



## DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

Student Affairs News for YOU: Reflection, Homecoming, LGBTQ+ History Month, Leading with Love  
Monday, October 9, 2023

Dear Colleague,

As I write to you today, I know that in times both calm and turbulent, your commitment and resilience shine through. I am thankful for the strength and compassion of our DSA team. In light of the [events of this weekend in the Middle East](#), I am also moved to pause and reflect on the devastating loss of innocent lives we witnessed. This conflict is deeply distressing, and very personal for many of our colleagues. I understand that a range of emotions in our community is evoked. Please continue to find ways to care for yourself and those around you. We are connected.

While this may feel insignificant given world events, creating community matters! It's the 100th anniversary of Homecoming at UMD. Show your spirit and all that it means to be a Terp. [So many activities are planned for this week!](#) Don't forget to show your Maryland pride and [wear your best UMD gear](#). Several Homecoming events are made possible by your great work! Thank you for continuing to create exciting programs that engage our community.

I also want to extend a huge congratulations to the Office of Family Engagement on last week's spectacular Family Weekend—[check out this beautiful synopsis](#) from Maryland Today! Much thanks to Brian Watkins and Danielle Walker of Family Engagement, and the entire planning committee, for a fun and purpose-filled weekend.

### **Celebrating LGBTQ+ History Month**

October is LGBTQ+ History Month, which we at UMD observe for the first time during this month with a new month-long event series, "[Love Me Tender, Love Me Queer](#)." Presented by the [Office of Multicultural Involvement & Community Advocacy \(MICA\)](#) in The Stamp, the series highlights the essential role of love and unity within the LGBTQ+ community. To emphasize the struggles and solidarity of LGBTQ+ communities, our annual Pride month activities will take place in October, rather than April. We are proud to join in this important commemoration that recognizes and honors the often-overlooked Queer histories that have shaped our society.

## **Understanding and Confronting Politicized Attacks on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) in Education**

DSA is co-sponsoring a powerful College of Education event that features national expert on racial equity, Dr. Shaun Harper. On Wednesday, October 25, Dr. Harper will lead a timely conversation on the challenges facing educators and institutions that promote DEI efforts, strategies for advancing equity work, and the importance of fostering an inclusive learning environment. This discussion is particularly important given the U.S. Supreme Court's recent decision to end race-conscious admissions. In our dynamic political climate, we must adapt our approach to making an inclusive future for all. Let's meet the moment! I hope you are able to attend this important event. [See the details and register](#). I will be there!

## **Investing in People and Our Communities** **Careers in Student Affairs Month**

Continue to invest in yourself this October with our Careers in Student Affairs Month activities! Our Interim Director of Staff Experience and Culture, Earl Cabellon, and other divisional colleagues have coordinated professional enrichment events for you and our student employees.

Encourage your student staff to attend the panel discussion, "Paths in Student Affairs," and join a fireside chat with divisional staff who left UMD and returned after gaining experience elsewhere. I also invite you to connect with your colleagues at the Professionals of Color Networking Social and Happy Hour Career Mixer. More details about these events, as well as RSVP forms are available on the [Student Affairs website](#).

## **Lifting Up Those Who Lead With Love and Care**

We often celebrate the good work that people do in their job responsibilities—as we should! I also know your kindness and care are the heart of our division. It is an honor to lift up those who demonstrate deep commitment to our community. Our Acorn Awards celebrate how our people have led with love. We applauded our Acorn Award winners at our DSA Town Hall last Wednesday, and we applaud them here, too.

### **Don Hardy, Resident Life**

The Resident Director for Carroll, Caroline, Wicomico, and Worcester Halls, Don seemed to receive the lion's share of complaints from students and families during the recent heatwave. He responded to all of them with radical empathy, flexibility, and a positive attitude. Students and families felt heard, knew someone cared for them, and were more open to the options Resident Life could provide. Don rallied his RAs and checked in on his students day and night. He even regularly stocked fridges with chilled water and freezer pops. Don has been a rockstar, and his care is evident and centered in his work!

### **Natalie Taylor and Stephanie Draminski, University Recreation & Wellness**

Natalie and Stephanie, along with former RecWell employee Amanda Preparato, were biking in Pennsylvania when they heroically saved the life of a stranger. They heard cries for help while biking along a river during a camping trip and discovered a young man in danger in the water. Without

hesitation, they executed a water rescue, pulling the man to safety just in the nick of time. This incident exemplifies their dedication to caring for others and going above and beyond to help their community.

### **Tracy Kiras, Resident Life**

In her role as Associate Director for Assignments, Communications, and Technology Services, Tracy often comes across students and families who are stuck and in a panic. They often need support and need someone to listen, and Tracy does this frequently and with care and grace. She recently went above and beyond to assist the parent of an incoming international student who was concerned about her student's transition to a country so far away. Tracy offered this parent options and ideas, and listened genuinely, authentically, and with compassion. This parent's response speaks for itself: "Tracy's touch leaves behind a long-lasting experience and memories and put UMD at a very special place in our stories."

### **Sarah Wilson, University Health Center**

Sarah's guiding philosophy at work is to meet campus needs on campus through creative, thoughtful and effective change. The Wags for Wellness program she created and coordinates has allowed over 2,000 students to bond with dogs for stress relief. Sarah also volunteered to join a national well-being learning community focused on survey-informed action steps. She does all of this work in service of our students' well-being and equity. Her role leading the Health Center's meditation efforts transcends all aspects of her life. To put it simply, Sarah cares.

May we all continue to lead with love, kindness and care as it will make this world a better place,

Patty Perillo, Ph.D.

Vice President for Student Affairs, University of Maryland

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### **Save the Dates**

- [Homecoming](#): Sunday, October 8 to Saturday, October 14
- [Terp Carnival](#): Friday, October 13, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m., McKeldin Mall
- [Understanding and Confronting Politicized Attacks on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Education](#): Wednesday, October 25, 5:30 p.m., The Hotel