



Vision / Mission / Theory of Change / Values

VISION

The UMBC Community Leadership Programs envision:

People learning and working together to champion vibrant communities: inclusively, collaboratively, compassionately, equitably, authentically, skillfully, creatively, powerfully, intelligently, sustainably, and courageously.

MISSION

With this Vision as our North Star, Community Leadership's Mission is to:

Teach and build communities as dynamic human places:

- Physical as well as virtual;
- Classroom and community-based;
- Valuing shared qualities, as well as differences, and;
- Rooted in relationships, brought to life through co-teaching, co-learning, co-creating.

Engage and connect our overlapping communities:

- Facilitating lifelong learning in and beyond the classroom.
- Building connections among students, university staff and faculty, and community residents and leaders.
- Advancing our identity as citizens in our greater Baltimore community.

- Building on solidarity across our communities to generate impact within larger social movements, to address white supremacy and other systemic barriers to progress.

Teach and model community leadership as a practice, not a position:

- Grounded in core values that guide actions in specific times, settings, and groups.
- Requiring a willingness to show up and participate, not rely on an achieved title.
- Practiced socially, not privately, through deep listening and courageous sharing, learning from and with fellow community members, trusting and risking together.
- Energized by a shared cause of building positive change within and across communities.

Teach and model a holistic curriculum and pedagogy for practicing community leadership that:

- Integrates knowledge, skills, and affective growth (KSAs) in transformative learning;
- Draws upon diverse academic disciplines and extensively from community expertise and practical knowledges.
- Utilizes the best of the classroom, while significantly integrating experiential, place-based, and community-based learning by doing.
- Values student's prior knowledge as content for co-learning.
- Centers self-understanding and reflective practice as essential to practicing leadership effectively.
- Directs learning and interactions toward amplifying community assets and addressing community goals and needs.

Lead institutional change in higher education towards:

- Holistic and engaged pedagogical practices in graduate education.
- Dedicating resources for accessible and affordable graduate education for those willing and able to pursue it.
- Generating greater quality, equity, and scale in universities' collaborations with communities.
- A core institutional identity as an active participant in our greater Baltimore community.

THEORY of CHANGE

Change is inevitable and creates both challenge and opportunity. What matters, then, is to meet change with intention and integrity. We choose to engage as communities to support social change that moves us collectively toward greater understanding, connection, equity, inclusion, and sustainability. At times, directing change involves resisting and remaking the status quo. Community Leadership impels us to engage in cultural, economic, environmental, political and social initiatives that address historic levels of inequality and intersecting crises that damage communities. Directing change also involves collaboratively conserving, creating, and building new social forms and structures. Community Leadership impels us to preserve what is good and healthy in our societies, and elevate existing strengths within people and communities. We engage those existing goods and strengths to generate creative solutions and build vibrant communities. Generating transformative change is inherently difficult and ongoing. We believe that taking collective action with deep self-awareness, knowledge gained from study and experience, effective skills and tools, creative and moral imagination, and a commitment to lifelong learning, can indeed influence change. Community leadership, as we teach and practice it, involves directing intentional change toward vibrant futures for our communities.

VALUES

Community Leadership is grounded in core values that speak to who we are and move us to advance our mission with integrity and authenticity. These values include:

Pedagogical Values -- How we teach and learn matters. We value education that is:

- **Lifelong:** education is life, not preparation for life, and learning never stops.
- **Holistic:** we educate the whole person by promoting growth in knowledge, skills, and affective competencies.
- **Emotional:** We support the strengthening of qualities such as awareness, empathy, and compassion.
- **Relational:** in each course and throughout the program we create a learning community that engages its members.
- **Engaged:** we value direct experience and promote hands-on learning by doing.
- **Impactful:** we believe that ideas matter in the world, and we support learning that makes a difference.
- **Ethical:** we are aware of ourselves in relation to others, seek connections across lines of difference, and consider intention as well as impact.

Relationship Values -- How we relate to people within and outside the program matters. We value relationships that are:

- **Collaborative:** we learn and work for change in partnership with others.
- **Authentic:** we commit to being vulnerable and transparent, and putting our best selves forward.
- **Mutual:** in engaging with others we strive to build partnerships that benefit all parties.
- **Equitable:** we study and directly address structural inequities, and challenge hierarchies that continue to support those inequities.
- **Sustained:** when appropriate, our partnerships move beyond short-term projects to become long-term relationships.
- **Results-oriented:** we support positive, community-oriented change, and believe that both process and products matter.

Community Practice Values -- How we engage with and think about communities matters. We value community practice that embraces:

- **Reflexivity:** we show up in community with a clear sense of ourselves, and where we stand in relationship to others.
- **Deep and Radical Listening:** we approach our work with humility, openness, willingness to learn and grow.
- **Asset-Based Approach:** we identify, value and engage with the strengths of community residents and organizations
- **Context:** we inform our engagement through research and analysis that draws on academic and nonacademic sources.
- **Definitions:** we understand 'community' to encompass what is shared by its members, *and* what is distinctive about its members.
- **Adaptable Leadership:** We take multiple approaches to leadership, adapting roles and methods to fit the need, and recognize that metaphors matter.