Meeting Minutes


Members Absent: Mercel Meredith Ault, Christie Ryan, Lori Lamson, MaryRose Sylvester

Staff Present: Rose Boulay

The meeting started at 5:30 p.m. with Rose Boulay presiding. Rose welcomed the two new members to the group and asked everyone to introduce themselves. Then, everyone went into breakout rooms to respond to the following icebreaker prompts:

- If you get one song to listen to for the rest of your life, what would it be?
- What is one thing you own that you really need to throw away?
- Have you ever asked someone for their autograph? Explain!

Nomination of Officers: The President-elect position needed to be filled for Fall 2021. Bernadette Carr was the only member who had expressed an interest, and will be the next President-elect starting in Fall 2021. Bernadette will now attend the co-chair meetings to start the transition process and shadow Andrew who will become the President come Fall 2021. Rose thanked Mary Millet for her leadership this academic year and congratulated Bernadette for taking on the leadership role.

Member update: Debra Ross is no longer a member of the Advisory Council. Joe Kaplan and Mary Millett’s two-year term will end this spring semester. Again, Rose and other members thanked both of them (Mary and Joe) for their service, hard work, and continued support.

Guest Speaker: Melissa L. Rotkiewicz, Psy.D., Director, Center for Counseling and Psychological Health (CCPH). Melissa spoke to the group for thirty minutes. She spoke about the pandemic and its impact on college students’ mental state, their families, the university, and the nation. She also discussed the additional services available now at CCPH to help students cope during this difficult time.

University Communication Feedback: Because of the time constraint, this agenda items was tabled for the next conference call.
Besides OPS, which other department communicates with you as a family member?

Do you usually receive emails from third party organizations doing business with UMass and what are they?

Are there any communication/department of which you wish you had the option to opt out? What are they?

Upcoming Admissions Office Events – Rose gave an update on the prospective families’ events that Advisory Council members have been participated in. So far OPS has participated in two events for admitted students and families with two more coming up in April. They have been well attended and very well organized, and Advisory Council members’ participation and enthusiasm have been excellent. Amy and Wayne thought the sessions were very broad and felt that the info presented was very useful and encouraging.

Dean of Students/Advisory Council Partnership ---Guest Speaker, Charity O’Connor, Student Support Coordinator, Dean of Students – Charity attended the meeting to talk to members, answer questions, and give the charge to the Council in their next effort to help raise funds for the Student Care and Emergency Respond Fund (SCERF) during UMassGives 2021. She gave some background information about SCERF, how the fund is being used by students, how many students access the fund, and talked about how the Council can help. Examples:

- Microgrant applications from students rose from 45 or so (Charity will update) in 2018-2019 to 152 in 2019-2020
- Students use the fund ($500) if eligible for basic needs such as rent, food, emergency car repair, and other financial hardships
  - 76% rent, living expenses, medical costs
  - 11% academic costs not covered by tuition, etc. (unpaid fees)

The pandemic has clearly impacted students; there are very few resources for non-academic needs outside of tuition, room & board.

UMassGives will occur, April 28-30*. It is a two-day fundraising event where every department and student group on campus raise money for their programs and services. The Advisory Council will help raise funds throughout the two days and participate in a Power Hour on April 30 at 8 p.m. to 9 p.m. to try to win an additional $2,000 or $500 bonus for most number of unique donation. Advisory Council members will also serve as ambassadors by committing to contact families, friends, and friends of families, etc. to ask for a donation and drive them to the UMassGives SCERF donation site to make a donation. Advisory Council members will be asked to consider making a donation as well. Minimum donation for any individual is $5. The Special Events and the Outreach committees will work on a social fundraising event (April 30 during the Power Hour) to get all Council members involved, bring awareness to UMassGives and SCERF, and encourage folks to donate. They will share more information about UMassGives (including fundraising goal for this event, activities, and materials to use, etc.) with the group very soon. We hope everyone will participate.
Summer Orientation – Call for Participation: Summer Orientation will be done online for Summer 2021. Rose will send more information to everyone about this as events are finalized but please mark your calendar. Advisory Council members will be asked to serve as panelists for the Family Panel session during orientation to share insights with new families. OPS in collaboration with the Outreach committee will also host some very casual social hours in June to connect new families with each other and the Advisory Council. There will be no more than four social hours and one Family Panel during summer orientation. More information to come soon.

- Zoom Social Hour (June)
- Zoom Drop-in (June)
- Family Panel (July 14, Time TBA)

Family to Family Blog – This agenda item was also tabled for the next conference call because of time constraints.

Committee Report – Again, we did not have enough time for committee reports. A blurb from each committee is listed below in bullet points as received.

- **Wellness Committee** - Lolli Fleming & J. Allan Bird
  The Wellness committee continues to meet regularly each month. This quarter, here's what our committee has been working on:
  - crafted a letter of support for parents and families to provide information about COVID-related resources
  - crafted postcards for students to extend a message of support and to provide information about COVID-related resources
  - developed part 2 of the Nutrition webinar - shifting gears to focus on delivery during fall 2021.
  We plan to pause meetings in June and July in order to give everyone a well-deserved and needed break. We'll resume again in August.

- **Outreach Committee** - Tracy O’Neill & Bernadette Carr
  The Outreach Committee had been working with Rose and Pamela Dutta to organize a parent Zoom social hour that was originally planned for March. We were all in agreement that it would be best to postpone the event until summer. We look forward to circling back around to this when it gets closer to the end of the spring semester.

  Secondly, we are excited to participate in UMass Gives. It was wonderful to have Charity O'Connor speak at our meeting. She had lots of helpful information and can provide us with great promotional material. We look forward to working with Special Events and Social Media to make this a success. Lastly, we will be gearing up to participate in the fall crowd funding campaign later in the summer for Family Weekend.

- **Special Events Committee** - Amy Bronson & Dale DiMento
Our meeting took place in February 2021, over Zoom. There was a glitch in the transfer of technology. While Amy quickly regrouped, most of us had signed off which brought us to presenting the meeting to all in note form in March. (Wayne, Amy and Dale met over Zoom)

Items discussed:
Videos on the Facebook page to welcome parents.
The virtual nature of Summer Orientation events through social media
The fundraiser in April, Amy is looking into at Bingo game Power Hour, make it UMass themed. Cost is $20 for the platform, which Amy is willing to donate. This will be done via Zoom. We are looking forward to fall, and an in person socially distanced Family Weekend. We plan to meet again prior to early April to discuss the Power Hour.

- **Social Media** - report not provided

**Next Council Group Conference Calls:** April 12 @ 5:30 p.m., May 3 @ 5:30 p.m. both via Zoom. Please mark your calendar

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Silletti

UMass Parents Advisory Committee member, Emeritus