

Advisory Council General Meeting October 18, 2021

Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Aninda Barat, Nancy Boyle, Amy Bronson, Bernadette Carr, Dale DiMento, Andrew Ehrlich, Gina Fishman, Lolli Fleming, Itixa Goyal, Lori Lamson, Lynn Malone, Eric McRoy, Penny Nichols-Cordero, Craig Pavlik, Maureen Provost, Juliette Rooney-Varga, Christie Ryan, Tara Schneider, Kathleen Sweeny Small, Maryrose Sylvester, Wayne Goldstein

Members Absent: Jack Brandwein, Christina Brooks, Doreen Carbone, Jyothi Cohen, Mary Millett, Tracy O'Neill, Jody Troderman, Dana Wade-Smith,

Staff Present: Rose Boulay, Pallavi Bandalli

Council Members Check-In and New Members Welcome:

The meeting began at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom with Rose welcoming all attendees, new and existing. She thanked everyone for attending the meet and greet at Family Weekend. New members introduced themselves. All members then moved to breakout rooms (4 members in each room) for fifteen minutes to chat and get to know each other.

Guest Speaker: Pete Smith, Director of SACL (Student Affairs and Campus Life)

Communications and Professional Development:

Rose welcomed Pete and introduced him to council members. As Communications and Professional Development Director, Pete manages Student Affairs communications and what UMass can/cannot communicate with family members. He spoke about OPS being a wonderful partner.

Key Takeaways:

Communicating with Parents and Families – Pete discussed past practices, COVID-19 Era, information for the future. He explained which departments convey information and how it is conveyed (silo structure). In the past our primary audience was students. Covid-19 Era has presented challenges for communications. This has caused communications to be more centralized – access to information was so critical in such a rapidly changing environment. It was imperative to communicate more regularly with families, students, alumni as the health and safety of the community depended on it. As everyone returned to campus this year, the university is reassessing practices (frequency, cadence of communications).

- **Going forward:** Campus wide communications – families want more frequent communication, so all campus-wide communications will go to parents and families (some notifications that never went out to families will still not go out)
- **Subscription Center:** UMass is moving to the Salesforce Platform to provide better list management for all communications channels. Eventually, there will be a platform that will allow recipients to subscribe to lists and manage their preferences. Other elements such as the MyUMass app (which has been under-utilized) will be built into a more functional space for families.
- **Asking for our help/opinions:** Pete’s goal is to engage council members in some focus groups in the coming months to identify the type of information that is most relevant to families – with the plan to revise the MyUMass app. He plans to do the same for the Office of Parent Services website so it can be more accessible for users (families).

Family Weekend Update

Rose reported on Family Weekend. Close to 8,000 people registered this year and at least 6,000 attended. This is close to double the usual number of participants. The council’s initiative to fundraise for Food Insecurity to support students in need was very successful with over \$28,000 raised over three days.

Family Blog

All members were encouraged to sign up to draft an article. Four articles are lined up for fall 2021 and at least 4 more on different topics are in need for spring 2022. A handful of members volunteered to submit their articles by December 2021.

Committee reports

- **Community Service/Outreach**
Bernadette and Tracy are looking for folks to co-chair. This team works closely with Special Events committee for projects such as food insecurity. Any fundraising idea can be brought to Rose and this committee. It does not always have to be about SCERF or food insecurity if it helps students in general.
- **Special Events**
Amy discussed the move-in welcome events and multiple events that took place over Family Weekend. She is looking for a new co-chair in the spring.
- **Wellness**
Lolli and Gina discussed webinars they have done in the past that were successful and are hoping to schedule something similar for spring semester. They are also looking for more members to join the committee.

➤ **Social Media**

Administrators for the Family to Family Facebook group are Kathleen Sweeney Small, Penny Nichols-Cordero, Lynne Malone (welcome to Lynne as a new Admin!)

This group is a place for positive and helpful family support, for sharing basic information and experiences as parents/families transition to their role as a parent/guardian of independent college students.

Notable Numbers for this fall are as follows:

Membership: 7, 775 Members up from 5249 members a year ago

Activity in the last 28 Days:

611 Posts

6, 597 Comments

20, 960 Reactions

Note: There were over 80 posts during Family Weekend. Members shared pictures enjoying family weekend activities.

Points of Pride:

- UMass Amherst Ranked among Top 26 (#26) National Public Universities by U.S. News & World Report.
- The Princeton Review has named UMass Amherst as one of “Great Campus Food” list in its 2022 edition of The Best 387 Colleges.
- “UMass Magazine” received three Gold awards and a Judge’s Choice award at the 2021 Creative Awards given by the Advertising Club of Western Massachusetts on Sept. 14.
- Isenberg’s Online MBA program ranks within the top 30 online MBA programs listed by U.S. News & World Report and multiple #3 worldwide rankings in the Financial Times.
- We’re among the top research universities nationwide for our commitment to leadership in sustainability.
- For the second year in a row, the Best Global Universities guide published by U.S. News and World Report ranks the University of Massachusetts Amherst No. 4 in the comprehensive subject area of Agricultural Sciences for 2021, and first among U.S. universities in that subject area.
- Our graduates work in such dynamic places as Broadway, NASA, Google, Fenway Park, IBM, the Brooklyn Museum, CNN, General Electric, Alaska’s Denali National Park to name a few. They are leaders on Beacon Hill and Capitol Hill, on the stage and on the field, in the board room and in the laboratory.
- Campus Pride has named UMass Amherst to their 2021 list of Best of the Best Colleges and Universities for LGBTQ Students in the United States.
- The UMass Amherst food science department maintained its number-one ranking in the U.S. and jumped to seventh in the world, according to the 2021 Global Ranking of Academic Subjects, part of the annual Academic Ranking of World Universities.
- UMass Campus Ranked Seventh Safest in U.S.

Next Meeting:

November 15, 2021 - 5:30-6:30 p.m. via Zoom

December 8, 2021 - 5:30-6:30 p.m. via Zoom

Spring 2022 General meeting Sunday March 6, 2022 – 3 p.m. via Zoom

Meeting adjourned at 7:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christie Ryan, Recording Secretary