Univ. of Baltimore Project Summary - **UB CARES: Support and Access in Baltimore City**

UB qualifies for this program and seeks grant funding to protect the health of its campus community members; to improve its online educational offerings for its students and its dual enrollment partners; to ensure its students are able to succeed in online learning; and to protect its enrollment by ensuring students' needs are met as they were prior to the pandemic. UB will expand initiatives in dual enrollment and online education; secure contractual health services; purchase instructional technology to boost academic programs' resilience; provide more loaner equipment for students; and give needy, qualified students additional direct support in order to retain and graduate them. UB's enrollment dropped by 6% from fall 2019 to fall 2020, but student retention has been stable and relatively strong, in part because of direct aid and supports.

Of the 70% of UB students who complete a FAFSA, 39% have a zero-dollar family contribution. UB has raised private funds to support students' needs, and CARES grants have been capped at $1,500, but direct aid funds will be expended before all spring awards are made. Need will extend into 2022. Additionally, 1,500 eligible students have been prompted to apply for aid but have not. To keep students progressing, UB requests additional direct aid to support students past May 2021 at a rate of approximately 50% of the current CARES grant.

Courses with laboratories have had to make the greatest adjustments since COVID, and several majority-minority STEM programs have labs that are not available. Programs are building cloud solutions that have costs for technology, training, and course redesign. Some programs are planning for an online future, while others are developing ways to enrich campus programs with virtual labs. UB will develop more resilient academic programs that will be able to be fully online or hybridized as health conditions and academic needs dictate. It also seeks support for loaner technology and library support as library services build out online services.

The office responsible for faculty professional development and for online learning at UB, including learning management system (LMS) administration, has 5 staff members. While full-time positions are requested as well through the University budget process, contractual assistance is needed immediately to support the addition of the law school to the LMS and more generally to address the fact that 5 people serve over 4,000 students and over 400 faculty, all now online, and with more programs moving to online delivery. There is only one instructional designer. UB requests funds for two contractual instructional designers to help through this transition period.

UB was not prepared to offer a full set of general education requirements online before the pandemic, either for its students or for the dual enrollment students UB serves across 24 public Baltimore City public schools, many in Opportunity Zones. The project will help develop a full array of general education to allow UB to offer a few fully online undergraduate degrees. In doing so, it will improve online dual enrollment courses. In addition, there will be significant credit offerings so 50 dual enrollment students can earn up to 27 credits.

UB lacks a health center, medical professionals, or staff of any kind who can be dedicated to the COVID-tracking, tracing, and communication protocols necessary for State compliance and community safety. Although UB has partnered with another institution to use REDCap, a full-time staff member is needed for managing that process and other health management issues.