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2021 Presidential Core Values Award for Civility: Violeta Rus, MD, PhD

June 02, 2021 | Lou Cortina

The School of Medicine professor is highly respected for her knowledge, decorum, and compassion as a teacher, researcher, and clinician.

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.

Civility Award Winner: *Violeta Rus, MD, PhD, professor, Department of Medicine, School of Medicine*



In promoting the core value of civility, the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) expects interactions among its students, faculty, and staff to be professional, ethical, respectful, and courteous. This is second nature to Violeta Rus, MD, PhD, professor in the Department of Medicine at the University of Maryland School of Medicine (UMSOM).

As a teacher, researcher, and clinician who specializes in rheumatology and internal medicine, Rus is highly respected for her knowledge, decorum, and compassion.

"As an expert on lupus, Dr. Rus advances potential medical therapies with clinical research. While conducting this research, she also supervises fellows in the clinic and sees her own panel of patients," says Afton Thomas, DO, an instructor in UMSOM's Department of Medicine. "These cases are often complex, so she spends additional time with patients and goes the extra mile to help them.

"Dr. Rus is an amazing and compassionate physician who is rightfully being recognized for her dedication to our patients and education," Thomas added. "She is an absolute joy to work with."

The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged all health care professionals, and Rus is no exception. She especially appreciates and excels at the face-to-face aspect of patient care, so the increase in virtual visits was not ideal.

"I enjoy having the ability to pursue complex medical questions from the bedside to the bench and back. Human contact and interaction are what I like most about my job," Rus said. "The uncertainty derived from replacing the physical exam, which is so important for a rheumatologist, with a cursory and limited exam on Zoom, or even worse, a phone conversation, was the biggest challenge of the pandemic."

That doesn't mean she wasn't effective, according to Thomas.

"Dr. Rus helped us navigate the difficult transition to telemedicine, continued to contribute to our education as rheumatology fellows, and has helped me now as a rheumatology faculty member," said Thomas, who nominated Rus for the UMB Presidential Core Values Award.

"As a teacher, she went above and beyond during the pandemic and presented multiple times during Grand Rounds to update us on COVID immunology and virology and its impact on our patient care. I was impressed with her perseverance despite the numerous challenges we faced and survived together.

"Dr. Rus truly embodies civility and professionalism and is an outstanding physician. I aspire to be like her, and we are truly blessed to have her in our division."

Rus said she was honored to win the Presidential Core Values Award because "it's a recognition of dedication, professionalism, and hard work in general. But I don't think I am any different than my colleagues. Any of my colleagues would be a worthy recipient."

Honorable mention: Mary Therese Phelan, Office of Communications and Public Affairs, UMB

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