



UMB News

Draft Set of Updated UMB Core Values Presented

April 6, 2021 | By [Lou Cortina](#)

At the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB), the institution's core values are omnipresent. You see the list of seven values on posters, garage walls, letterhead — even mousepads. There's a website espousing and defining the core values as well as Presidential Core Values Awards honoring those who exemplify them.

But years pass, priorities shift, universities evolve — and core values must change with the times. This was the backdrop for a virtual town hall April 1 hosted by the co-chairs for [UMB's 2022-2026 Strategic Plan](#) — **Judy L. Postmus, PhD, ACSW**, dean of the [University of Maryland School of Social Work](#), and **Roger J. Ward, EdD, JD, MSL, MPA**, interim provost, executive vice president, and dean of the [University of Maryland Graduate School](#).

As part of the Strategic Plan process, which must be concluded by June 30, 2021, the co-chairs and steering committee have been meeting since January to produce a draft set of updated core values, which were presented to the UMB community members who attended the town hall online. Formulated for the University's first Strategic Plan in 2011, UMB's current core values — accountability, civility, collaboration, diversity, excellence, knowledge, and leadership — will be changing but their foundation remains.

"Even as we evolve our core values, we are not abandoning our current core values, we're evolving them and making them more current and contemporary, given the times in which we are living," Ward said in his opening remarks. "Our values anchor us in times of uncertainty, and certainly our core values have done that exactly and especially over the last year during the COVID-19 pandemic."

"Our core values speak to who we are as a community and broadcast to the world what we stand for, which is why we're spending so much time in making sure that we adopt the right set of updated core values."

Postmus also alluded to the pandemic in her first remarks, saying, "A lot has happened in the last year, let alone the last 10 years, to really make us think a bit differently about how we work and how we think about what is guiding us in our thoughts and processes. So one thing we talked about as a steering committee was perhaps trying to limit the number of core values in a way to make it easier to understand and easier to remember."

Postmus used PowerPoint slides to detail how the core values would evolve from seven values to four, as follows, with brief statements on what the value means as well as key synonyms/ideas to capture the fuller narrative of each value:

Respect and Integrity

Evolved from: Civility and Accountability

What it means: We value each other and hold ourselves accountable for acting ethically and transparently.

Synonyms/ideas: Civility, Accountability, Transparency, Ethics

Well-Being and Sustainability

Evolved from: Leadership

What it means: We care about the welfare of our people, planet, communities, and University.

Synonyms/ideas: Work and Academic Life Balance, Environmentally Friendly, Responsible Stewardship of Resources, Family Friendly, Mindfulness

Equity and Justice

Evolved from: Diversity

What it means: We embrace diversity and value inclusive and just communities.

Synonyms/ideas: Diversity, Inclusion, Social Justice

Innovation and Discovery

Evolved from: Excellence, Knowledge, and Collaboration

What it means: We imagine new and improved ways to get things done.

Synonyms/ideas: Creativity, Discovery, Agility, Novel Thinking, Teamwork, Partnership

As next steps, the co-chairs and steering committee are seeking additional feedback from the Staff Senate, Faculty Senate, and UMB leadership, as well as the University community via a survey that will be available through April 12. ([Take the survey](#) ) In addition, the Strategic Plan's themes will be the subject of the next virtual town hall hosted by Postmus and Ward on April 29 at 2 p.m. ([Register to attend](#) )

Comments from the audience included suggestions on other core values to consider, such as compassion, courage, and adaptability. Questions included: How do you define sustainability? How will UMB measure the effectiveness of these core values? Will collaboration be devalued because it would no longer be a core value? Where does UMB's goal to be an anti-racist organization fit in? How will these core values affect my daily work life?

On the last question, Postmus said the core values would be infused throughout the themes and outcomes of the Strategic Plan, and she hoped they will be something "that isn't just posted on our website, but that they become a living, breathing part of who we are as individuals, as an academic community, and as an institution within a larger community. We hope to see that we are all practicing these core values."

Ward agreed, adding that he anticipates that the UMB community will embrace the new set of core values when they are finalized.

"I would want you to use the core values as principles and tenets to guide your work and your interactions here at the University," he said. "We hope that it's not that the core values just passively impact you, but that you actively embrace them and live them."

Watch the town hall by accessing the link at the top of this page.

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