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2021 Presidential Core Values Award for Knowledge: Abree Johnson, MS, MBA

April 21, 2021 | Lou Cortina

With inquisitive nature and ability to multitask, director of pharmaceutical research computing is a great asset to the School of Pharmacy.

To celebrate and promote the University of Maryland, Baltimore's (UMB) core values, the University hands out **Presidential Core Values Awards**, designed to recognize students, faculty, and staff who embody the seven values at the heart of UMB's mission: accountability, civility, collaboration, diversity, excellence, knowledge, and leadership.

Knowledge Award Winner: *Abree Johnson, MS, MBA, director, Pharmaceutical Research Computing, School of Pharmacy*



Abree Johnson, MS, MBA, says she's naturally inquisitive, a trait that explains her success as director of the Pharmaceutical Research Computing (PRC) data analytics unit at the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy (UMSOP).

"Working with PRC allows my inquisitive nature to flourish," Johnson said. "We might juggle five to 10 projects on any given week with topics that may never overlap. I might not know a thing about HIV or cancer treatments or dental procedures at the start of a project, but I'm able to learn from investigators and clinicians who have a true passion for their craft."

PRC, part of the Department of Pharmaceutical Health Services Research at UMSOP, provides data management and analysis support for faculty, postdoctoral fellows, graduate students, and other researchers. PRC's executive director, Eberchukwu Onukwugha, MS, PhD, said Johnson's knowledge and ability to multitask have been great assets to the center, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Abree leverages her knowledge of data, analytics, billing processes, human resource management, and project management to great effect," Onukwugha said. "She elevates morale, encourages accountability, and fosters a sense of community amongst the individuals who report to her as well as individuals outside the center."

As the pandemic unfolded in March 2020, Onukwugha said investigators from University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) schools, Baltimore Veterans Affairs Medical Center, and other public and private institutions leaned more than ever on PRC to continue their programs and begin new projects.

"Thanks to Abree's deep knowledge of PRC operations, her can-do attitude, and her ability to engage with the offices that support our operations, PRC maintained continuous server access to data resources, added new projects to its workflow, and added new dataset resources, all while working remotely," said Onukwugha, who nominated Johnson for the Presidential Core Values Award.

Johnson, who also manages PRC's billing process, supports projects by attending investigators' meetings, and oversees technical staff and their contributions to projects, said she was humbled to be honored by UMB.

"Being recognized for my hard work validates that it's OK to be inquisitive, it's OK to challenge the norm," she said. "It also reminds me that although I might question and challenge things, taking a moment to listen and to learn helps not only me but others around me in the long run."

"There isn't a day that goes by that I do not learn something new from faculty, students, administration, or other staff."

Honorable mention: Steve Deck, DM, MBA, Department of Environmental Health and Safety, UMB; David Ingle, MBA, School of Medicine

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