



Search for the Dean, College of Natural and Mathematical Sciences
University of Maryland, Baltimore County
Baltimore, Maryland

THE SEARCH

The University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC), a nationally recognized leader in inclusive excellence and interdisciplinary research, seeks a strategic and visionary Dean to lead its College of Natural and Mathematical Sciences (CNMS or the College). CNMS works to extend the boundaries of science and pursue excellence in the delivery and innovation of teaching and learning. As UMBC continues to build on the momentum of its elevation to R1 research status, the next Dean will play a vital role in shaping the College's future, strengthening its academic programs, supporting scholarly ambition, and advancing its public mission.

In this pivotal leadership role, the Dean will steward a college comprising 7 departments and 10 distinct programs, each contributing unique perspectives and strengths. UMBC seeks a leader who can nurture collaboration across disciplinary boundaries, support faculty in expanding their research impact, and advance education amid evolving funding landscapes and enrollment patterns. The Dean will serve as a compelling advocate for the natural and mathematical sciences, providing the support and leadership needed to ensure the College and its disciplines are well resourced and prepared to thrive in an ever changing scientific world.

Success in this role will require a seasoned academic administrator with a distinguished record of scholarly achievement and a deep commitment to excellence in research, student success, faculty development, and inclusive excellence. This leader will be a coalition builder, skilled at fostering trust and building relationships across the university and with alumni, donors, and external partners. Experience navigating complex institutions and a thoughtful approach to strategic planning and resource management will be essential. Equally important is a leadership style grounded in empathy, integrity, and curiosity that fosters a climate where people feel supported and every member of the community can thrive.

The University of Maryland, Baltimore County, has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to support this critical recruitment. Confidential inquiries, nominations, and applications may be directed to the firm as indicated at the end of this document.

ABOUT THE 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. It enjoys more than \$118 million in externally funded research annually. The University delivers a distinctive undergraduate educational experience characterized by a strong liberal arts and sciences core and offers graduate programs in engineering, computer science, information technology, science, mathematics and statistics, humanities, social sciences, public policy, and human services. UMBC 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 suburban 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.

The University enrolls almost 14,000 students. Over the past 20 years, UMBC has increased its international student population, more than doubled the proportion of students from low-income households, and more than doubled its annual graduates, from 1,700 to nearly 3,500.

UMBC has achieved a remarkable national and international reputation for innovation and student success. Reflecting its commitment to experiential learning, 85% of undergraduates engage in applied learning opportunities, such as internships, research, service-learning, study abroad, student teaching, and leadership positions while at UMBC. The university supports high-achieving students through distinctive programs such as the Humanities Scholars Program, the Linehan Artist Scholars Program, and the Sondheim Public Affairs Scholars Program, which cultivate leadership, creativity, and civic engagement in the arts, humanities, and social sciences. 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.”

LEADERSHIP

Valerie Sheares Ashby, PhD, President

Valerie Sheares Ashby began as the sixth president of UMBC on August 1, 2022. She is the first woman to serve in this role and 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. Before 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, 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.

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 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 13,530 total students: 11,087 undergraduates and 2,443 graduates. Most students 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, 11% 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 60% 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 or Asian American students, and 10% Hispanic/Latinx 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 985 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 and 391 part-time faculty members.

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 1,288 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 Adjunct Faculty Advisory Committee, 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 COLLEGE OF NATURAL AND MATHEMATICAL SCIENCES

The College of Natural and Mathematical Sciences (CNMS) serves as a cornerstone of the university's leadership in STEM education and research, advancing discovery through collaborative and increasingly interdisciplinary approaches. Since its founding in 2005, when UMBC's longstanding College of Arts and Sciences was reorganized into CNMS and the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, CNMS has cultivated a reputation for innovation across biology, chemistry, physics, mathematics, and emerging fields that bridge traditional disciplinary boundaries. The College is home to 190 faculty and 80 staff members and comprises 10 departments and programs. Twelve undergraduate and 16 graduate programs are offered spanning both basic and applied sciences. In Fall 2025, CNMS enrolled 2,024 undergraduate and 343 graduate students, with 54% of the total student population identifying as members of minority groups, reflecting UMBC's longstanding commitment to access, inclusion, and student success.

CNMS supports a vibrant research enterprise across the natural and mathematical sciences, providing faculty and students with access to [in-house core facilities](#) that provide shared instrumentation, technical expertise, and specialized resources. These facilities enable cutting-edge inquiry, create opportunities for greater cross-departmental collaboration and external partnerships, and elevate the College's research productivity and visibility. In FY 2025, CNMS's annual extramural research expenditures were just under \$25 million, a record high for the college, reflecting the College's commitment to advancing discovery.

CNMS balances a dual commitment to delivering a rigorous, accessible education that serves the needs of the state of Maryland while sustaining a trajectory of research excellence that elevates the institution's national profile. In addition to educating its own majors, the College provides many of UMBC's largest foundational service courses, supporting students across the university in building essential scientific and mathematical and statistical literacy. CNMS actively contributes to workforce development in critical STEM fields, preparing graduates who are equipped to lead in academia, industry, and beyond. At the same time, the College continues to expand its research enterprise through strategic investments in faculty scholarship, research infrastructure, and initiatives that encourage greater collaboration across disciplines. The integrated focus on education, research, and service positions CNMS as a vital engine of innovation and opportunity at UMBC.

ROLE OF THE DEAN

Reporting to the Provost and Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs, the Dean is the principal academic and administrative officer for CNMS. The Dean will build upon the College's strong foundation and UMBC's elevation to R1 status by developing and implementing a strategic vision that advances excellence in teaching, scholarship, and public engagement across all disciplines. This includes fostering collaboration among the departments and programs and with departments and programs throughout the university, supporting innovative research and scientific scholarship, and enhancing graduate and undergraduate education with an emphasis on student success.

The Dean is responsible for ensuring the quality and vitality of CNMS's academic programs and research portfolio, effectively managing fiscal and human resources, and overseeing the College's physical and operational infrastructure. As the face of the College, the Dean communicates the vision and mission of CNMS to the community while seeking public and private funds to support its goals. They are supported by a talented team of department chairs and directors, three associate deans, two assistant deans, a finance and administration team, a core research facilities team, a research support team, and an academic advising team.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE DEAN

Articulate and advance a bold, shared vision for the College's next chapter.

The next Dean will lead the College at a pivotal moment in UMBC's history as rapid technological advancement and evolving research priorities, societal expectations, and funding mechanisms reshape the landscape. The College must evolve to meet this moment, embracing new opportunities, addressing emerging challenges, and positioning itself for sustained impact. The Dean will be charged with articulating a compelling vision for the future and translating that vision into creative, systemic change that strengthens programs, enhances the research enterprise, and deepens internal and external partnerships. This work will require both strategic clarity and inclusive leadership, the ability to inspire confidence and build trust so that faculty, staff, students and external stakeholders see themselves reflected in and energized by the path forward. By pairing ambition with thoughtful execution, the Dean will help guide the College into a strong and forward-looking next chapter.

Foster interdisciplinary collaboration and strengthen cohesion across a diverse academic portfolio.

The next Dean will take helm of a college defined by the breadth of its disciplines, programs, and units. With departments spanning the natural sciences and mathematics, and with some units operating at satellite locations, the College's diversity is one of its greatest assets. At the same time, this breadth presents an opportunity to cultivate greater cohesion and a stronger sense of shared identity. The Dean will have the opportunity to position the College's varied programs not as discrete entities, but as interconnected contributors to a larger academic and research enterprise whose collective impact exceeds the sum of its parts. The Dean will encourage deeper connections across disciplines and create

space for collaboration across departmental and college lines. There is a strong appetite for leadership that brings people together in ways that feel novel, intentional, and supported. The Dean will play a critical role in strengthening interdisciplinary engagement and ensuring that CNMS's diversity is fully leveraged as a strategic advantage.

Balance an enduring commitment to education and teaching with research excellence.

UMBC's transition to R1 status is a defining opportunity for CNMS to continue elevating its research profile while staying true to its founding commitment to education. The next Dean must champion excellence in teaching, curricular innovation, and student support ensuring that academic offerings remain rigorous, relevant, and responsive to evolving needs. Graduate education remains a vital part of the College's identity and impact. As funding models evolve and international enrollment becomes more complex, the Dean will be called upon to strengthen graduate programs and the students who sustain them.

At the same time, the institution is welcoming a new era of research opportunity. The Dean will be charged with advancing a vibrant and innovative research enterprise. They will scale research support and remove barriers to scholarly productivity. The Dean will support faculty members in competing for external research funding across all disciplines and in their pursuit of a variety of research and publication opportunities. Central to this challenge is positioning research growth as complementary to, rather than in competition with, the College's educational mission. By aligning expectations, incentives, and resources across both domains, the Dean will ensure that CNMS thrives as a research-intensive college grounded in a deep and enduring commitment to student learning and success.

Provide strong administrative leadership and steward the College's people and resources.

The next Dean must bring deep administrative experience and sound financial judgment to guide the College through an increasingly complex resource environment. With evolving funding models and heightened expectations tied to research growth and student success, the Dean will need a sophisticated understanding of university budgeting, revenue streams, and cost structures. Core facilities and research infrastructure require strategic attention to ensure they remain competitive with peer institutions and capable of supporting ambitious scholarly work. The Dean will be responsible for identifying priorities, advocating effectively for resources, and aligning investments with the College's long-term goals. Careful stewardship, transparent decision-making, and the ability to navigate institutional processes will be essential to sustaining momentum and credibility.

Equally important, the Dean must be an accomplished and engaged people leader. Attracting, developing, and retaining exceptional faculty and staff will depend on leadership that is both inspiring and structured, setting clear goals and expectations while fostering a culture of accountability, recognition, and professional growth. The College will benefit from a Dean who communicates openly, clarifies roles and pathways for advancement, and supports chairs and unit leaders in building strong teams. By pairing

strategic management of resources with thoughtful investment in people, the Dean will create the conditions for excellence across teaching, research, and service.

Serve as a compelling advocate for the College, within the university and beyond.

The next Dean will play a critical role as the principal advocate for CNMS, ensuring that the College's goals, priorities, and resource needs are clearly understood and supported across the university. This includes working closely with senior leadership to align College initiatives with broader institutional objectives and securing the investments necessary to advance. Externally, the Dean will serve as a visible champion for CNMS, building and sustaining relationships with external stakeholders by articulating a compelling narrative that creates opportunities for new partnerships and investment. The Dean will be expected to engage in fundraising in innovative and strategic ways, inspiring confidence and enthusiasm while expanding the College's philanthropic base.

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

UMBC is nationally recognized for its commitment to inclusive excellence, fostering an academic environment where people from all backgrounds are supported in their pursuit of knowledge. This culture is the result of decades of intentional work that continues to evolve in response to the needs of the university community. That commitment is evident in the College's efforts to expand access, cultivate a community of belonging, and elevate the voices of students, faculty, and staff. The next Dean of CNMS will join a college that values openness to new ideas, collaboration across perspectives, and a strong sense of community. As the College looks to the future, it continues to build on this strong foundation, adapting thoughtfully to a changing landscape while holding fast to the belief that academic excellence and innovation are strongest when shaped by a wide range of perspectives and experiences.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The successful candidate will possess the following required qualifications:

- Distinguished record of scholarly achievement as defined by disciplinary standards in the natural or mathematical sciences
- Excellence in teaching and mentoring at both undergraduate and graduate levels, with a commitment to inclusive pedagogy and student success
- PhD or equivalent terminal degree from an accredited institution
- Currently hold the rank of Professor and is eligible for appointment at the rank of Professor with tenure in an academic department in CNMS
- Demonstrated effectiveness in the administration of a large academic unit, including strategic and financial planning, with a track record of successful leadership

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

- An appreciation for the varied backgrounds and complex needs of undergraduate and graduate students today
- An understanding of and experience with change management, with the ability to empower, delegate, and build consensus
- Experience with alumni or donor relations, and/or demonstrate the potential for success in this work; strength in storytelling and a desire to engage in fundraising activities
- The ability to assess and prioritize tasks, balancing urgent needs with long-term strategic objectives
- A commitment to sustaining a culture defined by trust, transparency, and open communication
- The capacity to approach difficult conversations with empathy, transparency, and a commitment to resolution

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

The University of Maryland, Baltimore County has retained Isaacson, Miller to assist in this search. The target salary range is \$275,000 to \$310,000 and will be commensurate with experience. For best consideration, please submit materials by April 15. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent in confidence via the [search portal on the Isaacson, Miller website](#).

Keight Tucker Kennedy, Partner
Courtney Cabansag, Associate
Alexis Scott, Senior Search Coordinator
Isaacson, Miller

Have accommodation or access needs?

Isaacson, Miller, and the University of Maryland, Baltimore County 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, 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.

This document has been prepared based on the information provided by the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. The material presented in this leadership profile should be relied on for informational purposes only. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, the original source documents and information provided by UMBC would supersede any conflicting information in this document.