

University of Mary Washington 2025 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan

Goal 1: Access and Success

Recruit and retain a diverse campus by increasing access for diverse populations.

- **Objective 1: Recruit, retain, and graduate underserved students.**
 - A. Design and implement enhanced efforts through
 - admissions,
 - access partnerships,
 - summer bridge
 - and new pathways to support the recruitment, retention and completion of a of underserved students in the region and around the Commonwealth.
- **Objective 2: Increase campus accessibility.**
 - A. Implement a plan for capital improvements to address campus accessibility issues.

Goal 2: Welcoming and Respectful Culture

Create and sustain a culture that welcomes and embraces diverse opinions, independent thinking, and respectful interactions to deliver optimal results for the campus.

- **Objective 1: Celebrate our ASPIRE Community Values.**
 - A. Develop a plan to bring UMW's core values (Accountability, Scholarship, Personal and Institutional Integrity, Inclusive Excellence, Respect and Civility, and Engagement) to life as a fundamental aspect of the student experience.
 - B. Implement plan accordingly.
- **Objective 2: Cultivate free speech and expression resources.**
 - A. Create an interdisciplinary program with curricular and co-curricular opportunities for participation focused on civil discourse and debate to support the free exchange of ideas and diverse perspectives
 - B. Support training for students, faculty and staff in having difficult conversations across differences.

Goal 3: State Agency DEI Infrastructure & Training

Maintain a plan and infrastructure that continues to provide individualized skills training and career development for the campus.

- **Objective 1: Bolster mental health and well-being resources.**
 - A. Enhance the capacity for employees to support students with mental health needs through
 - “gatekeeper” training
 - as well as resource development,

- and programming.
 - **B.** Communicate often about services and supports for the wellbeing of all students, faculty, and staff to the entire campus community.
- **Objective 2: Continued focus on campus safety.**
 - **A.** Build connections between and among UMW Police and students, faculty, and staff through an advisory board that emphasizes community policing principles and the significance of safety to a vibrant campus life.

University of Mary Washington: 2025 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan Report

The University of Mary Washington is delighted to submit our final report on the progress made within our 2025 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan. Under **Goal 1, Access and Success, Objective 1, was to recruit, retain, and graduate underserved students**. We have advanced these efforts, by prioritizing the recruitment, retention, and graduation of underserved students through targeted initiatives supported by the Pell Initiative in Virginia, sponsored by SCHEV. This funding has strengthened our ability to increase enrollment and success among Pell-eligible students by expanding early and sustained engagement in the college search and admissions process, including through the Eagles in Flight program. This initiative partners with regional middle and high schools to provide targeted outreach to low-income students. We have also increased participation in the Summer Bridge Program through the Student Transition, Access and Retention Services office (STARS), offering customized advising and continuous academic and transitional support to promote persistence and success. To further enhance retention and degree completion, we have hired a dedicated Retention Specialist and Financial Aid Counselor who work directly with students to address academic and financial barriers. Lastly, we established a Call Me MISTER Program at UMW to support the recruitment and retention of Pell-eligible students while addressing the critical need for the development of future educators, particularly those from low-income backgrounds.

With respect to **Objective 2: increasing campus accessibility**, substantial progress has been made. Several projects have been completed or are nearing completion, including the campus-wide accessible sidewalk paver maintenance project, and the installation of accessible toilets in the Battleground Athletic Complex (BAC) modular buildings. These efforts are part of the \$11.25 million Campus Wide Accessibility Improvements umbrella project. Phase 1 construction, which began in Fall 2025 and is scheduled for completion by August 1, 2026, includes major upgrades to Ball and Madison residence halls. Improvements include the creation of accessible rooms and bathrooms, new elevators and ramps, relocation of laundry facilities to improve access, and accessible community kitchen upgrades. In addition, accessible classroom seating has been installed in Jepson Science Center and Combs Hall to better support inclusive learning environments. Looking ahead, the university continues to invest in both near-term and long-range accessibility enhancements as Phase 2 design is underway and focuses on improving spectator accessibility at the BAC playing fields and adding ADA parking with compliant ramps.

Our second goal was maintaining a Welcoming and Respectful Culture, through Objective 1, celebrating our ASPIRE Community Values. This spring we celebrated our 4th annual ASPIRE Values Week. During this time, we highlight a different value (Accountability, Scholarship, Personal and Institutional Integrity, Inclusive Excellence, Respect and Civility, and Engagement) each day. This week brings together the entire campus, our alumni network, as well as the Greater Fredericksburg community, through a series of events including tabling fairs, a networking reception, a multicultural luncheon, and a community service project, just to name a few examples. Our community is very familiar with our ASPIRE values because we introduce them at new student and employee orientations and talk about them during university programming, in classroom discussions, and during student extracurricular club events. Our values are posted all around campus in classrooms, offices, and common spaces, including on recently updated flags on our Campus Walk flagpoles which is the main thoroughfare through campus.

In response to **Objective 2, cultivating free speech and expression resources**, we are continuing some collaborative programming that has been very effective, while also creating new opportunities. We are in our 5th year of participating in the SCHEV co-sponsored cohort that provides our students, faculty, and staff with the opportunity to take the Perspectives modules which are designed by the Constructive Dialogue Institute (CDI). These modules help us understand how we develop our own life philosophies, how others develop theirs, and how we can all work together to make our world a better place. New students complete additional training led by administrators and peers on these important concepts. Additionally, a group of faculty and staff from across the university took part in an intensive training sponsored by CDI on how to facilitate effective conversations which they have then applied within their work. This past year we hosted a Braver Angels debate in partnership with Germanna Community College as a part of the VA250 celebrations. The goal of this model is not to win a debate, but to understand why a person believes what they do. It was very well attended with upwards of 100 people and a bevy of volunteer debaters. It was so effective that we have now decided to partner with Germanna to host a debate during each semester.

To respond to **Goal 3, State Agency DOI Infrastructure & Training**, our first **objective was to bolster mental health and well-being resources**. In August 2026, The Princeton Review ranked UMW's Student Health Center 11th and the Talley Center for Counseling Services 15th nationally, based on student survey data, underscoring the impact of these efforts. Leadership transitions further strengthened this work with the appointment of Dr. Chad Sims as Director of the Talley Center and Dr. April Brecht as Director of Campus Recreation, alongside expanded staffing, trainees, and peer health education initiatives. Across the academic year, we enhanced outreach, prevention, and care through increased counseling and group services, vaccination clinics, crisis and postvention protocols, data-informed assessment via the Healthy Minds Study, and new grant-funded initiatives addressing recovery, food insecurity, and health communication. Cross-divisional partnerships supported programming focused on stress reduction, career-related anxiety, faculty and staff well-being, and social connection, while Campus Recreation saw significant growth in participation and introduced innovative, credit-bearing wellness courses.

Finally, there is **Objective 2: a continued focus on campus safety**. Over the past year, the University of Mary Washington Police Department has maintained a strong and intentional focus on campus safety through sustained community engagement, strategic infrastructure investments, and enhancements to officer readiness. The continued convening of the Community Advisory Board has strengthened partnerships among students, faculty, and staff while reinforcing community policing principles and open dialogue around safety concerns. Ongoing safety presentations and outreach efforts have further increased awareness of available resources. Significant upgrades to security infrastructure including 12 additional cameras and a blue light replacement in 2025, have expanded campus coverage and improved emergency response capabilities. The deployment of body-worn cameras to all patrol officers and sergeants in 2025 supports transparency, accountability, and effective policing. Together, all of these efforts underscore our continued commitment to fostering a campus environment that supports the needs of everyone.