



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

University of Maryland, Baltimore County
1000 Hilltop Circle, Baltimore, MD 21250

umbc.edu

University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC)

Fiscal Year 2025 Operating Budget

Response to Department of Legislative Services Analysis

Budget and Taxation Committee

Education, Business, and Administration

Senator Nancy J. King

February 9, 2024

Appropriations Committee

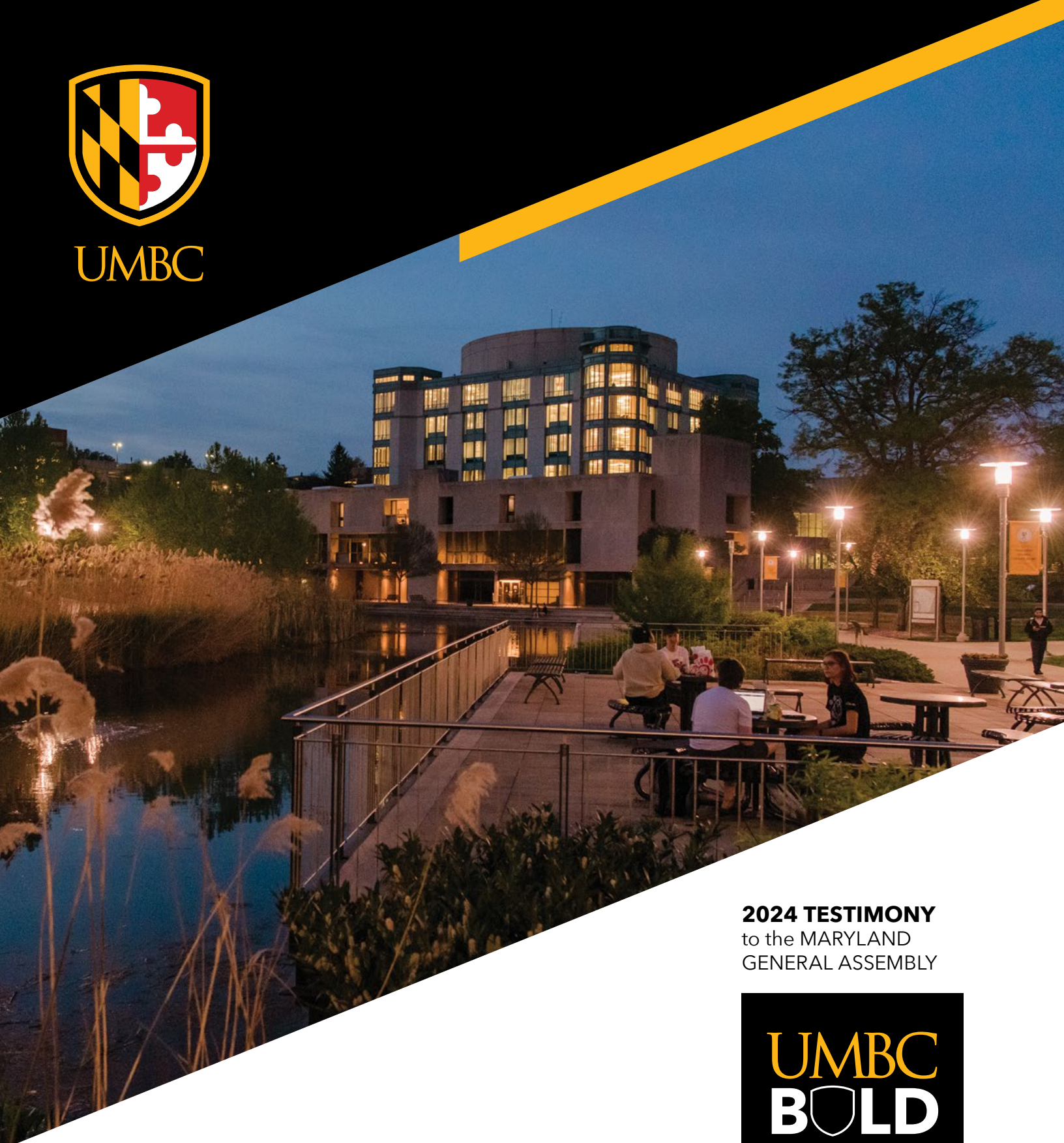
Education and Economic Development

Delegate Stephanie Smith

February 14, 2024



UMBC



2024 TESTIMONY
to the MARYLAND
GENERAL ASSEMBLY



Presented by
Valerie Sheares Ashby
President
University of Maryland,
Baltimore County



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In this, my second year as president of UMBC, I am more inspired and optimistic than ever about the future of this extraordinary institution and the role it will play in advancing the great state of Maryland and the lives of all Marylanders.

What I know about UMBC is that it is a bold, dynamic institution filled with people who are deeply dedicated to its public mission and driven by its vision for inclusive excellence. I know that UMBC is transforming individual lives and changing family trajectories, creating knowledge, and educating a sophisticated, highly skilled workforce that is contributing to the economic vitality of the state.

What I know about Maryland is that there is nowhere better to pursue higher education, and that we are all beneficiaries of the longstanding support for education that the state's local and statewide leaders have shown. This is a state that believes in higher education and knows that its purpose lies not just in individual achievement, but also in lifting up all of society.

As a university, our aim is to advance understanding—of ourselves, one another, and our world—and to pursue peace and justice for all of humanity. This very public purpose seems ever-more relevant, valuable, and urgent. On behalf of the entire UMBC community, thank you for your continued support and partnership in this critical mission.

Valerie Sheares Ashby
President, UMBC

Moments captured on stage and with students at President Sheares Ashby's Inauguration in April 2023.



By the Numbers

Who We Are

We pride ourselves on making education inclusive for all. This is a snapshot of our student body at our Baltimore County and Shady Grove campuses:

14,148

Total Enrollment*

* As of Fall 2023

10,490

Undergraduate

3,658

Graduate

29.9%

First-Generation Students

30.5%

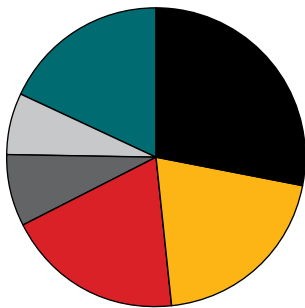
Transfer Students

92.6%

In-State Students

90+

Countries Represented



Student Enrollment

- African American 20.2%
- Asian American 19.3%
- Hispanic 7.7%
- International 17.8%
- Other 6.8%
- White 28.2%

Our Impact

Our students graduate ready to make a difference in Maryland and beyond.

90,000+

proud Retriever alumni

71%

stay in Maryland

92%

of degree recipients are employed and/or pursuing further education within six months of graduating*

* Class of 2022

78%

of those employed obtained jobs in Maryland, directly impacting our economy

Top Rankings

Here's what others are saying about UMBC.

#12

National leader for undergraduate teaching programs, *U.S. News*

#87

In the nation, best colleges for veterans, *U.S. News*

Top 100

Public universities to receive federal research funding, Higher Education Research and Development (HERD) survey

14 years in a row

ModernThink's Great Colleges to Work For

Top 50

Green College, *The Princeton Review*



Focus on Student Success

Student success is serious business at UMBC. Here are a few ways we are moving the mark to help every student:

Center of Excellence - With more than 180 peer educators and student workers, UMBC's Academic Success Center is one of only six designated by the International College Learning Center Association to be a "Learning Center of Excellence." And, as an active member of The University Innovation Alliance, we are helping to lead work in increasing the number and diversity of college graduates, particularly low-income students, first-generation students, and students of color in the United States.

Competitive Edge - This year, [UMBC's volleyball](#) and [softball teams](#) both had amazing seasons, each winning their fourth consecutive America East championship titles. And while stunning players on the court, volleyball player Emily Ferketic also pursued her Ph.D. in theoretical physics at UMBC!

Shining Stars - Our specialists in prestigious scholarships help guide interested students through the complicated application processes, and with good results. In the past year, we have celebrated students as Gates Cambridge and Marshall Scholars.

A World of Difference - UMBC continues to produce [large numbers of Fulbright Scholars](#), giving students incredible experiences around the world. This summer, three UMBC students shined in an [international "capture the flag"-style cybersecurity competition in Japan](#). We also welcomed our very first [Peaceworker Global Fellow, Jok Thon](#) of South Sudan.



"I knew that in order to succeed, I needed to be in a community that could push me to be my best, hold me accountable, and support me at the same time. To accomplish what I wanted to accomplish—getting a Ph.D. in a scientific field—there was no place better for me to start than UMBC."

**– Christopher Slaughter '23,
computer engineering, and
a Gates Cambridge Scholar**

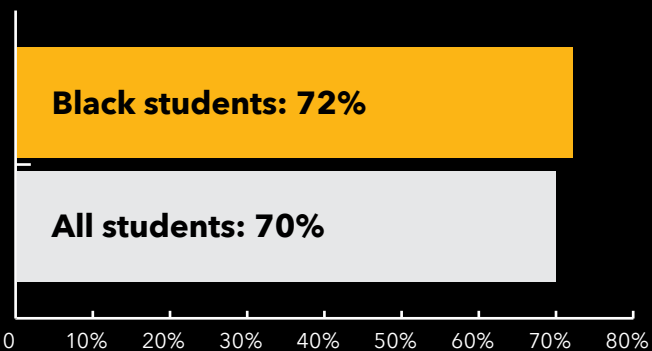


Academic Success Center staff and peer leaders celebrate their new location in the Albin O. Kuhn Library.

A National Model for Inclusive Excellence

A pioneer in advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging, UMBC has transformed lives as it has defined inclusive excellence for higher education.

No Achievement Gap – Unlike most other institutions, UMBC reports no achievement gap among populations of students. We are the nation’s #1 producer of Black undergraduates who go on to complete a Ph.D. in the natural sciences or engineering and #1 for Black undergraduates who complete an M.D./Ph.D.



Six-year graduation rates for African American/Black full-time new first-year students versus all students. Data from 2013 cohort, the last available cohort for which six-year rate data is available.

Embracing Our Diversity – As a [Minority Serving Institution](#) (MSI), UMBC is one of the top 50 most ethnically diverse colleges, according to Best College Reviews. Our students bring to UMBC a diverse range of backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences, which serve as the foundation of our culture of inclusive excellence.

“Your Story Belongs Here” – UMBC’s recent [“Your Story Belongs Here”](#) video project, a collaboration between the theatre department and i3b - Initiatives for Identity, Inclusion & Belonging, allows students to share their own stories in a welcoming way.



“When I saw the video at my orientation, I was like ‘Oh, thank God, I’m not the only one like me here.’ I hope people who are in the arts and humanities will see me in this year’s video and be like, ‘Okay, I am not alone.’”

– **Jaya Marshall, theatre major and “Your Story Belongs Here” participant**



Visitors to UMBC will drive up to find a pathway filled with “Welcome” bricks in languages from around the world.

Creating an Engaged Citizenry

At UMBC, we know that service will change the world, so we work hard to connect students to meaningful experiences that will result in a lifetime of engagement.

Civic Co-Creators – UMBC’s [Center for Democracy and Civic Life](#) and other campus groups empower students to become “civic co-creators” and contribute to positive social change as leaders, communicators, and voters. In the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge, UMBC finished at #4 in the nation in the number of students who pledged to vote in Election 2022.

Choice Impact – Through programming, case management, and other work, UMBC’s [Choice Program](#) served 336 students and their families around Maryland in FY23. Choice’s Intensive Advocacy Program, supported by a contract with the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services, also reported that 99% of youth they worked with did not receive a new charge, and 98% did not receive a new arrest.

Public Service Participants – The Shriver Center at UMBC coordinates several [Public Service Scholars](#) fellowship programs on behalf of the state of Maryland, providing students across Maryland the opportunity to develop as future leaders in Maryland’s public and social sectors.

Community Connections – UMBC’s Community Service & Learning Practicum allows for students to engage in weekly service and reflection and our Alternative Spring Break program creates ongoing connections through which students may contribute to long-term collective civic action.

Student volunteers from Retriever Essentials, the campus food pantry, work in the on-campus garden.



Students learn about the workings of a small town during a hands-on lesson in urban planning.

“Some define democracy and civic engagement as just voting. I don’t think that is a fair description of democracy and civic engagement. Simple things such as gathering with friends and inviting someone who has different views than your own are very basic ways to be civically engaged. I think that can do a lot of good in helping heal the divide.”

– Musa Jafri '24, Student Government Association president



Purpose-Driven Pipelines

Through K-12 partnerships, economic development opportunities, and relationships with the surrounding community, UMBC nurtures pipelines of talent that directly fulfill areas of high demand in Maryland.

Addressing Community Needs – Our community works directly with neighbors in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and beyond, to address needs in education, social services, and elsewhere. The [Sherman Teacher Scholars Program](#) collaborates with high-needs schools to create compassionate educators, and the Choice Program provides programming, connection to resources, and holistic case management to youth across our state.

Biotech Pipeline – UMBC’s [translational life sciences program at our Shady Grove campus](#) specifically creates opportunities for students in the state’s rapidly growing biotech industry, and pulls from a strong and diverse pipeline of students at Montgomery College.



“One of the goals of ... UMBC being at Shady Grove is to contribute to workforce development for the state, particularly in STEM. This campus symbolizes an opportunity to bring the disciplines together to address societal problems and to discover how they can work together to address the biggest challenges.”

– Annica Wayman '99, mechanical engineering, associate dean for Shady Grove affairs in UMBC's College of Natural and Mathematical Sciences.

A student teacher practices her skills at Lakeland Elementary/Middle School.





Public Research for Public Good

One of just two public R1 universities in the state, UMBC leads the way in emerging areas of study, while engaging in community-driven research, and preparing a diverse new generation of scholars for the workforce.

Making Our Mark in AI – Recent transformational work in AI include a \$20M grant (with UMCP) to strengthen army AI technology; research into ways of that [using machine learning to improve healthcare](#); and [advancing the next generation of powerful computer chips](#).

An Inclusive Approach – UMBC’s faculty purposefully include their students and our community in their work. This year, we were ranked as a national leader in innovation (#15) and undergraduate teaching (#12) (*U.S. News & World Report*), and we also joined a [national effort to improve pathways for women of color in tech](#).

Tackling Today’s Challenges – Our researchers take an interdisciplinary approach to improving the state and our world, [using AI and high-performance computing to tackle environmental science challenges](#), understanding the implications of smog, [improving the health of Maryland’s oyster reefs](#) and [Baltimore’s waterways](#). We are out in the community, partnering with our neighbors to catalog the histories of flora and city blocks, using [new media techniques to share the stories of immigrants in Baltimore](#), and understanding the mental and physical health of our aging population.

Supporting Up-And-Coming Researchers – [Thirteen early-career researchers at UMBC have received NSF CAREER grants since 2020](#), providing a firm foundation for a lifetime of leadership in integrating education and research.

“Using data better to aid medical decisions is a grand challenge of the 21st century. We need innovations in existing techniques to take full advantage of artificial intelligence in healthcare.”

– **Sanjay Purushotham, assistant professor, information systems**



Our Proud Community

Our community stands united by a common mission of inclusive excellence.

Our Vision – 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.

A Love of the Work – UMBC employees for the 14th consecutive year rated UMBC as one of ModernThink's [Great Colleges to Work For](#) in all 10 categories, including shared governance, mission and pride, job satisfaction and support, and diversity, equity, and inclusion. Additionally, the *Baltimore Sun* has once again named UMBC a 2023 Top Workplace winner. This is the 9th time UMBC has earned this designation since 2013.

Dozens of UMBC staff and faculty spent time last fall planting 900 new trees around campus.



"In my job, I work with the UMBC community to put their dreams into words. Working with the Fulbright Program—the largest educational exchange program sponsored by the U.S. Department of State—allows me the chance to help build future leaders in global affairs. Who wouldn't want to be a part of that?"

**– Brian Souders, Ph.D. '09, M.A. '19,
associate director for global learning**



"Our ambition for the future is BOLD, like UMBC itself. This ambition, and our shared vision, will require resolve, relationships, and resources...The vision is real, not just words on a page. And I know we can achieve it. I know it because I have seen what UMBC has already accomplished and because I know the power of this community."

**– President Valerie Sheares Ashby,
Inauguration Address, April 27, 2023**

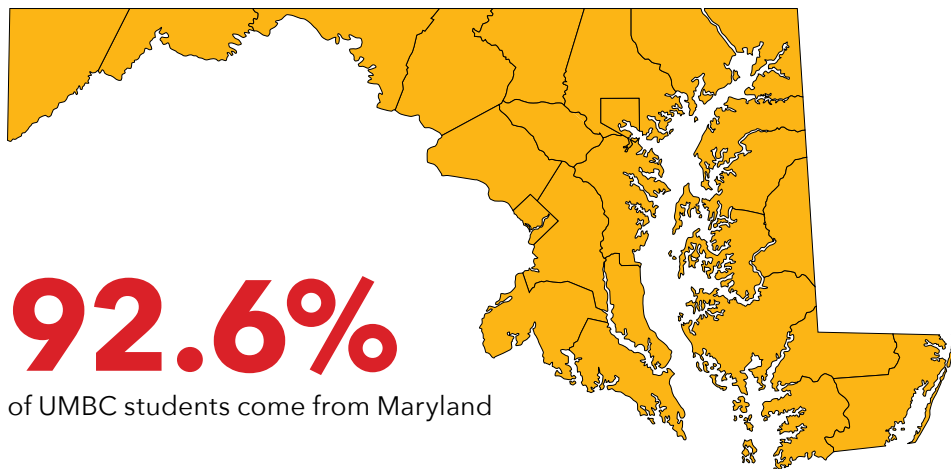
Investment in UMBC's Bold Future

As a university, we are committed to boldly serving our students in the best way possible. As we look to the future, we are excited about the growth state support will bring.

Our Students Are Maryland – We will continue to educate and serve students from all over the state, in every discipline, and prepare them to make a difference in Maryland and beyond.

Expanding Our Footprint – We are excited to imagine what is possible for UMBC and our surrounding communities with the growth potential of the Spring Grove property in Catonsville, and our ever-evolving presence at The Universities at Shady Grove in Montgomery County.

Bold Ideas Abound – UMBC is leading the way in the humanities, social sciences, natural and mathematical sciences, and engineering and computing, and nurturing creative achievement in myriad artistic fields. With your support, UMBC is poised to reach new levels of impact for our students, our community, and our state.





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UMBC



The President should comment on the decline in spending on need-based aid.

From FY17 through FY22, UMBC significantly increased financial aid to students with the greatest need. Overall, our spending on institutional aid during that period increased by 50%, or more than \$11 million, to \$33.3 million. In those years, UMBC more than doubled the number of Pell-eligible students who were receiving merit aid: Many students receive both merit and need-based awards. While the percentage of Pell-eligible students at UMBC increased slightly over those years—from 30 to 31%—the amount of financial aid they received (a combination of merit and need-based aid) nearly doubled, from \$5.8 million in 2017 to \$10.7 million in 2022.

The President should comment on the challenges of hiring and retaining personnel.

At UMBC, we are optimistic about our ability to attract and retain a skilled, talented, and dedicated workforce. We are pursuing a combination of short- and long-term strategies, including:

- Attending to remote-work needs to provide employees with flexibility
- Modernizing recruitment strategies
- Enhancing, expanding, and providing new professional development and career development opportunities
- Consistently attending to the overall employee experience, from onboarding through retirement

A significant part of UMBC's strategy is, in fact, to ensure that UMBC is a top-choice employer. We are gratified to have been recognized for 14 years running as among the nation's "Great Colleges to Work For" and, in 2023, for the ninth time in 10 years, as one of the Baltimore Sun's "Top Workplaces" in the Baltimore region.