



Search for the Dean of the Albin O. Kuhn Library & Gallery
University of Maryland, Baltimore County
Baltimore, MD

THE SEARCH

The University of Maryland, Baltimore County (“UMBC”) seeks a visionary and collaborative leader to serve as the inaugural Dean of the Albin O. Kuhn Library & Gallery (“AOK Library & Gallery” or “the Library”). As an experienced Library leader, the Dean will provide overall leadership to the Library and further connect the Library with the broader campus. Reporting to the Provost and a member of the University’s senior leadership team, the Dean will play a pivotal role in leading the AOK Library & Gallery into a new era of excellence and innovation.

Founded in 1966, UMBC is a distinguished national university with an inclusive culture that connects innovative teaching and learning, research across disciplines, and civic engagement. UMBC is dedicated to cultural and ethnic diversity, social responsibility, and lifelong learning. UMBC has achieved a remarkable national and international reputation for innovation and student success, best known for STEM but also the Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences. UMBC is home to approximately 14,000 students, around 1,000 faculty, and 95,000 alumni. Fifty-six percent of students identify as minority students, making UMBC a Minority Serving Institution (MSI). Located just southwest of downtown Baltimore City and in proximity to Washington DC, UMBC is a nationally recognized model of inclusive excellence. UMBC consistently ranks among the most innovative universities with the highest quality undergraduate teaching. As one of eleven campuses within the University System of Maryland, UMBC was designated as a Research 1 (R1) university in 2022, making it one of only 146 institutions nationally, including 107 public and 39 private universities, with the R1 designation for doctoral universities.

The Albin O. Kuhn Library & Gallery serves as the heartbeat of campus, strategically positioned at the center of the UMBC grounds with student dormitories on one side and academic buildings on the other, symbolizing its integral role in connecting and energizing the university community. Recognizing the rapidly evolving landscape of information access and digital innovation, the Dean of AOK Library & Gallery will lead transformative initiatives to ensure the Library remains at the forefront of academic and technological advancement. This community-building leader will cultivate a cohesive and inclusive culture within the Library, empowering staff and fostering a shared sense of purpose and pride. The Dean will inspire engagement across campus and beyond by articulating a bold and compelling vision for AOK Library & Gallery’s future, championing the Library’s essential role in supporting discovery, collaboration, and creativity. As a passionate advocate for the Library, the Dean will build meaningful relationships with diverse stakeholders, showcasing its impact as an indispensable cornerstone of UMBC’s academic and research excellence. With a commitment to innovation and adaptability, the Dean will ensure that AOK Library & Gallery thrives as a dynamic and forward-looking resource for the whole UMBC community.

UMBC has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist the university search committee. All applications, nominations, and inquiries, which will remain confidential, should be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

ABOUT 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](#). Significantly, UMBC is the nation's number one producer of Black undergraduates who go on to complete a PhD in the natural sciences or engineering and first for Black undergraduates who complete an M.D./Ph.D. as well. 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 receives more than \$144 million in externally funded research annually, including \$87 million from U.S. federal funding sources, reflecting an increase of 71% over the past three years. 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.

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 via select research and teaching facilities in downtown Baltimore.

The campus has transformed from a commuter school to a school that includes a large residential student body; the University enrolls almost 14,000 students (made up of about 11,000 undergraduate students and 3,000 graduate students). 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.

UMBC ranks among the U.S.'s top 100 public universities in federal research support, #16 in NASA funding, #33 in Geosciences, Atmospheric Science, & Ocean Sciences, and #44 in federal funding for social sciences. In 2020, UMBC was honored by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching with its distinguished Carnegie Community Engagement classification. For over a decade, The Chronicle of Higher Education has recognized UMBC as a "great college to work for."

For more information about the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, please see umbc.edu.

LEADERSHIP

Valerie Sheares Ashby, PhD, President of UMBC

The first woman to serve in this role, Dr. Sheares Ashby became the sixth president of UMBC on August 1, 2022. Dr. 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, 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.

As a researcher, Dr. 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.

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

A first-generation college student and first-generation immigrant to the U.S., Dr. Van Dulmen began his tenure at UMBC on July 1, 2024.

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. Since then, he 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.

ABOUT THE ALBIN O. KUHN LIBRARY & GALLERY

Centrally located and serving as a vibrant intellectual and cultural hub, the Albin O. Kuhn Library & Gallery is the heartbeat of campus and open to the public. Named after Albin O. Kuhn, the first President (then called Chancellor) of UMBC, the Library was constructed in multiple phases to accommodate the University's growth. The west wing was completed in 1968, followed by the east wing in 1975. The library expanded from 90,000 square feet to 131,000 in 1995, with a significant \$23 million expansion that included the construction of the library tower and main entrance. Renowned for its contemporary design and expansive resources, the library serves as a campus icon to support the academic endeavors of students and faculty alike. Its collection boasts an impressive range of print and digital materials. A sample of the collection includes over 1 million books and bound journals, over 140,000 eBooks, 30,000 sound recordings, over 33,00 subscriptions, approximately 4,500 linear feet of archival collections, and over 8 million items in the photography collections. With a seating capacity of over 1,100, the Library is consistently bustling, fostering an environment of energy and connection that underscores its role as a foundation of student life and academic engagement. With an average attendance of over 530,000 annually, the Library is a thriving hub for students, faculty, staff, and the general public. Representing its centrality to the campus community, the Library often welcomes on and off-campus visitors, and UMBC's President maintains an office and often takes meetings in the Library and the Gallery.

Mission

The Albin O. Kuhn Library & Gallery promotes intellectual growth and creativity by developing high-quality collections, facilitating access to information resources, and furthering innovative teaching, learning, and research. In support of the University's mission, the Library is dedicated to diversity, social responsibility, and lifelong learning.

Vision

The Albin O. Kuhn Library & Gallery will become the center of the University's intellectual and creative life.

To serve future users, the Library's physical and virtual space will be transformed to adapt to changing needs; respond to advances in research, teaching, and learning; and invest in dedicated and knowledgeable staff by supporting professional growth and encouraging innovation. The commitment to this vision will position the Library as an institutional asset as the University looks to advance knowledge, economic prosperity, and social justice.

Commitment to Inclusive Excellence:

In affirmation of UMBC's commitment to inclusive excellence, the Albin O. Kuhn Library and Gallery commits to supporting inclusive excellence for our users, staff, collections, environment, and services. The Library strives to create and maintain a community that acknowledges, encourages, appreciates, and celebrates differences. To accomplish this, the Library will:

- Create welcoming, accessible, and supportive spaces that uphold the physical, mental, and intellectual well-being of our users and staff;
- Recruit and support staff from all backgrounds;
- Facilitate equitable access to a comprehensive and inclusive range of information resources; and
- Develop initiatives for users and staff that advance social justice and cultural humility.

The [Special Collections](#) Department of the AOK Library & Gallery serves to collect, house, preserve, and make accessible scholarly collections of original, rare, unique, fragile, historical, and archival materials. The Special Collections Department emphasizes local collections that reflect the community surrounding UMBC's campus. Topics held in particular depth in the collections include photography, the history of the biological sciences, the Baltimore Sun newspaper, science fiction literature and popular culture, alternative presses and radical literature, Parapsychology, UMBC history and records, and Maryland folklife and history.

The [Library Gallery](#) plays a pivotal role in the University's intellectual and creative life. It presents thoughtfully researched exhibitions and public programs often drawn from UMBC's Special Collections, with particular emphasis on the history and cultural impact of photography. It also hosts lectures, traveling exhibits, and educational programming sponsored by campus groups. In support of the University's mission, the Library Gallery is dedicated to diversity, social responsibility, and lifelong learning in all its activities.

The Library houses several other important campus partners in the space. UMBC's [Academic Success Center](#) and the [Honors College](#) both occupy space in the library on the first and second floors, respectively. The [Retriever Learning Center](#) (RLC) is a secure, 24-hour space where students and faculty interact together informally or collaborate on research or projects. The RLC is UMBC's best place for lively group study, scholarly discussion, collaboration, and academic coaching.

Thanks to a generous gift from the Alan D. and Wendy R. Wilson Foundation, the Library has created a dedicated maker space for students to develop ideas, prototype projects, and seek mentorship on innovation and entrepreneurship. The [Alan and Wendy Wilson Innovation Lab](#) is open to all UMBC students, faculty, and staff. It includes five 3D printers, two 3D Scanners, two laser cutters, a soldering iron, and four dedicated lab workstations.

UMBC proudly participates in the [University System of Maryland and Affiliated Institutions](#) (USMAI), a 17-member statewide consortium that continues to broaden the reach of the Library and allows for shared resources, systems, and expertise. In addition, the UMBC is an active participant in the University of

Maryland Interlibrary Loan (UMILL) system, a powerful network that connects the university to an extensive array of resources across the University System of Maryland and beyond. This collaborative system allows students, faculty, and staff to access materials from partnering institutions, unlocking a wealth of knowledge and research opportunities. Through UMILL and USMAI, UMBC extends the reach of its already robust library collection, exemplifying the university's commitment to empowering discovery and fostering innovation.

ROLE OF THE DEAN OF THE ALBIN O. KUHN LIBRARY & GALLERY

Reporting to the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Dean is responsible for the leadership and administration of the UMBC Albin O. Kuhn Library & Gallery, overseeing their innovation and development in the areas of user service, technology, collections and resources, management and infrastructure, cooperative initiatives and cross-campus outreach, and support and funding. The Dean articulates a clear vision for the continued role of the academic research library; develops and implements the Library's strategic plan in support of the University's academic priorities, curricula, and research; and represents and advocates for the Library to campus administration and external audiences.

The Dean oversees a full team of 49 (22 full-time faculty and associate staff, and 28 non-exempt staff) in addition to an average of about 30 student assistants per semester. The Dean oversees five direct reports: the Administrative Services Manager and Head of Accounting & Receiving, the Curator and Head of Special Collections, the Associate Director of Library Innovation & Technology Services, the Associate Director of Public Services, and the Associate Director of Technical Services. The Library's state operating for FY2025 is \$10.2 million. The Dean of the Library is a member of the Academic Leadership Group and the Council of Deans and is the head of the permanent status review process for the UMBC library faculty.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE DEAN

The Dean role is an outstanding opportunity for an experienced senior administrator with a history of innovative and inclusive leadership. The successful candidate will be dynamic, strategic, entrepreneurial, collaborative, and creative in recognizing and utilizing opportunities as well as in identifying and overcoming constraints. Ultimately, the successful candidate will provide the leadership to develop and achieve a vision of an R1 university library in the 21st century. Working closely with the university leadership and library faculty and staff, the Dean of the Library will address the following opportunities and challenges:

Collaboratively advance a compelling, forward-thinking vision for AOK Library & Gallery

The Dean will lead the University in building and supporting a library commensurate with the needs of faculty and students at an academic research university in the 21st century. The Dean plays a key role on the University's leadership team and within the Council of Deans. The Dean ensures the integration of the library's work across all the academic units and interests of the University. Like other major academic research libraries, the UMBC Library must continue to define and position itself during a time of rapid transformation of the information management landscape and ensure that the Library's growth is commensurate with supporting UMBC's research needs. The 21st-century library needs to be innovative

and nimble to proactively respond to the continual changes in scholarly communication, open education resources, and the use of library buildings as spaces for instruction, learning, and community building. The Dean will bring innovative ideas to UMBC to enhance the value of the Library within the context of UMBC's mission and strategic priorities.

The Dean should anticipate change and be eager to lead, experiment, guide, and champion the Library in pursuit of the University and Library's vision and will balance attention to visionary plans with the core business of the Library. The Dean will build consensus toward critical choices and exercise leadership in allocating resources. The Dean will be alert in recognizing new, inventive ideas to keep pace with the changing demands of academic research libraries and embrace experimenting with new projects and solutions.

Support and enhance the UMBC's serious commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, social justice, and accessibility

Inclusive excellence across the campus is front and center of UMBC's mission. The Library has made significant progress in promoting and advancing inclusion, social justice, and accessibility within the Library and across campus, and the Dean will be invested and highly involved in achieving success in continued efforts. As a thought leader with a proven track record of actively advancing access and inclusion, the Dean will work in collaboration with faculty, staff, students, administration, and relevant committees to foster education, awareness, advocacy, and actions promoting an inclusive teaching and learning environment and resource allocation to advance UMBC's mission further. The inaugural Dean will prioritize the accessibility of library resources to provide UMBC students with equitable opportunities to succeed and innovate on campus and virtually and leverage the existing expertise in the AOK Library & Gallery to further this crucial mission.

Amplify, advocate, and champion the work of the Library

As a public presence for the library, the Dean will play an important and visible role in the university community. The Dean will be an effective and highly engaging communicator and tireless advocate for the Library, generating excitement across campus about its relevance and importance, facilitating collaboration with all academic units, and building campus awareness of the Library's resources, services, and capacity to support the teaching, research, and creative activities of the community. The Dean will work with campus leaders to ensure that the Library is equipped to meet the increasing demands of university research and will serve as a leader in supporting opportunities for open education resources. The position will provide a vision for integrated state-of-the-art library facilities that meet the needs of the campus community. The Dean will need to maintain strong channels of communication across the University to determine the best ways to support students in their studies and projects, as well as faculty in their teaching and research.

Pursue and cultivate partnerships with units across campus and beyond

As the inaugural Dean of the Albin O. Kuhn Library & Gallery, this leader will play a pivotal role in fostering interconnectedness across campus, creating new partnerships, and driving innovative collaborations that

enhance the Library's impact. By leveraging the expertise and creativity of the Library's team, the Dean will facilitate cross-campus connections and interdisciplinary partnerships, positioning the Library as a key catalyst for new ideas and transformative opportunities that advance the university's mission.

As discussed above, AOK Library & Gallery Library is part of the University System of Maryland and USMAI Library consortium. This provides a significant set of resources both to UMBC faculty and students, as well as professional development opportunities for the AOK Library professionals.

Explore opportunities to secure supplemental support and partnerships

While the Library receives strong support for its core programs, a dynamic and creative Dean can explore opportunities to raise funds on behalf of the AOK Library & Gallery. The new Dean will have an opportunity to reengage and energize The Friends of the Albin O. Kuhn Library and Gallery. The Friends Group was created to enrich the library by sponsoring speakers, exhibitions, and purchases not covered by the UMBC budget. Its membership is traditionally comprised of retired faculty and dedicated community members. Over time, participation in the program gradually declined, leading to its eventual dormancy. Revitalizing this program presents a unique opportunity for the inaugural dean to re-engage alumni, faculty, and other stakeholders, fostering renewed support for the library's mission. By collaborating with the development office and reinvigorating this program, the Dean can build a stronger network of advocates to enhance its resources and enrich the campus experience.

Enhance the organizational structure and culture of the Library to recruit and retain a talented and diverse team

The incoming Dean will recognize and bolster the contributions of this remarkable community and actively nurture consultation, as well as the health and morale of staff and faculty. The Dean will lead with transparency, mutual respect, emotional intelligence, and interpersonal engagement, inspiring and earning trust both inside the Library and with the broader campus. By encouraging ongoing professional development and soliciting feedback from the faculty and staff of the Library, community, and key stakeholders, the Dean will establish a clear organizational structure that invites their colleagues to lead alongside them. In creating a culture of collaboration, the next Dean will actively listen and lift up ideas for change and build connections and knowledge amongst all faculty and staff.

The Dean will oversee the recruitment and professional advancement of Library staff and faculty. Faculty Librarians at UMBC are classified by professional track designations of Librarian I-IV commensurate with professional graduate training. The Dean will support the professional advancement of the Library faculty by advocating and advancing opportunities for leadership in service roles, supporting scholarship with dedicated research funding and leave, and advancing the faculty through the campus's permanent status and promotion guidelines. The Dean will support the professional advancement of staff by advocating and advancing opportunities for professional development and leadership roles, as well as funding for training and other growth opportunities.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The Dean will be a thoughtful and visionary leader with a record of professional success in the field. The Dean will welcome the collaboration of faculty and staff at all levels in the division and possess the drive, innovative spirit, and care that will inspire those working in and with the AOK Library & Gallery.

The ideal candidate will possess many of the following experiences, competencies, and personal qualities:

- A minimum of 10 years of progressively responsible experience in a library setting in leadership roles, with at least two years at a leadership level that includes budgetary, programmatic, and people management at a similar scale and/or in academic or research libraries.
- An MLS or equivalent degree from an ALA-accredited institution and/or PhD and commensurate library leadership experience.
- An entrepreneurial mindset with a proven track record of decisive leadership with constructive outcomes.
- A demonstrated ability to understand and plan for the innovative needs of an R1 academic library and the community it serves.
- Developing and maintaining collaborative partnerships with internal and external stakeholders
- A clear understanding of the challenges facing higher education and research university libraries in the digital age.
- A high degree of emotional intelligence, including an interpersonal style that fosters collaboration and meaningful relationships with colleagues and students.
- Demonstrated effectiveness and competency in the development and execution of strategic and operational plans and policy development that require coordination and collaboration across internal departments and external functions.
- Experience with fundraising, public relations, and donor relations.
- A record of success as an administratively strong and collaborative leader in a mission-driven organization.
- Exceptional communication skills, with the ability to convey a vision and value effectively to diverse audiences.
- The ability to inspire, build, lead, motivate, and provide vision to staff while overseeing complex organizational structures and encouraging change and growth in programs and people.
- A demonstrated commitment to public higher education and experience with inclusive excellence, with an active record of removing systemic barriers.
- Experience with academic library building construction and/or renovation experience is desirable.
- The highest integrity and can-do attitude; even keeled and calm when leading through challenges.
- Demonstrated commitment to – and evidence for – supporting and developing a culture of inclusive excellence

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

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. The target salary range for this role is \$225,000 - \$250,000 and will be commensurate with experience. Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

Sean Farrell, Partner (he/him)
Arianna Williams, Senior Associate (she/her)
Drew Chang, Search Coordinator (she/her)
Isaacson, Miller

[Dean of Albin O. Kuhn Library, UMBC](#)

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.