges: through data-informed planning, cross-campus collaboration, and continuous improvement. This learning continues to inform the university's broader student success strategy, strengthening the foundation that enables all students to thrive throughout their Maryland experience.

This example illustrates how UMD meets the expectations of Standard IV by grounding student support in evidence, accountability, and compassion, ensuring that every student is equipped to thrive.

### **UMD'S INSTITUTIONAL PHILOSOPHY AND APPROACH TO STANDARD IV**

At UMD, student success is defined not only by academic achievement but by holistic development and equitable opportunity. Guided by *Fearlessly Forward* and its commitment to Invest in People and Communities, UMD sustains a comprehensive support ecosystem that promotes belonging, well-being, financial stability, and persistence.

As Maryland's flagship, public, land-grant research university, UMD recognizes that an inclusive and responsive student experience is essential to institutional effectiveness and public trust. Student support is viewed as both structural, through advising systems, financial aid programs, wellness resources, and co-curricular opportunities, and cultural, emphasizing accessibility, accountability, and care.

Through continuous assessment and evidence-informed improvement, UMD ensures that its student experience evolves to meet the changing needs of a dynamic student population. This philosophy reflects the university's mission-driven commitment to preparing students for academic success, civic engagement, and lifelong impact.

## STANDARD IV: SUPPORT OF THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

At the UMD, the student experience is central to the mission. UMD embraces its responsibility to support students through every stage of their educational journey. The university's approach to Standard IV reflects a commitment to all students' success that integrates access and affordability, academic engagement, co-curricular enrichment, and personal well-being.

UMD conceptualizes student support as a developmental continuum that begins before admission and extends beyond graduation. Its holistic admissions model prioritizes academic preparation and contextual achievement, while a variety of initiatives expand outreach across the state. Upon enrollment, structured transition programs, including UNIV100 (The Student in the University), UNIV106 (The Transfer Student in the University), HESI310 (Transfer2Terp Learning Community), and the Grand Challenges First-Year Seminar, orient students to academic expectations while reinforcing institutional values of civic engagement and interdisciplinary exploration.

Academic progress is sustained by a coordinated advising infrastructure and mission-aligned policies such as the Student Academic Success–Degree Completion Policy, which ensure timely graduation and informed decision-making. Complementing this framework is a robust network of student support services, led by the Division of Student Affairs, encompassing mental health, housing and food security, financial wellness, cultural enrichment, and leadership development.

Recent initiatives, including the Terrapin Commitment, a need-based financial aid program, as well as the Financial Wellness Center, expanded Counseling Center staffing, and the Dean of Students Office, are among recent initiatives that underscore UMD's recognition that academic achievement is inseparable from social, psychological, and economic well-being. These efforts are anchored in *Fearlessly Forward*, particularly its commitment to Invest in People and Communities.

Data and assessment are central to UMD's approach. Offices such as the Student Success Office, Academic Achievement Programs, and the Teaching and Learning Transformation Center utilize data on retention, persistence, and graduation to shape targeted interventions and foster continuous improvement. Through a cycle of reflection, responsiveness, and renewal, UMD ensures that its student support systems remain comprehensive and adaptive.

This chapter demonstrates how UMD sustains a mission-aligned student experience that is inclusive, developmental, and success-oriented. It details the structures, policies, and practices that enable students to thrive academically, personally, and socially, while illustrating how these efforts are continuously evaluated and modified to promote equity, effectiveness, and alignment with institutional goals.

#### COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

UMD advances its *Fearlessly Forward* commitments, particularly to Invest in People and Communities, and meets MSCHE expectations for Standard IV by sustaining a comprehensive support ecosystem that promotes student access, equity, well-being, and success from admission through graduation and beyond.

#### CRITERION 1: ETHICAL RECRUITMENT • STUDENT SUCCESS • DATA-INFORMED SUPPORT

UMD upholds admissions and retention policies that align with its mission as Maryland's flagship, land-grant, public research university. Consistent with its commitment to excellence, access, and affordability, UMD admits and supports students based on academic preparation, talent, and potential, regardless of income or background (Institutional Mission Statement).

UMD's undergraduate admissions philosophy is grounded in holistic, individualized review, evaluating not only academic achievement but also leadership, service, resilience, and life experiences. This approach identifies students who will thrive in and enrich UMD's diverse learning environment (Admissions Philosophy; Admissions Review Process). The process is fully aligned with the University System of Maryland's policy on undergraduate admissions, and UMD publishes criteria and expectations transparently to applicants and families.

- ▶ **Competitive profile:** UMD now receives nearly 70,000 first-time student applications, with an admit rate below 50% and a yield rate of just over 20%. The fall 2025 first-time entering class demonstrated strong academic preparation, with an average GPA of over 4.4 and the middle 50% of SAT scores ranged from 1410 to 1520 among those submitting scores (Common Data Set; Admissions Data Reports).
- ▶ **Expanding access:** Enrollment data confirms representation from every county in Maryland. In addition to the Terrapin Commitment need-based aid program, programs such as Academic Achievement Programs (AAP), the Incentive Awards Program (IAP), and the Maryland Promise Program (MPP) further broaden access, supporting students from low-income families and, in the case of IAP, students from Baltimore City, and Baltimore, Prince George's, and Montgomery counties.
- ▶ **Targeted outreach:** Through the STARS College Network, UMD recruits students from rural and small-town communities, increasing applicants and admits while distributing more than \$7.6 million in financial support in 2024-25. Outreach also includes Terps on Tour, Maryland Day, and partnerships with community counselors (STARS Mid-Year Report). Complementing these efforts,

programs such as IAP, AAP, Maryland Ascent, and MPP focus on expanding access for students from urban communities and low-income backgrounds across the state.

- ▶ **Transparency in selective programs:** Limited Enrollment Programs (LEPs) publish clear, annually updated admissions outcomes and benchmarks, ensuring fairness while managing capacity constraints in popular programs of study. As part of UMD's access mission, LEPs also provide transparent pathways for transfer students, including those at the Universities at Shady Grove, helping to broaden opportunity for these competitive programs.

Graduate admissions processes are equally rigorous and aligned with the mission. The Graduate School manages standards related to institutional policies (including English proficiency for international students), while departments holistically review applicants for program fit. Over 20,000 graduate student applications are processed annually, supported by centralized digital resources, including the Graduate Handbook.

UMD's admissions policies are mission-driven, transparent, and ethically administered. They ensure that students are admitted and supported based on merit and potential, advancing the university's goals of inclusive excellence and public impact.

#### CRITERION 2: TRANSFER TRANSPARENCY • CREDIT EVALUATION • ALTERNATIVE LEARNING

UMD maintains robust, student-centered policies that promote academic progress, timely degree completion, and equitable support. Policies are regularly reviewed in collaboration with academic colleges, advising units, and student services to ensure transparency, consistency, and responsiveness (COMAR 13B.06.02.03).

#### UNDERGRADUATE ADVISING AND DEGREE COMPLETION POLICIES

- ▶ The Student Academic Success-Degree Completion Policy requires all undergraduates to file a graduation plan in their first semester, identify benchmark courses, and remain on track through regular reviews. Students who fall behind receive targeted interventions and may be advised to consider changing majors. Students changing or adding majors must complete a plan for timely graduation in the new major.
- ▶ Advising is delivered through a decentralized but coordinated model, with colleges managing primary advising and central oversight from the Office of Undergraduate Studies and the Student Success Office. Letters and Sciences serves as a student success-oriented hub for undergraduates who have not declared a major, are transitioning between majors, or are seeking admission to a Limited Enrollment Program (LEP). The advising community further advances best practices and professional development for advisors through workshops, conferences, reading groups, and guest speakers.
- ▶ Technology support for advising includes uAchieve (a real-time degree audit tool) and TerpEngage (Salesforce-based CRM). Since 2021, TerpEngage has logged nearly 300,000 advising notes for over 49,000 students, thereby enhancing coordination and continuity.

#### INSTRUCTION AND ADVISING AT ADDITIONAL LOCATIONS

In addition to the College Park campus, UMD offers upper-division instruction and student support at seven other locations, including two Regional Higher Education Centers — the Universities at Shady Grove and

the University System of Maryland at Southern Maryland (USMSM), where academic programs are offered primarily in years three and four. UMD also delivers instruction at sites in the District of Columbia and other locations, as appropriate to programmatic needs.

- ▶ **Shared governance and program oversight:** Academic programs offered at additional locations are developed, calibrated, approved, and periodically reviewed through the same shared governance and faculty-led curricular processes that apply to programs on the College Park campus, including Senate oversight and institutional academic policies.
- ▶ **Faculty standards and instructional quality:** Faculty teaching at additional locations are held to the same qualification, appointment, and evaluation standards as faculty teaching on the main campus. Courses follow the same learning outcomes, syllabus expectations, credit hour policies, and assessment practices.
- ▶ **Advising and student support services:** Students enrolled at additional locations have access to comparable academic advising, financial aid counseling, disability and accessibility services, mental health resources, and related services through coordinated campus and University System of Maryland services.
- ▶ **Consistent student experience:** These shared standards and coordinated services ensure that academic quality, instructional rigor, and the overall student experience at additional locations are consistent with UMD's institutional expectations.

These practices ensure compliance with MSCHE Requirements of Affiliation 9 and 10 by providing students at all instructional locations with comparable academic quality, learning resources, and support services.

#### STUDENT OUTCOMES

- ▶ Fall 2023 first-year retention rate: 96.2%.
- ▶ Six-year graduation rate (Fall 2018 cohort): 88.6%, with minimal variation between Pell and non-Pell recipients, among the top 10 public doctoral-granting institutions
- ▶ Four-year graduation rate: 75.7%, placing UMD among the top 10 public doctoral institutions (IPEDS).

#### TRANSFER AND PRIOR LEARNING CREDIT

- ▶ Governed by COMAR regulations, UMD strives for equitable and seamless transfer of credits. General education credits are fully transferable, with safeguards in place to prevent duplication (COMAR 13B.06.02.07).
- ▶ UMD enables community college students to take discounted UMD courses before transfer. Distinctively, UMD deploys pre-transfer advisors embedded in Maryland community colleges to guide students on course selection and transfer pathways, and participates in the Aspen Transfer Intensive to strengthen statewide transfer success. In Fall 2024, more than 2,450 new transfer students enrolled; 87.9% were in-state residents, and 32% were first-generation students. On average, transfer students brought 56 credits with a mean GPA of 3.33-3.48, and the six-year graduation rate for the Outcome Measures full-time cohort stands at 83%.
- ▶ Prior Learning Credit allows students to earn up to 60 credits through Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, the College Level Examination Program, A-levels, and military training, subject to departmental standards.

#### GRADUATE ADVISING AND COMPLETION

- ▶ Graduate advising happens at the departmental level, with supplemental support available through the graduate academic counselor, the Graduate Student Life Handbook, and centralized resources within the Graduate School. Several academic units have also implemented 4+1 pathways that allow high-achieving undergraduates to complete a master's degree on an accelerated timeline, with advising structures designed to support students navigating these combined programs.
- ▶ Transfer and revalidated credits are governed by formal policy: up to six credits from external institutions and up to nine credits from UMD non-degree coursework.
- ▶ Graduate outcomes: Approximately 93% of doctoral students stayed for year two; about 80% for year four. Average doctoral time to degree: 6.4 years (median 5.7). Master's average time to degree: 2.0 years (median 1.7). Data is reviewed annually in college-level strategic planning sessions with the provost.

UMD's integrated framework of policies, advising structures, and assessment mechanisms ensures that students receive support throughout their academic journey, from entry to graduation. By combining proactive advising, robust transfer and prior learning policies, and systematic review of outcomes, the university advances its mission to promote timely degree completion and equitable student success.

#### CRITERION 3: RECORDS SECURITY • INFORMATION PRIVACY • FERPA COMPLIANCE

UMD maintains rigorous policies and practices to safeguard student information and ensure effective academic support. These frameworks are grounded in federal and state law, institutional governance structures, and a culture of continuous training and accountability.

#### ETHICAL AND SECURE USE OF STUDENT INFORMATION

UMD's commitment to protecting student data is anchored in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), state law, and institutional policies. Together, these ensure privacy, ethical data use, and secure access.

- ▶ **FERPA compliance:** The Policy and Procedures on the Disclosure of Student Education Records affirm students' rights to access, amend, and consent to the disclosure of records. Staff across advising and registrar offices receive training to ensure compliance with FERPA.
- ▶ **Controlled third-party access:** Students may grant limited access to parents/guardians via the Testudo online student system or formal consent documentation, striking a balance between transparency and privacy.
- ▶ **Data governance:** Institutional data is designated a university asset under the Policy on Institutional Data Management and Policy on Data Management Structure and Procedures, which assign responsibilities to data stewards, managers, and users.
- ▶ **Oversight:** The Data Policy Advisory Committee (DPAC), chaired by the chief data officer, meets monthly to coordinate data governance, approve projects, and provide guidance to data trustees.
- ▶ **Staff expectations:** The DPAC Data Access Expectations agreement requires annual training, prohibits unauthorized research use without IRB approval, and establishes sanctions for misuse (from loss of access to separation).

- ▶ **Access standards:** The Standard on Access to and Use of Data (IT-19) and Practices for Data Sharing provide a secure, role-based framework for accessing institutional data, including learning analytics.
- ▶ **Guidance and compliance:** The Faculty and Staff Resource Guide consolidates federal, state, and campus-level compliance requirements, including FERPA, copyright law, and reporting obligations.
- ▶ **Retention protocols:** The Records Retention Schedule establishes timelines for secure maintenance and destruction of student files, advising notes, and related academic records.

Together, these measures promote data-informed decision-making while safeguarding student privacy and ensuring compliance with legal and ethical standards.

### ACADEMIC ADVISING AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Complementing its data protections, UMD provides advising and academic support tailored to diverse student needs:

- ▶ **A decentralized advising model** supported by central coordination through the Student Success Office and Office of Undergraduate Studies.
- ▶ **Technology-enabled advising** with uAchieve for real-time degree audits and TerpEngage for CRM-based case management, communications, and workflow integration.
- ▶ **Embedded support** for specialized student populations, including student-athletes, international students, veterans, and students with disabilities.
- ▶ **Complementary academic support units** such as the Teaching and Learning Transformation Center, Academic Achievement Programs, and the University Libraries, which provide tutoring, coaching, and skill development.

UMD ensures that student records are managed securely and ethically, in compliance with FERPA and institutional policy. At the same time, the university provides a comprehensive advising and support infrastructure tailored to the needs of its student population. Together, these measures demonstrate UMD's strong alignment with MSCHE expectations for Criterion 3.

#### CRITERION 4: CO-CURRICULAR OVERSIGHT • ADMINISTRATIVE CONSISTENCY • PROGRAM INTEGRITY

UMD provides a comprehensive range of inclusive and accessible student support services tailored to meet the varied academic, co-curricular, wellness, and personal needs of its student population. These services are coordinated primarily through the Division of Student Affairs and Intercollegiate Athletics, with cross-unit collaboration to ensure equity and effectiveness.

### RESIDENT LIFE AND DINING SERVICES

UMD provides on-campus housing and dining services designed to meet the diverse needs of its student population. Residential Life offers a range of housing options with varied room types, amenities, and price points, ensuring accessibility and choice for students with differing financial and personal circumstances. Standard residential services include wireless internet, furnished living spaces, and laundry access. Housing policies, including cost structures, cancellation and appeal processes, and student obligations, are clearly articulated in the 2025–26 *Terms and Conditions*. Students living in traditional residence halls are required

to participate in a dining plan, with structured opportunities to adjust meal plan selections early in each semester to accommodate changing needs.

### MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS SERVICES

UMD supports student mental health and well-being through a coordinated and increasingly integrated system of care, and has amplified this work through a Joint Mental Health Task Force led by the Divisions of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs. The Counseling Center provides drop-in consultations, crisis intervention, and a centralized triage model that streamlines access and ensures timely support. UMD also implemented a program to embed mental health counselors in several colleges and schools, and launched a robust website of mental health and wellness information and resources for students, faculty, and staff. To expand capacity and reduce barriers to care, UMD supplements in-person services with the Uwill teletherapy platform, which offers rapid access to licensed mental health providers. Counseling services are funded through a mandatory student fee, ensuring broad availability and supporting targeted outreach and embedded support for vulnerable student populations.

### STUDENT-ATHLETE SUPPORT

- ▶ Through the Gossett Student-Athlete Center, student-athletes receive:
  - » Individualized academic counseling and learning support.
  - » Access to specialized mental health, medical, and nutritional resources.
  - » Tutoring, performance enhancement programs, sport psychology services, and structured study halls emphasizing accountability.
- ▶ The Athletics Compliance Office ensures adherence to NCAA, Big Ten, and institutional standards.
- ▶ The Athletics Council advises the president, providing transparency and equity in program oversight.

### STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS AND CO-CURRICULAR ENGAGEMENT

- ▶ The Division of Student Affairs supports more than 800 student organizations.
- ▶ Undergraduate and graduate student activity fees are distributed through student-majority committees, guided by formal disbursement policies and procedures.
- ▶ The Office of Student Organizations provides equitable participation opportunities, with periodic audits and strategic reviews to enhance access and impact.

UMD ensures that student support services, including housing, dining, wellness, athletics, and co-curricular engagement, are accessible to all and aligned with student needs. Policies are clearly communicated, costs and appeals processes are transparent, and services are regularly assessed to ensure responsiveness. These structures demonstrate UMD's sustained institutional commitment to student success and well-being in alignment with MSCHE Standard IV.

#### CRITERION 5: THIRD-PARTY REVIEW • SUPPORT SERVICES OVERSIGHT • INSTITUTIONAL CONTROL

UMD ensures the confidentiality, security, and integrity of student records through comprehensive policies, clear governance structures, and rigorous oversight of internal systems and external vendors. These safeguards reflect UMD's commitment to FERPA compliance, responsible data stewardship, and student trust.

### INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES AND COMPLIANCE

- ▶ The UMD Policy and Procedures on the Disclosure of Student Education Records aligns with FERPA, affirming students' rights to access, amend, and consent to disclosures of their education records. The policy defines conditions for disclosure and institutional responsibilities.
- ▶ The University Privacy Policy provides a framework for managing personally identifiable information with respect, equity, and transparency, limiting disclosure to mission-aligned purposes.
- ▶ Staff training, led by the Office of the Registrar and the Office of General Counsel, reinforces compliance expectations across units.

### SYSTEMS, PROCESSES, AND GOVERNANCE

- ▶ Access to records is controlled through secure platforms, such as Testudo (the student portal) and ELMS (the learning management system), which are supported by defined access protocols.
- ▶ The Records Retention Schedule establishes clear guidelines for the retention, destruction, or transfer of student records, including advising notes and academic files, to ensure secure lifecycle management.
- ▶ Data governance is overseen by the Data Policy Advisory Committee (DPAC), chaired by the chief data officer. DPAC reviews data access policies, oversees role-based permissions, and ensures cross-unit accountability.

### VENDOR AND THIRD-PARTY SAFEGUARDS

- ▶ All external vendor relationships, including those involving student data, are governed by the UMD Procurement Policy and delegated purchasing authority protocols.
- ▶ Contracts for software or services that involve access to student data require legal, privacy and security review to ensure alignment with data protection standards.
- ▶ UMD carefully vets specialized vendors, such as Uwill teletherapy (offering secure, licensed mental health services) and Warner Psychology Associates (specializing in sports psychology), both of which comply with relevant state and federal protections.

UMD protects student records and personal information through a layered approach: robust FERPA-aligned policies, secure and role-based system access, clear data governance structures, and rigorous vendor management. Together, these measures ensure that student data is managed ethically, transparently, and securely, in complete alignment with MSCHE Standard IV, Criterion 5.

#### CRITERION 6: SUPPORT ASSESSMENT • OUTCOME METRICS • CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

UMD demonstrates a sustained commitment to the periodic assessment of student support services through coordinated, evidence-based processes in the Division of Student Affairs (DSA) and the Division of Academic Affairs. These processes are anchored in the university's mission and strategic priorities, including the *Forward Together: Division of Student Affairs Strategic Plan*, which envisions a campus "where every student thrives."

### DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS: SYSTEMATIC EVALUATION AND INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE

Assessment is embedded within DSA's six strategic commitments, such as "We Put Students First" and "We Create Caring and Inclusive Communities." Departments align annual goals with division-wide outcomes and document progress through annual reports. Examples include:

- ▶ **Counseling Center:** Expanded clinical staffing and launched the Initial Access Team model to reduce wait times and improve triage, based on utilization data and student feedback.
- ▶ **The Mental Health Task Force:** Recommended enhanced prevention programming, culturally responsive care, and cross-unit collaboration, leading to programmatic adjustments.
- ▶ **RecWell:** Implemented the WISHES well-being survey and tracked student employee learning outcomes, using findings to adjust staffing, programming, and campaigns.
- ▶ **The Stamp Student Union:** Expanded student leadership initiatives (e.g., Stamp Guided Reflection on Work (GROW)), guided by data from student participation and assessment reports.
- ▶ **Fostering Terp Success:** Grew to serve 48 students with histories of foster care or housing insecurity; retention and alumni outcomes demonstrate program effectiveness.

### ACADEMIC AFFAIRS: EMBEDDED AND ITERATIVE ASSESSMENT

Academic support programs use formative and summative measures to evaluate effectiveness:

- ▶ **Academic Coaching:** Launched in 2023-24, with pre- and post-surveys showing 100% of students finding sessions helpful and adopting new strategies (Academic Coaching Annual Report).
- ▶ **Guided Study Sessions:** Structured as the course TLTC310 (Leadership in Collaborative Learning Groups), the sessions are assessed through leader observations, lesson plans, and reflections to inform program design.
- ▶ **Math Success Program:** Evaluated through coaching observations and feedback, emphasizing conceptual understanding and productive struggle.
- ▶ **Academic Achievement Programs (AAP):** Data shows strong outcomes, including a 94% pass rate in math and 86% in English among first-year incoming degree-seeking undergraduates; supplemental instruction participants earn higher grades in courses with a high number of Ds, Ws, and Fs; 93% of students recommend tutoring.

### STRATEGIC INTEGRATION AND INSTITUTIONAL LEARNING

- ▶ For nearly 30 years, the Campus Assessment Working Group has conducted annual surveys of new and junior-level students to gather their experiences, attitudes, and perceptions on a variety of topics. Findings are shared across campus, including with senior leaders, and inform decisions on academic and support services.
- ▶ Institutional planning integrates these unit-level assessments. DSA's *Forward Together* plan emphasizes mapping and evaluating learning experiences to advance equity.
- ▶ The reports.umd.edu portal enables disaggregated analysis by student population and at all curricular levels, supporting equity-focused interventions and continuous improvement.

UMD sustains a culture of systematic and strategic assessment of student support services. Evidence-based evaluation is embedded in unit planning, institutional surveys, and cross-divisional coordination. Both quantitative and qualitative data inform refinements, ensuring that student services remain responsive, equitable, and aligned with the university's mission and MSCHE Standard IV.

#### KEY FINDINGS

UMD provides a comprehensive student support ecosystem that integrates admissions, advising, wellness, and co-curricular engagement. Services are coordinated across divisions, data-informed, and regularly assessed for effectiveness. Strategic initiatives, such as the Terrapin Commitment and the expansion of Counseling Center staffing, demonstrate the university's commitment to student belonging, persistence, and holistic success.

- ▶ **Invest in People and Communities:** Initiatives such as the Terrapin Commitment, the Financial Wellness Center, and expanded Counseling Center staffing are evidence of the university's commitment to equity, belonging, and holistic student success.
- ▶ **Reimagine Learning:** Mission-aligned student lifecycle support emphasizes student potential and inclusive excellence. First-year programs, such as Grand Challenges seminars and living-learning communities, create smooth transitions, and foster a sense of belonging. At the same time, robust advising and academic progress systems (e.g., uAchieve and TerpEngage) support timely graduation and experiential learning.
- ▶ **Partner to Advance the Public Good:** Student Affairs delivers wellness, leadership, and engagement programs that prepare students for civic responsibility and community impact. Co-curricular engagement, leadership development, and Do Good initiatives extend the reach of UMD's public mission.
- ▶ **Take on Humanity's Grand Challenges:** Data-informed continuous improvement, led by units such as the Student Success Office and Academic Achievement Programs, uses disaggregated retention, persistence, and graduation data to identify equity gaps and target interventions. This systematic approach aligns student success infrastructure with UMD's broader responsibility to address the grand challenges of our time and promote inclusive excellence.

UMD sustains a mission-driven, equity-centered student experience that integrates academic, social, and personal dimensions of success. Its data-informed and continuously assessed structures foster student achievement and well-being, aligning with its role as Maryland's flagship public research university.

#### OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH

UMD's student support ecosystem is broad and mission-aligned. A key opportunity moving forward is to further integrate assessment across academic, co-curricular, and well-being supports, enabling a more holistic understanding of how students experience support across their lifecycle. Strengthening cross-unit synthesis of data and student voice would enhance continuous improvement and equity-centered decision-making.

#### CONCLUSION

UMD exceeds the expectations of MSCHE Standard IV through a comprehensive, adaptive, and mission-driven approach to supporting the student experience. From admissions through graduation and beyond, UMD sustains intentional, evidence-based structures that promote academic achievement, personal growth, and equitable access to opportunity.

Key accomplishments demonstrate this strength:

- ▶ The Terrapin Commitment advances affordability and access for Pell-eligible students.
- ▶ Expanded mental health services, wellness initiatives, and co-curricular programming support holistic student well-being.
- ▶ Cross-functional initiatives, such as the Math Success Working Group, Academic Support Collaborative, and Co-Curricular Learning Framework, enhance student persistence and success.
- ▶ Targeted programs for first-generation and transfer students reinforce UMD's commitment to inclusive excellence.

Looking ahead, the university will continue to strengthen integration across services, expand predictive analytics for proactive intervention, and increase visibility and accessibility of resources. Together, these efforts affirm UMD's commitment to continuous improvement and fulfillment of MSCHE Standard IV.

#### EVIDENCE INDEX

EVIDENCE TITLE	DESCRIPTION	CRITERION
Undergraduate Admissions Overview	Policies and procedures governing undergraduate admissions.	C1
Graduate Admissions Policies	Graduate-level admissions standards and procedures.	C1
Admissions and Enrollment Campus Counts Data	Standardized admissions data including acceptance rates and test scores.	C1
Campus Counts UG Student Profile Data (Disaggregated by Race, Gender, Residency)	Demographic breakdowns of admitted and enrolled students.	C1
Terrapin Commitment Program Overview	Institutional initiative closing tuition gaps for Pell-eligible Maryland students.	C1, C2
Freshmen Connection Program Materials	Documentation of early start and transition support program.	C1, C2
Math Success Program Annual Report	Includes information about staffing and participation in the TLTC's Math Success Program.	C2
Student Success Office Resources Website	Coordination of advising and success initiatives across units.	C2, C3
CAWG Survey Report (Sample)	Student experience and engagement data, including advising and support perceptions.	C6
Retention and Persistence Reports from IRPA	Trends in retention and persistence by cohort and subgroups.	C2, C3

Stop-out and Re-enrollment Reports	IRPA reports related to students who leave without a degree.	C2, C3
Federal and State Aid Participation Reports (IPEDS)	Data on participation in federal and state aid programs.	C1, C2
Stamp Student Union Annual Report	Overview of co-curricular programming, engagement, and outcomes at the student union.	C4
Co-Curricular Learning Framework	Framework for assessing co-curricular student learning outcomes.	C4
RecWell Annual Report	Overview of programming, engagement, and outcomes demonstrating alignment with DSA's strategic commitments.	C2, C5
Counseling Center & Wellness Expansion Reports	Utilization data and service expansion in mental health and wellness.	C5
Policy on Institutional Data Management	Outlines policy for managing Institutional Data.	C3
Veteran and Military Student Services Overview	Support services for student veterans and families.	C5
Maryland Global Year in Review Website	Programs supporting international student adjustment.	C5
Academic Achievement Programs Annual Report	Federal TRIO programs performance and outcomes including TRIO and McNair Scholars.	C2, C5
Career Center Annual Report	Employment outcomes for graduating students.	C4
Internship Participation	Self-reported data on employment outcomes, including internship experiences, disaggregated by college.	C4
Student Conduct and Community Standards Report	Annual data on student accountability cases.	C6



## CHAPTER 5

### VIGNETTE: STRENGTHENING LEARNING THROUGH ASSESSMENT-INFORMED IMPROVEMENT AT THE COURSE, PROGRAM, AND INSTITUTIONAL LEVELS

#### ASSESSMENTS REVEALED OPPORTUNITIES FOR INNOVATION IN STUDENT LEARNING

Across UMD, periodic assessment cycles surfaced areas where students were not fully achieving intended learning outcomes, sometimes in ways that were not immediately visible in everyday instruction. At the course and program levels, faculty in the Institute of Applied Agriculture (IAA) discovered through capstone assessments that, while students spoke confidently and demonstrated content mastery, their visual communication skills fell short of professional expectations. At the university level, the 2022 periodic review of College Park Scholars, a multiprogram living-learning community, identified deeper structural challenges, including budget constraints, uneven staffing, and pandemic-related strain, that limited its programs' ability to sustain high-quality, equity-focused learning experiences.

These findings from unit-based assessment processes allowed the campus to leverage its approach to intentional assessment, resource allocation, and structures that allow programs to act on what the evidence reveals.

#### REDESIGNING INSTRUCTION AND REBUILDING CAPACITY TO SUPPORT LEARNING

In the IAA, faculty used assessment data to pinpoint a hidden barrier: Instruction emphasized oral delivery but left the design of professional-quality slides implicit. To close this gap, instructors created modules on slide design, integrated peer review of visuals, and added rubric components to evaluate presentation aids. Students now submit slides in advance, creating a scaffolded process that reinforces learning across multiple courses.

At the university level, the College Park Scholars review prompted a collaborative response from the Provost's Office and sponsoring deans. Recognizing that staffing disparities hindered coherent, mission-aligned learning, they invested in stabilizing the College Park Scholars infrastructure, converting key positions to full-time roles and ensuring more equitable support across programs such as Public Leadership; Environment, Technology and Economy; Global Public Health; and Media, Self and Society. With strengthened capacity, College Park Scholars' central and program faculty began defining clear program-level learning outcomes, refining assessment plans, and building systematic, measurable approaches to evaluating learning across communities.

Both efforts reflected the *Fearlessly Forward* commitment to Reimagine Learning by aligning pedagogy, resources, and structures with today's learners' needs.

#### IMPROVED STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND STRENGTHENED EDUCATIONAL COHERENCE

The results emerged quickly. In IAA, students' visual presentations became more sophisticated, professional, and aligned with workplace expectations, giving graduates a competitive edge. In College Park Scholars, stabilizing staffing allowed programs to move from short-term crisis management to long-term curricular and assessment innovation. Programs now use disaggregated data on student participation, retention, and completion to refine educational practices and ensure equitable, high-quality experiences across communities.

These improvements demonstrate the power of coordinated assessment: When learning outcomes are clearly articulated, measured, and acted upon, both student performance and program coherence improve.

#### EFFECTIVE ASSESSMENT REQUIRES CAPACITY, CLARITY, AND INTENTIONAL REDESIGN

Together, the IAA and College Park Scholars examples illustrate how assessment operates at different scales within the institution – and how evidence-based improvement depends on the capacity to respond. At the course level, assessment uncovered an instructional blind spot and led to targeted redesign. At the program and university levels, assessment revealed structural barriers that required investment and cross-unit collaboration. Across contexts, UMD learned that educational effectiveness emerges when outcomes are explicit, assessment is meaningful, and instructors and programs have the resources needed to translate evidence into action.

These examples affirm UMD's fulfillment of Standard V by showing how clearly articulated outcomes, systematic assessment, and intentional redesign lead to measurable gains in student learning and institutional effectiveness.

### UMD'S INSTITUTIONAL PHILOSOPHY AND APPROACH TO STANDARD V

As Maryland's flagship, land-grant, and public research university, UMD approaches educational effectiveness assessment as a mission-critical practice that ensures academic quality, equity, and continuous improvement. Assessment is not viewed as a compliance requirement, but rather as a catalyst for advancing inclusive excellence and enhancing student success.

UMD embeds a culture of ongoing assessment across academic, co-curricular, and student support domains. Through the Reimagine Learning commitment of *Fearlessly Forward*, assessment is framed as a tool for innovation and public good, linking evidence about student learning to the university's broader goals. Faculty, staff, and leadership share responsibility for using assessment results to refine teaching, enhance curricula, and guide institutional planning.

Central to this philosophy is a commitment to inquiry centered on belongingness: Disaggregated data analyses, cross-unit collaboration, and intentional alignment with strategic priorities ensure that evaluation efforts are actionable, transparent, and focused on student achievement. By integrating assessment into decision-making at every level, UMD sustains a culture where evidence informs practice and continuous improvement remains at the heart of the student experience.

## STANDARD V: EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS ASSESSMENT

UMD approaches Standard V with the conviction that assessing educational effectiveness is both a foundational responsibility and a strategic opportunity. UMD integrates assessment into every stage of the learning process, using it as a tool for accountability, equity, and continuous improvement.

UMD's assessment framework aligns with the university's mission and the priorities of *Fearlessly Forward*: Reimagine Learning, Take on Humanity's Grand Challenges, Invest in People and Communities, and Partner to Advance the Public Good. Institution-level learning goals emphasize critical competencies, including analytical reasoning, communication, quantitative and scientific reasoning, information literacy, technological fluency, ethical decision-making, and intercultural competence. These competencies are embedded across general education, majors, graduate programs, and co-curricular learning environments.

Programs define discipline-specific outcomes, participate in structured assessment cycles, and use findings to strengthen curriculum, pedagogy, and student support. Recent initiatives have expanded the framework to center inclusive excellence, institutionalized graduate assessment through the Graduate Learning Outcomes Assessment Project, and codified co-curricular learning outcomes through the Co-Curricular Learning

Domains and the Maryland Leadership Development Framework. Supported by the Teaching and Learning Transformation Center, the Graduate School, and academic colleges, assessment results are systematically used to guide faculty development, inform planning, and close equity gaps, ensuring that evidence of learning drives institutional improvement and student success.

#### COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

UMD advances its *Fearlessly Forward* commitments, particularly Reimagine Learning, and meets MSCHE expectations for Standard V by embedding systematic and equity-minded assessment across academic and co-curricular domains, and by using evidence of learning to inform teaching, curricula, planning, and continuous improvement.

#### CRITERION 1: LEARNING OUTCOMES • INSTITUTIONAL ALIGNMENT • PROGRAM COHERENCE

UMD maintains a comprehensive framework for defining and disseminating student learning outcomes across undergraduate, graduate, and co-curricular programs. This framework aligns with the university's mission and *Fearlessly Forward* commitments, reflecting UMD's emphasis on academic excellence, student success, and equity.

#### INSTITUTIONAL LEARNING GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS

At the institutional level, UMD has articulated learning goals that establish expectations for critical reasoning, communication, quantitative and scientific reasoning, information literacy, technological fluency, ethical decision-making, and intercultural competence. These goals are embedded in the general education curriculum, where courses must demonstrate alignment with standardized rubrics and are published publicly to guide both academic and co-curricular learning.

#### PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the program level, all academic units define and regularly update discipline-specific outcomes through the Programs, Curricula, and Courses process. Proposals for new programs or courses must include measurable outcomes, curriculum maps, and alignment with institutional goals. For example, the Department of Psychology's curriculum map illustrates progression from foundational knowledge to advanced application across multiple domains.

Graduate programs follow a parallel structure. The Graduate Learning Outcomes Assessment process requires doctoral programs to submit reports on targeted outcomes, assessment methods, and improvement strategies every three years, ensuring consistency and accountability across disciplines.

Living-learning and co-curricular programs also define and share clear learning outcomes. For instance, the University Honors program emphasizes belonging, navigation, self-direction, and contribution, while the Division of Student Affairs organizes outcomes around four domains: Engage Inquisitively, Practice Compassion, Act with Courage, and Work for Justice. Programs such as College Park Scholars demonstrate intentional integration of outcomes across seminars, courses, practica, and co-curricular experiences, reinforced by regular assessment cycles and quadrennial reviews.

Through these coordinated structures, UMD ensures that learning outcomes are clearly defined, broadly disseminated, and intentionally embedded across all learning environments, regardless of delivery mode or academic level.

#### CRITERION 2: SYSTEMATIC ASSESSMENT • DATA COLLECTION • STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATION

UMD employs a comprehensive, multitiered system of student learning outcomes assessment that is organized, systematic, and embedded across academic and co-curricular programs. This system aligns with institutional goals and supports continuous improvement in teaching, learning, and institutional effectiveness.

#### UNDERGRADUATE LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT

Undergraduate programs participate in an annual Learning Outcomes Assessment (LOA) cycle, requiring each program to assess at least one outcome annually and complete a full cycle within four years. Reports are submitted using standardized templates, evaluated with common rubrics, and reviewed by the Provost's Commission on Learning Outcomes Assessment, which includes representatives from colleges, the Office of Undergraduate Studies (UGST), the Teaching and Learning Transformation Center (TLTC), the Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Assessment (IRPA), and the University Libraries. Results are synthesized in campuswide summaries such as the 2021 Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Report and the FY24 Report of the Provost's Commission.

#### GRADUATE LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT

Graduate programs are evaluated through the Graduate Learning Outcomes Assessment, launched in 2022, which requires doctoral programs to report on targeted outcomes every three years. Results inform program-level improvements and Graduate School quality assurance processes. For example, the Ph.D. program in behavioral and community health revised its prerequisite methods courses after a rubric-based review of dissertation proposals. At the same time, the Department of Geographical Sciences adjusted its advising structures following dissertation progress assessments.

#### CO-CURRICULAR AND LIVING-LEARNING PROGRAMS

Co-curricular and living-learning programs are integrated into this system through quadrennial reviews and assessment cycles. Programs such as FIRE and BioFIRE use surveys, reflections, and student interviews to refine curricula and supports; College Park Scholars regularly revises seminars and experiential practica based on outcome data; and Student Affairs employs a four-year departmental review process, guided by the division's *Forward Together* strategic plan, to ensure alignment with divisional learning domains.

Together, these processes demonstrate UMD's mature, evidence-based assessment infrastructure, ensuring that student learning outcomes are measured systematically and consistently across the institution and that assessment results are used to inform change when needed.

#### CRITERION 3: DISAGGREGATED RESULTS • DATA-INFORMED • CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

UMD ensures that assessment produces credible evidence of student achievement and that results are widely communicated to stakeholders. Assessment data is used to demonstrate learning gains, identify gaps, and inform targeted interventions at the course, program, and institutional levels.

Examples of evidence include:

- ▶ In the **Department of Sociology**, pre- and post-tests in SOCY 201 showed significant gains in research design proficiency, prompting expanded use of this model across foundational courses.

- ▶ In the **Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice**, disaggregated analysis of research paper assessments revealed that first-year students outperformed transfer students, leading to advising and curricular adjustments in prerequisite math coursework.
- ▶ In the **School of Public Policy**, results highlighted inconsistencies across course sections, which led to the creation of resource guides and the clarification of competencies.
- ▶ The **Department of Psychology's curriculum map** demonstrates scaffolded learning outcomes from introductory knowledge to advanced multicultural competence.

Co-curricular programs likewise document evidence of student learning. The Incentive Awards Program utilizes longitudinal data to track retention and graduation rates, demonstrating that participants outperform their comparison cohorts. Break Through Tech tracks student reflections, mentor feedback, and placement outcomes, using these data to design new courses and workshops that strengthen belonging and equity in computing.

Assessment results inform accreditation reviews, guide resource and curricular decisions, and support faculty development. This transparency ensures that evidence of learning achievement contributes to planning, resource allocation, and continuous improvement at every level.

#### CRITERION 4: ASSESSMENT OVERSIGHT • THIRD-PARTY REVIEW • INSTITUTIONAL APPROVAL

At UMD, student learning assessment results are systematically integrated into institutional planning, strategic priority-setting, and resource allocation. This ensures that assessment of student learning not only evaluates instructional effectiveness but also drives investment in programs, curricula, and student support services.

Colleges incorporate assessment findings into their annual strategic planning reports, which are reviewed at the college and university levels to identify priorities and funding needs. For example, the School of Public Health and the College of Arts and Humanities have used assessment data in planning meetings to refine student support strategies and curricular design. Departments also draw directly on results to guide resource decisions. The School of Public Policy, for example, used evidence from course-level assessments to introduce instructional resource guides, align competencies across sections, and inform advising and scheduling decisions.

Co-curricular and living-learning programs similarly use assessment results to shape institutional support. The FIRE program discontinued or redesigned underperforming research streams to align with learning outcomes. College Park Scholars revised seminars and added modules based on feedback from a four-year review. Assessment results are also embedded in the university's budget processes. Units are expected to connect funding requests to assessment evidence and *Fearlessly Forward* priorities. In FY25, proposals in the Office of Undergraduate Studies and Division of Student Affairs were prioritized due to identified links between assessment data, equity goals, and student success outcomes.

Through these processes, UMD demonstrates that assessment is a driver of institutional improvement, ensuring that planning, decision-making, and resource allocation are informed by credible evidence of student learning.

#### CRITERION 5: ASSESSMENT EVALUATION • PROCESS EFFECTIVENESS • EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT

UMD maintains a structured, participatory, and iterative system for documenting and improving its assessment practices. Undergraduate assessment templates are regularly updated to reflect best practices, with the most recent updates adding prompts on inclusive excellence, sampling methods, and the role of indirect evidence and faculty dialogue in continuous improvement. These changes are developed in consultation with college coordinators and informed by faculty input gathered through onboarding and listening sessions.

Programs receive detailed feedback from review teams using a shared LOA scoring rubric, which evaluates clarity of outcomes, use of results, robustness of methods, and faculty engagement. A reliability study conducted by IRPA confirmed the rubric's consistency across reviewers.

Improving the assessment process is also a focus of faculty and staff development. UGST and the TLTC offer norming sessions, consultations, and resource hubs to support effective assessment design and implementation. The Graduate School provides training and planning tools for assessing graduate programs. At the same time, the Division of Student Affairs utilizes cyclical program reviews and meta-assessment guidelines to evaluate learning strategies.

Living-learning and special undergraduate programs participate in quadrennial reviews that include program outcomes, assessment strategies, and the use of evidence. The Provost's Committee on Living-Learning and Special Programs oversees this process, ensuring consistency, faculty engagement, and a culture of continuous improvement across units.

In summary, UMD's assessment system is well-documented, peer-reviewed, and continually refined. Through standard templates, rigorous feedback processes, and intentional faculty development, the university ensures the quality of educational experiences and the integrity of the assessment process itself.

#### KEY FINDINGS

UMD has established a mature, mission-aligned culture of assessment that links evidence of student learning to teaching, curricula, and planning. Processes are systematic and inclusive, with faculty, staff, and leadership engaged in continuous improvement. The institution demonstrates how assessment catalyzes innovation, equity-minded practice, and institutional effectiveness.

- ▶ **Reimagine Learning:** A balanced approach, centralized coordination through institution-wide competencies, and decentralized program-level innovation, empowers faculty to design meaningful, discipline-specific assessments and fosters innovation in pedagogy.
- ▶ **Invest in People and Communities:** UMD trains and engages faculty, staff, and leadership in continuous improvement through a robust assessment cycle. Disaggregated data is used to identify achievement gaps by first-generation status and family income level, leading to targeted advising, redesigns of gateway courses, and inclusive pedagogical strategies that strengthen equity and belonging.
- ▶ **Partner to Advance the Public Good:** Assessment results routinely inform institutional planning, program design, and faculty development. Initiatives such as the Graduate Learning Outcomes Assessment Project and TerrapinSTRONG demonstrate how assessment advances civic engagement, leadership development, and co-curricular learning in service of the public good.

- ▶ **Take on Humanity’s Grand Challenges:** UMD’s assessment culture demonstrates responsiveness to emerging priorities, such as interdisciplinary inquiry and societal needs. Evidence-based improvements in curriculum and pedagogy position graduates to address pressing global and societal challenges.

**OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH**

An opportunity exists to more consistently connect assessment results to institutional priorities and documented change, particularly in demonstrating how learning outcomes prepare students to address complex societal challenges. While assessment practices are strong, clearer articulation of how results inform curricular redesign, equity interventions, and innovation would further strengthen evidence of institutional learning and impact.

**CONCLUSION**

UMD exceeds the expectations of MSCHE Standard V through a comprehensive, mission-aligned system of assessment that advances student learning, equity, and institutional improvement. Assessment at UMD is embedded across academic and co-curricular domains. It is characterized by coherence, broad faculty and staff engagement, and the sustained use of evidence to inform planning and practice.

Key accomplishments illustrate this maturity:

- ▶ Undergraduate programs have embedded inclusive excellence into their learning outcomes, supported by disaggregated data that informs curricular innovation.
- ▶ The Graduate Learning Outcomes Assessment Project institutionalizes the evaluation of graduate-level learning across disciplines.
- ▶ The Provost’s Commission on Learning Outcomes Assessment and the Teaching and Learning Transformation Center foster faculty-driven innovation in pedagogy and curriculum design.

These practices confirm that assessment is not a compliance exercise but a strategic tool for advancing academic quality and student success. By expanding the reach and visibility of assessment findings, UMD reinforces its position as a national leader in evidence-informed teaching and learning. Together, these accomplishments demonstrate UMD’s commitment to continuous improvement and fulfillment of MSCHE Standard V.

**EVIDENCE INDEX**

EVIDENCE TITLE	DESCRIPTION	CRITERION
Learning Outcomes Assessment Brief Guide	Institution-wide expectations and methodology for learning assessment.	C1
General Education Assessment Overview	Process for GenEd learning outcomes assessment.	C1, C2
Rubrics for General Education Assessment	Standard rubrics used for evaluating GenEd learning objectives.	C1

Department of Sociology Learning Outcomes Assessment Report	Representative sample of program-level assessment submissions.	C1, C2
Department of Psychology Curriculum Map	Unit-level plans aligning program outcomes to goals.	C1, C3
Learning Outcomes Mapping Document	Visual maps aligning courses to program and institutional goals.	C1
Graduate Learning Outcomes Assessment Project (GLOAP) Reports (Sample 1)	Institutional initiative assessing graduate-level outcomes.	C2
Graduate Learning Outcomes Assessment Project (GLOAP) Reports (Sample 2)	Institutional initiative assessing graduate-level outcomes.	C2
Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice Learning Outcomes Assessment Report	Analyses showing equity gaps and course redesign impacts.	C2, C3
Provost’s Commission on Learning Outcomes Assessment Reports	Governance body reports on assessment priorities and outcomes.	C2, C3
School of Public Policy Learning Outcomes Assessment Report	Analysis highlighting inconsistencies across course sections and course resource impacts.	C3
TLTC LOA Asynchronous Course Outline	Course outline for online workshops supporting faculty skill-building in assessment.	C3
LOA Onboarding Session Slide Deck	Slide deck used to train program contacts on the importance of the LOA process.	C3, C5
College of Arts and Humanities Strategic Planning Slide Deck	Example of a college’s use of data for summer planning meetings.	C4
School of Public Health Strategic Planning Slide Deck	Example of a college’s use of data for summer planning meetings.	C4
Co-Curricular Learning Framework	Framework guiding assessment of non-academic learning.	C5
Co-Curricular Program Assessment Report (FIRE)	Reports assessing outcomes of co-curricular programs.	C4
Co-Curricular Program Assessment Report (College Park Scholars)	Reports assessing outcomes of co-curricular programs.	C4
gradSERU Survey Results	Graduate student surveys linked to learning and co-curricular outcomes.	C5
CAWG Report - Juniors’ and Seniors’ Reflections on the Value of Their UMD Education	Findings on student perceptions of learning and preparation.	C2, C5
Post-Graduation Outcomes Report	Data on employment, graduate/professional school outcomes.	C2, C5

## CHAPTER 6

### VIGNETTE: INVESTING IN PEOPLE, CULTURE, AND SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH YAHENTAMITSI DINING HALL

#### *A HIGH-STAKES CAPITAL PROJECT AT RISK*

In 2020, the pandemic introduced sudden financial instability across higher education. As liquidity tightened, the University System of Maryland (USM) signaled that UMD's first new dining hall in more than 50 years, a project central to the emerging Heritage Community, might need to be paused. The facility relied on \$25 million in prior-year cash reserves, resources urgently needed to stabilize operations during the crisis. Without an alternative, years of planning and community engagement faced indefinite delay.

#### *COLLABORATIVE STEWARDSHIP TO SUSTAIN MISSION-CRITICAL PRIORITIES*

UMD's Budget Advisory Committee (BAC), the institution's central forum for resource planning and fiscal stewardship, worked closely with USM to develop a financially viable alternative. The BAC proposed shifting from cash to debt financing, extending the repayment horizon from 20 to 30 years, and adding early payoff flexibility. This strategy preserved institutional liquidity while enabling construction to continue, modeling the adaptive, evidence-informed resource planning emphasized in Standard V.

#### *A FACILITY SHAPED BY COMMUNITY VALUES AND CULTURAL RECOGNITION*

Once financial stability was secured, attention turned to designing a dining hall that embodied UMD's values of belonging, sustainability, and academic integration. Students, faculty, and staff participated in extensive engagement sessions to shape the culinary experience and physical design. UMD invited elders of the regional Piscataway tribe, on whose ancestral land the university was built, to lead the naming and cultural framing of the space, resulting in Yahentamitsi, meaning "a place to go to eat" in the Algonquin language. The interior design elements honor the tribe, reinforcing the Heritage Community's commitment to place and belonging.

The completed facility is more than a dining hall. It integrates sustainable design, celebrates Indigenous history through interior storytelling, and responds to evolving student preferences. The ground floor includes active-learning classrooms and collaborative spaces for the University Honors program, increasing access to innovative, centrally located academic environments and strengthening connections between learning and residential life.

#### *STEWARDSHIP THAT ADVANCES MISSION, CULTURE, AND COMMUNITY WELL-BEING*

The Yahentamitsi project demonstrated that even in periods of profound uncertainty, UMD can advance its mission by pairing creative financial strategy, broad stakeholder engagement, and values-driven planning. The experience reinforced the importance of transparent, collaborative decision-making structures, like the BAC, and highlighted how capital projects can be powerful expressions of institutional identity. Yahentamitsi now serves as a model for mission-aligned resource allocation: a project that weathered financial disruption while advancing cultural recognition, academic excellence, sustainability, and community well-being.

This example demonstrates UMD's commitment to Standard VI by showing how thoughtful planning, fiscal adaptability, and inclusive design strengthen the institution's capacity to advance its mission, even in times of uncertainty.

### **UMD'S INSTITUTIONAL PHILOSOPHY AND APPROACH TO STANDARD VI**

As Maryland's flagship, land-grant, and public research university, UMD approaches planning, resources, and institutional improvement as mission-driven, equity-conscious, and public-serving functions. UMD's philosophy emphasizes that effective planning is both structural and cultural: structures that integrate financial, human, and physical resources, and a culture of inclusive participation, transparency, and accountability.

Through *Fearlessly Forward: In Pursuit of Excellence and Impact for the Public Good*, UMD advances planning and resource strategies aligned with four commitments: Reimagine Learning, Take on Humanity's Grand Challenges, Invest in People and Communities, and Partner to Advance the Public Good. These commitments establish a university-wide framework that links mission, goals, and resource decisions, ensuring that institutional improvement remains systematic and sustainable.

UMD's approach emphasizes that planning is iterative, data-informed, and participatory. Colleges, schools, and divisions develop unit-level priorities and budgets, which are coordinated centrally by the president, provost, and chief financial officer to ensure alignment with institutional priorities. This hybrid model, decentralized planning with centralized oversight, enables collaboration, promotes fiscal responsibility, and fosters adaptability in a rapidly changing higher education environment.

## **STANDARD VI: PLANNING, RESOURCES, AND INSTITUTIONAL IMPROVEMENT**

At UMD, planning, budgeting, and institutional improvement are interdependent processes that sustain mission fulfillment and long-term resilience. Planning is grounded in evidence, inclusive engagement, and scenario analysis, aligning strategic priorities with financial, human, and physical resources.

As a public university, UMD operates within a budget framework shaped by state appropriations from the governor and General Assembly, tuition and fee approval by the USM Board of Regents, capital funding through both state appropriation and USM-issued debt, research funding, and philanthropy. Within these structures, UMD employs an all-funds budgeting model and multiyear financial planning to ensure transparent allocation and long-term sustainability.

UMD's role as a land-grant institution further extends to the University of Maryland Extension, supported by federal, state, and county funding, and partnered with the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, the state's 1890 land-grant institution. This partnership exemplifies UMD's public mission by delivering educational and economic impact across the state.

Institutional improvement is operationalized through annual updates from colleges and divisions, systematic assessment of financial and enrollment trends, and comprehensive capital and facilities planning. These processes ensure that resources are deployed equitably, strategically, and in service to student success, research excellence, and public engagement.

Collectively, UMD fulfills MSCHE Standard VI through integrated and evidence-based planning systems that link mission, goals, and resources. This approach enables the university to advance its strategic commitments, sustain institutional excellence, and respond with agility to emerging challenges and opportunities in the service of the public good.

**COMPLIANCE STATEMENT**

UMD advances its *Fearlessly Forward* commitments, particularly Invest in People and Communities and Partner to Advance the Public Good, and meets MSCHE expectations for Standard VI by aligning transparent, participatory planning and resource allocation with institutional goals, priorities, and continuous improvement.

**CRITERION 1: GOAL ALIGNMENT • ASSESSMENT-INFORMED PLANNING • RESOURCE LINKAGE**

UMD conducts mission-driven, inclusive, and evidence-based planning, reflecting its role as Maryland's flagship, public, land-grant research university. The *Fearlessly Forward* strategic plan, shaped through extensive stakeholder engagement, defines four commitments — Reimagine Learning, Take on Humanity's Grand Challenges, Invest in People and Communities, and Partner to Advance the Public Good — that guide institutional priorities. Progress is tracked through annual reports and a public dashboard, reinforcing transparency and accountability.

Planning integrates academic, financial, and capital priorities. An all-funds budgeting model aligns resources with strategic goals, and the new Adaptive Planning software (launching FY26) will enable real-time forecasting at the unit level. Shared governance bodies, including the BAC, Academic Planning Advisory Committee (APAC), and Capital, Infrastructure, and Technology Committee (CITC), provide input on budgets, academic initiatives, and long-term investments.

Facilities and capital planning follow a similar model, linking major projects and deferred maintenance strategies to the University System of Maryland (USM) and state-level expectations. Colleges and divisions submit annual updates and mid-cycle reviews that assess alignment, efficiency, and impact on student success and equity.

Through these inclusive and transparent systems, UMD ensures that planning is coordinated across levels, grounded in its mission, and supported by evidence for continuous improvement.

**CRITERION 2: DOCUMENTED PROCESSES • ACCESS • COMMUNICATION**

UMD's institutional goals are clearly defined, documented, and communicated through the *Fearlessly Forward* strategic plan. Developed through environmental scanning and broad stakeholder engagement, these commitments guide decision-making, resource allocation, and program development.

Strategic goals are embedded across university functions. Colleges, schools, and divisions align unit-level plans and budget submissions with institutional priorities. Examples include the \$30 million Grand Challenges Grants Program, which funds research with measurable societal impact, as well as reforms to general education and experiential learning that advance inclusive excellence.

Goals are operationalized through action plans, performance indicators, and multiyear financial and capital planning. Priorities such as strengthening graduate education, addressing deferred maintenance, and advancing IT modernization are embedded in recurring planning cycles and reviewed through data-informed processes.

UMD's institutional goals are mission-driven and systematically integrated across planning processes, ensuring coherence, accountability, and sustainability.

**CRITERION 3: INTEGRATED PLANNING • STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT FOCUS • INSTITUTIONAL IMPROVEMENT**

UMD integrates institutional effectiveness measures and student learning assessment directly into planning and budgeting decisions. Annual allocation processes consider assessment results, community input, and progress toward the commitments of *Fearlessly Forward*.

Recent examples include the Terrapin Commitment, launched in response to affordability data and initially reducing unmet financial need for more than 5,400 students; the adoption of discipline-specific learning outcomes across nearly all programs, which prompted expanded instructional support and targeted advising; and the expansion of Teaching Innovation Grants in response to student feedback and new opportunities in teaching and learning.

Resource allocation is coordinated through an all-funds budgeting model overseen by the Provost's Office and BAC, with accountability reinforced through annual reports.

Through these mechanisms, UMD ensures that affordability and learning assessment drive investment decisions, strengthening academic quality and student success.

**CRITERION 4: PLANNING • RESOURCE SUFFICIENCY • MISSION ALIGNMENT**

UMD demonstrates that its fiscal and human resources are sufficient, strategically aligned, and sustainably managed to advance institutional priorities. The university operates a \$2.97 billion enterprise, supported by state appropriations, tuition and fees, research funding, and philanthropy, with an all-funds budgeting model that ensures coordinated investments in academic excellence, research innovation, and student success.

Human capital is central to UMD's strength. In Fall 2024, the university employed nearly 11,000 personnel, including over 4,500 faculty and 6,400 staff. Strategic workforce initiatives, such as professional development, family care benefits, and supervisory training, support recruitment, retention, and employee success. Many of these initiatives grew out of feedback from a variety of formal and informal assessments. For example, the Terrapin Innovation and MVP Impact awards for staff are the result of feedback received during the strategic plan implementation process.

Financial resources are deployed to advance mission-driven priorities such as the Terrapin Commitment, funded with up to \$20 million annually, and the \$30 million invested in Grand Challenges Grants. Targeted salary adjustments for faculty and staff and major facility investments illustrate UMD's commitment to equity, competitiveness, and long-term capacity.

Challenges remain, including state appropriations that lag rising costs, tuition dependency, and deferred maintenance backlogs. UMD addresses these pressures through revenue diversification, philanthropy, efficiency measures, and strategic prioritization to sustain resilience and capacity.

Through transparent budgeting, inclusive workforce planning, and equity-focused investments, UMD ensures that its fiscal and human resources are sufficient, strategically aligned, and effectively managed to support institutional effectiveness and student success.

**CRITERION 5: MISSION-ALIGNED BUDGETING • FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY • RISK ASSESSMENT**

UMD's decision-making framework is structured, transparent, and accountable, with clearly defined responsibilities across central leadership, colleges, and departments. Authority is distributed through a hybrid model that balances institutional oversight with unit-level autonomy, ensuring alignment with mission-driven priorities (*Fearlessly Forward*).

The president and provost oversee planning and resource allocation. Instruction, research, and public service account for more than half of annual expenditures, reflecting UMD's mission focus.

Organizational charts, updated annually, clarify reporting lines and decision-making responsibilities across central administration, colleges, and divisions, reinforcing accountability and transparency. Accountability is reinforced through systematic reviews. The president undergoes annual evaluation by the USM chancellor; vice presidents, deans, and chairs are subject to regular performance and five-year leadership reviews that explicitly assess progress toward institutional goals.

Academic program development and capital planning follow structured, consultative processes. New programs undergo faculty governance and administrative review before approval by the USM Board of Regents and the Maryland Higher Education Commission, ensuring quality and alignment. Major capital projects are prioritized through cross-divisional consultation, supported by state, system, and philanthropic funding.

Shared governance provides a final layer of accountability. The University Senate, Graduate Council, and advisory committees such as the BAC and CITC ensure broad input into major decisions and sustain transparency across the institution.

UMD fulfills Criterion 5 through an interlocking system of authority, review, and shared governance that ensures decision-making is transparent, evidence-based, and strategically aligned with institutional priorities.

**CRITERION 6: RESOURCE ADEQUACY • INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT • OPERATIONAL CAPACITY**

UMD links strategic planning directly to institutional assessment, ensuring that improvement efforts are measurable and mission-driven. Annual progress reports evaluate outcomes against defined targets, with initiatives such as curriculum modernization and graduate education enhancements demonstrating impact on student outcomes (*Fearlessly Forward* Progress Reports).

Financial and resource planning reinforce this alignment. In FY22, 33.1% of core expenses supported instruction and 29.8% supported research (IPEDES), reflecting the mission's emphasis on teaching and discovery. Investments in advising, student services, and digital learning capacity demonstrate how strategic planning enhances student success.

Planning occurs across all levels of the university. Colleges and divisions submit annual strategic and budgetary updates, reviewed by the provost and supported by data, to inform resource allocation decisions and priority setting. Infrastructure and new program proposals follow similar evidence-based processes tied to enrollment demand, workforce needs, and funding capacity.

Transparent data systems further support effectiveness. Dashboards and analytics maintained in the central reports.umd.edu platform enable leaders to monitor performance in real time and adjust proactively. The platform allows for campus-wide usage of frozen, analytic data as well as reports that support operations

utilizing up-to-date information. In addition, dashboards are used by the Provost's Office and the CFO to both report results at the strategic planning meetings and forecast college/division position mid-year.

Through these systems, UMD integrates assessment into financial, academic, and infrastructure planning, sustaining institutional effectiveness, student outcomes, and its public mission.

**CRITERION 7: FINANCIAL STABILITY • FUNDING BASE • SUSTAINABILITY**

UMD systematically integrates assessment results into planning, budgeting, and improvement processes. Resource allocations, including faculty hiring, academic initiatives, and capital projects, are tied to demonstrated outcomes and strategic priorities (*Fearlessly Forward*).

The Grand Challenges Grants Program exemplifies this approach; teams proposed projects and competed for internal funding during the initial phase. Funding has expanded in response to documented gains in interdisciplinary collaboration, external support, and student participation. Similarly, new academic programs in Global Health, Immersive Media Design, and Cyber-Physical Systems Engineering were approved only after a rigorous analysis of labor market demand, enrollment projections, and student learning outcomes, with faculty governance and a state workforce review ensuring alignment with the mission and public need.

UMD monitors effectiveness through IRPA data and reports, which track graduation rates, equity measures, enrollment and degree production, and research productivity. Units use these data to guide decisions; for example, the College of Arts and Humanities redesigned advising models to improve retention, while the A. James Clark School of Engineering leveraged enrollment data to inform program and facilities planning. State capital requests also require evidence of utilization and enrollment, embedding assessment into long-term infrastructure decisions.

Through these mechanisms, UMD demonstrates compliance with Criterion 7 by ensuring that evidence directly informs planning, program development, and resource allocation across the institution.

**CRITERION 8: FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY • INDEPENDENT AUDIT • INTERNAL CONTROLS**

UMD's planning and improvement processes are inclusive, participatory, and accountable, ensuring alignment with the mission and the commitments of *Fearlessly Forward*.

- ▶ **Shared governance** provides the foundation for broad-based input and participation. Development of the strategic plan involved more than 40 town halls, surveys, and listening sessions. Ongoing input is sustained through the University Senate, the Graduate Council, the APAC, BAC, and CITC.
- ▶ **Accountability is reinforced at the unit level.** Colleges and schools submit annual strategic updates with progress metrics, reviewed by the Provost's Office to link responsibility for improvement directly to academic leadership.
- ▶ **Financial planning** supports inclusivity through the all-funds budgeting process, which requires units to tie requests to goals and outcomes. Submissions are evaluated for feasibility and alignment with institutional priorities.

- ▶ **Evidence systems** maintained by IRPA, including dashboards, enrollment analyses, and benchmarking, equip units to identify challenges and guide actions such as curriculum redesign, advising enhancements, and expansion of student support.

Through these mechanisms, UMD fulfills Criterion 8 by ensuring that planning is broad-based, evidence-informed, and accountable, sustaining institutional resilience and continuous improvement.

#### CRITERION 9: DECISION ACCOUNTABILITY • CLEAR AUTHORITY • INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE

UMD ensures that financial, physical, and technological resources are allocated efficiently through systematic review, evidence-based planning, and mission-centered prioritization.

- ▶ **Financial resources** are reviewed annually through the all-funds budgeting process, which aligns funding with strategic priorities. In FY22, 33.1% of core expenditures supported instruction, 29.8% research, and 11.2% academic support, while administrative functions accounted for about 9% (IPEDS expense analysis). Personnel costs account for over two-thirds of the budget, underscoring the reliance on faculty and staff to advance the mission.
- ▶ **Physical and technological resources** are managed through capital planning, facilities renewal, and IT governance. Major projects, such as Stanley A. Zupnik Hall, Thurgood Marshall Hall, and the NextGen energy initiative, are prioritized based on programmatic needs, enrollment growth, and sustainability goals, with input from shared governance.
- ▶ **Technology planning**, led by the Division of IT and governance committees, ensures investments are secure, sustainable, and aligned with instructional and research priorities. Analyses of enrollment trends and space utilization further guide optimization and reallocation.

Through these processes, UMD demonstrates compliance with Criterion 9 by deploying resources transparently and efficiently to sustain operational capacity, advance academic excellence, and fulfill its public mission.

#### CRITERION 10: FACILITIES PLANNING • SUSTAINABILITY • STRATEGIC INTEGRATION

UMD systematically evaluates the effectiveness of planning and resource allocation to ensure alignment with institutional goals, operational needs, and long-term sustainability. Assessment is embedded in every stage of strategic planning, budgeting, and capital investment.

At the institutional level, progress on *Fearlessly Forward* is tracked through annual reports, resource alignment reviews, and division-level strategic updates. These reviews provide performance indicators and stakeholder feedback that guide adjustments to priorities.

Facilities and infrastructure are evaluated through long-range planning and condition assessments. The 2023 Campus Facilities Plan, developed through 18 months of engagement and 6,000 survey responses, aligns infrastructure development with instructional, research, and sustainability goals. To address a \$1.2 billion deferred maintenance backlog, Facilities Management maintains a 10-year renewal plan informed by Facility Condition Assessments and Board of Regents requirements.

Sustainability and energy planning are assessed through the 2024 Energy Management Plan, which uses predictive modeling and building-level scorecards to track efficiency and progress toward net-zero carbon emissions by 2040. Instructional and research space utilization is also monitored through data reports and tools which prompt scheduling adjustments and inform capital priorities.

Through these systematic evaluations, UMD demonstrates compliance with Criterion 10 by embedding continuous assessment into planning and resource decisions. These processes ensure that resources are deployed efficiently, aligned with the mission, and responsive to evolving needs.

#### CRITERION 11: TITLE IV COMPLIANCE • REGULATORY ADHERENCE • FINANCIAL AID OVERSIGHT

UMD grounds its planning in realistic assessments of financial, physical, and human resource capacity, ensuring that institutional goals are achievable and sustainable. Integrated strategic, financial, and operational planning, supported by robust assessment systems, aligns institutional ambitions with available resources.

Financial capacity is managed through an all-funds budget of nearly \$2.97 billion (FY25 Operating Budget Breakdown). Budget proposals must demonstrate alignment with institutional priorities and the availability of funds. Multiyear models incorporate inflation, fringe rates, and capital staging to reinforce fiscal resilience and sustainability.

Physical capacity is addressed through the 2023 Campus Facilities Plan, which sets long-range priorities for development, renewal, and sustainability based on enrollment trends, research needs, and land-use constraints. Facility condition assessments, updated in 2024 for over 200 buildings, inform a renewal prioritization tool that guides maintenance and long-term funding strategies (Deferred Maintenance and Facilities Renewal). Instructional space assessments further ensure that classrooms and labs align with pedagogical needs.

Sustainability is embedded in planning. The 2024 Energy Management Plan outlines staged investments in efficiency, retro-commissioning, and electrification, advancing carbon neutrality goals while lowering operating costs and preparing for regulatory change.

Through these systems, UMD demonstrates compliance with Criterion 11 by embedding feasibility, capacity analysis, and sustainability into planning. Integrated projections ensure that institutional priorities are both realistic and aligned with the university's mission and public responsibilities.

#### CRITERION 12: RESOURCE EVALUATION • EFFICIENCY • MISSION SUPPORT

UMD integrates enrollment forecasts, demographic trends, labor market analysis, and external factors into planning to ensure mission-aligned growth, equity, and financial sustainability.

Enrollment forecasting is conducted annually by IRPA, Enrollment Management, and Finance, using 10-year models that incorporate admissions, retention, and graduation patterns. Forecasts have maintained high accuracy, within 1% in the closest year, supporting scenario testing and strategic planning.

Planning links enrollment to affordability, academic programs, and facilities. The Terrapin Commitment (2023) reduces unmet need for Maryland residents, while new programs in data science, cybersecurity,

immersive media, and public health respond to student demand and workforce needs. The 2023 Campus Facilities Plan incorporates utilization data to align space modernization with projected enrollment growth.

External factors are systematically monitored. Federal and state financial aid policies, visa regulations, and state funding trends inform scenario analysis and risk planning. Sustainability planning, guided by the 2024 Energy Management Plan and NextGen energy initiative, advances carbon reduction and energy resilience as integral to long-term capacity.

Through this integrated approach, UMD demonstrates compliance with Criterion 12 by incorporating enrollment, market, and environmental factors into strategic and operational planning. This forward-looking system strengthens institutional agility and ensures alignment with mission and public responsibilities.

### CRITERION 13: PLANNING ASSESSMENT • RESOURCE REVIEW • INSTITUTIONAL RENEWAL

UMD documents and communicates its planning and improvement processes with transparency, ensuring students, faculty, staff, governance bodies, and external stakeholders remain informed about priorities, progress, and challenges.

Communication is anchored in *Fearlessly Forward*, the 10-year strategic plan. Annual progress reports, publicly available, presented to the University Senate, and shared campus-wide, summarize achievements, challenges, and evolving priorities. Colleges and divisions submit strategic yearly updates, which inform budget and policy decisions, with feedback provided to ensure alignment and accountability.

Budget and resource decisions are shared through the University Senate, leadership retreats, and provost and finance updates, with colleges receiving clear guidance on allocation outcomes. Significant capital and sustainability initiatives, including the 2023 Campus Facilities Plan and 2024 Energy Management Plan, are shaped by extensive stakeholder engagement and widely published.

Assessment and institutional data are disseminated through IRPA dashboards and reports on enrollment, graduation, space utilization, and research productivity, making performance indicators accessible for decision-making. Externally, UMD provides regular reports to the USM Board of Regents, state legislators, accreditors, and donors, reinforcing public trust and accountability.

UMD demonstrates compliance with Criterion 13 by ensuring that planning processes are documented, widely communicated, and publicly accountable, thereby reinforcing transparency and alignment with its mission and goals.

### KEY FINDINGS

UMD integrates planning and resource allocation through transparent, participatory, and data-informed processes. Financial, human, and physical resources are consistently aligned with institutional goals and *Fearlessly Forward* priorities. The university demonstrates capacity for sustainable growth while embedding equity, accountability, and continuous improvement in its planning culture.

- ▶ **Take on Humanity's Grand Challenges:** *Fearlessly Forward*, UMD's strategic plan, anchors institutional priorities and guides academic, operational, and financial decisions across units. Investments in Grand Challenges Grants, research infrastructure, and sustainability initiatives (e.g.,

the 2024 Energy Management Plan) demonstrate how planning links institutional vision to global and societal impact.

- ▶ **Partner to Advance the Public Good:** UMD's all-funds budgeting model and multiyear capital planning system transparently align resources with enrollment trends, program needs, and public priorities. Statewide engagement through University of Maryland Extension and *MPowering the State* partnerships ensures planning is grounded in public service and civic responsibility.
- ▶ **Invest in People and Communities:** Equity and inclusion are embedded in planning processes through initiatives such as the Terrapin Commitment (student access and affordability) and expanded faculty and staff professional development. These investments ensure that resource allocation advances institutional values of equity and belonging.
- ▶ **Reimagine Learning:** UMD strikes a balance between decentralized innovation and centralized coordination. Colleges and divisions design unit-level plans tailored to their contexts, while institutional leadership ensures alignment and accountability. Investments in instructional technology, hybrid learning, and flexible facilities, accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic, demonstrate adaptability and support innovative teaching and learning.

UMD demonstrates a mature, evidence-based planning ecosystem that links institutional vision to unit-level strategies, deploys resources transparently, and adapts effectively to changing conditions, fully meeting the expectations of Standard VI.

### OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH

An opportunity remains to further align long-term planning and resource decisions with measurable student and societal-impact outcomes, particularly through expanded use of shared dashboards and public reporting. Doing so would strengthen transparency and reinforce UMD's capacity to direct resources toward enduring institutional and global priorities.

### CONCLUSION

UMD demonstrates that its planning, resource management, and improvement processes are transparent, inclusive, and evidence-informed, ensuring strong alignment between mission, institutional goals, and operational execution.

Key accomplishments highlight this maturity:

- ▶ The Terrapin Commitment initiative, funded with up to \$20 million annually, advanced affordability for Pell-eligible students, directly linking financial aid strategy to goals related to access.
- ▶ Long-range facilities and sustainability planning, including the 2023 Campus Facilities Plan and the 2024 Energy Management Plan, integrate space utilization, deferred maintenance, and renewable energy investments to optimize resource allocation.
- ▶ Annual unit-level strategic updates, supported by multiyear financial modeling and enrollment forecasting, ensure responsiveness to demographic, fiscal, and policy shifts.

UMD also recognizes ongoing challenges, reduced state appropriations, tuition dependency, and facilities renewal backlogs, that require careful prioritization and innovative funding strategies. Planning processes are increasingly focused on resilience, efficiency, and revenue diversification to sustain mission fulfillment.

Through coordinated, data-informed planning across decentralized units, UMD sustains institutional effectiveness, advances inclusive excellence, and reinforces its role as a national leader in public higher education. These accomplishments demonstrate UMD's commitment to continuous improvement and fulfillment of MSCHE Standard VI.

### EVIDENCE INDEX

EVIDENCE TITLE	DESCRIPTION	CRITERION
Annual Budget Overview	Summaries of budget development and allocations.	C1, C2, C4, C5, C6, C8, C9, C11, C13
Multi-Year Financial Plans	Financial projections aligned with institutional goals.	C1, C11
Finance Webpage - Operating Budget	Annual summary of operating budget.	C1, C5
Tuition and Fee Schedules (2020-2024)	Approved tuition and fee structures.	C1
USM Budget Submissions	Budget requests to USM for approval.	C1, C5
Fearlessly Forward Strategic Plan Website	Strategic plan and annual progress updates.	C1, C2, C3, C6, C7, C8, C10, C12, C13
Finance Webpage - Budget Resources	Demonstrates resources available to the campus regarding budget timelines and approvals.	C1
Adaptive Planning Implementation	Materials on rollout of new forecasting system.	C1
Facilities Management Approval Authorities Website	Documentation of financial approval structure for facilities related expenses.	C1
Grand Challenges Grants Outcomes	Results of \$30M program (partnerships, funding, engagement).	C2, C3, C6, C7
Teaching & Learning Innovation Grants	Reports on outcomes from pedagogical grants.	C3
Terrapin Commitment Reports	Data on reduced unmet financial need.	C3, C4, C6, Opportunities, Conclusion
Campus Counts - UMD Employee Summary	Faculty, staff, and graduate assistant data.	C4
Terrapin Innovation and MVP Impact Award Website	Sample HR initiative growing out of strategic plan.	C4
Campus Facilities Plan (2023)	Long-range facilities and space planning.	C1, C5, C6, C9, C10, C11, C12, C13
Deferred Maintenance and Facilities Renewal Plan	Backlog and renewal priorities.	C1, C9, C10, C11

Energy Management Plan (2024)	Carbon neutrality and sustainability strategy.	C9, C10, C11, C12, C13
Space Utilization & Instructional Space Assessments	Classroom and lab usage data.	C1, C6, C10, C11, C13
SPHL Annual College Data Packet	Example of dashboards for enrollment, equity, finance, facilities distributed for summer planning meetings.	C1, C3, C6, C7, C8, C9, C13
SPHL Summer Meeting Slide Deck	Example of a college's use of data for summer planning meetings.	C1, C3, C6, C7, C8, C9, C13
Graduate Student Profile	Graduate enrollment, demographics, outcomes.	C4, C6, C7, C9
Enrollment Forecasting Models	Ten-year enrollment projections.	C12
Screenshots of Space Utilization Dashboards	Dashboards used to monitor space utilization for classroom scheduling and space planning and allocation.	C10
New Academic Program Approvals	Governance and state approvals for new programs.	C5, C7, C12
Organizational Charts	Updated annually to clarify reporting lines and responsibilities.	C5, C8
BAC, APAC & CITC Records	Advisory committee input on budgets and planning.	C1, C3, C5, C8
University Senate Records	Senate deliberations on academic and budget planning.	C5, C8, C13
Lessons Worth Keeping - Harnessing Lessons Learned Through COVID-19	Slide deck from Innovations in Teaching and Learning Conference with data regarding classroom experiences.	Key Findings

## CHAPTER 7

### VIGNETTE: STRENGTHENING SHARED GOVERNANCE THROUGH CONTINUOUS POLICY REVIEW AND TRANSPARENT COMMUNICATION

#### *GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES REQUIRED SYSTEMATIC POLICY REVIEW AND CLEARER VISIBILITY*

As UMD advanced *Fearlessly Forward* and modernized academic and administrative practices, faculty, staff, and student representatives recognized that enacted policies required more systematic review to ensure contemporary relevance. While the University Senate maintained established procedures for policy development, stakeholders noted that a less formal structure existed for revisiting policies after adoption. Community members expressed interest in ensuring that governance processes not only generated new policies but also sustained ongoing evaluation of existing ones. Greater clarity about how policies were reviewed and updated would strengthen trust and institutional alignment.

#### *DEMONSTRATING SHARED GOVERNANCE IN ACTION THROUGH STRUCTURAL REFINEMENT*

The University Senate's Special Committee for Policy Review initiated this conversation by examining enacted policies and identifying areas where language, scope, or implementation no longer reflected current institutional realities. Composed of faculty, staff, and student representatives, the committee conducted a careful review of governance mechanisms and assessed how policy evaluation could be strengthened. Through deliberation and consultation, the committee concluded that regular review should be more formally embedded within Senate structures.

The conversation shifted to Senate leadership and administrative partners, where the Plan of Organization Review Committee (PORC) was tasked with assessing whether systematic policy review should become a permanent Senate responsibility. Beginning in Spring 2026, PORC will evaluate governance structures and recommend whether ongoing policy review should be formalized as a standing committee function. This process reflects collaboration among Senate officers, elected representatives, and university leadership.

#### *A STRONGER GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK THROUGH REGULAR REVIEW AND ENGAGEMENT*

The policy review initiative showed that governance at UMD extends beyond initial policy approval. Representative stakeholders engaged in structured deliberation about how best to maintain policy relevance over time. By clarifying review pathways and embedding responsibility within established committees, the Senate strengthened transparency and accountability. Community members gained clearer insight into how policies evolve, and leadership reinforced alignment between governance deliberation and institutional planning.

#### *SHARED GOVERNANCE THRIVES WHEN REPRESENTATIVE DELIBERATION IS PAIRED WITH CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT*

Together, these developments reinforce a core principle of Standard VII: Effective governance depends on inclusive participation, clearly defined structures, and regular evaluation of institutional policies. The evolution of systematic policy review demonstrates how shared governance operates as a dynamic, responsive system—one that intentionally adapts to support UMD's academic mission while ensuring transparency and accountability across the university community.

This example reflects UMD's fulfillment of Standard VII by demonstrating how shared governance thrives when policy pathways are clear, communication is strong, and stakeholders meaningfully shape the decisions that guide the university.

### **UMD'S INSTITUTIONAL PHILOSOPHY AND APPROACH TO STANDARD VII**

As Maryland's flagship public, land-grant research university, UMD sustains a governance philosophy rooted in shared responsibility, ethical stewardship, and public trust. UMD's approach to Standard VII reflects the conviction that transparent governance, inclusive decision-making, and accountable leadership are essential to institutional effectiveness and public confidence.

Through *Fearlessly Forward: In Pursuit of Excellence and Impact for the Public Good* (2022), UMD advances governance and leadership aligned with four institutional commitments: Reimagine Learning, Take on Humanity's Grand Challenges, Invest in People and Communities, and Partner to Advance the Public Good. These commitments establish a mission-centered framework that shapes how the university organizes decision-making, evaluates leadership, and ensures that administrative practices remain aligned with institutional goals and public expectations.

UMD's philosophy emphasizes that governance is not only a matter of structure but also of culture: a culture where integrity, transparency, and collaboration are embedded in decision-making processes. This approach sustains confidence among students, faculty, staff, policymakers, and external partners while ensuring that the institution remains agile and accountable in a rapidly evolving higher education landscape.

## **STANDARD VII: GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP, AND ADMINISTRATION**

At UMD, governance, leadership, and administration are designed to maintain institutional integrity, provide strategic direction, and achieve equitable impact. As a constituent institution of the University System of Maryland (USM), UMD operates within a governance framework that combines statutory oversight by the Board of Regents and regulatory approval by the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) with robust shared governance structures and internal administrative systems (USM Bylaws; MHEC Institutional Review Guidelines).

The Board of Regents holds fiduciary responsibility for academic quality and fiscal integrity, while preserving UMD's authority over academic, financial, and operational decisions. The president, appointed by the regents, provides strategic vision and operational leadership, supported by a team of vice presidents, deans, and senior administrators. Leadership effectiveness is assessed through annual performance reviews, strategic progress reports, and stakeholder consultations.

Shared governance remains a defining strength of UMD. The University Senate Plan of Organization provides for broad participation by faculty, staff, and students in policy development, curricular oversight, and institutional planning. Parallel structures at the college and school level extend this participatory ethos across the university.

Regular and systematic assessment ensures accountability and continuous improvement. Processes include periodic evaluations of governance bodies, leadership performance, and administrative units (IRPA Governance Effectiveness Brief, 2024; Internal Audit Annual Report, 2023). These assessments reinforce a culture of integrity and adaptability across the institution.

Collectively, these structures and practices demonstrate that UMD meets the expectations of MSCHE Standard VII. Through transparent governance, strategic leadership, and effective administration, UMD

affirms its capacity to lead with integrity and to advance its mission as a flagship, public, land-grant, and R1 institution.

#### COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

UMD advances its *Fearlessly Forward* commitments and meets MSCHE expectations for Standard VII by sustaining governance, leadership, and administrative structures that are transparent, participatory, accountable, and strategically aligned.

#### CRITERION 1: GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE • ROLE CLARITY • ACCOUNTABILITY

UMD maintains a governance structure that is clearly defined, transparent, and participatory, and consistent with state statutes, USM policies, and institutional documents. Authority is intentionally distributed among external governing bodies, campus leadership, and shared governance stakeholders to ensure accountability, integrity, and alignment with institutional mission and public responsibilities (USM Bylaws, Section I-2.00; Md. Education Code §§10-207, 12-104).

At the state level, MHEC exercises regulatory authority under Title 13B of the Code of Maryland Regulations, including responsibility for program approval, mission alignment, and sector-wide policy coordination. This oversight provides a consistent external framework for academic quality and institutional accountability across Maryland's public higher education sector (COMAR Title 13B; MHEC Commission Responsibilities and Membership Overview, 2024).

Within the University System of Maryland, governance responsibility is vested in the USM Board of Regents, which holds fiduciary authority for policy oversight and appoints the president. The board conducts its work through regularly scheduled public meetings and annual retreats focused on system-wide priorities such as access, affordability, and academic innovation. The 2024 Board of Regents retreat, for example, included substantive discussions on shared governance, artificial intelligence, and student achievement, reinforcing the board's engagement with emerging institutional and sector challenges (University System of Maryland, 2024 Board of Regents Retreat Agenda).

At the campus level, shared governance is structured through UMD's Plan of Organization for Shared Governance, which is reviewed at least every 10 years to ensure continued relevance and effectiveness. The University Senate, a 220-member representative body of faculty, staff, students, and administrators, deliberates on matters related to curriculum, faculty affairs, safety, and strategic planning. Participation is extended through more than 20 standing committees and councils, while the public posting of agendas, minutes, and voting outcomes reinforces transparency and broad access to governance processes (University Senate Annual Report, 2024).

UMD's governance framework is further strengthened by system-wide councils that provide structured faculty, staff, and student input across USM institutions. The Council of University System Faculty, Council of University System Staff, and USM Student Council advise the chancellor and the Board of Regents on academic policy, operations, tuition, and student life. These councils enhance communication across institutions and ensure that diverse perspectives inform system-level decision-making (Council of University System Faculty, USM; Council of University System Staff, USM; USM Student Council Overview, 2024).

#### CRITERION 2: BOARD INDEPENDENCE • FIDUCIARY RESPONSIBILITY • POLICY OVERSIGHT

UMD is governed by the USM Board of Regents, a legally constituted governing body authorized under the Maryland Education Code (Md. Code Ann., Educ. §§10-207, 12-104). The 21-member board, which includes two student regents, serves staggered terms — five years for most members and two years for student members — and receives no compensation, reflecting a clear commitment to public service and fiduciary stewardship.

The authority and independence of the Board of Regents are defined and reinforced through the USM Bylaws, which codify the board's responsibilities, committee structure, and operating procedures. These bylaws affirm the board's responsibility for academic, administrative, and financial policy across all USM institutions. Independence from undue influence is further supported by the USM Policy on Public Ethics and oversight by the Maryland State Ethics Commission, which reviews and adjudicates potential conflicts of interest involving public officials. Together, these frameworks ensure that governing authority is exercised with integrity, accountability, and transparency.

UMD's governance environment is strengthened by advisory and representative bodies that extend engagement beyond the formal governing board. The College Park Foundation Board of Trustees contributes strategic counsel and philanthropic stewardship by engaging civic, business, and community leaders in support of the university's mission and priorities. At the campus level, the University Senate, comprised of elected faculty, staff, and students, and administrators, meets monthly in sessions open to the public to deliberate on institutional policies, with agendas and supporting materials posted in advance to promote transparency and informed participation.

Student representation is embedded throughout UMD's governance structure. The Student Government Association and the Graduate Student Government provide formal platforms for undergraduate and graduate student advocacy, legislation, and collaboration with university leadership on affordability, academic policy, and campus services. In addition, student advisory boards serve at the college and administrative unit levels, advising deans and vice presidents and further integrating student perspectives into institutional decision-making.

Governance processes at UMD are informed by data and evidence. IRPA provides data and analytical support to governance bodies and maintains representation on the Elections, Representation, and Governance (ERG) Committee, helping to ensure that governance structures and processes remain representative, equitable, and aligned with institutional needs.

#### CRITERION 3: CEO AUTHORITY • EXECUTIVE ACCOUNTABILITY • INSTITUTIONAL LEADERSHIP

UMD is led by President Darryll J. Pines, who was appointed by the USM Board of Regents in 2020. His academic and administrative background, including service as dean of the A. James Clark School of Engineering, leadership in national defense research, and membership in the National Academy of Engineering reflect the board's commitment to appointing highly qualified executive leadership aligned with UMD's mission as a flagship, public, land-grant, and research institution.

The president exercises broad executive authority delegated through state law and USM policy for academic, strategic, and operational decision-making (Policy on Shared Governance in the USM). This authority is supported by a well-defined leadership structure, including the President's Cabinet, which brings together senior leaders with expertise across research, student affairs, finance, communications, government

relations, athletics, and academic administration. Institutional organizational charts clarify lines of responsibility and accountability, ensuring leadership roles remain aligned with institutional mission and strategic priorities.

UMD's leadership model incorporates advisory and consultative bodies that provide structured input on campus conditions and emerging issues. Standing commissions and time-limited task forces enable the president and senior leadership to respond thoughtfully to complex challenges. Recent examples include the President's Commission on Artificial Intelligence and the Joint Task Force on Antisemitism and Islamophobia, which demonstrate the president's leadership in responding to technological, social, and cultural developments affecting the university community. The Athletic Council provides additional oversight to ensure that intercollegiate athletics remain consistent with institutional values, academic integrity, and compliance standards.

Ethical leadership is reinforced through a comprehensive compliance and oversight infrastructure. UMD maintains clear policies governing professional conduct and external engagement, including the Policy on Conflict of Interest and Conflict of Commitment, Procedures on Financial Conflicts of Interest in Research, the Policy on Organizational Conflicts of Interest, and the Policy on Consensual Relationships Between Faculty and Students. These policies are supported by institutional platforms such as Quali COI and inTERP, which provide systematic mechanisms for disclosure, review, and monitoring of external activities and financial interests. Together, these structures promote an ethical culture that supports accountability, transparency, and public trust.

#### **CRITERION 4: ADMINISTRATIVE CAPACITY • ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE • OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**

UMD maintains a well-organized and professionally staffed administrative structure that supports the university's mission and strategic priorities as a flagship, public, land-grant institution. Administrative organization is designed to ensure clear lines of responsibility, effective coordination across functions, and alignment with institutional goals.

Guided by *Fearlessly Forward*, UMD's administrative framework aligns priorities related to learning, research, equity, and public service. The President's Cabinet, chaired by President Darryll J. Pines, includes vice presidents and senior advisors with expertise spanning academic leadership, finance, operations, technology, legal affairs, communications, student services, and development. Institutional organizational charts provide clarity regarding roles, reporting relationships, and decision-making authority, reinforcing accountability and coordination across administrative units (Office of the President Organizational Chart, 2024; Cabinet Biographies, 2024).

Since 2020, UMD has strengthened administrative capacity through a series of leadership transitions and structural refinements. These include the appointments of a new provost and vice presidents for finance, student affairs, marketing, belonging, legal affairs, and university relations. During this period, the Division of Administration and Finance was separated into two distinct units, a change that enhanced transparency, oversight, and operational efficiency (Changes in the President's Senior Leadership Team, 2020–24).

Each major administrative division is led by experienced professionals and organized with clear structures of accountability tailored to its functional responsibilities. Academic Affairs oversees colleges, enrollment, faculty affairs, global engagement, research, and libraries (Office of the Provost, 2024). Student Affairs supports student well-being and engagement through programs addressing health, counseling,

housing, inclusion, and co-curricular activities (Student Affairs Leadership Team, 2024). The Division of Administration manages infrastructure, human resources, safety, and capital projects (Division of Administration Organizational Chart, 2024), while the Division of Information Technology oversees cybersecurity, enterprise systems, and learning technologies (Division of IT Organizational Chart, 2024).

Additional divisions provide essential institutional support and compliance functions. Office of General Counsel offers counsel on compliance, labor, research, student affairs, and intellectual property (Office of General Counsel, 2024). Finance manages budgeting, resource allocation, and fiscal compliance (Finance Organization Website, 2024). The Division of Research advances compliance and partnerships with federal and state agencies (Division of Research, 2024). The Office of Government Relations represents UMD to policymakers and external stakeholders (Office of Government Relations, 2024), while University Relations directs fundraising and alumni engagement (University Relations Organizational Chart, 2024). Marketing and Communications leads institutional communications, editorial, creative, marketing, and web services (Marketing and Communications Organizational Chart, 2024), and Belonging and Community works to cultivate a vibrant learning and working environment for all members of the university community (Belonging and Community, 2025).

Together, this comprehensive administrative structure enables UMD to manage the scale and complexity of a major public research university while remaining responsive to the evolving needs of students, faculty, staff, and external partners.

#### **CRITERION 5: GOVERNANCE ASSESSMENT • LEADERSHIP EVALUATION • CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

UMD maintains a comprehensive, multilayered system for evaluating the effectiveness of governance, leadership, and administration. These evaluation processes reinforce accountability, support professional development, and ensure continued alignment with institutional mission, strategic priorities, and public responsibilities.

At the executive level, the USM Board of Regents and the chancellor conduct annual evaluations of campus presidents, assessing leadership performance, progress toward strategic goals, and institutional alignment (USM Policy on Performance Evaluation, 2024). In addition to these annual assessments, presidents undergo comprehensive multi-year reviews every three to five years to evaluate longer-term effectiveness in areas including academic excellence, fiscal stewardship, research impact, and public engagement (USM Policy on Multi-Year Review, 2023).

UMD applies similarly structured evaluation processes to academic leadership roles. Deans participate in comprehensive five-year reviews led by the provost that examine leadership effectiveness, operational performance, and contributions to institutional priorities (UMD Policy on Dean Review, 2024). Department chairs and directors are reviewed regularly using criteria tailored to the scope and needs of their units (UMD Policy on Chair and Director Review, 2024). Directors of centers and institutes undergo five-year evaluations that incorporate stakeholder feedback and assess alignment with funding sources and institutional priorities (UMD Policy on Center/Institute Review, 2024).

Governance structures are also subject to periodic evaluation to ensure continued effectiveness and responsiveness. UMD reviews its Plan of Organization for Shared Governance on a regular cycle, with Senate Bill 21-22-30 (2022) reaffirming the 10-year review timeline, authorizing mid-cycle reviews when warranted, and strengthening Senate oversight of financial matters and constituency representation.

Collectively, these evaluation processes create a culture of continuous improvement by ensuring that governance, leadership, and administration are regularly assessed, transparent in their operations, and responsive to institutional needs. Through systematic review and evidence-informed refinement, UMD sustains governance and leadership practices that are accountable, effective, and mission-driven.

**KEY FINDINGS**

UMD’s governance, leadership, and administrative structures are transparent, participatory, and strategically aligned with mission and strategic priorities. Shared governance is robust, decision-making is inclusive, and leadership fosters accountability and public trust. These qualities ensure institutional resilience, integrity, and effectiveness in advancing the university’s commitments.

- ▶ **Reimagine Learning:** *Fearlessly Forward* provides four commitments that guide governance and administrative priorities. These commitments are embedded in leadership practices, divisional planning, and decision-making processes, supporting innovation in teaching, learning, and institutional improvement.
- ▶ **Take on Humanity’s Grand Challenges:** Legislative and system recognition of UMD’s role as Maryland’s flagship, public and land-grant university provides the framework for mission-driven governance. Administrative capacity, anchored in the President’s Cabinet and divisional structures, ensures qualified leadership, accountability, and adaptability to societal needs and global challenges.
- ▶ **Invest in People and Communities:** Shared governance, anchored in the University Senate and parallel bodies, ensures inclusive participation and alignment of institutional goals with unit plans, reports, and initiatives. Leadership invests in cultivating equity, accountability, and a culture of care across faculty, staff, and students.
- ▶ **Partner to Advance the Public Good:** UMD’s governance, leadership, and administrative structures are transparent, participatory, and strategically aligned with institutional priorities. The USM Board of Regents provides fiduciary oversight of academic quality and fiscal integrity, while UMD advances its public mission through *MPowering the State* and regional workforce collaborations.

**OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH**

UMD’s governance and leadership structures are inclusive and effective. A key opportunity moving forward is to more systematically document how input from shared governance bodies and advisory groups informs decisions, leadership development, and evaluation. Strengthening these feedback loops would enhance transparency, reinforce trust, and further demonstrate how governance invests in people as stewards of institutional mission.

**CONCLUSION**

UMD exceeds the expectations of MSCHE Standard VII through its governance, leadership, and administration, which are inclusive, transparent, and strategically aligned. Anchored in the University System of Maryland (USM) framework and strengthened by campus leadership and shared governance, UMD balances oversight, autonomy, and accountability to sustain institutional effectiveness.

Key accomplishments underscore this strength:

- ▶ **Robust shared governance:** The University Senate comprises more than 200 elected representatives and over 20 standing committees, which collectively shape academic and administrative policy.
- ▶ **Strategic leadership:** The president and Cabinet advance the university’s strategic blueprint, *Fearlessly Forward*, ensuring alignment of mission and priorities.
- ▶ **Data-informed assessment:** The Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment (IRPA) provides analyses that support leadership evaluations, operational alignment, and evidence-based decisions.
- ▶ **Continuous improvement:** Expanding evaluation of non-academic units and introducing new systems for tracking administrative performance strengthens adaptability and accountability.

Together, these structures foster ethical leadership, institutional agility, and shared responsibility. UMD not only fulfills but also exemplifies MSCHE expectations of integrity, improvement, and accountability. Through effective governance and a commitment to *Fearlessly Forward*, the university demonstrates its role as a national model for flagship, land-grant public higher education.

**EVIDENCE INDEX**

EVIDENCE TITLE	DESCRIPTION	CRITERION
University Senate Plan of Organization	Outlines shared governance framework and responsibilities.	C1
USM Bylaws (2024)	System-level governance and policy documentation.	C1
Md. Education Code §§10-207, 12-104	Statutory authority for governance.	C1
MHEC Commission Responsibilities and Membership Overview (2024)	State-level oversight functions.	C1
COMAR Title 13B	Regulatory framework for academic program approval.	C1
USM Board of Regents Retreat Agenda (2024)	Documented Regents’ priorities and governance focus.	C1
Council of University System Faculty, Staff, and Student Council Overviews	System-wide shared governance bodies.	C1
USM Board of Regents Policies and Bylaws	Define Board authority and fiduciary role.	C2
USM Policy on Public Ethics	Ethics requirements for Regents.	C2
Maryland State Ethics Commission Website	Oversight of ethics compliance.	C2
UMD SGA Website	Student representation in governance.	C2
UMD GSG Website	Graduate student representation in governance.	C2
UMD College Park Foundation Board of Trustees	Advisory role in advancement and fundraising.	C2
President’s Cabinet and Biographies	Executive leadership structure and qualifications.	C3

Office of the President Organizational Chart	Leadership reporting lines.	C3
President's Commissions and Task Forces Websites	Sample websites for advisory and consultative bodies to the President.	C3
Athletic Council Website	Oversight of intercollegiate athletics.	C3
Conflict of Interest and Commitment Policies	Ethics and compliance safeguards.	C3
Research Administration Organization Chart	Key individuals involved in disclosure and monitoring of external activities.	C3
Organizational Chart of Senior Administration	Structure of divisions and reporting lines.	C4
Changes in Senior Leadership Team 2020-24	Recent administrative transitions and reorganization.	C4
Office of the Provost Website	Academic Affairs leadership and scope.	C4
Student Affairs Leadership Team	Structure of student life and services leadership.	C4
Division of Administration Organizational Chart	Administrative services and operations leadership.	C4
Division of IT Organizational Chart	Technology leadership.	C4
Office of General Counsel Organizational Chart	Legal affairs leadership.	C4
Finance Organization Chart	Financial administration and CFO responsibilities.	C4
Division of Research Organization Chart	Research administration and compliance leadership.	C4
Office of Government Relations Website	Government engagement and advocacy.	C4
University Relations Organizational Chart	Fundraising and alumni engagement.	C4
Office of Marketing and Communications Organizational Chart	Branding and communications leadership.	C4
USM Policy on Performance Evaluation of Presidents	Annual presidential performance evaluation.	C5
USM Policy on the Multi-Year Review of Presidents	Comprehensive multi-year performance review.	C5
UMD Policy on the Review of Deans	Periodic dean review process.	C5
UMD Policy on the Review of Chairs and Directors	Periodic chair/director review process.	C5
UMD Policy on Center/Institute Review	Review of academic/research centers.	C5
University Senate Bill 21-22-30 (Plan of Organization)	Plan of Organization review and oversight strengthening.	C5
Internal Audit Annual Report	Findings and responses to institutional audits.	C5
Enterprise Risk Management Framework	UMD process for identifying risks and mitigation strategies.	C5



