

# Letters to the UMB Community

## Rick Barth Stepping Down as SSW Dean

June 7, 2019

Dear Colleagues:

I write to share with you that Richard P. Barth, PhD, MSW, dean of the School of Social Work (SSW), has decided to step down by the end of the 2019-20 academic year, after leading the school for 14 enormously successful years. Following his term as dean, he will continue as a full-time tenured SSW faculty member.

Dean Barth has driven significant expansion at the school. On his watch, the school's grants and contracts grew from \$6 million to \$40 million a year. Its development campaign climbed from \$46,000 to \$4 million a year, and total annual aid to students has soared to \$3 million. (Dean Barth himself provided lead gifts for three scholarships.)

The school's academic framework has grown in kind. Dean Barth oversaw an expansion of training, research, and stipend support in behavioral health, and recruited national experts in this critical area to join the SSW faculty. He led efforts to strengthen the school's PhD program, develop a postdoctoral program, and offer social work programs at the Universities at Shady Grove. He invigorated the school's alumni engagement activities, re-establishing the SSW Alumni Board of Directors and increasing alumni awards and scholarships.

Dedicated to translating rigorous scholarship into positive on-the-ground outcomes, Dean Barth has nurtured a culture of research-informed community outreach. Building on the success of signature programs -- including Family Connections, Title IV-E, the Family Welfare Research and Training Group, and the Social Work Community Outreach Service -- he led the charge to engage more deeply in West Baltimore and, in so doing, influenced the University's own engagement efforts. Promise Heights, among the most successful of these programs, supports children and families in Upton/Druid Heights with a robust network of education, health, employment, and social services; it was rewarded last year with a \$30 million federal grant.

While the School of Social Work has been Dean Barth's top priority, he has advanced the University's interests as well. He helped secure the foundational funding and administrative support needed to launch the UMB Institute for Clinical and Translational Research (ICTR), our first Universitywide interdisciplinary hub for clinical translational research and training. Dean Barth serves as ICTR's deputy director.

Dean Barth has had a powerful impact not only on the multitude of people served through social work but also on the profession itself. The U.S.'s second-most cited social worker, Dean Barth strives to improve lives on a large scale. He is a leader in the Grand Challenges for Social Work, the first major initiative of the American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare, for which he served as founding president from 2009 to 2015. Hosted at SSW, Grand Challenges tackles some of the nation's most urgent social problems.

Dean Barth plans to take a well-deserved leave before returning to the faculty and resuming his scholarship. Upon his return, he will carry on his influential research in children's services, remain active in the Grand Challenges priorities, and continue as ICTR deputy director.

I'll soon begin the process to identify Dean Barth's successor and will engage an external firm in a national search. We'll also plan some opportunities to celebrate Dean Barth's leadership. But for now, on behalf of the University, I simply want to congratulate Rick on his extraordinary record of excellence and thank him for his exemplary service.

Sincerely,

**Jay A. Perman, MD**  
*President*