



Search for the Assistant Vice President and Dean of Students
University of Maryland, Baltimore County
Baltimore, MD

THE SEARCH

The University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) seeks a dynamic, student-centered leader to serve as its inaugural Assistant Vice President and Dean of Students (AVP/DOS). Reporting to the Vice President for Student Affairs, the newly elevated role will provide visionary leadership across a broad portfolio of departments and initiatives that foster belonging, engagement, and holistic development for UMBC's diverse student body. This is an exceptional opportunity for a seasoned and compassionate student-centered leader to join a nationally recognized institution known for its innovation, inclusive culture, and commitment to transforming lives through education and engagement.

UMBC is a nationally recognized public research university known for its commitment to inclusive excellence. As a Minority Serving Institution and a Carnegie R1 university, UMBC is home to a vibrant and diverse student population, and it consistently ranks among the most innovative institutions in the country. The Division of Student Affairs plays a central role in creating a vibrant and engaging student experience, encompassing a wide range of departments—from health and wellness to civic engagement and identity development—that work collaboratively to support students' academic, personal, and professional growth.

The AVP/DOS will join the Division at a pivotal moment of organizational transformation. As part of a broader realignment, the AVP/DOS will lead efforts to evaluate and refine the structure, systems, and staffing within their portfolio to ensure alignment with institutional priorities and the evolving needs of students. The AVP/DOS will be a collaborative strategist, a trusted advocate, and a visible campus leader, guiding the Division in its mission to empower students and enrich the UMBC experience. The AVP/DOS will be a known and trusted advocate for students, guiding efforts in crisis response, case management, and behavioral intervention, while cultivating a vibrant and safe campus community. They will lead and develop a talented team of professionals and collaborate across the university to advance inclusive excellence, student success, and institutional pride. With a strong foundation in student affairs best practices, organization development, and data-informed decision-making, the AVP/DOS will play a pivotal role in shaping the future of campus and student life at UMBC.

The Vice President of Student Affairs will lead this important search in partnership with the national 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.

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. 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. Most of the University's academic programs are offered on its 500-acre main campus near Baltimore, with some programs offered at the University's Shady Grove campus – a distinctive partnership of nine USM institutions – in Rockville, Maryland, and select research and teaching facilities in downtown Baltimore.

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 U.S.'s top 100 public universities in federal research support, #14 in NASA funding, and #40 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. 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.

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

Community

“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 Vision Statement

UMBC serves 13,487 total students: 11,056 undergraduates and 2,431 graduates. Most students (82% of undergraduates and 18% 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 2025, 12% of undergraduate and graduate students were international, and over 40 countries are represented in the entire student body.

The University is firmly committed to access and is a diverse and welcoming community, with just over 70% of students self-identifying as students of color. As of Fall 2025, across undergraduate and graduate students, the University enrolled a student body comprising 27% White students, 23% Black/African American students, 21% Asian American students, 10% Hispanic/Latinx students, and 12% international students. 54% of students self-identify as men and 46% as women, a trend that has remained relatively stable over the past 20 years.

UMBC's 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 approximately 594 full-time instructional faculty members, of whom 451 hold the ranks of professor, associate professor, or assistant professor. 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 1,352 staff members in a variety of non-faculty roles.

UMBC embraces a strong shared-governance model, in which academic success is facilitated 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. To learn more about each of the groups, please visit <https://usc.umbc.edu/>.

THE DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

The division is undergoing an exciting reorganization, which includes several new departments and realignments. Encompassing several departments, the division of student affairs serves as a dynamic resource for student social and academic success. With a passionate and dedicated administrative leadership team, the division strives to serve a student population and campus community that has seen immense growth in a short amount of time. The division supports innovative and dynamic changes that creatively reimagine what student life is and how it can continue to better serve all students in their academic pursuits, as active campus community members, and as global citizens. For more information on the Division of Student Affairs and the various departments, please [explore here](#).

The Division of Student Affairs plays a central role in cultivating a vibrant, inclusive, and student-centered campus environment. Committed to fostering belonging, well-being, and success, the Division

encompasses a wide array of departments that support students holistically—from health and wellness to leadership development and civic engagement. Key units include the [Office of Health Promotion](#), [Residential Life](#), [Student Conduct and Community Standards](#), [Career Center](#), [Retriever Integrated Health](#), [Center for Democracy and Civic Life](#), [Graduate Student Life](#), and the [Dean of Students Office](#), which launched in Fall 2024. Together, these departments collaborate to create transformative experiences that prepare students to thrive academically, socially, and professionally. Among its signature initiatives is the [Student Success Initiatives](#), which supports first-generation, transfer, and culturally diverse students through targeted programming and leadership development. The Division also leads efforts in holistic student support through the [Retriever Support Services](#), a cross-campus system designed to identify and respond to students in need of coordinated care and basic needs support. In addition, Student Affairs champions student engagement and belonging through [Campus Life](#), which includes more than 270 student organizations, 3 cultural centers, graduate student life and adult and commuter student engagement. The Division’s commitment to continuous improvement is reflected in its internal [Student Affairs Assessment and Research Committee \(SAARC\)](#), which ensures that programs and services are responsive to student needs and aligned with institutional goals. These initiatives exemplify UMBC’s mission to unlock potential and transform lives through meaningful, inclusive, and transformative student experiences.

Leadership

Renique Kersh, PhD, became UMBC’s Vice President for Student Affairs in August 2023. Throughout her career, Dr. Kersh has led student success and engagement with a strong commitment to creating experiential equity, providing leadership development, and building strong teams. She is committed to putting students at the center of important institutional decisions. Her experience in both academic and student affairs provides her with a broad understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing students and higher education institutions, and positions her well to lead institutional efforts. Dr. Kersh has provided visionary leadership at both public and private institutions, engaging university stakeholders in the critical and collaborative work required to ensure that students are transformed by their experiences both in and out of the classroom.

Dr. Kersh earned her BA in Communications from Oakland University, her M.Ed. in College Student Personnel from the University of Maryland, and her PhD in Community Health from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

ROLE OF THE ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT AND DEAN OF STUDENTS

The creation of the new AVP/DOS role exemplifies a strategic realignment that brings closely related areas within the Division of Student Affairs into a unified executive portfolio including units in [engagement and belonging](#), [student support](#) and [community standards](#). This role reflects UMBC’s commitment to organizational change, student-centered excellence, and holistic support for undergraduate, graduate, and professional students. A seasoned student affairs professional, the AVP/DOS will lead the full implementation of the newly established Dean of Students Office, which launched in Fall 2024. Following a recent program review of the student conduct and community standards area, the AVP/DOS will lead

efforts to align these functions with best practices—balancing community standards, institutional reputation, safety, and individual responsibility.

Reporting to the Vice President for Student Affairs, the AVP/DOS role currently oversees nine departments, with eight direct reports, serving as a key partner in providing leadership and strategic vision for a broad range of programs that enrich and support the UMBC student experience. The AVP/DOS will re-envision the student engagement area to enhance campus vibrancy, strengthen student leader development, and elevate traditions and anchor programs. The AVP/DOS will also serve as a campus-wide consultant to deans, department chairs, and staff on emerging trends and effective approaches to student success and behavioral intervention. Through strategic partnerships across the division and university, this work will position student engagement as a high-impact experience, fostering increased campus pride and spirit.

The AVP/DOS is responsible for fostering a student-centered environment that enhances student learning, engagement, and well-being. The AVP/DOS will provide direction in managing crises, supporting students of concern, and advancing a sense of belonging and engagement within an inclusive community. This role requires a deep dedication to serving students at all levels, including those at the Universities at Shady Grove.

The ideal candidate will be a visionary and experienced leader, capable of guiding organizational change, managing complex crises, fostering vibrant campus communities, and building inclusive, responsible, and innovative student support structures. The AVP/DOS must be a collaborative strategist and an effective communicator, adept at managing a large portfolio of interconnected units. This leader will have a strong and effective presence on campus and will be a visible and engaged mentor and leader for the staff within their portfolio, ensuring alignment with the mission and vision of both the division and the university.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT AND DEAN OF STUDENTS

UMBC seeks an AVP/DOS with a strategic vision, a thorough understanding of best practices in student affairs, and the creativity to meet the challenges facing higher education and UMBC’s diverse and evolving student community. Overseeing a \$5 million budget, the AVP/DOS will work closely with colleagues to ensure their hard work is responsive, coordinated, data-driven, and closely aligned with the mission of the university and its community members. The key opportunities and challenges include:

Lead strategic change and shape a student-centered organizational culture

The AVP/DOS will serve as a visible and influential leader during a pivotal moment of institutional transformation, joining a newly formed executive leadership team and contributing to a reimagined vision for student affairs at UMBC. With the opportunity to be innovative, creative, and forward-thinking, the AVP/DOS will play a central role in shaping organizational culture and driving change that enhances the student experience and fosters a deep sense of belonging.

This leader will conduct a comprehensive review of current operations across their portfolio, applying a data-informed approach to assess effectiveness, identify gaps, and implement improvements. As both a visionary and a pragmatic builder, the AVP/DOS will unify stakeholders around a shared purpose, providing clarity of direction and cultivating alignment across teams. The AVP/DOS will be empowered to make independent decisions, manage upward, and streamline systems and processes to ensure alignment with institutional priorities and student-centered outcomes. The AVP/DOS will lead efforts to create capacity, clarify roles, and realign structures where needed, fostering a highly productive and student-focused workforce. Through thoughtful collaboration and analysis, this individual will ensure that programs and services support the holistic development of students—including academic success, resilience, empathy, inclusion, and meaningful interpersonal engagement. This leader will establish clear goals and measurable outcomes, creating systems for tracking progress and celebrating success to ensure accountability and continuous improvement.

Build and support the development of a dedicated team of professionals

The AVP/DOS oversees a broad and distinctive set of areas and offices, and benefits from a highly effective staff with a deep commitment to supporting and enhancing the student experience at UMBC. The next AVP/DOS will develop a talented team of professionals to maintain high standards of performance. As an experienced manager, this individual will bring strong emotional intelligence, organizational development skills, and proven accomplishments in building and managing strong, vibrant teams. The AVP/DOS must possess the capacity to develop effective systems and processes that will streamline office functions, enhance productivity and collaboration, and allow for consistent communication to support students across the institution. They will motivate and inspire staff, fostering a culture of trust, empowerment, transparency, and excellence while facilitating internal collaboration to better serve UMBC students.

Given recent leadership transitions, the AVP/DOS will prioritize trust-building and team cohesion, fostering a sense of stability and shared purpose across the division. They will actively promote collaboration within and across departments, while continuing to evaluate the staff structure to ensure alignment with strategic goals and communicating changes with transparency and care. Strong change management skills will be essential, as the AVP/DOS will be expected to bring clarity to roles and responsibilities, helping staff understand how their work contributes to the broader mission.

Foster and maintain a vibrant and safe campus community for all students

This leader will embrace the vibrancy of UMBC's campus life for all students and identify opportunities to strengthen university identity, pride, and community connection. In addition to being a champion for student voice, the AVP/DOS will bring deep expertise in crisis response, case management, behavioral intervention, and threat assessment. They will lead efforts to ensure that students in distress receive timely, coordinated, and compassionate support, while also contributing to a safe and inclusive campus environment through proactive systems and cross-functional collaboration. As a campus leader, the AVP/DOS is expected to provide effective leadership and guidance when student-related crises occur, demonstrating sound judgment in assessing the appropriate level of response for each situation. This individual will possess a proven ability to manage through campus-level and individual student crises with equanimity, discretion, and a sense of responsibility and respect for students, families, and the institution.

Champion an inclusive campus community and enhance the core value of inclusive excellence

Inclusive excellence across the campus is front and center of UMBC's mission and at the core of the UMBC culture. The AVP/DOS will work alongside other senior administrators, faculty, and staff to ensure that the academic and social needs of the students are met and that their UMBC experience is an equitable one. In collaboration with the leaders of the Division of Student Affairs, the next AVP/DOS will envision and implement new ways to advance UMBC's commitment to the values of community and inclusion, building an intentional and inclusive campus culture that ensures students of all racial, socio-economic, gender, citizenship, and neurodiverse identities thrive at UMBC.

This leader will be a visible and engaged presence on campus—attending student events, participating in campus traditions, and building authentic relationships with students outside of formal or crisis contexts. Their joy in working with students will be evident, and they will inspire staff who share this commitment to student success and belonging.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The minimum educational qualifications include a doctorate in higher education administration, student affairs, counseling, or a related field (other related terminal degrees may be considered). While no one person will embody all the following, the successful AVP/DOS candidate will bring many of the following professional qualifications, skills, experiences, and personal qualities:

- At least 8–10 years of progressively responsible leadership experience in student affairs or a related area
- An understanding of the differences and commonalities that will be necessary for student engagement that serves both undergraduate and graduate students
- Experience in leading organizational change and development within a complex institution
- Demonstrated commitment to the fostering of a diverse and inclusive student community
- Experience with public health issues, crisis management, and emergency situations
- Strong background in crisis response, student support services, and behavioral intervention
- Exceptional communication, strategic planning, and stakeholder engagement skills
- Demonstrated experience leading innovative initiatives and programs working with student organizations and shared governance leaders
- Facility in analyzing data to develop and assess programs to drive change and innovation
- High degree of accessibility and openness to students, and demonstrated record of earning and maintaining the trust of the student body
- Highest personal and professional integrity
- Adaptable and able to function effectively in a complex environment and work with all stakeholders within and outside of the institution
- Intellectually curious and open-minded; motivated and energized by a talented and high-performing student body
- Proven ability to inspire, lead, support, and mentor a team of skilled and dedicated professionals, effectively manage talent, and develop processes for effective teamwork
- Experience with student conduct systems, care teams, and student leadership development programs

- Familiarity with current and emerging issues in higher education, including mental health, Title IX, campus climate, and regulatory compliance
- Proven track record of effective fiscal and operational management
- Strategic leader able to engage with diverse stakeholders
- Background in using student affairs technology platforms (e.g., Maxient, Advocate, Starfish, Qualtrics, Campus Labs)

Research shows that some people 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 search process is completed. The target salary range for this role is \$175,000 - \$195,000 and will be commensurate with experience. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website.

Keight Tucker Kennedy, *Managing Partner*

Arianna Williams, *Senior Associate*

Alexis Scott, *Senior Search Coordinator*

Isaacson, Miller

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/university-maryland-baltimore-county/assistant-vice-president-and-dean-students>

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.

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