

**Staff Senate February Meeting Minutes**  
**\*Thursday, February 4, 2020**  
**12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.**

❖ **Call to Order (12 noon)**

The meeting was called to order by Staff Vice Senate President, Christine Fenwick.

❖ **Attendees**

Voting Members: Ayuk-Brown, Ayamba; Azen, Michael; Brightbill, Gregory; Buckingham, Kent; DeBoer, Taylor; Dietz, Allison; Essien, Sharese; Fenwick, Christina; Hamilton, Jill; Hitch, Kecia; Hokenmaier, Sarah; Holt, Susan; Jackson, Sarah; Lewis, LaToya; Ludd, Latoya; Phelan, Mary; Privette, Shawnta; Volberding, Jenn; Wakefield, Priti; Wilson, Lakeisha; Zhang, Lei.

Alternate Members: Barkman, Emma; Hockensmith, Thomas.

Absent Members: Novak, Kristy.

❖ **Establish Quorum (50% +1 = 13 voting members): Quorum is achieved at 21 members.**

❖ **Welcome/Staff Senate Check In**

Motion to start by Lei Zhang, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Sharese Essien.

- Christine Fenwick welcomed Staff Senate members and opened the floor to allow members to greet each other; she also provided the opportunity for Staff Senate members to share any updates as desired.
- Jill Hamilton informed the meeting that she is currently studying Genealogy. She was able to retrieve information on family members (uncle, mom). She is enjoying the course.
- Mary Phelan encouraged members that adopted pets since the covid-19 pandemic to share their experiences and introduce their pets.
- Michael Azen informed the meeting that he recently adopted a Boston Terrier.-
- Thomas Hockensmith shared with the meeting that he added an additional two kittens to his family; his family now has four cats.
- Mary Phelan shared that she got a new plant.
- Christina Fenwick informed the meeting of a School of Nursing Town Hall scheduled for 1:30 p.m. today.
- Christina Fenwick informed Kristy and family is doing great. Pictures will be shared next month

❖ **Approval of December Minutes**

- A motion to approve December meeting minutes by Jill Hamilton; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Kecia Hitch. Motion Passed Unanimously.

❖ **Updates from UMB Leadership (In Attendance)**

➤ *Introduction of Juliet Dickenson, Interim Associate Vice President*

Christina Fenwick introduced Juliet Dickenson, Interim Associate Vice President. Juliet Dickenson has been with UMB for 23 years and will be the interim Associate VP for

Human Resources. She has worked with Staff Senate before and is excited in continuing the relationship between Staff Senate and HR. Christina congratulated Ms. Dickerson on her new appointment.

- Juliet Dickerson thanked Christina for her introduction and expressed her devotion and excitement to work with the Staff Senate in the future. She shared briefly of her experiences working at UMB for the past twenty three (23) years, reflecting on her transition 17 years ago when she had decided to quit to commit her time to her family but then return to UMB. She spoke this new role allowing her to interact and network with persons that she would not have connected with otherwise. Ms. Dickerson expressed her gratitude to be able to work at the capacity granted through her appointment. She stated that it is her belief that each person working at UMB should be granted equal opportunity to grow and feel supported. She added that she views staff senate as the heartbeat and one of the governing trifactors that exists within UMB to create an environment of opportunity; each one of the trifactors is important. She ended her dialogue by informing of her open door policy and availability to staff senate members.
- **Chief Thomas Leone, Interim Chief UMB Police Department**
  - Chief Thomas Leone shared his gratitude to Ms. Juliet Dickerson and spoke of their working together on issues affecting UMB campus community and safety in the past.
  - Chief Leone shared the following updates:
    - SAFE RIDE**
    - Chief Leone stated that the Safe Ride has experienced a few operational hurdles but he is hopeful that the program will continue to advance successfully. He added that the Lift program did not achieve the intended or desired outcome. He shared that a recent statistical analysis indicated that there were only 70 rides during the month of January.
    - VIRTUAL SELF-DEFENSE**
    - The UMBPD is currently working on presenting a virtual self-defense program that will be available to the UMB campus members.
    - BLUE LIGHT PHONES**
    - The UMBPD is continuing to update the Blue light phones that are located on the campus to provide direct communications between the caller the UMBPD during an emergency or situation of safety concern. Chief Leone commented that although the Blue lights are installed the UMBPD is currently working on an app that will allow the campus members to communicate via a mobile device as well. He added that although it may appear as overlapping systems, they are both necessary and important in reinforcing safety.
    - Questions:**
    - Jill Hamilton commented that the app will be a great inclusion since there may be instances where an individual may not feel safe to stand at the Blue light phone to communicate with UMBPD. She added that although the Blue light phones are important they may not apply to every situation.

- Chief Leone agreed that the overlap of technologies may seem redundant but they are necessary to provide options in varying circumstances. He added that he is working with Greg Brightbill and vendors in finalizing the app.
- Christina Fenwick commented that she is really excited to see that UMBPD is offering a Virtual defense class in the future. She looks forward to it.
- Chief Leone said that he is hopeful that it will be offered sometime during this semester and commented that some kinks are being worked out.
- Sarah Hokenmaier highlighted the Polar Baer Plunge, the UMBPD's involvement and the event success.-
- Susan Holt commented that while she understands that having an app to communicate to the UMBPD is helpful and convenient, she believes that the Blue Light Phones are critically important when you have been robbed of your cell phone and/or personal belongings and need immediate help.
- Christina thanked Chief Leone for the updates.

#### ❖ Staff Senate Updates

- Two Staff Senate Alternate seats are to be filled. Carroll Perri (previous alternate) resigned, and accepted a position at the State of Maryland. Thomas Wise has declined the invitation to fill previous vacant alternate seat.
- There were two recent resignations: Steven Boggs, and LaToya Lewis.
- Steven Boggs has resigned due to additional responsibilities assigned during the pandemic in his current role at UMB. Steven Boggs has served on the Staff Senate for several years and will be missed.
- LaToya Lewis accepted a position outside of the UMB campus. She shared that she was thankful for the opportunity to work towards and accomplish the UMB Staff Senate's objectives during her tenure. She was honored to serve with the members of staff senate to achieve collective goals, and remains passionate about the mission of advocating on behalf of others promoting policies and practices that foster equity, diversity, inclusion, and respect. She added that she is more than willing to lend support when and where she can in the future.
- Emma Barkman and Thomas Hockensmith will fill the 2 full member vacancies until the end of the term (May 2021).

#### ❖ Guest Speaker(s)

- ***Mark Emmel, MAS, Director, Organization and Employee Development Professional Development Forum 2021***
  - Mark expressed his gratitude to the Staff Senate for including the Employee Recognition in the Staff Senate's communication with the UMB campus. He reminded the meeting of the James T. Hill Scholarship award which was established to support the University's commitment to staff development in recognition of the longtime vice president. He

informed that the \$2000 reward can be used towards professional development costs such as books, or fees.

- The USM Professional Development planning committee usually meets quarterly, however recently meetings have been more frequent (every two weeks). Mark spoke of recent committee discussions that centered on planning the Professional Development Forum during the covid-19 pandemic. The committee recognized that there was an opportunity to expand the Professional Development Forum for a week using a virtual platform as more employees are working remotely. Mark explained that extending the forum to a week of activities will allow for a variety of offerings and facilitators as well as allow for more participation. He reflected on feedback received from the last Professional Development Forum (about 1,333 responses to the post forum survey) and the most expressed concern was that persons could not attend all of the various presentations due to time conflicts. He added that expanding the forum will also allow for more schools and departments involved. Currently there are about six schools that will be collaborating for the event including University of Maryland College Park, University of Maryland, Baltimore, Frostburg University, UMBC, and Towson University. Mark believes that the forum could host as much as 900 participants this year. The theme for 2021 Professional Development Week will be USM Workplace 2021 & Beyond, and will focus on: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Workplace Productivity; Wellness; and Leadership. Forums will be held during the week of June 7, 2021. Mark has promised to return to the Staff Senate to provide additional information.

**Questions:**

- Christina Fenwick noted that in the past there were representation from the Staff Senate on the planning committee. She asked if there was a need for any staff senators on the committee.
- Mark Emmel acknowledged that Christina was correct, but noted that it may not be necessary at this point in the planning. He added that there were representations from schools and departments that provides a wide scope of ideas and recommendations.
- Sharese Essien asked if there was representation from any of the women affinity groups noting that these groups bring unique perspectives on career development and opportunities.
- Mark Emmel responded that the question was very important and that he will provide feedback on the involvement of these groups. He added that more likely than not, there would be representation from these groups in the planning.

➤ ***Lt. Matthew Johnson, University of Maryland, Baltimore Police Department, Cold Weather Kits***

- Lieutenant Johnson expressed gratitude for the Staff Senate's contribution to the Cold Weather Kits initiative in January 2021; Staff Senate contributed 100 kits. He explained that the initiative has been existence for the past three winters. As officers encounter homeless persons while carrying out their duties, they engage in conversations to assess needs. Officers are able to provide weather kits and refer persons in need to other resources. Lt. Johnson commented that the pandemic has affected some of the community outreach programs that the UMBPD facilitated in the past, but they are continuing to provide resources where possible to the community.

Officer Yale Partlow, the UMBPD homeless outreach liaison and member of the Crisis Intervention Team informed the meeting of the kits content. He explained that most models for kits contain items necessary for survival including socks, feet warmers, gloves, a bar of soap, lip balm, and a face mask (consistent with Covid-19 advisories). The kits also include women hygiene products which is not included in commercially available survival kits. He extended his appreciation for the contribution made by the Staff Senate. He added that having the ability to provide the resources and connect individuals to appropriate social services builds rapport and community trust.

**Questions:**

- A meeting attendee asked how officers make the decisions in distributions.
- Officer Yale responded that decisions are made after the officer engages in a conversation that informs if there is a need for resources and/or services. Twice a week UMBPD patrol the community with a clinical team (nurse, social worker, and members of other agencies around the community).
- Lt. Johnson commented that the kits provides an opportunity to break the ice and have conversations, building relationships within the community and addressing mental health and homelessness is important in ensuring that the incidence of harm is decreased.
- Christina Fenwick thanked the UMBPD for their presentation and accredited the Staff Senate's involvement in the Cold Weather Kits initiative to Sarah Hokenmaier, Jill Hamilton and the rest of the members of the Staff Senate Community Engagement committee.

❖ **Committee Reports:**

**University Life (Updates provided by Thomas Hockensmith)**

- The committee is finalizing communication with leadership as they prepare for the upcoming town hall. The Staff Senate UMB leadership town hall is now scheduled for February 25, 2021 and will replace the Face to Face forum with President Jarrell that had been previously scheduled for that day. The forum panel will include: Dawn Rhodes, Jonathon Bratt, Roger Ward, and a representative from HR. Topics will include campus parking during covid-19, teleworking post pandemic and working models, safety measures upon return to campus, and child care provisions.
- Christina Fenwick thanked the committee for their updates and encouraged staff senators to attend the event.
- Taylor De Boer recommended that the staff senators to encourage staff members with concerns (e.g. parking etc.) to attend. He added that this forum provides an opportunity to get their concerns addressed directly from leadership.
- Thomas Hockensmith informed the meeting that topics were chosen from themes that were derived from the survey. He explained that focused discussions will allow more concerns to be addressed within the hour scheduled for the forum. He promised to send

the topics and the survey to the executive team to be disseminated to the rest of the staff senate members.

- Ayamba Ayuk-Brown commented that she receives many concerns regarding the possibility of snow days being paid leave to accommodate for parents who may have challenges with closed day care centers or other dependent care challenges. She added that although the option is given to use liberal leave, employees feel less appreciated when they have to use personal leave on those days.
- Thomas Hockensmith responded that although he could relate to some of those concerns that specific topic may not have been included in the forum discussion theme plan.
- LaToya Lewis commented that the issue with snow days being paid time off was addressed in past meetings and in her recollection HR explained that some of the time off policies are consistent with the state policies. Since UMB employees are considered state employees, there are some changes that cannot be made unless they are made through the state of Maryland legislative process.
- LaKeisha Wilson reminded that meeting that pre-Covid it was 1%, but it is now mandatory to telework.
- Sarah Hokenmaier asked if there will be representation from parking on the panel, since there have been concerns of parking fees during covid-19 mandatory telework.
- LaToya Ludd responded that even though there would not be representation from the parking office, Dawn Rhodes would be on the panel. Dawn Rhodes oversees parking and safety, and will be able to address concerns related to those topics.
- **BOR (Update provided by Jennifer Volberding)**
  - The committee is compiling and finalizing 1 packet and awaiting additional documentation from two other packets. Jennifer shared the committee's challenges in securing packets during the pandemic. She informed that many of the applicants from the prior year were either retired, no longer with UMB or not interested in submitting an application. She added that some nominations expressed that they did not feel worthy and declined. She extended gratitude to Susan Holt and other committee members who have worked really hard this year and in the past to ensure that UMB had applicants. She plans to step down from committee chair next term. She hopes that packets submitted this year will be among the top finalists.
- **Communications (Update provided by Ayamba Ayuk-Brown)**
  - There were no updates from the committee. Ayamba Ayuk-Brown encouraged staff senators to continue inform the communications committee of any events, notifications, or other communications that may be forwarded to the UMB campus via the Staff Senate.
  - Mary Phelan informed the meeting that the UMB OCPA will be heavily promoting the upcoming Staff Senate town hall through social media to encourage attendance.
- **Community Outreach (Update provided by Jill Hamilton)**
  - Jill Hamilton thanked staff senators and all that contributed and participated in the fundraisers during the holiday season (Back to School Drive, Thanksgiving, and

Christmas). There were 830 donations disseminated to the community through the various drives and fundraisers. She thanked senators for the messages and heartfelt emails, as well for voting on time to ensure that funds were contributed the cold weather kits. She thanked Priti Wakefield for being available and facilitating drop offs during drive collections. The committee is continuing to work to be resource for the community wherever and whenever needed.

- Christina Fenwick thanked the committee and commented that the members of the committee really work well together which results in its success.

➤ **CUSS (Update provided by Susan Holt)**

- Susan Holt reported that the Chancellor addressed the CUSS committee regarding the recent unrest at the Capitol. She read the Chancellor's address to the University of Maryland System institutions.
- The Chancellor encouraged Marylanders to get vaccinated. He highlighted that 5 system institutions are working with the state in facilitating the vaccination process (UMB, Towson University, UB, Frostburg, and UMGC).
- The benefits committee is advocating for the removal of tuition and fees for staff members. They believe this will remove barriers and allow more access to tuition remission for staff members.
- Virtual Advocacy Day is scheduled for next Wednesday. The CUSS committee is hoping to convince members of congress to not cut the University System budget as concerns of budgetary cuts due to the covid-19 pandemic emerge.

➤ **Policy/Legislation (Updates provided by LaToya Lewis)**

- LaToya Lewis informed that the committee members have completed the review and evaluation process of the Bylaws. The review will be presented to the Staff Senate Executive team by Friday February 5, 2021.

➤ **Executive Committee (Updates from UMB Leadership)**

- The next meeting with Dawn Rhodes, Chief Business and Finance Officer and Vice President on February 16, 2021.
- A scheduled meeting with Chief Leone was cancelled. Chief Leone was at the Staff Senate February meeting and provided updates.
- The executive team met with Matt Lasecki and Juliet Dickerson on January 21, 2021. Matt Lasecki resigned on January 25, 2021 and accepted an offer as Associate Vice President Human Resources at Gwynedd Mercy University in Pennsylvania. Juliet Dickerson was in attendance in the Staff Senate February meeting.
- Campus communication. Staff Senate received a comment from a staff member that the email received on Thursday, December 17, 2020 (weather related alert instructing essential employees of UMB opening plans) was unclear/ambiguous. Staff members (essential employees) reported to duty two hours late (10 a.m.) as referenced in the email notification. However essential staff members were to report to duty at regular time. The issue was resolved by HR. Impacted employees were granted 2 hours Admin Leave. At

the last Executive team meeting with HR, it was discussed and the concern was highlighted to the University Admin to ensure that correspondences provide more clarity as to administrative leave, teleworking, and/or essential staff.

- The interviews for the Chief DEIO are ongoing. Staff Senators should have received invitations for forums with 4 candidates last week (Feb25 through Feb29). Committee meeting tomorrow to finalize everything
- Gregory Brightbill thanked senators that attended the interview forums. He said that attendees you should have a received a survey. Results from the survey will be used to select finalists. Gregory expressed his excitement in the position being filled. The successful candidate will begin June 2021.
- Sharese Essien asked if there was a reason for the start day to be in June.
- Gregory responded that the committee wanted to allow for flexibility and transition since most candidates were serving as DEIO at their respective institutions.

❖ **New Business (This item on the agenda was cancelled by unanimous consensus)**

- New Business – Break out Groups
  - What is the general consensus on work models for returning to campus? How can we advocate on behalf of staff members in implementing or exploring these future work models?
  - Are there any concerns regarding the Covid-19 vaccination and its impact on the return to campus?

❖ **Other Items**

- Gregory Brightbill informed the meeting the Diversity Advisory Council (DAC) is asking for feedback from the UMB community.
- Christina Fenwick confirmed with Gregory that the DAC committee decides on the date of MLK events. She noted the conflict between the MLK event and the Staff Senate meeting. Christina also noted that most of the UMB leadership could not attend the February Staff Senate meeting because of the conflict in schedule.
- Gregory promised to address the conflict with DAC.
- Taylor De Boer informed the meeting that the GRID is launching a student incubator program intended for students that are aspiring entrepreneurs. Students selected for the program will be paired with mentors that will guide them in achieving milestones in their careers. More information will be forthcoming.
- Sarah Hokenmaier informed the meeting that there were no new updates from the Funding Model Committee. She reminded the Staff Senate that it is expected that the next fiscal year will be challenging. She commented that leadership will be assessing ways in which to cut the budget without job loss etc. and suggested that those who would like to advocate for hybrid working models and maintaining telework should communicate how remote work saves money (Building energy bills, etc.).

- Christina Fenwick agreed and added that remote work saves on paper, ink and energy making it a valid consideration. She added that it has been speculated that the decision (telework/work models) will remain with the schools and supervisors. She commented that these ideas can be addressed with leadership at the town hall but senators should send concerns and recommendations to the executive team to bring to leadership at meetings.
- Gregory Brightbill agreed that many persons are hoping for continued flexibility and there need to be conversations regarding working models and building capacity rules post- Covid.

**Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn meeting by Lei Zhang; second by Ayamba Ayuk-Brown

**Minutes submitted by:** LaToya Lewis, Staff Senate Secretary

**Minutes approved:**

*\*Note: Due to modified UMB operations in response to COVID-19, the December Staff Senate Meeting was held via Zoom. The meeting was open to UMB staff members.*