

CAHSS Candidates and Statements for Ballot Spring 2026

Number of Candidates: 3 (listed alphabetically by last name)

Name: Robert Jonathan Bennett

Years of Service at UMBC: 14

Department: English

What strengths do you think you would bring to the AFAC? Leadership, strong network with staff, faculty, students. A love for what UMBC stands for, and a goal to make things better for all part-time faculty here.

What issues do you think the AFAC should be addressing during the 2026-2027 academic year?

- Build on our role with the University Steering Committee (USC)
- Get year-long contracts for Adjunct II and above, teaching fall/spring as the default
- Push for reclassification (the UMD PTNTF model) of long-term adjuncts or other ways to get them to full-time or full-time equivalency
- Continue to push for Deans in the annual meetings with Senior Administration. And find ways to hold them accountable.
- Continue to push for better benefits for adjuncts (parking, health insurance, tuition remission)
- Continue to promote AFAC professional grants
- Support and promote our annual conference
- Continue to push for adjunct research opportunities.
- Find other ways to build a sense of community for adjuncts on campus.
- Work with recent legislation on collective bargaining to create better conditions for all adjuncts

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Name: Natalie Groom

Years of Service at UMBC: 5

Department: Music

What strengths do you think you would bring to the AFAC?

I have many years of experience in committee service by way of my previous day job (I was the Manager of Advancement Operations and Analytics at Washington Performing Arts). I imagine there are many administrative tasks that need to be addressed, and I am skilled at crafting clear To Do Lists with clearly delegated action items. I demonstrate conscientiousness and follow through for my own tasks, which is essential to making sure things move forward and get done in a timely manner. Part of my role at WPA was crafting agendas, assigning tasks, following up on progress, and then leading debriefs or summary reports at the end of a project. I am passionate about advocating for adjuncts (see some of those items below), and I am ready to take an active and leadership role within our part-timer community.

Coming from the music department, I offer a new and unique perspective because it's a discipline that has a lot of special cases for adjunct needs (and opportunities) because of it being a performance-based, subjective discipline. My creative and collaborative background as a musician

also demonstrates my strengths in bringing together a slew of different types of people to refine and produce something stellar together.

Related to the question below, I am specifically interested in helping with the annual adjunct conference, and I have many years of experience coordinating large events (Woodwind Day, Clarinet Day, Clarinet Academy of America, a concert series, and 4 large galas at Washington Performing Arts). I am excited to do this in the context of a conference, as I hope to run my own music by women conference someday and see this as a great training/mentorship opportunity.

What issues do you think the AFAC should be addressing during the 2026-2027 academic year?

I haven't been able to plug into AFAC as much as I'd like because it seems like the meetings usually conflict with my teaching or gigging (I am a musician). However, as a representative, I would know the meeting schedule in advance and could plan my teaching schedule around that. I appreciate the work AFAC does and how it has helped me and advocated for me.

Some of the things I care most about that I'd like to contribute to as an AFAC representative:

Expand internal institutional grants, fellowships, and similar opportunities to be open to adjunct faculty members. I have many research and creative projects I pursue, but I consistently run into the issue of not being eligible for internal UMBC funding because of my adjunct status. I've been told this is because the university operates under the assumption that adjuncts won't be sticking around and so shouldn't be "taking" funding from full-timers. This logic, to me, is completely backwards. Adjuncts would be a lot happier and fulfilled (both financially and artistically) if we had similar opportunities to our full-time colleagues. I want to see us made eligible for more funding opportunities.

Investigate alternate methods of contracting adjuncts so that it's based on number of credits taught, rather than manually filling out a time card (for music). This might be a problem unique to music (I am not sure), but the situation I find myself in is a volatile paycheck. I teach private lessons, chamber music, and sometimes sectionals. Every two weeks, I manually fill out a timecard of my activities. However, sometimes a student cancels their lesson at the last minute (literally, sometimes within 5 minutes of their lesson). When something like that happens, I don't get paid. It doesn't matter that I wasn't the one to cancel; if I don't make up the lesson, I don't get paid. Paying adjuncts a flat fee based on the number of credits they teach (this is how it's done at the other university I teach at) would provide more income stability. That makes it sound like it's all about me, but I'm using my specific problem to show there are many small things affecting adjunct income stability that we can be addressing. Moving away from a weekly timecard would also significantly free up time and ease stress for our department's Business Specialist who has to manually review, approve, and pay us out every two weeks.

Establish clear policies about adjunct pay (and thus cancelled classes, lessons, meetings, concerts) in the event of unexpected campus closures (such as snow days). Related to the above point, when the university had extended closures due to snow, I was not getting paid. There was also no way for me to make up those lessons to recoup my lost income because of the timing of the

snow days. I think it's wrong to cut my pay due to an uncontrollable event, when people under contract (not being paid by the hour) don't suffer the same economic losses.

I'd specifically like to be on the committee involved with planning the annual adjunct conference, because I think it's a great idea and want to see more adjuncts from around the state participate. I love hearing about other people's research and getting to network with adjuncts outside of my department. I have extensive experience planning events (Woodwind Day, Clarinet Day, Clarinet Academy of America, a concert series, and 4 large galas at Washington Performing Arts), and feel I have a lot to contribute in logistics and advertising.

Continue supporting AFAC/AAUP on collective bargaining rights. It seems optimistic we will get this for NTT and Adjuncts, so next we will educate our full time faculty on the merits of including them in collective bargaining.

Engage in discussions with HR and the Director of Talent Acquisition & Total Rewards to continue advocating for how the university (or USM system more broadly) can support adjuncts.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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Name: Jill Vasbinder Morrison

Years of Service at UMBC: 16

Department: Dance

What strengths do you think you would bring to the AFAC?

I bring to the committee my experience in service to my community as a community organizer and non-profit organization executive committee member for many years.

I bring with me knowledge of the UMBC community from participation not only in departmental events but participation in Inclusion Imperative programming through the Drescher Center, completion of the Equitable and Inclusive Courses Workshop (as of May 1st), and connection & community built in HT Labs, FDC events, being on search committees, and participating in co-teaching multi-departmental courses. I remain committed to prioritizing Inclusive Practices in my teaching and service to my community, and bring with me patience, dedication, creativity and diligence to all of my work and activities. I am proud to have been a part of facilitating the Fall AFAC Conference 2023-2025, being a part of the UMBC parking committee so that our needs are addressed there as well, and working to support our part of shared governance with the University Steering Committee.

What issues do you think the AFAC should be addressing during the 2026-2027 academic year?

I would like the AFAC continue to work towards:

- communicating with & meeting the needs of the diverse adjunct constituencies
- stability for all adjunct faculty in contracts,
- appropriate & equitable pay,
- support for research through access to funds, facilities, and other resources.

I would like the committee to continue to push for the university to redefine what it means to be an adjunct faculty member that more accurately reflects the different kinds of adjuncts on this campus.

I would like to see departments and colleges acknowledge the load that adjuncts carry and the vital role they play in creating the community, and upholding the standards set forth by this University by re-establishing best practices that are upheld by each college and department.

I would like the committee to advocate for and facilitate more visibility for adjuncts within their departments and the university and acknowledge our new-found power in collective bargaining as well as acceptance to more areas including Faculty Learning Communities.