



Search for the Vice President for Institutional Equity and Chief Diversity Officer  
University of Maryland, Baltimore County  
Baltimore, Maryland

## THE SEARCH

The University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC), seeks a seasoned, strategic, and galvanizing inaugural Vice President for Institutional Equity and Chief Diversity Officer (VPIE/CDO). This is an exciting and challenging opportunity to lead and advance inclusive excellence at an R1 institution with national prominence in teaching, research, and service. Serving as a relentless connector, the VPIE/CDO will coordinate action and enhance the culture and climate to support UMBC's commitment to a safe and inclusive community in alignment with federal and state laws. The inaugural VPIE/CDO will be among Dr. Valerie Sheares Ashby's first cabinet-level appointments.

UMBC is proud to be one of the fastest-growing and most diverse public research universities in the nation, with just over fifty percent of its nearly 14,000 students self-identifying as students of color. The University's vibrant campus is regarded as a new model for American higher education – a place where talented students, faculty, and staff thrive in a culture that embraces new ideas and strong shared governance. UMBC is one of a handful of research-intensive and minority-serving institutions in the United States. As the United States becomes increasingly more diverse, UMBC represents the prototype of what universities will look like in the future and as such can innovate in ways that will define public higher education.

Capitalizing on the current momentum and the University's strengths, the role of VPIE/CDO calls for an inspiring individual with exceptional communication skills and decisive leadership. Reporting directly to the President, the empowered leader will oversee and manage the Office of Equity and Inclusion which has primary responsibilities over civil rights matters, which include a clear focus on discrimination, harassment, hate, and bias. The VPIE/CDO will be responsible for designing and implementing a vision and strategy for inclusive excellence; building a team and infrastructure to support the diverse, growing campus community; assessing and integrating relevant policies and procedures; and communicating to sustain trust.

Dr. Valerie Sheares Ashby has appointed a search committee to conduct this confidential search in partnership with Keight Tucker Kennedy and Berlinda Mojica of the international executive search firm [Isaacson, Miller](#). Confidential nominations, inquiries, and applications may be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

## THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND, BALTIMORE COUNTY

Founded in 1966, the University of Maryland, Baltimore County is a mid-sized public research university in the Baltimore-Washington corridor. It was the first public university in Maryland to include students of all races and is federally designated as a minority-serving institution. UMBC was established upon the land of the Piscataway and Susquehannock peoples and, over time, citizens of many more Indigenous nations came to reside in the region. UMBC humbly offers its respects to all past, present, and future Indigenous people connected to this place.

UMBC is a member of the University System of Maryland (USM). Under the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, UMBC is termed a doctoral university with higher research activity (R1). The University delivers a distinctive undergraduate educational experience characterized by a strong liberal arts and sciences core, and offers graduate programs emphasizing selected areas of engineering, information technology, science, public policy, and human services. Thirty-five new academic programs have been added since 2006, including three new departments: gender, women's and sexuality studies; media and communication studies; and marine biotechnology. Most of the University's academic programs are offered on its 500-acre main campus near Baltimore, with some programs offered at the [Universities at Shady Grove campus](#) – a distinctive partnership of nine USM institutions – in Rockville, Maryland, and select research and teaching facilities in downtown Baltimore.

The campus is largely residential, the University enrolls almost 14,000 students, and it enjoys more than \$80 million in externally funded research annually. UMBC has increased its international student population, more than doubled the proportion of students from low-income households, and more than doubled its number of annual graduates – from 1,700 to nearly 3,500.

UMBC is a young university with a national and international reputation for innovation and student success, particularly in STEM. *Times Higher Education* has five times recognized UMBC as one of the world's top 100 young universities for strong research, innovation, and an international outlook. *The Princeton Review*, *Kiplinger's Personal Finance*, and *Fiske Guide to Colleges* have repeatedly named UMBC a "best value" university. For over a decade, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* has recognized UMBC as a "great college to work for." Significantly, UMBC is the nation's #1 producer of Black undergraduates who go on to complete a Ph.D. in the natural sciences or engineering, and #1 for Black undergraduates who complete an M.D./Ph.D.

For more information about the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, please visit [www.umbc.edu](http://www.umbc.edu).

## THE UMBC COMMUNITY

UMBC serves 13,991 total students: 10,625 undergraduates and 3,366 graduates. The majority of students (91 percent of undergraduates and 40 percent of graduates) come from the state of Maryland, with many from the counties immediately surrounding UMBC. As of Fall 2022, 8 percent are international students, and over 100 countries are represented in the student body.

The University is firmly committed to access and is a diverse and welcoming community, with nearly fifty percent of students self-identifying as students of color. As of Fall 2022, the University serves, 31 percent White students, 20 percent Black/African American students, 19 percent Asian American students, 16 percent Hispanic/Latinx students, and 8 percent international students. About 29 percent of first-year

students are the first in their families to attend college. Fifty-three percent of students self-identify as men and 46 percent as women, a trend that has held relatively stable over the past twenty years.

UMBC's 1,116 faculty are recognized nationally and internationally, notably in the areas of research, scholarship, and creative achievement. In fiscal year 2021, UMBC faculty submitted over \$530 million in extramural funding and secured over \$114 million in new extramural awards in fiscal year 2022. The rich and rigorous environment for teaching and learning is supported by approximately 556 full-time faculty members of which 428 hold the ranks of professor, associate professor, or assistant professor. Of those tenured or on the tenure track approximately 45 percent self-identify as women, 6 percent Black or African American, 5 percent Hispanic or Latino, and 19 percent Asian.

Essential to all University activities and initiatives are the employees who tirelessly support and advance the institution's mission and curate the student experience at UMBC. The University employs approximately 1241 staff members in a variety of non-faculty roles. As of 2021, 60 percent of UMBC staff self-identify as women, 21 percent Black or African American, 3 percent Hispanic or Latino, 5 percent Asian, 0.08 percent American Indian or Alaska Native, and 0.2 percent Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander.

UMBC embraces a strong shared-governance model. The [University Steering Committee](#) comprised of five senates and the President or their designee, leads UMBC's shared-governance process. To learn more about each of the groups please visit: <https://usc.umbc.edu/>.

#### **PRESIDENT VALERIE SHEARES ASHBY**

Valerie Sheares Ashby was appointed to the presidency of UMBC on August 1, 2022. She is the first woman to serve in this role.

Sheares Ashby previously served as dean of Duke University's Trinity College of Arts & Sciences. In this role since 2015, she led a 700-person faculty spanning nearly 40 departments and programs in rethinking what it means to deliver a world-class liberal arts education while navigating a pandemic and consistently promoting diversity and inclusion as a means of achieving excellence in both teaching and research.

Sheares Ashby came to Duke from UNC, where she served on the faculty since 2003 and chaired the chemistry department from 2012 to 2015. In her role as department chair, she was instrumental in UNC's collaboration with UMBC to launch the Chancellor's Science Scholars Program, among the earliest Meyerhoff Scholars replication pilots at an R1 institution. She began her academic career at Iowa State University as an assistant professor in 1996 and was promoted to associate professor in 2002. While at Iowa State, Sheares Ashby was a mentor for the Iowa State University Program for Women in Science & Engineering, a summer research program for undergraduate and high school students.

As a researcher, Sheares Ashby has focused on synthetic polymer chemistry with an emphasis on designing and synthesizing materials for biomedical applications such as X-ray contrast agents and drug delivery materials. She is the recipient of the National Science Foundation Career Development Award, DuPont Young Faculty Award, and 3M Young Faculty Award, as well as numerous teaching awards.

She received her B.A. and Ph.D. degrees in chemistry from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC) and completed postdoctoral research at Universitat Mainz in Germany as a National Science Foundation Postdoctoral Fellow and NATO Postdoctoral Fellow.

## THE OFFICE OF EQUITY AND INCLUSION

The [Office of Equity and Inclusion](#) (OEI) was formed in January 2020 to promote and coordinate the [University's core values](#) of inclusive excellence and equity, and has primary responsibility for managing UMBC's efforts related to Title IX as well as other civil rights issues, including discrimination, harassment, hate, and bias.

The office's mission is to not only ensure compliance with sexual misconduct and non-discrimination laws, regulations, and policies through prompt, fair investigations, education and training, and outreach and engagement; but also to foster an inclusive and accessible environment for all members of the campus community through partnerships and initiatives. OEI is a continuation and expansion of the important work that [Retriever Courage](#) began in 2018. Administrative and shared governance leaders, faculty, staff, and students joined together in the Retriever Courage initiative to better understand the implementation of the UMBC sexual misconduct policy, and to hold themselves accountable to a shared value of inclusive excellence. Through their tireless efforts, [recommendations](#), and collaboration across campus, UMBC successfully formed the Office of Equity and Inclusion, which reports directly to the University President.

OEI is supported by a \$500k annual operating budget and a five-person team that includes a director, a Title IX coordinator, two civil rights and Title IX investigators, and a case and training manager.

### Inclusion Council

On June 30, 2020, approximately six months after the establishment of OEI, the [Inclusion Council](#) was created to provide guidance to university leadership, serve as ambassadors for diversity, equity, and inclusion across campus, and make short- and long-term recommendations to advance social justice at an institutional level. A true grassroots effort emerged, and ten working groups invested a year's time discussing how to promote social justice and take action to resolve issues of equity. In close partnership and in an advisory capacity, the Inclusion Council has worked closely with OEI to determine recommendations. As of April 2022, UMBC has designated an implementation team comprised of members of the Inclusion Council, representatives of the University's Shared-Governance bodies, and subject-matter experts.

## THE ROLE

The Vice President for Institutional Equity and Chief Diversity Officer is a cabinet-level position that reports directly to the President. The new Vice President will be among her first appointments to the senior cabinet. In announcing the position, the President reinforced the campus's bold commitment to supporting an inclusive and welcoming culture for all students, faculty, and staff. This empowered leader will first understand the depth and breadth of the work already happening across the campus to build diversity, equity, and inclusion, and will recommend effective ways to move that work forward and fill any apparent gaps. This position will also be responsible for managing all Title IX and civil rights efforts, which include a clear focus on discrimination, harassment, hate, and bias. The VPIE/CDO is expected to partner

closely with the President and other senior leaders to anticipate and address DEI issues in a collaborative manner.

Building upon the institution's powerful legacy, the VPIE/CDO will be expected to define inclusive excellence at UMBC, build and inspire a team, stabilize, and strengthen systems, and convene and coordinate partners to catalyze ever more innovative thinking and approaches. Reflecting the highest levels of ethical practices, the VPIE/CDO will strategically lead the Office of Equity and Inclusion, responsible for ensuring and enforcing the University's compliance with all applicable laws relevant to discrimination and harassment based on protected categories. This includes effective development and deployment of high-quality, differentiated training and education initiatives throughout the University.

### **KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES**

The overarching challenge for the VPIE/CDO will be to drive UMBC's community forward in continuous growth and collaboration and to facilitate transformative action as the institution reaches new heights in teaching, research, and service. In carrying out their responsibilities, the successful VPIE/CDO will address several important challenges and opportunities including:

#### **Design and execute a clear, unifying, and strategic vision of inclusive excellence at UMBC;**

UMBC is distinguished in research and academic outcomes for students, and yet there is potential for continued and even deeper impact. The President will expect a clear and well-researched path forward. Part of this work will include cultivating strong relationships across constituencies and establishing clear guidelines and expectations around collaboration and decision-making, to formulate an ambitious vision for the future of inclusive excellence at UMBC. The new VPIE/CDO will leverage the hard work of the Inclusion Council and Implementation Team to incorporate recommendations into a strategic action plan.

The ideal candidate will possess a deep understanding of the academy, the distribution and role of power, and the dynamics of shared governance to stimulate important institutional discussions. They will have the capacity to pose challenging questions, engage in courageous conversation, and offer a strategic way forward. They must galvanize others and engage them in the shared endeavor that necessitates a change in behavior, mindset, and action.

#### **Build and strengthen a core team, expand capacity, and inspire trust;**

The VPIE/CDO will inherit a dedicated and talented team and as such will have the opportunity to reimagine the office's structure with increased capacity to deliver on its mission within a large, growing university context. A careful assessment and audit of OEI's systems and staffing should be a top priority for the incoming VPIE/CDO. They must gather and align resources to ensure roles and responsibilities are well-defined, well-staffed, and well-supported. In tandem, the VPIE/CDO should promote an adaptive, caring, and thriving organizational culture, where staff are empowered to learn, grow, and perform at their maximum potential.

In light of recent challenges, and with a particular eye on UMBC's commitment to demonstrate care and inclusion of its students, staff, and faculty, the VPIE/CDO will be expected to develop a framework to further the institution's civil rights efforts and mitigate risk. The VPIE/CDO will work in partnership with colleagues in OEI to ensure compliance with federal and state laws, enhance the culture of care and

support for those harmed, and become a national model. The VPIE/CDO will work closely with campus partners, such as the Office of the General Counsel, Student Affairs, Human Resources, Faculty Affairs, University police, and the University's senior leadership, to cultivate a culture that inspires trust and confidence in the processes and policies deployed, and simultaneously demonstrates a respect for privacy.

**Assess and evaluate the current landscape for inclusive excellence;**

The VPIE/CDO will need strong analytic skills to assess and evaluate existing efforts and infuse a greater sense of accountability and sustainability in future endeavors. Committed allies across the institution have made significant progress in recent years, particularly at the student level. It is important that the VPIE/CDO, with measured deference to the past, work with campus partners to deploy a consistent and clear strategic plan that addresses the staff and faculty experience as well as ongoing student needs. Positioning OEI as a center for collaboration that drives visionary change will help the VPIE/CDO coordinate, centralize, and amplify actions geared towards building a supportive infrastructure to further build and sustain a culture of inclusive excellence.

**Communicate effectively to educate and empower;**

Communication is paramount and inextricably linked to the sensitive and invaluable work of OEI, therefore the VPIE/CDO must be a model of clear and effective communication. A part of this work will require defining inclusive excellence at UMBC, best practices, and common language to ensure a collective understanding. They must build trust and confidence with the campus community by explaining policies, procedures, and relevant laws in an accessible manner.

The campus community must view and respect the VPIE/CDO as a knowledgeable partner, resident expert, and supportive colleague, with excellent interpersonal skills. They will enhance the skills and capacity of individuals with diverse lived experiences to debate and disagree respectfully. Lastly, the confident leader will be consistent in their messaging and will not shy away from naming behaviors and actions that promote and undermine diversity, equity, and inclusion.

**QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS**

While no single candidate will have all the ideal qualifications or characteristics, the VPIE/CDO should possess many of the following:

- A demonstrated track record of inspirational leadership advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion strategies in a complex higher education environment;
- Proven expertise on complex policies, such as Title IX, Affirmative Action/EEO, Title IV, Title VII, Clery Act, Age Discrimination in Employment Act, Section 504, and the Americans with Disabilities Act, with legal and civil rights implications;
- A deep understanding of power structures, privilege differentials, and institutional systems that foster systemic inequities;
- Experienced coalition builder, with the ability to mobilize leaders within a large organizational context; an understanding of shared governance structures;

- A seasoned administrator and manager with experience operationalizing a shared vision and deploying resources;
- A person who is self-aware, reflective, value-driven, and seeks continuous learning and growth;
- Demonstrated cultural humility and an ability to deeply listen to individuals of diverse cultures and perspectives;
- The highest integrity, wisdom, humor, emotional intelligence, and can-do attitude; adept at conflict management; even-keeled and calm when leading through challenges and capable of exercising a high degree of diplomacy and strict discretion.

### **Applications, Inquiries, and Nominations**

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website for the search: <https://www.imsearch.com/search-detail/S8-739>. Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

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*The University of Maryland, Baltimore County values safety, cultural and ethnic diversity, social responsibility, lifelong learning, equity, and civic engagement. Consistent with these principles, the UMBC does not discriminate in offering equal access to its educational programs and activities or with respect to employment terms and conditions on the basis of a UMBC community member's race, creed, color, religion, sex, gender, pregnancy, ancestry, age, gender identity or expression, national origin, veterans status, marital status, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, or genetic information.*