



On the Front Lines: UMB Champions of Excellence: Parking and Transportation Services Maintenance Team

November 04, 2020 | Jen Badie

The nine-member crew adapted to changes brought on by the pandemic by adding projects and increased sanitizing measures to their essential duties.

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: Parking and Transportation Services Maintenance Team

Fewer people have been on the University of Maryland, Baltimore campus during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has meant fewer people using its parking facilities. But that hasn't meant less work for a front-line crew who often stay behind the scenes: the Parking and Transportation Services (PTS) maintenance team.

At the seven campus parking garages and seven surface lots, the maintenance team tackles the general cleaning of the garage decks, restrooms, and elevators; replaces lights; removes trash; conducts pressure washing and sweeping; and makes necessary repairs. And they are continually sanitizing doors and railings, one of the important practices to keep everyone safe during the pandemic.

Or as maintenance mechanic John Daniel describes the nine-member crew's duties: "It's like taking care of your house."

As essential staff, the maintenance team has continued to work on campus throughout the pandemic.

"They continually improvise, adapt, and target the various facility demands placed upon them," Robert Milner, MS, executive director, Auxiliary Services, wrote in nominating the team as a Champion of Excellence.

(See video below.)

The crew took advantage of several garages being closed to work on pressure washing, painting, and other projects.

"There was a period of reduced shifts when only four of the locations were opened. But we soon realized the opportunity to work on small projects and pressure wash decks in the closed facilities," said Brian Simmons, assistant director, PTS, who supervises the maintenance staff. "We have a crew of nine who work all three shifts during the week to address issues and prepare the facilities for daily usage."

The team's safety was a priority when the pandemic started.

"As things started to develop around the country and rumors circulated, there was an uncertainty of what to expect and uneasiness with increased chances of exposure due to the nature of their work," Simmons said. "Safety of staff was the first and foremost thing to consider as the situation heightened, and new training and equipment were investigated to deal with and limit the spread of germs on touchpoints."

Milner commended the work of the team, which in addition to Daniel includes maintenance mechanic leads Scott Wilhelm and Jerome Robinson; maintenance aide I Bernard Dickerson; maintenance aides II Terrell Boswell, Harry Turnquist, Steven Robinson, and William Gathuru; and service worker Clarence Moore.

"Having a team of individuals I can depend on to do the work well makes my job so much easier. I admire their constant dedication to the University and dedication to a job well done," Milner said. "The conditions of the garages speak for themselves. This group does a job that's not noticed until they aren't there to do it. It's rare to see trash littering the facility or gum sticking to your shoe. This team is constantly moving from facility to facility to make sure the campus retains the quality it deserves."

And the team's work is not slowing down as it prepares the parking facilities for winter.

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"We are currently operating six of the seven garages and are gearing up for the winter months, distributing ice melt to all locations and testing all snow removal equipment," Simmons said.

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