

NESS Meeting Minutes

October 14, 2026

Attendance (folks in bold only) John C. Roemer, President; VP Crocetta Argento; Connie Bailey, James Bailey, Robert Barnard, Kelly Birch, Mia Blackston, Tammy Brown, Kathy Chetelat, Lexus Collins, **Helena Dahlen, Brandy Darcey, Cathy Fu, Shamere Germany, Justine Gonzales, Monica Green, Bruce Griffin, Yonatan Harris, Gina Hoagland, Kristen Hodges, Melessia Jasper; Michele Kimery, Brynn Krasney, 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, **Lisa Thomas,** Tanya Veronin, Marquita Whidby, Terisa White, Scott Williams.

Guest: *Michael Clemons*, Executive Director, Auxiliary Services

- Changes in dining options: In the Commons, Blend and Bowls and India Kitchen have each moved. Jerk and Lime has opened and is popular.
- Faculty/Staff Meal Plans are still available. They're a great value, and the larger packages can be paid for through payroll deduction.
- Grubhub program rolled out last year. It's going well, and use has been growing. Folks can now use Retriever dollars to pay for the service.
- Kiwibots through Grubhub
 - These are autonomous bots from [Robot.com](https://www.robot.com) designed to deliver food. Food delivery would be to a designated spot outside the building.
 - Before piloting this program, the campus must be mapped, and stakeholder input must be considered. Mike is bringing in many departments to make sure this change is welcome and goes well.

Updating Our Bylaws

- John proposes seven bylaw updates in order to reflect current realities, strengthen continuity, reduce unnecessary workload and protect the senate's independence.
- Amendments must be submitted in writing and appear in today's meeting minutes before they can be discussed during the November meeting. Senators will receive a ballot at the end of next month's meeting to vote on the bylaws. Passage of amendments requires a two thirds majority.

- NESS Senators received the NESS Bylaw Amendment Package and the NESS Bylaw Amendments: Voting Guide documents, see attached documents.
- Proposed amendments:
 - Amendment 1 — Make the Secretary a Voting Officer
 - Amendment 2 — Eliminate the Treasurer Position (With Conditional Reinstatement)
 - Amendment 3 — Modernize Ex-Officio Membership Eligibility
 - Amendment 4 — Add Administrative Coordination & Continuity Article
 - Amendment 5 — Add Continuity of Operations Article
 - Amendment 6 — Add Conflict of Interest & Recusal Article
 - Amendment 7 — Add Digital Governance Article

USC Report-Out

- John and Crocetta attended the October 4 University Steering Committee meeting, which focused on three issues:
 - Sherman Hall incident: Someone slammed a door and the noise was thought to be a gunshot, so police were called. An individual thought to be having a mental health crisis was attended to. To address concerns about communication delays, an office may be created to respond to incidents like this.
 - Automatic license plate readers on campus: There are now four sets of readers at the entrances and exits around Hilltop Circle. They are not Flock cameras, and have a good auditing process.
 - [Bold Moves strategic plan](#) is very impressive, assembled over 2-3 years with many stakeholders consulted. John says the report reflects the UMBC that he believes in. Three things to highlight:
 - Inclusive excellence is the core value.
 - Pillar 4: Cultivate Organizational Innovation and Vitality
 - Pillar 5: Strengthen Maryland and Its Communities

Board of Regents Awards Update

- John and Crocetta were asked to review the staff senate awards nomination packet and provide a governance recommendation. Due to the compressed timeline and late notice of the deadline, the group relied on an ad hoc review process this year.
- Looking ahead, NESS hopes to contribute to a more robust evaluation process, one that is transparent and easy to engage with. Staff have limited bandwidth to do the work to

nominate someone. There is also the PR piece: Do campus partners know about this award and how to nominate a staff member?

- Cathy is the co-chair of CUSS's awards committee and says that, at all other USM campuses, the staff senate handles the awards nomination process. (UMBC is also unique to have two staff senates, ESS and NESS. All other campuses have one staff senate.) This year, there have been multiple difficulties with the process at the CUSS level.
- Helena served on UMBC's Service Awards committee. Last year, UMBC had three possible nominees, but the process to nominate them was not completed due to an administrative error. It's not clear if they can be nominated again this year. John is willing to write each candidate not advanced due to an administrative error a letter of support so they can be included in future awards cycles.
- Cathy has connected John with someone at Towson University, which has a solid procedure for the Board of Regents awards process. The hope is to have a more robust process going forward. John would also like to build into the bylaws procedures to call a special meeting of NESS senators (?) when necessary.

Host UMBC president in November?

Dr. Sheares Ashby is willing to come talk to us about the decision to not match the salary increases awarded to bargaining staff to NESS-eligible members. (Budget constraints were cited.)

- NESS members think it would be good for the president to hear our concerns. The cost of giving us the merit increase is estimated to be \$150-168 K, which is very little in the scheme of things.
- The president seems to be calling merit pay "union pay", perhaps as a way to assert that only union members should receive this increase. The chair of the University Steering Committee would like to invite Dr. Sheares Ashby to the next USC meeting to clarify this term.
- NESS-eligible staff are a very small group compared with exempt staff and bargaining staff. UMBC is the only USM campus with separate exempt and non-exempt staff senates.
- Where does the money come from for the merit increases? It's believed to come from the state allocation.

- The administration is open to non-financial incentives for us. One idea is to create two awards, one for supervisory and one for confidential non-exempt staff. Another is to give us an extra administrative leave day.
- Crocetta will extend an invitation to Dr. Sheares Ashby to attend in November. Her schedule may not permit attendance during our usual November meeting, so we would be open to finding another time. Perhaps get a bigger space for that meeting?

HRSTM Succession Planning Delphi Process

- When roles change or someone is separated from employment at UMBC, what happens to their job knowledge? Have we documented their job processes, the relationships they have made across campus and beyond?
- HRSTM has sent a survey to 15-20 campus partners, including John, and will follow up with a discussion and perhaps another survey. John hopes to highlight the critical role of NESS members as holders of institutional knowledge, something that the Bold Moves strategic plan supports.
- Hopefully, the survey will lead to a standard transition checklist requiring documentation for onboarding roles, clearer onboarding expectations and campus wide templates for continuity.

Committee Reports

IT Steering Committee (Helena)

- October is Cybersecurity Awareness Month. Information is posted around campus and also on the DoIT page on how to keep yourself and your online information safe.
- The AI Task Force Committee report is now online. Dr. Anupam Joshi would like to speak to NESS about the role of AI on campus.

CUSS (Council of University System Staff) (Cathy)

- CUSS members are disappointed that, once again, they are not receiving the salary increases that the bargaining unit will receive. (Most CUSS members are exempt staff.) There was discussion about how to respond to USM, mostly at a campus level.
- The costs of cloud storage have increased substantially. College Park just discontinued using Box for cloud storage, and UMBC is discussing use of cloud storage now. Heads up that changes may be coming.

The Caring University book discussion (Monica): Session two is on October 23 from 10-11:30 am, virtual. Anyone interested should email her.

Our next NESS meeting is currently scheduled for Wednesday, November 11 at 11:30 am via Webex.

--- Cathy Fu, NESS Secretary

NESS BYLAW AMENDMENT PACKAGE

OCTOBER 2026

***Secretary Officer Status • Treasurer Elimination & Conditional Reinstatement •
Modernized Ex-Officio Roles • Governance Support • Continuity • Conflict of
Interest • Digital Governance***

****Important Notice About Amendments 1 and 2****

Amendments 1 and 2 affect the structure of NESS officer roles. While each amendment is voted on independently, they interact with one another.

If Amendment 1 passes and Amendment 2 does not, the Secretary becomes a voting officer and the Treasurer remains a voting officer.

- This results in four voting officers: President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer.
- If Amendment 2 passes and Amendment 1 does not, the Treasurer role is eliminated, but the Secretary remains a non-voting, appointed position.
- If both amendments pass, the Secretary becomes a voting officer and the Treasurer role is eliminated (with conditional reinstatement if NESS ever receives a budget).
- If both amendments fail, the officer structure remains unchanged.

Please review each amendment carefully and vote on each one independently. The outcome of one amendment does not determine the outcome of the other, but the combination of results will affect the final officer structure.

Amendment 1 — Make Secretary a Voting Officer

Modifies Article V.A

Replace Article V.A with:

A. There shall be three officers of this Senate: President, Vice President, and Secretary.

Add new Article V.A.1:

1. The Secretary shall be a voting officer, elected by the Senate, and responsible for maintaining records, minutes, digital archives, and continuity of operations. The Secretary shall serve on the Executive Committee.

Amendment 2 — Elimination and Conditional Reinstatement of the Treasurer Role

Modifies Articles V, VIII, IX and adds new transitional and reinstatement provisions

Section 1 — Elimination of Treasurer Role (Prospective)

Replace Article V.A.2 with:

Effective upon adoption of this amendment, the Treasurer position shall be removed from the list of required officers of the Nonexempt Staff Senate. All references to the Treasurer in Articles V, VIII, and IX shall be suspended and held in abeyance.

Add to Article V:

The Senate's officer structure shall consist of the President, Vice President, and Secretary.

Section 2 — Preservation of Current Treasurer's Authority (Transitional)

Add new Article V.A.3:

3. The individual currently serving as Treasurer shall retain full voting rights, officer status, and participation in the Executive Committee for the remainder of their elected term. During this transitional period, the Treasurer shall not be responsible for financial duties but shall continue to exercise all governance rights associated with officer status.

Section 3 — Automatic Reinstatement Clause (Conditional)

Add new Article V.A.4:

4. If at any future time the Senate receives a budget, funding allocation, or financial authority from UMBC or any external source, the Treasurer position shall be automatically reinstated as a required officer without the need for further bylaw amendment.

Upon reinstatement:

- **A special election shall be held to fill the Treasurer role for the remainder of the Senate year;**
- **All financial duties previously defined in Article IX shall be restored in full;**
- **The Treasurer shall resume responsibility for fiscal oversight, record-keeping, reconciliation, reporting, and compliance with UMBC and USM financial policies;**
- **The Treasurer shall immediately join the Executive Committee.**

Section 4 — Redistribution of Duties (Interim)

Add new Article V.A.5:

5. Until such time as a budget is created, any residual administrative or record-keeping duties previously assigned to the Treasurer shall be performed by the Secretary or President, as determined by the Executive Committee. No officer shall assume financial responsibilities unless a budget exists.

Section 5 — Continuity and Recordkeeping Requirements

Add new Article V.A.6:

6. To ensure readiness for future reinstatement of the Treasurer role, the Secretary shall maintain a digital archive of all suspended Treasurer duties. The Executive Committee shall annually review whether conditions for reinstatement have changed and shall publish a notice to the constituency if the Treasurer role is reinstated.

Amendment 3 — Modernize Ex-Officio Roles

Replaces Article IV.B of the NESS Bylaws (pursuant to Article IV.C of the Plan of Organization).

Replace Article IV.B with:

B. Ex-officio members of the Senate shall include the President, the Provost, the Vice President for Administration and Finance, the Associate Vice President for Human Resources and Strategic Talent Management, the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the most recent Past President of the Senate.

Ex-officio representatives may hold any job classification—whether exempt, non-exempt, or subject to collective bargaining—including titles altered by reclassification. Position classification does not impact eligibility to serve in an ex-officio capacity; however, Contingent I personnel and representatives of the UMBC Administration remain ineligible for ex-officio roles.

For purposes of these bylaws, ‘Administration’ refers to senior executive leadership roles commonly identified in the Plan of Organization’s ex-officio listings — including Vice Presidents, Associate Vice Presidents, Assistant Vice Presidents, Deans, and comparable officers exercising campuswide authority.

Ex-officio members serve as liaisons between the Senate and the administration, provide updates on institutional matters affecting non-exempt staff, and may designate an alternate when necessary.

This bylaw does not alter or expand the ex-officio membership defined in Article II.B of the Plan of Organization.

Amendment 4 — Add Governance Support Article

Adds new Article XII

Amendment Text:

XII.1 *The officers of the Senate may request administrative support from the appropriate UMBC office for duties assigned to the Senate under the Plan of Organization or for shared governance activities that require coordination beyond the capacity of elected members.*

XII.2 *Administrative support may include assistance with recordkeeping, access to shared governance documents, election administration, communications, or other operational tasks necessary for continuity of Senate functions.*

XII.3 *Requests for administrative support shall be made by the Senate President, or by another officer designated by the Executive Committee, in consultation with the campus office best positioned to provide such support.*

XII.4 *Nothing in this Article shall be construed as obligating any specific UMBC office to provide administrative support. This Article establishes a framework for coordination to ensure that Senate responsibilities are not expanded beyond the reasonable capacity of elected members and to protect the Senate from the assignment of operational duties without appropriate administrative assistance.*

Amendment 5 — Add Continuity of Operations Article

Adds new Article XIII

Add new Article XIII:

Article XIII — Continuity of Operations

The Senate shall maintain digital records, meeting minutes, committee reports, and governance documents in a shared repository accessible to all officers. Outgoing officers shall provide onboarding and transition materials to incoming officers to ensure continuity of operations.

Amendment 6 — Add Conflict of Interest Article

Adds new Article XIV

Add new Article XIV:

Article XIV — Conflict of Interest

Senators shall recuse themselves from deliberations or votes when a conflict of interest exists, including supervisory relationships, nomination involvement, or personal relationships that may bias judgment.

Amendment 7 — Add Digital Governance Article

Adds new Article XV

Add new Article XV:

Article XV — Digital Governance

The Senate may conduct meetings, elections, and votes electronically. Digital records shall be maintained in accordance with UMBC policy.

NESS Bylaw Amendments: Voting Guide

Summary of Reasons FOR and AGAINST Each Amendment

Amendment 1 — Make the Secretary a Voting Officer

What the Amendment Does

- Converts the Secretary from an appointed, non-voting role
- Into a fully elected voting officer
- Adds responsibility for records, minutes, digital archives, and continuity of operations
- Places the Secretary on the Executive Committee

Reasons FOR

- **Reflects actual workload:** The Secretary already performs essential compliance duties that exceed those of the Treasurer.
- **Strengthens continuity:** Governance workload has increased; documentation is now a risk-mitigation function.
- **Allows compensation:** Officers may receive stipends or release time if funding becomes available.
- **Aligns with other senates:** Most UMBC senates have a voting Secretary.
- **Improves governance:** Ensures the person maintaining records has a vote in decisions.

Reasons AGAINST

- **Adds another elected position:** More competition and election logistics.
- **Changes tradition:** Historically, NESS had only three voting officers.
- **May increase expectations:** A voting officer role may require more time commitment.

Amendment 2 — Eliminate the Treasurer Position (With Conditional Reinstatement)

What the Amendment Does

- Removes the Treasurer role while NESS has no budget
- Preserves the current Treasurer's voting authority for the remainder of their term
- Automatically reinstates the Treasurer if NESS ever receives a budget
- Redistributes residual administrative duties to the Secretary or President
- Creates continuity and recordkeeping requirements for future reinstatement

Reasons FOR

- **NESS has no budget:** No funds, no expenditures, no financial reporting.
- **Reduces unnecessary workload:** The Treasurer role is unused and creates needless election complexity.
- **Simplifies officer structure:** Fewer officers = easier recruitment and clearer responsibilities.
- **Future-proofed:** Treasurer automatically returns if funding appears — no new amendment needed.
- **Protects current Treasurer:** No loss of voting power or officer status mid-term.

Reasons AGAINST

- **Loss of future flexibility:** Some members may prefer keeping the role even without a budget.
- **Reduces officer count:** Some may prefer more officers for shared workload.
- **Historical precedent:** The Treasurer has existed since the Senate's founding.

Amendment 3 — Modernize Ex-Officio Membership Eligibility

What the Amendment Does

- Allows ex-officio members to be exempt, non-exempt, or collective-bargaining-eligible
- Ensures eligibility remains intact even if classification changes
- Explicitly excludes Contingent I and “Administration”
- Defines “Administration” clearly using UMBC’s Plan of Organization
- Clarifies ex-officio liaison responsibilities

Reasons FOR

- **Reflects reclassification reality:** Staff classifications are changing; eligibility should not depend on HR status.
- **Protects continuity:** Past Presidents remain eligible even if reclassified.
- **Strengthens governance:** Ensures ex-officio members can serve as reliable liaisons regardless of employment category.
- **Prevents administrative overreach:** Excludes Contingent I and senior Administration, preserving NESS’s independence.

Reasons AGAINST

- **Broadens eligibility:** Some members may prefer stricter limits.
- **May increase expectations:** Ex-officio roles could become more active.
- **Requires careful definition:** “Administration” must be clearly understood.

Amendment 4 — Add Administrative Coordination & Continuity Article

What the Amendment Does

- Creates a formal framework allowing Senate officers to **request administrative support** from the appropriate UMBC office when Senate duties exceed what elected members can reasonably manage.
- Establishes expectations for **recordkeeping, continuity, and coordination** so future Senates are not left without support or assigned operational work without assistance.

Reasons FOR

- **Protects the Senate from work dumping:** Ensures NESS cannot be assigned new operational responsibilities without a mechanism to request appropriate administrative support.
- **Supports continuity:** Provides structure for recordkeeping and transitions so future officers aren't starting from scratch.
- **Reflects real workload:** NESS now manages BoR packet coordination, elections, shared governance representation, and other tasks that sometimes require administrative assistance.
- **Future-proofs operations:** Creates a flexible coordination process that can adapt to campus reorganizations without locking NESS into any specific office.

Reasons AGAINST

- **Adds structure:** Some members may prefer to continue relying on informal support arrangements.
- **Requires coordination:** Officers will need to communicate with campus offices to request assistance, which may add steps to certain processes.
- **May increase documentation expectations:** Establishing continuity practices could require more consistent recordkeeping by officers.

Amendment 5 — Add Continuity of Operations Article

What the Amendment Does

- Establishes formal expectations for maintaining digital records, meeting minutes, committee reports, and governance documents in a shared repository accessible to all officers.
- Requires outgoing officers to provide onboarding and transition materials to incoming officers to ensure continuity of operations and preserve institutional knowledge.

Reasons FOR

- **Protects institutional memory:** Ensures future officers have access to past records, decisions, and governance documents instead of losing information during leadership turnover.
- **Supports smooth transitions:** Formalizes onboarding expectations so incoming officers receive the context and materials needed to perform their roles effectively.
- **Reduces operational risk:** Prevents gaps in recordkeeping or loss of critical documents during reorganizations or officer changes.
- **Improves transparency and consistency:** Shared repositories make Senate operations more accessible and reliable for all officers.

Reasons AGAINST

- **Adds structure:** Some members may prefer informal handoffs rather than formalized transition requirements.
- **Requires consistent documentation:** Officers will need to maintain digital records and upload materials regularly.
- **May increase workload:** Preparing transition materials could add responsibilities for outgoing officers.

Amendment 6 — Add Conflict of Interest & Recusal Article

What the Amendment Does

- Establishes formal expectations for Senators to recuse themselves from deliberations or votes when a conflict of interest exists, including supervisory relationships, involvement in nomination preparation, or personal relationships that could bias judgment.
- Provides a clear, consistent standard for handling conflicts to protect the integrity and fairness of Senate decision-making.

Reasons FOR

- Protects fairness: Ensures that Senate decisions—especially on sensitive matters like awards, nominations, or policy recommendations—are made without undue influence.
- Clarifies expectations: Removes ambiguity by defining when recusal is appropriate, preventing confusion or inconsistent practices in future cycles.
- Aligns with shared governance norms: Mirrors conflict-of-interest standards used across campus committees and strengthens NESS's credibility.
- Reduces risk: Helps prevent disputes, grievances, or perceptions of favoritism that could undermine the Senate's work.

Reasons AGAINST

- Adds structure: Some members may prefer informal judgment rather than formal recusal rules.
- May limit participation: Senators with supervisory or close working relationships may need to step out of certain discussions.
- Requires self-awareness: Members must actively identify and disclose potential conflicts, which may require additional diligence.

Amendment 7 — Add Digital Governance Article

What the Amendment Does

- Authorizes the Senate to conduct meetings, elections, and votes electronically when appropriate, allowing flexibility in how NESS carries out its shared governance responsibilities.
- Establishes expectations for maintaining digital records in accordance with UMBC policy to ensure transparency, accessibility, and continuity.

Reasons FOR

- Modernizes operations: Electronic meetings and voting reflect current campus practice and make participation easier for Senators with varied schedules or remote work arrangements.
- Improves accessibility: Digital tools support broader engagement, especially for Senators who cannot attend in person.
- Supports continuity: Maintaining digital records ensures long-term access to minutes, decisions, and governance documents.
- Aligns with UMBC policy: Ensures NESS's digital practices follow campus standards for record retention and data security.

Reasons AGAINST

- Technology reliance: Some members may prefer traditional in-person meetings or paper-based voting.
- Requires digital literacy: Officers and Senators must be comfortable using electronic platforms.
- Potential for technical issues: Electronic voting or meetings may occasionally encounter connectivity or platform challenges.

Final Note to Voting Members

These amendments are designed to:

- modernize NESS governance,
- reflect UMBC's current institutional realities,
- strengthen continuity,
- reduce unnecessary workload,
- and protect the Senate's independence.

Each amendment can be adopted independently. Members should weigh both the **practical benefits** and the **structural implications** before voting.