Revitalizing Agency

Strategic Plan 2025-2028

Authors

Jaden Farris
Meghna Chandrasekaran
Eli Gendleman
Meghan Thomas

UMBC SGA

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The strategic plan is a roadmap for the future of SGA, built upon the legacy of changemakers of our entire community. And we are beyond grateful for all the support we have received in this process and the participation of all of our key stakeholders.

Letter from the SGA President

During winter break of the 2022-2023 school year, I was encouraged by David Hoffman to look through the SGA archives to remind us of our history and the power we hold in SGA with another officer, Musa Jafri. Our SGA office during break looked like a crime scene room without the red string. We had names thrown up on the whiteboard of previous SGA officers, copies of previous constitutions that we annotated, and clippings from the Retriever highlighting major events. Countless hours were spent in the Special Collections room in the library looking through endless agendas, flipjacks, articles, meeting minutes and so much more to get a sense as to why our SGA is distinct from other SGAs. From when UMBC was founded in the 1960s, students had an active role in shaping the campus community. Shared governance was not just a formality but a true value from the university's beginning. And this spirit was felt throughout the campus community. A student from the first graduating class of UMBC, Diane Juknelis, even said:
"The present class of graduates is the first in a long line of innovators who are not to be considered products of UMBC, but rather constant producers of all that gives it character and quality. The campus, ever-growing and changing, will bear the indelible imprint of those who participated in its all-important first step on a course untried."

The journey of going through our SGA history had such a profound impact on me. In that moment, I knew that I was part of something bigger than me and I have the agency to add to that legacy of changemaking. I had heard of stories of the golden age of SGA where we passed a new constitution, launched the Retriver Learning Center, ProveIt!, and the University Center Study Place. After talking to some of the officers of those times, I knew I wanted to see that spirit again in our campus community especially among our student community. After COVID, when people were trying to find a community, all of us writing this plan (Jaden Farris, Eli Gendleman, Meghan Thomas and I) found a community in SGA and we wanted that for every student on campus. From that connectedness, students will feel as active agents of this community and would feel empowered to co-create change with all community members. This plan is my addition to the legacy of changemaking, hoping that future officers have that same moment for themselves to unlock their agency.

This entire journey crafting this plan had its ups and downs, but what process and organization does not? And for future SGA officers, I encourage you to take the time and learn about the history of our SGA. You are here because someone before you started this legacy of being makers of the community that you are in. You are joining that legacy too, so take a minute to realize the power behind that. Know that you are an active agent that can co-create the UMBC you want it to be. It is going to be hard. It is not easy work, but the first step is to make the choice to show up. I am confident that you will add to this special legacy and know that you have a community of previous officers who are there for you when you go through this journey yourself. I am excited to see what the future holds for SGA and our campus community, and already proud of what you are going to add to this legacy.

With love and gratitude,
Meghna Chandrasekaran

Timeline of Crafting Plan

Winter 2022

- Intensive research of SGA history
- Built a strong foundation of understanding the role and power of SGA in the past

Spring 2023

- Had a baseline purpose, vision and mission statement to start understanding how to align the work of SGA to the basic values

Fall 2023

- Worked with 2023-24 SGA Steering Committee to fully flesh out the vision and mission of SGA
- Started process of data collection of students' wants and needs

Spring 2024

- Continued process of data collection from students

Fall 2024

- Conducted visioning session with new officers
- Conducted logic modeling with each SGA body
- Analyzed all information and drafted Strategic Plan

Spring 2025

- Launch of Strategic Plan

This strategic plan is founded on core principles relating to students' vital role as co-creators of the UMBC community, which are reflected in SGA's long legacy of advocating for students' interests and facilitating their campus engagement. These core principles include:

- Students should be involved in shaping the norms, practices, programs, and policies that structure their experiences at UMBC.
- Students are capable of making meaningful contributions as partners in campus leadership, decision-making, and programming.
- As a shared governance organization led by officers elected by the undergraduate student body, SGA has the right and responsibility to represent students' interests in university decision-making, and to organize students to advocate on their own behalf.
- SGA has a special responsibility to support and advocate for student organizations as crucial forums for student contributions to the campus community.

While our principles are bedrock, change in our community is inevitable, and as circumstances change, so too must our strategies. We expect and intend that this plan will be a dynamic tool, continuously subject to assessment, refinement, and enhancement as SGA leaders learn and respond to emerging challenges together.

Vision And Mission

Vision

UMBC Student Government Association is committed to enhancing the role of students in creating a dynamic higher education community. Through a commitment to co-creation and honoring our students' multifaceted diverse backgrounds. SGA strives to connect the UMBC undergraduate student body to the change-making processes and decisions that allow us to create the most inclusive and equitable UMBC community possible.

Mission

We seek to organize and support undergraduate students in building a sense of community amongst all students, co-curricular and academic experiences; identify and voice students' hopes and concerns; engage students in campus activities and decision-making, and provide every student with the resources needed to be an effective leader.

Core Values

INCLUSION AND EQUITY

Each action in the community must prioritize inclusion of each and every form of diversity. Equity goes further, providing opportunities based on different lived experiences of individuals. They go hand-in-hand to create a university that equips members with tools and support systems to succeed.

CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

This value prioritizes fostering meaningful relationships, collaboration, and mutual support among all members of the UMBC community. This allows for students to interact across identities and experiences in building a campus culture based in trust, empathy and collective growth.

CO-CREATION AND CHANGEMAKING

This value prioritizes fostering meaningful relationships, collaboration, and mutual support among all members of the UMBC community. This allows for students to interact across identities and experiences in building a campus culture based in trust, empathy and collective growth.

Priorities

From our detailed logic modeling sessions with each of the SGA bodies and data collection from the student body, four priorities emerged. Each of these priorities, when accomplished, is also in alignment with our core values, reassuring our commitment to them.

Priority #1

Empowering Student Organizations

WHY?

Student organizations are the lifeblood of student involvement and belonging at UMBC, driving a dynamic campus culture of events and activities. By intentionally supporting intra-organization and inter-organization collaboration, we will build a more collective and inclusive community that inspires deeper connections between and among students. We should continue working to provide greater opportunities for non-residential and non-traditional students to get involved so that all students have the opportunity to benefit from the leadership development, personal growth, and exploration of interests made possible through student organizations.

GOALS

1. **ENHANCE STUDENT ORGANIZATION ENGAGEMENT AND COLLABORATION**
2. **STREAMLINE FINANCIAL PROCESSES AND INCREASE FUNDING**
3. **INCREASE AWARENESS OF RESOURCES**
4. **PROMOTE CONNECTION AND COMMUNICATION WITH STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS AND THE CAMPUS COMMUNITY**

CONCEPTUALIZATION

- vibrant and active campus community with events and opportunities for everyone
- more intentional collaboration among student organizations
- broken silos through sustained collaboration and support with campus departments
- thorough understanding of university and SGA policies and procedures

Priority #2

Advocacy through Shared Governance

WHY?

By embracing the collaborative structures of shared governance, we ensure student perspectives inform institutional decisions to create a campus community in which both the university and its students can flourish. This helps drive collective responsibility, increases meaningful student engagement in effecting change, and forms the basis for enduring success.

GOALS

1. STRENGTHEN COMMITMENT TO SHARED GOVERNANCE
2. ENHANCE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND FEEDBACK COLLECTION
3. CREATE STUDENT-LED GOVERNANCE INITIATIVES
4. ADVOCATE FOR ADMINISTRATIVE ACCOUNTABILITY AND SUPPORT
5. IMPROVE COMMUNICATION AND TRANSPARENCY

CONCEPTUALIZATION

- prioritize co-creation and changemaking for issues and concerns
- student concerns are SGA concerns and will prioritize intentional engagement with shared governance committees
- new opportunities for students at large to engage in the decision making process

Priority #3

Fostering Community and Collaboration

WHY?

Bolstering interconnectedness through intentional partnerships and high-impact experiences is essential for maximizing the collective impact of student initiatives and avoiding duplicative efforts. Strategic collaboration with campus departments, offices, and charter organizations enhances co-creation, strengthens SGA's influence, and amplifies the reach of resources and programming. An interconnected SGA shows the supportiveness and connectedness of the student community in such a way that no student is dealing with their issues in isolation. High-impact partnerships create a more cohesive and engaging college experience where student voices are heard, and meaningful change is achieved.

GOALS

1. **STRENGTHEN STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS**
2. **FORMALIZE SUSTAINABLE COLLABORATIONS THROUGH MOUS**
3. **MAINTAIN REGULAR COMMUNICATION WITH CAMPUS STAKEHOLDERS**
4. **EXPAND HIGH-IMPACT PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES**

CONCEPTUALIZATION

- constant communication and collaboration with charter organizations, campus departments, and university offices
- work closely with campus departments to prioritize engagement with non-traditional students, creating more interconnectedness

Priority #4

Organizational Transparency, Operational Efficiency, & Accountability

WHY?

Clear communication about actions and decisions promotes accountability, demonstrating a commitment to addressing both student-identified priorities and broader initiatives. Proper documentation prevents the reinvention of the wheel and engenders institutional memory for more strategic progress. Transparency therefore nurtures trust in the SGA; it consolidates student involvement and makes operations easier, hence more effective, ultimately for the benefit of the entire UMBC community.

GOALS

1. ENHANCE ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION WITH THE STUDENT BODY
2. STRENGTHEN INFORMATION INFRASTRUCTURE AND DOCUMENTATION
3. FOSTER INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES
4. REVISE GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORKS
5. INCREASE VISIBILITY OF SGA

CONCEPTUALIZATION

- student body is aware of all SGA related things
- student feel encouraged to join SGA either through elections, ProveIt!, or the FYA program
- SGA processes and guiding documents will be adapted to current climate

Contact Us

@umbcsga

sga@umbc.edu

sga.umbc.edu

UMBC Student Government Association