



SGA MONTHLY

# february

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UPDATES**

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## **Center for Democracy & Civic Life: Civic Courage Journaling Event**

JOIN US FOR MARCH'S  
CIVIC COURAGE  
JOURNALING EVENT ON  
MARCH 26TH. [CLICK HERE](#)  
FOR MORE INFORMATION!

## **OCA MOCHA: Art & Identity Gallery**

OCA MOCHA INVITES YOU  
TO VIEW THIS EXHIBITION  
ON PERSONAL MEANING &  
IDENTITY.

## **OCA MOCHA: New Vegan Menu**

JOIN OCA MOCHA THE  
FIRST WEEK OF MARCH TO  
CELEBRATE THE LAUNCH  
OF THEIR NEW VEGAN  
MENU, WITH NEW FOOD  
ITEMS & SIGNATURE  
DRINKS!

*Plus: Check out  
UMBCTogether to discover  
a new way for our  
communities to bond over  
shared interests!*

# **WHAT HAS SGA BEEN UP TO THIS MONTH?**

## SENATE

- Worked on sustainability initiatives to improve UMBC's handling of food waste & compost
- Look out for the Cultural Organization Campus Takeovers on our Instagram from March 1st-5th!
- Our Free Menstrual Products Initiative has been set to PILOT this semester! Look out for menstrual products rolling out in on-campus public bathrooms!

## FINANCE BOARD

- We cannot process any Merchandise & Marketing Fees for this semester, as it interfere's with UMBC's COVID-19 safety rules.
- Semester budgets for FALL 2021 are DUE on APRIL 2ND, 2021 at midnight!

## TOP FOUR

- President: Working on revitalizing Meyerhoff Courtyard to feature artwork from all members of our community, representing inclusivity!
- Check out UMBCTogether on myUMBC for updates on a project we are working on to allow all members of our community to interact and bond through shared interests!

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## DEPARTMENT OF EXTENDED CONNECTIONS

- Collaborated with Executive Initiatives on the Black Excellence Summit!
- Working on creating an official procedure to allow students to come to us with issues they would like to improve at UMBC, and have SGA there to support them.
- Working with OCA Mocha to find & feature UMBC and Arbutus artists on their interview series.

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS

- Working with students and other governance committees to strengthen the relationship between UMBC students through social media.

## DEPARTMENT OF EXECUTIVE INITIATIVES

- Collaborated with other committees on SGA to develop and run the Black Excellence Summit which occurred February 27th, 2021.
- Developing programs to promote sense of unity within Greek Life.
- Began working with Peer Health Educators to create a campus Vaccine Education campaign!
- Have been working with UMBC Admins to be able to provide a free Grammarly subscription to all UMBC students.



## Staff Spotlight: Jess Myers

by Maheera Chaudhry

**Fun Fact:** Ms. Myers' goal is to travel all 50 states by the time she turns 50. She only has 6 more to go!

**How has this year changed your perspective on life or how you handle tasks or day-to-day activities? What are some things you want to do differently this year or next semester?**

Jess Myers, the director of the Women's Center, is one of the most uplifting and positive people I've spoken with. While meeting with her, I immediately realized how talking to such a bright and passionate person can change your perspective on such ordinary tasks. I remember having a difficult week during the time I talked to Ms. Myers, yet leaving the meeting with an urge to continue my tasks and duties with a different, more focused motive.

Although these past few months have been particularly difficult for Ms. Myers, due to the pandemic and the passing of her brother, she has continued to persevere through the challenging times by remembering one motto, "outlast the discomfort, outlast the challenge." The drastic changes that came within the last year, pushed Ms. Myers to prioritize her family and self reflect as she continues to be resilient and strong. Ms. Myers finds herself in the healing and grieving process, yet uses this time as a way to cherish her brother while routinely going through his belongings and reflecting. Regardless of her personal journey, Ms. Myers has always given her absolute attention to her work and students.

Just like many people, Ms Myers remembers thinking that the first 2 weeks of quarantine was going to be just a short break, and when it wasn't many of her plans were disrupted. Ms. Myers vividly recalls having to cancel one of the most important events, Take Back the Night, for the Women's center, which is an incredibly meaningful event for survivors. Now, Ms. Myers and the Women's Center are trying to figure out the best way to hold the event virtually this semester. However, over the past few months, Ms. Myers and the Women's Center has been able to hold many virtual sessions and Instagram live sessions, which still allows passionate students to share experiences.

Going into the next semester, Ms. Myers hopes to focus on teaching vulnerability and trust between students at the Women's Center since meeting virtually is extremely different than meeting in person. Ms. Myers passion and determination for the center has ultimately allowed for great organization and growth, and students are constantly encouraged to participate. Luckily for those interested, the Women's Center is still meeting and prioritizing small group sessions for women of color, trans and non-binary students, and survivor of sexual violence during the spring semester!

# Alumni Feature: Collin Sullivan

by Milan Sulibhavi



Collin Sullivan started his journey off at UMBC in Fall 2015 as an undergraduate student studying information systems and economics. Collin also hit the ground running as he started working with SGA his freshman year of undergraduate all the way till his senior year while serving as SGA president. It is safe to say Collin had his hands full as an undergraduate student, but now he serves as the Learning Management System Support Specialist at UMBC in the Division of Information and Technology.

At the beginning of our conversation, I asked Collin about his time in SGA and what drove him to run for all of these positions. He said he “just wanted to help people,” and that if you ask any officer currently in SGA, they would say the same thing. This was a valid observation, because even when I applied for SGA my reason was to help better the campus and help the students; as was the intention for all my other fellow SGA officers. As an underclassman, he was in Senate for the most part and actually ran for President his junior year of undergraduate but lost. Collin described this loss as “a very sobering experience.” But he did not let that stop him, because he ran again for president in his senior year and won.

In SGA every officer usually has an initiative that they want to start on campus to improve student life, the environment, student engagement, and many more categories. Collin said he worked on the Election Night Extravaganza while he was speaker of the senate. He loved that he could put his own spin on this event.

Collin was not only in SGA but also working in the Division of Information and Technology during his time as an undergraduate student. He ended up immediately working for UMBC in the Division of Information and Technology after he graduated and is still working there.

When I asked about this new online school setting and how it has affected his work for DoIT he said his life “has definitely changed but it has also been really rewarding.” He also stressed how important it was to be understanding toward every individual in this situation because we don’t know how their home life is or what they are going through during the time of a global pandemic. But he also found that there are a good number of students where online learning is actually preferred in terms of performance, which is really interesting, as he pointed out. Collin Sullivan was a very interesting and motivating person to talk to. The work he has and still is putting into UMBC is inspiring. His attitude toward work is admirable and his attention to detail is impeccable.



# Retriever Reflections

## IF GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY, WHAT ISSUES ON UMBC'S CAMPUS WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO SOLVE? WHY THAT ISSUE?

"I believe that the issue of students living on campus having to purchase a Spring Break meal plan is problematic. These students should've been guaranteed food for this week, and I believe that some funding should've been moved around in order for this to happen. This is the most pressing issue at UMBC at the moment. "

"Better dining options because true grits does not have quality food, and many times what is on the menu is different from what's served. Also the issue of the closed library and gym."

"I would solve the issue of administration downplaying issues surrounding discrimination. I've been at UMBC for a bit under a year and I've witnessed a lot of reported acts of discrimination happen and there wasn't really much done to punish the offenders"

"The student fees, especially athletics, seem outrageous. Students also shouldn't have to pay extra for meal plans over spring break. I don't support increasing the financial burden on the student body while we are still in a pandemic, as our athletic fees were still some of the highest in the nation before the increase and students need to get their basic needs met in a more affordable way."

"Having printers available or the RLC open. Will allow people on campus to print and have access to computers."

"I've been working on making campus more inclusive and more civically/politically engaged, so that's an issue I would dedicate more time to addressing. Inclusivity and racial equity are very important areas to promote, especially with today's political climate?"

"If given the opportunity, I would like to solve the issue of the meal plan not covering certain meals at on campus dining locations. This is important to me because after paying so much for a meal plan, students deserve to enjoy all of the options on campus without worrying if they will have to use flex or pay out of pocket."

"The issue of not being able to work around the pandemic and somehow provide students with the most in-person learning experience. This issue is important especially for students because it affects the way they learn and how much knowledge they are able to retain. "

# Mental Health & Wellness: The Academic Success Center

*by Mokeira Nyakoe*

## Tips for a Successful Semester

All those who work with and for the Academic Success Center are some of the kindest souls you will meet across UMBC's campus, and all of them want to help you succeed academically! Their office has some tips on how you can make this semester your best one yet!

### Understand the Technology

Go through each of your syllabi and understand how your professor is running their class. Whether the class is happening through Zoom, Webex, or BlackBoard Collaborate, is the class synchronous or asynchronous. One of the best ways to keep track of what time you need to be in class is Google Calendar. Google Calendar also allows you to see other people's schedules to make coordinating times for study groups easy. Also, make sure you are keeping up on myUMBC, look out for any notifications and alerts from your professors!

### Get Organized

Make sure you have gone through each of your professor's syllabi and have taken note of when each assignment is due and every test date. Figure out how much you need to do for each class each week so that you can find the balance for each of your classes.

### Work with Others

Your professor is your first asset! If you have questions don't be afraid to ask!! Whether you reach out to your professor, TA, or other students. Don't hesitate to send one or more of your classmates an email asking to form a study group. Don't try to get through the semester alone!

## Learn How You Study

Students who passively read are less likely to do as well as students who actively engage with the content. Do the reading, take notes. Go to class, take notes. Look over those notes. Turn your notes into study questions. Review quizzes and understand what and why you have gotten things wrong look over notes after class, take a quiz to figure out what you got wrong.

## Give Yourself Grace

Be kind to yourself! We are in the middle of a pandemic, the first of its kind. For all of us, there is a lot going on beyond the classroom whether it is emotionally, mentally, or physically. Make sure be taking time to care for yourself!

## Find Balance

In past semesters you may have comfortably taken on many credits and be involved in several extracurriculars it is okay to take this time to reevaluate and take a step back. Try to strike a balance between school, work/internships, and time to decompress and relax.

## Don't Be Afraid to Get Help

The Academic Success Center is a comprehensive one-stop place to get help 9-5 help Mondays through Friday from the math and science tutoring to the computing success center to the writing center and SI Pass. They also offer Academic Success meetings in which they can connect you with the resources to be successful. To find a comprehensive list of all the services the Academic Success Center has check out <https://umbcasc.carrd.co/>. For more tips and tricks on how to stay organized and prepare yourself for a successful semester check out these videos, [https://lrc.umbc.edu/online\\_learning/](https://lrc.umbc.edu/online_learning/) Lastly be sure to check out their website <https://academicsuccess.umbc.edu/> and feel free to email them at [academicsuccess@umbc.edu](mailto:academicsuccess@umbc.edu).

# Sorrento OF ARBUTUS



Pizza -- the language of Friday nights and Sunday mornings alike, a food that does not need translation. Located in Arbutus,

Sorrento's Pizza upholds the same value; as well as the one of community that we all love. In speaking to the manager of the place, we learned that Sorrento's is less of a pizza restaurant and

"more of a family." The customers that eat pizza at Sorrento's have been coming for so long that they all know each other, as well as the manager.

Upholding the universalliy-loved concept of connection amongst the world of Arbutus, Maryland, Sorrento's values itself on its compelling ability to draw communities through food. Whether you're stopping by to pick up pizzas for to-go delivery, or dining in with COVID-19 precautions, you will probably end up finding yourself in a conversation with another customer or employee that will stay with you for weeks to come.