

# THE UNITY CENTER

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<https://studentaffairs.umd.edu/student-life/student-experience-culture>  
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The Unity Center is a newly-designed space, grounded in the collective voices of our student body and created to honor, and celebrate the diversity of our campus community. The Unity Center includes five lounges and a multipurpose room. Each of these spaces is crafted to reflect the cultures it represents, in order to educate as well as foster connection and a shared sense of belonging for all Terps.

The Unity Center serves all students and educates them on issues related to disability, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, religion, and their intersections. Our work focused on:

- providing opportunities and spaces for all students that affirm identities
- building inclusive communities among diverse members
- creating social change - locally, nationally and globally.

## Lounge Descriptions

### The Mosaic

A mosaic is the creation of an image from many small, multicolored pieces of stone or glass. This art form has been practiced by cultures around the world since ancient times, passed down through generations, linking past and present. From the zellige of North Africa to the turquoise sculptures of Central America, mosaics remind us that culture, identity, and heritage are beautifully multifaceted. In this space, we celebrate the pieces and honor the whole, mirroring the journeys of multiracial, multiethnic, and adoptee communities.

### The Braid

Braiding is a sacred practice in Native American and Indigenous communities. To braid—whether it's hair, sweetgrass, yarn, or another material—one must gather the three strands with intention, time, and patience. The braider then must carefully weave the three strands together, creating a unified bond. In this space, we weave together three strands: relatives, culture, and empowerment to create a community gathering place.

### The Tapestry

A tapestry — intricately designed and alive with a vibrant array of colors—embodies the depth and richness of the human experience. Each thread tells a unique story, reflecting the spirit of various peoples, cultures, and histories. Its elaborate patterns invite an exploration of a shared past, illuminating both the connections and divides that shape our global reality. Just as every thread enhances the overall composition, intersecting disability identities and unique backgrounds contribute to the collective stories that shape our material existence. A tapestry embodies not only artistry but also the complexity of interconnectedness and the patterns that bind and separate our communities across time and space.

Making use of art, education, cultural practice, carework, rest, and joy, the Tapestry aims to be a space of exploration, connection, and curiosity; one where the expression of shared disability identity and the

interconnectedness of lived experience might also illuminate what makes us uniquely human — together, in celebration, mourning, and in-between.

### The Wave

A focal point of one of the most famous artworks around the globe, The Great Wave off Kanagawa by Katsushika Hokusai, the wave symbolizes a powerful and dynamic force of nature. Yet, the wave cannot exist without the strong bonds between its smaller units of matter. It is through this collective power that the Asian, Pacific Islander, and Desi community found its voice and strength in history. May this space honor the bonds between our communities and the cultural heritage throughout our lands.

### The Vista

The Vista is a space recognizing the contributions of the Latine community to the University of Maryland. Calling to mind beautiful lakes, mountains, coastlines, and forests of our homelands, this title is a call to reflect on the natural world that surrounds us. The name Vista also invites us to consider our current perspectives, honor the past changemakers that have brought us to this point, and to empower the generations that will follow to inspire a better vision for the future.