**UMW Six-Year Plan Initiative Update**

1. ***Program in Civil Discourse and Debate****: UMW seeks to build upon its history of success and leadership in intercollegiate debate and in teacher preparation by creating a university-wide and interdisciplinary program consisting of curricular and extra/co-curricular components that prepares individuals to engage in civil discourse through the exchange of ideas from different perspectives. This program would house curricular components for undergraduates, faculty development support to bring debate skills to the classroom, training for students, faculty and staff to have conversations across diverse viewpoints, as well as programming and student activities on campus and throughout the UMW community such as open forums, debates, and critical discussions. The program would also be responsible for partnering with the College of Education to develop a certificate/endorsement in debate and civil discourse for future teachers to grow capacity to introduce and develop these essential skills K-12 classrooms.*

*Note: This is a new initiative for the 2022 Six-Year Plan Update.*

1. ***Access to Internship Opportunities for All Students****: UMW seeks to create an internship program that will provide any student who seeks an internship, an opportunity to complete one. This will require staff professionals who will be responsible for developing internship arrangements with employers and organizations around the Commonwealth and managing the student recruitment, application, and selection process. It will also require providing students with demonstrated financial need the resources to take advantage of these opportunities in the form of modest internship grants.*

*Note: This is a new initiative for the 2022 Six-Year Plan Update.*

1. **Enhance the Office for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:** UMW’s obligation to implement ONE Virginia have identified a number of critical needs. First, and foremost, the University needs to recruit additional personnel to support the successful implementation of the inclusive excellence framework across campus. Second, and equally important, it will be necessary to provide additional resources to support the education, training, and programming necessary to move the university forward on issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

*The University has reorganized this office to include compliance (Title IX and ADA) and has hired an Associate Provost to provide oversite and management of these critical areas and the Office of Disability Resources.*

1. **Enhance support for students, faculty and staff with disabilities**: Given the large population of students with disabilities enrolled at UMW (more than twice that of many other public institutions in the Commonwealth) there is continued emphasis on the need for resources to specifically support the disabled population. Size and mission make UMW a popular recommendation among school counselors seeking to find a good fit for students with disabilities. The completed renovation of Seacobeck Hall (reopening January 2022) with the new expanded offices for the Office of Disability Resources and a testing center will further drive this distinctive strength. As a result, the University is especially challenged in meeting student needs ranging from fully accessible classrooms/furniture (in buildings that have not been renovated in the past decade), assistive technologies, learning resources and supports, and appropriate advising/counseling resources (at UMW, the staff to student ratio is twice the recognized standard). This includes ongoing demand for up-to-date assistive technologies, accessible instructional design, and accessible physical environments on campus, as well as new demands for accessible digital environments and access advising/counseling to support mental health and well-being. In addition, meeting the needs of a more diverse faculty/ staff includes providing the appropriate accommodations to ensure a fully accessible workplace environment. This can include providing specialized furniture for employees with mobility challenges, assistive technologies on computing and other devices for employees with physical impairments, and retrofitting offices. It also includes support for faculty, staff, and students includes providing software to allow for the creation of accessible electronic documents and the ability to provide closed captioned and audio described video content, as well as additional staffing to support university-wide needs for disabled faculty, staff, students, and guests of UMW.

*The university’s 2022-23 operating budget includes additional state funding of $480,000, which will be committed to meeting staffing and operational needs in the Office of Disability Resources. One such need is to staff the opening of a testing center which was created as part of the Seacobeck Hall renovation. Another need which is being met is to support the creation of an additional student case manager to meet student demand. Additional resources will be used to support the acquisition of assistive technologies, retrofitting spaces with accessible furniture, and hiring skilled services (e.g. interpreters).*

1. **Increase retention efforts for specific student sub-populations**: Retention data indicate that selected student sub-populations retain at lower rates. These sub-populations include commuter students, transfer students, first generation students and Pell eligible students. Higher retention reduces time to degree for students, enhances graduation rates, strengthens the university’s financial position, and ultimately improves student employment prospects. Additional resources will be used to expand tutoring services, offer enhanced learning resources, and provide more intensive academic advising.

*Funding for this initiative has been delayed until 2023-24.*

1. **Faculty and staff salaries**: The provision of effective instruction and the realization of equity goals requires UMW to recruit, retain and reward an effective and diverse workforce. To do this, UMW is planning to conduct equity and market studies for both faculty and staff. Once complete, the University will need to be in a position to respond to the results, make competitive offers, and address inequities, as well as accumulated compression and inversion.

*UMW is in the process of conducting a faculty equity study which is due to be complete in late fall 2022. Additional decisions about a staff equity study and market studies for faculty and staff have yet to be made. At present, no additional funding has been identified to adjust salaries as a result of the equity study. Funding for this initiative has been delayed until 2023-24.*

1. **Develop and implement a life-design curriculum**: In recent years, UMW has invested significantly in the first-year experience for first-time, first-year students. This begins with the student’s enrollment deposit in the spring of their senior year of high school, continues throughout the summer and new student arrival, and culminates with the first-year advising and seminar program that students complete in their first semester. The focus of the first semester curriculum covers the key skills necessary for college success (research, writing, and speaking) and key elements of academic advising (selecting and registering for classes, completing the general education program, finding a major).

At the same time, the state has invested in UMW’s efforts to support students’ post-college aspirations through additional funding to build the Center for Career and Professional Development.

The next step is to bring these strategic initiatives together to support students in developing higher order skills beyond the first semester, which are responsive to clear emerging needs from a more diverse student population, essential for completion of the bachelor’s degree and necessary to prepare students for life after college. These include (1) having difficult conversations with diverse others, (2) mustering resilience in the face of adversity and failure, (3) exploring one’s interests and strengths, and (4) engaging in deliberate planning for life at Mary Washington and beyond. UMW aims to develop a plan to integrate life design to support all students’ in cultivating the knowledge, skills and habits of mind necessary to successfully navigate their time in college and live meaningful lives after graduation.

*UMW is in the developmental phase of this initiative in the form of its Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) being developed in AY 22-23 as part of its decennial reaffirmation of accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). Additional financial support for this initiative will be found through reallocation beginning in FY 24-25.*

1. **Establish an office of transfer student services**: UMW has been actively supporting transfer through its involvement with Transfer Virginia while building relationships with community colleges within the University’s service area. Significant progress has been made to change policies and remove barriers for transfer students and our academic departments have been building pathways focused on reducing time to completion. To keep pace with this momentum, UMW will need to enhance its programmatic and human resources dedicated to transfer students. Establishing a dedicated center capable of providing comprehensive academic, financial, and career counseling along with a full slate of pathways, programs and experiences, to include residential living communities and experiential learning opportunities will significantly enhance UMW’s to participate in closing completion gaps while reducing costs and ensuring that graduates are prepared to enter the workforce as quickly as possible with the most appropriate credentials.

*Funding for this initiative has been delayed until 2023-24.*

1. **Expand the development of Open Education Resources (OER)**: Textbooks, media and other course materials represent a significant component of the cost of attendance for students. The use of open educational resources (OER) is a viable option for reducing these student costs. In accordance with SCHEV’s strategic plan and UMW’s policy on OER, UMW seeks to expand its support of OER by providing course-release time to faculty developing OER materials for their courses. Faculty development to ensure the accessibility of OER is particularly important.

*Funding for this initiative has been delayed until 2023-24\.*

1. **Refresh classroom and campus IT infrastructure**: In the midst of the pandemic UMW made modest investments to quickly deliver online and hybrid courses which involved the adoption of low-cost and temporary technological solutions to provide limited virtual access to students. Classrooms and instructional spaces on the Fredericksburg and Stafford campuses are not outfitted with the IT capabilities to ensure the durability of these emergency adjustments (e.g. microphones, secondary screens and cameras so that all have equal access to participate fully). Further investments in classroom technology and personnel to support flexible instruction and multiple modalities will provide UMW with the capacity to realize access and equity aspirations while supporting regional economic and workforce needs. The imperative is especially so for the Stafford campus which is fast becoming home to UMW’s workforce pathway efforts in nursing and educator preparation involving local school districts and Germanna Community College.

*Modest progress has been made in this area, by upgrading a few classrooms around campus to support remote instruction from HEERF funding.*

1. **Streamline information systems**: Over several decades, the University has patched together an information system architecture which deploys a variety of different systems to manage all of the various operations and information sources of the university. These systems are not interoperable, some are at the end of their life cycle, and few permit the university to maximize efficiencies, reduce costs, and support strategic decisions. Investment in a single cloud-based system for student information, financial and human capital management, and analytics and reporting would significantly improve the University’s effectiveness to fulfill its mission and student success goals while realizing long term cost savings.

*Funding for this initiative has been delayed until 2023-24.*

1. **Expand adult degree completion and continuing education programs**: Based on census data and a regional market survey conducted by the Division of Continuing and Professional Education, approximately a fifth to a third of residents in counties surrounding Fredericksburg have some college, no degree or an associate degree. Many are working and require course scheduling options that provide flexible paths to degree completion or additional credentials, including on-line and hybrid courses and evening and weekend coursework.

*UMW is expanding its support for adult degree completion through the initiation of an online major in Leadership and Management which is one course of study in the Bachelor of Liberal Studies Degree. The University has also upgraded the advising position for this program and is expanding recruitment efforts through a streamlined approach to marketing and a reorganization of enrollment management operations.*

1. **Enhance support for the Commonwealth’s museums at UMW**: In a unique arrangement, dating back several decades, UMW is responsible for the administration and stewardship of two Commonwealth owned museum properties (Gari Melchers Home and Studio at Belmont and the James Monroe Museum). Although the University receives a separate budget allocation to support these properties (Belmont, $481,118; Monroe, $273,947), it has with time proven insufficient to cover the full cost of museum operations and personnel. To sustain and tether museum operations to the academic mission of the institution, the University has come to subsidize the museums in the amount of $85,785. In addition to these direct costs, there are many other indirect costs to UMW including the maintenance of the buildings and grounds on aging facilities which have significant deferred maintenance. In FY20-21, the properties saw significant revenue declines from the COVID-19 pandemic, requiring the University to further subsidize the properties by approximately $100,000. Further permanent declines in funding (approximately $26,000/year) will follow from the elimination of an annual subsidy from the UMW Foundation beginning in FY22. This budget request is designed to reduce the burden on the University’s budget while supporting the work of the two museums as well as the ongoing maintenance and repair of the facilities.

*The university’s 2022-23 operating budget includes an additional appropriate to provide support for the Commonwealth’s museums which is committed to meeting staffing needs and operational expenses, including deferred maintenance for both facilities.*