

Staff Senate November Agenda
***Thursday, December 3, 2020**
12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

❖ **Call to Order (12 noon)**

The meeting was called to order by Staff Senate President, Kristy Novak.

❖ **Attendees**

Voting Members: Ayuk-Brown, Ayamba; Azen, Michael; Brightbill, Gregory; Buckingham, Kent; DeBoer, Taylor; Dietz, Allison; Essien, Sharese; Fenwick, Christina; Hamilton, Jill; Hitch, Kecia; Hokenmaier, Sarah; Holt, Susan; Jackson, Sarah; Lewis, LaToya; Ludd, Latoya; Novak, Kristy; Phelan, Mary; Privette, Shawnta; Volberding, Jenn; Wakefield, Priti; Wilson, Lakeisha; Zhang, Lei.

Alternate Members: Barkman, Emma; Hockensmith, Thomas; Perri, Carroll.

Absent Members: Sizemore, Cody; Boggs, Steven.

❖ **Establish Quorum (50% +1 = 13 voting members): Quorum is achieved at 23 members.**

❖ **Welcome/Staff Senate Check In**

Motion to start by Kecia Hitch, 2nd by Allison Deitz.

- Kristy Novak welcomed Staff Senate members and opened the floor to allow members to greet each other; she also provided the opportunity for Staff Senate members to share any updates as desired.
- Taylor De Boer has been recognized as the Employee of the month for November.
- Priti Wakefield celebrated her birthday this past week; Jenn Volberding celebrated her 10 years wedding anniversary.
- Shawnta Privette will be graduating with her BSc. Homeland Security in December.

Holiday Sweater Display

- Staff Senators who participated in the ugly sweater theme were given an opportunity to display their attire.

Thankful Reflections

- Staff Senators, and meeting attendees took a moment to reflect and share some of the things that they were grateful for.

❖ **Guest Speaker(s)**

- Kristy introduced Dr. Bruce Jarrell, UMB President.

❖ **Dr. Bruce Jarrell, UMB President**

- President Dr. Jarrell commented that it was heartwarming to hear the thankful reflections expressed the staff senators and attendees. He noted that it is a stressful time in which UMB leadership continue to address any urgencies and ensuring the campus community is safe and well during the pandemic.

Covid-19 Update

- Dr. Jarrell advised that the recent surge in cases validates that the virus is still here and we should not let our guards down. He informed that hospital capacity is almost full due to the recent surge; he urged that the campus community remain diligent in efforts to control the virus- wearing a mask, following social distancing, limiting travelling for essential reasons as advised by the CDC. He commented that he was happy to hear a lot of the meeting attendees express gratitude for their health, he would like everyone to be thoughtful in all they do to ensure they remain healthy. Dr. Jarrell said that he feels some comfort and assurance that nurses and doctors now have the tools needed in terms of treatment options to improve mortality rates in high risk patients, but warn that we still need to be diligent.

Covid-19 Vaccination

- Dr. Jarrell expressed his optimism with regards to the possibility of two or three soon to be approved vaccines. He cautioned that although the vaccines are promising that the state will still need to decide on the distribution of the vaccine and control prioritization of vaccines. He suspects that the UMB community will most likely have access to distribute vaccines campus-wide in March, April or May. He warned further that even as the vaccines are distributed persons should remain thoughtful in maintaining CDC guidelines as data will still need to be collected on the long term effectiveness of the vaccine.
- Dr. Jarrell stated that he believes that the Campus will continue teleworking and remote learning in the spring 2021.
- Dr. Jarrell extended his gratitude to frontline workers who provide care to sick persons, and the essential workers that maintain functions on campus.

Questions:

- Sarah Hokenmaier inquired of the UMB course on Structural Racism that would be offered through the School of Social Work. She asked if there were any updates on the development of the course and if there was a timeline for its availability for the campus.
- Dr. Jarrell responded that UMB leadership remains committed to ensuring that this course will be made available to the campus. He informed that UMB leadership is currently engaged in a pilot- a shortened version of the course to ensure that the course meets the desired standards and specifications. He is estimating that the full version will be available to the campus in early January.
- Susan Holt asked Dr. Jarrell if his participation in the Moderna Vaccine trial precludes him from having to take the vaccine-granted that he did get the vaccine and not the placebo.
- Dr. Jarrell clarified that he did not know if he received the placebo or the vaccine, adding that his wife and daughter also participated in the Moderna study but did not know which arm of the study they were enrolled into. He noted that his participation in the clinical

trial does not change his vigilance in ensuring he followed Covid-19 advisories. He informed that he did not experience any severe reactions, but noted that to his knowledge there were no reported severe reactions to the Moderna Clinical Trial. Dr. Jarrell stated that he was proud of Moderna Clinical Trial's commitment to diversity and inclusion. He informed that the trial included 432 participants from minority groups (1/3 were Hispanics from the Montgomery County; 50% were African Americans from the West Baltimore area).

- Kristy Novak shared with the group that at the recent Executive Staff Senate meeting with Dr. Jarrell and Jennifer Litchman there were discussions of the importance of the employees using the Holiday break to decompress. Kristy commented that she is aware how difficult it could be to draw the line between work and home especially during the pandemic when most of the campus members are working remotely. She highlighted that at the meeting UMB leadership committed to encouraging the campus community to take time off and away from work- read a book, visit people only within your bubble if it is safe to do so, but be intentional about unplugging/unwinding.
- Dr. Jarrell thanked Kristy for reminding him of the meeting discussion. He informed that UMB leadership met with the Deans, and other leaders today to discuss this expectation during the Holiday break. He stated that there is a plan to ensure that the message is clear that during the Holiday break employees should take some time away to the extent that it is possible.
- Jill Hamilton inquired if there would be any UMB mandates to get the vaccine once it becomes available to everyone.
- Dr. Jarrell responded that question has been asked and there are no answers at this time. He informed that the UMB legal team are reviewing; he added that students may be required to get the vaccines especially if they work in clinical areas, but employees may be different. He explained that people must be comfortable with getting the vaccine knowing that it gives some protections and that he does not wish to impose mandates since it is not his preference in operating. He added that he is comfortable with taking the vaccine which is evident from his enrollment in the Moderna trial.
- Kristy thanked Dr. Jarrell for taking the time to attend the meeting and sharing updates.
- ❖ ***Matt Lasecki, Associate Vice President, Human Resource Services***
 - Matt Lasecki thanked persons who were involved in promoting the first virtual open enrollment session. He noted that the state has been working towards a virtual enrollment process prior to his employment at UMB. He reported that the virtual open enrollment was a success.
 - Matt Lasecki shared that the HR department launched its first of a series of Parent/Caregiver Life Hacks forum. He explained that the forum is not intended to focus on the problems facing parents/caregivers but to provide tips and ideas on managing educating children k through 12 (elementary school) while balancing work demands during the pandemic. The series will be presented over the next 4 to 5 months with

different topics at each forum. Matt shared that he enjoyed the sessions and learned so much from the discussions. He added that there were many useful ideas that as a parent of 6th grade and 4th grade children, he was grateful to learn. The session was recorded and is accessible to the UMB campus.

Questions

❖ ***Dawn Rhodes, Chief Business and Finance Officer and Vice President***

- Dawn Rhodes confirmed that there were no updates.

❖ **Updates from UMB Leadership (Staff Senate Executive Committee)**

Kristy provided the following update:

➤ ***Chief Thomas Leone, Interim Chief UMB Police Department***

- Chief Thomas Leone would like to encourage the UMB campus community to continue to use the SAFE Ride and SAFE Walk program offered by the UMBPD. Kristy reminded senators that security officers are available to escort persons working on campus to their cars.
- The UMBPD has launched the Riding with Lyft program. Lyft is the official rideshare partner for UMB. The Lyft program provides two on-demand options –Lyft On demand Shuttle, and Lyft Ride Smart. The programs are intended to better serve the UMB community with affordable on-demand options, given that the UM Shuttle and previous Safe Ride programs were recently suspended due to COVID-19. Kristy recommended that senators refer to the recent communications shared in the Elm.

❖ **Committee Reports: Goals for the Coming Year**

➤ **BOR** (Update provided by Jennifer Volberding)

- The committee has begun reviewing packets. Jennifer shared that she is working with Susan and the Cuss Committee in that they are reviewing and Susan will work with CUSS in evaluating feedback and establishing best practices so that the review process is more effective.

➤ **Communications** (Update provided by Ayamba Ayuk-Brown)

- Ayamba Ayuk-Brown reported that everything is going well. She reminded senators that they can send any communication requests to her.
- Kristy Novak thanked Gregory Brightbill for working with Cindy to advertise the upcoming UMB Got Talent event. She reminded Ayamba to send out Flyers or any other forms of promotions for the event. Tom Hockensmith (IT) will work with Ayamba Ayuk-Brown in communicating additional information about the event.

➤ **Community Outreach** (Update provided by Jill Hamilton)

- Jill Hamilton shared the success of the Thanksgiving Drive. She commented that the committee anticipated possible challenges as most of the campus community members are working remote. Jill reported that the Thanksgiving drive raised about \$6,965 with over 147 donations exceeding expectations. Jill expressed gratitude to persons that collaborated with the Staff Senate Community Outreach committee (Ashley Valis, Brian

Sturdivant-UMB Community Engagement Center). Jill informed that the Holiday Drive is underway and the Christmas Toy Drive will still be hosted this year. Both drives will be held virtually. Persons interested may purchase toys through the website and shop for specific items from merchants such as Target. Financial contributions may be donated on the website for all current drives. Sarah Hokenmaier commented that the monetary contributions are valuable to meeting needs during the holiday season as well as identified needs beyond the holidays. She stated that it is vital as the committee receives requests and are informed of needs that are specific; they are able to meet those needs using the monetary donations.

- Kristy Novak commended the committee and shared that Dr. Jarrell and the UMB Leadership were thrilled to hear of the success that the committee was having with virtual drives. She expressed a heartfelt thank you to the committee and everyone else that supported the committee during the drives. Kristy inquired if the drives were a collaborative effort with the Faculty Senate.
- Sarah Hokenmaier confirmed that the Faculty Senate collaborated and highlighted that part of the success of the Thanksgiving drive was due to the giving contest organized by the faculty members in the School of Pharmacy.
- **CUSS** (Update provided by Susan Holt)
 - Susan Holt informed that the last CUSS was a joint council meeting – University System Staff Senate (CUSS), Council of University System Faculty (CUSF), and University Student body. She highlighted that the meeting featured remarks from the current University Chancellor - Dr. Perman, Darryll J. Pines President of University of Maryland, College Park, Patrick Hogan Vice Chancellor for Government Relations, and Andy Clark, Director of Legislative Affairs. The meeting discussions focused on upcoming budget projections, the impact of Covid 19 on the University System, staff/talent retention-career advancement opportunities to improve retention, and benefits for contracted employees and extended benefits for employees recently separated from intuitions - such as tuition remission. She recommended that staff members interested in learning more of the discussions should visit the University System of Maryland website- CUSS (minutes are posted). Susan also informed that the upcoming Advocacy Day will be held virtually and may consist of several days of virtual meetings with various legislators.
 - Senators were encouraged to forward any questions that may be addressed at the CUSS meetings to the CUSS representatives.
 - Kristy Novak asked Lei Zhang if she has been able to adjust and integrate into CUSS membership.
 - Lei Zhang informed that she has been able to complete the new CUSS member documents and she has received her welcome package. She shared that she is excited about the opportunity to learn more of CUSS and the cultures at other institutions as she

interacts with individuals from the other institutions.

Policy/Legislation (Updates provided by LaToya Lewis)

- LaToya Lewis informed that the committee members have begun the review and evaluation process of the Bylaws. She commented that the committee has developed new tools and templates that may be used in the future.
- Kristy commented that the committee will need to provide the recommended changes to the Staff Senate Executive team and to the Staff Senate to vote on. She recommended that the Policy and Legislative Committee work with the Executive Committee members in the revision process. She stated that the review is a shared process and she would like that the Staff Senate members get some involvement in the process.
- LaToya Lewis responded that the committee will contact the Executive Committee- she noted that for changes to occur there must be a recommendation by two members of the staff senate and then a review by the Staff Senate and a vote. LaToya informed that the committee members will try to have a submission in January so that there is sufficient time for review.

➤ **University Life** (Updates provided by Tom Hockensmith)

- Tom Hockensmith reported that The UMB Got Talent show is scheduled for December 17, 2020 at 7 p.m. There are 11 participants (both staff and faculty).
- The University Life committee are currently analyzing data from a survey sent out to the campus. The survey intended to generate themes/topics that reflect concerns/questions that UMB leadership may be able to address. Tom informed that there are about 257 responses. He stated that the committee will provide an update on the date of the town hall in January.
- Kristy Novak reminded the committee that there is no Staff Senate meeting in January and therefore January was a great time last year to host the town hall. She added that the committee may want to rethink the timeline of the town hall and provide enough time so that UMB leadership may be able to include the town hall in their schedule. She recommended that the committee seek support from Gregory Brightbill (Staff Senate Executive Member at Large) and Ayamba Ayuk-Brown (Staff Senate Executive Communication Officer).

➤ **President's Council for Women** (Update provided by Lakeisha Wilson)

- LaKeisha Wilson reported that a meeting is scheduled for December 15, 2020. An update will be provided after the meeting.

➤ **HR Working Group** (Update provided by Amy Daniels-Faculty Senate Liaison)

- Amy Daniels informed that the group is currently working on reviewing and revising the PDP process.

➤ **HR Recovery Task Force** (Update provided by Amy Daniels-Faculty Senate Liaison)

- Amy Daniels will provide additional updates when they become available. She also stated that she will provide updates from the Faculty Senate while Kristy is on leave.

➤ **Funding Model Working Group**

- Sarah Hokenmaier informed that there are no updates on the budget. She shared that the group has been focused on reviewing historical data to assess where funds are allocated in effort to find ways to increase financial efficiency as they anticipate a challenging financial time ahead.
- Dawn Rhodes commented that the committee as well as UMB Leadership are reviewing data as described by Sarah Hokenmaier. She stated that they have been able to find some areas in the past where things were not as accounted for as they would have hoped. They have been benchmarking and making improvements to processes.

➤ **Executive Committee** (Updates provided by Kristy Novak earlier in the meeting)

❖ **New Business**

Kristy Novak thanked Sarah Hokenmaier for her recommendations on including breakout groups for Staff Senate meetings. She introduced the following topics that would be discussed in breakout groups for the meeting:

➤ **Break Out Groups Discussions**

Topics/Questions:

- *Do you feel safe sharing your political beliefs on campus and with your coworkers?*
- *Does UMB leadership actively listen to your opinions?*
- *Are there areas where UMB could advocate on behalf of staff and faculty in Annapolis?*
- *Are there any state based policies that will be a good mantle for the staff senate to champion? e.g. K through 12 schools education on LGBTQ*

Christina Fenwick provided the instructions for the breakout sessions informing of the 8 to 10 minute time period for discussions.

➤ ***Group Reports***(Group leads/note volunteers were asked to submit notes from discussions:

Group 1

Do you feel safe sharing your political beliefs on campus and with your coworkers?

- The group discussed that they would feel “cautious” in discussing political beliefs.
- One person mentioned that it is not appropriate to discuss in the workplace and it is best to be neutral. However, if it is related to the workplace, then it is appropriate to discuss.
- Further discussion given to unpack/define “safe.” Although there is not a concern for violence when views are expressed, it was still stressed that it’s not appropriate to discuss political views in the workplace.

Does UMB leadership actively listen to your opinions?

- Yes, the group believes that UMB leadership is open to hearing opinions but that it is different at the each school/department level.

Are there areas where UMB could advocate on behalf of staff and faculty in Annapolis?

- It was mentioned about the CUSS Legislative committee advocating for staff in the upcoming Legislation Day in Annapolis for the USM.

Group 2

Do you feel safe sharing your political beliefs on campus and with your coworkers?

- Not with co-workers

- General sense but not personal opinions
- Not that individuals don't feel safe, but it is just not a topic discussed
- Depends on who you have a trusting relationship with
- Politics/Religion

Does UMB leadership actively listen to your opinions?

- Yes-through surveys

Are there areas where UMB could advocate on behalf of staff and faculty in Annapolis?

- Budget
- Allocation of Resources-especially towards staff/employees

Group 3

Do you feel safe sharing your political beliefs on campus and with your coworkers?

- As a whole, the group felt safe talking about political beliefs at UMB. They believe that the intuition provides employees with an environment in which they can be themselves and talk about political issues.
- The group felt that politics are commonly and openly discussed; more among liberal views and less so for individuals who have more conservative views. The group talked about this being a side effect of the more liberal environment of higher education.
- The group felt that more guidance and better dialogues regarding the discussion of politics are needed. The group was concerned that there is a lack of political discourse between liberal and conservative views and we would like to learn ways to help improve this issue.
- Members of the group would like to learn more about the laws as it pertains to political activity, being a state institution and state employees.

Group 4

Do you feel safe sharing your political beliefs on campus and with your coworkers?

- Yes, the group felt comfortable sharing political beliefs with close coworkers; if there are differences of opinions then views are respected. Persons in the group did not have experience talking about political views with other people on campus that are not coworkers.

Does UMB leadership actively listen to your opinions?

- Leadership does a good job actively listening with town halls, surveys, etc. However, implementation and taking our opinions into consideration is different. Leadership could do a better job at implementing.

Are there areas where UMB could advocate on behalf of staff and faculty in Annapolis?

- The group felt that UMB should always be advocating for faculty and staff. Working at a higher education institution the students come first, then the faculty, and then the staff. Faculty receive more representation compared to staff. Staff that is not regular, e.g. contracted, are just as important to this campus and need people to advocate for them too. Tuition remission and other benefits for staff need to be widely known.

Are there any state based policies that will be a good mantle for the staff senate to champion? E.g. K through 12 schools education on LGBTQ

- The group did not know of any specific policies, but felt that they should support the k-12 education on LGBTQ+.

Group 5

Do you feel safe sharing your political beliefs on campus and with your coworkers?

- The group reported that there were mixed views. One senator who handles Title IX complaints said that quite a lot of calls that come into that hotline don't deal with discrimination but from UMB staff members who feel there would be adverse consequences to speaking freely and sharing political views. Another senator shared that since she works in a capacity that is both under the School of Medicine and UMMC, that she gets mixed messages about whether she would be safe sharing political beliefs. There is a "doctor vs. social worker (and anyone else not a doctor) mindset" that is often not conducive to healthy political discussions. Another member of our group said she felt safe expressing her political beliefs. Another member believes that politics should be kept out of the workplace as much as possible.

Does UMB leadership actively listen to your opinions?

- The feeling among the group was that if you are fortunate enough to be a Staff Senator, you are privileged to have access to UMB leadership in a way that most other employees are not. The general UMB staff population is not aware of any avenues that are open to them in terms of expressing their opinions to leadership. One group member who works under the purview of UMSOM and the hospital expressed not feeling heard and added that it was not as a result of UMB, but more a reflection of the culture of UMSOM.

Group 6:

Do you feel safe sharing your political beliefs on campus and with your coworkers?

- Only with familiar persons. Not true if views were shared with less familiar persons. There may be some biases – unknowingly.

Does UMB leadership actively listen to your opinions?

- It is not consistent on campus. If voiced through Staff Senate -yes, but specific schools, position and titles, opinions may not welcomed.

Are there areas where UMB could advocate on behalf of staff and faculty in Annapolis?

- **Yes** – Job Position Titles and Job Descriptions that have to match external positions who can translate to other career opportunities. “Desk Check”.
- Tuition Remission – can be broader for opportunities.

Are there any state based policies that will be a good mantle for the staff senate to champion? E.g. K through 12 schools education on LGBTQ

- More information on Financial Literacy and Student Borrowing should be provided to the campus.

Other Items

- Christina Fenwick asked how Staff Senators can address the concern that some among the campus community may feel as if their concerns/issues are not being heard or

addressed. She noted that at times there are many moving parts to resolving concerns and at times they are addressed and there are improvements made but they are missed or goes unrecognized.

- Gregory Brightbill shared that he provides Staff Senate updates at staff meetings. He added that he informs the meetings that issues and concerns can be brought to him as well as the Staff Senate.
- Susan Holt informed that is given time at her department meetings to provide any staff senate updates.
- Christina Fenwick stated that she provides updates annually, but she ensures persons are informed that they can submit any concerns/issues to her or through the Staff Senate.
- Kent Buckingham asked if there was a way for persons to submit concerns/issues without fear of retaliation.
- Christina Fenwick confirmed that there is a link on the Staff Senate website that allows persons to submit any concerns/issues or questions.
- Kristy Novak commented that the volume of comments received through the website has decreased over the past 6 months. She reminded Ayamba to include the link in the weekly emails.
- Christina Fenwick commented that there should be language and a link included in the Elm as well.
- Lakeisha Wilson commented that there may be advocacy work accomplished by the Staff Senate that the campus is unaware of.
- Sarah Hokenmaier commented that Staff Senate can do better at promoting what we do and providing outcomes so that people would feel as if they have been heard.
- LaToya Lewis recommended having an annual publication that highlights a year in review for Staff Senate featuring the advocacy work accomplished by the committee.
- Amy Daniel agreed and stated that she was thinking along the same lines but more of an ongoing section of the Staff Senate website that provides most common facts-Questions and answers.

❖ **End of Year Greetings**

- Kristy Novak thanked the senators for participating in the group discussions. She asked that if there were topics or thoughts of themes for discussions that they be forwarded to Christina Fenwick and the Executive Committee members in her absence.
- Kristy Novak extended holiday greetings to all- Happy Holidays, Merry Christmas, and Happy Hanukkah.

❖ **Approval of November Minutes**

- There was 1 edit made to the November meeting minutes; page 9-rewording of line 35.
- A motion to approve November meeting minutes by Ayamba-Ayuk-Brown; 2nd by Gregory Brightbill.
Motion Passed Unanimously.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn meeting by Kristy Novak; second by Shareece Essien.

Minutes submitted by: LaToya Lewis, Staff Senate Secretary

Minutes approved: February 4, 2021

**Note: Due to modified UMB operations in response to COVID-19, the December Staff Senate Meeting was held via Zoom. The meeting was open to UMB staff members.*