



## On the Front Lines: UMB Champions of Excellence: Alana Kyriakakis, JD

September 16, 2020 | Jena Frick

University Counsel provides sage advice to help UMB navigate legal matters and other important issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The *Champions of Excellence* campaign is a multiyear branding campaign at the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) in which we highlight individuals and teams that exemplify extraordinary accomplishment and represent excellence at the University. This year, UMB is highlighting the employees who've done exemplary work since the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded in March. During the next few months, The Elm will be featuring these UMB Champions, who are making Baltimore, our region, and in some cases the world a better place.



Today: Alana Kyriakakis, JD, Office of University Counsel, UMB

When Alana Kyriakakis wakes up, she starts the morning with a cup of coffee before getting four boys set up for a day of virtual school. After the basics are taken care of, Kyriakakis retreats to her home office, where she spends the workday juggling copious duties on top of her normal day-to-day responsibilities as a member of the University Counsel team at the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB).

This has been Kyriakakis' daily routine since March 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic turned the world on its head. Masks became a requirement in public spaces, work and education moved to virtual platforms, and new health and safety policies needed to be drafted and put in place quickly.

(See video below.)

Before the pandemic, Kyriakakis' main job duties involved matters of employment law. She works closely with Human Resource Services, the Office of Accountability and Compliance, and supervisors across UMB to navigate matters before they turn into problems as well as to offer guidance for addressing problems that arise.

"When my kids ask me what I do, I tell them that I do my best to help people follow the rules and do what is right," Kyriakakis said.

Since the pandemic began, her work concept has largely remained the same, but the focus of her day-to-day requirements has evolved. She attends daily Recovery Task Force meetings, researches pandemic-related legal issues, drafts and edits policies and documents for COVID-19 health and safety, and advises UMB leadership on various issues.

She recalls what a whirlwind it was for her and her colleagues to strategically respond and prepare for the pandemic in the days before UMB's episodic telework requirement was implemented.

"My last week on campus before the pandemic was incredibly long and busy because I knew what was coming," Kyriakakis said. "Our policies were not originally written with a pandemic in mind and had to be quickly revised to provide a better framework for employees to work remotely and to allow employees greater access to sick leave and other accrued leave for COVID-19-related reasons."

Kyriakakis' leadership, initiative, and quick action during this time compelled Dawn M. Rhodes, MBA, UMB's chief business and finance officer and vice president of administration and finance, to nominate her as a Champion of Excellence.

"Alana is always on the ball," Rhodes said. "She has gone above and beyond in serving UMB through emergency planning, preparedness, response, and recovery. With her wealth of knowledge, professionalism, and commitment to UMB, Alana is a wise advisor and a true star."

While she is grateful to have been nominated as a Champion of Excellence, Kyriakakis says the success of UMB's COVID-19 response and recovery efforts were made possible by the teams she works with.

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"There has been a lot of teamwork, patience, and creativity shared by, between, and among a large group of dedicated professionals throughout this pandemic," she said. "It is our collective efforts that deserve recognition."

(Go to the *Champions of Excellence website* to see a list of this year's honorees.)

## UMB CHAMPION OF EXCELLENCE - Alana Kyriakakis, JD



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