

NESS Meeting Minutes May 13, 2026

Attendance: Helena Dahlen, President; Barbara Ann Smith, VP; Crocetta Argento; Jenny Carr; Cathy Fu; Michele Kimery; Michele Mullins; Wendi Myers; Sharon Paul; Kyle Pokorny; John Roemer.

Guest: *Laila Shishineh*, Assistant Vice Provost and Chief of Staff to the Provost was scheduled to speak, but had a work emergency. We hope she'll be able to attend our June meeting.

Election season.

Results from the President and Vice President elections are in.

- Welcome to John Roemer as the new serving President of NESS!
- Welcome to Crocetta Argento as the new Vice President of NESS.
- John and Crocetta are starting 2-year terms on July 1st, 2026.

Report from previous Committee meetings

- The University Steering Committee (USC), Helena and Barbara
 - Future collective bargaining discussion: Grad students and adjunct faculty can now take a vote on joining the union.
 - There was discussion of staff senate reps meeting with bargaining staff for information sharing and to give the bargaining staff information from USC meetings.
- IT Steering Committee, Helena
 - Digital accessibility: Although our 4/24/26 deadline has been extended one year, the campus has already made great progress. Two thirds of our online content is already accessible!
 - In light of the recent Canvas hack and a cyber shutdown at another university, Stacy Cahill and others are working on a plan in case we are attacked.
- AI Administrative Subcommittee meeting, Helena
 - The sub group has identified five high-level principles and a three-tiered training strategy for AI use at UMBC.
 - The sub group is strictly advisory to the AI Steering Committee.
 - [Software catalog– Generative AI](#) on the DoIT website highlights tools available.
 - Several NESSies are already using AI tools for work and school.

- CUSS (Council of University System Staff), Cathy
 - State paid family medical leave (PFML) program starts July 1!
 - Staff will receive 12 weeks leave without draining leave balances.
 - Expanded definition of family to include grandparents. Cathy will check to see if the person must be related to the staff member. (What if you're not related but have Power of Attorney for the individual?)
 - Layoffs: College Park has eliminated 150 positions (vacant and filled) and Bowie has eliminated 70-80 positions. More campuses may follow suit.
 - Ombuds services: There should be a contract in place by the end of this fiscal year. Each campus will decide how they will use ombuds services.
 - Alternative Work Arrangements (AWA)
 - They vary widely from campus to campus.
 - Our bargaining staff wish to negotiate their own AWA arrangements with HR.

Ad-Hoc Information

- Congratulations to Michele Kimery for being awarded the Presidential Distinguished Staff Award, Non-Exempt Staff.
- Congratulations to Maisha Cron for being awarded the Karen L. Wensch Award for outstanding Non-Exempt Staff.
- New Tool: Media Inventory [Media Inventory link](#) to help organize the files on campus websites.
- Next month, Cathy will send out a survey to explore the possibility of moving the monthly NESS meeting to a day/time other than the second Wednesday at 11:30 - 12:30.

Our next NESS meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 10 from 11:30 am - 12:30 pm.

--- Cathy Fu, NESS Secretary