

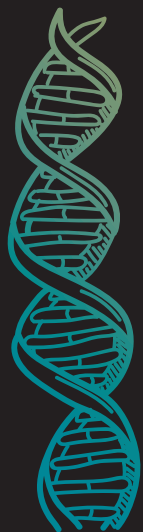
Fall 2021

UMBC

MAGAZINE



EMBRACING



Our JOY

EVEN IN UNCERTAIN TIMES,
RETRIEVERS' INNATE SENSE
OF WONDER, PLAY, AND
DISCOVERY KEEPS HOPE ALIVE.



36

UMBC After Dark

Life doesn't pause when classes end and the sun goes down. Instead, students grab a cup of coffee and find a million ways to follow their interests.

By UMBC staff and editorial intern team



TABLE OF CONTENTS



22

For the Love of Dirty Jobs

Making a difference in the world isn't always a neat endeavor. These Retrievers are finding immense joy in work that is sometimes smelly, usually dirty, and always requires an intrepid spirit.

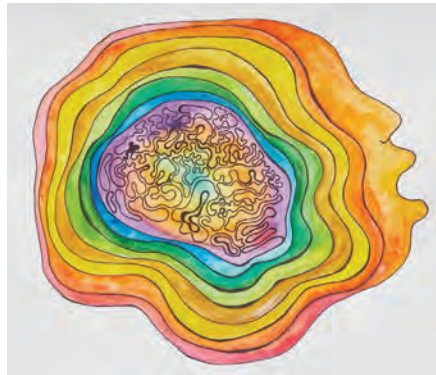
By Susan Hobby

30

Reframing the Question

What if the answer wasn't the goal? What if the joy was found in asking a better question? What can we learn about ourselves when we don't expect a ready-made answer to our questions?

By Randianne Leysbon '09



44

Game Changers

Learning and play can look a lot alike. Both call for creativity and resourcefulness, inspire curiosity, and require failure, reflection, and practice. That's why some Retrievers are combining the two.

By Kennedy Lamb '20

50

How To Chill Out

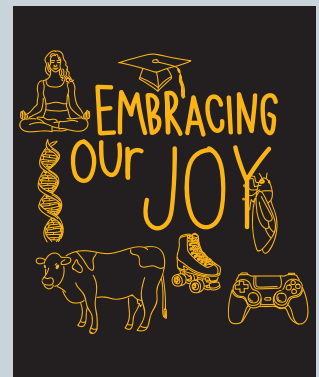
A great way to reconnect, relax, and recentre is through yoga. **Joella Lubaszewski '10, theatre**, has spent hundreds of hours getting certified so that she can teach you the art of finding your calm.

By Kait McCaffrey



DEPARTMENTS

TO YOU	2
UP ON THE ROOF	3
DAWG'S EYE VIEW	4
THE NEWS	6
AT PLAY	10
DISCOVERY	14
IMPACT	18
HOW TO	50
I SPY AT UMBC	52
CLASS NOTES	54
THEN & NOW	62
WILD CARD	64



ON THE COVER

Joy takes on many forms within our community—and we love it all!
Cover design by **Jim Lord '99**.

Visit *UMBC Magazine* online year-round at magazine.umbc.edu for plenty of web extras! Thoughts, complaints, or suggestions about *UMBC Magazine*? Get in touch at magazine@umbc.edu.

TO YOU



Dear Retrievers,

Walking to main campus late this summer, I came across a funny sight amid a gravel divider in a vacant Lot 22. Here sprouted the tendrils of a volunteer watermelon thrusting valiantly from beneath the shade of a metal trash can, a tiny spring green bulb thirsty for water and sunlight.

Like so many of us emerging from these darkest of years, I smiled at this moment of joy and the little fellow trying its best to make the most of its situation.

Around the same time, I shared in a state-wide reading of this year's One Maryland One Book, *The Book of Delights* by the poet Ross Gay. Through a series of daily essays written over the course of a difficult year, Gay pulls joy from unexpected places, finding poetry in the mundane, and light in the darkness. To read it felt like a gift, just as the secret watermelon had.

Joy can take many forms. Sometimes it's the mind-blowing rush of wonder or childlike play. It can be the energy of a connection to our senses, like the smell of rain on dirt. It can rise up through accomplishment, growth, and the connections nurtured even—especially—during difficult moments. Here at UMBC, we experience so many of these moments together.

This special issue of *UMBC Magazine* is our attempt to deliver some much-needed moments of joy directly to you. We've spoken with people who derive happiness from the grit of their work (page 22), and we've explored the joys of a campus that never sleeps (page 36). We've reveled at the thought of questions so big, they might never be answered (page 30). And we've sprinkled in some fun and silly bits that will, hopefully, bring you a smile. (Or, at least, some #FutureRetrievers out there.)

We've come through a lot together, and the darkness has, at times, seemed to drown out the light. But, we can't help but try to open the drapes a little. We can find joy in who we are and how we do what we do. And even when our little watermelon inevitably disappears—a snack for a hungry passing deer, I'm hoping—we know that our lives are all the richer for having noticed its presence.

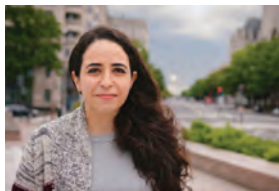
—Jenny O'Grady
Editor, UMBC Magazine

WEB FEATURES

See web-only videos, interviews, and more all year long at magazine.umbc.edu.



Photo Essay: Celebrating
Campus Sustainers



Alumni Video Profile:
Organizing for Civic Change



Keep an Eye Out: The College
Tour is Coming This Spring!

OUR STAFF

Editor

Jenny O'Grady

Design Director

Jim Lord '99

Assistant Editor

Randianne Leyshon '09

News Editor

Dinah Winnick

Photographer

Marlayna Demond '11

Video Producer

Corey Jennings '10

Production Coordinator

Emily Macenko

Design Team

Jill Blum

Marissa Clayton '21

Sadaf Rehman '19

Editorial Advisory Group

Jill Blum

Catalina So a Dansberger Duque

Marlayna Demond '11

Randianne Leyshon '09

Jim Lord '99

Stanyell Odom

Jenny O'Grady

Dinah Winnick

Contributors

Catalina So a Dansberger Duque

Anjali DasSarma '21

Adriana Fraser

Susan Hobby

Sarah Hansen, M.S. '15

Kennedy Lamb '20

Charis Lawson '20

Cassie Le '18

Steve Levy '85

Megan Hanks Mastrola

Kait McCaffrey

Michelle Rudman

Karen Stysley

Tsai-Ann Yawching

Editorial Interns

Anna Lee '22

Eric Widemann '21

Founding Editor

Richard Byrne '86

Administration

Greg Simmons, M.P.P. '04

Vice President, Institutional Advancement

Lisa Akchin

Associate Vice President, Engagement

Stacey Sickels Locke

Associate Vice President,
Alumni Engagement and Development

For more information on the Alumni
Association, visit alumni.umbc.edu. To
learn about giving, visit giving.umbc.edu.

UP ON THE ROOF



Late this summer, President Freeman Hrabowski announced that he will be retiring from UMBC at the end of this academic year after a career that has included more than 30 years at UMBC. We sat down to talk about moments of joy he has experienced in his penultimate semester and why he's so very excited about the future of UMBC.

UMBC Magazine: *I've been thinking a lot about what life must have been like for you since you made your big announcement. In the days and weeks that followed, what has brought you joy?*

Freeman Hrabowski: Well, it has been this spirit of love that is all around us. You may recall that in one of my opening speeches on campus, right after announcing, I talked about the idea that UMBC is “the house that love built,” which is inspired by the Ronald McDonald House. And that thought has really resonated with people—from alumni to faculty and staff, to our students. People believe in the UMBC way, and that means an emphasis on grit and resilience. It means supporting each other, having compassion, academic excellence, and really being grateful to be a part of such a healthy community. And that's the part that's given me such joy.

People from around the country have been writing and saying, “Wow, what is the magic sauce, that secret sauce at UMBC?” The truth is that when you talk to people who work here, they love it. You talk to our alumni, and they're so proud to be from our institution. So, when

they ask, “What is the secret sauce?” I say, “We have really good people here. We care about each other. We love ideas. We love working with people in the communities. We're proud of our alumni.”

And to see just how supportive people are is just wonderful... and at this past Homecoming taking photos with the children of alumni, I was just surprised by it all. I didn't think I could ever be surprised, but at Homecoming when we took the big community photo, and you've got all those folks on the library steps and they're all applauding—well, I wasn't ready for it. I was getting a little emotional. But it was so special. And that's what I've been feeling since announcing.

UMBC Magazine: *Thinking ahead, what are you hoping that alumni and our community will be keeping top of mind as we travel into the spring and the transition ahead?*

I didn't think I could ever be surprised, but at Homecoming when we took the big community photo, and you've got all those folks on the library steps and they're all applauding—well, I wasn't ready for it. I was getting a little emotional.

Hrabowski: It is the idea that this is not a story about one person. It is about all of us and the alumni who helped build the foundation; UMBC really belongs to the alumni. And it's about how proud we are as faculty and staff, administrators, and students to be here at this moment. For all of us, it is about caring about this university, this house that love built.

You know people always say, “What's going to happen to UMBC?” And I'm saying, “UMBC is going to continue to get better and better and better because we've laid a great foundation... People have been so amazingly supportive of me for the past 30 years, and the other five when I was here before that, that everybody knows a new president will be given a chance to thrive and to help the university go to the next level. And she will be fantastic. I've been saying that to people putting that idea in the universe. We'll see. We don't know who that person will be. There are many people in leadership positions interested in the presidency of UMBC because the university is one of the most talked about and admired institutions in the country, and I leave it in really good shape. I feel so good about that.

And so this transition will be one where we're shedding light on what's important and our shared values...the emphasis on people, loving ideas, the importance of grit, and most important—believing in ourselves. We are UMBC.

Learn more about the Presidential Search Process at president.umbc.edu.

DAWG'S EYE VIEW



RETRO-TRIEVER

Designed by former *MAD Magazine* artist Jack Davis, UMBC's "Running Dog" logo from the 1979 – 1992 time frame, has a new home in the Chesapeake Employers Insurance Arena. Created from old flooring from the RAC, the new installation celebrates the multiple championships won on those boards.



EYE FOUND YOU

Our eyes were drawn to the extremely rare white eyed cicada found by **David Hoffman, Ph.D. '13, language, literacy, and culture.** While rumors of a cash prize for rare non-red-eyed cicadas turned out to be false, its unique appearance makes for a striking picture.



HOP, JUMP, SKIP TO TOKYO

Aboshioma Obemeata '14, visual arts, spent the summer in Tokyo for the Olympics as a coordinator for USA Track & Field. During his time at UMBC, Obemeata was a two-time conference champion in the triple jump.



TRUCKLOAD OF CAFFEINE

Tired of standing in line for coffee in the UC? UMBC Dining has a tasty permanent new fixture in parking lot 8 across from the Performing Arts and Humanities Building. The Starbucks truck will meet all your hot drink needs in the cold months to come.





WELCOME HOME, RETRIEVERS

Nothing is sweeter than a Homecoming that truly feels like coming home. And after a year's hiatus, Retrievers streamed onto campus in early October, with family and friends in tow. Eager to reconnect with each other and campus, alumni, students, and friends took part in carnival games, rides, and food trucks—with everything pausing for one of the most anticipated moments of every Homecoming: the puppy parade.



SPOTTED IN THE MAYOR'S OFFICE

Baltimore City Mayor Brandon Scott honored **Felipe Filomeno** (left) with a 2021 Hispanic Heritage Award for his active role in the community. Scott says that Filomeno, associate director of UMBC's Center for Social Science Scholarship and associate professor of political science and global studies, leads through his strong commitment to making Baltimore a better place for all.



FAMILY MATTERS

We love to see it when students and alumni bring their #FutureRetrievers to campus. The class of 2041 is getting an early start with campus visits, well prepared with a backpack and an adventuring spirit.



ANOTHER AMERICA EAST TITLE? WE DIG IT.

"That 🏆 feeling never gets old! We're on to NCAAAs!" — Brian Barrio, UMBC Athletics Director. Congrats to our volleyball team for clinching the America East championship for the second year in a row!



WHAT'S YOUR VIEW?



Share your Retriever perspective on social media using the hashtag #dawgseyeview, and your image could be included in a future issue of *UMBC Magazine*!

THE NEWS

Reenvisioning Earth Science



NASA has announced a major award of \$72 million over three years for the new Goddard Earth Sciences Technology and Research (GESTAR) II center. UMBC serves as the lead for the national consortium and will receive over \$38 million. Morgan State University serves as the primary partner, and other universities, organizations, and companies will also collaborate through the center.

“This award is a massive win for UMBC, for the University System, and—with Morgan State as a key partner—for Maryland as a whole,” says **Jay Perman**, chancellor of the University System of Maryland.

The GESTAR II consortium will support over 120 researchers, creating extensive opportunities for breakthroughs in earth and atmospheric science research. Participants will carry out observational, experimental, and theoretical research in support of NASA’s strategic earth science mission objectives. The

large scale of this work will also enable students at all levels to contribute to the research.

“I am absolutely delighted that this new cooperative GESTAR II award will further strengthen and expand the mutually beneficial partnership between NASA Goddard and UMBC, which was first launched a quarter-century ago,” says **Karl Steiner**, UMBC’s vice president for research.

Morgan brings more than a decade of experience working with NASA,” adds Willie E. May, vice president for research and economic development at Morgan State. “We are very excited about what this partnership will mean for our students—more exposure, new educational pursuits, and access to longer-term employment opportunities.

Like UMBC’s Joint Center for Earth Systems Technology (JCET), GESTAR II will create opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to conduct research with and

be mentored by NASA scientists and engineers. Some of these researchers might also teach courses or offer workshops to students from participating institutions.

This fall, funding for JCET will sunset after two-and-a-half highly productive decades. The new GESTAR II award will enable ongoing projects to continue while also creating opportunities for expansion under a new structure. **Belay Demoz**, professor of physics, has led JCET since 2014 and will transition to leading GESTAR II.

Bringing together students and researchers from UMBC, Morgan State, NASA, and other institutions creates the opportunity for innovation and major advances in earth science. It also creates a pipeline of students from a wide range of backgrounds who are prepared to pursue careers at NASA and elsewhere, using the skills they’ve gained through learning from and with NASA team members.

“GESTAR II embodies UMBC’s collaborative, multidisciplinary approach to research and highlights the importance of research partnerships,” says **Bill LaCourse**, dean of UMBC’s College of Natural and Mathematical Sciences. “Only through inclusive excellence, which GESTAR II exemplifies, can we hope to unravel the mysteries of the universe and understand the world around us.”

Read more at news.umbc.edu.

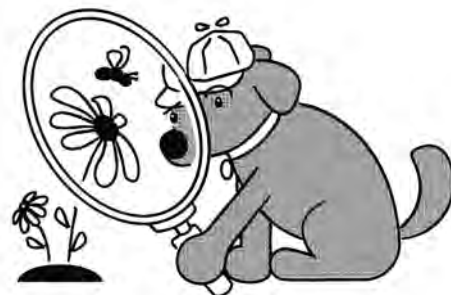
— Sarah Hansen, M.S. '15

Photo: UMBC and Morgan State colleagues gather to celebrate the new GESTAR II award outside UMBC’s Interdisciplinary Life Sciences Building. From left to right: Willie E. May, Daniel Laughlin, David K. Wilson, Margo Young, Freeman A. Hrabowski, Belay Demoz, Karl V. Steiner. Photo by Marlayna Demond '11 for UMBC.

A DETECTIVE CHIP ADVENTURE



HEY, CHIP!
WHAT'S WITH
THE GETUP?



Investing in Tomorrow's Leaders



The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has granted UMBC, Morgan State University, and the University of Maryland, College Park (UMD) \$3 million to launch Breaking the M.O.L.D. (Mellon/Maryland Opportunities for Leadership Development). This program will develop a pipeline to higher ed leadership for scholars in the arts and humanities. It will focus on interested faculty members at the rank of associate and full professor, particularly women faculty and Black, Hispanic, and American Indian/Alaskan Native faculty.

Many existing faculty leadership programs in higher education focus on leadership in STEM fields, rather than the arts and humanities, the organizers note. Breaking the M.O.L.D. is also unique in its design with six women in senior leadership serving as principal investigators (PI), five of whom are Black. UMBC's **Kimberly Moffitt**, interim dean of UMBC's College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences

(CAHSS) and professor of language, literacy, and culture, serves as the project's lead PI. Joining her in leading UMBC's implementation of the program will be **Patrice McDermott**, vice provost for faculty affairs.

"The many health, social justice, economic, and political challenges facing our society today place important demands on higher education institutions," says Moffitt. She points out that colleges and universities must shift how they approach engaging with societal problems, which often means reflecting on how higher ed itself works.

As a minority-serving institution (MSI), Historically Black College and University (HBCU), and a predominantly white institution (PWI), respectively, UMBC, Morgan State, and UMD are uniquely positioned to collaboratively lead this charge.

This ambitious project will include two cohorts of faculty—associate and full professors—

guided by senior faculty over a three-year period. Participants will engage in skill-building seminars, learn key leadership skills from experts who hold senior leadership positions at the three universities, and take part in leadership experiences with their faculty mentors. The cohorts will travel to each campus to gain insights on how MSIs, HBCUs, and PWIs create different pathways to senior leadership.

This work builds on the success of previous initiatives, such as UMBC's Postdoctoral Fellows for Faculty Diversity program. That program has brought 20 talented postdoctoral fellows to UMBC and provides extensive mentoring and other support to enable postdocs to transition to faculty positions. Seventeen have already done so, including 11 at UMBC.

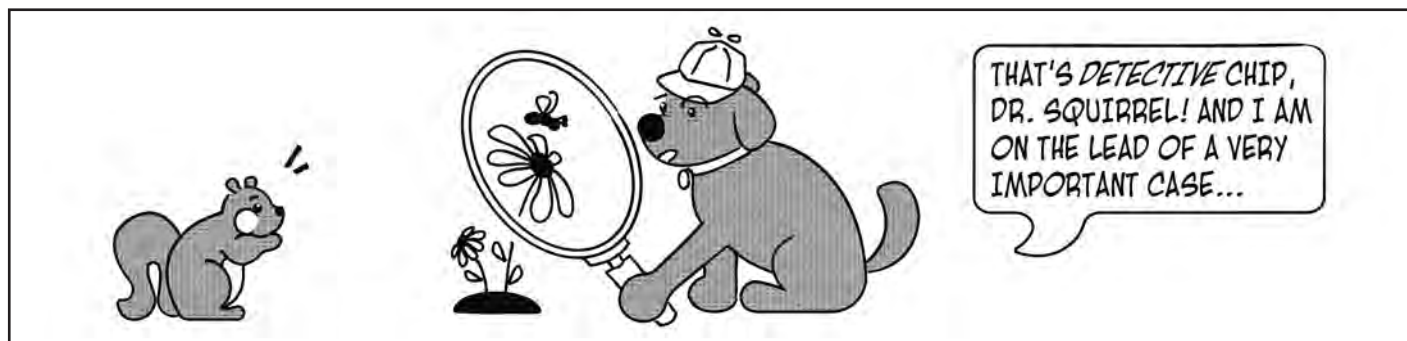
CAHSS faculty includes dozens of scholars who identify as Black, Hispanic, American Indian or Alaska Native, but only 10 hold the title of full professor. And just a handful serve in leadership positions, such as department chair or roles in the dean's or provost's office. While women are well represented among CAHSS faculty, most women in CAHSS are associate professors.

"Universities and colleges are at a crossroad to reimagine academia by cultivating diverse leaders with important leadership skills, such as imagination, compassion, and understanding," says Moffitt. "These new leaders will become the next generation of stewards leading innovation in teaching and scholarship and reshaping university structures to go beyond the status quo."

Read more at news.umbc.edu.

— Catalina Sofia Dansberger Duque

Left to right: CAHSS faculty Camee Maddox-Wingfield, Keisha Allen, Interim Dean Kimberly Moffitt, and Emily Yoon Perez.



THE NEWS

Toward Even Greater Heights

Provost **Philip Rous** shared an emotional moment with the UMBC community as he took to the stage at the university's August Fall Opening Meeting, just a day after UMBC President **Freeman Hrabowski** announced he will retire in June 2022. Rous shared a message he's been hearing from across Retriever Nation, one of gratitude and hope.

"Each of us holds in our hands the legacy of Freeman's leadership and that of all members of our community who have built it into what it is today. But as Freeman often says, 'success is never final,' so that legacy is not static, it's dynamic," Rous told the group.

"It's forward-looking and it belongs to all of us," he said, noting that our community's strong foundation of shared values will allow us to continue the "important work of building and advancing this remarkable university to even greater heights."

In October, University System of Maryland Chancellor **Jay A. Perman** visited campus with Regent **Michelle Gourdine**, a UMBC parent who is leading the search for UMBC's sixth president, for a community town hall to kick off the process. A committee representative of university stakeholders—including alumni, students, faculty, and staff—was appointed soon after to take on the search, expected to culminate in mid-spring with the assistance of national search firm Isaacson, Miller.

Throughout the fall semester, Hrabowski shared moments of celebration with the community. At Homecoming, he posed with more than 150 people in front of the Albin O. Kuhn Library to recreate a similar photo taken of him when he first became president in 1992. This

spring, alumni can expect to hear about more moments to connect with the outgoing president.

At the Fall Opening Meeting, Hrabowski thanked the community for their support and encouraged them to think about how to carry on the important mission and values of UMBC.

"Here is my message—this is the house that love has built," said Hrabowski, following a huge standing ovation in the RAC. "We show the world that we can transform lives through education."

Learn more about the presidential search and share a message with President Hrabowski at president.umbc.edu.

—Jenny O'Grady

The members of the presidential search committee are:

Michelle Gourdine, Search Committee Chair—Regent, University System of Maryland

Brian Barrio—Director of Athletics

Lee Blaney—Associate Professor, Chemical, Biochemical, and Environmental Engineering

Belay Demoz—Director, Joint Center for Earth Systems Technology

Kathy Dettloff—Associate Vice President, Administration and Finance

Mehrshad Fahim Devin '21—President, Student Government Association

Ellen Fish—Regent, University System of Maryland

Patricia Florestano—Former USM regent and Former Secretary, Maryland Higher Education Commission

Brian Frazee '11, '12—President, Alumni Association Board, Vice President, Government Affairs for the Maryland Hospital Association

Beatriz Gutierrez-Malagon—Co-Secretary, Professional Staff Senate, Coordinator for Leadership, Campus Life

Preminda Jacob—Associate Dean, College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences

William LaCourse—Dean, College of Natural and Mathematical Sciences

Carole McCann—Professor and Chair, Gender, Women's, and Sexuality Studies

Yvette Mozie-Ross '88—Vice Provost, Office of Enrollment Management and Planning

Sarah Shin—Associate Provost, Office of Academic Affairs

Orianne Smith—President, Faculty Senate, Associate Professor, English

Joel Tyson '18—President, Graduate Student Association

Shelly Wiechelt—Associate Dean and Chair, Department of Social Work

Melody Wright, '21—President, Nonexempt Staff Senate, Academic Business Services Specialist, Biological Sciences





AT PLAY

Finding Your Voice in Fanfiction



Your favorite heroes are joining forces to fight Thanos in *Avengers: Endgame*. Suddenly, you watch as one by one, they are dropped off on Sesame Street in New York City. You're seeing the story unfold on the page because you're creating a merged universe as an exercise to enhance your English language skills. What will happen next? Only you know.

This interplay of fanfiction in language learning and instruction is what **Shannon Sauro**, associate professor of education and faculty member in the Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) program at UMBC, strives to showcase in her reading and writing courses.

As Sauro explains, quoting fan studies scholar Mark Duffett, a fan is “someone who has a strong, positive emotional connection to someone or something famous.” Her students

come from different backgrounds with these connections under their belt, which makes it easier for them to form an emotional bond to the work as it unfolds. This ultimately helps them gain new language skills.

Prior to moving to the U.S., Sauro lived and taught in Sweden, where she noticed that many students used fanfiction to develop their English language skills recreationally. “We can see different cultural attitudes around fiction writing, and I found this refreshing in Sweden because in the Swedish national curriculum, they emphasize the learning of foreign languages not just for work,” shares Sauro, “but also pleasure.”

Language-learning classes in the U.S. often stress the importance of reading and analyzing canonical texts to hone skills. But fanfiction allows students to play around with

literary tropes, dialogue, plot, and character development—all within the context of their favorite fandom. **BB Kim '23**, a TESOL graduate student, would have never guessed that she'd be writing about the Disney film *Frozen* for a high-level reading and writing course.

Kim began to see the potential of fanfiction only after she finished writing her take on *Frozen*. With a single click, she published her story on a website for a real audience to read and leave comments on (imagine if Elsa embraced her powers from the start instead of hiding them away!).

“I feel like it was a nice brain break from taking classes that are more theory-based,” says Kim, adding that Sauro's teaching style has served as a model for how she conducts her own classes.

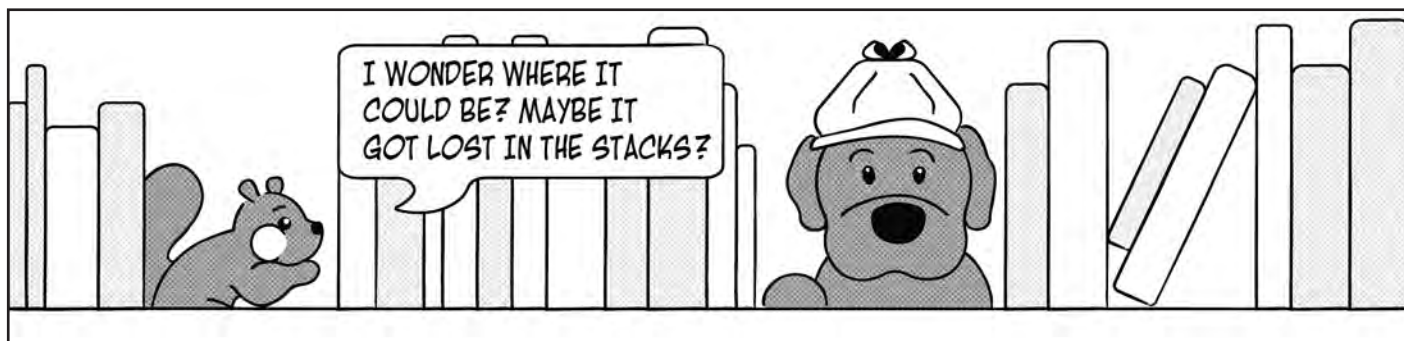
“By inviting students to either play with the text, transform it, put themselves in it, or merge it with something they actually like, it gets them more engaged and involved with the text,” says Sauro.

What Sauro hopes for her students, in addition to increased language skills, is to recognize how they can write themselves into a text to express their experiences.

“Often when working with language learners, you can see that there are certain texts that get selected as a canon, but they don't represent all the lived experiences in the classroom,” says Sauro. “And fanfiction is a way to give students a voice to talk back to that text, to correct that text, and to write themselves into the canon, into the literature, and into the media that their society or their classrooms celebrate and value.”

— Anna Lee '22

Photo: Sauro connects with a student in her office.



First-Year Retrievers Buck the Trend

Cameron Hindle finished 22nd of 92 cross country runners in the America East Championships. **Lauren Reid** played nearly every minute in all 17 soccer games as a central fullback. **Hayden Lim** scored the game-winning soccer goal to clinch a playoff spot.

What do these UMBC student-athletes have in common? They are all first-year students at UMBC, after COVID-19 curtailed their senior year of high school.

Since the NCAA allowed all student-athletes enrolled in the spring of 2020 and the fall and winter of 2020 – 2021 to earn an extra year of eligibility, fifth-year seniors and graduate students are dominating most NCAA Division I intercollegiate rosters. But at UMBC, this trio of student-athletes are among many first-year Retrievers who are contributing to their teams' success.

Only two other America East first years outpaced Hindle in cool, muddy conditions on the New Hampshire course on October 29. Moreover, the Elliott City native's UMBC classmate, **Ayalew Fantaw '24, information systems**, was the second Retriever to cross the finish line.

As a member of the women's soccer team, Reid was one of seven first-year students that started at least six times and one of 14 first-year players on the roster. The Retrievers earned as many "results" (eight, with five wins and three draws) as they have since 2015. Reid came to UMBC from Denver, Colorado, and credits her new #RetrieverNation family for her early success.

"Each and every single one of the players on the team pushes you to be the best version of yourself that you can be whether playing or

going through life," said Reid. "The coaches are also a huge part of my success this semester. They provide constant support, checking in on school, food, mental health, etc. In every part of life, they are making sure that we're okay."

"The 14 young women from the class of 2025 have not only been able to complement our returners but have also been able to start to lay down the initial steps of what their legacy will be here at UMBC," said fourth-year women's soccer Head Coach **Vanessa Mann**. "We are incredibly optimistic about where we are headed and feel now like this really was our true 'year-one' in terms of moving the program forward."

The nationally ranked New Hampshire men's soccer team faced UMBC on October 23 with 10 graduate students on their active roster and barely escaped Retriever Soccer Park with a 1-0 victory. Six days later, Lim and the Retrievers faced a must-win game at NJIT, a team which featured the nation's top active goal-scorer. UMBC fell behind, 2-0, but rallied with three second-half goals, including Lim's game-winner with 17 minutes remaining, to clinch a playoff berth.

"I believe that some of my success started with the attitude of knowing I am younger but still wanting to make an impact to help the team any way I can," said Lim. "I have gained a lot of confidence by having good chemistry with the team on and off the field and also knowing the trust coaches had in me in high-stakes moments. This has and will continue to make my first semester here a memorable one and I can't wait to keep going."

— Steve Levy '85



Cameron Hindle at the 2021 America East Conference Cross Country Championship meet finished in Durham, NH, on Oct. 29. Photo courtesy of America East Conference

Athletics Highlights

The Retriever volleyball team won the America East regular season championship for the second consecutive year.

So far this season, men's soccer has scored 32 goals through 18 games, their highest total since 2014.

Juliana Rafaniello '23, media and communication studies, led the women's soccer team with six goals and earned a spot on the league's All-Academic team.

Both cross country squads placed seventh in the America East Championships.

Visit umbcretrievers.com to see the latest results.



AT PLAY

Retriever Nation Meets Bachelor Nation

At first glance, Justin Glaze '16 seems like the quintessential UMBC alum—a graduate in business technology administration with a minor in fine arts, a track and field athlete who went on to work at T. Rowe Price. But if he looks a little more familiar than most Retrievers, it's probably because you've seen so many of his facial expressions as the runner-up on the latest season of ABC's The Bachelorette.

UMBC Magazine: *So, you were the runner-up on the most recent season of The Bachelorette. How'd that happen?*

Justin Glaze: In November 2020, I was single as a Pringle. It just so happened to be [an episode with] an art group date, and I was like, "I feel like I'd crush this." I filled out the application during a commercial break and less than a week later, I got an email from a casting producer from ABC.

UMBC Magazine: *How did your time at UMBC prepare you for this experience?*

Justin Glaze: At UMBC I learned about creating a strong social circle and staying true to myself. Being a student-athlete at UMBC, you're all joined together through the unity of sports and the togetherness of cheering for each other. And as long as you know who you are, you have a strong support system who knows who you are, that's what's most important.

UMBC Magazine: *Why does UMBC feel like a special place to you?*

Justin Glaze: At a meet-and-greet my freshman year with Dr. Hrabowski, I introduced myself. To no one's surprise, he was super friendly. I told him my thoughts about transferring to architecture school, and he was like, "Okay, well, how about at

the end of the semester, shoot me an email, we'll set some time up, and we'll figure something out." Long story short, I ended up meeting with him and to this day, he's been probably one of my biggest mentors.

UMBC Magazine: *What's your fondest memory with President Hrabowski?*

Justin Glaze: Every time I met with him, he served me a big slice of humble pie. He gives me that tough love that I need, and that's what I love about him. I have to say, it's also pretty cool that he's commissioned a few pieces of my art to hang in his house.

UMBC Magazine: *Wait, what? Tell us more.*

Justin Glaze: I was definitely nervous, because for all my art clients, I want to give my best, but especially him—after all he's done for me—I wanted to give my best work. I was very grateful that he had the trust in me to create some artwork for some special people in his family.

UMBC Magazine: *How have you been managing the return to normal life after you came back from the show?*

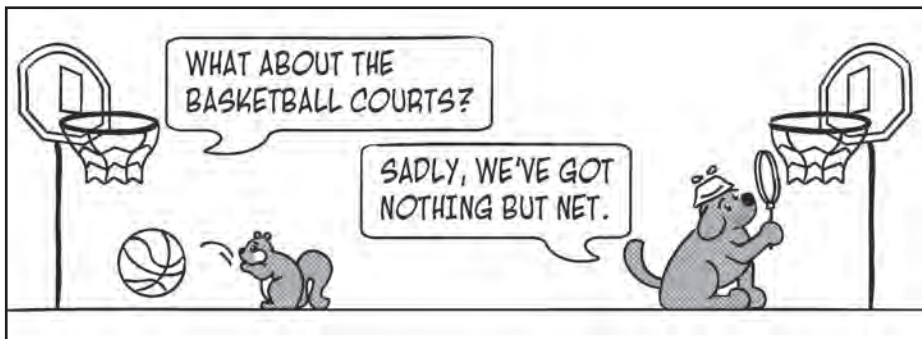
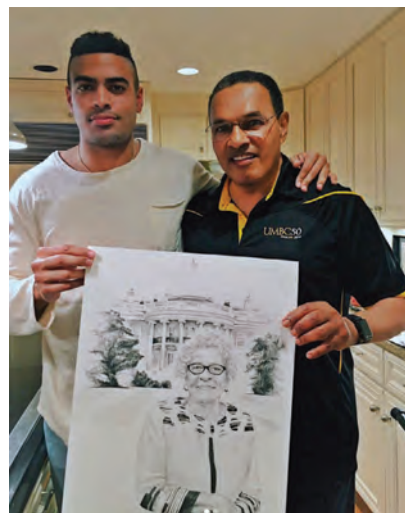
Justin Glaze: I was a bit naïve as to what it would be like. The biggest thing is just coming to grips with people's expectations of you. It's been tough trying to find that balance of staying true to who you are but also knowing that being true to who you are can be perceived in so many different ways.

UMBC Magazine: *If you had the chance to do it all over again, would you?*

Justin Glaze: Without hesitation. The good, the bad. All of it. 100%.

— Tsai-Ann Yawching

Inset: Glaze shares a drawing he made for Dr. Hrabowski. Provided by @justinglaze. Main photo: by Corey Jennings '10.





DISCOVERY

When Real-World Problems Drive the Work



Natural disasters leave layers of industrial and economic damage in their wake—not to mention loss of life. In order to better combat the next unforeseen event, data is collected immediately after floods, hurricanes, and other weather-related tragedies. But when **Maryam Rahnemoonfar**, associate professor of information systems, was in graduate school, she had to cull through this data manually. Eager to combine her interests in civil engineering, remote sensing, and computer science in a meaningful way, Rahnemoonfar began developing an algorithm that could automatically assess and understand the post-disaster data.

Along with her colleagues, Rahnemoonfar began working with the Humanitarian Robotics and Artificial Intelligence (AI) Laboratory at Texas A&M University, where she was faculty before coming to UMBC. Rahnemoonfar

explains that various types of robots, including unpiloted aerial vehicles and robots on the ground and on water, are used to collect data.

“But the data collected is not AI-ready,” Rahnemoonfar explains, noting that in order to make the data about natural disasters more useful, it needs to be annotated and trained. So the next step, she says, is to develop an AI and machine learning algorithm to assess the images collected by the robots. However, the images collected were not of easily identifiable objects, says Rahnemoonfar, so it took more time to develop algorithms that could distinguish a damaged building from a washed-out road, for example.

By applying AI and machine learning techniques to the data collected, people can thoroughly assess damage and issues that need to be addressed, such as flooding, destroyed buildings, or to detect debris.

Over time, Rahnemoonfar worked with collaborators to develop the first high-level data set, called FloodNet. As a publicly available data set, it drew the attention of people around the world who were interested in using FloodNet in their cities and towns.

“For me, it’s important to know that the research I do has value and impacts the communities after natural disasters,” Rahnemoonfar says.

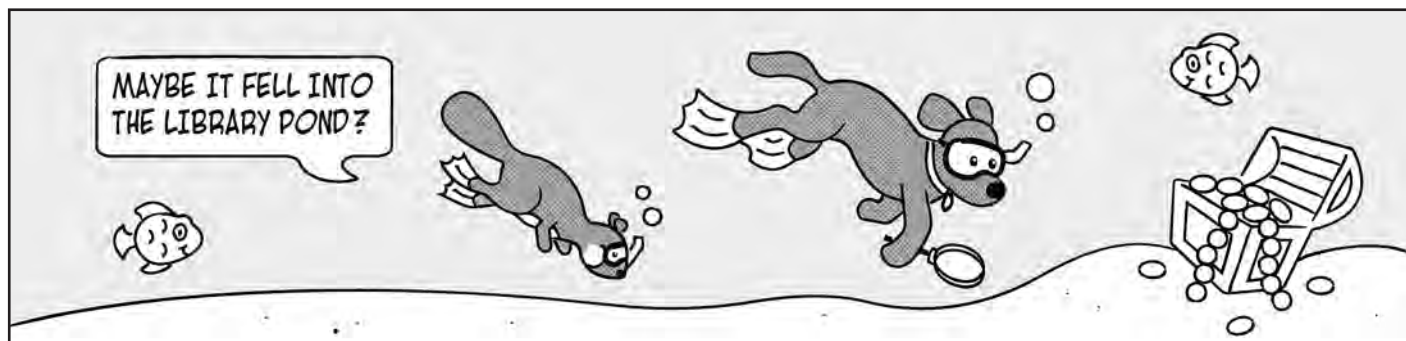
Rahnemoonfar’s commitment to helping communities recently expanded when she received a significant grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF), which allows her to make a bigger impact around the world. In September 2021, NSF announced the launch of the HDR Institute for Harnessing Data and Model Revolution in the Polar Regions (iHARP), which Rahnemoonfar is leading as the principal investigator. She and her collaborators will develop novel machine learning and AI algorithms and tools to analyze enormous volumes of climate data, along with Arctic and Antarctic observations, in ways that could help populations prepare for and respond to climate change risks.

“We are the first data science and machine learning institute in the world that is dedicated to research in polar regions,” she says, “but this comes with huge responsibility.”

The results of this work will inform policymaking to address national and global priorities related to the climate crisis, explains Rahnemoonfar. She foresees that students working on the project will become the next generation of experts addressing these global issues.

— Megan Hanks Mastrola

Read more at magazine.umbc.edu/climate-focused-data



New Book Explores Emerging Ed-Tech Trends



COVID-19 has fast-forwarded tech innovation, propelling millions of people to shift, nearly overnight, to virtual learning, remote work, and online healthcare. **Patricia Young's** new book, *Human Specialization in Design and Technology: The Current Wave for Learning, Culture, Industry, and Beyond*, traces moments in history that have sparked or dampened innovation in instructional design and technology across industries.

Young, an associate professor of education at UMBC, examines the impact of those innovations on our current political, social, health, economic, and educational climate. She also provides insight on how to move forward more effectively, particularly in the education space.

"COVID has already changed the way we think and approach technology innovation," says Young. "These are reasons why educational technologies and technology-enhanced learning must keep pace

with trends in design and technology."

Young's work over the last 17 years at UMBC has centered around innovation in instructional technology. Her research integrates her background in media and communications with education to study culture-specific information and communication technologies.

"At the same time we are encouraging diverse students to learn, we are also saying, through technology, 'Your culture and the knowledge that you bring into the classroom is not valid here. There is only one way to learn this skill,'" says Young. "Innovative technology for a socially just world is a critical need in this time in history."

This year, Young has been promoted to full professor and named the special assistant for strategy and innovation in the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences (CAHSS). In this role, she is working with CAHSS Interim Dean Kimberly Moffitt, faculty, and staff to design and implement *Looking in the Mirror*, a year-long faculty-led discussion series focused on strengthening community.

"Patricia will work with me to cultivate a return to a more inclusive community that shows continued progress from the campus we left in March 2020, when COVID required us to shift to remote learning," shares Moffitt. "I'm excited about her expertise and willingness to guide us through programmatic initiatives, such as *Looking in the Mirror*."

After two decades of researching the process of innovation, Young is excited for her new role. "Sometimes we are so focused on what is that we can't innovate past today," says Young. "We have to engage everyone for who they are as a whole, not just as an end-user.

Leading the Conversation

Patricia Young also wrote about her new book in *The Conversation*, a nonprofit, independent news organization that publishes articles by academic experts for the general public. The articles are frequently republished in national and international news outlets. Since 2015, UMBC faculty have published more than 215 *Conversation* articles that have garnered almost 10 million reads.

Three popular articles of the past year include:

- "How females from some species can reproduce without males" by **Mercedes Burns**, assistant professor, biological sciences
- "How engineering can contribute to a reimagining of the U.S. public health system" by **Woodrow W. Winchester III**, graduate program director, professional engineering programs
- "Over-the-counter rapid antigen tests can help slow the spread of COVID-19" by **Zoë McLaren**, associate professor, public policy

Read more UMBC articles from *The Conversation* at magazine.umbc.edu/tag/the-conversation.

COVID has shown us that collaborative problem-solving is the only way to create a future where inclusion, access, and equity are the norm from which we innovate."

— *Catalina Sofia Dansberger Duque*



DISCOVERY

Paving the Way in Python-Tracking

Professor **Jennifer Hewitt '18, physics**, didn't know her casual interest in reptiles would lead to a one-of-a-kind study that helps snake hunters track down Burmese pythons in the Florida Everglades.

Hewitt, a doctoral candidate at the University of Central Florida (UCF), and fellow researchers at The College of Optics and Photonics, are using near-infrared (NIR) cameras to detect and identify Burmese pythons. The snakes, which can reach up to 26 feet in length and 200 pounds, have threatened native species in the Everglades since first introduced into the region in the 1990s by irresponsible exotic pet owners and breeders. Previous studies have shown pythons have caused a drop in the number of common native species—such as raccoons, opossums, and rabbits—by more than 90 percent.

Hewitt led the python-tracking study, which was published in *Applied Optics* this year. Her work is paving the way in decreasing the pesky python problem in the Everglades while further advancing optics research and system design.

The Maryland native joined the project to build on work already being done in analyzing the spectral reflectivity characterizations of pythons—which would then allow the NIR camera to effectively circumvent the python's natural camouflage.

"We went to a local zoo and took spectral measurements of the [snake] hide so that we could take a look at their reflectivity," said Hewitt. "We compared that to similar spectral measurements of plant life that are local to the region. We noticed that there is a pretty good contrast between the pythons and the background in the NIR starting at around 750 nanometers and longer." At lower ranges, said Hewitt, there's little visible difference between python and plant.

Hewitt collected images of pythons in locations with different background scenery. She then conducted a human perception test on volunteers to evaluate the effectiveness of the system she developed. The study's results showed that the enhanced contrast from the NIR enabled participants to detect pythons at 20 percent longer ranges than through the use of visible imagery, comparable to the naked eye.

As an undergrad, Hewitt impressed **Eileen Meyer** when working in her physics lab studying black hole imaging and the structure of jets emitted from the black holes. "She wrote the most beautiful lab reports I ever saw in the course. After she joined the research group, Hewitt very quickly mastered the 'art' of analyzing astronomy images made at radio wavelengths," said Meyer, associate professor of physics and Hewitt's advisor. "She made so many useful images for our archive that we still regularly use them today."

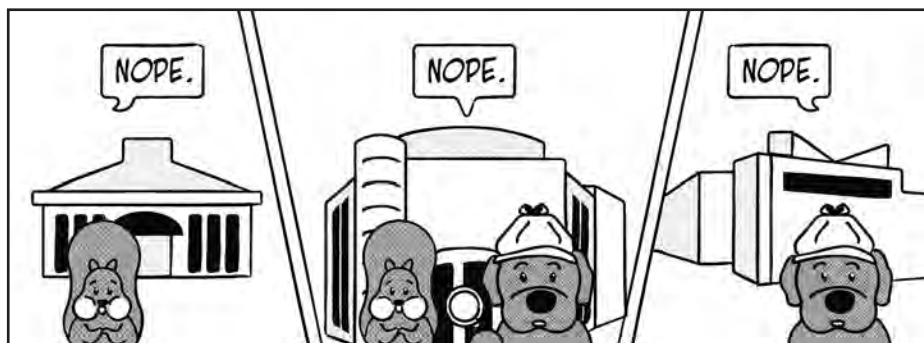
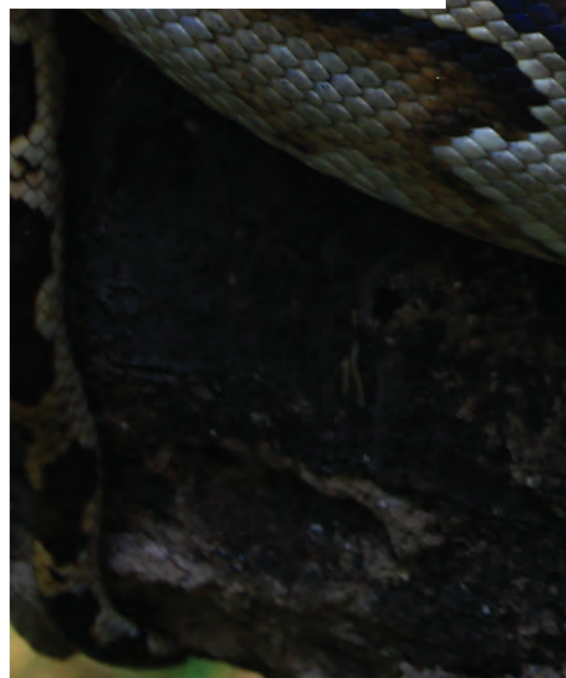
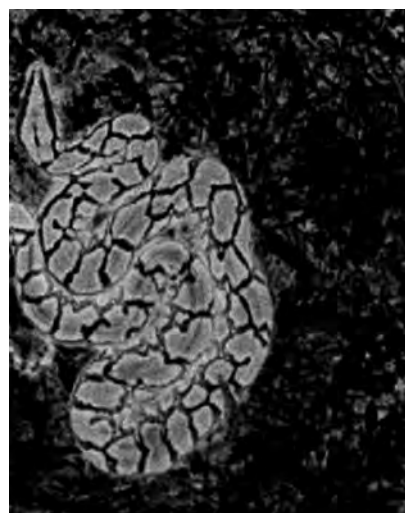
Hewitt doesn't take it lightly that she's among the small percentage of women who have a career in physics. According to the American Institute of Physics, in 2017, women earned 21 percent of physics bachelor's degrees and 20 percent of physics doctorates.

Hewitt's snake-tracking research has already garnered attention from major research entities. She was awarded a scholarship by the U.S. Air Force and will work in the Air Force's research labs after she graduates from UCF.

Hewitt shared that while she enjoyed her work in astronomy at UMBC, "I very much prefer the field work that I'm doing as a more closer-to-earth scientist."

— *Adriana Fraser*

Inset top: Headshot of Jennifer Hewitt. Bottom: NIR images of Burmese pythons in grass. Courtesy of Hewitt.





IMPACT

The Alumni Awards Return



After time apart, the UMBC community is eager to celebrate the accomplishments of alumni—in a safe, socially distant fashion. In this spirit, the UMBC Alumni Association Board of Directors hosted the 32nd annual Alumni Awards on October 20. While the in-person ceremony at the Linehan Concert Hall was smaller than past years, more alumni than ever were celebrated.

“Tonight represents dreams fulfilled,” President **Freeman Hrabowski** said. And as each alumni awardee stood up and shared words of gratitude, it was impossible to ignore that truth.

“An organization is more than buildings and rooms. Rather it is the people who animate its mission and purpose,” said Distinguished Service award winner **Michael Hassett, M.P.P. '17, Ph.D. '19, public policy**. “I have been incredibly fortunate to have many mentors and inspirations that have animated UMBC.”

“I chose UMBC because of the community... UMBC was a school that felt like they were most excited to have me there. I knew from the start I would always have a family there,” shared **Christine Osazuwa '11, interdisciplinary studies**, and recipient of a Rising Star award.

“UMBC students I have interacted with over the years have brought amazing energy, creativity, and passion to our campus. They have given my life meaning that far surpasses that associated with simply publishing papers,” said **Michael Summers**, Outstanding Faculty award winner.

Other recipients include Rising Stars **Michael Berardi '19, media and communications studies**, and **Deep Patel '19, biological sciences and financial economics**—cofounders of OCA Mocha, an Arbutus coffee shop that emphasizes community-arts. Engineering & Information Technology honored **Scott Banta '97, chemical engineering**.

Sean Pang '09, English, M.A. '11, education, was recognized in the Humanities.

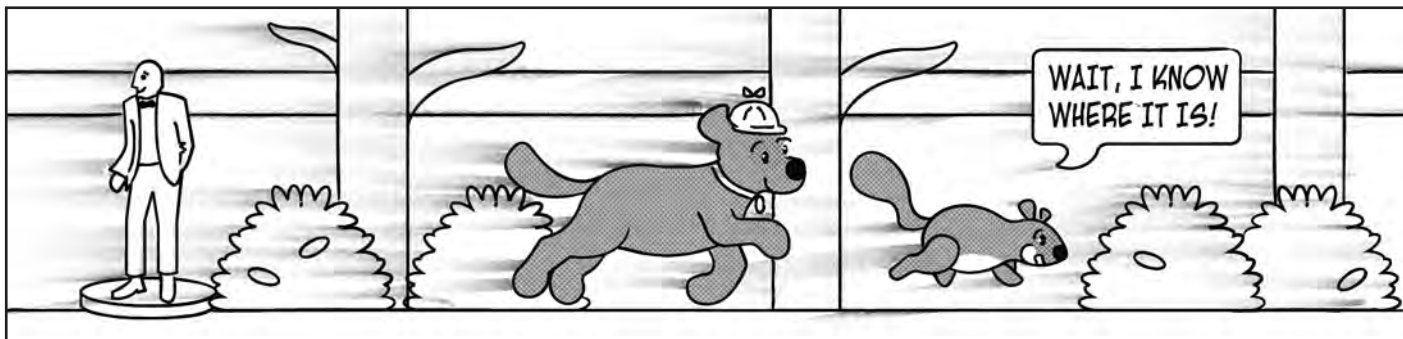
Natural & Mathematical Sciences celebrated **Kizzmekia Corbett '08, M16, biological sciences and sociology**, scientific lead of the NIH Vaccine Research Center's coronavirus team. Baltimore City middle school teacher **Theresa Bruce '09, political science and social work**, was the recipient for Social & Behavioral Sciences. Visual & Performing Arts honored **Tewodross Melchishua Williams M.F.A. '00, intermedia and digital arts**, founder of the film and digital media studio collective Visual Jazz and associate professor at Bowie State University.

The Alumni Association Board of Directors also took the opportunity to give special recognition to four alumnae closely tied to the pandemic response: NIH-Moderna vaccine lead Kizzmekia Corbett; Baltimore City Health Commissioner **Letitia Dzirasa '03, M11, biological sciences**; and National Institutes of Health investigator **Kaitlyn Sadtler '11, biological sciences**; special advisor to the senior vice chancellor of Academic and Student Affairs of the University System of Maryland **Kate Tracy, M.A. '01, Ph.D. '03, psychology**.

“They are entrepreneurs, leaders, educators, creators, artists, and explorers,” says **Stanyell Odom**, director of Alumni Engagement. “They’ve stepped forward to lead us during a time where sound leadership was required to get us through some of the most difficult days of our generation.”

— *Charis Lawson '20 & Randianne Leyshon '09*

Photo: Kaitlyn Sadtler '11 speaks at the 2021 Alumni Award ceremony.



Ripple Effect



Kafui Dzirasa '01, M8, chemical engineering, recently earned two highly prestigious honors distinctive even among leaders in the medical and life sciences: a Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) Investigator award and election to the National Academy of Medicine.

Dzirasa is the K. Ranga Rama Krishnan Associate Professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Duke University. He earned both his M.D. and his Ph.D. in neurobiology and neurosciences at Duke. Today, he examines the role of the brain's electrical activity in psychiatric illness, including depression, bipolar disorder, and addiction, with the goal of creating mechanisms to disrupt these disorders.

Dzirasa is one of 100 new members elected to the National Academy of Medicine this year. The announcement recognizes his "seminal contributions to the neuroscience of emotion and mental illness" as well as his pioneering research methods. It also honors his "contributions to society through science policy and advocacy, a commitment to mentoring, and support for efforts to build a diverse and inclusive scientific workforce," carrying forward the values of UMBC's Meyerhoff Scholars Program.

"Dr. Dzirasa represents the best of UMBC," says Meyerhoff Scholars Program Director **Keith Harmon**. "From his achievements as a physician-scientist working at the intersection of medicine and engineering to mentoring scores of individuals at UMBC and across the nation, he is making the world a better place for others through a personal commitment to excellence in all endeavors."

Dzirasa was also named an HHMI Investigator this fall. He joins a cohort of 33 new Investigators from across the U.S. Each was selected for their ability to "dive deep into tough questions" and address some of the most challenging issues in biomedical research.

There are approximately 250 HHMI Investigators across the U.S., including UMBC's **Michael Summers**, Robert E. Meyerhoff Chair for Excellence in Research and Mentoring and Distinguished University Professor.

HHMI is investing about \$300 million in Dzirasa and the other members of the new cohort. The institute also recently announced a plan to invest \$2 billion in work to accelerate inclusion and equity throughout the academic science pipeline—a goal championed by Dzirasa, other Meyerhoff alumni, and UMBC President **Freeman Hrabowski**.

Dzirasa also was honored by the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology with its Daniel H. Efron Research Award to a young scientist on the basis of outstanding basic research contributions to neuropsychopharmacology.

— *Megan Hanks Mastrola*

Photo: Dzirasa visits with the M29 cohort of Meyerhoff Scholars. Courtesy of the Meyerhoff Scholars Program.

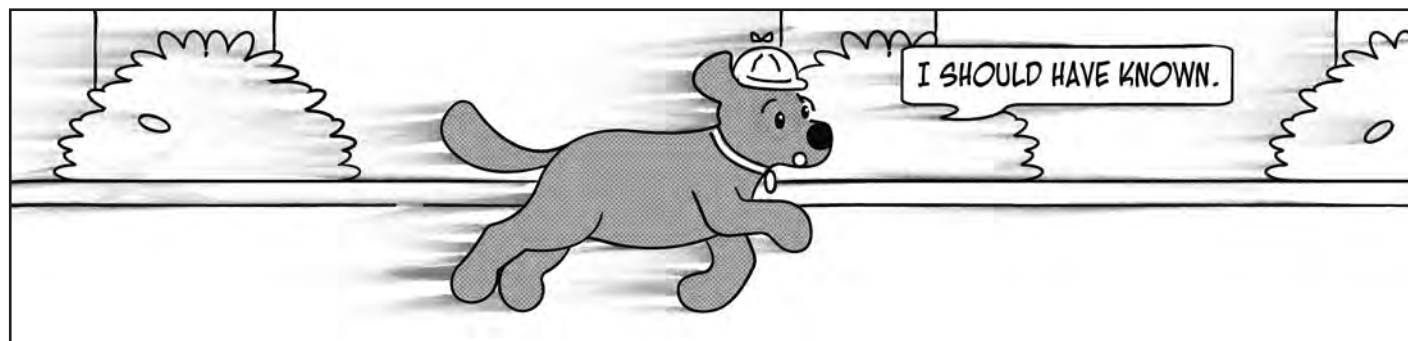
Campaign Corner

Announcing the Freeman A. Hrabowski, III Endowment for Student Excellence.

We are pleased to announce that record-breaking alumni support has enabled UMBC's Grit & Greatness Campaign to reach \$150 million. This total includes fundraising for all annual giving, endowment, and sponsored research. Thank you to all who have contributed to this campaign to make big breakthroughs, forge true partnerships, and transform lives. We will announce final campaign totals at our celebration events this spring both on campus and around the country.

But as Dr. Hrabowski says, "Success is never final." During Dr. Hrabowski's tenure, the UMBC endowment (gifts invested in perpetuity providing sustaining support) has grown by more than \$100 million. So, in honor of his final year at UMBC, we challenge the UMBC community to partner with us to grow UMBC's endowment from \$135 million to \$150 million. We hope you will join us in strengthening an investment that will support UMBC's mission for years to come. Endowment contributions for scholarships, fellowships, endowed professorships, and programs are still encouraged. A particular focus and priority will be the new Freeman A. Hrabowski, III Endowment for Student Excellence, a scholarship fund available to incoming students.

Learn more at giving.umbc.edu/HrabowskiFund or contact giving@umbc.edu or by phone at 410-455-2902.



IMPACT

Sherman Scholars Live Out Founder's Legacy

In Baltimore City, middle schoolers are making roller coasters out of insulation tubing and tape. High schoolers are dunking basketballs to learn math equations. And not too far away at UMBC, the Sherman STEM Teacher Scholars are prepping to spread even more innovative, inclusive lessons throughout city schools.

The Sherman STEM Teacher Scholars Program began in the fall of 2007 thanks to the generosity of philanthropists **George and Betsy Sherman**. The goal of the program is to support scholars to become culturally responsive and compassionate STEM educators in historically underserved, urban schools.

"They're working in the school buildings that people tend to shy away from because they've got those 'bad kids' or they don't have a lot of resources. Our scholars are gravitating to those spaces," says program director **Rehana Shafi**.

George Sherman passed away earlier this year but the legacy he left continues to be felt in the lives of the scholars who bear his name. Fourteen years later, the program supports 80 current scholars who will one day join the 140 program alumni who are teaching in high needs schools in Baltimore and throughout the region. All scholars receive scholarships towards their education as well as advising and coaching to embody the Sherman Program's values.

Ben Davis '11, biological sciences, M.A.T. '13, was one of the first Sherman scholars to enter the workforce. Today he tries to make sure his middle-school science students do one hands-on project a week. "The kids are able to use scalpels and surgical scissors to dissect sharks and frogs and look inside and ask 'is this similar to what we see in a human or is this different?'" says Davis.

Davis has also started a summer program to get middle-school girls onto the UMBC campus to attend college courses and engage in lab work like discovering a virus, sequencing its DNA, and even naming it.

Sherman scholar **Maria Packard '19, mathematics, M.A.T. '20**, meanwhile, is at Green Street Academy in Baltimore, challenging the stigma that math is boring. She has her 11th graders shooting basketball hoops for extra points, giving Algebra 2 an unexpectedly exciting and competitive edge for students.

To prepare for teaching roles, Sherman scholars volunteer in classrooms and take the program's courses that help scholars reflect on their own cultural lens and understand the historical context of schooling in Baltimore. Experiences like this make space for scholars to embrace the humility required to listen to "kids whose own lived experiences are generally different from their own," says Shafi, who has been with the program since the beginning.

That aspect of cultural humility and social responsibility drew **Haleemat Adekoya '22, political science**, to UMBC. Adekoya, who is the current student member of the Maryland Higher Education Commission, plans to be an elementary school teacher who nurtures her students' identities. She is optimistic about her future and that of the program.

"I see the legacy of the Sherman program as a seed—it's been planted and people will continue to water that seed," she says. "It's one of those trees in a folk tale that doesn't die out because the community and the people who have benefited from its impact see the importance of that tree living beyond generations."

— Karen Styxley







FOR THE



LOVE OF



DIRTY JOBS

BY SUSAN THORNTON HOBBS

First Mate **Alex Barnard '09, American studies**, spends many mornings high atop the mast on the 150-foot sailing ship *Kwai*, watching the bright horizon of the Pacific Ocean through binoculars for the shimmer of an abandoned fishing net. When she spots a clump of plastic waste, she guides the captain toward the tangle of fishing nets and the garbage they accumulate.

Then sailors on deck throw grappling hooks into the floating trash. A hydraulic crane hauls onto the deck the dripping hunks of degrading plastic nets—sometimes the size of Volkswagen Beetles, sometimes 100 feet long. Barnard and the crew cull through tangles slick with algae and seaweed, throwing the trash's resident crabs and fish back overboard. Those moments are cathartic, Barnard says, as if they've just pulled a rotten tooth from the mouth of the ocean.

"I just think about that moment as beautiful. I love seeing that net up on deck," Barnard says. "It's so toxic and then to watch it come out. Just to be able to do that all day every day. It's pretty amazing."

All photos of Alexandra Barnard and the ship Kwai are courtesy of Ocean Voyages Institute.

Walking down a steep hill on her family's farm, **Roxann Brooks Motroni '06, M14, biological sciences**, is searching for her cattle.

"Hey mamas! Hey cows!" the veterinarian calls. A fuzzy black head pops up over the next hill and bellows. The cattle gallop toward Motroni and her bucket, which rattles with hay cookies.

She steps into the pasture and is mobbed by her family's cattle, the flies clustered on their backs in the late autumn heat. Cookie, the black Lowline Angus most fond of the treats, pushes to the front of the herd. The cow's foot-long tongue curls around Motroni's forearm, leaving bubbly trails of slobber and grass bits.

Ignoring the fresh cow patty her black boot has just stepped in, Motroni hands out cookies, then tosses the rest of the nuggets into the scrum. She swipes off her freshly slimed arm and continues naming the cattle—The Hereford, Valentino the bull, and her favorite, Nellie, named for a great-grandmother because they're a bit alike.

"Sweet, but a little suspicious of new people," Motroni says and wades out of the herd distributing scratches all around, oblivious to the flies and slobber and excrement.

Stephen Bradley, associate professor in the Department of Visual Arts, hauls on a braided cord connected to a white lifesaving ring that bobs on the water of the Jones Falls in Baltimore. A Doritos package, two latex gloves, a slick of oil, and some liquor bottles float nearby. And that's just what's visible. Other ingredients in the toxic stew flowing toward the Inner Harbor are heavy metals, fertilizer, microbes, pesticides, and sewage, as well as industrial sound pollution.

Bradley, an artist who adds video and audio sensory layers to his sculptures, pulls out his dripping hydrophones and dangles them with their connections. Then he lowers the receivers back in, to record the underwater sounds of mussels, gizzard shad, and blue crabs, along with the urban noise of HVAC systems and traffic.

Chatting away, Bradley pulls out his sketch pad to show some drawings, then licks his thumb to turn the page. He stops to grimace at his thumb, which was just mucking about in the murky water.

"Guess I shouldn't have done that," he says.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD ISN'T ALWAYS A NEAT ENDEAVOR. Hard to keep your hands clean when you're raising cattle humanely and safely, pulling communities together to pick up trash and make art, or hauling tons of plastic waste from the Pacific Ocean. These three Retrievers all find immense joy in work that is sometimes smelly, usually dirty, and always requires an intrepid spirit.



SUSTAINABILITY SPARKED BARNARD'S QUEST

Alex Barnard wrote her UMBC honors thesis on her attempts to live sustainably in Baltimore. “Extremely challenging,” Barnard summarized, with a wry chuckle. “It completely changed my life. I see everything through this lens now.”

For nearly 10 years, she traveled, trying to live lightly on the planet. She worked in an eco-cafe in Fiji, labored on an organic farm in Hawaii, sailed on eco-tourism voyages in the South Pacific, and biked New Zealand.

Now, she has her captain's license and sails as a chief mate on National Geographic voyages to Costa Rica, Alaska, and Baja with Lindblad Expeditions, a company known for its green approach to travel.

Barnard's schedule of two months on, two months off gives her time to volunteer on the Kwai for the Ocean Voyages Institute. The institute partners with companies that turn the trash into fuel, shoes, clothing, and building blocks for construction.

Through overconsumption and improper trash disposal, humans have created five garbage patches in the Pacific, Atlantic, and Indian oceans, where trash is concentrated by currents.

Discarded nets and lines from fishing boats now make up 46% of the waste in the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, according to the World Wildlife Fund. Dubbed “ghostnets” or “ghost gear,” the fishing waste kills marine life by the thousands—turtles and whales and dolphins tangle themselves in the nets that are tossed off fishing boats. But because oceans are vast, and the nets sink and bob in the waves, they're difficult to find.

“It's not like wading through trash,” Barnard explains. “There are big spaces in between. If you were at sea level, the nets are hard to see. We could be sailing right by one and not see it until we're past it. The plastic breaks down in UV light—a lot of it is microplastic, which is deadly to the ocean.”

Last summer, Barnard and the Kwai crew hauled 170 tons of plastic from the ocean, a fraction of the 17 billion tons dumped into the world's waters every year. Other organizations, like Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, Greenpeace, The Ocean Cleanup, and the 5 Gyres Institute, are also focusing on ghostnet removal. Many environmental groups are pushing the Global Ghost Gear Initiative, a collaborative effort by the fishing industry, NGOs, governments, and researchers to regulate plastic dumping.

“This work is possible and successful,” Barnard says. “The idea is to show that we need more boats, a fleet of vessels doing the same thing. It feels like a starting point more than anything.”

Temporarily on land, in a remote cabin in Michigan where she's doing some writing for Lindblad, Barnard hikes often, always with a trash bag.

“It's my dream to go somewhere and not have to pick up trash,” Barnard says. “I could spend my whole life picking up trash everywhere I go. That's not very efficient. It has to be bigger than just one person. But it's better than not picking it up.”



“I COULD SPEND MY WHOLE LIFE PICKING UP TRASH EVERYWHERE I GO. THAT'S NOT VERY EFFICIENT. IT HAS TO BE BIGGER THAN JUST ONE PERSON. BUT IT'S BETTER THAN NOT PICKING IT UP.”





A FAMILY FARM AFFAIR

Every morning and evening, Roxann Brooks Motroni visits her cattle, not just to offer treats but to check the herd for a limp, some pinkeye, a calf that's not thriving.

Her family started 804 Cattle Company in Upper Marlboro in 2016 with three cows. They now raise 25 cattle on 33 acres. A vet married to an agricultural business expert, Motroni works the farm with her parents, John and Chantal Brooks, both retired doctors. And while Motroni has a day job as a National Program Leader for Animal Health for the USDA's Agricultural Research Service, focusing on research solutions for livestock diseases, she begins and ends her days on the farm.

"This is a family affair. My mom is the chief cow operator. I do the vet work, my husband does the finances and handyman work," Motroni explains, plus he's the beekeeper.

The farm is also devoted to teaching the next generation of farmers and

veterinarians. Today, two interns hoping to be veterinarians are chasing Nutmeg the goat and grooming horses. The family brings in veterans seeking help getting started in agriculture, through the Arcadia Center for Sustainable Food and Agriculture. The farm also sells at the Capital Market, whose mission is to provide quality food, produced by businesses and farms run by people of color, to residents of Prince George's County's food deserts.

A Meyerhoff Scholar, Motroni quotes its motto, "To Whom Much Is Given, Much Is Expected," and says she lives by it.

Their farm prides itself on their humane and safe practices with their cattle. The animals and their health comes first. No hormones or steroids go into their cattle, and they limit antibiotic use to only sick cows. Their chutes and corrals are designed to reduce their cattle's stress. All animals spend all their lives on grass pastures.

The family also uses regenerative agriculture practices to improve soil health and combat climate change through carbon sequestration while limiting fertilizer and pesticide usage. Motroni crouches in the pasture to show off the shoots of radishes, hairy vetch, turnips, oats, and rye that she interplants with grass, to aerate and fix nitrogen and carbon in the soil. Plus they offer her herd fine dining.

"I didn't know when I became a cattle farmer that I would also become a grass farmer. I've come to realize how magical cow poop is. Every year our pastures get better and better," she says, laughing. "All those plant physiology classes at UMBC really served me well."

She hikes up the hill again, squelching through the mud around a water pump.

"Wow, now you can really smell the cow," she says and smiles at the odor and the view.



"I'VE COME TO REALIZE HOW MAGICAL COW POOP IS. EVERY YEAR OUR PASTURES GET BETTER AND BETTER," SHE SAYS, LAUGHING. "ALL THOSE PLANT PHYSIOLOGY CLASSES AT UMBG REALLY SERVED ME WELL."





TRACES OF LIFE FUEL HIS ART

As an artist, Stephen Bradley sees and hears things a little differently. From the pop of color of a blue plastic container handle to the squelching clicks of the mussels underwater, the evidence of life is fascinating to him.

For more than 12 years, he has labored in the Brooklyn and Curtis Bay area of Baltimore, partnering with the Enoch Pratt Free Library, the National Aquarium, the local Boys and Girls Club, and the Masonville Cove Environmental Education Center to clean up the alleys and streets and to make art, from sidewalk paintings and murals to trash sculptures.

Right now, he's bent closely over a pier in the Inner Harbor, lowering into the water a round lifesaver strung with microphones and chum to attract fish. He occasionally catches the attention of passersby and eagerly explains his artistic vision to them.

The project that inspired his recording in the Jones Falls waterway is a collaborative biodiversity study with the National Aquarium and the Institute of Marine and Environmental Technology (IMET). IMET has sunk a biodisk in the same areas Bradley is recording, to track biodiversity in the waters by collecting DNA samples. Those findings will be paired with Bradley's recordings to provide a fuller picture of what's living in Baltimore's waterways. Bradley's Inner Harbor's soundtrack is run through a spectrograph to determine what species made the sounds, most of which

can't be heard by human ears, such as the mating songs of water bugs.

"With these recordings, it's almost as if I have my ear to the water," he says. "The gift is going home and listening."

Bradley's portion of the IMET project, called Bio-Buggy: Ear to the Harbor, will draw attention to the harm that human-generated noise pollution inflicts on aquatic species, including disrupting mating and growth.

In the fall, Bradley was recording at Marshy Point Nature Center and heard explosions coming from his underwater recorders, from the direction of Aberdeen Proving Ground, nearly 30 miles away.

"Hundreds of small minnows leaped out of the water each time there was an explosion, and there were nine huge discharges," Bradley says. But in between, he heard the complex harmonies of bubbles and critter sounds, something he calls "musical marshlands."

He has also built an exhibit, called the "Oh, Murky Waters Chorus," with trash compositions, an aquarium with teeny water critters still living on one of those IMET DNA sampling biodisks, and an interactive video of microscopic creatures paired with their noises. The art installation showed at UMBC's Center for Art, Design, and Visual Culture in 2019, and Bradley hopes to exhibit it again, as a work-in-progress later in 2022.

"The trash-filled sculptural elements in the art installation...are there to represent the stress and urgency for us as a society to gain control of our waste before we drown from it," Bradley explains. Baltimore has taken recent steps, including banning polystyrene and taxing plastic bags, to reduce the trash in the Inner Harbor enough that if it hasn't rained in 48 hours, according to Blue Water Baltimore, some areas are swimmable.

At the IMET open house next spring, Bradley hopes to show a prototype of the Bio-Buggy, a mobile science and sound collection lab, which engineering students at UMBC will work to design with him as their capstone project. The Bio-Buggy exhibit will also feature Bradley's sound compositions based on the Inner Harbor and other Chesapeake Bay recordings.

"I have no aspiration to be a scientist, but I am inspired by science—the tools, the rigor, the process," he says and tucks his headphones back on, listening for evidence of life in the waters. Perhaps, Bradley hopes, if people hear and see the life below the surface, they'll pocket their Doritos packages and recycle their water bottles, instead of tossing them in the gutter for him to find later.

People who care about change must be willing to plunge their hands deep into the mess of this world. It's a dirty job, but someone's gotta do it.



Samples from Bradley's collection of art trash.

**"I HAVE NO ASPIRATION TO BE A
SCIENTIST, BUT I AM INSPIRED BY
SCIENCE—THE TOOLS, THE RIGOR,
THE PROCESS."**

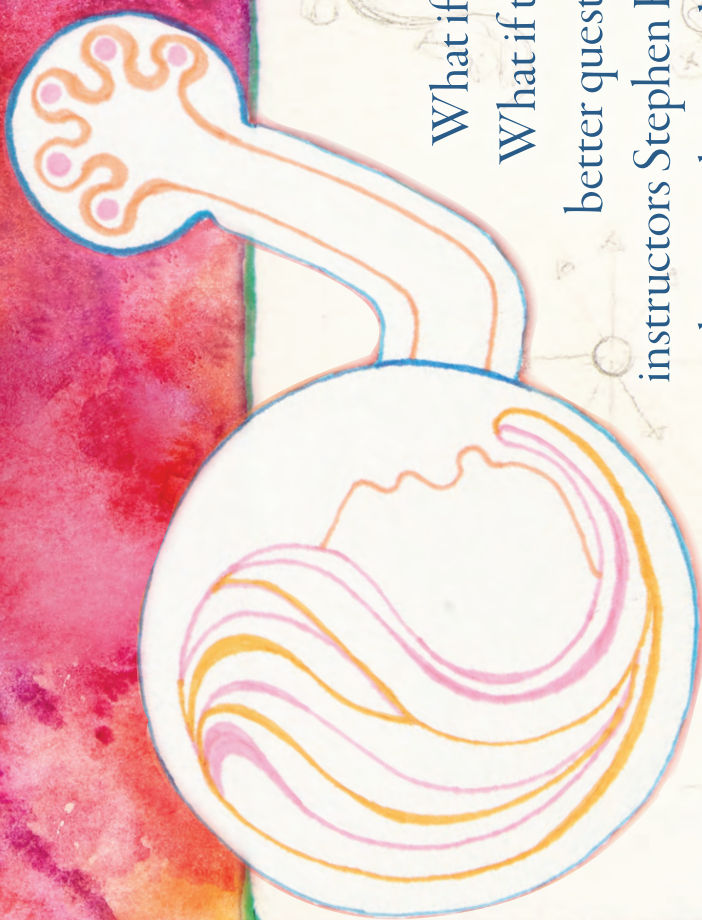
Reframing the Question

written by Randianne Leyshon '09
illustrated by Michelle Rudman



What if the answer wasn't the goal?
 What if the joy was found in asking a
 better question? Individualized Study
 instructors Stephen Freeland and Eric Brown
 eagerly invite their students to delve into the
 mystery and wonder of the world, balancing that awe
 with an intrepid curiosity that doesn't accept surface-level explanations.
 What can we learn about ourselves, they ask, when we don't expect a
 ready-made answer to our questions?

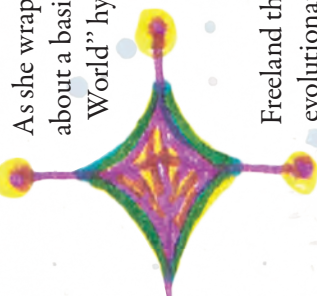
Stephen Freeland and Eric Brown '93, M1, interdisciplinary studies, stand off to either side of the Fine Arts classroom. Playfully adversarial, the two Leos know how to pull each other's levers. The question on the whiteboard asks the students in Brown's Human Context of Science and Technology class to reconsider life as they know it: the origins of life, the evolution of life, the label "intelligent life"—and not just here on our blue marble, but in galaxies far, far away.



Freeland and Brown are not scared away by “what if” questions. Freeland, an evolutionary biologist, and Brown, with a background in the history of science, both find their homes in UMBC’s Department of Individualized Study (INDS). The pair seems like they would thrive under the interrogation of any 4-year-old’s barrage of “whys.” But this childlike curiosity isn’t aimless (it never is). Instead, the colleagues of almost a decade take great pleasure in finding ways to question established scientific norms and help students eschew culturally constructed labels that might accidentally shield them from further scientific discovery.

Some of the students eagerly step into the scrum. Being asked to question something as fundamental to her biology studies as the moment of the origin of life clearly takes **Emma**

Galambos ’23, psychology, aback.



As she wraps her head around what Freeland is positing, Galambos peppers him with questions about a basic tenet in most biology textbooks. Developed as an idea in the 1960s, the “RNA World” hypothesis states that life began with a simple RNA molecule that could copy itself without help from other molecules, like DNA and proteins. And somewhere in this RNA-only universe, the origin of life happened. It’s a commonly featured point on famous graphs that claim to explain the pre-biotic origins of the universe.

Freeland thinks, to put it simply, this is rubbish. But despite Freeland’s extensive background in evolutionary biology, Galambos has a few things to push back on—which is something Brown actively fosters with his students.

“I was taught the RNA World hypothesis in previous courses, that RNA was the precursor for life,” says Galambos, reflecting on the exchange after the class concluded. Currently an EMT and who plans to attend nursing school after graduation, Galambos says, “I’ve been taught that there was a distinct origin of life and Dr. Freeland’s concept goes against this idea, but I find his explanations and ideas very fascinating.” Brown facilitates the in-class conversation by occasionally prodding Freeland to expound on his alternative take.

Freeland goes on to outline his proposal on the board with a few simple x-y axes, changing what looks like a sharp vertical upswing into a more nuanced diagonal line (to indicate there may have been one or more stages before RNA, from which RNA later evolved). “Something that grows out of the natural way I do science, and what has made me a scientist,” says Freeland, INDS director, “is to imagine the counterfactual. You imagine what it isn’t, in order to see more clearly what it is.”

He’s currently trying to publish a paper that questions the dominant paradigm of the RNA World hypothesis while also working on a review for a different manuscript that criticizes the well-accepted theory. He emphasizes the word *trying*, “as it’s sort of proven to be strangely unpublishable,” he says with a wry smile, “at least within the U.S.”



Regardless of any professional hurdles, the joy that Freeland and Brown bring to this scientific tug-of-war is evident in their ease with each other and the way they eagerly invite the students into the mystery and wonder of the world with reverence—and a healthy dose of skepticism.

The alien problem

Similarly unpublishable to an extent is genuine scientific inquiry into the existence of extraterrestrial life. Not that it's stopping Avi Loeb, chair of Harvard's astronomy department. Loeb is the jumping off point for Freeland and Brown's classroom conversation: how does a well-respected astrophysicist earn the ire and interest of colleagues across the globe? Belief in aliens is the short answer, and the slightly longer version is by sincerely positing the likelihood of communicative life near and far using an equation developed in 1961 by Frank Drake.

Brown jots a formula on the board. Known as the Drake equation, it attempts to solve for the numbers of technologically advanced civilizations in the galaxy, using factors like the average number of planets in the Milky Way that can potentially support life per star that has planets, the fraction of planets with life that actually go on to develop intelligent life, the length of time for which such civilizations release detectable signals into space, etc.

It's more of a thought experiment than a mathematical formula, but it's had broad implications for how astrophysicists consider extraterrestrial life. Brown wraps up the exchange with what could be a loaded question to his colleague. "So, your estimation then is that there's a lot of life in the galaxy?"

"Yes," Freeland gamely replies. "But I'm growing more careful to say that there has been a lot of life in the galaxy."

"Part of the reason why I don't believe in capital T truth, is because I think humans are good at tricking ourselves into believing that we have discovered the truth about the world. And then, in 100 years when that's no longer the truth, we're also very good at telling retroactive stories about how those people were just mistaken." — Eric Brown



“It could be a cosmic graveyard out there,” Brown follows up. “Yes, life comes about and then life disappears. It could be that one of these terms in the Drake equation is a really, really small number.”

There are other even more banal and prosaic reasons we haven’t discovered signs of life elsewhere, says Freeland. We haven’t tried.

“Our state of actual scientific knowledge about our own cosmic backyard and neighboring planets is minimal, zero,” says Freeland. “Our species has only conducted three full experiments to test for the existence of life outside of Earth, and they were all on Mars, and they were all in 1977. One of those three is still up for debate, because by the standards that they began the experiment, it demonstrated there was life. The consensus was to re-explain the outcome.”

“All of that is to say,” says Freeland, “don’t mistake this: there is an absence of evidence, not an evidence of absence. That would be my biggest point to you.”

Upsetting the established balance

Freeland and Brown are using the example of extraterrestrial life as a starting point in their discussion, but they’re not just interested in the possibility of little green people arriving in spaceships—although they wouldn’t turn them away. Freeland and Brown see the opportunity to open students’ minds to question self-reinforcing patterns: something is “discovered,” then put in a textbook then taught for decades, and now it is true. This could be said about well-regarded theories of the origin point of life to other entrenched systems like white patriarchy, Freeland gives as an example.

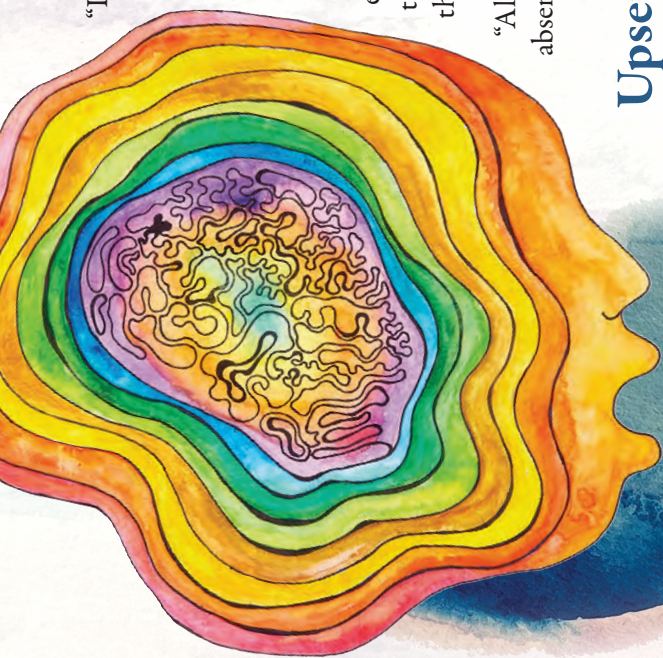
“It comes to this vicious circle where we’ve created a culture that can’t remember to see it other than the way our culture sees it,” says Freeland. “And as time goes on, it actually gets progressively harder and harder for alternatives to penetrate that.”

“Part of the reason why I don’t believe in capital T truth,” Brown addresses his students, “is because I think humans are good at tricking ourselves into believing that we have discovered the truth about the world. And then, in 100 years when that’s no longer the truth, we’re also very good at telling retroactive stories about how those people were just mistaken.”

So what is true?

Brown’s and Freeland’s shared astrological sign popped up earlier in the class when they asked the students if they put any stock in the zodiac. The students were wary of aligning themselves with the stars, but Freeland and Brown are quite happy to explore what the social ramifications are of always hearing about being a Leo actually contributing to their natural sense of self-assurance. In this way, something becomes (lowercase-t) “true,” a truth defined by shared experience as opposed to objectivity.

“The origin of life is actually a seamless part of the unraveling of the universe, the way that time and energy can make the universe go. That’s a much more interesting universe, really.” — Stephen Freeland



Many things students dutifully copy from lectures and textbooks and assume are truthful building blocks, are actually obsolete concepts at this point, Brown and Freeland point out. Like scientific discoveries of old, it's difficult for society to adjust to new information. Galileo was sentenced to life imprisonment for his heliocentric views—in our age maybe that looks like a denied tenure package or rejected manuscripts for questioning the scientific norm.

“What’s interesting about this to me,” says Brown, “is that it seems so anti-scientific, that I can’t believe something or I can’t argue something because this other proposed theory has won the current approval, even if I have evidence otherwise. Ought it not be that it’s the evidence that guides you?”

“The danger here,” replies Freeland, “is if we mistake the model that we are using and the labels that we’ve all grown familiar with—if we mistake them for objective reality...then we’re never going to see past those labels.” Freeland points to UMBC’s **Kevin Omland**, professor of biological sciences and expert on the evolutionary biology of birds, to make his point. “Omland is finding that actually the more we study, the less there is an objective line to say where one species begins and another one ends. That’s not to say that labels can’t be useful, but they mean different things, depending on what question you’re asking.”

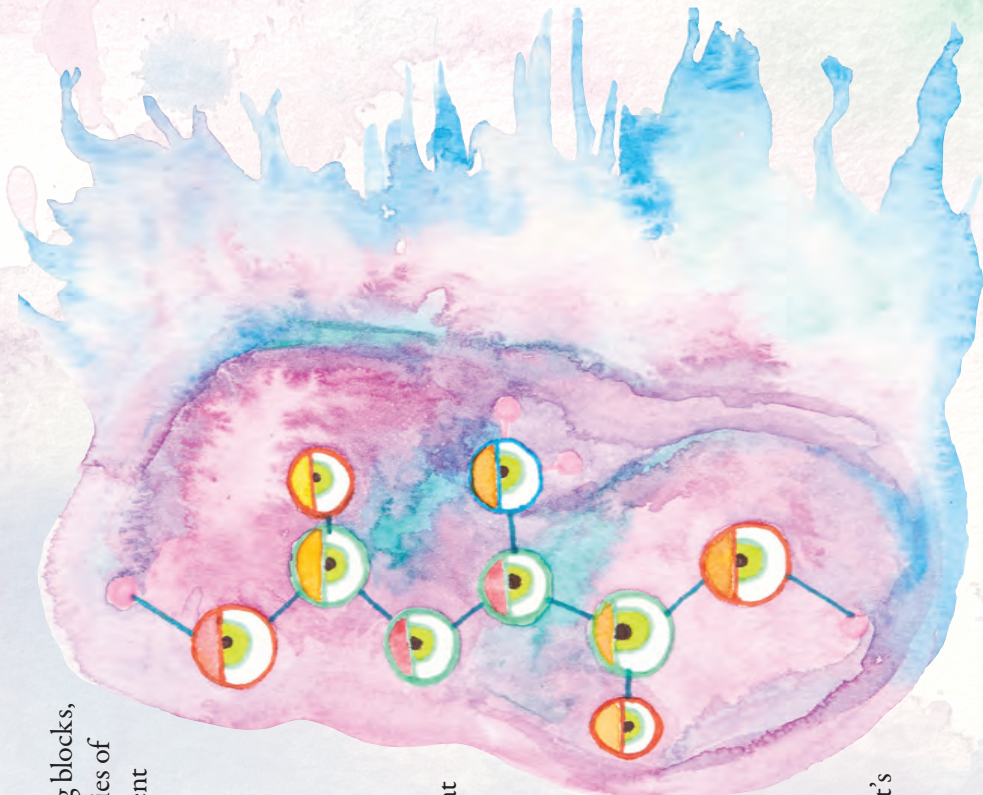
Freeland brings that back around to his own research—debunking the moment of the origin of life. Pointing again to his alternative theory, the diagonal line representing gradual interplay of RNA and DNA, Freeland says, “what is interesting to me about that diagonal line is that there’s nowhere on that to call the moment of the origin of life. “The origin of life is actually a seamless part of the unraveling of the universe, the way that time and energy can make the universe go. That’s a much more interesting universe, really.”

Asking better questions

What purpose is there in asking big questions we’ll (probably) never know the answers to? Aristotle famously addresses this human tendency in the first sentence of *Metaphysics*: “All men by nature desire understanding.” For some, that understanding leads down an unfamiliar but fulfilling path that might make your colleagues—or your students—uncomfortable with the destination.


Galambos says that Brown doesn’t hesitate to share “that a student changed his perception or will continue to ask the student further questions about how they got to the idea” because he seems naturally intrigued by his students’ responses. Freeland and Brown are not alone in their mission to revive and share their students’ natural curiosity about the world—or at the very least help them learn how to ask better questions. It’s one of the pillars of UMBC’s mission to welcome all students to our community of inquiring minds.

“And the further I go,” says Freeland of his 25-plus year research career, “the more I’m convinced, like all good research, what you learn is where the question was wrong, and the question gets better rather than getting an answer.”



UMBC AFTER DARK

Life doesn't pause when classes end and the sun goes down. Instead, students grab a cup of coffee and find a million ways to follow their interests. Whether dancing, studying over pizza, or keeping delicate plants alive in the labs—our campus is abuzz 24/7. We sent staff writer **Charis Lawson '20** and editorial interns **Anna Lee '22** and **Eric Widemann '21** off into the night with *UMBC Magazine* photographer **Marlayna Demond '11** to explore it all.

A photograph of two women roller skating on an outdoor basketball court at night. The woman on the left is wearing a maroon tank top and dark shorts, with yellow roller skates. The woman on the right is wearing a grey t-shirt and dark leggings, with black roller skates. They are both in a low, ready stance, facing each other. The court is illuminated by overhead lights, and a building with lit windows is visible in the background.

Maddie Mills-Snyder '25 and Leah Jupiter '25 practice their roller skating on the basketball court near True Grit's.

ESPECIALLY IN THE DARK, UMBC ROLLS ON

D-Hall Basketball Court

Every evening from 8 p.m. to 2 a.m., steady streams of students fill the dining hall at True Grit's Late Night. Some come strictly for the food, others to socialize. Some come for a study break, others come to study.

Just outside the dining hall, an entirely different scene presents itself. Playful shouts radiate from the basketball court. As night arrives, so does cool, crisp air—but students have found a way to keep warm by engaging in a hotly contested pick-up basketball game. This happens here almost every night.

But tonight, something else is particularly eye-catching. Whizzing just above the ground, the wheels of roller skates radiate bright rainbow colors, and laughter and chatter follow the lights much in the way that sound usually follows light.

"I roller skate on campus every single day, as often as I can, sometimes even to or in class," says **Maddie Mills-Snyder '25, undecided**, AKA "Rex" to the thousands of followers of her roller skating-centric Instagram.

Skating after dark presents a unique opportunity "because that's when we get to skate to late night with our light-up wheels," says Mills-Snyder, sharing the court with **Leah Jupiter '25, biology**, who loves the energy and cool breezes of nighttime skating.

"I love learning new tricks and showing off. I love when people ask us to show them a trick. Rex and I have also created a few dances to popular songs like 'Bad' by Michael Jackson," continues Jupiter. Both love this court but also take advantage of any flat surface, really—the Commons garage, or elsewhere around campus.

Both agreed the best part of skating is the community it brings. So if you're looking to light up the night on campus, lace up your skates and you'll be sure to find a welcoming scene.

"I love empowering other skaters," says Mills-Snyder.

—Eric Widemann '21

RUN FOR YOUR LIFE

Campus-wide

All across campus, darkness camouflages hoards of young adults chasing one another and defending themselves with Nerf darts and rolled-up socks. If that sounds like a childish game, Humans vs. Zombies (HvZ) members would agree with you. HvZ members are not known for taking themselves too seriously.

While many members have described HvZ as a glorified game of tag, there is a lot more to it than that, the members explain. "An average mission starts with a briefing where we learn about our mission and what we're expected to do in order to win.

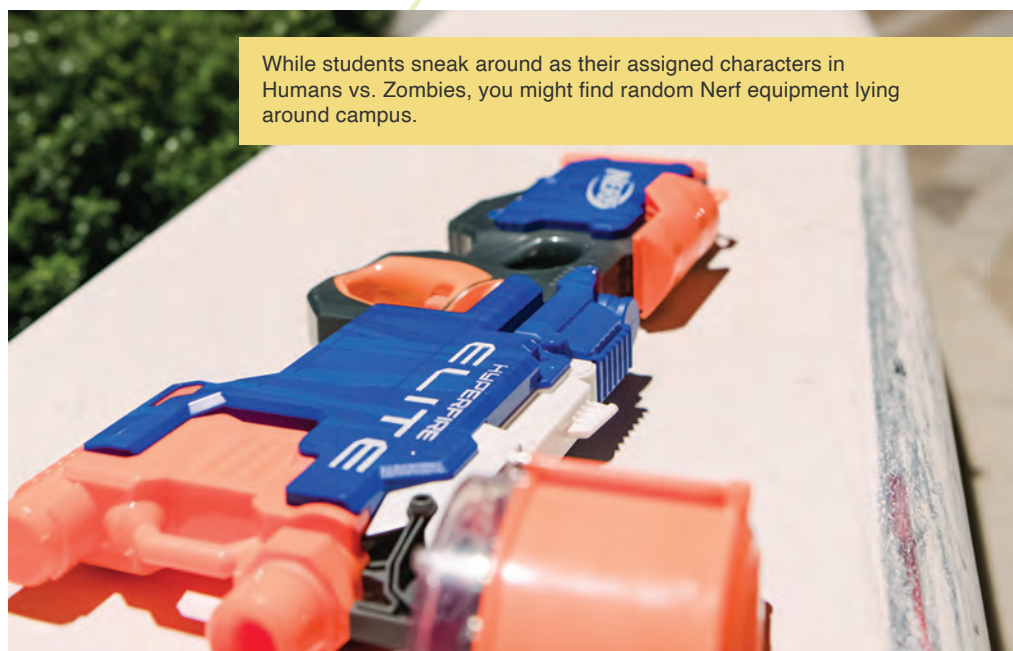
Most people start 'human' but some start 'zombie.' Humans start strong and more often than not, human victory feels like it'll be a piece of cake," notes **Henry Denny '23, mechanical engineering**. Usually, the humans have to rethink that sentiment as the hoard of zombies grows.

HvZ has a decade-long legacy on campus, organizing night missions, Saturday games, missions that span across other colleges, and even week-long missions that run 24/7. The result? A tight-knit community like no other. **Kyle Mosier '20, computer science and mathematics, M.S. '22 computer science**, talks about how during the pandemic, having a group of friends to eat with several times a day on campus was so important.

Even after the missions are complete, it doesn't mean everything is over. They often head over to D-Hall (as their human selves, not their zombie selves) for non-brain-related snacks and to tell stories from the night and club lore, stories that have been passed down from years ago.

—Charis Lawson '20

While students sneak around as their assigned characters in Humans vs. Zombies, you might find random Nerf equipment lying around campus.





BRINGING YOUR A-GAME

UMBC Game Room

Whoever controls the playlist in the Game Room has queued a selection of upbeat songs, only rivaled in volume by the smacking of billiard balls and rhythmic bouncing coming from the pingpong tables.

Tonight, more or less every billiards table is in use, and the pingpong tables are playing host to some intense rallies. **Ayush Nigam '24, computer science**, plays pingpong or billiards two to three times a week and enjoys the “dark-ish warm vibe” of the space after hours.

Justin Nguyen '24, biochemistry, is among the gamers, as he is many nights of the week. Around him, enthusiastic players of all sorts blow off steam with their favorite video games or practice their angles on the pool tables.

“Whenever my friends and I come [here], it’s to play pingpong. We love the competitiveness—it gets the blood flowing,” he continues. “I love hanging out with my friends.”

– Eric Widemann '21



The Game Room offers billiards, pingpong, video games, and other amusements.

LATE NIGHT PICK-ME-UP

UMBC Shuttle Route

Holly Knott clutches the microphone of the CB radio on her shuttle dashboard. “319 BWI 10-8,” Knott says. It’s 6:20 p.m. and the code signals to the others working in the UMBC Transit office that her bus is in service and she is about to start her five-hour shift.

She’s headed to BWI, a run she completes five times a night. The darkness makes it hard to know how much time has passed sometimes, but she fixes her concentration on the road before her and keeps her eyes wide open.

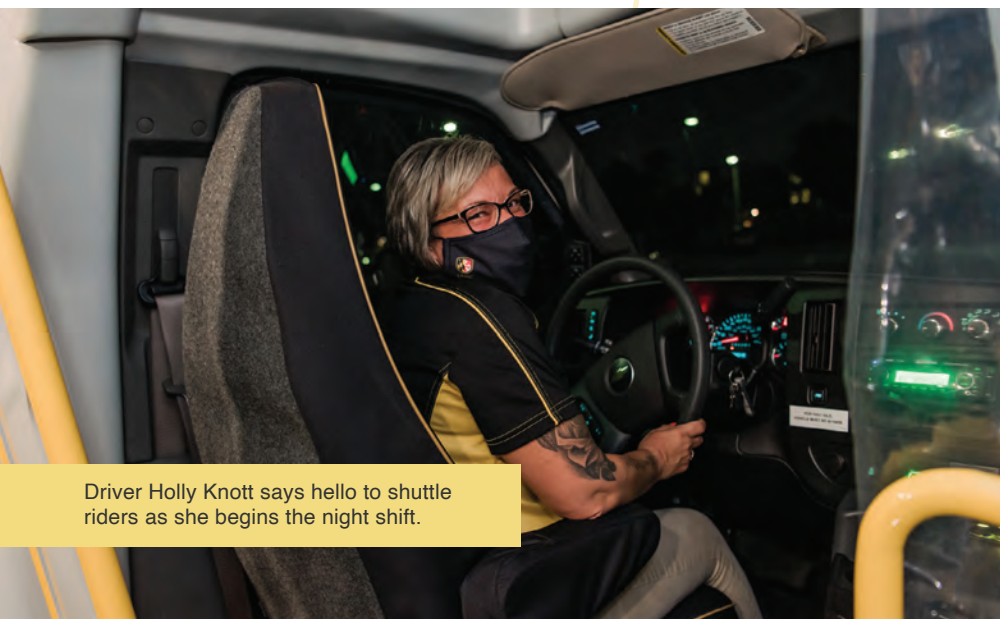
“When students get on, I try to turn the music up a little bit for them.” Most nights, Knott is playing 97.1—her favorites include the classics from the ’80s and ’90s and earlier hits from the Temptations. “I tell people I’m a young person with an old soul,” Knott adds with a smile.

“Everybody here is very welcoming,” says Knott, who started at UMBC in August 2021. “The students, they greet you. ‘Have a good day.’ ‘Have a good night.’ Some even said, ‘Be careful out there.’”

Knott looks forward to the day the protective plastic curtain around the driver’s seat can come down and it’s safe to have prolonged conversations with some of the regulars. Until then, she finds other little ways to return the warmth. She welcomes students and makes sure she turns towards them when they board. She tries to make sure to park super close to the curb so that students have easy access to the bus.

Knott enjoys working late at night, but it’s 11:12 pm, so she leisurely drives the bus into its proper parking spot. Once again, she grabs the microphone of her CB radio. “319 BWI 10-7,” she says, indicating that the 319 bus trip to BWI has ended and the bus is no longer in service.

– Charis Lawson '20



Driver Holly Knott says hello to shuttle riders as she begins the night shift.



Resident Assistant Hager Younes '22 shares a moment with her residents.



Late-night sushi always hits the spot!

MAKING THE ROUNDS

Chester Hall, West Hill Apartments

It's 10:25 p.m. and Lead Residential Assistant (RA) **Hager Younes '22, biology**, is grateful to wrap up her rounds on a quiet note. Anything can happen in this job. But even when it isn't easy, the bonds she has formed with her residents help her through—just as her former RA did for her.

When she came to UMBC in 2018 as an out-of-state student, Younes felt isolated from friends, family, and any sense of stability. However, through the efforts of her Erickson Hall RA **Princess Sara Njemanze '21, chemical engineering**, Younes soon felt welcomed and part of a community. That is why she works so hard to instill that same sense of community in her residents and her fellow RAs.

Younes loves getting creative, posting, “Would you rather?” boards to spark hours-long conversations and organizing an on-going gathering where students drink tea, eat snacks, and just talk.

“I feel like everyone is so human deprived. People are wanting to come to any and every event,” Younes says, commenting on the sheer turnout of events this semester. One thing that always makes the students happy? Visits from Chip, the campus comfort dog.

“When she would come through, you could just hear doors opening down the hall.”

— Charis Lawson '20

STUDYING OVER SUSHI

Hissho Sushi, The Commons

Late-night studying means late-night snacking. And while you'll find students squeezing in cram sessions pretty much everywhere around campus in the wee hours, one newer option is over sashimi and California rolls.

Soft chatter fills the second floor of The Commons, as students share company and a meal with one another. The zesty scent of orange chicken fills the air and the brightly illuminated sushi refrigerator invites in curious students, especially at this hour. While by day The Commons is rather loud, the nighttime calm is the perfect environment to do some studying.

“I study late with friends, so it's definitely become convenient,” says **Erin Hamner '22, geography and environmental science**.

To top it off, the staff here is so friendly—even through the masks, you can make out the smiles.

— Eric Widemann '21



Major Definition turns up the bass as it takes over a hallway in the UC for a late-night practice session.



Harmonies blend and echo as the Cleftomaniacs practice their songs in Fine Arts, Room 306.

DANCE LIKE NO ONE CAN SEE YOU

University Center Hallway, Ground Level

UMBC's University Center appears quiet and empty, with students retiring for the night with Chick-fil-A or Starbucks in their hands. But if you listen closely, you'll hear the faint thump of bass and upbeat hip-hop music emanate from the first floor. Most of the building has gone to sleep, but Major Definition dances on to the beat.

Major Def's executive director, **Timothy Huynh '22, computer science**, wasn't sure what dance meant to him when he joined the club. But Huynh's connection and dedication has since grown, as he now considers dance to be essential to his well-being and weekly schedule.

Prior to the pandemic, Major Def would meet at the UC three evenings a week. Even after their practices turned virtual, they continued working just as hard to put together concept videos in small teams. While Major Def plans on slowly getting back into the swing of things with the in-person semester, their energy remains just as contagious.

"When you're really passionate about dance or you're just looking forward to dancing with each other, the hours really don't matter because they go by really quickly and you're not even looking at the time," says Huynh.

The club's practices take place in an uplifting, supportive environment where teammates offer feedback to one another and embrace each other's unique styles. From quick twists and turns, hand gestures, facial expressions, and smooth movements from head to toe, the dancers are precise and tell stories of their own.

After practice, dancers form a circle and put their hands in for a chant before dismissal. Later, you might see the team stay back to chat with each other, show off their new choreography, or head out to grab some bubble tea.

"Even if you don't see yourself growing in terms of dance, your other teammates can see it. And it's really beautiful being able to see that progression," Huynh says.

— Anna Lee '22

MIDNIGHT MELODIES

Fine Arts, Room 306

A single voice enchants you. Despite being faint, almost whisked away by the wind, the voice is clear. Another voice joins the first and then another until a whole group of voices are expertly switching from synchronization to harmonization, each moment a new voice coming to the forefront. **Sonia Anger '22, mathematics and psychology**, with her clear soprano, blends with the talents around her.

The Cleftomaniacs made a name for themselves when they placed first in the 2018 Mid-Atlantic Quarterfinals at the International Championship of Collegiate A Cappella. When Anger got involved with the co-ed performance group her first year at UMBC, the club was the breath of fresh air she needed.

After a year spent serving with Americorps, Anger felt disconnected from her peers, but from the moment she auditioned, despite her own anxiety, she could see how welcoming and friendly the group was and she wanted to be a part of it. Anger talks about the Cleftomaniacs like the group is her own family. While they spend a lot of time together outside of club activities, performing is her favorite part.

When the group splits up to work on individual voice parts late at night, she frequently finds herself practicing in empty classrooms, hallways, and stairwells of ITE. Afterward, she often walks with her friends to the dorms or Late Night at True Grit's only to continue singing.

"We would be singing outside of SUS [Susquehanna dorm] in the middle of December and people would be like, 'You know you can go inside right?' but we were stubborn and we just wanted to have fun," says Anger.

— Charis Lawson '20



On a gorgeous night, Astronomy Club members enjoy open spaces and fun conversation.

EYES TO THE STARS

UMBC Observatory and Lawn

It's easy in an academic environment to keep your head in a book—or more likely, in front of a screen. The Astronomy Club, however, asks you to look up.

"I love taking walks at night around campus it is very freeing," says **Tara O'Donnell '24, physics**. As she looked up into the night sky, O'Donnell—president of the Astronomy Club—and fellow members found solace in the vast cosmos. Despite loving the atmosphere of campus at night and the view of the stars and the moon, most of her first year at UMBC was virtual. "My experience was sitting in my room doing classes through Blackboard, so my opportunity to connect more fully with the UMBC community was through the Astronomy Club," says O'Donnell.

Now the Astronomy Club once again meets in person, and their meetings range from discussing major space news like the Perseverance landing on Mars or making use of the telescope in the observatory on top of the Physics building to playing games like Jeopardy, watching movies, and hosting special guests and debates.

The Astronomy Club has maintained a thriving community. Late into the night, you can find O'Donnell and her friends looking up into the sky contemplating ideas as big as the universe itself.

— *Charis Lawson '20*



Graduate Jessica Allison tends to the flora in the Hua Lu Lab.



Peer through the windows of the Retriever Learning Center, and you'll see learning happening 24/7.

BURNING THE MIDNIGHT OIL

Biological Sciences Building, Hua Lu Lab

When the sun has gone down, plants are just as active as they are during the day. Like humans, they have an internal clock that prompts responses to environmental stimuli such as light, temperature, and unwanted visitors like pathogens. If left unaddressed, these pathogens can be detrimental to plant health and reduce crop yield in agricultural fields. In UMBC's Biological Sciences building, the members of Professor **Hua Lu's** lab study the role of the circadian clock in plant defense against these outside invaders.

That explains the brown, cushiony sofa to the side of the room. Because students have had to monitor the plants every four hours for previous projects, Lu's office has become the go-to snooze spot for overnight stays. **Jessica Allison**, a graduate student at the Lu lab, even remembers finding a sleeping bag under her desk after joining the team.

The plants that Allison and the other lab members use in their research, thale cress (*Arabidopsis thaliana*), seem to sit peacefully in the large chambers they're stored in. But much more is happening beneath the surface of these wispy, flowering plants.

For her project, Allison regularly conducts a process called a luminescence assay where 96 thale cress seedlings are first planted into a well plate. The plates are then placed into chambers, where the plants are only exposed to light. Allison finally examines how the absence of dark conditions affects plants' circadian clocks.

Even after the lab members have gone home, this process continues to run throughout the night. The next day, Allison uses a machine called a plate reader once an hour to check the plates for gene expression patterns—graphs that depict the activity of the plants' internal clocks.

"We test a lot of genes like that, and we knock out some genes and see if it affects others. We let that run 24/7," Allison explains.

For now, Allison hasn't had to stay overnight to check up on the plants on a set schedule. But she expects to be making good use of the couch when the time comes.

—Anna Lee '22

ALL-NIGHTERS WELCOME

Retriever Learning Center, Albin O. Kuhn Library

At 8 p.m. as the rest of the library closes for the night, students begin heading to the 24/7 Retriever Learning Center (RLC). The white lights of the RLC beam down on notebooks and bright laptop screens. Students clack away at their keyboards and scribble down notes from the formula-ridden whiteboards beside them. Some have earphones in, dedicated to finishing the assignment due at midnight, while others study all night in larger groups to tackle content for an upcoming exam.

Among them are **Ahsan Baig '24, information systems**, **Devanshi Patel '24, information systems**, **Emilien Tchuosi '24, information systems**, and **Nazim Elliott '22, information systems**, who are working on a group project for their information systems class. Baig loves the fact that you don't have to whisper here. The RLC's whiteboards and portable chairs are also a plus, as the group mentions how practical they are for studying. Tchuosi especially appreciates having a place where she feels compelled to get work done.

"I come here on a daily basis just because it pressures me to study.... So when I come here, I actually study instead of watching YouTube videos," Tchuosi says, eliciting laughter from her group mates.

Shawn Parker, a building manager at the library, is dedicated to making the RLC more secure and conducive to student learning. With students as a top priority, Parker works to provide accessible furniture and ensure students' safety within the building. This was also students' vision for the RLC when plans for an accessible learning space began in 2006. With support from the university, the overnight learning center became a reality.

Parker hopes that the center can continue equipping students with the resources to collaborate on all sorts of projects.

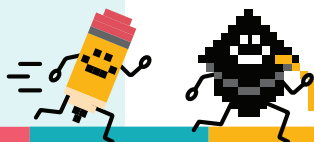
"It's a brighter day for students when they're listened to and understood. But most importantly, you have to hear what they're saying to understand what they're asking for. And that's what I try to do best," says Parker.

—Anna Lee '22

GAME CHANGERS

At their most basic levels, learning and play can look a lot alike. Both call for creativity and resourcefulness, inspire curiosity, and require failure, reflection, and practice. For some students, learning isn't all fun and games. But members of the UMBC community are looking to change that.

By Kennedy Lamb '20



Kerri Evans always strives to make her curriculum engaging but knew she needed a new way to connect her students to the material. As a social work professor at UMBC, Evans teaches and studies the experiences of recent immigrants and refugees to the U.S. and wanted a new way to expose her students to the trials and triumphs of immigrant children navigating the U.S. education system.

“Social work curriculums largely rely on analyzing and reflecting upon case studies,” Evans says. “But immigrant stories are so diverse—it’s hard to understand the breadth of their experiences just by reading and responding to a case study.”

While working as a program manager at Lutheran Immigration and Refugee

Service in downtown Baltimore, Evans saw how an engaging training activity helped foster parents, educators, and staff to better understand the experiences of immigrant and refugee children. For the activity, participants read cards containing stories of immigrants as they navigated various stages of their journey, like falling off the train in Guatemala, or losing your relatives at the U.S. and Mexico border, for example. A group discussion followed of how these experiences, some horrific, influenced the lives of unaccompanied children in the U.S.

“It wasn’t a game in the traditional sense, but it was inspiring and engaging,” she says.

And thus, Evans’ idea for the board game “Emerging: The Educational Journey of Immigrant Students” was born.

The gamification of learning is an approach more instructors are adopting to motivate their students to think outside of the box. Professors like Evans and others are maximizing enjoyment and engagement in their classes by capturing the interests of students and inspiring them to keep learning. Students across disciplines at UMBC are getting hands-on experience building games—tangible ones like “Emerging” as well as a host of video games that also foster a collaborative learning environment. Both the students and teachers agree: Learning is a lot easier when you’re having fun.



UNDERSTANDING THE “RULES OF THE GAME”

“Emerging” is still in its infancy, but it is attracting the help of people across the UMBC community. In fall 2021, Evans paired up with **Keisha Allen** and **Jiyoon Lee**, assistant professors of education, and five UMBC undergraduate and graduate students to help bring the game to fruition.

Both the game and a future interdisciplinary course will focus on the immigrant experience in the U.S. from pre-kindergarten to college, with the goal of teaching UMBC students who will become service providers and teachers to understand the experiences faced, to advocate for inclusion, and to dismantle racism in schools.

“Emerging” will be a multiplayer, cooperative game where participants assume the role of an immigrant child and work together to gain the resources necessary for “success” such as educational attainment, language skills, and social networks. Along the way, players will face challenges, get helpful boosts, and be forced to mitigate stress before it brings the game to a close. Picture Forbidden Island-meets-Catan-meets-Monopoly-meets immigrant experiences.

Participants will need to achieve both happiness and self-sufficiency to win, and players will lose if their stress levels get too high or if they are unable to access help and resources they need.

Advancing on the board will require strategy, resourcefulness, collaboration, and a little bit of luck. Players could land on spaces that require them to pick a card that describes a “win” or a “setback.” Wins may include getting an A on a test, making a new friend, or having a teacher stick up for you. Setbacks may look like getting bullied, forgetting to turn in your homework, or having troubles with immigration status.

Players can also gather “resources” along the way, which could come in the form of joining a sports team, partaking in an after-school program, or going to a tutoring session. These resources play an integral role in managing your players’ mental health, an essential part of winning the game.

All of the “wins” and “setbacks” will be based on real-life stories collected through a research process the students are currently undertaking, something Evans says is important to the integrity of the game.

“We don’t want these stories to be hearsay or things that could theoretically. We’re doing our research to create an accurate game of experiences that have truly happened,” Evans says.

“I think we are creating something really special,” says social work and psychology undergrad **Ashley Pereira ’22**, who is part of the team currently analyzing hundreds of peer-reviewed journals and case studies



Headshot of Kerri Evans courtesy of Melissa Penley Cormier.

to find stories of success and heartbreak to include. “And to know we are creating it in a way where it’s based on research just makes you feel so confident about the decisions you make.”

The game also aims to highlight the cultural differences within the education systems of various countries. For example, Evans says, it’s important to be mindful that immigrant students may not understand how to open up a locker or the need to raise your hand to ask for permission to speak. The team is working on ways to include these discrepancies into the game.

“We take for granted that we know the ‘rules of the game,’ in our education systems,” says TESOL graduate student and team member **Eric Chen ’22**. “If educators assume children from other countries come in with this knowledge, it can put the kids at a disadvantage.”

Like all great games, “Emerging” plays on participants’ emotions. The stakes are high, and tragedy or triumph may be just around the corner.



Left: Members of Evans’ board game team work on brainstorming the look and feel of “Emerging.” From left to right—Eric Chen ’22, TESOL, senior Shahana Abdul Javed, psychology, and Ashley Pereira ’22, social work and psychology, and Evans. Photo by Marlayna Demond ’11.

GAME DEVELOPERS GALORE

Over in the Engineering building, a different type of game development is taking place. Over 46 game developers are congregating to create the next great video game. Founded in 2005, the Game Developers Club is dedicated to bringing students of all majors and skill levels together to learn about game development, work as a team, and, of course, create video games.

Emotions are high around this time of year, as club members pitch their ideas to the group in hopes their game will garner interest from other club members. Vice president of the club, **Seth Davis '22, computer science**, is well acquainted with the process. He's been a part of the club for three years and has created three games. Pitch time is his favorite time of the year.

"It's always so exciting to see a person get up in front of the club and talk about an idea they're passionate about," Davis says. "Some people are so nervous that others won't like their idea, but then after they pitch it, five people come running up to them saying they love the idea and want to support them."

In 2020, Davis pitched the idea for a game called Binary Bubbles, a side-scroller (think Super Mario Bros.) puzzle game. The goal is simple: Get to the yellow flag as quickly as you can. The catch? There are malfunctioning robots in the way. Using strategy and logic, players must hack into the robots, steal their code bubbles, and move the code bubbles to other robots.

Davis and his team created 20 levels that span over two worlds, something he says would only be possible by working with an interdisciplinary team. Davis enlisted the help of art students, music students, and English students to make his games a reality.

"There are so many majors represented in the club—it's not just computer science

people," he says. "This club teaches you how to work as a team to create an amazing product."

TURNING GAMES INTO JOBS

If Davis had to pick a second-favorite time of year, it would be the unveiling of the games. It's when club members take their projects to the school and community and let others play the video games they've worked so hard to create.

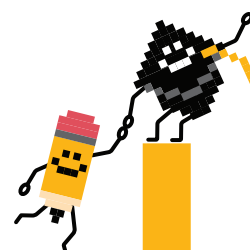
Binary Bubbles was featured at 2020's Undergraduate Research and Creative Achievement Day (URCAD) along with 13 other video games created by members of the Game Developers Club. Previous games have also been featured at Artscape, Baltimore's largest annual art festival.

Members of the Game Developers Club receive more than just thunderous applause at URCAD and Artscape—they also get job offers from blue-chip employers. They've gone on to find positions at Facebook, Unity game engine, and Firaxis Games, to name a few.

"Our club is actually very career-focused," Davis says. "Employers love it when they see our portfolios and see we completed a game. Lots of former members got jobs because of this club."

As a member of the club's executive board, Davis works hard to ensure the games are seen by as many people as possible, including professional game developers. Some of those professionals are former club members themselves. Davis says alumni like **Eric Jordan '08, computer science**, currently at Meta, are eager to help current club members achieve their dreams.

"This club is such a great way to network and build real relationships," Davis says. "It's the perfect way to get that gaming job you've always dreamed of."



THE GO-TO GAMER GUY

Marc Olano knows a thing or two about video games—he’s commonly referred to as UMBC’s “go-to gamer guy.” Ironically, Olano isn’t much of a gamer himself, but he certainly knows the recipe for creating a great game.

Olano, associate professor of computer science and electrical engineering, has been doing research on video game graphics hardware for over 25 years. He pioneered procedural shading on graphics hardware, a technique that is used to add details to a surface of an object. The model is now the standard on every PC and game platform. Olano also pioneered UMBC’s Game Development track and helped usher in UMBC’s 3D photogrammetry scanning facility in 2015, now serving as the director for both.

The Game Development track and the Visual Arts Department’s Animation and Interactive Media concentration make up “GAIM:” UMBC’s Games, Animation and Interactive Media program. GAIM prepares students for careers in the video game industry and exposes them to internship opportunities at local game development companies such as Firaxis,



Headshot of Marc Olano courtesy of Ryan Zuber '04, Imaging Research Center.

Big Huge Games, Epic Games, Mythic Entertainment and Zynga.

In the GAIM capstone course, visual arts and computer science students join forces for a semester to design an original game. The course mimics the setup of teams in the industry where 500 artists and programmers must work together for several years to develop a single game.

“My role is teaching the students how to do the work, then letting the students figure out for themselves how to actually do it,” Olano says. “I’ve found it brings students a lot of joy to know they created something very independently.”



IT NEVER GETS OLD SEEING STUDENTS WHEN THEY REALIZE THEY CAN ACTUALLY BUILD A GAME FOR THEMSELVES AND THEY ARE EXCITED DOING IT. HONESTLY, IT BRINGS ME A LOT OF JOY, TOO.

— *Marc Olano, associate professor, computer science and electrical engineering*



Marc Olano’s game development class presents their spring 2021 final presentations. Screenshot via YouTube.com.



THIS CLUB IS SUCH A GREAT WAY TO NETWORK AND BUILD REAL RELATIONSHIPS. IT'S THE PERFECT WAY TO GET THAT GAMING JOB YOU'VE ALWAYS DREAMED OF.

— *Seth Davis '22, computer science*



A still from “Bandit,” a game that came from Marc Olano and Anne Rubin joining their classes.

“BANDIT”

Olano’s first taste of an educational game development project was with UMBC history professor **Anne Rubin**. In spring 2015, Rubin and Olano united their classes to create a computer game called “Bandit” detailing the 1861 Pratt Street Riots, an event many scholars believe was the site of first blood shed in the U.S. Civil War. Undergraduates in the Game Development track built the game and Rubin’s history students served as historical researchers and consultants.

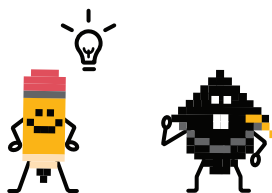
In the game, players control a fox who is on the loose on the streets of Baltimore during the Pratt Street Riots, when Massachusetts militiamen came in contact with anti-war protestors in Baltimore. The fox is on the hunt for documents from the riots, which can be examined and recorded all while trying to avoid guards patrolling Pratt Street.

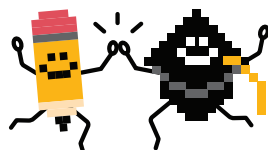
“MEETING MAYHEM”

Olano is currently working with professor of computer science **Alan Sherman** and students from the UMBC Cyber Defense Lab to create a video game called “Meeting Mayhem.” The web-based game aims to help students learn about adversarial thinking, or the ability to embody the technological capabilities and strategic reasoning of hackers. The goal of the game is to arrange a meeting time and place by sending and receiving messages through an insecure network that is under the control of a malicious adversary. Players can choose to be the hero or the villain, or in this case,

the benevolent meeting-maker or the hacker. The hacker can disrupt the efforts of the meeting-maker by intercepting, modifying, blocking, and injecting messages into the insecure network.

In this engaging challenge, computer science students learn the basics of the Dolev-Yao intruder network model, a framework used to analyze safety protocols within a communications network. Students also learn the value of using cryptography to mitigate these dangers.





WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO WIN?

Across UMBC, professors and students are harnessing the power of play to enrich their learning experiences. Be it video games, board games, or anything in between, Retrievers are rich with ideas of how to make learning a little more interactive and a lot more fun.

Olano, who was recently appointed associate dean for academic programs in the College of Engineering and Information Technology, is adjusting to his new responsibilities, but for him, it's still all about the students and the games.

"It never gets old seeing students when they realize they can actually build a game for themselves and they are excited doing

it," Olano says. "Honestly, it brings me a lot of joy, too."

For Evans, winning means the participants of "Emerging" leave the game with more insight than before—even insight into what different types of "success" could look like. In the meantime, her students will experience joy as they learn research skills, build the game, and begin to introduce the game to more students in the coming semesters. The team plans to gain knowledge from other UMBC students who are immigrants themselves and discover how this subset of students found success in college. After that, the team will enlist the help

of UMBC art students to help design a prototype. In the future, the team hopes to premiere the game to educators outside of the UMBC community.

"People have sympathy reading case studies, but it's not nearly as visceral as if you're playing a game and your character experiences something tragic and now you've lost three turns," Evans says. "Players will feel the anger of feeling left behind and the joy of successes."

For Davis and the Game Developers Club, winning means making friends, networking, and having fun. "At the end of the day, we're really just having a great time making games," he says.

Kerri Evans examines other games to see how best to build the board game "Emerging." Photo by Marlayna Demond '11.



WE DON'T WANT THESE STORIES TO BE HEARSAY OR THINGS THAT COULD THEORETICALLY HAPPEN. WE'RE DOING OUR RESEARCH TO CREATE AN ACCURATE GAME OF EXPERIENCES THAT HAVE TRULY HAPPENED.

— Kerri Evans, assistant professor, social work

HOW TO CHILL OUT

With Joella Lubaszewski '10, theatre



In the hustle and bustle of exams, family dinners, and everyday life, it can be easy to forget to take time for yourself—time that isn't spent thinking about the errands you need to run or the emails cluttering your inbox. One could argue that Ferris Bueller said it best when he reminded us, "Life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it."

*A great way to reconnect, relax, and recenter is through yoga. UMBC's coordinator in fitness and wellness, **Joella Lubaszewski '10, theatre**, has spent hundreds of hours getting certified, so she can teach you the art of finding your calm.*

Tools of the Trade

1. A willingness to try (seriously, that's it): "There are a lot of different types of yoga and ways to practice—you don't necessarily need anything special," says Lubaszewski.
2. Optional: Yoga mat and yoga blocks.

Step 1

GET STARTED

So frequently people seem to think they need to have a certain level of flexibility or balance to get started (or the right wardrobe), but Lubaszewski wants to assure newbies this is not the case.

"I think anybody can do yoga in some capacity," says Lubaszewski. "There are a lot of different kinds of yoga. Maybe you're never going to put your foot behind your head, that doesn't mean you're not doing yoga. Maybe for you it's more of the meditation or the act of practicing."

She encourages those who are new to try a few studios and a few classes before throwing in the towel—the RAC offers quite a few options, too. Having trouble getting started? Try journaling or reading beforehand to ease yourself into the class and center your focus.

Step 2

FIND YOUR SPACE

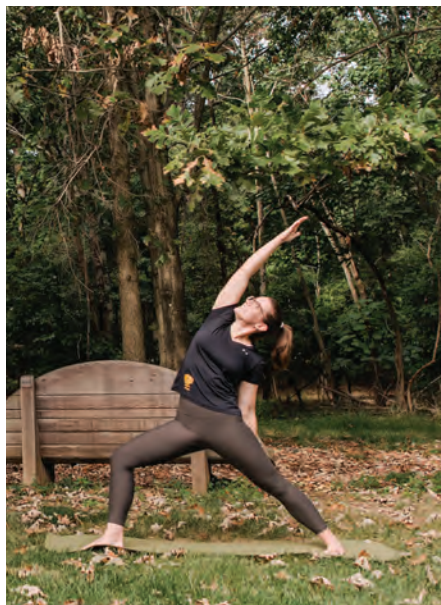
Wouldn't it be cool to have a full yoga studio in your home? Yes. Is that feasible? Maybe not, but it's okay to dream big. The good news is you don't need a fancy space or equipment to get started. The rise of online classes has made it easier than ever to take a virtual class from virtually anywhere.

"Some days your practice will be just from your bed in your pajamas and some days it will be on the floor, it just depends on what you need that day," says Lubaszewski.

The important thing is finding a space that's yours. One of the biggest challenges that comes with starting is focusing on your practice. You may find that you concentrate better when you're in an in-person class with others, a live video with an instructor, a pre-recorded class you can do at your own speed, or even just working through your own flow.

*Through recurring events like Mindfulness Mondays, UMBC students and staff are encouraged to find ways to breathe and relax. Here, RAC fitness instructor **Erica Sligh '20, biological sciences**, leads a yoga class next to the Library Pond in 2019.*





Step 3

FIND WHAT WORKS FOR YOU

If you're trying yoga for the first time and can't seem to get the hang of it, you're not the only one. Lubaszewski recalls that when she first started practicing, she admits she thought it was "a little boring," but as she integrated it into her regular routine, she fell in love with it.

You don't need to have a reason to start or set an intention to start your practice that day. "It's such a personal thing; if you have a clear reason and intention, sure, you can think about that. If you don't, maybe you'll figure it out along the way, but it's not a problem if you don't," she assures new students.

Step 4

BE PREPARED TO GROW YOUR ART

"I say this during savasana [the final resting pose of almost every class]—try not to think that as soon as class is over you're going to get changed and go to the grocery store and run your errands," Lubaszewski encourages. "Just stop, don't think for a minute."



We know this one is easier said than done, but if you're really going to let yourself relax, you're going to have to channel your inner Elsa and "let it go." There are so few occasions when we're actually encouraged not to think, but this helps to reflect on the work you just did and capture the last vestiges of peace before returning to real life.

Brain still stuck on a hamster wheel of thoughts? Lubaszewski suggests making an inventory of all the things you can feel—your legs on the mat, your arms at your sides, the fabric of your clothes, etc.

Step 5

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Even after over a decade of practice, Lubaszewski still doesn't consider herself an expert (hence why it's called a practice). For her, the appeal is that you can do it every day but still find new and different ways to suit your needs.

"One of the reasons I really love yoga is that it can be whatever you need, when you need it. Sometimes it's sitting down for an intense 90-minute workout, sometimes it's 30 seconds of just breathing because you're feeling overwhelmed."



Step 6

RECAPTURE YOUR PEACE THROUGHOUT THE DAY

As you start to condition yourself to take time throughout the day, it can get easier to recapture some of those feelings of peace, even without rolling out your mat.

"It can be easy to wake up and jump into all the things you have to do," says Lubaszewski, "but giving yourself permission to stop and focus for a second can calm you down and change the trajectory of your day."

— Kait McCaffrey

I SPY AT UMBC





I spy with my Retriever eye...

- Academic Row
- A.O.K. Library
- Baby geese
- Bicyclist
- Blue crab
- Catonsville, aka "Music City"
- Chess piece
- Homecoming bonfire
- ISLB
- OCA Mocha
- PAHB
- Squirrels (3)
- Statue of True Grit

Illustration by Cassie Le '18, visual arts and biological sciences. Le worked at commonvision during her time at UMBC, and she's now a digital graphic designer at PBS Kids.

CLASS NOTES

UMBC Class Notes is compiled by *UMBC Magazine* staff from items submitted online and by mail by alumni as well as from news articles and press releases received by the University. This edition of Class Notes contains information processed by October 29, 2021.

How to Submit Class Notes

The deadline for submitting Class Notes for the next print issue of *UMBC Magazine* is April 25, 2022. Notes and photos may be submitted online at umbc.edu/magazine or by email to magazine@umbc.edu.

Photo Guidelines

Digital photos should be taken on the highest-quality setting. They should be 4 x 6 inches or larger and 300 ppi. Save the attachment as a TIFF or JPEG. Questions? Please email magazine@umbc.edu.

1971

Charlene Thomas Porter, social work and sociology, celebrates the 50th anniversary of the second graduating class of UMBC. She fondly remembers the intrepid spirit of students and staff at the brand new university, the mud of construction notwithstanding. “We thrived,” she says. “The education that we received from UMBC—that baby university—prepared us not only for our respected place in our chosen field, but the courage to thirst for knowledge and further accomplishments.”

1976

Blair Grubb, biological sciences, cardiologist at the University of Toledo Medical Center, explains the wide-ranging symptoms of postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome and his breakthrough research that may provide a roadmap for new diagnostic methods and treatments in the third episode of *Prescribed Listening*.

1978

Jeffrey Armiger, English, whose career includes 30-plus years of banking, was appointed to the University of Maryland Medical System Board of Directors.

1980

Steve Cassard, political science, his wife, Laura Cassard, and **Debora Fajer-Smith '81, political science**, met at UMBC and have been lifelong friends since.

Margaret Chisolm, visual and performing arts, spouse of fellow UMBC alum **Richard Chisolm '82**, had her latest book *From Survive to Thrive: Living Your Best Life with Mental Illness* published in October 2021. Its aim is to demystify psychiatric illness, combat stigma, and inspire hope for people with mental illness and their loved ones.

Barry Willen, chemistry and history, was recently promoted to the position of relationship banker at PNC Bank in Eldersburg, Maryland. He welcomed his fourth grandchild in November.

1984

Renee Cooper, economics, joined US Wind as the Maryland business engagement program compliance manager.

1986

Stephanie C. Hill, economics, discussed her career and accomplishments on a podcast interview conducted by SWE Diverse.

Susan Tasker-Weaver, nursing, received the Allegany College of Maryland Distinguished Alumni Award.



Steve Cassard '80 and his wife, Laura (left), and lifelong friend Debora Fajer-Smith '81 (right) get together in Millville, Delaware.

1987

LaTonya Groom, information systems management, has been named vice president of talent and diversity at HanesBrands Inc.

1989

Tom Sadowski, political science, has been named the next executive director of the Maryland Economic Development Corporation.

1990

Michele Barmoy, biological sciences, was honored with the Sanner Award for Outstanding Teaching at Allegany College of Maryland.

Gustavo Matheus, biological sciences, was elected to the Leadership Montgomery Board of Directors. Matheus is a member of litigation law firm Anderson & Quinn LLC.

Jackie Pfeiler, economics, was promoted to senior vice president for finance at the real estate firm St. John Properties.

LIVING HER VALUES

Kate Tracy, M.A. '01, Ph.D. '03, psychology



Kate Tracy, M.A. '01, Ph.D. '03, psychology, holds many titles—newest among them is special advisor to the senior vice chancellor of Academic and Student Affairs of the University System of Maryland (USM). But one of her longest-standing and most important descriptors is “Maxine Tracy in a different form,” laughs Tracy. “A feistier version of my grandmother.”

Raised in a small, Midwestern town, Tracy looks back on her grandmother Maxine as a source of unconditional love and support. “In many ways, my grandmother was the northstar in my compass. I always felt anchored—in the most positive way—to her. She did what she could where she was for as many as she could in the way that she could. She opened opportunities for a lot of women,” says Tracy, who is honoring the late Maxine with an endowment in her name to the Women’s Center.

Tracy’s path back to UMBC and eventually to giving is a winding one that includes almost 20 years teaching at the University of Maryland School of Medicine and shadowing President **Freeman Hrabowski** through a fellowship as an American Council on Education (ACE) Fellow for the 2019 – 2020 school year. That her tenure (and her background in epidemiology and public health) overlapped with the onset of a global pandemic is a coincidence not lost to Tracy. Her expertise made her a natural choice for joining the USM’s pandemic response efforts.

In those early meetings, Tracy watched the group’s dynamics take shape: “Freeman’s focus was always ‘We need to stay focused on the people,’” she says. “I think he brought that people-centeredness to the conversations and I was like, ‘That’s how I want to lead.’”

And her leadership has not gone unrecognized. Tracy received a 2021 Alumni Award for Retrievers directly working on the pandemic response. Serving as a special advisor for USM, Tracy sees her role as “an important set of eyes and ears and public health expertise” for the system, helping keep campus communities at a much lower rate of infection than their surrounding counties. “Our campuses are among the safest places to be and we are part of the solution of keeping Maryland open and the economy humming along,” says Tracy.

UMBC’s success in this endeavor, says Tracy, is because of the groundwork of trust already laid by President Hrabowski. “He has basically permeated that value system to the most basic level of the organization and it just goes all the way up through the top. When you put in the time to build that kind of culture—the community knows they can trust your leadership during times of crisis like a pandemic.”

Women’s Center Director **Jess Myers**, who nominated Tracy for the award, says “Dr. Tracy’s work in helping understand and navigate testing protocols and products not only benefits UMBC but all the schools in the system and what better reaction is that of #UMBCtogether?”

Tracy has seen the impact of seemingly small gestures like her grandmother Maxine’s open door hospitality, for example. In Tracy’s own work, she helped facilitate the successful effort to vaccinate 11,000 girls in Mali against HPV, which ultimately positioned the country to apply for outside assistance to put that vaccine in their national immunization program.

When she learned the impact her gift could make for the Returning Women’s Student (RWS) Scholars + Affiliates program—a cohort that supports adult learners at UMBC—Tracy said it was an easy decision. She visited an RWS event with President Hrabowski just a few weeks after she started her ACE fellowship. “The energy of that event was just so powerful,” remembers Tracy, “and I was like, ‘I would like to do something with this. I wonder what that looks like?’ After talking with folks in Alumni Engagement, I started thinking about how my grandmother was such a powerful force in my life, and I’ve been a women’s health researcher, so all of these little dots started linking up together.”

The Women’s Center plans to dedicate the Maxine Tracy Endowment to scholarship support for approximately 25 RWS students each year, offering pre-semester orientations, monthly events, and individualized support for adult learners who are often already at the margins of university life, says Myers.

Tracy, meanwhile, is thinking through what the next step of her career will look like. “When I think about taking on leadership roles, I think about the ways I watched my grandmother all through my life make space for people that she didn’t necessarily understand and that she didn’t necessarily agree with, but she always found a way to make them feel welcome and able to participate,” says Tracy. “I think we desperately need strategies to open up dialogue and conversation, and I want to be part of that conversation.”

— *Randianne Leyshon '09*

Snapshots of Tracy and her grandmother Maxine, courtesy of Tracy.



CLASS NOTES

1991

Bruce R. Reich, English, was accepted into the Dramatists Guild. Reich is the author of three plays and is currently working on expanding his one-act play, *Lavender Lad*, into a full-length play.

1993

Kimberly Ellison-Taylor, information systems, has been named as one of 2020-2021's Most Powerful Women in accounting by CPA Practice Advisor. She was also announced as a new member of the board of trustees for Loyola University Maryland.

1994

Oliver Myers, M.S. '96, Ph.D. '07, M1, mechanical engineering, associate dean of equity and inclusion in Clemson University's College of Engineering, Computing, and Applied Sciences, has been named Fellow of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, one of mechanical engineering's highest professional honors.

Ryan Saunders, visual and performing arts, co-produced a documentary *SteelPan Now! Notes on Where Pan Gone* that premiered at the Trinidad + Tobago Film Festival.

1995

Mike Hoffer, mechanical engineering, won a seat on the Carolina Beach Town Council in November 2021.

Ginina Jackson Stevenson, Afro-American studies, was sworn in as a magistrate for the Circuit Court of Anne Arundel County on November 1.

1998

Aimee Jennings, visual and performing arts, has been working on an experimental travel essay film trilogy. Jennings' recent work has consisted of editing seasons of *Bull, For Life, Grown-ish*, and most recently, *S.W.A.T.*

Padmanabhan Seshaiyer, Ph.D., mathematics, was officially sworn in to the Virginia STEM Education Advisory Board.

1999

Omolola Eniola-Adefeso, M7, chemical engineering, and President **Freeman Hrabowski** contributed their thoughts on the National Institutes of Health's new plan to combat the funding disparity between white and minority scientists. Eniola-Adefeso also shared how the Howard Hughes Medical Institute can improve its plan to increase diversity and equity in science in an article published by *Stat News*. This year, Eniola-Adefeso was appointed as University of Michigan's associate dean for graduate and professional education.

Daniel Harrigan, biological sciences, joined medical research company BioFactura as a senior manager.

Marilyn Hatza, Afro-American studies, was promoted to director of grants and community engagement at the statewide educational non-profit, Maryland Humanities.

Adrienne McFadden, M7, interdisciplinary studies, was named chief medical officer at Buoy Health, an AI-powered health navigation platform.

2000

Chuan-Chin Chiao, Ph.D., biological sciences, became the head of the National Museum of Natural Science, the largest science museum in Taiwan in August 2021. "It's a huge challenge for me but also a great opportunity to make impacts on science education in Taiwan."

2001

Kafui Dzirasa, M8, chemical engineering, recently earned two highly prestigious honors distinctive even among leaders in the medical and life sciences. He was named a Howard Hughes Medical Institute Investigator and was elected to the National Academy of Medicine. Dzirasa is the K. Ranga Rama Krishnan associate professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Duke University. He earned both his M.D. and his Ph.D. in neurobiology and neurosciences at Duke.



Brett McKenzie '04, is now senior manager of content and community for Foresight Insurance, and a board member for Baltimore-based Capoeira Social Project, founded by fellow alum Justin West '04, mathematics. She's mom to Sophie (pictured here on campus) and Nathan.

Jincai Li, Ph.D., chemical engineering, has been named CEO of the new biotech company WuXi XDC.

2002

Mina Cheon, M.F.A., imaging and digital arts, began a three-year appointment as the associate dean of the First Year Experience and Faculty at the Maryland Institute College of Art in July 2021.

Kenita Barrow, M7, interdisciplinary studies, wrote about why the Meyerhoff Scholars Program is an effective model for encouraging diversity in medtech at the collegiate level in *Med Device Online*.

Bernadette Hanlon, M.A., policy sciences, Ph.D. '07, public policy, was appointed editor of the *Journal of Urban Affairs*. As of July 2021, she became the sixth editor of the 42-year-old journal.

Nathaniel Jones, III, Ph.D., policy sciences, was appointed as president of the College of Alameda.

Ramya Joseph, economics and computer science, discussed the "Roller Coaster Ride of Entrepreneurship" this fall at UMBC's Alex. Brown Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation. Joseph is the CEO and founder of Pefin, the world's first AI financial advisor.

2003

Michelle Jabès Corpora, English, recently published a book titled *The Fog of War*, which tells true stories as reported by Martha Gelhorn, an accomplished war correspondent.

Brian Rowland, economics, is building a strong men's soccer program at Temple University as head coach.

2004

Brett McKenzie, English, was appointed as the senior content and community director of Foresight Commercial Insurance.

Augustine "Jay" Nwachu, psychology, is included in *The Daily Record's* "Influential Marylanders" list for Civic Leadership.

2005

La Jerne Terry Cornish, Ph.D., language, literacy, and culture, will serve as interim president of Ithaca College for the 2021 – 2022 academic year.

Malcolm Furgol, history, was appointed as the first executive director of the Frederick County Health Care Coalition.

Isaac Kinde, M13, biological sciences, was highlighted as a leading healthcare innovator by *Business Advisor*.

Aaron Merki, political science, was promoted to chief program officer of the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, which aims to improve the lives of people experiencing poverty in the U.S. and Israel.

2006

Steve Sharkey, M.P.P., has been appointed director of the Baltimore City Department of Transportation.

Rear Admiral Sylvia Trent-Adams, Ph.D., public policy, former principal deputy assistant secretary for health for the U.S. has recently been named chief strategy officer for the University of North Texas.

2007

Brita D'Agostino, M.F.A., imaging and digital arts, is exhibiting her collage and installation works, titled "Premium Glossies," virtually and in person at Arts Visalia in California.

Sharmy Davis, history, has recently been named director of diversity at Owensboro Community and Technical College in Kentucky.

2008

Kizzmekia Corbett, M16, biological sciences and sociology, was named Federal Worker of the Year for her work that was central to developing mRNA-based coronavirus vaccines.

Curtis Fomengia, psychology, and his company FiveMedicine are working with local churches to provide vaccines to underserved communities in Washington, D.C.

2009

Alexandra Barnard, American studies, serves as chief mate on the "Kwai" cargo ship, chartered by the nonprofit Ocean Voyages Institute, which performed the largest at-sea ocean clean-up in history, removing more than 340,000 pounds of plastic from the ocean.

Neal Karkhanis, M.A. '11, management of aging studies, has been included in *The Daily Record's* "Successful by 40" list.

Drew Westervelt, economics, is the owner of HEX, a sports apparel laundry detergent company. HEX has been named the official laundry partner of the Premier Lacrosse League.

Karsonya (Kaye) Wise Whitehead, Ph.D., language, literacy and culture, is profiled in the *Baltimore Business Journal* as a winner of a 2021 Leader in Diversity Award.

2011

Bradley Andrus, M.A. management of aging studies, was named the new executive director of Devonshire at PGA National by Erickson Senior Living.

Kimberley Acebo Arteché, visual arts, joined the Berkeley Art Center as the new co-director in July 2021.

Serenity Kelly, emergency health services, joined the University of Maryland Shore Medical Center at Chestertown as a health advocate in its new Mobile Wellness Team.

2013

Peter David Andes, history, philosophy, and ancient studies, earned a Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada. The title of his dissertation was "The Ethics of Procreation and Parenthood in Affluent Nations."

Julia Celtnieks, media and communication studies, started a position as an enrollment marketing specialist for the Johns Hopkins Carey Business School.

Schnaude Dorizan, M21, biological sciences and psychology, received Northwestern University's McBride Award for her commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Reese Fuller, psychology and sociology, discusses his career path as a writer in a design agency in episode 412 of the *Revision Path* podcast.

Donta Henson, health administration and policy, M.P.S. '17, and his brother William are excited to announce the launch of Los Hermanos 1978, a signature line of premium tequilas that seeks to change consumers' expectations of the Mexican spirit.

Robbin Lee, visual arts, the executive director of Baltimore Homecoming, is included in *The Daily Record's* "Leading Women" winners 2021 list.

Mallorie Ortega, theatre and visual arts, talked on WTOP about directing *The Girl Who Left Home*, a film that premiered at the annual D.C. Asian Pacific American Film Festival in July 2021.

Lynn Pronobis, chemistry, the new meadmaker at Charm City Meadworks, is included in a *Baltimore Style* list of women leaders fostering innovation for three spirits brands.

Tatiana Figueroa Ramirez, English, performed at a Busboys and Poets event in Washington, D.C., this past summer.

CLASS NOTES



On November 1, Ginina Jackson Stevenson '95 was sworn in as a magistrate for the Circuit Court of Anne Arundel County.

2014

Charles Mason III, design, opened his solo art exhibition on June 12 at the Goya Contemporary Gallery.

2015

Mustafa Al-Adhami, M.S., Ph.D. '20, mechanical engineering, and his company Astek Diagnostics are part of the summer 2021 cohort of the Y Combinator, a startup accelerator.

Toni-Rose Bioc, health administration and policy, talked about her family business, Manila Mart, in a *Voyage Baltimore* article.

Jermaine Ellerbe, Ph.D., language, literacy, and culture, was awarded a 2020 – 2021 Fulbright Teachers for Global Classrooms Program Fellowship to South Korea and a 2021 – 2022 NEA Foundation Global Learning Fellowship to South Africa.

2016

Rachael DeVore, visual arts, created animation for the music video for "Nevertheless" by Princess Goes To The Butterfly Museum. The video appeared online in *Rolling Stone*.

Maura Smith, health administration and policy, completed the first phase of Navy Officer Candidate School this fall.

Scott Tiffin, social work, joined Public Policy Partners as a senior government relations associate.

2017

Audrey Clark, sociology, was named a 2021 Star Watch Honoree by *Publishers Weekly* in recognition for her professional contributions in the early stage of her career. Clark is a senior marketing specialist at 1517 Media, with the Fortress Press imprint.

Adam Leah W. Harvey, M.S., Ph.D. '21, physics, accepted an offer from the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory to work in the Air and Missile Defense Sector while continuing to pursue their passion for policy.

Michael Hassett, M.P.P., Ph.D. '19, public policy, and his wife, **Chiara Collette, M.A. '21, TESOL**, founded Friends of Tonga in 2018 as a Returned Peace Corps group dedicated to keeping relationships and collaborations going with their Peace Corps communities in Tonga. In 2021, Friends of Tonga received a Literacy Award from the Library of Congress, and Hassett has been recognized with a 2021 UMBC Alumni Award.

Qubilah Huddleston, M.P.P., has recently been named an education policy analyst at the DC Fiscal Policy Institute.

Jared Margulies, geography and environmental systems, is noted as a plant trafficking expert in a *Baltimore Magazine* article about illegal cacti trade.

Alexa Murphy, chemical engineering, and **Shane West, chemical engineering**, are engaged. Their wedding is planned for March 2022.

Paul Oh, visual arts, is a 2021 Saul Zaentz Innovation Fund Fellowship recipient for his documentary *Everlasting Life*.

2018

Gabrielle Dickerson, information systems, M.P.S. '19, cybersecurity, discusses her experience rock climbing and her work to combat racism and increase diversity in the sport in *The Washington Post Magazine*.

Jennifer Hewitt, physics, was featured by the Optical Society of America's journal *Applied Optics* and appeared on local news in central Florida for her research in detecting invasive Burmese pythons in the Florida Everglades using near infrared sensing.

Reagan Huber, mathematics, talked in a *Traders Magazine* article about her new role as a market structure analyst at T. Rowe Price, which she assumed after serving at the company as a UMBC student intern.

2019

Shannon Clancy, mechanical engineering, was featured on NPR, discussing her mechanical engineering capstone project developed along with her teammates in the same major, **Rebekah Kempske '19** and **Juliet Schick '20**. Through their capstone, they designed a device to help a woman living with rheumatoid arthritis reach her face so that she could brush her teeth, put on makeup, etc.

Anna Gifty Opoku-Agyeman, M26, economics, talks about the first Sadie Tanner Mossell Alexander Conference for Economics and Related Fields, which she co-founded, on NPR's *Planet Money* podcast.

Sammy Kahsai, business technology administration, played midfield on the men's soccer team at UMBC and now plays for the Maryland Bobcats FC.

Dan Lee, computer science, CEO of Dentuit Imaging, discusses with Technical.ly the last 18 months of working on his startup, which uses AI to improve dental care.

Ezra Pailer, visual arts, created a promotional animation for the Chesapeake Film Festival. He is an animator at Early Light Media.

2020

Gabrielle Franks, music technology, talks about their new album, the process of music-making, and more in an artist interview published by *The Alternative*.

Alison Knowles, M.P.P., was selected as a legislative fellow with the State of Maryland Department of Legislative Services with the Education Workgroup during the 2021 term.

FROM POOL TO MED SCHOOL

Philip Adejumo '18, M26, biochemistry and molecular biology



Days before the torch was lit at this summer's Tokyo Olympics, swimmer **Philip Adejumo '18, M26, biochemistry and molecular biology**, was certain that his years-long quest to compete for Nigeria on the most prominent world stage would become a reality. However, as many athletes experienced during the COVID-19 Olympics, the details of paperwork and processes got in the way—taking away his chance to compete.

But Adejumo—who is also pursuing an M.D./Ph.D. at Yale—found a path through the disappointment to raise his eyes to the next challenge.

Adejumo came to UMBC in the fall of 2014 as part of the Meyerhoff Scholars Program and went on to a stellar senior year on the swim team, earning a pair of America East titles in the 100 and 200 butterfly events. His UMBC butterfly times broke Nigerian national records and he was buoyed by very competitive performances in the 2018 World Swimming Championships.

After graduating, Adejumo decided to gain more research experience in the biomedical department at Vanderbilt University before applying to medical school and to keep up with his swimming training. He turned heads during the 2019 African Games in Morocco when he qualified in second place in the 100-meter butterfly, becoming the first Nigerian ranked to medal in the games.

"A bunch of Nigerians came to the pool to watch and created a huge uproar," said Adejumo. "I felt that I was actually changing the narrative of the sport in a country that doesn't get acknowledged like that on the international scene."

Now his path was clear: Apply to medical school while training for the 2020 Olympics.

Yale University offered Adejumo the opportunity to pursue both his academic and athletic goals. But with COVID-19 spreading across the world,

and conversations about racial injustice becoming a national focus, it was a difficult year.

Pandemic closures forced Adejumo to drive an hour each way for daily 5-7 a.m. practices, and he also traveled to swimming events throughout the U.S. at his own expense to try to shave 0.5 seconds off his butterfly time in order to meet the Olympic qualifying standard. But the mark remained out of reach.

"I was so close to my goal and working so hard," he said. "What am I doing all this for? Am I still in a spot where I can be competitive? A lot of those questions were going through my mind."

His mother provided excellent advice. "I sometimes have to give myself a break not being able to compete at the level I normally would. Even though it wasn't what I hoped, there were a lot of things that affected me. A lot of swimmers, a lot of Black swimmers, were going through so much during this time."

Adejumo invited his former teammate **Alexander Gliese '19, mechanical engineering**, to train and live with him in Nashville in the summer of 2020. "Even during that unforgiving time," says Gliese, now pursuing his Ph.D. in mechanical engineering at N.C. State, "Philip never lost sight of his ultimate goal of competing at the Games."

Even though he did not hit the qualifying time, Adejumo was ranked No. 1 in Nigeria by a wide margin and each country is entitled to enter one male and one female swimmer. The Nigeria Aquatics Federation sent their protégé a letter a week prior to the Games, stating that the International Olympic Committee would be inviting him to Tokyo—but the federation missed the deadline.

It was a difficult blow, says Adejumo, but it was softened, in part, by the support system that Adejumo has at UMBC.

Other Retriever swimmers also had their sights set on Tokyo. **Hania Moro '19, financial economics**, and Gliese hoped to represent Egypt and Denmark, respectively. **Emily Escobedo '17, psychology**, sought to become the first-ever Retriever student-athlete to represent the U.S. in Olympic competition.

"None of us ended up making the team that we were shooting for, but all of us had a very, very good shot of doing so," said Adejumo. "Seeing how they responded in not being able to compete in the event that they had been training for a long time gave me the strength to be able to handle my loss with grace as well."

Adejumo also credits **Keith Harmon**, the director of UMBC's Meyerhoff Scholars Program, with guiding him towards his academic goals while understanding the importance of his emerging athletic goals.

Now, as a second-year medical school student at Yale, Adejumo is considering specialties in cardiology or radiology, using health data for analysis to improve patient care. As for swimming, he plans to attend the FINA World Swimming Championships in Abu Dhabi, UAE, in December. And he's not ruling out a shot at the Paris Olympics in 2024.

"A big piece of my story is the process of continual improvement," Adejumo reflects. "I'm a big fan of moving slowly, as long as you're moving forward."

— Steve Levy '85

Images courtesy of UMBC Athletics



CLASS NOTES

Oladosu Teyibo, information systems, is building a software development company called Analog Team with several collaborators. Analog Team helps tech firms collaborate with individuals from underrepresented communities to power their digital business.

Elayna Williams, mechanical engineering, is included in a *Baltimore Sun* list of the top volleyball players in Howard County over the last decade.

2021

Viviana Angelini, political science, will receive support toward her master's degree as one of 10 Women in Defense Scholars, awarded by the National Defense Industrial Association.

Kathryn Blake, music composition, wrote *All Burnt Up*, a piece selected by Balance Campaign for performance at their fundraising concert.

Meghna Chandrasekaran, biological sciences, has been named to the Maryland Youth Advisory Council.

Lynn Dixon, music technology and music composition, was commissioned for a solo piano work by the District New Music Coalition, and the resulting *In Black, White, and Gray* premiered in June.

Ariel Egbunine, biochemistry and molecular biology, a participant in STEM BUILD at UMBC, was featured in a Johns Hopkins *News & Publications* article titled "Ariel's Story" on her inspiration to pursue medicine.



Montia Gardner, Ph.D. language, literacy, and culture, was nominated as vice president of education for the Northside Achievement Zone in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Michael Ogunsanya, M28, economics, one of the founders of MindStand Technologies, is included in *Maryland Inno's* "Inno: Under 25" list.

Katie Poteet, global studies and political science, one of UMBC's valedictorians, will pursue her Ph.D. at the University of Cambridge in England.

Ryan Shadle, graphic design, is a graphic designer for the Cleveland Cavaliers.

Jordan Troutman, M29, computer science and mathematics, and **Sam Patterson, M29, mathematics, statistics, and economics**, highlighted the Meyerhoff Scholars Program and discussed how to increase diversity in STEM in an essay published in *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education*.

Kiran Yarlagadda, computer science, and **Arveen Zarrabi '23, bioinformatics**, won the Collegiate Esports Invitational featuring Fortnite by beating the Big West Conference champion.

Friends we will miss

Paul Behrens, M.S. '80, Ph.D. '83, biological sciences, adjunct professor in the biology department, passed away on October 16. After graduating from UMBC, Behrens worked for more than three decades at Martek Biosciences, a biotechnology company based in Columbia, Maryland, that focused on using microalgae to produce high-value products. He joined UMBC as an adjunct professor in the 1980s, teaching the course Plant Biology to undergraduates for 25 years.

Allan "St. Johnn" Blondell II, '06, visual arts, passed away on August 10. His passion for the fine arts, especially photography, led to a teaching career to help open his students' eyes to the world of art and to encourage their creativity.

Robert P. Burchard, professor emeritus of biological sciences, passed away on September 21. Burchard believed in the potential of the young university that he joined as a founding member of the faculty during its first year, 1966. A campus leader for decades, he served as president of the Faculty Senate, interim chair of his department, and as interim dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. He recalled that creating UMBC's new biology curriculum from scratch was invigorating, writing, "It was a great experiment. And we were excited about what we were doing. There was a sense that we were all a part of a pioneering educational experience."

Joseph P. Connelly '77, biological sciences, who practiced family medicine for nearly 40 years, died on June 10 at home. He is survived by wife **Carla Connelly '77, biological sciences**.

J. Marvin Cook, founder of the Instructional Systems Development (ISD) graduate program at UMBC (now Learning & Performance Technology), died on May 13. The original ISD program began in the early 1970s and was arguably the first program of its kind in the nation. It was also one of UMBC's first master's degree programs. Cook was a pioneer by creating an applied professional program geared toward working adults.

Mark Cornes '99, psychology, and a member of the first UMBC men's lacrosse team to compete in the NCAA Division I Tournament, passed away unexpectedly on May 22.

Roger Dubois, who retired from the Department of Geography and Environmental Systems in 2005 after starting in the mid-1970s, passed away on October 14. He was a Rhode Island native, a Navy veteran, and a coastal geomorphologist, who is remembered for his passion for teaching, supporting his students, and UMBC.

Angela Houtz '96, English, was an intelligence analyst and civil servant for the Department of the Navy (DON). On September 11, 2001, she was tragically killed in the 9/11 terrorist attack on the Pentagon. On the 20-year remembrance of the attacks, the Navy announced the creation of The Angela M. Houtz Medal for Fallen Civilians, which recognizes and honors civilian employees of the DON who are killed or sustain serious injury as a result of a criminal act, natural disaster, terrorist act, or other circumstances as determined by the Secretary of the Navy in the performance of their official duties. Retired Rear Admiral Sam Cox remembers that Houtz was considered a "shipmate" by her coworkers. He writes that Houtz's dedication to service and the DON makes her the appropriate namesake for this award, which will only expand her already remarkable legacy.

BODY OF WORK

William Carter Edinger, associate professor emeritus of English, passed away on June 19. At UMBC, Edinger helped to found the university's Honors College as well as the English Department's Honors Program, which he directed for 17 years before retiring in 2008.

Sue Furnary, the second-longest-tenured head coach in UMBC women's basketball history, passed away on May 31. Furnary came to UMBC in the fall of 1980 and coached the Retrievers for 12 seasons. She amassed 143 victories, the second-most in the 53-year history of the program.

Rhonda Joy Ray '90, political science, passed away on July 19. Ray is remembered as a loyal alumna and supporter of UMBC. After she graduated from UMBC, she stayed connected to one of her beloved faculty members, Arthur Johnson. She regularly accepted and mentored UMBC student interns throughout her career. Ray also taught a UMBC internship course with Johnson for a few years. Johnson writes, "Rhonda exemplifies the kind of public servant our students aspire to be. Her work in the public sector speaks well of UMBC in producing graduates who make a difference and who serve Maryland."

Daniel P. Rexford '82, English, a former Erickson Retirement Communities marketing executive known for his lifelong enthusiasm for fitness, died of colon cancer on July 28.

Jeff Seidel '85, political science, a veteran sports writer (and frequent contributor to this publication) passed away on August 28. He is survived by his wife **Nadine Seidel '86, interdisciplinary studies**, and children **Zach Seidel '12, media and communication studies**, director of digital media for UMBC athletics, and current doctoral student in the language, literacy, and culture program **Kara Seidel '18, psychology**.

Frank R. Shivers Jr., a former adjunct professor of writing, passed away October 5. Shivers was an avid Baltimore historian and author of four books.

Walter J. Thompson II, '81, health science and policy, passed away on December 8, 2020. Thompson met his wife **Betty Lapp Thompson '79, economics**, at UMBC in 1974 and they married in 1980. Known as an enthusiastic motorcyclist, Thompson worked full-time for the State of Maryland for 20 years before retiring.

Kimberley Acebo Arteche '11, visual arts



Artist, educator, community and cultural worker, and curator: **Kimberley Acebo Arteche** identifies herself with all of these labels. But the path to becoming an artist was a considerable diversion from their original plan to enter the field of medicine.

"I come from a Filipino family and the expectation is always that the children either become nurses, doctors, or pharmacists," says Arteche '11, visual arts. Their mother worked at Howard University Hospital, mostly with other Filipino nurses, and Arteche's high grades in science pushed them in that direction.

It was at UMBC that Arteche, now the co-director of the Berkeley Art Center, decided to delve into other ways of exploring their identity and visibility. Joining the Filipino American Student Association their first year was one step; another was their role as a founding member of the campus hip-hop dance group Major De'inition. "I did struggle a little bit trying to navigate what my identity was as an autonomous person outside of my parents' home," says Arteche.

Exposure to folks pursuing arts pushed Arteche to switch majors and begin a journey down a new path: photography—finishing a visual arts major in only a year and a half.

Coincidentally, Arteche's graduation in 2011 was the same year UMBC established the Asian studies program. "I had been looking for this kind of education in this kind of history for so long!" says Arteche, who even emailed American studies Professor **Theodore S. Gonzalves** to ask if she should try to get a second degree at UMBC, this time in Asian studies. He offered to meet with her regularly instead.

Gonzalves, now the interim director of the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center, introduced Arteche to Filipino American literature and had them read *America Is in the Heart*, a book by Carlos Bulosan about the struggles of Filipino migrant laborers in the 1930s and 1940s. Gonzalves and Arteche also discussed Carlos Villa, an artist, educator, and community arts organizer and the first person in the U.S. to teach a Filipino American arts course.

From these conversations, Arteche situated themselves in the greater historical and colonialist context of America. "What came out of that was me finally realizing that, although my family had just immigrated to the U.S., my history here in the United States is so much longer," they say.

After getting their M.F.A. at San Francisco State, Arteche began teaching there while also working at the Berkeley Art Center and pursuing their own art. "For me, all of that informs each other. One of the classes I'm teaching is intermediate darkroom, where I focus on decolonizing photography, because our history of photography in the European-American Western canon is about documenting indigenous peoples and using that as a tool for colonialism."

While at the Berkeley Art Center, Arteche aims to break down ideas of art being seen as the "white cube gallery with crisp white walls." One of their art exhibitions is *Bodyless*, which features colorful and bright dresses called dusters suspended in spaces as if being worn, but, as expected by the title: without a body inside the dress.

Dusters, Arteche says, are very significant to their community. "They're the dresses that you wear at home. A lot of times your grandma doesn't even wear underwear underneath the dresses, because they're at home, they're doing physical domestic care work," Arteche says. As the only one pursuing arts in their family, and a self-proclaimed black sheep, Arteche has been digging into family history to understand oral histories and experiences.

They collected dusters from their own family members for the exhibit. "You see the outline of a body. That also is very similar for me, as a person of color in art spaces. When I got out of grad school, so much of me being affiliated with white art spaces was so that I could check off these diversity boxes."

Most recently, the San Francisco Arts Commission awarded Arteche funding for their work, an upcoming project called *Kundiman ng Katawan*. "It touches on these really tense political histories in the Philippines like the [Ferdinand] Marcos dictatorship, and also just how colonialism has compromised our relationship to our bodies and how we feel like success and wealth and freedom is tied to how much money we can make," they say.

"Artistically," Arteche says, "my goal is to make art that makes folks question their relationship to culture and question their relationship to history, in whatever that means for them."

—Anjali DasSarma '21

Image courtesy of Jamie Cardenas.

THEN & NOW



Cicada Invasion

The world has changed a lot over the past 17 years; smartphones have found their way into everyone's pockets, social media has taken over traditional media, video rental stores like Blockbuster have made way for streaming services like Netflix.

Things at UMBC have changed, too. The Chesapeake Employers Insurance Arena is now home to UMBC Athletics and world-renowned musical acts. The Performing Arts and Humanities Building has a gorgeous presence on campus. And our men's basketball team shocked the nation, becoming a household name. The list goes on.

Now imagine, while all of those things have happened, the cicadas have only changed guard twice.

The 2004 appearance of the screeching locusts only warranted one story in the then *Retriever Weekly*. But this year's cicadas got a celebrity welcome—it's possible that the doldrums of the pandemic particularly set the stage for this year's cicada pandamonium.

When they first arrived, it was as if aliens made their first landing on earth. Their mammoth physique and prehistoric appearance took some getting used to. Soon, they were everywhere, both wreaking havoc and making friends.

Rachel Wesley '22, visual arts, describes her first interaction with a cicada this summer as nothing less than alarming. "I looked over my shoulder and it was there staring at me with those outward pointing eyes. I didn't freak out but it was a deep breath and I was like 'okaaay'. They're so big," she says.

But before long, the intimidation factor dwindled. "By the end of summer, I was actually picking them up with my hand," says Wesley, the painter behind UMBC's new Retriever-themed cicada sculpture, a part of the Formstone Castle Collective's Cicada Parade-a, a Baltimore-based public art installation of plaster insects. "If they were on the sidewalk, I put them into a bush to get them away from the sidewalk," says Wesley.

When the next swarm visits UMBC in 2038, this brood will have faded in our memories, and their comeback will surely feel like aliens have first landed on earth yet again.

Special thanks to Creative Services's senior designer Jill Blum who purchased "Harold" the cicada to be painted and donated to UMBC for posterity.

— Eric Widemann '21



INSIDE
News 02
REGISTER TO VOTE
SGA Election results, Ambassador visits UMBC, and Drag show preview.
Opinion 08

Volume 38, Issue 28 1000 Hilltop Circle, Baltimore, MD 21250 May 4, 2004

The cicada swarms cometh

Preparing for Brood X - bugs will be harmless but numerous

JOE HOWLEY
Retriever Weekly Editorial Staff

UMBC students and faculty are bracing for a veritable plague of mythological proportions that could strike at any time in the coming weeks.

Brood X of Magicicada Septendecim commonly known as cicada is even now preparing to squirm forth from its underground hibernation like an ancient Egyptian curse. Brood X, is one of several local generations of the periodical cicada, that comes out every seventeen years - its last emergence was in 1987.

But the UMBC community has little to fear, according to Biology graduate student Mark Rowley. "It's not like they really

End in sight for campus construction projects

PATRICK TYLER
Retriever Weekly Editorial Staff

Construction projects on campus are a familiar sight to students, but the completion dates of these projects and the plans for campus development as a whole remain largely unknown to the campus community.

Currently, there are three major construction projects being completed on campus: the renovation of chemistry building, the construction of the Walker Avenue

WILD CARD

U Made the Best Choice

There are three things we find endlessly amusing: throwbacks to childhood, cutting things up, and attempting to predict the future. And there is one thing that magically combines it all: a paper prognosticator like the one we've specially fashioned below. We hope this will give you the chance both to joyfully wreck this magazine and choose your own UMBC adventure! Take a spin over to magazine.umbc.edu/wildcard for a quick how to, and then cut, fold, and share the joy with your favorite #FutureRetriever!



BE A RETRIEVER BELIEVER



"I love UMBC because of how easy it is to make friends here! UMBC is a great place to be because of the wide variety of clubs and activities to participate in. I was able to join UMBC Mock Trial and win a national championship!"

Poushali Banerjee '23



"Giving back to UMBC is important to me because someone else's gift helped pushed me to become the person I am today, and I'm all about paying it forward! I give to the Music Department and various departments within Student Affairs that were a significant part of my UMBC journey."

Bentley Corbett-Wilson '17, M.A.T. '20

giving.umbc.edu/retrieverbeltiever

Every donation provides potentially life-changing opportunities for our community.

Ready to be brilliant? We'll help you shine.



No matter your goal, UMBC offers students the learning opportunities of a liberal arts college with the creative intensity of a leading research university. Because we know that great things happen when you're part of a community that believes in you.

Learn more and request a viewbook at undergraduate.umbc.edu/viewbook



UMBC MAGAZINE

University of Maryland, Baltimore County
1000 Hilltop Circle, Baltimore, MD 21250

CELEBRATING WITH OUR RETRIEVER COMMUNITY

As we look forward to a spring filled with opportunities to celebrate the impact President **Freeman Hrabowski** has made at UMBC and welcome UMBC's next president, the Office of Alumni Engagement will help keep you in the loop about how to be a part of it all.

We are planning special regional events in winter and spring 2022 at UMBC, in the local DMV area, and in San Francisco, Seattle, Tampa, New York, and Philadelphia. You can expect to hear about more activities soon and we hope you can join us in person or virtually.

Visit president.umbc.edu for all the latest news about the presidential transition. And please visit alumni.umbc.edu, and follow us on social media, to stay in the loop about engagement opportunities all year round.



facebook.com/umbcalumni
facebook.com/umbcpage



[@umbclife](https://instagram.com/umbclife)
[@umbcalumni](https://instagram.com/umbcalumni)



[@umbc](https://twitter.com/umbc)

