

University of Baltimore
President Kurt L. Schmoke
FY 2021 Operating Budget Testimony

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee. On behalf of the University of Baltimore's administration, faculty, staff, students and alumni, I am pleased to address you today.

Thank you for your steadfast support of the University of Baltimore and Maryland higher education. Your leadership ensures that our institutions can continue to provide Maryland residents with top-notch educational opportunities. Maryland's leaders understand the significant benefits of adequately funding its system of public higher education institutions, and we appreciate every dollar that we receive.

I want to express my support for the Governor's FY 2021 proposed operating budget for the University System of Maryland of \$1.59 billion. This funding represents an increase of 5.5% (\$83M) over the FY 2020 adjusted appropriation largely to be applied to the statewide salary and fringe benefit increases for all state employees. The Governor's proposed budget also includes funds for UB to continue its high-impact priority educational programs and community engagement activities. These initiatives support efforts that help solve local problems and support city residents, including education opportunities, public safety enhancements, and veteran's education. On behalf of the UB community, we respectfully ask for the subcommittee's support so that UB can continue its comprehensive efforts.

Regarding the Department of Legislative Services recommendation to reduce the USM's general fund appropriation by \$5.7M, we oppose this recommendation. By reducing these funds, the legislature would eliminate the USM's new Workforce Development Initiatives. These initiatives contribute to Maryland's overall economic development and many important, specific programs would be eliminated without this funding. For example, funding for UB's Forensic Science program is among the WDIs identified for reduction; this program supports skilled and workforce-ready professionals who can help solve crimes and improve public safety. I know that Chancellor Perman has already briefed the subcommittee on the impact of these reductions, if made. We support the Governor's allocation for the USM.

Today, UB offers to Marylanders a chance to study and hone their leadership abilities in the contemporary and popular subjects offered by our schools of law, business, liberal arts and public affairs. Our University is made up of 87 percent of Maryland residents, and we are proud of that number. UB's students are bright, ambitious, hard-working adults. They are professional, serious-minded, and career-oriented students. We are diverse and distinctive. The University is honored to be the University of choice for working adults in Maryland, meeting their educational needs for nearly 100 years. My testimony today will focus on this student population and UB's plans for the future to serve these students in an ever-changing higher education market. Along the way, I will provide an update on key operational areas of the university, including enrollment and retention, and I will respond to any questions that you may have.

I would like to begin with UB's role as an urban institution that serves adult students. Ninety-five years ago, UB was founded as an evening school for the Baltimore region's working adults. Today, *Washington Monthly* ranks UB number one in Maryland and top 20 nationally for working adults. We have kept our mission intact for adult students, who come to UB to recharge, retool, and reinvent themselves. These students are the backbone of Baltimore City's working population in industries across the board. We take our role as a city-serving and local-educating institution very seriously. The University's strategic plan renews our commitment to serve the city and state through an urban-centered mission, which means that we have a desire to do all we can to help advance the City of Baltimore. Now, with so much attention on the needs of Baltimore, it is the right time to highlight UB's programs, ongoing initiatives and community-related projects that contribute in so many positive ways to Baltimore and the region. This is the work of our students and faculty who are passionate about economic and social progress for our city. UB has a long tradition of community engagement through the outstanding work of its faculty, students and staff who go beyond their expected duties because they believe in the success and future of our students and Baltimore City. The volume of UB initiatives that stimulate positive results for the city and our communities is astounding. There are far too many to include in this testimony, but I will provide a few examples of UB's work in this area later.

UB supports a strong, highly capable faculty that consistently meets the educational needs of our students. Our professors are connected, well-versed in their areas of expertise, and always looking for new opportunities to plug their base of knowledge into today's and tomorrow's issues. Year over year, approximately 90 percent of UB faculty hold the highest degree possible in their respective fields. This status affords them the chance to lead their disciplines – nationally, or even internationally – into unexplored, uncharted areas of intellectual discourse. Our students, in turn, benefit from this leadership in their own interests and career choices.

When adding together UB's performance as an urban institution with its academic excellence and programming – civic-engagement, faculty grant-funded projects, forums for community neighbors, student organization activities, and college readiness and outreach programs – UB has a transformative impact on Baltimore and the region. Most of all, we are proud of the education that we provide to our students. After graduation, the vast majority of our alumni remain in Maryland and contribute to the healthy development and economic vitality of Maryland. UB alumni are approximately 48,000 strong. Together, the individual and collective efforts of the UB community give UB its unique stature and special place among University System of Maryland institutions.

Who We Are: Student Composition

Our first priority at UB is the success of our students. We are working diligently to help students reach their college completion goals in a timely manner through various efforts to ensure student success.

The University delivers undergraduate, graduate and legal education through its four schools and colleges: the UB School of Law, the Yale Gordon College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Public Affairs, and the Merrick School of Business. We continue to serve an undergraduate population that skews heavily toward adult and transfer students; in fact, the average age of a UB student is 28 years old for undergraduates and 33 years old for graduate students. Eighty percent of our undergraduate students transfer into the University from community colleges or from other higher education institutions.

As a member of the University System of Maryland, the University of Baltimore is committed to its mission of accessibility. UB is one of Maryland's most diverse universities in terms of both academic offerings and student profiles. Whether students are attending UB full or part-time or whether they are undergraduate, graduate or law students, UB is committed to helping them reach their educational goals. We take considerable care in providing the support our students need to reach college completion by helping them navigate financial, academic and scheduling obstacles. The University is dedicated to serving students who want the opportunity to combine academic studies with career preparation and advancement. Students are applying to the University because of its distinctive blend of degree offerings and flexible scheduling.

UB at a Glance

Student Profile for Fall 2019

Total Enrollment	4,476
Undergraduate	2,097
Graduate	1,655
Law	724
Undergraduate Transfer	81.0 percent
Female	60 percent
Male	40 percent
Full Time	49 percent
Part Time	51 percent
Undergraduate Minority	63 percent
Graduate Minority	58 percent
Law Minority	35 percent
Maryland Resident	87 percent
Baltimore City Resident	28.0 percent
Average Age	
Undergraduate	28.4
Graduate	33.2

UB's Plan: The Next Level

On February 5, 2020, I presented a plan to the University community that outlined the University's direction for the next three years. The content of the plan expands upon the goals in the University's current Strategic Plan, "Re-Imagining UB, 2018 – 2023."

The University's strategic plan provides the framework necessary for responding to the challenges of declining enrollment, which is an important driver for our decision making. Our multi-year financial and operational plan is designed to reduce base costs and realign the University to best support UB's current and future student size, mix, and profile. This plan will be available for implementation in FY 2021. The University recognizes that the foundational solution must include administrative and academic restructuring while also stabilizing enrollments.

The decline in the University of Baltimore's enrollment over the past six years is largely at the undergraduate level, accounting for 70% of the total decline, with graduate and law enrollments accounting for 15% of the decline, respectively. The School of Law's enrollments, however, have stabilized over the last four years. And while enrollment stability is a challenge for many higher education institutions nationally, each institution must develop a tailor-made plan for navigating its enrollment changes. The task requires the involvement of the entire campus community, considerable time, input and the exchange of ideas, as well as a willingness to change. This is not an easy task, but the UB community has been fully engaged and participatory. As a result, the plan that I shared with the UB community represents their work and feedback.

The enrollment elements of the plan include:

- Organizing the University to serve a student population of 4,000 students.
- Targeting a student mix of 60% graduate and 40% undergraduate students to be comprised of primarily transfer students.
- Remaining true to our legacy of recruiting and retaining graduate and professional adult learners.
- Increasing online course offerings, particularly at the graduate level.
- Right-sizing the employee base across the University to align with UB's enrollment.

UB is uniquely the region's premier institution for undergraduate students seeking to transfer to another institution to complete their bachelor's degree. We are also well-known among the region's professional, career-focused students looking for a graduate level education. In keeping with this distinction, we will realign our academic program portfolio to professional career pathways for undergraduate students in five signature areas of excellence: (1) business and entrepreneurship; (2) law, justice and public affairs; (3) communication and design; (4) psychology, health and human services; and (5) cybersecurity, gaming and technology (Strategic Plan Goal 1). These professional career pathways also feed into UB's graduate programs where qualified students can take up to 9 graduate credits that apply to both their bachelor's degree and master's or law degree.

In addition, to increase degree completion rates and shorten students' time to degree, we plan to upgrade our program structure and courses to streamline offerings and maximize flexible course delivery. Part of this effort will include expanding opportunities for awarding credit through prior learning, dual enrollment and military credit (Strategic Plan Goal 2).

We will continue to ensure that our academic programs meet the needs of our region through community engagement and public service to the Baltimore region. In doing so, we will look for opportunities to leverage funding to increase community partnerships, strengthen connections with regional leaders, expand our programs to support neighborhood development organizations, and help tackle critical issues in the Baltimore region (Strategic Plan, Goal 3)

Finally, the plan includes other important and necessary measures to right-size the University as we work on this realignment effort. We plan to maximize our institutional capabilities, build efficiencies, grow revenue, and increase the University's endowment to support outstanding education. To achieve this portion of our plan, we will among other things:

- Reorganize UB's academic structure for even greater academic excellence and student success. We will become three schools rather than four schools. The schools will align with UB's signature areas of law, business, technology and various facets of community and public engagement. With this effort, the University will modify its budgeting process to better support the schools to a Responsibility Centered Management (RCM) model. Each school will manage its RCM-focused budget to prioritize its own needs, while relying on the central university for administrative functions such as financial-aid disbursement and student activities. To further advance efficiencies by sharing services with other University System of Maryland (USM) institutions for appropriate operational functions and monetize facilities, where appropriate.
- Implement a voluntary separation program for 20-plus year employees and retirement-eligible employees. We will know the results of the separation program by the end of March. In addition, we will eliminate most vacant positions and reduce the number of filled positions that do not directly support the number and mix of students or compliance requirements;
- Increase funding advocacy at every level where possible, from state funding support where UB's initiatives match the state and city's needs to fundraising efforts. Philanthropic giving will continue to be a key priority moving forward, as the University has raised more than \$30 million in the past five years.

Over the next few months, the University of Baltimore's dedicated team of faculty and staff will fill in the details of the plan and timelines to operationalize these actions. Together – through our collective expertise and commitment to the UB mission, the University community will lead a successfully transition.

UNIVERSITY UPDATES

❖ College Affordability Update

Guiding prospective and current students through affordability options is essential in aiding the recruitment and retention efforts which lead to increased degree completion and improved graduation rates. The University is committed to making a college education affordable which begins with a strong financial literacy initiative. UB has developed a new and revised strategy for financial literacy and payment planning and has provided a financial literacy tool to help students understand the best ways to cover expenses and remain in control of their financial health. One tool available to students is Financial Literacy TV, which is an online library of video clips to address popular financial aid questions.

As an increasingly predominate transfer and graduate institution, the University is mindful of the need to serve students who demonstrate great financial need. Our service includes encouraging students to pursue private, state, and federal resources, which when added to University and UB Foundation assistance, makes their education affordable. In fall 2019, approximately 39% percent of UB's undergraduate population received Federal Pell Grants. Additionally, 18% received state grants, 18% percent received UB institutional grants and 46% percent received UB merit scholarships.

To better address student financial needs holistically, UB implemented a Student Financial Services model that merges access to sources of financial assistance with the payment of tuition and fees. This integrated model utilizes enhanced and coordinated communications. One feature is a 24/7 Chatbot, which allows prospective and current students access to financial aid information. In addition, UB is implementing software by April 2020 that will enhance access to private scholarships and grants. We have also established a financial clearance initiative to ensure students can cover their tuition (via direct payment, financial aid or third-party) each semester. The goal is to encourage students to plan how to cover the cost of education.

UB revised its scholarship model to better support recruitment and help more first-time, full-time freshmen with higher academic credentials (3.0 GPA or higher) than prior years. Also, UB is developing a new, need-based aid strategy to assist with the recruitment and retention of undergraduate students. These strategies include merit-based Transfer Scholarships for both full- and part-time students. Students with the required cumulative GPAs and a minimum 30 transferable credits are awarded scholarships. Students who have completed an associate's degree are eligible for an additional scholarship. Merit scholarships are incremental to need-based aid. UB continues to offer the Near-Completers Grant: micro-grants awarded to undergraduates within 30 credits of graduation and who have no remaining financial aid or who have a financial hardship.

❖ **Transfer Student Enrollment Update**

Transfer students from the region's community colleges compose 80 percent of UB's undergraduate student population. The University effectively attracts and retains transfer students through outreach activities and programs to support their smooth transition from associate-degree to baccalaureate-degree programs. University staff members make more than 100 visits a year to Maryland community colleges to speak with students, administrators and faculty.

UB automatically allows transfer credits to fulfill lower-level general education requirements for students who have earned an Associate of Arts, Associate of Science or Associate of Arts in Teaching degree from a Maryland community college. UB strives to make the process of transferring from a community college to UB as streamlined as possible and works to maximize credit transfer, accepting up to 63 lower-level credits from community colleges.

❖ **Retention, Progression and Graduation Update**

UB is pleased to report that we have achieved great success in student retention, progression and graduation.

- FTFT (first time, full time students) retention has increased from 77% - 87%.
- FTFT (first time, full time students) retention for African-American students has increased from 67% to 77%.
- The six-year graduation rate for African-American students has increased by 14 % points in one year and is the highest recorded since the lower division was reinstated in 2007.
- The six year graduation rate for African American students of 39% now exceeds that of all students at 37.2%.
- We have increased the percentage of students earning credits outside of the traditional classroom from 56% to 63%.
- Law graduates who pass the bar exam on first attempt is approximately 67%.



UB has developed the following initiatives to improve retention, progression and graduation for all undergraduate students:

- **Expanded Mandatory Milestone Advising Initiative:** Students are required to see an advisor at distinct times in their academic careers. Specific advising syllabi are used at each touch point and include topics such as academic progression, support services, career and internship opportunities, financial aid and graduate school preparation. An

initiative that started in 2017 for new students only, now extends to freshmen, sophomores, and juniors. Seniors will be added next year.

- **Expanded Supports in Math Writing and Peer-Support Programs:** In the summer of 2019, math support services were combined into a single Math Support Center within the Robert L. Bogomolny Library, providing drop-in math tutoring for all quantitative courses. The expansion of services at the new center was in response to increased student demand. Peer tutors are trained and certified to provide support for general education, math, and upper-division quantitative literacy courses.
- **Peer-based embedded support programs** provide scalable academic support from a staff of trained peer tutors, coaches, and writing consultants entering classes and bringing support directly to individual sections of challenging courses. Embedded programs include:
 - A **student mentoring program**, called UB Connects, that focuses on assigning mentors to lower division transfer students. In addition to academic advising, these mentors are engaged with students throughout the academic year to ensure that students are on track for timely degree completion. Student Success Teams are designed to help students. Each student is assigned a personal academic advisor, career coach. In fall 2020, a financial aid specialist will be added to this team.
 - An expanded **Early Alert** platform where faculty can post student attendance and intervention reports. The platform alerts University advisors about absences, late or missed assignments, poor performance on assignments, or other difficulties that students may be experiencing.
 - UB's **Signature Undergraduate Programs of Excellence** – the five new Professional Pathways created in career clusters – are designed to help students explore majors and careers throughout their first year and to keep students on track to graduate in four years.
 - **Supplemental instruction-style** review sessions for challenging courses, like statistics and accounting, are available in person and recorded for online access.
 - **Writing fellows** to help students with writing-intensive courses, which improves outcomes immediately and reduces writing-related barriers to graduation in future semesters.



UNIVERSITY SPOTLIGHT

❖ **The University of Baltimore *for* Baltimore**

As I mentioned earlier, as an anchor institution in Baltimore City, UB's commitment to community engagement and service amplifies the University's academic programs in helping to solve city challenges and meeting the needs of city neighborhoods, businesses, non-profits, and more. UB leverages the expertise of its faculty research, student talent, clinics and centers, as well as UB's community partnerships, to have a powerful and positive effect on the city.



UB is doing its part to support city priorities. For example, the Baltimore Police Department had an urgent need to relocate its officer education and training center in order to fulfill the department's obligations outlined in the recent federal consent decree. Consistent with UB's long-standing commitment to city engagement and progress, UB contracted with BPD to relocate their training center to one of our campus buildings that offered ideal accommodations at this time. With the arrival of the BPD training center, which begun last month, another chapter of city engagement is underway.

UB's programs and initiatives uniquely help support city goals and strengthen its core, including:

- **Scholarships for City Workers:** The UB Baltimore City Scholars Program offers scholarships to city government workers, first responders and public school employees who wish to complete their degrees. The scholarships give these workers the opportunity to retool and advance in their education, while meeting the city's workforce needs with enhanced skills. The program further encourages highly qualified employees from a variety of city agencies to advance their own careers while raising the bar on city services, including the police and fire departments and a number of city agencies. The funding will allow UB to expand this effective scholarship program, launched in 2003.
- **The UB Second Chance Program** offers a post-secondary education to male incarcerated individuals prior to release. Through this program offered at Jessup Correctional Institution, students study toward a B.A. in Human Service Administration degree with an option to minor in entrepreneurship. The students begin their studies at JCI and complete them at UB, once released. This educational program helps reduce the likelihood of recidivism and improves student employment success. Mentoring offers incarcerated men who are active leaders and role models in the prison mentoring and tutoring opportunities. The University's mentors are college educated and are committed to advancing the potential of higher education to local residents.



- **Strengthening Community Non-profits and Workforce:** The UB Community Development Fellowship Program effects positive change in urban areas by matching motivated students with community organizations that directly support Baltimore neighborhoods. This program improves student skills and cultivates the next generation of community development leaders strengthening the city’s workforce. The funding would expand the community partner base and increase student participation by providing more stipends and expand the program to support neighborhood development organizations.
- The University’s webpage called, “**UB Takes on City Challenges,**” provides a more expansive look at the University’s outstanding work and influence in the community.

❖ **Student Enrichment and Preparedness for the Workforce**

- **Supporting Legal Innovation:** The Fannie Angelos Program works in collaboration with Maryland’s four HBCUs to find talented students interested in a future career in law. This nationally-lauded program offers not just academic, but also whole-life support, to help remove barriers that are common deterrents from legal studies for minority students. UB Law works hard to fill in the gaps within both legal education and the legal profession by addressing the lack of diversity. In 2017, the program was awarded the Diversity Leadership Award by the American Bar Association (ABA) for, “promoting full and equal participation in the legal profession,” in the words of the ABA.



- **Fostering Democratic Participation:** In 2018, it was announced that more than 70% of UB’s student body- a higher percentage than any other college campus in the nation – voted in the 2016 election, winning UB the only ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge Gold Seal awarded that year. ALL IN recognized UB once again in 2019, awarding UB the Best in Class Award for highest voter participation at a medium-sized, public, four-year institution during the 2018 election.
- **Training Election Judges:** In addition to nurturing a culture of democratic participation, UB is actively involved in the training of election judges, chief judges, and early voting judges. The UB Schaefer Center for Public Policy has trained all individuals seeking to fill these roles for Baltimore City’s primary and general elections since 2006. This training covers voting laws, polling site management, and the operation of voting systems.
- **Commitment to the Community:** The UB Student Social Innovation Challenge fosters a student’s commitment to economic change by requiring students to design projects to address community needs. These projects are then presented to community partners. Students sharpen their skills as they compete for prizes awarded to projects that identify innovative solutions to today’s most pressing problems in our communities. The funding will allow this pilot program to be fully implemented.

- UB Students Are Up to the Challenge:** There are times when our efforts to create an environment where hard working students are given the resources to make their own opportunities pays off in astounding ways. Last spring, for example, a student group from two different technology majors in the University’s Yale Gordon College of Arts and Sciences traveled to the Johnson Space Center in Houston to present their ideas for an interactive, in-helmet heads up display to NASA officials.



The proposal was part of the NASA SUITS Student Challenge, and UB’s team, the “Poegrammers,” was the only exclusively undergraduate team to make it to that phase of the competition. Other teams hailed from Harvard, Virginia Tech, Texas A&M, and other schools with strong reputations in science and technology. This year, a new team of UB students has been invited back to Houston to take part in the competition once again.



- Jump Starting New Businesses:** The Phyllis Attman Competitive Business Prize is an example of UB’s support for student entrepreneurs. Each year, members of the UB community compete for a chance to receive seed money to be used toward starting up their own business. The first-place prize also includes a year of rent-free office space, as well as business services. This year more than 45 students – undergraduates and graduates from a wide range of academic backgrounds – entered the competition.

Mr. Chairman, the work of UB and its student body, faculty and staff is exceptional. We know that colleges and universities everywhere are facing stark choices about how to offer an education that is relevant and ready for rapid changes in the market. The University of Baltimore leadership has developed a path forward in recognition of our current challenges and the vigorous evolution of higher education. Our plan is intentional, shared and forward-thinking. It is influenced by the comments of our students, the input of many hardworking faculty and staff, and dedication of our supportive board members and alumni. The campus community is attentive and engaged. Our reorganization will, of course, take time to achieve. We certainly have work to do. But UB was built on resilience, established 95 years ago by local leaders who wanted to offer educational opportunities for working adults with real ambitions—be a leader, be an innovator, help your community, raise up your family. We have never had to turn away from that approach, and today, our plan presents a grand opportunity for us.

To advance the University’s strategic plan, UB will restructure itself and debut new schools to create a refreshed learning environment. This effort will include an intensive focus on enrollment of adult learners, community college transfers, and graduate students; a new budget model, and enhanced student success initiatives. We will continue to provide our students with an excellent,

quality education through the expertise and outstanding teaching of our faculty. We will continue to populate Maryland's workforce with our energetic alumni and contribute to do all we can to add to the vitality of Baltimore City and the State of Maryland.

Thank you for the opportunity to update you on UB's activities and plans for the future. Of course, we will keep you apprised of our progress. I know that you many difficult decisions to make sure the 90-day Session. We appreciate your support of the University of Baltimore.