



Assessment 365

From Potential to Practice:
The Ready to Lead Program



Briana Lawson

Staff Culture & Professional Wellbeing

The vision for the **Ready to Lead** program is to cultivate a dynamic, inclusive, and mission-driven leadership culture within the Division of Student Affairs that empowers employees to drive meaningful student impact through enhanced skills, strategic thinking, and collaborative leadership.

2nd Annual Cohort

- January 2026 - May 2026
- 30 hours of commitment
- 10 cohort members
- 6 program alumni
- 5 collaborative partnerships
- 4 rotating cohort connections
- 3 EQ executive coaching sessions
- 35+ colleagues, supervisors, ELT, PBOs, & program partners present at the Program Commencement

Cohort Competencies

- Analytical Skills
- Conflict Navigation
- Emotional Intelligence
- Inclusive Leadership
- Learning Agility
- Project Planning
- Self-Confidence
- Strategic Thinking
- Value & Vision Alignment

Direct Quotes

Commencement Guest

- The program was very well done and thought out. Excellent presentations from the cohort and the value of the program was evident.

Program Alumni

- This was a great experience, especially in growing in a mentor-like role and since I was working with staff I don't normally have a lot of work interactions with. The celebration was an authentic connection experience and it was great to see the positive impact and pride participants had.

Program Participants

- The Ready to Lead program was a valuable experience that provided meaningful opportunities for self-reflection, leadership development, and relationship-building across the institution. The cohort discussions, coaching sessions, and collaborative learning environment helped translate leadership concepts into practical skills that can be applied both professionally and personally. Thank you to everyone involved in designing and facilitating the program.

Updates for 2027

- Expanded Alumni participation opportunities
- Alumni coaching & development
- VPSA project integration
- Expanded cohort and Director connection
- Reimagined January timeline and Kickoff structure
- Fall Information Session
- Alumni post-program ongoing evaluation
- *Amplified shenanigans!*





Dan Neeley

*Student Affairs Communication
& Marketing*

Retrospective on R2L

As a participant of the *2026 Ready to Lead cohort* my leadership challenge was:

Cultivating Community in Shared Assets

My goal was to learn how to:

- Temper Emotional Intelligence and Expressiveness
- Leveraging Influence to Engage Stakeholders
- Strategize in Alignment with organizational objectives

Thank you, Serena!

Statistics to Chew On

Current **Primary Custodians: 11**

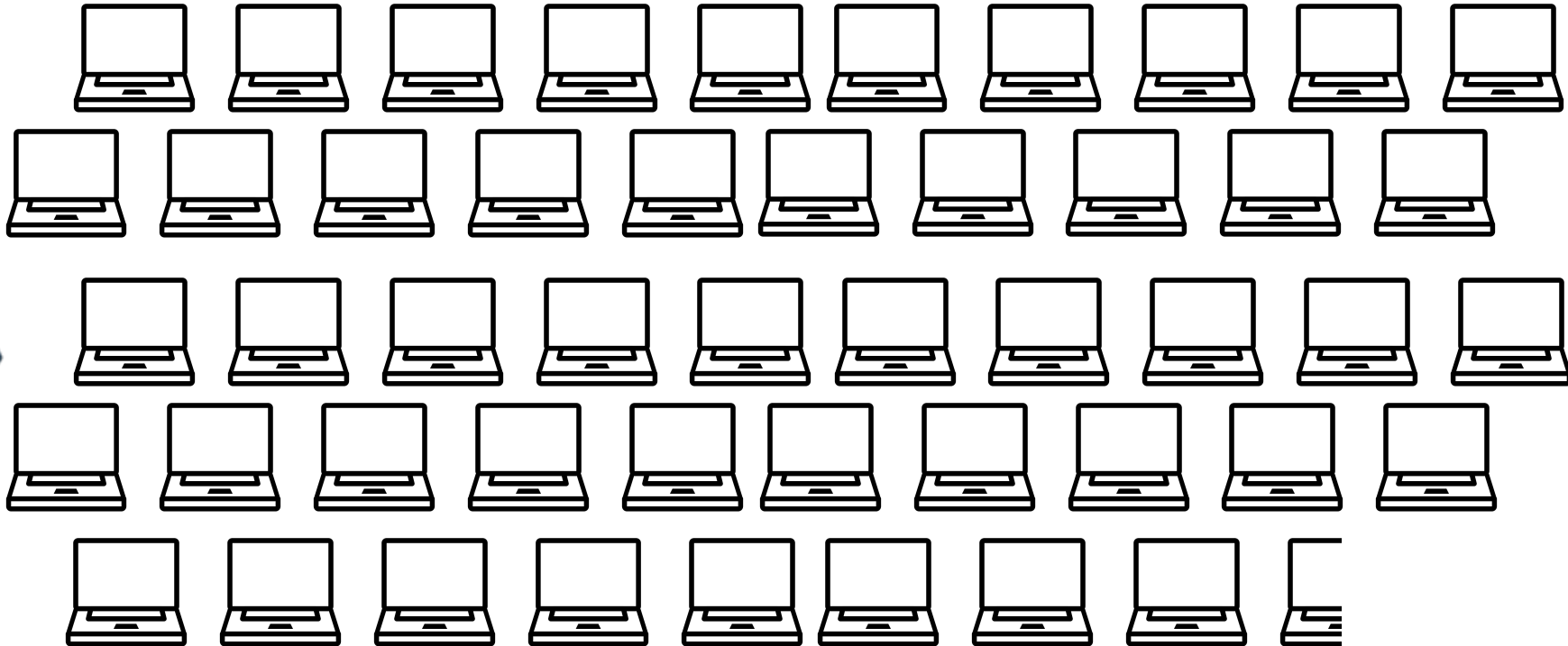
Recorded **Approvers: 10**

Current **Assets: 534** across 22 departments

Often, a primary custodian is responsible for more than one department regardless of size or scope



Assets 48.5 per Custodian



Divisional Sensitive Inventory

UMBC recently performed its Inventory Audit FY 26-27

Challenges:

- Bringing together stakeholders
- Bringing recorded and actual asset counts into alignment
- Overcoming initial complexities of a necessary process
- Better structuring the custodians and approvers

Next Steps: Planning and Proposing Custodian/Approver that more appropriately represents the current Division of Student Affairs



Riddhesh Patel

Transit

UMBC Transit

Safe. Reliable. Responsive.



About My Role & Leadership



10+ Workflows Built

Streamlined processes connecting drivers, students, dispatchers, pit crew & partner departments



2 Search Committees

Served on interview panels — shaping more human-centered, student-focused hiring decisions



Ready to Lead Program

Grew EQ, conflict management, time management, inclusive decision-making & intergenerational workforce skills

Fleet & Technology Snapshot — FY26



30

Buses



30

Radios



31

Routers



32

Tracking Devices



30

AI Cameras



21

Fare Validators



42

Tablets



10

GPS Units

FY26 By The Numbers



9,808

DVIR Safety Inspections

= 9,808 sheets of paper saved



1,107

Safety Defects Caught (Minor & Major)



275

Pit Crew Reports (last 6 months)

Maintenance • Cleanliness • Lost & Found



63,062 Miles

Charter Operation Miles (FY26)

≈ 2.5 trips around Earth / 26% to the Moon



28,690.1 Gal

Fuel Usage — FY26



424,032 Miles

Regular Operations Miles (FY26)



302,209 Passengers

Passenger Count — Regular Operations

Featured Project: Digital Rider Pass & Safety Validation System

Advancing Safe, Reliable, Responsive service — and the Division's commitment to student-centered, inclusive practice



Why

Ensure only eligible riders board — protecting student safety and reliable access to campus.



What We Built

A digital rider pass (physical ID backup for accessibility). Technically, the rollout was solid.



What We Discovered

Early days revealed different riders' category — alumni, contractors, council members, catering staff — clarifying exactly who our riders are, and sparking a vision to partner with UMBC County to safely extend service to nearby guests & personnel.



Where It Stands

Paused after pricing confusion among students, faculty & staff. Backed by strong divisional leadership support, it's now in review with real future scope.



Next Steps

- Resume a phased rollout with clearer, earlier communication on pricing & access eligibility
- Formalize the UMBC County partnership to extend the pass system to nearby guests & personnel
- Use rider-eligibility data to right-size and target future fare/pass tiers
- Apply the same workflow model used for DVIR & pit crew reporting to scale the system division-wide



Lessons Learned

- Solid technology isn't enough — communication and change management make or break adoption
- Early usage data revealed exactly who our riders are, including unexpected non-eligible groups
- Divisional leadership support was critical to sustaining the project through setbacks
- A paused project can still open doors to bigger, long-term opportunities — like the County partnership

What I learned from Ready to Lead ?

 1	Inclusive leadership	Designed with different rider needs in mind, including accessibility and different rider categories
 2	Conflict Navigation	When pricing/eligibility concerns surfaced, we learned to step back, listen, reassess, and adjust rather than simply push the implementation
 3	Intergenerational Workforce	Adapted how we communicate, train, and work with people across different generations and levels of experience
 4	Time Management	Balanced multiple projects, operational priorities, and day-to-day transit needs while keeping longer-term initiatives moving



UMBC

Russ Warner

Facilities & Operations

UMBC

Every Student

Every Story

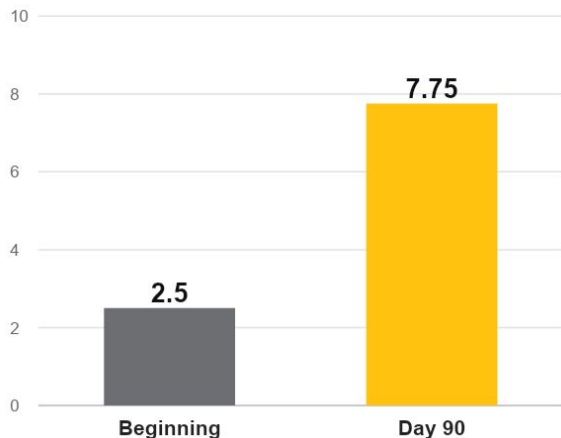
Every Day



90 Days of Positive Student Growth

Connection to the Student Affairs Mission, Vision and Core Commitments

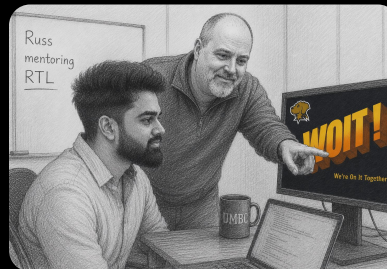
AVERAGE CONNECTION SCORE (10-POINT SCALE)



**+5.25
points**

**100%
of students
improved**

All six students reported stronger connection after 90 days.
The Commons Maintenance Team | UMBC Student Affairs



Building a Culture of Missional Excellence

90-Day Student Development Report • The Commons Maintenance Team

Russ Warner | September 10, 2026

+5.25 Points

Average Connection Score Gain
(10-Point Scale)

100%

Of Employed Students
Demonstrated Progress

7.0 - 8.5

Final Day-90 Peak
Score Range Across Group

Assessment Approach & Integration Model

Embedding structured reflection into the standard daily operational cycle.

01. BEGINNING

Group alignment session connecting maintenance jobs to Student Affairs goals. Completed baseline 1-10 personal metrics evaluation.

02. 90-DAY PRACTICE

Integrated core practical responsibilities alongside consistent micro-coaching, group book check-ins, and shared problem-solving.

03. DAY 90 OUTCOME

Repeated the standard 1-10 self-rating grid framework and provided formal narrative reflections on developmental milestones.

THE 85% WORK / 15% COACHING OPERATIONAL SYSTEM

Development was fully built directly into structural work hours rather than separated from tasks. Over the course of the 90-day tracking period, students averaged 34 active production framework assignment hours balanced with 6 structured intentional coaching hours.

Qualitative Themes & Student Voices

Analysis of participant reflection text revealed significant developmental markers beyond core technical capability.

PERSONAL AGENCY

Confidence & Self-Advocacy

"Being part of the maintenance team was a step at putting me outside my comfort zone... making new connections with the people in the Commons."

— Student 1 (Score: 2 → 8)

TEAM SYNCHRONY

Help-Seeking as a Strength

"It showed me the importance of asking for help and that it's okay to not carry everything by yourself. That's what the team is there for."

— Student 6 (Score: 1 → 8)

HOLISTIC APPLICATION

Transfer Beyond the Job Site

"I grew in hard skills but also in soft skills, growing in courage... This also expanded at home and helped me become a person my family can rely on."

— Student 5 (Score: 3 → 8.5)

Growth extended beyond technical skills

Six themes drawn from the students' written reflections

01 Confidence and self-advocacy

Speaking up, offering ideas and moving beyond shyness or insecurity.

03 Leadership and critical thinking

Solving problems and promoting progress, safety and effective teams.

05 Help-seeking and teamwork

Recognizing that asking for support is a strength.

02 Communication and career readiness

Growing comfort with teammates and stakeholders, alongside practical skills.

04 Belonging and relationships

Making meaningful connections in a supportive, inclusive team culture.

06 Transfer beyond work

Applying growth to classroom teams, family life and future service.

Project Team Lead Context

Supervisory Time Allocation & Core Strategy Reflection

- Supervisory Allocation: 70% Field Work / 30% Intentional Coaching.
- Personal Connection Trajectory: Shifted metrics baseline from 3 to 10.

“My potential was unlocked because high expectations were set for my team and me. Mediocrity is easy... However, expectations require effort in order to meet them... My potential was transformed as the expectations were met, because they became increasingly higher. Never out of reach, but enough to require me to reach just a little bit further than the last time.”

Strategic Implications

Living the Mission Framework Pillars

✓ Meaningful Responsibility

Authentic operational hands-on production framework experience gives students a structured environment to practice soft competencies, build trust, and deliver visible results.

✓ Intentional Coaching

Active baseline management support systems, paired with psychological safety guidelines and targeted stretch objectives, empower participants to safely grow past standard bounds.

✓ Mission-Centered Reflection

Explicitly mapping daily transactional metrics tasks to broader institutional strategic paths helps students see their personal development as highly kinetic and applied.

KAYLA | TEAM LEAD

Kayla's Growth Story

Mission connection in action

PERSONAL CONNECTION SCORE

3  10

BEFORE

AFTER 3 MONTHS

+7 POINTS

“High expectations recognized our potential and required me to reach a little further each time.”

Kayla's growth reflects confidence, leadership and an active connection to the Student Affairs mission.



High expectations helped unlock potential

The complete reflection accompanying the lead's 3-to-10 self-rating

“My potential was unlocked because high expectations were set for my team and I. Mediocrity is easy, and even accepted in many environments. However, expectations require effort in order to meet them and because my teammates and I are highly capable I saw these expectations as both a recognition of our potential and a chance to prove that it could become kinetic and applied to the student affairs mission.

My potential was transformed as the expectations were met, because they became increasingly higher. Never out of reach, but enough to require me to reach just a little bit further than the last time. By the end of the summer, I found myself with an arsenal full of hard and soft skills learned on the job that could not be taught in a classroom.”



Kayla's next chapter: UMBC → FAMU | PhD in Mechanical Engineering



Serena Studivant

*Off-Campus Housing &
Commuter Engagement*

As a participant of the *2025 Ready to Lead inaugural cohort* my leadership challenge was: **Overcoming imposter syndrome**

My goal was to learn how to:

- Build confidence as a leader
- Trust my expertise and decision-making
- Speak up and be able to assert my thoughts, ideas, and needs in professional spaces without hesitation or fear of being dismissed



**"Coloring outside the lines.
creating paths through life"**

**What did Ready to Lead
unlock in me, and how
does that now allow me
to **unlock potential** and
transform lives for
students?**

Since graduating from Ready to Lead:

OWNING MY LEADERSHIP

- Co-led **2** divisional subcommittees
- Named Co-chair of NASPA Off-Campus & Commuter Knowledge Community

FINDING MY VOICE

- Presented **5** conference sessions
- Served as the 8th grade graduation speaker at a local middle school

MAKING AN IMPACT

- 2026 NASPA Excellence Award
- VSPA Excellence in Assessment & Impact Award
- Promotion to Director



June 2026

First solo conference presentation
NASPA SSHE Conference



UMBC

**READY
TO LEAD**

Division of Student Affairs

2027 Program Overview & Information Session

Monday, October 19th at 3:30 p.m. (Webex)



UMBC

**READY
TO LEAD**

Division of Student Affairs

What Questions Do You Have?