



## **UDC's Vision 2020 Plan: How Much Progress Has Been Made?**

March 10, 2017

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A Report by the Office of the District of Columbia Auditor  
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### Why ODCA Did This Audit

The Office of the District of Columbia Auditor (ODCA), as a result of a risk-based analysis of District government operations, determined a need to audit UDC. Specific factors that led to the audit included the high visibility of UDC operations and the fact that its proposed FY15 budget lacked any of the details about how funds were to be spent that are normally found in District government agencies budget plans. ODCA chose two objectives for this audit:

- What progress UDC has made in achieving the first two objectives of Goal One of the 2014 Strategic Plan entitled "Vision 2020: A Roadmap for Renewal, Innovation, Success and Sustainability."
- Whether the Workforce Development and Lifelong Learning (WDLL) program as currently managed is meeting its goals.

### What ODCA Recommends

1. UDC should redouble its efforts to ensure that any remaining fixes to its financial aid program be made as soon as possible so as to remove the restrictions on adding new programs of study imposed by the U.S. Department of Education.
2. UDC should make public an updated timetable showing when the new programs of study mentioned in the Vision 2020 strategic plan that have been delayed will be offered for enrollment.
3. UDC should re-assess its priorities for online learning and make public a new timeline with regard to offering online programs. To the extent that this involves changing the Vision2020 strategic plan, an amended strategic plan should be approved by the board and released to the public.

For more information about this report, please contact Diane Shinn, ODCA Director of Communications, at [diane.shinn@dc.gov](mailto:diane.shinn@dc.gov) or 202-727-3600.

### What ODCA Found

This report involved an examination of UDC's progress in achieving the goals it set forth in its 2014 strategic plan, Vision 2020. Specifically, we looked at what had been achieved toward the plan's first goal, which addresses the realignment of course offerings to make them more accessible and relevant to students

Our findings are mixed. The university has taken notable steps to realign its course offerings and has significantly increased the number of online courses that students may take. Nevertheless, as noted earlier, few of the new majors that were intended to be offered are being offered, owing to ongoing trouble in managing their financial aid program according to federal requirements. It appears that these problems have been cleared, however, and the university intends to start adding new programs of study soon.

In addition, we reviewed activities of the University's Workforce Development and Lifelong Learning (WDLL) program. ODCA found that that the WDLL program was able to provide job training to a number of District residents, and helped them to obtain good paying jobs in the hotel industry. The university should be rightly proud of this. But performance was short of the goals set out in the agreement and areas for improvement remain. In speaking with upper management officials, we note that they recognize these areas for improvement and have already taken steps to improve them.

Below are ODCA's four findings:

- UDC is not offering all of the majors it said it would.
- UDC's undergraduate degree programs do not show improved alignment with identified economic priorities in the District of Columbia.
- UDC has not yet created an entirely online course of study.
- UDC's Workforce Development and Lifelong Learning program did not meet all the performance expectations under the terms of a grant agreement with DMPED.

# Table of Contents

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**Background**..... 1

**Objectives, Scope, and Methodology**..... 7

**Audit Results**..... 9

**Conclusion** ..... 20

**Agency Comments**..... 21

**Auditor’s Response to Agency Comments** ..... 22

# Background

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The University of the District of Columbia (UDC) is a public institution of higher education located in the Van Ness section of the District of Columbia. UDC includes a law school, a community college, and the flagship, four-year university. In the 2014-2015 school year, UDC had a total student population of approximately 5,000. In Fiscal Year 2016 the approved budget for UDC was \$154 million including a local subsidy of \$76.3 million, tuition paid by students, grants, and other funds from the federal government.

In 2009, the university created the UDC-Community College (UDC-CC). The community college currently operates as a branch campus and provides opportunities for students to earn associate degrees as well as course credits that can be transferred to a 4-year college, including the UDC flagship campus. In addition, through the community college's Division of Workforce Development and Lifelong Learning (WDLL), District residents can obtain job skills training leading to employment in a variety of industries including hospitality, construction, and healthcare. The WDLL program at UDC has recently enjoyed growth in enrollment and in the percentage of students successfully completing one course.

UDC serves a student body with an average age of 30 and a large number of part-time students. There is no on-campus housing (the university does rent several nearby off-campus apartment units that are used as student housing). UDC has a very low graduation rate (currently at just 15% for all students, including community college students).<sup>1</sup> UDC also struggles with a low retention rate (69% for full-time students entering in fall 2014).<sup>2</sup> Both of these numbers put UDC behind many nearby universities. See Table 1 for a list of nearby public universities and their retention and graduation rates.

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<sup>1</sup> Graduation rate is defined as those students who graduate with a degree within 150% of the expected time to earn the degree (i.e., 6 years for an undergraduate degree).

<sup>2</sup> The retention rate is the percent of students who return to take classes the following year.

**Table 1: Graduation and Retention Rates for UDC and Other Nearby Public Universities**

<b>University</b>	<b>Graduation Rate (2009 Cohort)</b>	<b>Retention Rate for First-Time Students Pursuing Bachelor's Degrees (2014 Cohort)</b>
UDC	15%	69%
George Mason University	69%	87%
James Madison University	83%	91%
Salisbury State University	67%	82%
Towson University	70%	86%
University of Maryland – College Park	86%	95%
University of Virginia	93%	97%

In 2012, the Council of the District of Columbia mandated that UDC prepare a “right-sizing” plan to address ongoing financial difficulties at the university.<sup>3</sup> UDC prepared and submitted a plan that involved cost saving measures, as well as a plan to increase enrollment and adjust tuition so as to increase revenue. However, this plan was criticized for not being thorough and UDC and its Board of Trustees decided to develop a more comprehensive strategic plan, setting forth new priorities and objectives for the university. The outcome of this effort was the university’s current strategic plan, entitled *Vision 2020*, approved by the UDC Board in 2014. The plan includes five broadly stated goals with three objectives identified for each. In addition, there are enrollment and revenue goals for each year from 2015-2020.

Vision 2020 calls for realigning the university’s educational offerings to be more in line with the interests of its students and the economic development needs of the District of Columbia. To meet this goal, the university has taken steps to change the courses of study available to students. Several courses of study were eliminated, and new students are no longer able to major in these subjects, which include graphic design, physics, history, and economics.

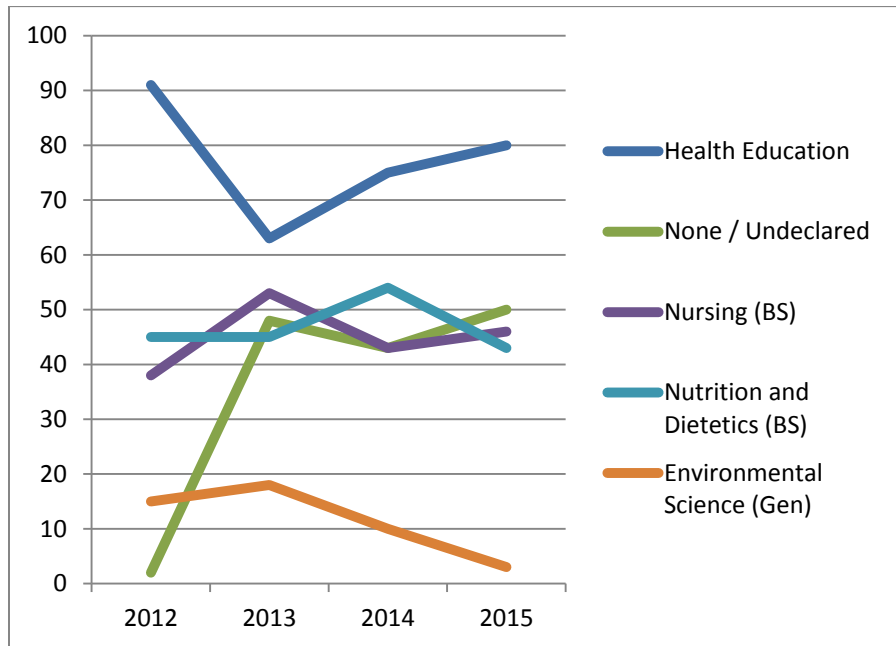
Enrollment in these subjects had been low, with very few degrees awarded each year. In some cases, the major is now available as a minor

<sup>3</sup> See Fiscal Year 2013 Budget Support Act of 2012, L19-168. Effective September 20, 2012.

or as an area of concentration within another major. Students enrolled in programs that were discontinued or had their status otherwise changed are being allowed to continue their studies and will graduate with their originally declared major.

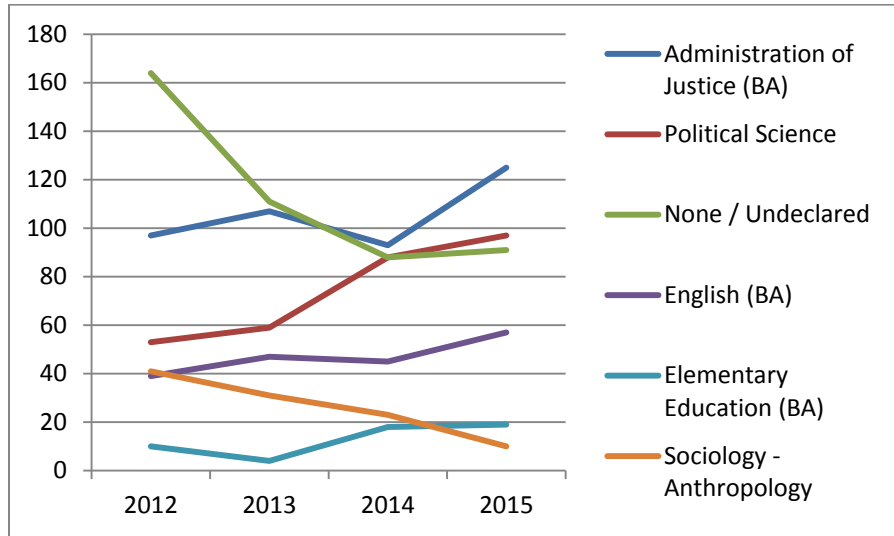
Because the Vision 2020 strategic plan involves how the university was seeking to realign its course offerings to better match student interests as well as needs, much of this review involved gathering basic data on what majors students have enrolled in. The following charts, organized by college within the university (not including the law school or the community college), show enrollment trends for select majors.

**College of Agriculture / Urban Sustainability / Environmental Science (CAUSES), Enrollment by Select Majors**



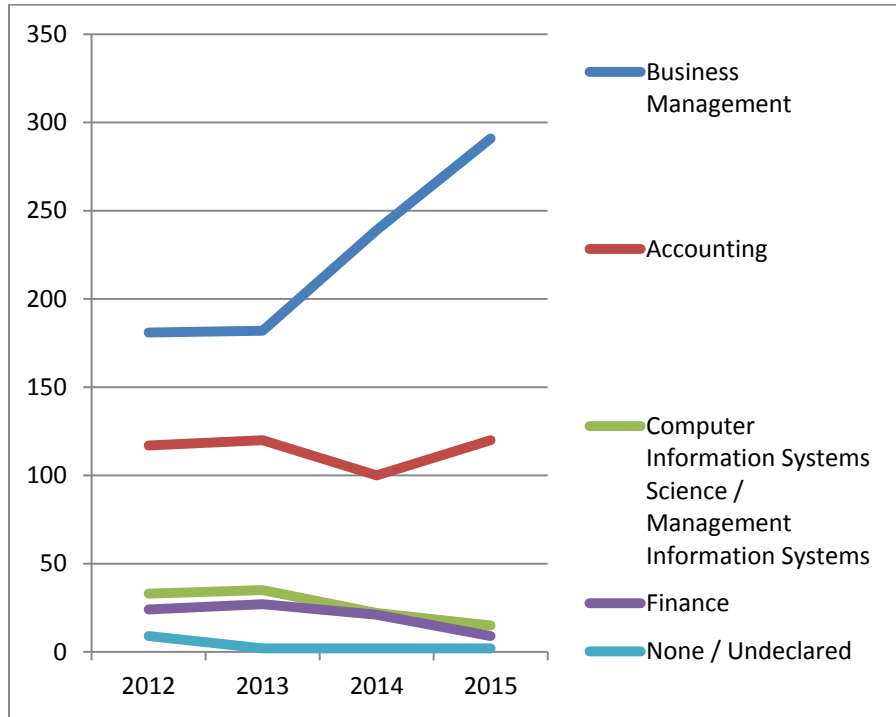
Enrollment in the College of Agriculture, Urban Sustainability & Environmental Science (CAUSES), is relatively flat over the last few years. Health education remains a popular major, while several others, including architecture and nutrition and dietetics have been steady at around 50 enrollees for the last few years. Enrollment in environmental science has fallen to just three in the fall of 2015. This major was eliminated by action of the Board of Trustees in March 2014 in keeping with the university's stated plan to do so in the Vision 2020 strategic plan, which recommended the elimination of more than a dozen major courses of study.

### College of Arts and Sciences, Enrollment by Select Majors



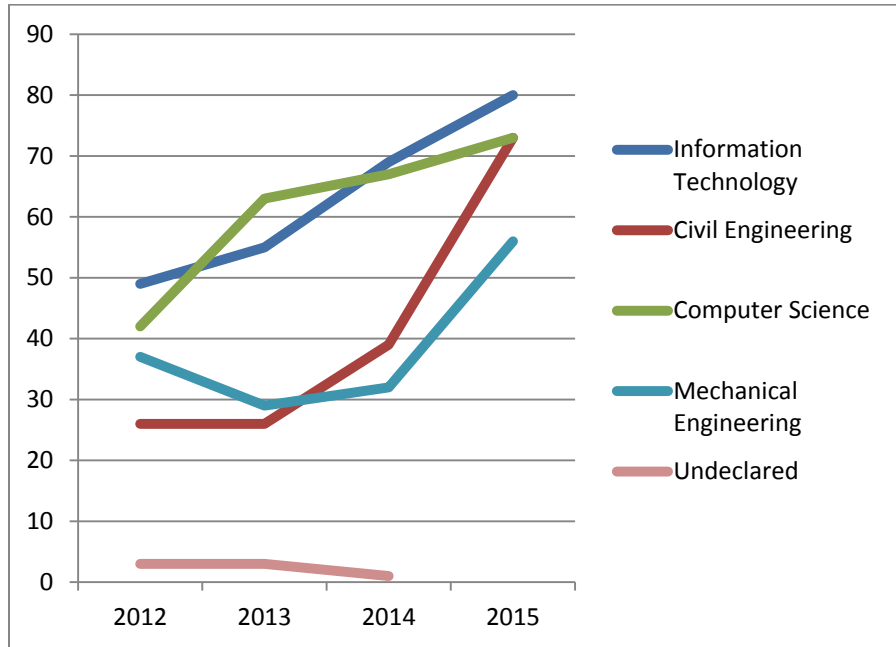
The College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) has the highest enrollment of all the colleges at UDC, offering the most majors. This chart shows only a portion of them. Notable trends here include the recent growth in popularity of political science, which saw enrollment nearly double from 2012 to 2015. In addition, the number of students with no declared major has fallen dramatically in the last few years. Many majors in CAS continue to have low enrollment, including elementary education.

**School of Business & Public Administration, Enrollment by Select Majors**



The School of Business and Public Administration offers the very popular Bachelors in Business Management (BBM) and a BA in Accounting that consistently has more than 100 students enrolled. Other majors in the school such as finance, marketing, and economics, with low and declining enrollments, most of which have been eliminated. Note the low and declining enrollment in the Management Information Systems major.

**School of Engineering & Applied Science, Enrollment by Select Majors**



As shown in the chart, enrollment in the School of Engineering & Applied Science’s (SEAS) courses of study has shown impressive growth in recent years. The Vision 2020 strategic plan does not call for any SEAS courses of study to be eliminated. Several new courses of study planned for launch in 2015 at SEAS have been delayed, as is discussed below.

# Objectives, Scope and Methodology

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## Objectives

The Office of the District of Columbia Auditor (ODCA), as a result of a risk-based analysis of District government operations, determined a need to audit UDC. Specific factors that led to the audit included the high visibility of UDC operations and the fact that its proposed FY15 budget lacked any of the details about how funds were to be spent that are normally found in District government agencies budget plans.<sup>4</sup> This represented a major change from how UDC's budget had been presented in previous years.

After preliminary meetings with UDC officials, ODCA chose two objectives for this audit:

1. What progress UDC has made in achieving the first two objectives of Goal One of the 2014 Strategic Plan entitled "Vision 2020: A Roadmap for Renewal, Innovation, Success and Sustainability". They are:
  - a. Become one of the nation's premier public universities in experiential and online learning; and
  - b. Align educational offerings across the University to respond to student interests and the District of Columbia's economic priorities.
2. Whether the Workforce Development and Lifelong Learning (WDLL) program as currently managed is meeting its goals.

## Scope

The audit period covered fiscal years (FY) 2012 through 2016.

## Methodology

To evaluate progress toward the targeted goals and objectives contained in UDC's strategic plan, ODCA interviewed management, examined course offerings as listed in the university catalog, and obtained and analyzed course enrollment data.

To determine whether UDC's WDLL program is achieving its goals, we examined information about courses offered and completion rates. ODCA also reviewed personnel files for all current workforce instructors. Our work also included a compliance review of a grant agreement UDC signed

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<sup>4</sup> Typically, agencies' proposed operating budgets include detail about how much of the total budget is to be allocated to various programs / activities, which generally vary from agency to agency. In UDC's case, a partial list of programs with budgets in previous years included such things as agency management, student affairs, academic affairs, and community college.

with the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED) to provide hospitality industry training to District residents from March 2014 through September 2015. We examined electronic and paper records to determine whether WDLL had provided the agreed services.

ODCA conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

# Audit Results

## UDC is not offering all of the majors it said it would.

The Vision 2020 strategic plan calls for a significant re-alignment of the courses of study offered by the university to better serve students and to prepare them for careers that are in demand in the District of Columbia metropolitan area.

The following table shows the majors that were to be retained and those that were proposed for the 2015-2016 school year, along with the results of ODCA's analysis.

**Table 2: List of Degree Programs at UDC**

Flagship College	Majors Retained and Proposed for 2015/16 (per Vision 2020)	Available?
College of Arts & Sciences	MS Adult Education (New 2015)	Yes
	BS Biology	Yes
	BS Chemistry	Yes
	BA Early Childhood Ed	Yes
	BS Math	Yes
	BA Political Science	Yes
	BA English	Yes
	BM Music	Yes
	BFA Art	Yes (BA)
	BS Psychology	Yes
	BA Human Development	Yes
	BSW Social Work	Yes
	BS Justice Studies	Yes (BA Administration of Justice)
	MS Homeland Security	Yes
	BA Elementary Ed	Yes
	BA Special Ed	Yes
	MS School Counseling	Yes (MS Counseling, Concentration: School Counseling)
	MS Rehab Counseling	Yes (MA)
	MAT	Yes
	MA Early Childhood Ed	Yes
	MS Speech Language Pathology	Yes
	MS Cancer Biology	Yes

School of Business & Public Administration	BA Hospitality Management & Tourism (New 2015)	No
	BBA Accounting	Yes
	BBA Business Management	Yes
	MBA	Yes
	MPA	Yes
School of Engineering & Applied Sciences	BS Civil Engineering	Yes
	BS Mechanical Engineering	Yes
	BS Electrical Engineering	Yes
	BS Information Technology	Yes
	BS Computer Science	Yes
	BS Biomedical Engineering (New in 2015)	No
	BS Architectural Engineering (New in 2015)	No
	MS Electrical Engineering (Reinstated in 2015)	Yes
	PhD Computer Science & Engineering (New in 2015)	No (MS Computer Science)
	Masters in Civil Engineering / Mechanical Engineering (New in 2015)	No
College of Agriculture, Urban Sustainability, and Environmental Sciences	RN to BSN Nursing (for students who are already RNs)	Yes
	BS Architecture	Yes
	BS Nutrition	Yes (BS Nutrition & Dietetics)
	MSN Nursing and Health Management (New in 2015)	No
	M Arch	Yes
	MS Nutrition & Dietetics	Yes
	PSM Water Resource Management	Yes
	BS Urban Public Health (New 2015)	Yes (BS Health Ed offers Concentration in Public Health)
	BS Nursing (New 2015)(for incoming freshmen)	No

UDC management informed us that the addition of new programs is proceeding more slowly than projected because of ongoing difficulties with the administration of federal financial aid programs. Recent annual audits of these programs, conducted by outside firms hired by UDC, uncovered repeated problems, some of them potentially resulting in wasteful spending of federal financial aid assistance. As a result, the U.S. Department of Education imposed limits on the ability of UDC to offer new academic programs for which students would be able to use federal financial aid, according to UDC officials. UDC officials also stated that the Department of Education must approve all new programs until the audit findings have been resolved, and this has slowed down the process.

In their comments provided to us on March 3, 2017, UDC informed us that they recently received word from the U.S. Department of Education that UDC has been fully re-certified to administer federal financial aid programs. We will follow up with UDC on this to confirm that this has removed all barriers to offering the programs they committed to in the Vision 2020 strategic plan.

**Recommendations:**

1. UDC should redouble its efforts to ensure that any remaining fixes to its financial aid program be made as soon as possible so as to remove the restrictions on adding new programs of study imposed by the U.S. Department of Education.
2. UDC should make public an updated timetable showing when the new programs of study mentioned in the Vision 2020 strategic plan that have been delayed will be offered for enrollment.

## **UDC's undergraduate degree programs do not show improved alignment with identified economic priorities in the District of Columbia.**

The university's Vision 2020 strategic plan includes five overarching goals. The first of these is:

Offer effective, flexible, and accessible educational programs that merge classroom and experiential learning to prepare graduates for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The plan offers three objectives to achieve this goal, the second of which is:

Align educational offerings across the University to respond to student interests and the District of Columbia's economic priorities.

ODCA analyzed the undergraduate degrees offered at UDC from 2012 through the spring of 2016 to determine whether they aligned with the sectors contained in the District of Columbia's *Five-Year Economic Development Strategy*, published by the Office of the Mayor in 2012, and referenced in UDC's Vision 2020 Strategic Plan. The sectors identified in Vision 2020 are:

- Government Service
- Health, Education
- Technology & Engineering
- Hospitality
- Business & Retail<sup>5</sup>

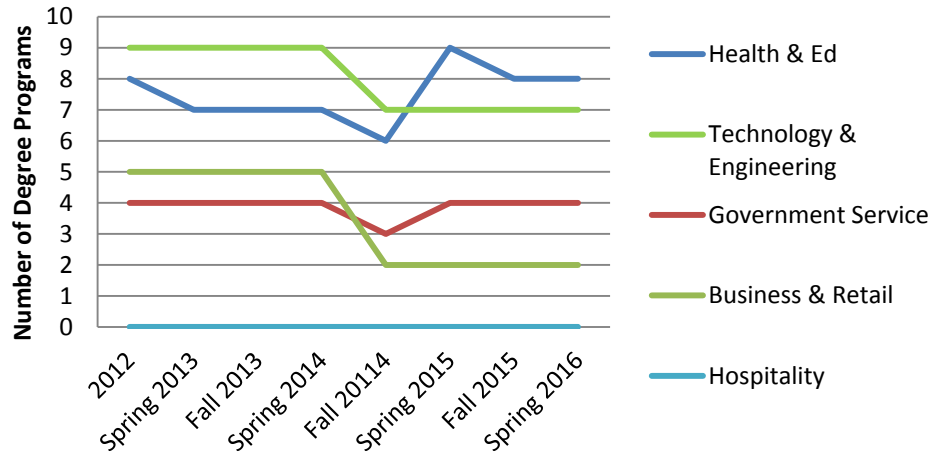
Our work involved obtaining the university course catalogs and course guides for each semester from 2012 through spring 2016. For every major listed, we subjectively determined whether it was aligned with one of these five sectors. As noted elsewhere in this report, the actual majors available have changed over the years, as UDC has eliminated certain majors and added others. However, the intent was simply to count how many in each college appeared to be aligned with the sectors. ODCA did not analyze the community college's offerings.

The following tables show the results of ODCA's analysis.

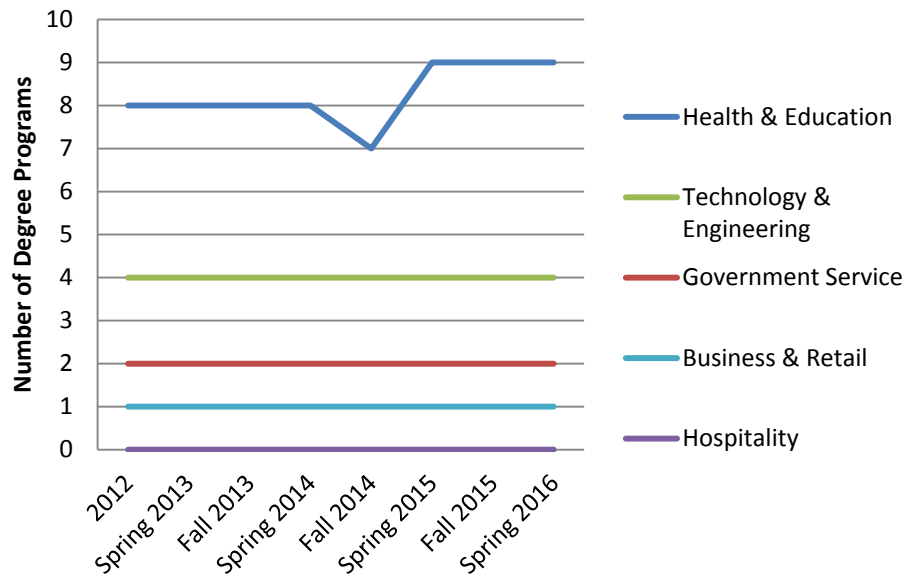
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<sup>5</sup> The Mayor's Plan names seven sectors: federal government and federal contractors; professional services; technology; hospitality; retail; real estate and construction; and higher education and health care.

### Alignment of Undergraduate Programs with Priority Economic Sectors



### Alignment of Graduate Programs with Priority Economic Sectors



So far, there is little evidence of a realignment of UDC’s degree programs with the identified economic priorities as called for in the strategic plan. In fact, looking at the spring 2016 semester as compared to fall 2012, there are now fewer programs available at the undergraduate level and only one additional program at the graduate level.

As noted above, UDC management explained to us that their efforts at re-aligning their course offerings have been delayed because of restrictions placed on the university by the U.S. Department of Education owing to operational deficiencies in UDC's financial aid program. In their March 3, 2017 comments, UDC indicated that the restrictions had been lifted. We therefore presume that the university will be able to continue adding new programs that will help it to achieve its stated goal to bring its offerings in line with the economic priorities of the District.

## **UDC has not yet created an entirely online course of study.**

In its Vision 2020 strategic plan, UDC declared that one of its objectives would be to “become one of the nation’s premier universities in online and experiential learning.” One of the recommended strategies to achieve that objective was the development of courses of study that could be offered entirely online. Specifically, in Vision 2020, UDC declared that it would offer an entirely online MBA program by 2015.

As of the fall 2016 semester, UDC is still not offering any completely online courses of study. More than 40 individual classes can be taken online. According to the acting director of the university’s Research Academy for Integrated Learning, the focus of the university has been on training professors and instructors on how to create online versions of existing courses. According to the acting director, this effort has taken priority over launching completely online programs of study. Efforts are underway to identify vendors who can help the university build and expand the information technology needed to manage online classes. An RFP has been prepared so that the university can hire an outside firm to help develop the capacity needed. UDC officials expressed the hope that they can offer an entirely online Professional Science Master's Degree (PSM) in Water and Resources Management in the fall of 2017.

We did find that the university offers an extensive array of experiential learning options in a variety of majors. Of the five majors that we looked at—biology, elementary education, business management, electrical engineering, and information technology—all had experiential learning opportunities, ranging from preparing tax returns under supervision, to student teaching opportunities, to the presentation of original experiments.

### **Recommendation:**

3. UDC should re-assess its priorities for online learning and make public a new timeline with regard to offering online programs. To the extent that this involves changing the Vision2020 strategic plan, an amended strategic plan should be approved by the board and released to the public.

## **UDC's Workforce Development and Lifelong Learning program did not meet all the performance expectations under the terms of a grant agreement with DMPED.**

In March 2014, UDC entered into a grant agreement with the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED). The agreement provided for up to \$350,000 to be paid to UDC to provide hospitality industry job training to qualified District residents. The agreement was initially for one year (April 1, 2014 through March 31, 2015), but was later amended and extended six months, through September 30, 2015. The amendment reduced the total amount available to \$300,000. As in the original agreement, funds were to be paid to UDC upon achievement of certain performance goals.

UDC sought reimbursement from DMPED for at least \$246,552.29 under the terms of the grant agreement based on invoices we reviewed.

ODCA found that UDC had not, or could not document that they had, achieved many of the performance goals contained in the grant agreement, including:

### **Number Completing Training**

UDC's payments under the grant agreement were to be based on the achievement of certain performance outcomes. One of those outcomes was that participants must actually complete the training program. The terms of the original agreement called for UDC to be paid for up to 60 jobseekers to be given occupational training to enable them to find jobs in the hotel or related industries. The amendment provided for payment for up to 28 additional people to be trained, for a total of up to 88.

In its monthly reporting to DMPED, UDC reported that 52 people had completed the program (defined as having attended the training and passed two exams certifying them in hospitality industry standards and practices). In our review of records UDC sent to DMPED to support its performance, we determined that UDC had actually only provided documented training to, at most, 51 people.

### **Eligible Participants**

The grant agreement required that UDC only provide training to students who met certain qualifications. Students were to be:

- District residents at least 18 years of age,
- Eligible to work in the United States, and
- Not earning more than a certain amount.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> The maximum allowable income for participants varied by household size and ranged from \$23,340 for individuals up to \$80,180 for a household of six.

As part of the registration process, prospective students were asked to provide documentation to demonstrate their eligibility.

ODCA selected a random sample of 25 students that UDC had reported as having completed the training, and then accessed UDC's AspirePath system, used by the WDLL program to track registered students. AspirePath is also used to store electronic records of student documents, including those collected at registration. Of the 25 student records accessed, we only found complete documentation of eligibility for 10.

We discussed these shortcomings with WDLL senior management, who explained the intake process this way: applicants for Workforce Development programs go through an interview with WDLL staff, who ask them about their eligibility to receive services and obtain necessary documentation. This documentation is then scanned into AspirePath. WDLL staff explained to us that one likely explanation for the lack of documentation was simply a failure of clerks within the office consistently to scan documents as required.

### **Post-Graduation Placement Services**

The grant agreement called on UDC to provide post-graduation services to all participants. These services were to include such things as job transition, career coaching, and mentoring support. The language used in the grant agreement was that UDC "shall" provide these services to "all" participants. Our review of UDC's records showed that only a small fraction of those who completed the training were given these services.

UDC officials explained that their interpretation of the language was that the services simply had to be *offered* to all participants. They claimed that they had offered the services but explained that there was no way to make individual participants take advantage of the offer. According to these same officials, despite repeated reminders that the services existed, once participants had graduated and received their certifications, there was little incentive to get them to come back to such coaching sessions. It was suggested by the Acting Dean of WDLL that if future such grants were to be awarded, perhaps a small stipend to the students could be provided to entice them to take advantage of these services to help them find and maintain a job.

### **Qualifying Jobs**

The grant agreement required UDC to do more than just train people; it called for placement of graduates into jobs in the hospitality industry. However, in order to get credit for these placements, and therefore be eligible for payment under the terms of the agreement, the jobs had to meet the following criteria:

1. Be in a hotel, convention center, eating/drinking establishment, or similar business.

2. Pay no less than \$10.50 an hour.
3. Be permanent, or have the potential to become permanent after the completion of a probationary period.
4. Provide at least 24 hours of regular work time per week.
5. Offer access to benefits, or a clear pathway to advancement into job opportunities that would provide benefits.
6. Provide pathways to career advancement.
7. Provide an increase in hourly wages of not less than 10 percent over current wages for individuals who were already employed at the time of placement.

UDC claimed that it placed 24 participants into qualifying jobs. ODCA reviewed its supporting documentation for these jobs and found only three that were completely supported. In most cases, the documentation consisted of paystubs, showing hourly wages, hours worked, etc. The shortcomings of the documentary evidence for the 24 participants are detailed in Table 3.

**Table 3: Criteria for Qualifying Jobs as part of WIC Grant**

Criteria	Participants with sufficient documentation	Participants with insufficient documentation
In the hospitality industry	21	3 <sup>7</sup>
Pay >= \$10.50	19	5
Permanent <sup>8</sup>	-	24
At least 24 hours / week	13	11
Benefits	3	21
Pathways to advancement <sup>9</sup>	-	24
At least a 10% increase in wages <sup>10</sup>	1	2

According to UDC officials, DMPED only asked for paystubs to document placements made. Paystubs are generally not sufficient, however, to demonstrate whether jobs met all seven requirements to count as “qualified.” As a result, we are unable to determine whether 21 of 24 job

<sup>7</sup> For two participants that UDC claimed had been placed in jobs following training, there was no documentary support at all in the records we reviewed.

<sup>8</sup> There was no way to determine whether a given job was “permanent” based on the documentation available to us. Again, documentation was typically a paystub.

<sup>9</sup> As with determining whether a job was “permanent,” it was very difficult, if not impossible, to determine just by looking at a paystub whether a given job included the possibility of advancement.

<sup>10</sup> This was only relevant in 3 cases.

placements met minimum requirements for payment under this grant agreement.

Because this grant is over and because we only examined this one grant, we do not offer any formal recommendations here. In discussions with WDLL management, they stated that they are taking steps to keep these record-keeping and other deficiencies from re-occurring in other similar training programs.

### **Additional Concerns**

#### **UDC did not consistently teach required courses in select majors.**

We chose a random sample of five undergraduate degrees offered by UDC and conducted research to determine whether the required courses for those degrees had been consistently taught between fall 2012 and fall 2015. ODCA found that for two of the five, several of the required core courses had not been taught for at least two consecutive semesters during this time. These are the courses:

#### **BA Elementary Education**

EDPY 300	Educational Psychology
ECED 304	MM for Teaching Language Arts in Elementary Schools
ECED 305	MM for Teaching Social Studies in Elementary Schools
ECED 306	MM for Teaching Math in Elementary Schools
ECED 307	MM for Teaching Science in Elementary Schools
RDNG 314	MM for Teaching Reading in Elementary Schools
ECED 330	Practicum I – Elementary Education
PHED 394	MM for Teaching Health, Physical Education, and Safety in Elementary Schools
ECED 428	Classroom Management in Elementary Schools
HIST 102	U.S. History II
MATH 393	Theory and Application of Math

## BS Computer Science

CSCI 311	Computer Organization Lecture
CSCI 325	Organization of Programming Language
CSCI 341	Software Engineering
CSCI 351	Computer Networks
CSCI 399	Advanced Applied Programming

In discussion with UDC management about this issue, it was explained that the source we used for our research (UDC's Online, Searchable Course Schedule) only shows courses actually taught in previous semesters; it does not show courses that were offered, but not taught owing to various reasons, including low enrollment. Consequently, it is possible that some (or all) of the courses found to have not been taught were in fact offered in those semesters and were not taught because of low enrollment or other reasons. It is UDC practice to not teach a course when only a handful of students enroll. When this happens, UDC allows students needing a particular course to take equivalent classes at other local universities participating in the Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area and still pay UDC tuition rates.<sup>11</sup>

ODCA requested data to support this potential explanation but did not receive it from UDC until after submitting our draft report for review. The university's statement as to which courses were offered but not taught is part of the written response at the end of this report. Depending on the timing of the decision not to offer the course, this practice may have left some students scrambling who needed the particular class and had little time to register elsewhere.

For students seeking to complete major requirements, the unavailability of one or more courses for a year or more can have a significant disruptive effect. Students may need to delay graduation, take the courses elsewhere and transfer the credits, or take other similar action. ODCA did not conduct research to determine whether any students actually were affected in this way. However, the risk appears significant, based on the number of courses not taught and the length of time that they were not available.

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<sup>11</sup> Other schools in the Consortium include American University, Catholic University, George Mason University, George Washington University, and Howard University.

## Conclusion

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This report involved an examination of UDC's progress in achieving the goals it set forth in its 2014 strategic plan, *Vision 2020*. Specifically, we looked at what had been achieved toward the plan's first goal, which addresses the realignment of course offerings to make them more accessible and relevant to students

Our findings are mixed. The university has taken notable steps to realign its course offerings and has significantly increased the number of online courses that students may take. Nevertheless, as noted earlier, few of the new majors that were intended to be offered are being offered, owing to ongoing trouble in managing their financial aid program according to federal requirements. It appears that these problems have been cleared, however, and the university intends to start adding new programs of study soon.

In addition, we reviewed activities of the University's Workforce Development and Lifelong Learning (WDLL) program. ODCA found that the WDLL program was able to provide job training to a number of District residents, and helped a few to obtain good paying jobs in the hotel industry. While the university should be proud of this, performance was short of the goals laid forth in the agreement and areas for improvement remain. In speaking with upper management officials, we note that they recognize these areas for improvement and have already taken steps to improve them.

We commend the university for setting out an ambitious plan for the future and encourage them in their ongoing efforts to achieve their goals.

## Agency Comments

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On January 17, 2017, we sent a draft copy of this report to UDC for review and written comment. The university responded on March 7, 2017, and provided written comments, which are included below in their entirety.



Ronald F. Mason, Jr.  
*President*

March 7, 2017

Kathleen Patterson  
District of Columbia Auditor  
Office of the District of Columbia Auditor  
717 14<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W., Suite 900  
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Ms. Patterson:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on your draft report, entitled “UDC’s Vision 2020 Plan: How Much Progress Has Been Made?,” dated January 17, 2017. My staff has worked closely and amicably with Mr. Joshua Stearns and others from the Office of the District of Columbia Auditor, and we appreciate the opportunity to provide our input.

The following are our detailed comments and suggested revisions to the ODCA Draft Report, “UDC’s Vision 2020 Plan: How Much Progress Has Been Made?,” as indicated:

**Page 2 after the last paragraph**

UDC officials agree that the graduation and retention rates are low when compared to these universities; however these universities have highly selective admissions criteria and are reporting on baccalaureate level students only. UDC’s graduation rate for first time, full-time baccalaureate students is 33%.

**Page 5 narrative under the chart entitled “College of Arts and Sciences, Enrollment by Select Majors”**

The final sentence states that the History program was not recommended for elimination in Vision 2020. The BA in History was eliminated by the Board of Trustees in May of 2014.

**Page 6**

In the narrative under the chart entitled “School of Business & Public Administration, Enrollment by Select Majors,” the last sentence states that there is “low and declining enrollment in the recently introduced Management Information Systems major.” The Management Information Systems major has been offered since 2001. It was originally approved by the Board of Trustees under the name Computer Information Systems Science.

**Page 8**

We propose putting the sentence below at the end of the first paragraph. It explains why there was not a detailed budget presented for UDC in the Mayor's FY 2015 Budget.

The District's Office of Budget and Planning determined that all independent agency budgets would be presented in the Mayor's FY 2015 Budget as a one-liner with only the gross budget amount listed. The University is designated as an independent agency.

**Page 10**

The page heading states that "UDC is not offering all of the majors it said it would." It is proposed that the following statement be added to the title: however it is offering 85% of its planned majors.

**Page 11**

The chart on page 11 makes two incorrect statements: it states that the MS in Electrical Engineering is new program introduced in 2015 and that there is no BS Nursing program. The MS in Electrical Engineering was initially offered in the Fall of 2010. The chart states that there is no BS Nursing program. UDC offers a Bachelor of Science in Nursing.

**Page 12**

The chart states that the BS in Nursing program was new in 2015. The correct title of the BS in Nursing program currently offered at the University is RN-BSN and it has been in operation since the Spring of 1981. The correct title for the new BSN program proposed in the 2020 Vision Plan is a Generic BSN program, so the chart should read Generic BSN. The University has developed a Generic BSN program which has been approved by the UDC Faculty Senate. This Generic BSN program must be approved by the District of Columbia Board of Nursing before it can be submitted to the Board of Trustees for final approval.

At the end of the first paragraph below the chart, include the following statement:

The University recently received word from the Department of Education that it has been fully recertified to administer Title IV funding.

**Page 15**

After Recommendation 3 at the bottom of the page, please add the following statement:

President Mason has launched an initiative to revise Vision 2020 to create a Vision 2022 Strategic Plan by the end of FY 2017.

**Page 16**

P. 16 overview of WIC grant. “The amendment made available an additional \$300,000. As in the original agreement, funds were to be paid to UDC upon achievement of certain performance goals.”

The University recommends the following language to correct this statement:

As previously mentioned, the original agreement covered a period from April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015, at a cost of \$350,000. The amendment extended the grant to Sept. 30, 2015, but reduced the total cost of the original agreement and amendment to \$300,000. This reduction in cost reflected the change in expectations by the WIC. Also, UDC received payment only for outcomes achieved.

**Number Trained**

The document states that the “terms of the original agreement called for a minimum of 70 jobseekers to be given occupational training to enable them to find jobs in the hotel or related industries. The amendment called for an additional 40 people to be trained, for a total of 110.”

The University would like to clarify this statement with the following: At the time of the contract amendment, the University had served 57 job-seekers in year one of the agreement. The amendment called for the University to serve an additional 40 clients by September 30, 2015. A total of 89 individuals were eventually enrolled: 57 in year one and 32 in year two.

**Page 17**

**Eligible Participants Section**

The first full sentence at the top of page 17 states that “Of the 25 student records accessed, we only found complete documentation of eligibility for 10.”

The University proposes that the following statement be added after this sentence:

The University admits that not all participant files were scanned into AspirePath as they should have been. However, the University maintained hard copy documentation for all 25 students.

**Pages 19 and 20**

Under the statement “UDC did not consistently teach required courses in select majors,” the report identifies courses in four academic programs which were not taught for at least two consecutive semesters during the period from 2012 to 2015. The deans reviewed the courses and determined the following:

BS Health Education

The Dean of CAUSES states that HLTH 465 Measurements and Evaluation and HLTH 494 Senior Projects courses are offered once per year on a rotational basis.

The prefix for the Measurements and Evaluation and Senior Projects courses changed from PHED to HLTH after the Fall of 2012 semester			
Semester	Course Name	Enrollment	CRN #
Fall 2012	PHED 465	26	10331
Fall 2013	HLTH 465	20	12487
Fall 2014	HLTH 465	24	12487
Summer 2015	HLTH 465	16	31164
Fall 2015	HLTH 465	16	12487
Summer 2016	HLTH 465	12	31164
Fall 2016	HLTH 465	6	12487
Fall 2012	PHED 494	30	10334
Fall 2013	HLTH 494	21	12488
Fall 2014	HLTH 494	21	12488
Fall 2015	HLTH 494	40	12488
Fall 2016	HLTH 494	17	12488

BA Elementary Education

The Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences completed a review of all of the Elementary Education courses and determined that they were all offered at least once a year between 2012 and 2015, except MATH 393 Theory and Application of Math, and ECED 428 Classroom Management in Elementary School.

BA Elementary Education	Fall 2012	Spring 2013	Fall 2013	Spring 2014	Fall 2014	Spring 2015	Fall 2015
<del>ELED</del> EDFN 220 Foundations of Education	OFFERED BUT CANCELED	YES	OFFERED BUT CANCELED	NO	YES	OFFERED BUT CANCELED	YES
EDPY 300 Education Psychology	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	OFFERED BUT CANCELED	NO
ECED 301 MM for Teaching <del>Language Arts</del> Math, Sciences and Social Studies in Elementary Schools	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	YES	OFFERED BUT CANCELED
<del>ECED 301</del> 302 MM for Teaching Language Arts in Elementary Schools	YES	NO	YES	NO	OFFERED BUT CANCELED	YES	OFFERED BUT CANCELED
ECED 305 MM for Teaching Social Studies in Elementary Schools	Appears that these courses have been collapsed into one course: ECED 301 MM for Teaching Math, Sciences and Social Studies in Elementary Schools.						
ECED 306 MM for Teaching Math in Elementary Schools							
ECED 307 MM for Teaching Science in elementary Schools							
ECED 230 <del>330</del> Practicum I- Elementary Education	YES	OFFERED BUT CANCELED	YES	YES	OFFERED BUT CANCELED	YES	OFFERED BUT CANCELED
PHED 394 MM for Teaching Health, Physical Education, and Safety in Elementary Schools	OFFERED BUT CANCELED	NO	NO	YES	NO	OFFERED BUT CANCELED	NO
HIST 102 U.S. History II	YES	OFFERED BUT CANCELED	YES	YES	YES	OFFERED BUT CANCELED	NO
MATH 393 Theory and Application of Math	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO

BS Computer Science

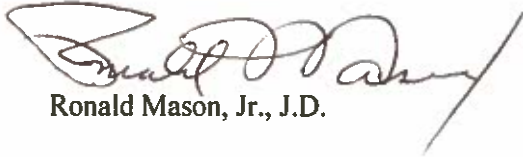
The Dean of the School of Engineering reviewed the course offerings and determined that all of the courses except CSCI 398 Advanced Applied Programming were offered once a year since Fall 2012. CSCI 398 (which was listed as 399 in the report) was added as a core course in Fall 2014. Each one of these courses is routinely scheduled to be offered in either the Fall or Spring of each academic year.

BBA Accounting

The Dean of the School of Business and Public Administration reviewed the course offerings for BGMT 104 Introduction to Business and BGMT 208 Business Communications. These courses are required for all business majors and were offered every year during the 2012 to 2015 audit period. However, the course prefixes were changed from OADM to BGMT after 2013.

Please contact me if you have any questions regarding our responses to the draft.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ronald Mason, Jr.", written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned above the printed name.

Ronald Mason, Jr., J.D.

## ODCA Response to Agency Comments

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ODCA appreciates the detailed comments and the additional information provided in the University's March 3, 2017, suggested revisions to the draft report. We have corrected several inaccuracies and noted some of the additional information provided at several points in the text of the report.

We appreciate being informed that the University president has launched an initiative to update the strategic plan by the end of this fiscal year. We will follow up on our recommendations during our ongoing compliance reporting including noting whether our recommendations on new programs of study and online learning priorities are reflected in the update.

We thank President Ronald Mason and his staff for their assistance.