

# UBALT: FOR BALTIMORE AND BEYOND

FY 2024 OPERATING BUDGET TESTIMONY  
TO THE MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY



PRESENTED BY

**Kurt L. Schmoke**, *president*  
The University of Baltimore

February 2024

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of The University of Baltimore, where we are contributing in impactful ways to the betterment of the city, state, region, and beyond. At a time when institutions are tasked with expanding their capabilities in support of multitudinous goals—from the career success of students to the readiness of the workforce to meet fast-moving challenges—the University serves as an engine of opportunity. After almost a century of experience in urban education, we have come to recognize that our relatively small size is no indicator of how much we are contributing to the lives of our fellow Baltimoreans and Marylanders.

## **A DIVERSE POPULATION, INCLUDING MANY FIRST-GENERATION STUDENTS**

We all recognize that one of the big hurdles to success in college is your familiarity with the college experience. How does a person prepare for a degree? What is the right major? How do I make sure that I'm getting good value for my investment? UBalt has always welcomed students from a variety of backgrounds, with an attitude of encouragement and a caring staff and faculty who know how to make the prospective student feel at home. The University of Baltimore focuses on transfer and graduate students and a small freshmen class who find their community at UBalt. Here, they are among their real-life peers.

When UBalt students sign up for a mix of in-person and online classes, they become part of our markedly diverse community. As I said last fall in a message to campus, our diversity is our superpower—it's one of the most enduring elements of The University of Baltimore. More than half of our current student population is considered to be the first in their families to go to college. Many are Pell Grant recipients. The University of Baltimore has also been designated by the U.S. Department of Education as a Predominantly Black Institution. More than half of our students come from a minority population, while nearly a third claim residency in Baltimore.

We're diverse in another way that resonates, too: Our population is older, on both the undergraduate and graduate sides, and more likely to be holding down a job and family responsibilities. Every day (every night, as well), in classrooms across our midtown campus, you'll see young people engaged with middle-aged, even retirement-age students.

## **SUPPORT WHEN YOU NEED IT**

At UBalt, we've made student success an essential part of our work. Whether you're a freshman newly introduced to the advanced math skills you'll need to compete in the business world, or a second-year law student struggling with an abstract idea in a constitutional law class, the University is there to help. Every person at UBalt is a member of a community that cares. Our shared goal is to get every student to that singular day when they finish their degree, start on their career path or move on to the next step in their career. Their UBalt experience is an important part of that hard work.

In this document, you'll find an abundance of information that explains what The University of Baltimore is. What we do is in there, as well. But the part I want to emphasize is the why. More is being asked of higher education, and UBalt is rising to the challenge. It's because we already know why we're in this profession:

- We help out the city around us, because we have the expertise to do so.
- We drive social mobility because our graduates are entering careers with incredible potential.
- We deliver excellence in our classes because our students work hard for the chance to be here.
- We strive to improve lives, because we have decades of experience that proves it's worth it—and it works.

The University of Baltimore is in the midst of an unparalleled period of change. I'm excited to tell you more about it. Let's share perspectives, learn about the challenges we face, and work together. I hope that UBalt truly inspires you, the same way it does me.

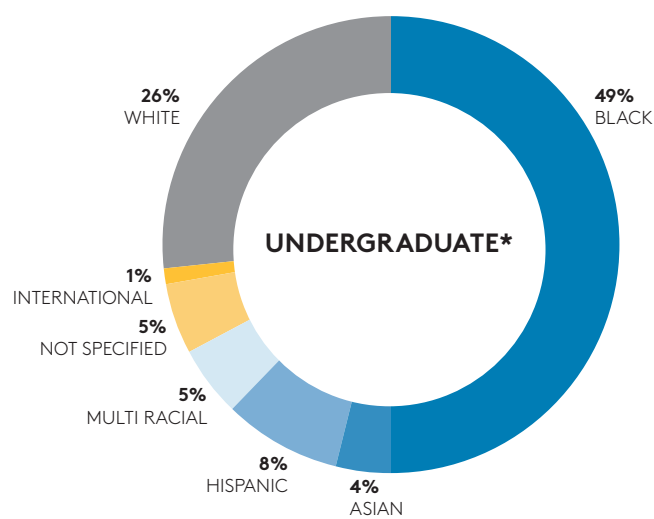
Sincerely,

Kurt L. Schmoke  
President

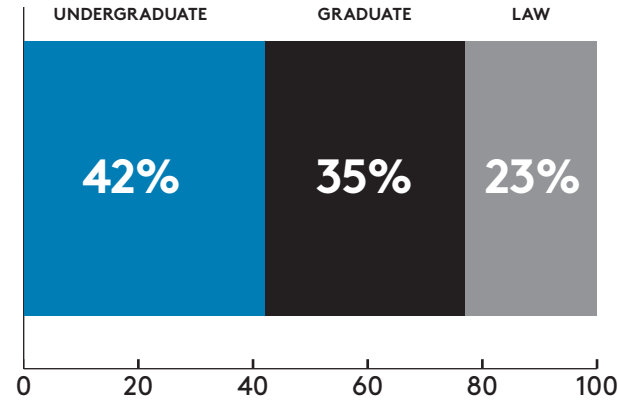


# UBALT: BY THE NUMBERS

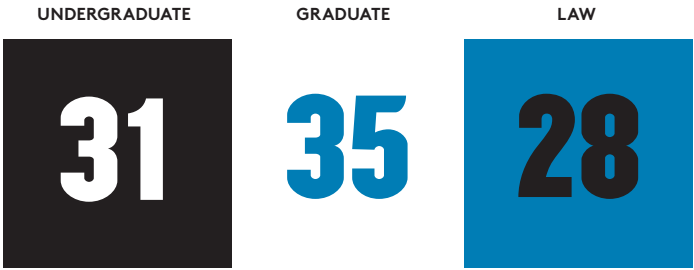
ENROLLMENT BY RACE/ETHNICITY, FALL 2023



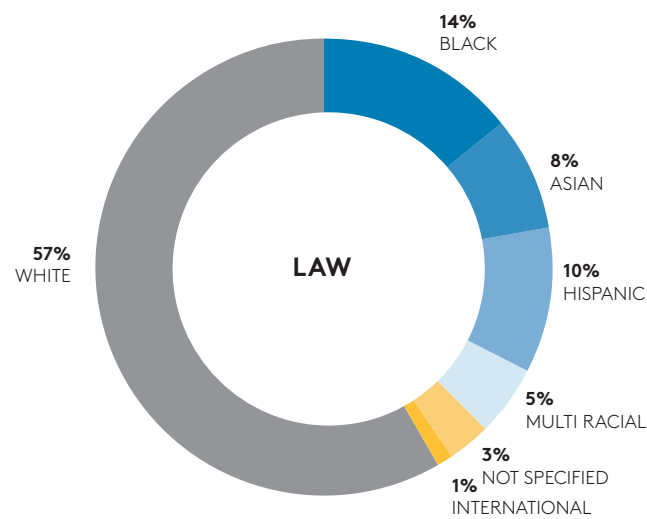
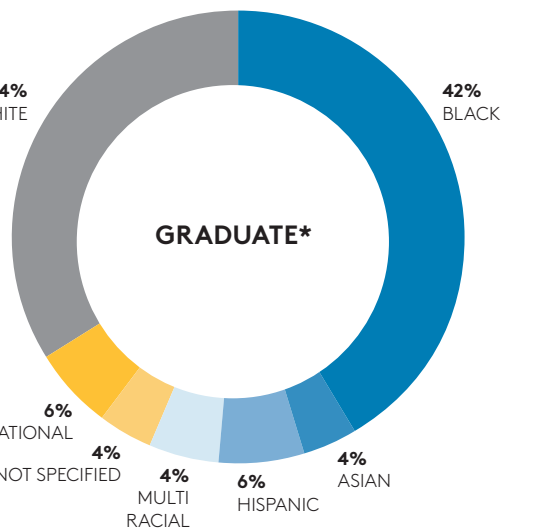
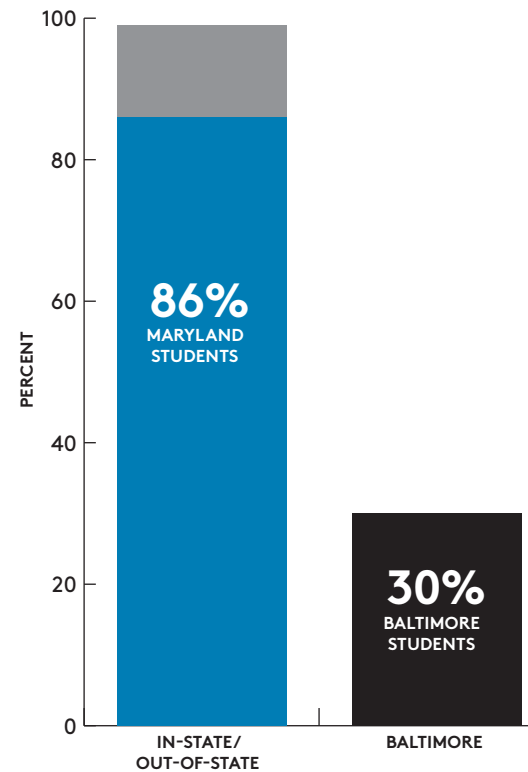
POPULATION TYPE, FALL 2023



AVERAGE STUDENT AGE, FALL 2023



STUDENT RESIDENCE, FALL 2023



\*UBalt's undergraduate and graduate populations include a percentage of Native American and Hawaiian students too small to be included in the charts above.

# WHO WE ARE IN 2024

With our centennial on the horizon in 2025, The University of Baltimore is preparing for a full year of celebrations that nod to its 100-year history and look forward to a bright future. We have a lot to celebrate, as our University continues to grow and evolve to meet the modern needs of our diverse class of students. Our students come to us in a variety of ways from a multitude of backgrounds. We welcome students who are first-time undergraduates, transferring from other institutions, and candidates for master’s, doctoral, and law degrees. We offer more than 70 programs, including certificates, across four colleges: the College of Public Affairs, Merrick School of Business, UBalt School of Law, and Yale Gordon College of Arts and Sciences.

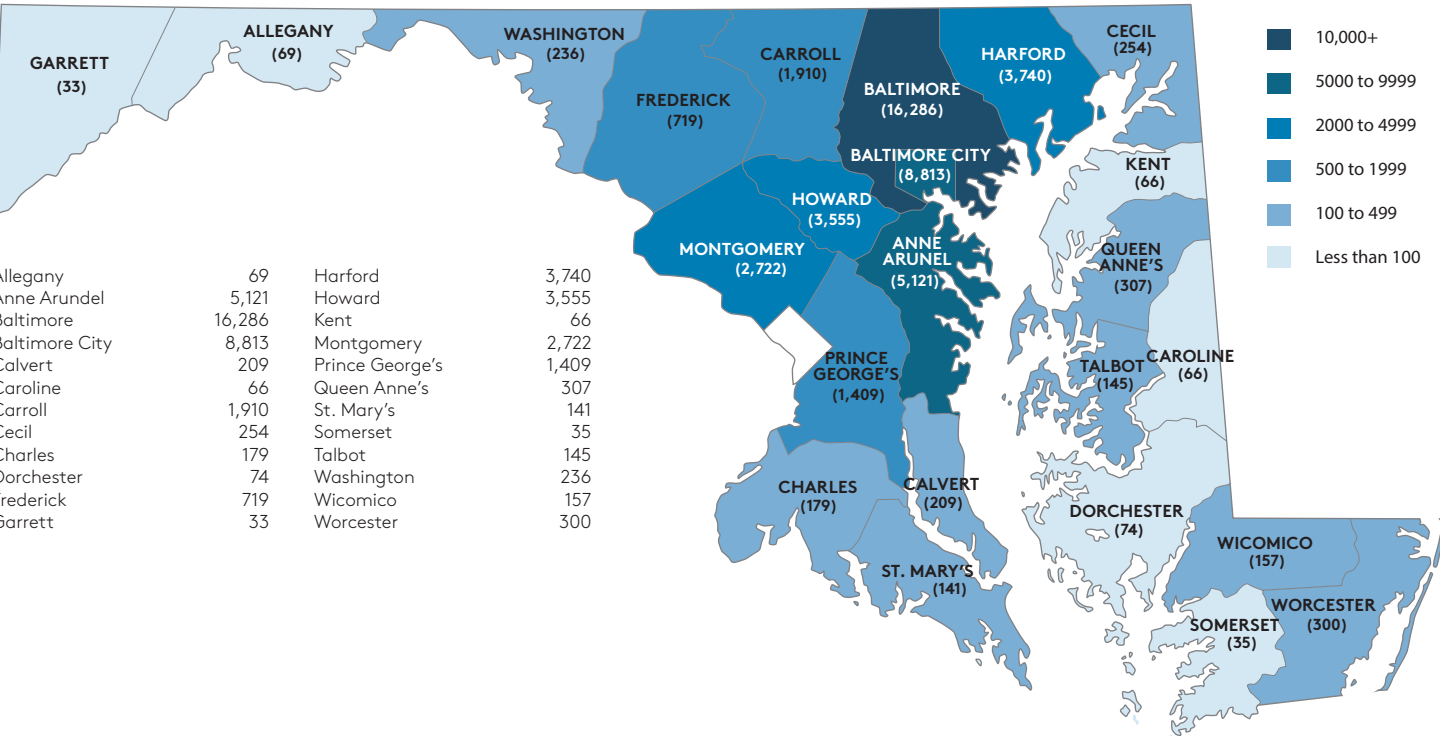
In fall 2023, UBalt enrolled 3,101 students, including 1,292 undergraduates, 1,089 graduate students and 720 law students. The University serves a truly diverse and nontraditional student population: average age is 31 for undergraduate and 35 for graduate; the student population is 56 percent minority and UBalt was designated by the U.S. Department of Education as a Predominantly Black Institution (PBI); and includes students from more than 50 countries. Our undergraduate population is evenly divided between full-time and part-time students while



56 percent of our graduate population attend part-time. Eighty-six percent of our students claim residency in Maryland, with 30 percent reporting residency in the city of Baltimore. Many of our students are working adults who are seeking to better themselves and move forward in their careers. Fifty-two percent of UBalt students report they are the first in their family to attend college.

Because our students come to us with different needs, we offer flexibility including online, in-person and hybrid classes, as well as offerings on weekends and at our second campus at The Universities at Shady Grove. We’ve assessed our students’ needs and met their changing demands, including adding new academic programs, bolstering mental health resources and other student support needs, and creating new opportunities for students to get engaged in their community, both on and off campus. We can proudly say for nearly 100 years, The University of

## UBALT ALUMNI BY COUNTY







Baltimore has designed its programs and opportunities to meet students where they are, so they can pursue their passions through our expertise and become the leaders and changemakers our city, state and world need. The University has taken significant steps forward in its long-standing efforts to support transfer students' desire to earn a four-year degree. We established two scholarships specifically for those audiences: The Bob Parsons Scholarship Fund is an investment, founded by its namesake alum, in Pell Grant-eligible transfer and military/veteran students. Qualifying students are able to attend UBalt and finish their bachelor's degree free from tuition and fees. The Samuel G. Rose Scholars Award, named for a law school alum, also provides financial assistance to transfer students, regardless of their Pell status.

In early 2023, the University became a founding partner of Community College of Baltimore County's Degrees to Succeed initiative. This collaboration invites students to commit to a four-year institution from their early days at the community college. In return, they gain access to events, advising and other advantages at their future university. It's because of opportunities like these that UBalt was recognized in 2023 on Phi Theta Kappa's Transfer Honor Roll. This ranking puts UBalt on the national map as a transfer friendly university.

UBalt has earned regional and national accolades for the strength of its academic programs, return on investment and social mobility.

In its latest rankings, *Washington Monthly* ranked UBalt at No. 1 among Maryland public universities for earnings performance (top 5 percent nationally) and as a top 15 percent Master's University nationally (No. 4 in Maryland). Nationally, UBalt ranked in the top 17 percent for social

mobility and top 20 percent for service, and in the top 25 percent for Bang for the Buck—Northeast. Also in 2023, *U.S. News & World Report* named UBalt a Top Performer for Social Mobility on the list of the Best Regional Universities—North.

At the college level, *U.S. News* this year ranked the College of Public Affairs at No. 72, tying with a dozen other institutions nationwide, and ranked the School of Law's Clinical Law Program at 8th nationwide. *preLaw Magazine* named UBalt Law one of the Best Schools for Criminal Law.

In the Yale Gordon College of Arts and Sciences, the M.S. in Interaction Design and Information Architecture ranked among the best UX/HCI programs in the nation in 2022, according to TopUXSchool.com, and is one of the 10 best online master's in interactive design and media degree programs according to Web Design Degree Center.

Merrick School of Business has consistently been recognized in *U.S. News & World Report* for its online and part-time MBA, and its B.S. in Business Administration was ranked as one of the nation's best undergraduate business programs by U.S. News in 2023.

### NEW LEADERS, BIG IMPACT

We've welcomed new leadership that will usher us well into our next century. **Ralph O. Mueller** joined UBalt as provost in July 2023. Mueller comes to Baltimore from Buffalo, New York, where he served as executive vice president for strategic initiatives at D'Youville University. Mueller will be a key member of the University's leadership team, which will look to unveil a new strategic plan in 2025. Additionally, the Merrick





School of Business welcomed a new dean, **Nagraj "Raju" Balakrishnan**, to take over after the retirement of Murray Dalziel at the end of the 2022-23 academic year. Balakrishnan brings his experience as a veteran university educator and, most recently, dean of the University of Michigan-Dearborn

College of Business. These new leaders are already using their experiences to strengthen our foundation in academic excellence and community engagement.

At every level of our University, our staff and faculty are making an undeniable impact, all to the benefit of the students they serve. **Dena Allen-Few**, a U.S. Army veteran who joined The Bob Parsons Veterans Center at UBalt as coordinator of veteran and military student services in December 2021, was selected as one of 40 2023 Veteran Champions of the Year in Higher Education by GI Jobs magazine. Also in 2023, Allen-Few was selected for a Focus Forward Fellowship at Purdue University. The highly competitive program gives fellows access to resources and training on emotional intelligence, career skills and other critical subject areas that they can bring back to their students. UBalt's veterans center has been consistently recognized, both by its students and on a national level, for its programming and services. In 2022 and 2023, it earned the **Military Friendly Gold School designation**, an assessment based on a survey of student retention, graduation, job placement and more for student veterans.



The University of Baltimore earned special community recognition for its longstanding commitment to bridging high school students' pathways to college. Urban Alliance-Baltimore named UBalt its **Community Partner of the Year** in 2023 for its support of the Urban Alliance High School Internship Program. John Brenner, UBalt's Early College Initiatives director who accepted the award, said an average of 50 high school students from Baltimore are placed in internship settings through Urban Alliance-Baltimore each year. Typically, 80 percent of those students go on to college careers. Early College Initiatives represents the University's commitment to education. It creates space for students from all backgrounds to access college programs and see themselves, sometimes for the first time, on a path that leads to college.

## A REVITALIZED NEIGHBORHOOD

Now is a transformative time in our campus community. Not only are we enjoying positive change through new leaders and programs, but also, we're part of a physical overhaul that further improves our ideal location in midtown Baltimore.

On the northern side of our campus, the historic Penn Station is undergoing a massive renovation designed to modernize the early 1900s structure and better connect it with surrounding neighborhoods. Working along a similar timeline, UBalt will benefit from the **Midtown Gateway Revitalization** along Oliver Street. A former U.S. Post Office site, owned by the University and across the street from Robert L. Bogomolny Library, will be demolished to make way for a new building. One of the buildings part of the project will offer 30,000 square feet of street-level retail, with several floors above for 235 market-rate, multifamily apartments and dedicated indoor and outdoor amenity space on the upper levels. The future vision along this campus gateway also includes improvements to green spaces, bringing a new look for the campus and neighborhood. As President Kurt Schmoke put it, the entire project "represents a breakthrough in how we think about the center of the city."

The University's position in midtown Baltimore has long been a draw for prospective students and students have found ways to make their mark, from beautification projects to public art. **Inclusion Alley** is just one example.



The student-led initiative transformed an alley between two campus buildings into a welcoming community space. What started with the Philadelphia Pride Flag brightening up the alley's pavement now includes more messages of diversity, equity and inclusion, and tables for people to enjoy the space. The spot has become a must-see space on campus for students and non-students alike. It even caught the city's attention. In 2023, Inclusion Alley was voted Best Exhibit by *Baltimore Magazine's* annual readers' poll.

The University of Baltimore is, and has been, an institution on the move. Over its 100 years, it became a pioneer in educating working adults and offering online classes, and looking ahead, its leaders will continue to assess new opportunities to help meet students' needs now and in the future.



With the traditional pomp and circumstance and some extra surprises, The University of Baltimore celebrated its newest graduates during the fall 2023 commencement on Monday, Dec. 18 at The Lyric Baltimore. During his keynote address, Maryland Gov. Wes Moore spoke of what makes UBalt graduates unique, noting, “you have beaten expectations that other people might not have had for you, but you did it.”

Gov. Moore pointed to and praised two exemplary graduates, in particular. Here are their stories.



## THOMAS ANDERSON

Thomas Anderson grew up on the fringes, torn between his devoutly religious mother's home and Baltimore's seemingly irresistible streets. When it came time to choose a side, he chose the latter and in return earned a life sentence in prison.

In time, while serving time, Anderson would find a new beginning through UBalt's Second Chance College Program. It was a path that would lead him toward a B.S. in Business Administration and an opportunity to represent the fall graduating class of 2023 as the student speaker.

"I want to express my deepest gratitude to the University of Baltimore, for believing in second chances, for providing a platform for individuals like me to be able to write our narrative."

Anderson found UBalt when its Second Chance College Program came to in Jessup Correctional Institute. The program enables incarcerated individuals to use Pell Grant funds to take courses for credits.

Anderson started taking courses in the Human Services Administration program. When he was released after 22 and a half years in prison, he continued at UBalt, but switched his major to business. He wants to pursue a career in real estate while he builds a nonprofit that supports other former inmates hoping to turn their life around.



## JEMIA BELL-SANDY

Jemia Bell-Sandy pushed herself through high school and into college. Raised in a home of three by a single mother who never finished high school, she wanted a different life for herself.

"Graduating high school was everything that I needed to move on and break that generational curse," she said.

Even willpower has limitations, however. As a first-generation college student at The University of Baltimore, Bell-Sandy struggled to find her way without guidance or knowing where to find it.

Additionally, she had to balance rigorous academic work with multiple jobs and care for her young son.

It took time but Bell-Sandy found the support she needed in the UBalt Connects mentorship program, which paired her with Llatetra Esters, the dean of students and a fellow first-generation college graduate.

In December 2023, Bell-Sandy graduated with a B.S. in Health Management. "Graduating is for myself, and graduating is also for my son," she said. "I get to pass that on down to him, and I get to share my memories of college, show him how important it is to go to college, how fun it is to go to college."

# HIGHLIGHTS: COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

## Service and learning in Baltimore's Jones Falls

**Dr. Stanley Kemp** has spent decades taking his Environmental Sustainability students to nearby Jones Falls. He's learned his ecology lectures go farther when taught on the banks of the urban stream.

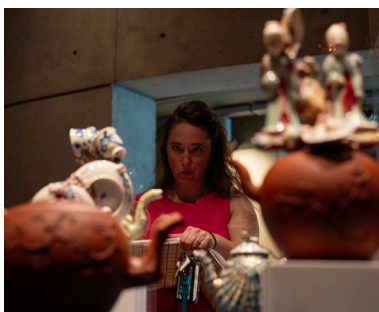


In recent years, Kemp has invited more than just his students to join him. He has served as site host on community service days to help clean up the waterway and even welcomed fellow **Professor Jane Delury** and her English students for a history lesson to help influence their next writing assignment. Kemp has been instrumental in setting the framework for more service-learning enhanced courses at UBalt, which create more opportunities for students to learn in and engage with the community around their campus.

## Escaping the classroom for new perspective

After the pandemic, **Dr. Rachael Zeleny** started reconsidering how best to help her students appreciate art and connect it to themselves.

The result was having students imagine and create their own digital escape rooms to tell a story about a piece or exhibit in local museums, or local libraries. These projects were then made available to the museums and libraries to engage their own audiences.



"We've all forgotten how to make time for just doing things we aren't good at and spending more time in that place where we're more like kids again," the arts and English professor explains.

## Psychology students chart new path for global studies

After a nearly three-year pause on travel prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic, **Dr. Sharon Glazer**, M.S. '95, accompanied her psychology graduate students to Spain. The successful trip was a turning point.

Over the course of 2023, UBalt students would trot the globe, landing in London; Bangkok, Thailand; Lucerne, Switzerland; Tel Aviv, Israel; San Juan, Puerto Rico, and Aberdeen, Scotland.

These global field studies differ from the traditional study abroad model in many ways, most notably because they only last about 10 days and take place during breaks in the academic calendar. Many UBalt students have families to care for and jobs to work around so a 15-week venture is largely unaffordable or unattainable. Another key advantage is the scholarships that help subsidize the total cost.



**Andressa Carvalho Viscone**, B.A. '22, an M.S. in Industrial-Organizational Psychology student, had an opportunity to present research she conducted with Glazer at the Israel Organizational Behavior Conference at the University of Tel-Aviv in January.

"Having the opportunity to talk with people who have been in the field for a while who are doing focused research in specific topics gives a good idea of all the things that we can do," she said.

## ACHIEVEMENTS

- Simulation and Game Design, the oldest and largest game design program in Maryland, with over 120 students spanning two campuses—UBalt and UBalt at The Universities at Shady Grove—celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2023.
- The Practitioner Specialization of the M.S. in Counseling Psychology program earned accreditation by the Masters in Psychology and Counseling Accreditation Council (MPCAC) for the period of February 2022 through February 2030.



# HIGHLIGHTS: MERRICK SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

## Building students' ROI through STEM designations

Ahead of the fall 2023 semester, the Merrick School of Business launched its highly anticipated **STEM-designated Master of Science in Business-Finance degree**. This innovative program promises to equip aspiring finance professionals with the specialized skills and knowledge necessary to excel in today's rapidly evolving business landscape.



The STEM designation of this degree opens up a wider range of career prospects for graduates, as many employers prioritize candidates with STEM backgrounds for positions that require a deep understanding of financial analysis, investment strategies, and risk assessment.

Business-Finance is one of several STEM programs now offered across the University and joins Cybersecurity Leadership as one of two in the business school.

## Empowering Baltimore residents with data

With a new director **Dr. Amanda Phillips de Lucas** at the helm, the Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance—Jacob France Institute hosted an in-person Baltimore Data Week in July 2023. The annual event welcomes community leaders, activists, nonprofit organizations, governmental entities and more for discussions about the latest trends in community-based data, technology and tools, and the use of data to support and advance constructive change.

BNIA-JFI, which celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2020, is a valuable city and University asset housed in our campus's William H. Thumel Sr., Business Center. Its annual Vital Signs report is a comprehensive statistical portrait of Baltimore and its neighborhoods, built with years of continuous monitoring of community-based quality of life indicators.

## Students win with entrepreneurial ideas

Five winners, including undergraduate students and recent alumni, emerged from UBalt's 2023 "Rise to the Challenge" Business Pitch Competition held on April 27. Each winner received their own "big check," plus a portion of the nearly \$30,000 in prize money. The event, now in its 11th year, is supported annually by the University's Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation to showcase many of the UBalt community's most talented and driven entrepreneurs.

For the first time in five years, two entrepreneurs earned the top prize, the "Most Promising Business" award: **Angel Wilson**, M.F.A. '19, founder of Silent Books Publishing, a minority-owned self-publishing services business for aspiring and seasoned authors, and **Tyeisha Pinnock**, MBA '19, created Dip'T, a line of vegetarian food.



"They're all impressive, and it is my hope that I'm not the only one who feels that way," said Henry Mortimer, CEI director. "My wish is that each caught the attention of someone new who'd be interested in their idea or product, possibly some very influential people who can help nurture the growth of their enterprise and allow them to continue to develop as entrepreneurs."

### ACHIEVEMENTS

- After proving a go-to expert for national media on oligarchs, entrepreneurship professor Dr. David Lingelbach co-authored a new book, *The Oligarchs' Grip: Fusing Wealth and Power*, to help broaden understanding.
- Shelby Blondell, B.S. '15, MBA '18, won a grant from the University System of Maryland's Launch Fund for a business venture she developed at UBalt, The Sheller, the first patented stainless steel, seafood multitool.

# HIGHLIGHTS: COLLEGE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

## Building the NextGen of Leaders

Launched in fall 2022, the NextGen Leaders program provides a range of opportunities including academic programs, paid professional experiences, co-curricular experiences and cohort experiences.

**NextGen Leaders for Public Service Program** provides graduate and undergraduate UBalt students from any major with the opportunity to explore careers in public service through paid internships. At the end of the 2022-23 academic year, nearly 100 NextGen students from The University of Baltimore have been placed at dozens of public service job sites.

Before her experience with the program, **Jeanette Brown**, B.A. '22, only had administrative assistance to fill out her resume. NextGen changed that and more: "During that time, I discovered I really loved public policy work. So, I came back to get my master's in public administration."

It even led to a full-time position.



"We're an institution built on engagement, and this is the perfect way for students to marry their academic career with the opportunity to make a difference," said **Dr.**

**Ann Cotten**, a program founder and director of UBalt's Schaefer Center for Public Policy.

## ACHIEVEMENTS

- Roper Victim Assistance Academy, in its 21st year, has trained more than 15,000 professionals, and is currently supported with three state grants, totaling \$488,000. Training is linked to degree and certificate programs.
- The college received three federal grants in 2023: one will explore AI-driven digital forensics for smart cybercrime investigations, another aims to expand AI innovation through capacity building and partnerships, and the last will explore visualized and explainable AI to expand students' learning experience.

## Graduates fulfill goals with Second Chance

In December 2022, the University celebrated James Ruffin III as the first graduate of its **Second Chance College Program**, which has offered a post-secondary education to incarcerated individuals at Jessup Correctional Institute since 2016. In 2023, many more Second Chance students followed his lead.

In May, **Kenneth Bond** and **Kelly Gilliss** donned their caps and gowns and walked across the stage at The Lyric with hundreds of more University graduates.

On Oct. 6, UBalt staff and faculty hosted a commencement at Jessup Correctional to celebrate six students that completed their bachelor's degrees in prison.



"With the trials of life, we had some detours," new UBalt alum **Michael White** told *The Baltimore Sun*. "I say I came from the back door in. But I'm coming out the front doors, with a degree."

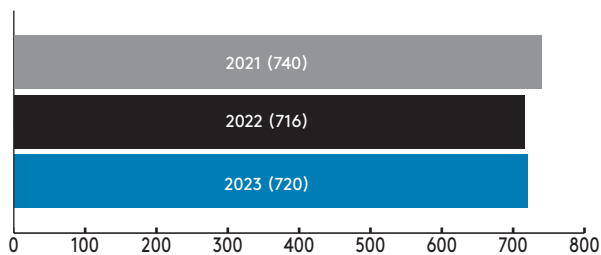
## Research garners top honors from Finland

**C. Alan Lyles**, the Henry A. Rosenberg Professor of Government, Business, and Nonprofit Partnerships, received an honorary doctoral degree from the University of Helsinki in Finland on May 26. He was among a group of 30 scholars from around the world, and one of 11 in the Doctor of Philosophy category, to be recognized by one of the world's oldest and most prestigious educational institutions.

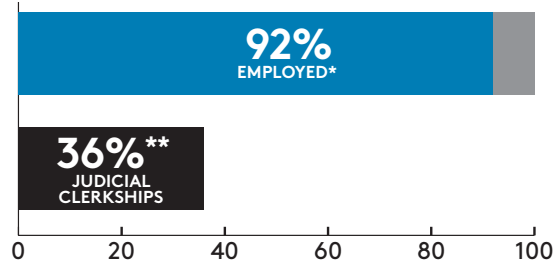
"I am proud to have been a part of this research because it has made a difference," Lyles says. "I will be forever grateful for the award and these opportunities, but there is more to be done."

# HIGHLIGHTS: SCHOOL OF LAW

## LAW ENROLLMENT, PAST THREE YEARS



## CLASS OF 2022 EMPLOYMENT



\*within 10 months of graduation; \*\*36% of those employed

### Students advocate for incarcerated veterans

In April, six students from **The Bob Parsons Veterans Advocacy Clinic** at UBalt School of Law hosted a presentation on the implementation of veteran-specific housing units, or pods, for military veterans incarcerated in Maryland's correctional system.



Veterans pods are specialized housing units located inside correctional facilities that have been designed to provide support and care for incarcerated veterans while helping them transition back to society after their release. The University of Baltimore was an ideal location to discuss the implementation of veterans prison pods, as the University has a strong commitment to social justice and offers multiple programs and initiatives that support veterans and their families.

### New center leads talks on criminal law system reform

In the two years since its inception, the UBalt School of Law's **Center for Criminal Justice Reform** has been a convener of important stakeholder conversations around criminal legal system reform. These convenings include a September 2022 conference, "Beyond Confinement: Rethinking Corrections and Rehabilitation in Maryland," which explored innovative approaches to transforming the current system, aiming to create a more effective, humane and equitable approach to rehabilitation; a November 2022 panel for Baltimore's Civil Rights Week Police Accountability Day, hosted by the Baltimore Office of Equity and Civil Rights, on the topic, "Collateral Consequences of Police Misconduct;" and an April 2023 event, "Policing in the Aftermath of the Gun Trace Task Force."



Additionally, **Heather Warnken**, the center's executive director, has been named to several task forces focused on reforming the criminal legal system in Maryland. These include the Maryland Equitable Justice Collaborative, which was established by the Office of the Attorney General and the Office of the Public Defender; the state attorney general's Civil Rights Advisory Council, and the General Assembly's Task Force to Study Transparency Standards for State's Attorneys.

### College 'Blazing the Trail' for historic law giants

This year's University of Baltimore Law Forum Symposium, "Blazing the Trail: Maryland's First Black Lawyers and the Legacy They Built," brought together a panel of distinguished legal professionals and historians to discuss Maryland's early Black lawyers and the challenges they faced in gaining admission to the bar, as well as obstacles still in existence for Black lawyers seeking bar admission and judgeships.

The event was a catalyst for the posthumous bar admission in October 2023 of Edward Garrison Draper, a Black man who was denied admission to the Maryland bar in 1857 because of his race. The Maryland Supreme Court granted his admission because of efforts made by participants in the February symposium.

UBalt Law **Professor Jose Anderson** had previously filed a petition to grant Draper's posthumous bar admission.

#### ACHIEVEMENTS

- One third of Maryland's sitting judges are UBalt Law alumni and alumni hold many bar leadership positions.
- Clinical Law Program was named 6th in the nation (*U.S. News & World Report*, 2024)



## THE PRESIDENT SHOULD COMMENT ON THE CHALLENGES OF STABILIZING AND INCREASING UNDERGRADUATE ENROLLMENT.

The University of Baltimore community is working hard and in concert to stabilize and increase undergraduate enrollment. We are by design, a non-traditional campus (without housing, sports teams, etc.), a campus and culture that traditional first-time students are not seeking for their post-secondary experience. For UBalt, efforts to grow enrollment with traditional first-year students is simply not a viable option. Our institution is a more attractive option for non-traditional adult students, that include first-time, transfer and degree completers. One challenge is identifying the non-traditional first-time student in a market where they are not easily distinguishable (unlike traditional first-year students who are located primarily in secondary institutions). Another significant challenge is UBalt's first-year students typically have unique stories and life circumstances that make UBalt an attractive option (flexible schedules, hybrid and full online programs); however, the level of effort and resources the University expends to find these students has not yielded a number of students equal to that effort. These students' life circumstances coupled with affordability concerns, even with generous financial aid packages that typically cover tuition and fees, can and often does delay enrollment of admitted first year and transfer students. The admission office's notable new efforts include our presence in Baltimore city's large events that adults attend, and our focus on parents at National College Fairs. Academic Affairs is engaging in proactive outreach to select high schools for broader and deeper dual enrollment.

The transfer student population, specifically graduates from MDCCs and degree completers, is where UBalt has focused its efforts to increase undergraduate enrollment. Challenges we face include more competition from traditional institutions entering this market within the state and beyond Maryland in response to the looming enrollment cliff, limited pools to recruit adult students with community college enrollment declines, low unemployment rates and shifting educational preferences that include deliberate choices of students not to attend college. We have strategies in place to overcome these challenges and to stabilize and increase undergraduate enrollment. These strategies include a focused and data-driven approach, highly engaged, personalized communication campaigns, community college outreach and partnerships, generous financial aid packages, dual admission opportunities, Phi Theta Kappa membership, and continuing to build on our reputation as a transfer friendly (one of the best) institution in Maryland. Academic Affairs is building stronger relationships with community colleges for broader curriculum alignments to facilitate transfer. Most notable for our transfer and veteran students is the Parsons scholarship, that covers tuition and fees for Pell-eligible students, and beginning in the spring of 2023, we were also able to award Parsons scholarships to part-time students. With these challenges and opportunities, UBalt's efforts yielded an increase in transfer students for spring 2023 of 5% (pre-census). Future strategies include building pipelines with community partners, such as public and private organizations to educate their employees, working with Maryland's Adult Education Office to begin engagement of GED completers and refreshing and rebranding our Baltimore city government partnership.

Growing enrollment requires a collaborative effort and strategic balancing of enrolling and retaining new students. At University of Baltimore, there are several challenges related to retaining our undergraduate students. We have a higher-than-average population with unique challenges. Specifically, over half of our undergraduate students are first-generation and nearly 40% are Pell-eligible. In addition to these demographic factors, many UBalt students are part-time, older, and non-traditional. Given that our campus is non-residential and undergraduate course offerings are a mix of mostly online and some in-person, there are fewer opportunities for students to deeply connect with the institution outside of the classroom. All these factors make it more challenging to retain students.

However, UBalt continuously assesses the needs of our students and implements best practices to support student success. The supports that are in place are high-touch, intrusive, and holistic. Our emphasis on academic, mental health, mentoring, and basic need supports remains critical to our students' success. While all these challenges remain, this spring, UBalt surpassed its goal for returning students by 2% and will build on this success for academic year 2024-2025.