

NESS Meeting Minutes September 9, 2026

Attendance: John Roemer, President; VP Crocetta Argento; James Bailey, Robert Barnard, Kelly Birch, Mia Blackston, Tammy Brown, Kathy Chetelat, Lexus Collins, Helena Dahlen, Brandy Darcey, Cathy Fu; Yonatan Harris, Gina Hoagland, Kristen Hodges, Melessia Jasper; Michele Kimery, Erin Minnagh, Jennie Moore, Andrea Morales, Michele Mullins; Wendi Myers; Anthony Oughton, Sharon Paul; Wendy Phillips, Kyle Pokorny; Donna Poleski, Teresa Reese, Barbara Smith, Nett Smith, Tenley Stewart, Chatal Suter, Tanya Veronin, Marquita Whidby, Terisa White, Scott Williams.

Guest: *Dr. Renique Kersh*, Vice President for Student Affairs with a UMBC Transit update

- Dr. Kersh personally apologized for the transit change rollout: The message was put out hastily and without stakeholder input.
- She's assembling a planning team to look at the issue and encourages transit users to be involved. Daniel Teage, Director of Transportation Services and Antwan Clinton, Asst. VP for Administration & Auxiliary Services, Student Affairs will head this effort. Dr. Kersh will be back to talk to us when the issue is further along.
- Challenges to address
 - Long term sustainability of transit: Can we move away from diesel-powered vehicles? Can we find more funding sources so the cost is not on the backs of faculty and staff?
 - Technology integration so we can gather data of who is riding when, also to know exactly who is using transit, when and where. At this point, riders just flash a UMBC ID, which gives no information and may be a safety concern since lots of folks have old IDs.
 - Ideally, transit will continue to be free but, if there is a fee, it should be equitable.
 - Interest in expanded transit routes and paying drivers competitively.

President's remarks: *John Roemer*

- The Provost Staff Advisory Council has been created. As Laila explained in June, they are meant to be a sounding board and will not have voting rights. How will shared governance groups work with this new group? Are we interested in asking for documentation such as a matrix of responsibilities, from Provost around the Councils?

- Surveys coming: John will be using surveys to gather NESSie feedback on important issues. Please make sure you've joined our myUMBC group and respond to surveys when requested to do so.
- Robert's Rules of Order: John distributed a handout on Robert's Rules of Order. As specified in our bylaws, we'll use this framework for meetings this year.

Supervisory and confidential employee pay parity issues

- John and Crocetta met with CHRO Dr. Lynne Adams on August 28 for their quarterly check in. Three requests that were followed up with a memo:
 - Job description realignment framework
 - Consider creating either a differential or a stipend for Supervisory and Confidential employees. Employees are asked to take on greater financial risk to step into a leadership role.
 - To define the period of time at which a "temporary duty gap" becomes a need for a "formal reclassification"
- AFSCME settled its lawsuit with USM & Gov. Moore on September 1. Under the terms of the settlement, Bargaining staff will receive a 2.5% merit increase (effective July 1, 2026) and \$500 base-pay increase (effective January 1, 2027). UMBC will have to fund union raises internally from the \$210m state allocation per news reporting.
- Until FY27, the precedent was that raises for bargaining staff were matched for Supervisory and Confidential non-exempt staff, but there is no guarantee that this will happen in the future. There are 84 NESS-eligible employees at UMBC and funding these FY27 pay increases would cost an estimated \$150-168,000, which is less than a tenth of a percent of the state allocation..
- Internal equity and pay parity should be a non-negotiable organizational baseline.
- NESS received a commitment of support on the pay parity issue from the Exempt Staff Senate. Cathy reports that CUSS, whose members are largely exempt staff, is very concerned about wage compression as the bargaining units continue to receive pay increases, and sent a letter of concern to Governor Moore last year.
- See attached memos or link them on the group?
- Looking ahead to John's next quarterly meeting with Dr. Adams, the new manager of HR Class/Comp will attend. We believe that determinations of non-exempt vs. exempt are complete, but not non-exempt NESS-eligible vs. non-exempt bargaining staff.

- There was discussion about wishing for more clarity and fairness in this matter. We have staff across the campus doing the same work who are classified differently.

Committee reports

- Research and Creative Achievement Council will meet soon, per Crocetta.
- Food Committee, per John
 - More summer dining options are coming to the west side of campus (Fine Arts, PAHB area), perhaps including a vending machine that serves hot food.
- University Steering Committee will met last week, per John and Crocetta
 - There's talk of robots fulfilling food orders around campus. The student committee reps are actually against this initiative due to worries about increasing student isolation if they don't have to go pick up food.
- Vacancies: We need a member for the Athletics Policy Committee and another member for CUSS. It's important that we have a presence at university committees! Let John know if you're interested.

Note about international students: Donna Poleski reports that, per new federal guidelines, international students are no longer allowed to work off campus, except for required internships in their field of study. This could be devastating for some of our students.

Our next NESS meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 10 from 11:30 am - 12:30 pm, in Engr 125 or via Webex.

--- Cathy Fu, NESS Secretary