



Search for the Vice Provost and Dean, The Graduate School  
University of Maryland, Baltimore County  
Baltimore, MD

## **THE SEARCH**

The University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) seeks a visionary and strategic leader to serve as the Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School. This is an exceptional opportunity for a dynamic leader to leverage UMBC's rich history of inclusivity and academic excellence and shape the future of graduate education with a focus on student success and belonging.

As a key member of UMBC's senior leadership team, the Vice Provost and Dean will lead initiatives that support the university's commitment to scholarly rigor, civic engagement, and student well-being. The new leader will play a critical role in advancing the Graduate School's mission, implementing strategies that enhance the graduate student experience and promote a thriving research ecosystem. At this pivotal moment, UMBC is focused on building a cohesive community that prioritizes the development of graduate students and their sense of community. This incoming leader will develop and execute a comprehensive strategy to enhance student support, career readiness, and wellness resources, ensuring that every graduate student feels a sense of belonging and is equipped to thrive.

The next leader will bring exceptional leadership skills, a depth of experience in academic administration, a history of robust cross-campus collaborations, and a strong and innovative vision for the future of graduate education. The Vice Provost and Dean will play a public role with university, state, regional, national, and international stakeholders to further the mission of graduate education and advocate for resources and support for its essential work.

The University of Maryland, Baltimore County, has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to support the search for its next Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School. Confidential inquiries, nominations, and applications may be directed to the firm as indicated at the end of this document.

## **UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND, BALTIMORE COUNTY**

Founded in 1966, UMBC is a mid-sized public research university in the Baltimore-Washington corridor and a member of the University System of Maryland (USM). It was the first public university in Maryland to include students of all races, and it 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.

In the 2021 Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, UMBC ascended to the highest level of research activity, achieving the Research 1 (R1) categorization for doctoral institutions. The University delivers a distinctive undergraduate educational experience characterized by a strong liberal arts and sciences core and offers graduate programs in engineering, information technology, science, humanities, social sciences, public policy, and human services. UMBC's Graduate School offers 41 master's degree programs, 24 doctoral degree programs, and 24 graduate certificate programs. The Division of Professional Studies offers an array of professionally-focused master's degrees, graduate certificates, individual courses, and non-degree training programs.

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 \$118 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 over the past 20 years.

UMBC has achieved a remarkable national and international reputation for innovation and student success, particularly in STEM. It has modeled for the world what it means to practice inclusive excellence – most notably through its Meyerhoff Scholars Program, which has been replicated at numerous institutions throughout higher education since its inception in 1988. UMBC consistently ranks among the most innovative universities with the highest quality undergraduate teaching. For over a decade, The Chronicle of Higher Education has recognized UMBC as a “great college to work for.”

UMBC ranks among the US's top public universities in federal research support, #16 in NASA funding, #33 in federal funding for geosciences, atmospheric sciences, and ocean sciences, and #55 for federal support for computer and information sciences. In 2020, UMBC was honored by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching with its distinguished Carnegie Community Engagement classification.

Significantly, UMBC is the nation's #1 producer of Black undergraduates who go on to complete a PhD in the natural sciences or engineering and #1 for Black undergraduates who complete an MD/PhD.

## **LEADERSHIP**

### ***Valerie Sheares Ashby, PhD, President***

Valerie Sheares Ashby began as the sixth president of UMBC on August 1, 2022. The first woman to serve in this role, she also holds a faculty appointment in UMBC's Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry.

Sheares Ashby joined UMBC from Duke University, where she had served since 2015 as dean of the Trinity College of Arts & Sciences. As dean, she led the development and implementation of strategic plans that resulted in significant new investments in faculty recruitment and development, philanthropy, and student engagement, and a realignment of operations that enhanced services and created operational efficiencies. Throughout, she consistently advanced diversity, equity, and inclusion as imperative to excellence in both teaching and research.

Prior to her tenure at Duke, Sheares Ashby chaired the chemistry department at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC) from 2012 to 2015. As a faculty member at UNC since 2003, she held numerous leadership positions and had experience at all levels of academic administration. She served on UNC's Arts & Sciences Foundation Board of Directors and Research Advisory Council and chaired the university's Institutional Conflict of Interest Committee and the College of Arts & Sciences Faculty Diversity Task Force. She engaged in all aspects of the undergraduate educational experience as director of undergraduate studies in the chemistry department, and she directed the UNC National Science Foundation Alliance for Graduate Education and the Professoriate. Sheares Ashby was instrumental in UNC's collaboration with UMBC to launch the Chancellor's Science Scholars Program, which was among the earliest replication pilots by a research university of the Meyerhoff Scholars Program.

She began her academic career in 1996 as an assistant professor at Iowa State University and was promoted to associate professor in 2002. At Iowa State, Sheares Ashby served as 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 and service awards, including the UNC Chapel Hill General Alumni Association Faculty Service Award and the Bowman and Gordon Gray Distinguished Term Professorship for excellence in undergraduate teaching and research. In 2022, Women of Color Magazine named Sheares Ashby its Technologist of the Year.

She received her BA and PhD degrees in chemistry from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and completed postdoctoral research at Johannes Gutenberg Universität Mainz in Germany as a National Science Foundation Postdoctoral Fellow and NATO Postdoctoral Fellow.

***Manfred H. M. van Dulmen, PhD, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs***

Manfred H. M. van Dulmen serves as UMBC's Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Dr. van Dulmen comes to UMBC from Kent State University in Ohio, where he served as Senior Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate College. He started at Kent State as a faculty member in the Department of Psychological Sciences in 2004 and, since then, has served in numerous academic leadership positions at Kent State, including Interim Department Chair and Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. He led Kent State through the COVID-19 pandemic and developed strategies for enhancing graduate education and supporting student mental health. He also led strategic planning in Academic Affairs, helped to enhance and promote research strength across all disciplines, and led efforts resulting in new collaborative degree programs in data science and cybersecurity, as well as in innovative micro-credential programs at Kent State.

Dr. van Dulmen is an award-winning scholar with a PhD in family social science from the University of Minnesota. He has published over 100 articles and book chapters and edited or co-edited three books. He also founded and served as editor-in-chief of the Sage Publications journal *Emerging Adulthood*. His research interests include adolescent and young adult relationships and experiences, externalizing behavior problems and aggression, and measurement and methodology.

**UMBC COMMUNITY**

UMBC's Vision Statement is remarkable in its clarity and ambition: "Our UMBC community redefines excellence in higher education through an inclusive culture that connects innovative teaching and learning, research across disciplines, and civic engagement. We will advance knowledge, economic prosperity, and social justice by welcoming and inspiring inquisitive minds from all backgrounds." UMBC serves 13,906 total students: 10,767 undergraduates and 3,139 graduates. Most students (94% of undergraduates and 44% of graduates) come from the state of Maryland, the majority coming from Baltimore, Howard, Montgomery, and Prince George's counties, as well as the City of Baltimore. As of Fall 2024, 15% of undergraduate and graduate students were international, and 99 countries are represented in the entire student body.

The University is firmly committed to access and is a diverse and welcoming community, with 56% of students self-identifying as students of color. As of Fall 2024, across undergraduate and graduate students, the University enrolled a student body comprising 27% White students, 22% Black/African American students, 20% Asian or Asian American students, 9% Hispanic/Latinx students, and 15%

international students. 56% of students self-identify as men and 44% as women, a trend that has remained relatively stable over the past 20 years.

UMBC's 1,242 faculty are recognized nationally and internationally, notably in the areas of research, scholarship, and creative achievement. The rich and rigorous environment for teaching and learning is supported by 594 full-time instructional faculty members, of which 443 hold the ranks of professor, associate professor, or assistant professor. Of those tenured or on the tenure track, approximately 45% self-identify as women, 8% as Black or African American, 6% as Hispanic or Latino, and 19% as Asian or Asian American.

Essential to all University activities and initiatives are the employees who tirelessly support and advance the institution's mission and enhance the student experience at UMBC. The University employs approximately 1,350 staff members in a variety of non-faculty roles. As of 2024, 60% of UMBC staff self-identify as women, 20% as Black or African American, 4% as Hispanic or Latino, 5% as Asian or Asian American, 0.2% as American Indian or Alaska Native, and 0.1% as Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander.

UMBC embraces a strong [shared-governance model](#), facilitating academic success by fostering an empowering institutional culture and broad leadership for innovation among senior leaders, administrators, staff, faculty, and students. The University Steering Committee, comprising the leaders of the University's three senates, the Graduate Student Association and the Student Government Association, is the cornerstone of UMBC's shared governance system. The robust shared governance model at UMBC is a critical element of its empowerment.

## **THE GRADUATE SCHOOL**

The Graduate School at UMBC leads and directs the university's graduate education enterprise, working with departments, schools, and colleges on the development and administration of graduate education as a critical component in the transmission of new knowledge, research, ideas, and scholarship across the university. UMBC recognizes that success as a leading R1 institution depends upon the ability to prioritize graduate education, research, and well-being as central to the academic mission.

UMBC currently offers more than 80 master's and doctoral degree programs through the Graduate School, in partnership with its three colleges and three schools. Additionally, UMBC offers 23 graduate certificate programs. Graduate students can earn graduate degrees at both the main campus and UMBC's campus at Shady Grove. In the Fall 2024 semester, UMBC has 2,176 students enrolled in master's programs and 808 in doctoral programs. 51% of graduate students are international students, 47% are women, and 31% of domestic students are from historically underrepresented groups.

The Graduate School has three units to serve students:

- **Graduate Enrollment**, which includes recruitment and admissions. These teams are dedicated to recruiting and enrolling a diverse student body. They engage in strategic outreach and recruitment efforts to attract and connect with prospective students.
- **Academic Success & Graduation**, which supports students through their academic journeys and works to ensure successful degree completion. This team collaborates with students, faculty, and academic advisors to monitor academic progress and provide timely interventions.
- **Student Development & Postdoctoral Affairs Team**, which is focused on enhancing graduate students' academic and professional experiences and offers a variety of professional and personal development opportunities for students to prepare for successful careers in their chosen fields.

The Graduate School is dedicated to supporting the mental health and well-being of the graduate student population; the [CARE \(Concern, Assessment, Referral, and Education\) Team](#) was created to identify, monitor, and support graduate students facing significant obstacles to progress. UMBC also has a faculty committee on graduate student mentoring: [MORE \(Mentoring Others Results in Excellence\)](#). MORE engages faculty and graduate students to foster conversations about effective mentorship and provides faculty with the tools and resources necessary to be strong mentors to graduate students. Additionally, the [Graduate Student Emergency Fund](#), created through support from UMBC donors, provides one-time financial assistance to graduate students facing unexpected financial hardships.

## **ROLE OF THE VICE PROVOST AND DEAN**

The Vice Provost and Dean will have an opportunity to build on the success of the Graduate School and shape the future of graduate education at UMBC. The Vice Provost and Dean will provide visionary leadership across all aspects of graduate education, collaborating with graduate programs campus-wide to implement policies, initiatives, and activities that support the recruitment, admission, retention, academic achievement, well-being, and career placements of a diverse graduate student body. As the leader of the Graduate School – the central connector across graduate programs across all schools and colleges on campus – this leader will foster collaboration, alignment, and the creation of shared systems and resources.

Reporting to the Provost, this leader serves on the Academic Leadership Group and will partner with the four other deans at the university. As Dean of the Graduate School, they will have primary responsibility for managing all aspects of human resources, finance, education, research, student and alumni relations, external partnerships, development, and community engagement related to the Graduate School, serving as its chief representative and spokesperson. Additionally, they will partner with university leadership to create and implement the priorities of the university's strategic plan relating to graduate education. The Vice Provost and Dean will lead coordination between the Graduate School and the [Graduate Council](#), which oversees the joint academic and research resources of UMBC and the University of Maryland Baltimore, on policies, procedures, and curriculum.

## **KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE NEXT VICE PROVOST AND DEAN**

### **Lead the Graduate School into a new era of excellence and innovation.**

UMBC seeks a collaborative and strategic leader who will cultivate partnerships across the institution's colleges and schools, strengthening bonds with other deans, graduate program directors, faculty, and staff to elevate the entire graduate community. As UMBC embarks on a transformative strategic planning process, this leader will play a key role in defining and advancing a cohesive vision for graduate education that underscores the university's commitment to graduate student success, scholarly rigor, and civic engagement. The Dean will be instrumental in fostering interdisciplinary collaboration and aligning the Graduate School's initiatives with broader institutional goals, championing efforts to support a thriving research ecosystem and advancing student success through targeted resources and programs. This leader will create a culture of best-practice sharing across departments, encouraging collaboration and continuous improvement to elevate the quality and consistency of graduate education at UMBC.

### **Strengthen and align institutional systems to improve the graduate student experience and well-being.**

The Vice Provost and Dean will advocate for graduate students and, through collaborations with other offices on campus (e.g., Division of Student Affairs, the Library, Student Disability Services, etc.), develop and strengthen systems to enhance the graduate student experience. This leader will prioritize student success strategies that enhance academic support, career readiness, and wellness, fostering an inclusive and engaging environment that helps graduate students reach their academic and professional goals. Though some graduate students may identify primarily with the department, college, or school in which they are studying, this leader is responsible for fostering connectedness among graduate students on campus and creating a culture where all graduate students feel a sense of belonging regardless of program/department.

Historically, the campus culture has emphasized undergraduate student support, which has sometimes resulted in graduate students feeling underserved. This leader will build upon the ongoing efforts to enhance the campus culture, reinforcing UMBC's commitment to equitable support for all students. With a growing number of international students, this leader will play a key role in creating and implementing support structures that address students' unique academic and personal needs as they pursue their degrees in a new country. The successful Vice Provost and Dean will collaborate closely with the Graduate Student Association (GSA) to ensure that student voices are heard and represented. By recognizing and addressing the unique challenges graduate students face – such as balancing rigorous research demands and preparing for specialized careers alongside work and family responsibilities – this leader will prioritize the development of comprehensive systems and resources based on current research and best practices that offer structured support for UMBC graduate students.

**Continue to advocate for, advance, and strengthen UMBC's commitment to inclusive excellence.**

UMBC is nationally recognized for its commitment to inclusive excellence, working to dismantle structural racism on campus and to disrupt sexual misconduct and gender-based discrimination. The University's success with diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility rests, in large part, on its belief that this work is never done. The next Vice Provost and Dean will not only bring a nuanced understanding of systemic racism and other structural inequities and how they impact the education sector but also have a proven track record of meaningful impact and engagement. They will be looked to as a leader, in both word and example, who is adept at developing and implementing strategies that go beyond mere acknowledgment. They will be skilled at proactively identifying and addressing issues, ensuring students are connected with university resources to confront harassment and discrimination, with particular sensitivity to the unique dynamics of the advisor-student relationship in graduate education.

**Enhance operational infrastructure and drive fundraising initiatives.**

The Vice Provost and Dean should bring substantial leadership and management experience to assess current systems and establish effective processes that support the school's success. They should prioritize removing barriers to collaboration and communication, exploring technological advancements that streamline processes across teams, and upholding transparency with clear, formal decision-making pathways. Additionally, this leader will be responsible for ensuring that the current infrastructure supports both current needs and the future direction of the Graduate School, allowing for flexibility.

As the face of the Graduate School, the Vice Provost and Dean will effectively communicate UMBC's vision and impact, inspiring potential donors to invest in the future of graduate education. They will leverage storytelling to highlight success stories and opportunities, fostering a culture of giving among alumni and community stakeholders. Additionally, this leader will collaborate with faculty and staff to identify funding needs and create compelling proposals that resonate with diverse funding sources.

**Align marketing and enrollment strategies to achieve institutional goals.**

In collaboration with university leadership, this leader will develop and implement data-driven marketing initiatives that highlight UMBC's unique strengths and programs, amplifying its visibility in competitive markets. They will bring a creative, strategic approach to graduate student recruitment: developing innovative methods, forming partnerships, and expanding recruitment efforts beyond traditional strategies to strengthen enrollment pipelines. By collaborating closely with academic departments and recruitment and admissions teams, they will ensure cohesive messaging that resonates with prospective students. This leader will enter a landscape where enrollment planning and data analysis have yet to be fully leveraged to guide decision-making in the Graduate School. They will establish a comprehensive, data-informed approach to enrollment management, ensuring that strategies are both intentional and aligned with institutional goals.



### **Cultivate a strong sense of community in the Graduate School.**

In collaboration with the Graduate School's leadership team, the Vice Provost and Dean will lead efforts in the recruitment, retention, and professional development of an exceptional and diverse staff. The Graduate School community currently enjoys a positive, inclusive culture that this next leader will continue to nurture and build to benefit staff and students.

The Graduate School benefits from a group of dedicated and talented staff members who are integral to its daily work and bring their expertise and exceptional service to bear in support of its mission. To maintain this high bar, the Vice Provost and Dean will work to provide appropriate recruitment and retention initiatives to attract talented staff and advocate for resources to ensure continued support and professional development.

### **QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS**

The successful candidate will possess the following required qualifications:

- Vision and ability to advance graduate education at UMBC, including interdisciplinary and campus-wide initiatives
- PhD or equivalent terminal degree from an accredited institution
- Substantial experience mentoring graduate students at a research university, meeting qualifications for tenure at the rank of Professor in an academic department at UMBC
- Demonstrated effectiveness in the administration of a large unit, including strategic and financial planning, with a track record of successful leadership
- Record of advancing equity, diversity, inclusion, and social justice
- Record of collaborative leadership across academic units; ability to create curricular and co-curricular components that advance student learning and research outcomes

While no person will embody every quality, the successful candidate will bring many of the following professional and personal qualifications:

- Demonstrated ability to lead graduate education to achieve excellence in teaching, research, and civic engagement
- An appreciation for the varied backgrounds and complex needs of graduate students today
- Commitment and track record of building strong relationships with graduate students through advising graduate student organizations (e.g., the Graduate Student Association), teaching courses, or having regularly scheduled formal and informal interactions
- Intellectual leader: a distinguished teacher, scholar, and academic visionary who can articulate the transformative power of university research, education, and service

- Record of accomplishment in the recruitment and retention of outstanding staff and students, including women and those traditionally underrepresented in higher education
- Experienced agent for change with strengths in organizational development, team building, and coalition leadership
- Relationship builder with a proven ability to engage and inspire donors through personalized communication and outreach efforts
- Demonstrated strategic and innovative thinking
- Record of evidence-informed, data-driven, transparent decision-making and accountability
- Showcase a commitment to sustaining a culture defined by trust, visibility, open communication, and transparency

Research shows that people belonging to structurally marginalized groups often only apply for jobs if they meet 100% of the qualifications. As no one ever meets 100% of the qualifications, we encourage you to apply if you feel that most of the above qualifications reflect your experience and expertise.

#### **APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS**

The University of Maryland, Baltimore County has retained Isaacson, Miller to assist in this search. The target salary range is \$226,000 to \$255,000 and will be commensurate with experience. 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 in confidence to:

**Keight Tucker Kenendy, Partner**

**Annah Wells, Associate**

**Alexis Scott, Senior Search Coordinator**

**Isaacson, Miller**

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/university-maryland-baltimore-county-graduate-school/vice-provost-and-dean>

*Have accommodation or access needs?*

*Isaacson, Miller and the University of Maryland, Baltimore County are committed to creating an inclusive environment and welcome applications from candidates with disabilities. If you have any accommodation or access needs, we are happy to provide reasonable accommodations.*

*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.*