UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MILWAUKEE

Belonging at USM

Students are engaged, known, and valued within our passionate independent school community...

When students are *engaged* in their learning, *known* for who they are, and *valued* for their contributions, they are empowered to grow and reach their full potential. And when all members of our community—students, faculty, staff, families, and alumni—feel engaged, known, and valued, we build the foundation for something even deeper: a true sense of belonging. Belonging is essential to our mission—when individuals feel seen, heard, and supported, they can pursue excellence both inside and outside the classroom.

Building a culture of belonging is a shared responsibility. At USM, we work together to create an inclusive environment where everyone matters, advance equity through meaningful engagement that helps all students thrive, and celebrate the diversity that strengthens our community. Since adopting our first diversity statement in 2005, we have remained committed to continuous learning, growth, and reflection. As we navigate an ever-evolving world, we reaffirm our commitment to foster belonging as a living expression of who we are and the legacy we continue to build together—enriching both our learning environment and the ongoing practice of excellence.

Our students are *engaged.*

Each of our students bring a diverse range of perspectives, experiences, and identities that shape how they learn and participate. When students feel seen and affirmed in their learning environment, they develop deeper connections: to their education, and to each other. We foster engagement by welcoming each student by name, championing their growth inside and outside the classroom, and creating opportunities for them to share their talents and passions in meaningful ways.

Our students are *known.*

To truly know a student is to understand their unique background, abilities, and aspirations. Practicing equity means identifying and providing access to support, resources, and opportunities each individual student needs to thrive. By doing so, we ensure that every student can fully engage in and benefit from their educational experience and foster diverse learning and social growth.

Our students are *valued.*

Feeling valued means knowing that your presence, identity, and contributions matter. We actively foster an inclusive community. By creating safe and empowering spaces, we uphold the values of our Common Trust, ensuring that every member of our community can engage authentically and grow intentionally. This commitment is reflected in how we celebrate all voices that make up our community, and adapt our programs to remain flexible and responsive to the needs of those we serve.

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