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# The Elm

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## UMB Together: Collaborating as We Transition Back to Campus

September 13, 2021 | UMB Office of Communications and Public Affairs

"UMB Together" provides an abundance of information from heartfelt welcome back video messages to a strong social media plan as we reconnect in person at UMB.

As you have returned to campus, you may have wondered about the signs, videos, and swag you've seen with the phrase that sums up the past 18 months: UMB Together.

UMB Together is a campaign recognizing the transition of faculty, staff, and students back to campus this fall and celebrating the steadfast members of our University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) community who have endured numerous months of continuous work onsite during the pandemic.

The campaign was developed by UMB's Office of

Communications and Public Affairs (CPA) and spearheaded by Laura Kozak, MA, associate vice president, CPA. Kozak envisioned developing a plan that would provide resources for schools and departments to seamlessly communicate to their areas that UMB has been and will continue to be together in spirit as we navigate the ongoing hurdles the COVID-19 pandemic presents.

Dana Rampolla, director of integrated marketing, CPA, is overseeing the management of the elements of the campaign. She says, "CPA has set up a **robust webpage** to serve as a central hub for all things 'UMB Together.' The site provides an abundance of information from heartfelt welcome back video messages to flyer, signage, and eboard templates and virtual meeting backgrounds, not to mention a strong social media plan. Additionally, people will see beautiful, welcoming signage across campus and find small welcome back trinkets at guard stations in some of our buildings as we return."

Rampolla explains the website is a one-stop spot to access information related to our return. The new webpage features welcoming videos from UMB leadership as well as representatives from the Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, and Student Affairs. Just when you might be feeling a little overwhelmed about the thought of resuming your morning commute or navigating how your office will function with pandemic protocols in place, you can log on to hear reassuring messages from others in the UMB community.

Details and registration links are also available on the site for upcoming in-person, outdoor "Welcome Back" events that will be hosted by the Office of the President. Events are scheduled during September and will feature the opportunity to reconnect with UMB leaders, colleagues, and friends as well as grab a quick bite to eat and get some UMB swag. Registration is required, and events are specific for different groups in the University to keep population density manageable.

The webpage also provides access to our UMB COVID-19 Pledge, which has been updated. Everyone is encouraged to sign on and commit to shared accountability to follow University requirements and guidance as we restart a vibrant in-person presence at UMB.

To capitalize on the potential impact the campaign could have, Rampolla reached out to the UMB Communications Council for support.

The University of Maryland School of Nursing (UMSON) quickly rose to the occasion. Giordana Segneri, MA, director of marketing and public relations, Office of Communications, UMSON, explains why her office decided to participate fully in the campaign.

"These past nearly 18 months have been so tough for everyone and there's been so much change and ongoing need to adjust," she says. "We're prepping for another major transition — welcoming everyone back in person to campus during a time that still feels very uncertain."

Segneri said UMSON's goal is to make everyone feel welcome and comfortable and to infuse the return with a little bit of fun and joy, which she thinks people have been missing.

"The UMB Together campaign provides UMSON with a platform on which to build its own activities and materials — a reminder that we truly are all in this together — as a University and as a nation (and even as a planet)," Segneri says. "From the adjustments we're having to make, to the concept that to overcome this extraordinary challenge, we need to be all in, together."



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UMSON has incorporated the campaign theme into their messaging by developing the concept of “Back ... and Stronger Than Ever.” Segneri’s hope is that it will serve to motivate students, faculty, and staff as they return, as well as meet the goal of infusing the return with excitement and reassurance.

“We are definitely stronger than we were 18 months ago, all of us, perhaps for different reasons,” Segneri notes.

Their first challenge for the fall semester came Aug. 30 at the UMSON Welcome Event, held on the first day of classes.

Part of the UMSON Welcome Week, it included an ice cream social, swag handouts, and a self-serve photo booth/selfie station. They even ordered balloon bouquets to make everything more festive. But they conscientiously followed safety guidelines and aimed to make people feel comfortable by holding the event outdoors and offering prepackaged confections from coolers. And they incorporated the UMB Together identity into the UMSON concept across printed materials — including banners and photo station props.

CPA expects to continue the UMB Together campaign through the year, while anticipating that on-campus protocols and guidance could change in this continually evolving landscape.

Rampolla explains, “Nothing is certain for what the future will hold. But what we have learned these past 18 months is how to be flexible and to pivot quickly. And CPA continually prioritizes maintaining informed communications with the University at-large.”

Please tune in to *Virtual Face to Face with President Bruce Jarrell* and *The UMB Pulse* podcast and read the COVID-19 email recap on Fridays to stay abreast of important information. And mostly, prioritize self-care and stay well. We are UMB Together!

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