UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
GLOBAL CAMPUS

SHAPING THE FUTURE

STRATEGIC PLAN 2024–2030

Glossary of Terms

In addition to defining our aspirations, priorities, and strategic initiatives, UMGC's strategic plan represents an opportunity to tell the story of who we are and aspire to be. The way we tell that story can generate excitement, affinity, and buy-in for our mission. The words we use matter, and we are making thoughtful choices to speak consistently about our people and our work in inspiring, empowering, and humanizing ways.

- **Community and teams** rather than faculty and staff: We will refer to our faculty and staff as part of a team and a community, rather than as separate groups with different objectives. They share responsibility and accountability for our learners' success and understand that our people's contributions are not limited to or defined by their titles.
- **Financial viability** rather than profit: We will refer to our financial objectives in terms of financial viability to indicate that the purpose of developing new revenue streams is to maintain stable resources so that we may expand our reach, serve more learners, and transform more lives.
- **Global** rather than international: We will emphasize our commitment to meeting learners—primarily from an American audience—where they are, both literally and metaphorically, as well as supporting them wherever they wish to go in pursuit of their goals.
- **Learners** rather than students: We will refer to our students as learners, acknowledging their agency in the learning journey, not as passive recipients of information, while recognizing that their journeys will continue beyond their time at UMGC.
- **Learning experience** rather than program: We will refer to the individual offerings in our portfolio as learning experiences, recognizing that our learners often seek more than just a credential and that UMGC provides them a range of options to help them meet their goals.
- **Postsecondary education** rather than higher education: We will refer to UMGC as a provider of postsecondary education, reiterating our commitment to access for all, regardless of background, experience, or status. This wording also helps UMGC differentiate itself from traditional "higher education" to encompass all learning experiences adults might pursue after high school, acknowledging that not all postsecondary educational needs are best met by traditional for-credit courses and programs. Finally, this shift in lexicon marks UMGC's status at the forefront of a new era of "lifelong learning" that normalizes the worker-learner who is constantly expanding their skill set to enable transitions within and across careers.

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The mission of University of Maryland Global Campus (UMGC) is to inspire hope, empower dreams, and transform lives . . . one student at a time.

That mission is expressed in Maryland statute as an obligation "to improve the lives of adult learners by operating as Maryland's open university, serving working adults, military servicemembers, their families, and veterans across the United States, and around the world. UMGC provides our students with open, affordable, and quality higher education. As a recognized leader in career-relevant education, the university embraces innovation and change aligned with our purpose and sharing our perspectives and expertise."

Since its founding in 1947, University of Maryland Global Campus has focused on educating and supporting learners who need more than the traditional college experience can provide, reaching beyond classrooms and borders to meet our learners where they are with the instruction, resources, and support they need to succeed in volatile and complex environments.

Through the years, that focus has propelled UMGC's evolution as we extended our operations to all seven continents, gained independent accreditation, and pioneered online learning. At the same time, we have prioritized accessibility, particularly for learners historically underserved by traditional institutions. We are experts at bringing the right learning experiences to the right students at the right times and in the right ways—empowering them to transform their lives, families, careers, communities, and the world. Our work has touched the lives of more than a million adult learners—a quarter million of whom have earned UMGC degrees—and we are confident that it will be even more critical in the future as learners live and work in environments that are both dynamic and unpredictable.

Our history as a pioneer in nontraditional learning has positioned UMGC to respond to tomorrow's learners as we continue to draw momentum from the forces that have always driven us, including the resolve to challenge the status quo, a commitment to academic quality, and a focus on results.

This strategic plan outlines a series of foundational commitments to the mission and learners that have been our focus for more than 75 years, molding us into the agile and innovative institution we are today and building on that foundation a series of strategic priorities that will allow us, through the year 2030, to respond to the needs of learners and employers with increasing creativity, dexterity, and continuous, measurable improvement.

I am confident that these priorities will propel UMGC to the forefront of postsecondary education, empowering our teams to continue reaching beyond classrooms and borders to create learning experiences that in turn empower our learners.

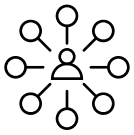
To achieve this, we must look past traditional educational norms and standards and develop the capability to constantly measure our success in terms of the objectives of our learners. This is not a pivot for UMGC; rather, it represents a renewed commitment to the values upon which our institution was built, positioning us to continue fulfilling our public mission for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Gregory W. Fowler, PhD
President, University of Maryland Global Campus

FOUNDATIONAL COMMITMENTS

To best serve our learners, UMGC must align our forward-looking ambitions with our historic strengths. We commit to building on the following fundamental elements of our institutional character and drawing strength from them as we evolve to meet the dynamic needs of our learners and our community.



Learner Centricity

UMGC was built to meet the needs of nontraditional learners, putting students first and recognizing that each one is unique. Our strategy must put our diverse learners at its center by identifying their needs, removing barriers to learning, and responding with learning experiences that are accessible, affordable, aligned with workforce needs, and not readily available at other institutions. We will ensure the success of those learners by making decisions, designing processes, and providing services and support in ways that keep their perspectives and priorities at the forefront.

Our People

All of higher education—and the adult higher education industry in particular—can be characterized as a volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous (VUCA) environment, and to survive and thrive, UMGC must embrace the process of change and rapid evolution. Thus, our global team is focused on and guided by the goals and pursuits of our learners. Together, this team embraces challenges and seizes opportunities. We recognize that achieving our vision and strategy requires foundational and ongoing investments in this team, their growth and development, the tools they need, and our culture as an organization.

State of Maryland

UMGC is first and foremost a Maryland institution. As the open university of the University System of Maryland (USM) and the single largest provider of postsecondary education for Maryland residents, UMGC must have strategic priorities that support access, educational attainment, post-career education, and career success for Maryland's diverse residents, businesses, and organizations. In a period of unprecedented volatility in the labor market and in the skill sets sought by employers, these priorities must also position UMGC as the state's preeminent community and workforce development provider.

Global Reach

In keeping with our name, UMGC will continue our commitment to meeting adult learners where they are around the globe through our digital reach, global operations, and geographically distributed physical locations. This global presence will allow us to provide continuous, consistent, and inclusive experiences for learners of all backgrounds as they move through different stages of their lives, careers, and education journeys.

Military

UMGC is the premier provider of education services to the U.S. armed forces, and our long history of service to the military, combined with our geographic reach and in-depth understanding of and dedication to meeting the evolving needs of military and veteran communities, represent a competitive advantage that other institutions cannot match. UMGC's commitment to the U.S. military and all who wear the uniform of our country will remain unwavering. We will continue to be a leading education provider to active-duty servicemembers, reservists, veterans, and their families.

Spirit of Innovation

From the first, UMGC was unusual in its willingness to consider, test, and adopt different approaches to serving adult learners. We have embraced technology and pedagogical innovations that allowed us to take our offerings throughout Maryland and around the globe. Our agile and innovative spirit has expanded the boundaries of traditional postsecondary education, and we have acted as a changemaker and innovation partner among our fellow institutions in the USM. UMGC will continue to be a catalyst for positive change in the education industry, the state of Maryland, the nation, and the world.

Digital Transformation

UMGC has been at the forefront of digital learning for more than two decades, and technology is the cornerstone that empowers us to serve our team members and learners, both in and out of the classroom. UMGC will invest in modernizing our technological capabilities—leveraging artificial intelligence and automation where appropriate—to enable our spirit of innovation, achieve our strategic priorities, and provide an experience for our learners and other partners that reduces friction and seamlessly meets their needs.

VISION

UMGC aspires to be the school of choice for adults and business because we are **learner-centric, data-driven,** and **skills-based**. This vision summarizes the future toward which UMGC is working—for ourselves and our learners—guided by the strategic priorities outlined in the following pages. We will know that we have achieved this vision when we can recognize and measurably demonstrate that . . .

We are learner-centric.

- **We are attuned to our learners' goals and put students first, measuring their success by how they achieve those goals,** starting from the moment they connect with UMGC. We prioritize enrollments in the *right* learning experiences—those that help learners achieve *their* goals—as a standard unit of measurement, and we build our fiscal models on successful enrollments, persistence, completions, and degree headcounts.
- **We recognize that accessibility and affordability pose significant challenges** for the learners we serve, and our initiatives and decision-making are guided by that reality, in keeping with our embrace of a learner-centric culture.
- **We use technology to maximize the impact of every UMGC team member**, giving them the tools to **see how learners are doing in real time**, as well as the history of their interactions with the university and the obstacles and solutions on the path ahead of them, allowing team members to intervene proactively and effectively.
- We use the lessons of UMGC's long history of productive engagement with cultures around the globe to drive high levels of learner satisfaction and success, **including in the areas of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging**. We have established **clear and geographically tailored channels for feedback and action** as part of a culture of continuous improvement that emphasizes learning from failure. This feedback loop maintains a particular focus on supporting the success of learners from minority and underrepresented communities.
- **The UMGC learning experience is consistent, intuitive, and seamless worldwide**. Learners are able to transition smoothly between local UMGC support teams, allowing learners—particularly those affiliated with the military—to continue their educational progress, even if their living or working locations change.
- **UMGC team members at every location are ambassadors for the university**, seeking opportunities to increase our visibility and reach more learners through physical, digital, and/or other means.

We are data-driven.

- **Every UMGC learning product is implemented and assessed based on measurements of how well its academic and nonacademic elements help learners acquire the knowledge, skills, abilities, and dispositions (KSADs) they were promised.** This includes academic and nonacademic learning experiences, corporate partnerships, and specialized audience initiatives. We act with urgency and efficacy to develop and improve our products.
- **We operate globally as a single agile system, adapted to thrive in a VUCA environment** by applying the right resources—including the appropriate team members—in any scenario. We deploy our resources rapidly and agilely by default. Those resources may be globally dispersed and quickly brought to bear in a fluid environment, adapting to meet shifting demands.

We are skills-based.

- **Learners can identify, demonstrate, and employ the KSADs** that they have acquired at UMGC or from prior learning. Each learning experience can be **stacked into different credentials easily recognized** by employers and the public.
- **For-profit and not-for-profit employers, including the military, recognize UMGC as the best-in-class provider of workforce skills and certifications** that the employers and their employees need, including the real-time on-the-job assessment of learning at scale and award of college credit as appropriate.
- **Our team members have been trained, positioned, and aligned with what UMGC needs** to promote learner success and provide high-quality learning experiences to a variety of audiences. We are not restrained by traditional university roles or structures.

VISION IN ACTION

How UMGC Will Serve Sam

Despite his parents' dreams, Sam will join the workforce immediately after high school, helping run the restaurant his family has owned for three generations. Not wanting to take on debt to pay for college and thinking that his father will need his help in the restaurant, Sam will figure he will find the time and the money for college someday, but in reality, family and work will make it nearly impossible for him to fit education into his busy schedule. Until, that is, he hears about UMGC.

Poking around the UMGC website, Sam will become curious about the wide array of options available and open a chat support window on the page. While he will know that he is talking to a bot, he will be pleasantly surprised to find that it is unlike any he has encountered before and that it prioritizes what he hopes to achieve and why he wants to go back to school. The next day, Sam will receive a call from an Admissions team member, who will have already outlined several options—including a three-course learning plan that will help Sam build managerial skills he can put to immediate use at the restaurant while also earning credit that will apply toward a future certificate or degree should he later choose to pursue one.

Three courses later, Sam's restaurant business will be booming and he will be ready to open a second location in a neighboring town. Feeling valued and supported at UMGC, which will have armed him with the skills and the confidence necessary for work without sacrificing precious family time, Sam will recommend the university to members of his waitstaff who he believes have the potential to assume managerial roles at the new location.

CORE VALUES

The core values of UMGC support its institutional vision for the future of learning and ensure the fidelity of the university's commitment to its learners and community.

CORE VALUES

Celebrate Diversity:

Our welcoming of diverse perspectives and ideas differentiates us and drives innovation

Optimize Agility:

Curiosity and adaptability—informed and guided by data—drive continuous improvement and transformation

Reach Beyond:

Courage and willingness to challenge boundaries lead to transformative solutions, for our institution and our learners alike

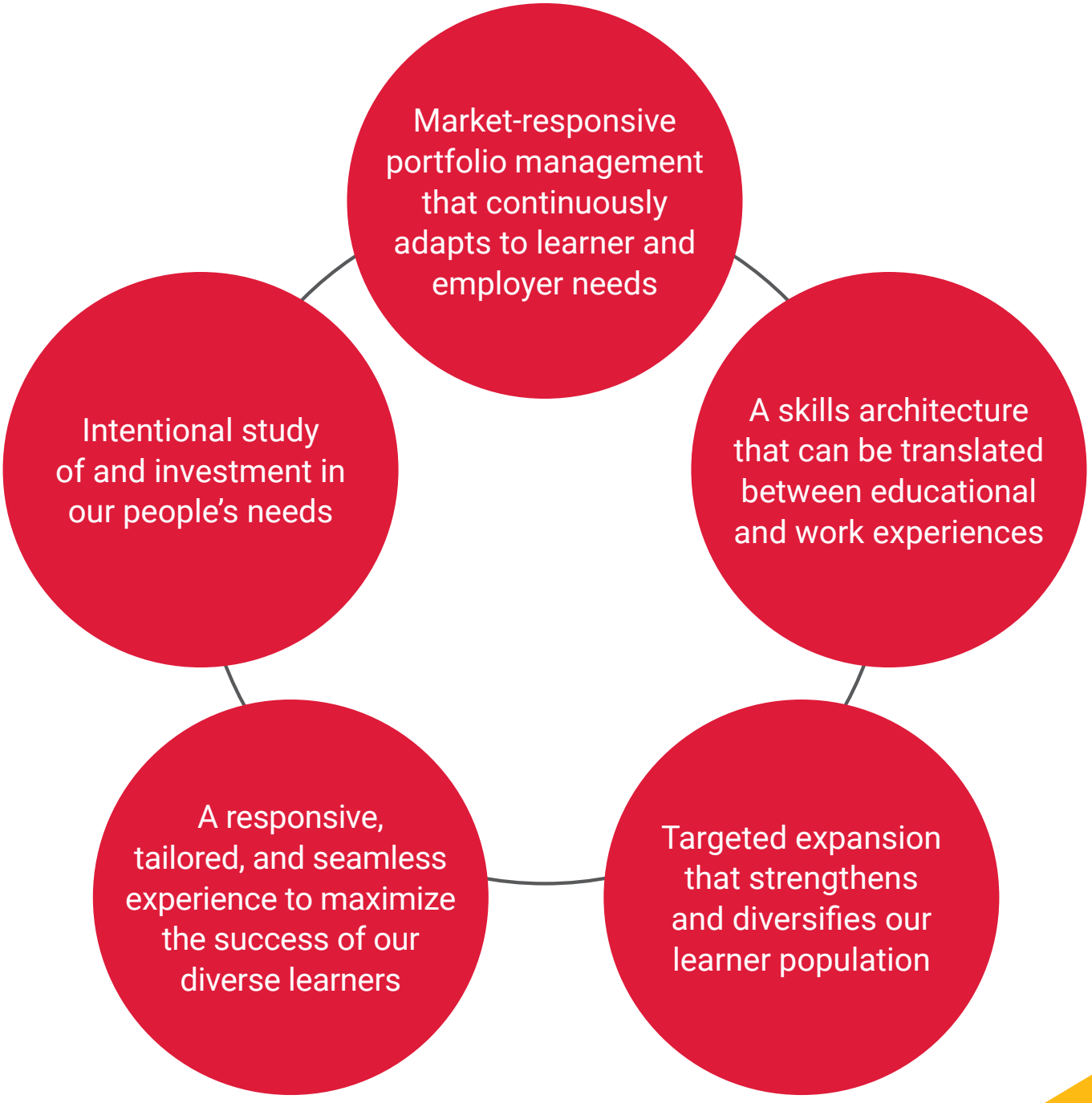
Embrace Collaboration:

Teamwork, effective communication, and clarity of purpose drive success

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

UMGC will focus on the following five strategic priorities to pursue our stated vision, beginning immediately and continuing through 2030.

We will work with internal and external stakeholders to define targets and benchmarks by which we will gauge progress and success.



PRIORITY I:

Market-responsive portfolio management that continuously adapts to learner and employer needs

Staying relevant in a rapidly shifting economy requires UMGC to evolve our learning experiences in alignment with the needs of learners and the regions where those learners live and work. To achieve this, UMGC will cultivate a dynamic view of our portfolio of offerings, holding ourselves accountable for continually testing, developing, launching, monitoring, and refining our credit and noncredit offerings accordingly.

Strategic Initiative A:
Continually develop and rapidly launch learning experiences

The COVID-19 pandemic provided an object lesson in how quickly demands can emerge for new skills and new ways of working. UMGC must evolve to keep up with these changes as they occur. We will therefore develop a discipline for identifying, building, testing, and launching new learning experiences in an accelerated timeframe that differentiates us from many traditional institutions.

UMGC will work toward this initiative through a series of deliberate, supporting activities:

1. Establishing a clear feedback loop with both learners and employers through ongoing market research and direct outreach, implementing mechanisms for quickly evaluating the input we receive about emerging learner and employer needs and prioritizing it in new learning experiences.
2. Defining a flexible "typology" of the learning experiences that UMGC provides (e.g., modules, courses, certificates, and degrees) and outlining the needed skills provided by each type of learning experience.
3. Investigating specific opportunities for UMGC to develop and test new learning experiences within key developing fields of healthcare, computer science/cybersecurity, business, and education.
4. Establishing processes for updating internal systems and knowledge bases as the portfolio expands.
5. Developing infrastructure to build custom programs for employers to meet specific and urgent skill needs.

Strategic Initiative B: Continually evaluate the portfolio and make strategic decisions to update offerings

UMGC will be recognized for the breadth of our academic offerings, as well as for our continued relevance to our learners and their employers. In addition to launching new learning experiences, we commit to continuously evaluating and updating our current offerings. This will require an established, data-driven discipline for assessing, revising, and—when necessary—sunsetting learning experiences to ensure that our offerings meet the needs of our learners and business partners.

UMGC will work toward this initiative through a series of deliberate, supporting activities:

1. Establishing the product management tools, criteria (including market alignment, financial performance, learner outcomes, etc.), and processes that allow us to monitor learning experiences at every level of the "typology" and make informed decisions about how to update them. Establishing a cyclical schedule to ensure these tools run continuously and in alignment with accreditation review cycles.
2. Establishing comprehensive processes for archiving and replacing offerings that are no longer relevant and notifying the appropriate stakeholders.
3. Developing processes for evaluating and, as appropriate, revising the tools and processes above.

Building Momentum Through Critical Enablers

To successfully implement these initiatives, we will need a foundation of resources and capabilities (i.e., critical enablers). In many cases, UMGC has already started putting these enablers in place.

- **Product management assessments:** By studying UMGC's full product portfolio, we have taken a critical first step toward this larger portfolio management initiative. This work has included the current product management enterprise project, along with market research and portfolio assessment.
- **Program redesign:** UMGC can leverage its recent experience redesigning several popular programs by applying learnings, resources, and processes to the redesign of future products.
- **Existing partnerships:** We must continue our efforts to identify and grow provider relationships with government, nonprofit, and corporate partners, which in turn will become thought partners in identifying products needed in the market.

How We Will Know We Are Successful

As we will with every priority, we will hold ourselves accountable in these initiatives by defining a set of key performance indicators (KPIs), measuring baselines, setting goals, and reporting progress toward these KPIs. Examples of these metrics may include the number of learning experiences launched and evaluated, the time it takes to launch or update a learning experience, and the reported relevance of our offerings to learners and employers.

VISION IN ACTION

How UMGC Will Serve Jamie

An employee of GenCo, Jamie will work in software engineering roles for nearly a decade before feeling ready for a change. After learning about a new certificate program focused on helping engineers build project management skills, Jamie will enroll at UMGC through GenCo's professional development partnership with the university, which will design the certificate as a customized credential applicable to both Jamie's current role and a variety of future positions they might choose to pursue. Excited about expanding their skill set beyond coding and into engineering project management, Jamie will even be able to incorporate their own professional experiences at GenCo into many of their assignments. And the UMGC curriculum will delve into challenges that diverse tech leaders might face in the industry, helping Jamie see themself in the coursework and giving them the feeling that UMGC is paying careful attention and responding with learning experiences that align with Jamie's needs.

PRIORITY II:

A skills architecture that can be translated between educational and work experiences

The future relevance of postsecondary education will depend on whether institutions can effectively help learners translate their goals into educational experiences that yield demonstrable skills that employers and communities need. UMGC is poised to lead this evolution by developing tools that enable learners to articulate their goals, identify and design the right learning experiences for the skills needed to achieve those goals, and communicate their growth to the world outside the classroom.

Strategic Initiative A: Implement a skills-first portfolio strategy that empowers learners and businesses to translate between skills and learning experiences

UMGC will pioneer the development of a system for building learning experiences that relies on the demonstration of skills as its raw materials and building blocks. This system will empower any learner at UMGC to document prior and current experiences (e.g., academic, workforce, or co-curricular); identify their own goals for a learning experience based on the skills and outcomes they seek; define their own success by building a sequence of programs, courses, or credentials that align with those goals; and communicate their learning development in ways that employers and others understand. This system will also empower businesses to identify the skills they need and easily craft a UMGC learning experience that delivers those skills.

UMGC will work toward this initiative through a series of deliberate, supporting activities:

1. Inventorying all course modules in a framework that identifies the skills learners will build during the module.
2. Tying the skills framework into UMGC's process for updating and developing new learning experiences.
3. Developing systems for mapping learner goals and employer needs to UMGC's skills framework.
4. Training and empowering UMGC employees to advise learners, before and after enrollment, using the skills framework as a guide.

5. Developing a system for assessing prior learning, work experience, and co-curricular activities, mapping them to UMGC's skills framework (and exploring the application of artificial intelligence and machine learning to support this assessment).

Strategic Initiative B: Build an ecosystem to develop, incubate, and test the viability of noncredit learning experiences

Within this ecosystem, UMGC will expand our portfolio of noncredit offerings while we build our capacity to test and add new offerings that meet the needs of a constantly evolving workforce. We will collect those noncredit learning experiences into a streamlined marketplace where both employers and learners can easily purchase noncredit experiences to meet their learning needs.

UMGC will work toward this initiative through a series of deliberate, supporting activities:

1. Building research capacity to continually assess business and learner needs, thus weaving the skills framework in Strategic Initiative A into both for-credit and noncredit course development.
2. Assessing avenues for noncredit portfolio expansion to meet both business and learner needs.
3. Setting benchmarks for educational and financial viability of the ecosystem.
4. Designing pathways from the noncredit ecosystem into UMGC's for-credit programs.
5. Evolving the current noncredit marketplace into a learner-facing platform.
6. Developing marketing programs to attract new learners and business partners.
7. Establishing processes for continually revising current noncredit offerings and launching new ones that meet the evolving needs of learners and business partners.

Building Momentum Through Critical Enablers

To successfully implement these initiatives, we will need a foundation of resources and capabilities (i.e., critical enablers). In many cases, UMGC has already started putting these enablers in place.

- **Noncredit learning platform:** UMGC's existing skills marketplace is the first building block that UMGC will need to bring its noncredit ecosystem to both business partners and individual learners.
- **Product management practices:** Although more holistically focused on credential program development, UMGC is also working to build competencies in agile program development that will reach into all corners of our organization, enabling effective change management and communication across the organization to support the launch of new offerings.
- **Skills mapping:** Mapping the KSADs offered within each course and program represents the first step toward achieving our skills-first portfolio strategy.
- **Prior learning experiences:** UMGC can build upon existing processes for assessing and awarding credit for prior learning. These processes could be expanded to prior work and co-curricular experiences and mapped to UMGC's skills framework.
- **External partnerships:** Continued efforts will be necessary to identify and grow provider relationships with government, nonprofit, and corporate partners, and to identify and grow transfer partnerships with community colleges. These partnerships will aid UMGC in identifying high-demand skills in real time.

How We Will Know We Are Successful

As we will with every priority, we will hold ourselves accountable in these initiatives by defining a set of KPIs, measuring baselines, setting goals, and reporting progress toward these KPIs. Examples of these metrics may include the number of offerings mapped to skills, learner enrollment and reenrollment in noncredit offerings, successful learner achievement of identified skill goals, and employer partner satisfaction.

VISION IN ACTION

How UMGC Will Serve Athena

Athena, 40, will work as a registered nurse for more than a decade before developing an interest in healthcare administration. Working full-time while raising two children, she will choose UMGC for the flexibility of its programs. After years of working long nights in the hospital, she will know she has the grit to complete her master's degree, but she will need a university willing to meet her part way. While she will only have time to send a message or two to her success coach between patients, the UMGC app will allow her to easily continue the conversation whenever time allows. Athena will have taken UMGC classes through the years to maintain her nursing license, and her success coach will have noted this and checked to see whether that coursework might apply to her degree. By the time Athena will have finished seeing her next patient, she will have already been awarded credit for one of the required courses in her program and part of the requirements for two other courses will have been waived, based on skills she will have acquired in earlier noncredit courses.

PRIORITY III:

Targeted expansion that strengthens and diversifies our learner population

The options available to adult learners to meet their educational needs, both within and beyond the traditional postsecondary education industry, will only increase as the postsecondary market continues to evolve. UMGC believes, however, that we can provide these learners with a higher quality, flexible, and tailored learning experience, as the institution that has been expressly designed to meet the learning and skill-development needs of adults. We will therefore work to expand access and awareness of UMGC to a broader population of learners, building on our reputation in military and veteran communities and on our established presence nationwide to ensure that we are the institution of choice for adults and businesses not only within Maryland but across the country.

Strategic Initiative A: Continue targeted investments in recruiting direct-to-consumer, veteran, and corporate learning populations

UMGC will work to reach additional learners within key populations by pursuing them directly, using our on-base locations to amplify our presence in areas with large veteran populations and building and maintaining partnerships with local businesses to understand corporate learning needs and develop learning experiences that meet those needs.

UMGC will work toward this initiative through a series of deliberate, supporting activities:

1. Continuing expansion of marketing efforts within the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia (DMV) region and across the United States.
2. Continuing regional strategies that leverage our local strength with the military, such as tests conducted in Colorado Springs, Honolulu, Richmond, and San Diego.
3. Exploring other regional strategies to test and leverage place as an asset, including local partnerships and community development.
4. Implementing continuous testing and refinement of marketing and admission efforts.
5. Developing capabilities to build custom programs that meet the unique needs of businesses and other organizations.
6. Continually adapting modality options in response to learners' needs, strengthening and growing multiple learner populations, including veterans and others.

Strategic Initiative B: Develop seamless pathways that foster lifelong learning

UMGC will create a clearly defined and seamless experience for learners to continue their educational journeys throughout their lives, on timelines that make sense for them. UMGC team members will be trained to support learners through major life transitions, such as transferring from a community college to UMGC, progressing from undergraduate to graduate studies, changing or advancing careers, transitioning from military to civilian life, or returning to stateside service after being stationed abroad.

UMGC will work toward this initiative through a series of deliberate, supporting activities:

1. Building customization and stackability into current portfolio offerings by mapping skills development and transferability.
2. Developing processes to track learner locations, allowing seamless transitions when a learner's location or status changes.
3. Leveraging our proximity to community colleges to create partnerships and develop pathways for community college graduates to complete bachelor's degrees and beyond with UMGC.
4. Developing training and an accurate knowledge base that equips team members to advise learners about the pathways available to them.
5. Creating tools that allow learners to customize their learning journey and better understand its timeline.
6. Exploring options for cost-effective, accelerated degree options (e.g., 4+1).

Building Momentum Through Critical Enablers

To successfully implement these initiatives, we will need a foundation of resources and capabilities (i.e., critical enablers). In many cases, UMGC has already started putting these enablers in place.

- **Place-based regional recruitment strategy:** The success of UMGC's regional recruitment tests—starting with those in Colorado Springs, Richmond, San Diego, and Honolulu—will inform our approach to recruiting more direct-to-consumer and veteran learners in areas where we have a physical presence. This includes tailored marketing strategies to meet the needs of these learner segments.
- **Portfolio management practices:** UMGC is working to expand its capacity for agile program development with a specific near-term focus on graduate programs. This is designed to make the university's offerings more competitive and create seamless pathways for learners to advance from undergraduate to graduate studies with UMGC.
- **Investment in retention:** Lifetime journey pathways encourage learners to continue with UMGC through their current learning experience into future ones. UMGC's current and future retention efforts represent the first step in an ongoing effort to remove barriers and create a seamless experience for learners, building their affinity and increasing the likelihood that they will reenroll.
- **External partnerships:** UMGC will continue to identify and grow relationships with government, nonprofit, and corporate partners to help build pipelines of corporate learners while continuing efforts to identify and grow transfer partnerships with community colleges.

How We Will Know We Are Successful

As we will with every priority, we will hold ourselves accountable in these initiatives by defining a set of KPIs, measuring baselines, setting goals, and reporting progress toward the KPIs. Examples of these metrics may include increases in the size and diversity of learner enrollment—particularly learners from key segments and geographies—and reenrollment of learners who have completed at least one learning experience.

VISION IN ACTION

How UMGC Will Serve Mateo

A Navy veteran living in San Diego, Mateo will first take classes with UMGC when on active duty and stationed overseas. He will appreciate the practical career guidance offered by his instructor, herself a military veteran. After separating from the Navy and settling in town, he will receive a message from UMGC welcoming him to the area and inviting him to stop by a local event. There, while chatting with a UMGC outreach partnership specialist, Mateo will learn that he can easily build on courses he took overseas. The staffer will help him download the UMGC app and show him how to customize his pathway based on his new goals, timeline, and career path.

Fast forward another five years: Mateo will have earned two certificates that stack into a bachelor's degree in Human Resource Management, and he will be just one course away from completing his Master of Business Administration. While his journey will take a few unexpected turns along the way, his instructor and success coach will use access to real-time analytics to predict challenges before they become crises and intervene with the correct support, helping him keep his eyes on the path forward—and on track for straight As. When he submits the last of the assignments for his MBA, Mateo will go back to the UMGC app to check his progress, a new noncredit course will catch his attention, and he will reach out to his success coach to find out more.

PRIORITY IV:

A responsive, tailored, and seamless experience to maximize the success of our diverse learners

UMGC will advance as a global and largely online university with deep commitment to learner-centricity by constructing a flexible and responsive ecosystem that supports our learners, blending the benefits of human support with accessible and intuitive digital resources. We will not merely remove barriers; we will create a platform that puts UMGC at our learners' fingertips, empowers them to identify and achieve their educational goals regardless of their location or modality, increases their likelihood of persistence in the face of social and economic challenges, and reassures them that UMGC is their reliable partner in their learning journey.

Strategic Initiative A: Build team members' capacity for real-time, learner-centric decision-making

UMGC will develop an integrated reporting system that offers a 360° view and enables team members to engage with learners in consistent, personalized, data- and goal-driven discussions in real time about those learners' skills, performance, and objectives. This system will empower UMGC's employees to help our learners make decisions about their education journeys. It will provide our team members with the right information at the right time to best support learners—acting as their guides, mentors, and cheerleaders.

UMGC will work toward this initiative through a series of deliberate, supporting activities:

1. Developing a data hub that integrates the systems relied on by team members who work directly with learners.
2. Refining the flagging or "early alert" capability within this hub to identify at-risk learners.
3. Training teams in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and cultural sensitivity to ensure responsiveness to dimensions of learner diversity.
4. Creating regular reports or dashboards for key teams who work directly with learners, based on their respective roles and responsibilities.
5. Training teams on the new technology and how to use it to support decision-making in their respective roles. Creating a shared knowledge base of resources, as well as guidelines for supporting learners, logging interventions, and following up.

6. Developing recurring processes to evaluate the technology and protocols, to solicit team member and learner feedback, and to address necessary modifications.

7. Layering goal-focused skills mapping onto learner profiles.

Strategic Initiative B: Develop an agile, accessible, and intuitive global ecosystem of tools and platforms for learners

UMGC will create a "one-stop shop" experience for learners, providing a single point of access and easy navigation as they log their learning goals, access coursework, correspond with UMGC team members, complete administrative tasks, and participate in other key aspects of their university experience. This ecosystem will integrate the various platforms our learners currently use, placing them within easy reach, regardless of time and place. It will also streamline learner processes, using automation where appropriate to enhance the capacity of our team members to provide individualized support.

UMGC will work toward this initiative through a series of deliberate, supporting activities:

1. Developing a system for continuously tracking the user experience on UMGC's learner-facing platforms, providing a better understanding of how learners interact with these platforms and allowing us to design, build, and continuously improve a seamless and accessible experience.

2. Identifying processes that serve as roadblocks for learners and establishing a system for measuring how well specific interventions eliminate those roadblocks.

3. Developing learner-facing checklists and pathways for completing common processes.

4. Developing a system for continually identifying and mapping answers to "tier 1" procedural questions and for connecting learners \to live support.

5. Investing in a more robust chatbot system that leverages artificial intelligence to assist learners. Establishing recurring processes for evolving automated support and communication channels as technology and learner needs change.

6. Consolidating current platforms into a singular entry-point platform for learners.

Building Momentum Through Critical Enablers

To successfully implement these initiatives, we will need a foundation of resources and capabilities (i.e., critical enablers). In many cases, UMGC has already started putting these enablers in place.

- **Learner experience mapping:** UMGC is mapping the global learner experience, which will inform improvements to pathways, experiences, business processes, and technologies. This information will better equip us to design the 360°-view reporting system, the learner-facing technology ecosystem, and other tools that prioritize the learner's user experience. With this effort as a starting point, we can identify the highest-impact, short-term improvements that will make things easier for our new learners in the near term.

- **Proactive learner support model:** UMGC is revamping its learner support models to improve proactivity, better meet learners where they are, remove barriers before they arise, and equip team members with tools, including modernized customer relationship manager (CRM) technology, that help them work smarter. This

lays the foundation for putting learners at the center of our decision-making by ensuring that we understand their needs and objectives and respond proactively.

- **Streamlined learner communications:** UMGC is streamlining the learner communication process, removing friction, enhancing wrap-around services, and improving our internal communications governance process. This will be critical as we make changes and communicate them to the UMGC community.

How We Will Know We Are Successful

As we will with every priority, we will hold ourselves accountable in these initiatives by defining a set of KPIs, measuring baselines, setting goals, and reporting progress toward these KPIs. Examples of these metrics may include learner success and outcomes, learner satisfaction, and lifetime learner retention.

VISION IN ACTION

How UMGC Will Serve Wally

A 25-year-old active-duty servicemember and a first-generation college student, Wally will feel unsure about what he wants to do after he's discharged. When a UMGC team member walks him through a sample schedule of how his classes will fit into his life on base, Wally will be impressed by the convenience and sign up.

Some weeks, Wally will work on his courses in the evenings; other times, he will chip away at assignments on his phone in between exercises. Once, when his unit is sent into the field, he will be unable to complete a class and will have to request an incomplete grade, but he will be relieved that his instructor understands and even offers guidance about how best to pick up where he leaves off once he has fulfilled his military responsibilities. Whether chatting with advisors about his goals over the UMGC app or making a drop-in visit to the Education Center on base, he will find that everyone at UMGC knows who he is, what he's working toward, and what his last interaction has been with the university. He will feel that he is part of the community and confident that he will succeed.

PRIORITY V:

Intentional study of and investment in our people's needs

Any investment in the institution first requires investment in our people, who identify, recruit, and teach our learners; provide guidance; and support the infrastructure and operations that make UMGC possible. We will develop our teams by investing in communication, training, leadership development, and skill development that equip team members, whether on-site or remote, to thrive as members of the UMGC community, advance as professionals in the workforce, and support the evolving needs of our learners.

Strategic Initiative A: Cultivate a culture of communication, learning, growth, and development for all UMGC team members

UMGC will develop a multitiered learning and development program that spans the life cycle of each team member, offering the same flexible, lifelong learning opportunities that we promise our learners. This program will provide teams with consistent onboarding, training, and cross-training in evolving skills and technology; regular updates that engage them in UMGC's mission and business endeavors; and professional growth and leadership opportunities that encourage career progression.

UMGC will work toward this initiative through a series of deliberate, supporting activities:

1. Encouraging employees to continue developing their skills by creating bandwidth for professional development.
2. Identifying and building a learning and development team that can create a learning architecture that evaluates and matches employee needs, including a robust onboarding experience.
3. Developing and leveraging existing career planning tools, training managers and supervisors to use those tools to explore career advancement goals with team members.
4. Revising employee evaluations to include learning and career development goals.

Strategic Initiative B:
Foster a dynamic organization that continuously evolves to meet learner needs and people success

To nurture and preserve the cohesive team we need to succeed, we must empower our people to evolve and grow as needs emerge and change in our dynamic environment. Thus, roles must be structured to evolve with our learners and our industry while preserving the efficiency and effectiveness of our teams. We must similarly support employees' changing needs as they themselves learn and grow in their careers, defining roles in terms of skills—just as we do with learning experiences—and equipping employees with tools and resources needed to adapt, advance, and recalibrate as careers progress.

UMGC will work toward this initiative through a series of deliberate, supporting activities:

1. Mapping all roles and core position competencies across the organization, clarifying responsibilities and measures of success within each role.
2. Developing mechanisms for employees to identify opportunities for growth and career development across the organization.
3. Developing an employee support system to review and identify evolving competencies and new organizational needs and enhance roles with opportunities for employee engagement, empowerment, and growth at top of mind.

Building Momentum Through Critical Enablers

To successfully implement these initiatives, we will need a foundation of resources and capabilities (i.e., critical enablers). In many cases, UMGC has already started putting these enablers in place.

- **Employee experience:** Just as we are committed to documenting and understanding our learners' experience, UMGC is also committed to studying the experience of our team members. A journey mapping exercise will offer insight into the major needs, challenges, and strengths of all aspects of the UMGC team member experience.
- **Employee engagement tactics:** UMGC is collecting feedback on ways to better sustain employee engagement. Understanding our team members' core needs will be critical to effectively building out revised roles and responsibilities, learning and development, and other support resources.
- **Learning and development assessment:** UMGC is conducting an in-depth assessment of current training and development programs for leaders at every level; this will inform the redesign of our learning and development strategy and help us create capacity for UMGC team members to focus on professional development, embrace leadership opportunities, and upskill when needed.

How We Will Know We Are Successful

As we will with every priority, we will hold ourselves accountable in these initiatives by defining a set of KPIs, measuring baselines, setting goals, and reporting progress toward these KPIs. Examples of these metrics may include team member retention, enrollment and completion of professional development offerings, team engagement with culture and development opportunities, and learner satisfaction with support teams.

VISION IN ACTION

How UMGC Will Serve Rita

A UMGC success coach for three years, Rita will love her day-to-day job helping learners solve problems and finding ways to fit education into their busy lives. Logging on to work, she will be matched in the chat with a military learner named Wally. Rita will pull up Wally's student profile, where she will be able to see his information, academic goals, and certified learner record, as well as quick highlights from the latest discussion Wally will have had with his instructors and success coach. That record will show that Wally has been chatting with the bot about jumping back into a course he interrupted while in the field. Rita will also be able to see that he will have told another coach that he may enroll in an accounting course. Rita will have already learned about updates in the accounting curricula at a recent Academic Affairs lunch-and-learn, so she won't have to dig through the course catalog to figure out what to recommend to Wally. In fact, she will have been thinking about taking an accounting course herself, to test whether she might want to pursue a new role at UMGC.

VISION IN ACTION

How UMGC Will Serve Taylor

Taylor will work in logistics and supply chain management for 16 years before joining the UMGC team. Having loved mentoring employees and interns and having seen the industry change significantly, they will want to share their experience with students. Each day in the online classroom portal, Taylor will see a 72-hour summary of student activity at the top of the dashboard. Those who struggled with formative assessments or missed assignments will be highlighted so that Taylor can reach out quickly with personalized assistance. Taylor will be reassured to know that each student's success coach or military education coordinator will also receive a copy of the communication and will be able to help those students stay on track. Taylor also will facilitate a community of practice with fellow instructors. They will discuss education and industry trends, along with revisions to learning experiences that will be necessary to maintain industry alignment across the curriculum. Taylor will share community feedback with team members across the university as part of regular portfolio reviews, and they will take enormous pride in ensuring that learners have an engaging, quality learning experience while benefitting from the knowledge of industry experts who are invested in each learner's academic and professional success.

BRINGING THE PLAN TO LIFE

Leveraging UMGC Ventures

A key element that makes UMGC unique is its ability to leverage UMGC Ventures—and its subsidiaries, HelioCampus and AccelerEd—to develop and incubate innovative solutions in postsecondary education. This empowers us to rapidly test and learn, expand our capabilities, and extend those capabilities to other institutions within the USM and beyond. These organizations are critical to UMGC's evolution and scale, generating revenue which, in turn, fuels further innovation and allows us to bring learning experiences to underserved populations. As such, UMGC Ventures will be integral to the process of launching, testing, and iterating the initiatives outlined in this strategic plan.

Aligning with USM

UMGC is a valued member of the USM, and we are committed to ensuring that our strategic priorities advance the priorities of our larger family of Maryland postsecondary institutions.

- UMGC's focus on creating a flexible and **data-informed portfolio of learning experiences** (Priority I) means that UMGC will be best positioned to **swiftly meet workforce demands** throughout the state of Maryland and beyond, which will in turn **attract, retain, and graduate more adult learners**. We will continually monitor the needs and demands of all UMGC markets, with emphasis on Maryland and the surrounding DMV area so we can best serve our local community.
- UMGC's skills-based architecture (Priority II) **will bridge learning experiences, skills, and prior learning credit** for learners across the state. This flexibility and accessibility position UMGC to lead the USM's efforts to **reskill and upskill the state's workforce**.
- Strengthening and diversifying our learner population (Priority III) will afford UMGC the scale and financial stability to bring **access to a Maryland education** to more groups of potential learners, and we will partner with HBCUs and other providers with specialized expertise to ensure that we employ best practices in serving those populations that have been historically underserved.
- UMGC's streamlined, learner-centric ecosystem (Priority IV) will ensure that our **tools, processes, and systems meet the needs of our learners. Continuous evaluation and improvement** of these tools, processes, and systems will allow us to evolve with our learners and ensure their success every step of the way. By automating and streamlining this ecosystem, we can **tailor support to the individual**, creating flexible avenues of support and ultimately improving learner outcomes.
- UMGC's commitment to its people will create a culture that will both **attract and retain talent**. Through its culture of **learning and development**, UMGC will put learner-centricity at the heart of all its operations, ensuring that team members have opportunities to develop their own skills and careers and supporting them as we do our learners. Intentional study of and investment in the needs of our community (Priority V) ensures agency and support for all employees, creating a **culture of inclusivity**.

NEXT STEPS

UMGC will work within and across its units internally and with its critical partners—UMGC Ventures, AccelerEd, HelioCampus, and the USM—to further develop the priorities and activities outlined above and to develop a plan for implementing this strategy. This work will also include defining clear targets and benchmarks for achieving and recognizing the success of each priority.

At the same time, UMGC will look to its community of talented, engaged, and enterprising teams and learners, calling on them to weave the priorities and initiatives of this strategic plan into their daily lives, to hold themselves accountable to its vision, and to regularly ask themselves: What can I do to enable my colleagues, other learners, and my community so that we—with our combined power—are better able to transform lives?

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