

An Investment of Hope for the Future

A Strategic Vision for the University of Mary Washington

As approved by the Board of Visitors on November 17, 2017

Call to Action:

The University of Mary Washington's (UMW) liberal arts and sciences mission provides a strong foundation for an increasingly diverse student body, and prepares students for professional and public leadership in a regional and global environment of rapid change. From its inception, UMW has stood for the Commonwealth's investment of hope in our Republic's future. The Commonwealth established UMW in 1908 as a Normal School to prepare teachers for a burgeoning system of public education to develop skills and instill values necessary for productive and engaged citizenship in an increasingly pluralistic society. In time, UMW expanded its academic offerings and became fully committed to a rigorous liberal arts and sciences education that introduced students to a broad spectrum of human inquiry designed to instill the intrinsic value of learning and develop higher order thinking skills deemed necessary for personal and professional fulfillment and engaged citizenship.

As it has for over a century, UMW will continue to be a force for positive social change aimed at producing citizens ready, willing, and able to address the greatest challenges facing our democracy and world. UMW, taking advantage of its unique resources due to its strategic location, will immerse an increasingly diverse student body in a liberal arts and sciences education that is outward looking and intentionally designed to serve as a tributary to the world it is here to serve. The University of Mary Washington is an investment of hope grounded in the belief that every human being has the freedom and power to grow at any instant and can join forces with others to change the world for the better. The following, not in priority order, is how UMW promises a return on this investment:

Goal 1: Promoting the values of service and community and civic engagement

As a public liberal arts and sciences institution, UMW seeks to realize the democratic purpose of our mission. Drawing inspiration from our 1908 founding as a public teacher's college, we will instill the value of service across the university, equipping students to address society's demands, to challenge injustices, and to embrace the world's possibilities. By supporting the full participation of all students in their University experience, we will respond to higher education's imperative to provide an increasingly diverse population with the opportunity to improve their lives, their communities, and the world around them. Our graduates will be prepared to engage in issues of the day with rigor, curiosity, and empathy.

Action Steps:

1:1 Establish academic and co-curricular programs that promote honor, leadership and service and that complement the UMW traditions exemplified by the legacy of Professor James Farmer and alumna Jean Donovan. Toward that end, we will conduct an assessment of the resources and activity of the James Farmer

Multicultural Center (JFMC) and develop a plan to position the JFMC to become a central, University-wide programmatic entity, a focal point for issues of equity, access, and diversity, providing programs and resources to the university and broader community; programs and training should include the development of a “cultural competency” model with both academic and student development outcomes and providing sustained cultural competency/cultural awareness training to faculty, staff, and students

1:2 Develop academic and co-curricular programs on civic engagement and community engaged learning, including meaningful service-learning courses, living and learning programs in residence halls, and the strengthening of relationships with community partners and organizations. In coordination with these efforts, the Division of Student Affairs will promote the development of student affinity organizations that provide opportunities for community and civic engagement.

1:3 Expand student and recent alumni participation in programs that promote community and civic engagement like the Peace Corps and AmeriCorps as well as further support programs to assist students to earn Fulbright, Truman, Goldwater, Rhodes, and other nationally competitive scholarships focused on leadership and service.

1:4 Promote stewardship of the planet by reducing the University’s carbon footprint, promoting initiatives, and enhancing the University’s visibility and reputation as a “green” campus.

1:5 Focus on meeting teacher shortages in subject areas such as science, mathematics, and special education as well as meeting the need of producing more diverse teachers and teachers for underserved regions.

Goal 2: Immersing our students in applied, impactful learning experiences

From their first courses at UMW and throughout their major and degree program, students are engaged by their faculty in student-centered, high impact learning experiences that prepare them for intellectual and professional success, and to live productive and full lives in their communities. Undergraduate and graduate students develop in a learning environment that is collaborative, where they are challenged by innovative and demanding teaching, and where their “classroom” is defined by the problems they seek to understand and solve and extends to the laboratory, the studio, the field, and their residence halls. UMW students become not just consumers of information but they learn to discover, create, and produce knowledge through research, internships, service learning, course work, creative work and living/learning programs that are grounded in civic and community engagement.

Action Steps:

2:1 Expand opportunities for student-faculty collaboration on undergraduate research and creative projects, building on tools and pedagogies currently in place.

2:2 Continue to invest resources and develop programs in STEM fields, to meet the needs of the Commonwealth for graduates in high-demand STEM fields, attract and retain high achieving STEM students, attract/retain, and graduate more students from underrepresented populations in STEM, support collaborative faculty-student research in the sciences, and promote instruction, research and other projects focusing on environmental sustainability; complete the Jepson Science Center addition and renovation to ensure sufficient research and instructional space to serve growing student interest and demand.

2:3 Enhance the Center for Career and Professional Development by developing a tactical plan with measurable outcomes to promote collaboration among all university partners engaged in students' continuing professional development and provide pervasive and impactful professional development opportunities, coaching and mentoring for students. Establish a strong connection between academic and career advising in a variety of ways, including streamlining and enhancing the collection of employment-related data and supporting departments in the use of digital networks and social media and develop a plan to support career exploration, mentoring opportunities, alumni engagement, and engagement with other regional professionals; move all on-campus student employment opportunities to be managed by the Center for Career and Professional Development.

2:4 Leverage and provide specific programmatic uses of the unique resources of UMW's location at the confluence of the District of Columbia, Richmond, the U.S. Naval base at Dahlgren, and the Chesapeake Bay.

2:5 Develop a comprehensive vision and strategic plan for the fine and performing arts that includes the necessary resources needed to promote the arts as a center for applied, collaborative learning that connects UMW to the cultural life of the surrounding community while fostering the creativity of our students.

2:6 Expand living and learning communities beyond the first year to encourage further connections between classroom knowledge and experiences in the residence halls and between faculty and students outside the traditional classroom. Residence halls will support themed communities and affinity groups as well.

2:7 The President will appoint a high-level committee co-chaired by the Provost and Vice President for Student Affairs to develop a vision and strategic plan for the Athletic Department to ensure its success as a premier NCAA Division III

program that promotes above all else, the learning opportunities and student learning outcomes inherent in the student-athlete experience. This committee will establish policies and procedures to promote and sustain a culture of diversity and inclusion in athletics and create a true integration of the student's academic and co-curricular learning experiences as well as ensure full and on-going collaboration between the faculty and staff who work with and support that student's education and development, both in the student's course of study and participation in athletics.

Goal 3: Adapting the liberal arts to an age of accelerations and a global digital environment

UMW must prepare our students to live, work, and serve effectively in this Age of Accelerations, and we do so by intentionally fostering the ability in our students to consume and produce digital knowledge critically, ethically, and responsibly, as well as to creatively adapt to emerging technology while developing the intellectual skills necessary to address the world's biggest problems. The University is already a national leader in the digital liberal arts, in our humane integration of technology into our teaching, our learning, our engagement, and our lives. But more can be done. UMW will ensure that all students, regardless of major, will develop digital fluency during their time at the University, that our faculty and staff will model digitally enabled learning in and out of the classroom that goes well beyond current forms of online learning, that unique programs will provide the framework for other innovations in teaching and learning, and that our focus on the digital world complements our longstanding history of strong, genuine, human connections.

Action Steps

3:1 Develop a curriculum that promotes advanced digital fluency for all students while empowering students to use digital technologies as creators and scholars.

3:2 Support academic instructional resources, including the Division of Teaching and Learning Technologies, the Center for Teaching Excellence and Innovation, and the Office of Disability Resources to ensure faculty are appropriately trained in teaching online and hybrid courses and can effectively incorporate digital technologies that promote pedagogical excellence in both traditional and online courses that are accessible to our students.

3:3 Create a digital repository that will include archival collections, openly accessible versions of faculty scholarship, and significant student scholarship, both traditional and digital.

3:4 Renovate the Simpson Library to support its function as the University's hub to access knowledge and information in the digital age.

3:5 Support efforts to understand students' digital identity, including their use of social media, how it shapes their college experience, and how various social

media platforms can be incorporated into efforts to communicate and encourage strong and healthy communities across campus.

3:6 Build a community of wellness at UMW in which all members of our community recognize that cohesive wellness – a state of physical, mental, and social well-being – is integral to the learning and work environment, particularly in this Age of Accelerations. To lead this effort, the President will establish the President’s Council on Wellness with members from across the University community.

Goal 4: Creating a diverse and inclusive community as an essential requirement for academic excellence and academic success

Diversity and inclusion define UMW’s commitment to serve the educational aspirations of all those in our communities. A diverse and inclusive classroom, innovative and culturally relevant pedagogies, and academic programs that are responsive and relevant to global change are fundamental and essential requirements for academic excellence and academic success. Further, as a public university building and exemplifying a culture of broadly based civic engagement is needed now more than ever amid our nation’s current political and cultural divisiveness.

Action Steps:

4:1 Develop and implement the appropriate administrative and institutional structure to coordinate, assess, and provide accountability for university initiatives focused on diversity, inclusion, equity, and access.

4:2 Create a “characteristics of a UMW graduate” that describes the intellectual, personal, and social characteristics developed by a UMW education. Those characteristics should include a commitment to the value of diversity, inclusion, and equity in a pluralistic liberal democracy and the skills to live and work productively and well in an interconnected, diverse, and global environment.

4:3 Conduct a university-wide, interdisciplinary assessment of UMW’s Statement of Community Values that includes revisiting UMW’s principles on diversity and inclusion statement and raising that statement to the status of the honor pledge.

4:4 Fully develop the assessment of campus climate to determine progress on the values of diversity and inclusion. Included in this assessment should be regular climate studies and the addition of the Topical Module on Inclusiveness and Engagement with Cultural Diversity for future iterations of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE).

4:5 Examine current curriculum, both the core curriculum and the requirements of specific majors, to determine what changes could be made to better develop

students' cultural competencies, and develop skills for living, learning, and working in a diverse environment.

4:6 Apply best practices for the recruitment and retention of a more diverse faculty and staff that includes mandatory training for all members of search committees, approval of all search plans, collection and review of data on all searches, and pursuit of all traditional and non-traditional sources to attract a diverse pool of candidates.

4:7 Continue to implement our admission tactical plan to recruit a more diverse student body in line with the targets set forth in the Strategic Enrollment Plan.

4:8 Create an ad hoc committee to assess the campus environment (with special attention to common areas) to ensure that it reflects UMW's commitment to a diverse and inclusive campus.

4:9 Develop a comprehensive outreach and communication plan around UMW's diversity efforts.

4:10 Reconstitute and reactivate the President's Community Advisory Committee on Diversity to foster communication and build community support for efforts around diversity and inclusion.

4:11 Ensure that appropriate academic and student life support services meet the needs of all underrepresented students including first generation, Summer Transition Program students, veterans, students with disabilities, and transfer students; establish a Transfer Center in the Office of Academic Services; provide appropriate support to the Office of Disability Resources to ensure that all UMW program and services are accessible to the students who seek and needs them.

4:12 Establish a robust and highly visible Division of Continuing and Professional Education to create, facilitate, and oversee adult credit and non-credit programs. The Division will lead to the establishment of high quality programs, as determined through market research, to serve the unmet needs of the large adult education population in the region, including veterans, first-generation, and other non-traditional students.