



# President's Office

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## Letters to the UMB Community

### First Day as Your President

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*September 11, 2020*

Dear UMB Community,

Today, I become the seventh president of the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB). It has been a privilege to serve as interim leader, and it is now my tremendous honor to lead UMB as your president. This morning, I took part in a vaccine trial for COVID-19. In the three hours I spent at the Center for Vaccine Development, I had time to reflect on what I would like to share with you today.

I was born and raised on a farm in Caroline County on Maryland's Eastern Shore. I learned from my parents the importance of integrity and "my word is my bond." I have carried their lessons, along with the value of education, throughout my life and career. I give you my word today that I will do everything possible to help UMB uphold its mission to improve the human condition and serve the public good of Maryland and society at-large through education, research, clinical care, and service.

I continue to commit to our core values. They are at the heart of UMB's mission and guide our academic programs, operating philosophy, and commitment to our constituents, while supporting our dedication to global enhancement and social progress. UMB's core values align very closely with my own. This University creates leaders, committed to excellence and, importantly, thinking about and collaborating to address major issues. I know that my own leadership skills have been developed through my time here.

I have long been committed to seeking and listening to input from faculty, staff, students, affiliates, and our community about UMB and will continue to do so. I also commit to seeking out and including those who might not otherwise be at the table — or might not yet feel comfortable speaking up. I am thankful to all who share their experiences, resources, suggestions, frustrations, and ideas with me. I want you to know that UMB hears you — and I hear you.

The UMB community is leading in the response to COVID-19. From our health care professionals, researchers, and staff supporting the fight against COVID-19, to our students who are learning virtually and our faculty and staff who are innovating as they go, we are committed to finding solutions to the problems brought by the pandemic. I believe in taking part in the process that leads to answers — whether by sharing UMB expertise in discussions and planning or by volunteering to be a human subject in a vaccine trial. UMB will be more resilient and stronger in the future. I want to take the lessons we're learning and use them to redefine how we function as an institution of higher education going forward.

I want UMB to be a more equitable environment. To be true to our mission, we have to address issues of structural racism and inequality directly through educational programs, through our community engagement work, and in our academic pursuits. We must look deeper into policies and each examine our own biases. I am focused on learning more about how I myself can be a better ally. My hope is that everyone at UMB,

including our graduates, will keep with them a firm understanding of how to root out and address these inequities and work to create opportunities for others where they might not have existed before. I also will work so that the makeup of our faculty better reflects the great diversity of our state.

As a Maryland native, I know that there are many needs here — in Baltimore City, certainly, but across the state. I want UMB to be an anchor institution for Baltimore and for Maryland, making significant positive impact on health, research, and social justice throughout the state. We will continue to strengthen and grow relationships within our West Baltimore neighborhood. Through new and existing partnerships with fellow universities and other institutions, we will expand UMB's reach whether right here in West Baltimore or in the farthest points of our state. In addition, we will continue to foster our incredibly strong relationships with the University of Maryland Medical System and its affiliates, which benefit citizens across the state.

Though COVID-19 continues to impact our ways of being, I am optimistic about UMB's ability to not only weather the current storm, but also to rise to the challenge of creating a better future. Together, the UMB community will continue to innovate to meet those future challenges. But for today, I am simply thankful to serve as your president.

Sincerely,

**Bruce E. Jarrell, MD, FACS**  
President

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