



UMB News

President's Fellows: EDI Starts with Curriculum

May 9, 2022 | By [Jena Frick](#)

On May 2, the [University of Maryland, Baltimore's](#) (UMB) President's Fellows gathered virtually to present their research on the state of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) at the University and recommendations for improvements as part of the [2021-2022 President's Symposium and White Paper Project](#).

The President's Symposium and White Paper Project is an interprofessional initiative that engages faculty, staff, and students in a yearlong conversation about a topic that is of interest and importance to the University and community at large. The goal of this year's White Paper Project was to identify strategies for leveraging inclusive leadership to develop an EDI-informed curriculum at UMB.



The President's Fellows present their White Paper Project on equity, diversity, and inclusion as part of the President's Symposium Series.

"We believe that it is the responsibility of an anchor institution like the University of Maryland, Baltimore to address structural oppression head-on and to act on issues of EDI from an anti-racist and anti-oppression perspective," said **Marcella Leath**, one of the fellows and a Doctor of Nursing Practice student at the [University of Maryland School of Nursing](#), as she introduced the project.

UMB has been taking steps to increase EDI within University leadership to create a more accessible, welcoming, and inclusive environment. In July 2021, UMB welcomed its first chief equity, diversity and inclusion officer and vice president (CEDIO/VP), **Diane Forbes Berthoud, PhD, MA**. In her role, Forbes Berthoud takes the lead on UMB's commitment to EDI by catalyzing institutional change to strengthen that commitment and designing a transparent accountability framework to measure and evaluate the impact and effectiveness at every level of the institution.

Given her responsibilities as CEDIO/VP, Forbes Berthoud was the perfect person to serve as an advisor and mentor to the President's Fellows as they researched and developed ways to improve the state of EDI at UMB.

"I want to applaud you all for your leadership and for your engagement," Forbes Berthoud told the fellows. "This is very extensive research on a topic near and dear to my heart. Even though I was mentoring you, in many ways, I learned from you as well."

During the presentation, the fellows explained how they measured the current EDI state of leadership at UMB by looking at six variables: access, accountability, leadership groups, starting young, training, and university engagement. Then, they compared those to the EDI programs at other institutions and universities.

The fellows explained that most of their research focused on curriculum because it is the foundation of education. It informs not only what and how students learn, but also shows what is deemed viable knowledge.

"Curriculum informs how we think and engage with the world around us," said **Julia Scott**, one of the fellows and a Master's in Social Work student at the [University of Maryland School of Social Work](#). "It greatly impacts how we decide which communities are important, and it plays a significant role in shaping a school's priorities and academic reputation."

The recommendations that the fellows drafted came down to five main objectives that placed an emphasis on leveraging education to elicit positive change and awareness.

1. Collaborate with other higher education institutions in the [University System of Maryland](#) (USM), specifically Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU)
2. Mandate EDI trainings for students on anti-racism, anti-oppression, and unconscious and implicit bias.
3. Create a center for EDI and anti-oppression for faculty to learn how to deliver and develop curriculum for a more diverse student body and a more inclusive classroom.
4. Require EDI deans and EDI departments within each of the individual schools.
5. Hire an equity team to evaluate, research, explore, and advise UMB as an institution regarding its accessibility to all students.

The findings and recommendations in this white paper project will be used as a resource when University leadership begins formulating a new strategic plan, which Forbes Berthoud says will begin in the coming months.

"I really appreciate the challenges and opportunities the fellows presented for transformation and inclusion at all levels of the University, as well as establishing and advancing strategic priorities related to EDI-informed curriculum and leveraging inclusive leadership," she said.

(Read the full 2021-2022 President's White Paper Project [here](#)  PDF.)

Participating Fellows:

Grace Lee, [University of Maryland School of Medicine](#), MD Program

Jeremie Oliver, [University of Maryland School of Dentistry](#), DDS

Julia Scott, University of Maryland School of Social Work, MSW

Kaila Noland, [University of Maryland Graduate School](#), Life Sciences in Molecular Medicine

Marcella Leath, University of Maryland School of Nursing, DNP

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