

# UMBC’s Faculty Caregiving Advisory Committee Listening Sessions and Survey Report and Recommendations

June 1, 2021

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# Executive Summary

In March 2021 UMBC's Faculty Caregiving Advisory Committee reached out to faculty members to ask them about their experiences and to suggest possible solutions in order to better understand and address the needs of faculty caregivers as our community transitions out of the conditions of the pandemic into the uncertainties of university life after Covid-19. After reviewing the caregiving crisis during Covid-19 and its implications specifically for women faculty, this report shares findings drawn from listening sessions and anonymous surveys conducted in Spring 2021 with 80 faculty caregivers (8.6% of the faculty) across the colleges at UMBC. It offers recommendations based on these findings—for the university, divisions, departments and programs—to ensure that faculty caregivers are provided with the support they need now and in the future.

## Context: Covid-19 and the Caregiving Crisis

Over this past year there has been a substantial amount of national and international research and data gathering on the effects of the pandemic on faculty caregivers. The conclusions are sobering:

- Before the pandemic, women shouldered a disproportionate burden of domestic and childcare responsibilities. This imbalance increased dramatically during Covid-19 when women of childbearing age were compelled to leave the workforce in record numbers, an exodus which was likely attributable to their increased caregiving responsibilities.
- Women academics published substantially less than their male colleagues while working remotely.
- The pandemic increased the faculty service load as well as the emotional labor within academic departments in terms of advising and mentoring students. This additional work fell disproportionately on women and underrepresented minority (URM) faculty.

In sum, the effects of Covid-19 on faculty caregivers across the nation is devastating. As the research shows, without strategic and timely interventions, higher education will become less diverse and less inclusive. In order to mitigate the gender inequality that has been exacerbated during remote work, university practices and processes must be rethought to mitigate the loss of our junior faculty and faculty of color.

## Summarized Findings: Listening Sessions and Online Survey

What was articulated by UMBC's faculty caregivers in the four listening sessions and the online survey conducted by the Committee in March 2021 resonated with the distressing trends outlined above. The individual stories of the struggles of faculty caregivers, mostly women, brought home the extreme stress, anxiety and utter exhaustion experienced by our colleagues since March 2020. Key findings include:

- Before the pandemic, faculty caregivers at UMBC felt capable of managing their family and work lives. 72.3% of the 47 online respondents rated their experience between 8-10 (on a scale of 1 being poor and 10 as excellent). **During the pandemic over half (51%) of respondents rated their ability to manage caregiving and work at 4 and below.**

- **During the pandemic, 70% of the online respondents rated their ability to conduct research at 4 and below (on a scale of 1 being poor and 10 as excellent);** 34% assessed their research output at 1-2. Participants in the listening sessions shared similar concerns about research and the impact it would have on their promotion and tenure.
- **Comments related to burnout and compassion fatigue were consistent throughout the listening sessions and the survey.** Many worried that they would not be given time and resources necessary to recover from the profound losses they sustained in terms of their research and in terms of their emotional and psychological wellbeing.
- Others asked if going back to “business as usual” would mean that caregiving and family responsibilities, which could not be ignored or unseen during the pandemic, would once again become invisible or perceived as a hurdle or a hindrance in their professional lives.
- Some wondered if, after all they and their families have endured, the sacrifice was worth it.

## Recommendations

The recommendations by the Faculty Caregiving Advisory Committee are based on the suggestions from the participants and committee members in addition to best practices that are currently implemented by other universities to support caregivers now and in the future. These recommendations were discussed with college deans and were finessed based on additional information and insights they shared. Since the pandemic has been experienced unequally by faculty of different groups, well-intended, but identity-neutral responses, may inadvertently exacerbate inequality. We therefore offer that recommendations are considered through a lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion in order to center the experiences of URM caregivers while also supporting all faculty caregivers. Additionally, we recognize that many of these recommendations will not only benefit faculty caregivers, but also contribute to a more holistic approach to wellness and work-life balance that has the potential to benefit all faculty members. The parenthetical dates in each section represent the recommended timelines. **The full report includes more context and details to support the recommendations.**

## University-level Recommendations

### Policies and Procedures (Summer 2021)

- The limit of two tenure-clock extensions should be reviewed and faculty who were granted extensions as part of their family support plans should also be eligible for extensions to their tenure clocks as a result of the impact of the pandemic on their research trajectories.
- Junior faculty should be provided with information regarding the possibility of extending the number of years that they can use their start-up funds if they were impacted by the pandemic.
- The Vice President of Research should investigate the accommodations that have been made by the federal funding agencies for Covid-related disruptions to research and draft a boilerplate statement to include in grant applications.

## Promotion and Tenure (Changes to Faculty Handbook, initiated Fall 2021)

- Faculty who have added additional year(s) to their tenure clock who are undergoing contract renewal, promotion and/or tenure should be able to choose the semesters they would like to be considered for review for teaching.
- Allow tenure-track faculty and lecturers to choose the semesters for which they will submit SEEQ results in dossiers for promotion and tenure.

## Education/Communications (Academic Year 21-22)

- Create and disperse a caregiver supportive toolkit to chairs/administrators on a yearly basis.
- Create and implement a caregiving-supportive/culture change workshop.
- Create a Caregiving Fellows cohort to educate peers on caregiver support.
- Enhance and streamline visibility of caregiving policies and resources by creating a “Faculty Caregiving” tab on the Provost’s website.

## Meetings and Accountability (Academic Year 21-22)

- Institute Provost-mandated reduced meeting times and mandated “protected” times for caregivers.
- Leverage the APR process to hold departments accountable to supporting caregivers and work-life balance.
- Set up a pathway for individual faculty members to report resistance within departments and colleges to accommodating caregivers.
- Leverage UMBC’s current Strategic Plan and future strategic plans to advocate for and highlight the recruitment, retention, and experiences of faculty caregivers.
- Ensure the Faculty Caregiving Advisory Committee receives an updated charge on a yearly basis to provide ongoing oversight and commitment to cultivating a caregiver-supportive culture.

## College and Department-level Recommendations

### Promotion and Tenure (Academic Year 21-22)

- Document and account for invisible labor, including emotional labor, provided to students during this crisis by faculty. Particular attention should be directed to the ways in which faculty of color navigated additional emotional labor throughout the past year in the aftermath of George Floyd’s murder, the surge of protests against structural racism and police brutality, and the increase of anti-Asian rhetoric and violence to support students and the greater campus community.
- Provide College-level guidance on how to document teaching during and after the pandemic in dossiers for promotion and tenure as well as comprehensive reviews.

## Workload and Time Management (Fall 2021)

- Allow for flexibility to work at home as a faculty caregiver, including work-at-home policies supporting asynchronous teaching for caregivers.
- Provide course releases to enable caregivers to get back on track with their research agendas.

## Looking to the Future

To advance aspirational recommendations and goals to cultivate a caregiver supportive culture, we recommend that future efforts be combined with the Professional Staff Senate (PSS) Caregiving Committee while working with Human Resources, student parents, and other partners allied with caregivers. We urge that future efforts center the identities and experiences of underrepresented and historically marginalized faculty, staff, and students. **The full report includes more details regarding these aspirational goals we invite the University to:**

- **Explore with more intentionality the impact of the intersections connected to caregiving during both a global health pandemic and a racial trauma pandemic.**
- **Increase access to on-campus childcare** beyond what is currently available through the Y Pre-School.
- **Continue to provide back-up care membership/subsidies** for UMBC employees and students.
- **Develop an on-campus Early Childhood Center.**
- **Develop concentrated fundraising efforts directed at funding initiatives for academic caregivers.**
- **Enhance accessible parking to accommodate pregnant people.**

These recommendations are not exhaustive or time-limited, but are intended to provide an initial overview of challenges and potential solutions identified by UMBC faculty caregivers.

**Importantly, as the lasting and future impacts of this global pandemic are better understood, these recommendations will need to be revisited and revised to meet the changing needs of faculty members.** While the pandemic has highlighted and deepened these disparities related to caregiving, it did not create them. **As an institution committed to inclusive excellence, equity, and social justice, it will be critical for UMBC to reflect on long-standing institutional practices related to the intersections of caregiving in order to adequately address issues of equity for faculty caregivers.** Decisive action is needed to ensure that faculty caregivers are well-positioned to recover and thrive as members of our UMBC community as it emerges from this pandemic throughout the next several years.

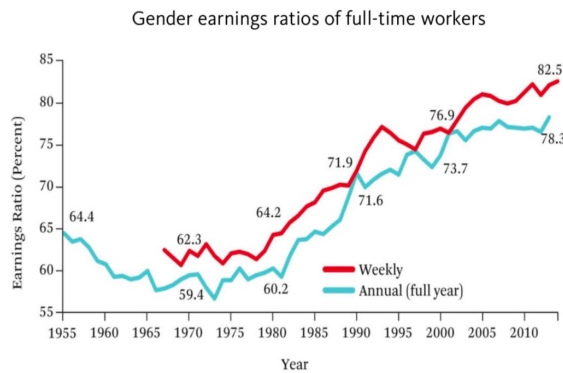
# Full Report

## Context: Covid-19 and the Caregiving Crisis

As has been well-documented, the effects of Covid-19 on faculty caregivers across the nation have been devastating. During the pandemic, faculty with young children were working from home while attempting to teach and supervise their children. Many faculty members were also responsible for caring for their aging parents who were more vulnerable to the virus. These conditions were exacerbated for [women](#), single parents, faculty with extremely young children, and [URM faculty](#).

Inequity and inequality are not new issues for women in the workforce. Before the pandemic, women on average made less money and did most of the caregiving duties and domestic work at home:

A key marker of persistent gender inequality: the **gender wage gap** (difference in earnings between men and women).



### Concern now:

*will this gap be exacerbated in the years to come?*

Source: Blau & Kahn 2016, Bailey & DiPrete 2016

	Self	Spouse/ partner	Shared	Other
<b>ROUTINE CHILDCARE</b>				
Male	8%	49%	42%	2%
Female	66%	5%	22%	7%
<b>COOKING</b>				
Male	29%	44%	19%	8%
Female	69%	8%	17%	6%
<b>CLEANING</b>				
Male	23%	38%	31%	8%
Female	68%	6%	20%	6%

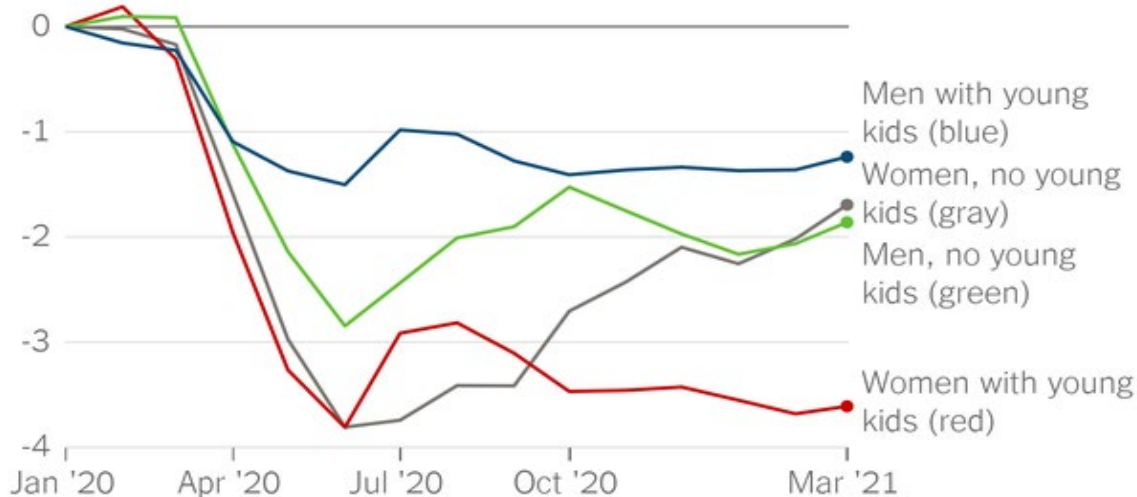
Even before the pandemic, women shouldered a **disproportionate burden of routine domestic and child care responsibilities.**

Source SHRM 2016 National Study of the Changing Workforce (n=1516)

[Oregon State University webinar, "Supporting Women in Higher Education," September 2, 2020]

During the pandemic, these issues and the potential for further wage compression as well as job loss were intensified for women, particularly women caregivers. [Data](#) collected in December 2020 on job losses during the pandemic reveals that women held 5.3 million fewer jobs than they did in February 2020, compared to a 4.6 million shortfall for men. Moreover, **according to [government data](#), about 617,000 women left the workforce in September 2020 compared with only 78,000 men.** Half of the women who dropped out were in the prime working age of 35-44, and this exodus from the workforce was likely attributable to the increased caregiving responsibilities of women with young children and/or ageing parents who were vulnerable to the virus. An [international study](#) revealed that caregivers increased their caregiving responsibilities by 7.6 hours per week during the pandemic, and that 20% of caregivers assumed this role for the first time during covid. This is an ongoing crisis. **As the graph below suggests, while men with or without children and women without children returned to the workforce after September 2020, the drop in labor force participation has continued for women with young children.**

Percent change in labor force participation, since Jan. 2020



Young children defined as those 13 and under. Chart shows three-month moving averages.

[New York Times, "[The Lack of Normal Schooling is Hurting Mothers](#)," May 3, 2021]

When university faculty were under lockdown, faculty caregivers struggled to work and to care for their children and, in some cases, their parents as well. Most had to learn how to teach online for the first time, and to do so under less than optimal conditions. Research agendas fell by the wayside and junior faculty members in particular worried about their ability to keep their jobs post-pandemic. Although not exclusively an issue for women, it is clear that women faculty caregivers have suffered the most during the pandemic. What is not clear is how this will impact their careers in the years to come.

**“We are all in the same storm, but not in the same boat . . . The scientific workforce has moved en masse into the home, where male faculty are four times more likely to have a partner engaged in full domestic care than their female colleagues.”**

[Monitoring women's scholarly production during the COVID-19 pandemic  
Philippe Vincent-Lamarre, Cassidy R. Sugimoto and Vincent Larivière]

The effect of the pandemic on women faculty's research productivity is sobering. An *Inside Higher Ed* [article](#) entitled, “Women are Falling Behind,” points to several recent studies that show that women academics published substantially less than their male colleagues while working remotely. The [largest of these studies](#) compared the rate of submissions by women and men to academic journals housed within Elsevier, the world's largest publisher of scientific books and articles, during lockdown to the rate of submissions during a similar period in 2018 and 2019. **Analyzing data on over five million authors and referees, this paper concluded that “women submitted fewer manuscripts than men during the first wave of the pandemic in early 2020”** and that “younger cohorts of women academics were penalised the most. This could be explained by a major shift in family schedules and routines caused by the pandemic due to interference of homeschooling and more intense family duties, which could have seen these cohorts of women on the front-line.” **As the authors note, this gender disparity in productivity during the first few months of the pandemic is indicative of a larger, systemic issue that will negatively impact women faculty, particularly junior faculty, in the future:** “It is probable that the first wave of the pandemic that we have examined here could be seen as the genealogy of gender disparities that will have important short- and longer-term effects . . . Previous research on peer review and editorial processes at journals has shown that gender inequalities in the rate of submissions to journals is key to determin(ing) inequality of publications and recognition” (7-8).

These inequalities are aggravated and even more concerning for women faculty members who are underrepresented minorities. As an *Inside Higher Ed* [article](#) noted, “Remote work is hard for everyone, but it is likely to have a greater negative impact on women faculty members--particularly those of color.” This article suggests that URM faculty caregivers who are women are even more at risk of student aggression and bullying in the classroom than their white colleagues. As the atrocities and instances of social injustice in 2020 and 2021 attest, this aggression towards underrepresented minorities is not confined to the classroom.



**“What has not been acknowledged is the world of terror enveloping many black academics that has changed feeling tired to absolute exhaustion . . . I purposely use the word ‘terror’ because that is what you feel when you are afraid to leave your home because you don’t know if you, or your loved ones, or even a stranger who looks like you, will return home with a virus that might be a death sentence, or if you will be murdered before you can return home. It is important that academia understand this, because it is our reality. It is not an excuse should productivity lag, or should we fail to laugh or smile on cue, but our reality.”**

[\[The Life of a Black Academic:Tired and Terrorized](#)

*Henrika McCoy]*

**Women faculty typically [advise more students and take on more teaching and service responsibilities](#) than their male colleagues.** This is especially true for women of color who may have an increase in requests for help and advice from underrepresented students, who often turn to faculty mentors who share their racial/ethnic identities in a time of need. Women faculty who take on the emotional labor within their departments may lag further behind in their research productivity, which could create issues for them when they are considered for promotion and tenure. An [online survey](#) of more than 200 international and regional faculty members in the social sciences and humanities indicated that “the pandemic created an exponential increase in faculty service loads and demands” which provided “clear evidence that this additional burden has fallen disproportionately on female faculty.”

In an article entitled “[Keeping Covid-19 from Sidelining Equity](#),” the authors acknowledge the toll that managing the pandemic has taken on faculty members and university administrators, and our hopes that when we return in the fall that the world of academia will be the one we remember prior to the pandemic. **Given the severe impediments to career advancement that caregivers, particularly women, have suffered as a result of the pandemic, this is not possible without rethinking university practices and processes in order to mitigate the gender inequality that has been exacerbated during lockdown and continued remote work.** The following report and the recommendations by the Faculty Caregiving Advisory Committee are intended to address this need and to foster a collaborative effort amongst faculty and administration as we work together to support the caregivers within our community now and in the future.

## Faculty Caregiving Advisory Committee: Charge and Membership

In the beginning of Spring 2021 UMBC’s Provost convened a Caregiving Advisory Committee to “provide counsel and advise the Provost and Council of Deans on the provision of post-Covid-19 support for faculty caregivers whose research, teaching and service has been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.” Co-chaired by Jess Myers

(Women's Center) and Orienne Smith (Faculty Senate President/English), this committee was tasked with conducting outreach and engaging in consultation with campus stakeholders, including faculty, Chairs and Program Directors and the Deans of UMBC's colleges and schools. The other committee members, selected in consultation with Dr. Pat McDermott, Vice-Provost of Faculty Affairs, and approved by the Provost are:

Matt Fagan (Geography)  
Joanna Gadsby (Library)  
Lindsay Johnson (Music)  
Erin Lavik (COEIT/CBEE)  
Jennifer Mata-McMahon (Education)  
Phyllis Robinson (Biology)  
Brandy Wallace (SAPH)

On February 9, 2021, the committee held its first meeting. At that meeting the committee decided to begin its work by holding a series of listening sessions for faculty caregivers along with an anonymous survey for faculty caregivers who did not have the time or did not feel comfortable sharing their experiences in person. These listening sessions and the survey would help the committee gather narrative data regarding the scope of the challenges that faculty caregivers are experiencing in order for the committee to find ways to support faculty caregivers in the short-term and to recommend policies and procedures that strengthen a caregiving supportive community at UMBC.

## Listening Sessions/Online Survey: Timing and Format

The Caregiving Advisory Committee held three listening sessions on Tuesday, March 23; Wednesday, March 24; and Monday, March 29. In addition, a member of the committee, Dr. Phyllis Robinson, convened a listening session for members of the WISE (Women in Science and Engineering) group on Wednesday, March 31. Thirty-three faculty members participated in these four listening sessions (including one faculty member who requested a one-to-one private session). Each of these meetings were facilitated by three members of the committee and all participants were asked the same questions, following a facilitation guide and format designed by the committee. These questions were:

- What has your **experience** been as a caregiver during Covid-19? Is it different than prior to the pandemic/remote work?
- How has the pandemic **impacted your research, teaching and service**?
- What do you **need** from the university? Now? And moving forward?
- What are your **questions and concerns** as UMBC moves toward more "normal" operations?
- What are your **recommendations** for strengthening a caregiving supportive culture at UMBC?

In addition to the listening sessions, the Caregiving Advisory Committee conducted an anonymous survey of faculty members. The invitation for this survey went out to all faculty on Monday, March 8 and the survey closed on Friday, April 2. Forty-seven faculty members participated in the online survey. The respondents included adjunct faculty, non-tenure track, tenure-track and tenured professors. **The survey asked faculty to rate their ability to execute their various roles and responsibilities prior to the pandemic and during the pandemic from 1-10, with 1 representing “poor” and 10 representing “excellent.”** The first three questions pertained to the ability to conduct research, teaching and service. Other questions included rating the working environment, the ability to manage caregiving responsibilities in relation to work, and the level of support from UMBC before and after the pandemic. The last two questions were “What do you wish the University knew about being a caregiver now?” and “What might the University do to help you manage your work and caregiving responsibilities?”

**“You are constantly just like, ‘should I just give up?’ because when you do the balance the kids are always going to be more important. At the end of the day the work has to be done. We can’t get paid for doing nothing. The University can’t just say that this doesn’t have to be turned in. It has to be done. The classes have to be taught. The committees have to meet. It is a tough position to be in, and that’s why so many people just decided that they can’t do both.”**

***-- Listening Session Participant***

## Findings: Listening Sessions

Reports and recommendations can often feel detached and distant from the issues and challenges they are attempting to address. Removing the names and identifying information from people’s lived experiences is necessary for privacy and safety, but in doing so, removes the opportunity for personal empathy and understanding. **With this in mind, we want to begin this section by naming how difficult and “heartbreaking” it was for several members of the committee to listen to our colleagues navigating caregiving and remote work throughout this pandemic.** As participants shared their challenges of caregiving throughout the pandemic, these challenges were exemplified by children popping onto their screens and the muting of themselves to attend to children’s online learning needs. For others, they joined us from their children’s bedrooms so they could ensure their children stayed in class. Still others battled with slow internet connectivity as their computer connection competed with others in their household. **Nonetheless, throughout the four listening sessions, participants expressed how meaningful it was for this space to be held for them as it presented a cathartic opportunity to share their challenges and concerns while being validated by others with similar experiences.**

While we did not ask for the gender identity of the listening session participants, it was clear from the conversations and shared experiences that the listening sessions were

predominantly attended by women faculty caregivers. We do not want to minimize the caregiving responsibilities and experiences of men or gender non-confirming caregivers, some of whom may have felt unable or apprehensive to join the listening sessions. Yet, **this committee cannot stress how important it is to remember the ways in which caregiving is gendered and impacts women faculty caregivers in inequitable ways.** As we move beyond the pandemic, it is important to recognize that women faculty caregivers may be feeling the professional effects from living and working through a pandemic for a long time. As one participant stated, the pandemic *“has magnified the injustices that already existed – gender and racial injustice... Women seem to take on a lot more of service than men – we need to name and disrupt these things so this can be transformed in the long-term.”*

This section identifies broad issues faculty caregivers shared during the listening sessions using participant quotes to center their voices. **Consistently, faculty caregivers spoke to an untenable level of exhaustion and concerns related to career advancement.** While not explored in the themes below, it was quite palpable that many faculty caregivers are concerned about the ways in which working from home has negatively impacted family members living with them. After sharing quotes to represent the witnessed themes, we provide some of the potential solutions participants explored throughout the listening sessions. Some of these potential solutions will be elaborated upon in more detail in the recommendations section of this report.

## 1. Overall Exhaustion and Additional Workload

**When asked to describe their current situation, participants used words and phrases like “exhaustion,” “relentless,” “completely drowning,” and “almost never ending.”** While caregivers noted that work-life balance is always complicated and challenging as a caregiver faculty member, the lack of separation between home and work made it especially difficult to create any sort of balance. **The lack of personal time and space impacted faculty members’ ability to think, prepare, create, and rest.** The summer and winter breaks that usually provide time to reset, plan, and research were not accessible to faculty as they pivoted their classes online or frantically used times when they were not teaching to meet publishing deadlines. **While their research faltered, many participants expressed significant ways in which their service expectations and loads increased while also not having access to administrative support to help them navigate the additional workload.** Several expressed deep concerns related to their students’ mental health and the increased energy it took to support and accommodate them. Some faculty expressed feeling overwhelmed by new expectations to meet the social needs of their students while working and learning remotely and ensuring that student enrollment was maintained. They shared experiences in which others in their department perceived them as neglectful in their responsibilities to students’ wellness if they did not create and/or participate in social opportunities within the department because of their caregiving responsibilities. **Comments related to burnout and compassion fatigue were consistent throughout the listening sessions and navigating these feelings troubled many participants.**

Additionally, an overall feeling of anxiety regarding the uncertainty connected to course scheduling and returning to campus was palpable amongst the participants. While perhaps much of this anxiety and the questions that come with it will be answered by the start of the Fall 2021 semester, **it cannot be overstated that the uncertainty and constant need to pivot over the past 14 months has taken an emotional and physical toll on faculty caregivers that may have lingering impacts.**

It is also worth noting that some shared that UMBC's messaging around grit and resilience mimics a kind of toxic positivity that inhibits some from sharing their true concerns. Moreover, when this is coupled with administrators/supervisors not checking in or offering more support around increased workload, it felt, to some, as an extra insult to their experiences.

**There is a “constant balancing act between work and duties as a caregiver...” it feels “almost never ending.” Work and caregiving “are constantly on the brain all the time.”**

**“It is constant work... now there's no separation... I'm always preparing for someone else.”**

**I'm “completely drowning...nothing has gone well and it's terrible.”**

**“Pre-pandemic, there was agreement that my program should hire a lecturer. That went on hold, and now it's just me with no staff support... It's not reasonable even if I didn't have caregiving issues..., and all I ever hear...is ‘yeah, that's rough. We need to get you help’ then nothing.”**

**“I'm working with so many people but I wonder sometimes who is going to work with me.”**

**“I constantly feel like I'm failing someone.”**

**I'm “having to do more and more with less and less.”**

**“...service, like the equity and justice work . . . has been on hold as well. There are so many things I have to say no to even though I feel my voice would be helpful because I am going through this and I know what it is like. But I can't be there.”**

**“Whether we're caregivers or not, we're all caregivers now for our students. They're in such pain and have such needs ... and we got such great training on how to do online teaching but not how to meet student's mental health/other needs in the classroom.”**

**“As a teacher I am very aware of how this is impacting our students and I'm constantly trying to take care of them as well.”**

## **2. Career Advancement**

### **a. Impacted Research**

**b. Comparisons + Competition**  
**c. Tenure-Track Process**

The listening sessions were open to all faculty caregivers and included adjunct faculty and non-tenure track faculty. **The experiences and concerns of these faculty members compared to tenure-track faculty differ significantly, with the most apparent difference being the expectation of research and progress towards tenure for tenure-track faculty.** With these critical tenets of tenure-track faculty in mind, we highlight several themes that stood out to include the ways in which the pandemic impacted research, enhanced concerns regarding comparison and competition, and elevated anxieties related to the promotion and tenure process.

For faculty members conducting research, this was the hardest role for them to maintain during the pandemic and caregiving from home. Along with non-caregiver faculty members, caregivers cited the lack of access to archives, international travel, communities, and labs which reduced their ability to conduct research. For participants in our listening sessions, though, an additional layer of caregiving impacted the ability to research, write, and publish.

**“Writing and researching are the hardest to do with the pace of caregiving during the pandemic...It is very hard to carve out the space, the larger chunks of time that are needed for the work involved in research.”**

**“The thing that really has suffered is research. Teaching and service are kind of immediate and they can be done. I feel like the time for research and mentoring my graduate students is the thing that gets cut. Having quiet time, basically our house is loud all of the time, finding the space to actually work that is not very late at night is very challenging.”**

**“I feel like I lost my protected research time.”**

**“I am just trying to maintain my current grants. However, in terms of new directions, looking for new opportunities and getting some preliminary data for proposal submissions is very difficult for me to start.”**

Throughout the various listening sessions, **faculty caregivers compared their experience at UMBC to that of colleagues at other institutions and found UMBC to be more supportive than many institutions.** Yet, this did not relieve their concern about competing with or being compared to other colleagues within their fields, especially when it came time for them to seek external letters for tenure or securing grants.

**“...but this support doesn’t make a difference between how I’ll be compared to other colleagues at other institutions or at UMBC who are non-caregivers, so I constantly feel like I have to be productive.”**

**“It’s been incredibly hard to start a lab during a pandemic... I am hoping in a year or two I can make up this time. UMBC has been supportive, but I’m competing with everyone else in my field for grants. I feel like I’m behind and can’t compete for it.”**

**“I feel like my research is just starting now - and I have been here for a year and a half. I feel way behind and it is stressing me out. I am worried about grants, progress of students, data, and start-up and all of that stuff, and it is freaking me out.”**

**It was also clear throughout all of our conversations with faculty caregivers that the process of preparing for promotion and tenure deadlines created another layer of deep exhaustion.** Despite the opportunities to delay reviews because of the pandemic, many felt that this option wasn’t accessible to them for a variety of reasons that included already stopping the clock for family leave and/or not wanting to delay the progress to promotion and salary increases further. Even those who already had tenure felt guilt around not being able to provide meaningful mentorship to faculty mentees as a result of their caregiving responsibilities.

**“I didn’t want to take an extension... I’ve already been in this limited position. I just want to be tenured.”**

**“I didn’t have an option to stop because I had to submit my file... I was working on fumes most of the year. That’s what academia does. You just do it. That was exhausting on top of caregiving.”**

**“In academia enough is never enough.... [I feel like I have] plates spinning on a broomstick. I hope none of them drop.”**

**“Publications are taking forever to be reviewed. I have two out there for the past year and there has been no response. I think that’s really going to impact tenure. I get the sense that folks will be sensitive and consider when looking at my dossier, but I also worry about the need to make excuses and the ability to articulate your situation.”**

## Potential Solutions Indicated by Faculty in Listening Sessions

During each of the listening sessions, faculty caregivers discussed ideas for solutions that could be developed by the university to address the short and longer-term needs of caregivers in the aftermath of the pandemic while also considering opportunities for expanding UMBC's caregiver supportive culture. While this report provides extensive recommendations, this section highlights the voices of faculty members during the listening session specifically. **Potential solutions articulated by faculty caregivers included:**

- 1. Protect and support junior faculty pursuing tenure and provide greater clarity and specifics on the promotion and tenure process**
  - a. *"It is not lost on me that this group has women with young children, and I think that that needs to be at the top of the list. My ambition is to protect the junior faculty as much as possible. If the University could think about that on a bigger scale then that would be very helpful. When I say protect, what I mean is 'time protect' too. Don't ask them to do committee service work, extra responsibilities."*
  - b. *In order to address lost research time, the opportunity to build community connections, and engage within their fields, a possible solution is to engage "research assistants for our assistant professors to help them make up for some of the lost time. Perhaps we could create a small assistantship for a grad student or an undergraduate student to help the junior faculty."*
  - c. *Consider course buyouts or course releases in order to provide "more time after this pandemic to do the research activity that is important for tenure and was lost...it is hard to do this research on a three course load in normal times. Figuring out how to give junior faculty that time, maybe through additional course releases would be helpful."*
  
- 2. Support chairs and supervisors in understanding the unique needs of caregivers and the ways in which accommodating and supporting their experiences are critical to caregivers**
  - a. *"Chairs have a lot of flexibility to help individual faculty, but not all chairs are equally willing to be accommodating and not all faculty are as comfortable talking to their chairs, especially those faculty who are caregivers whose chairs are not."*
  - b. *A caregiver's experience "should not be dependent on their chair."*
  - c. *"There needs to be some training around what's okay to say or not say, what questions are okay to ask or not" in regards to faculty caregivers' needs and experiences.*
  - d. *"...I have heard from our department chair that if I have a problem I should reach out, but I don't know what to ask for, and I don't know what the department resources are really... it would be helpful to know what the different options are."*



3. **Rethink the way we do meetings and work during the Fall 2021 semester and beyond**
  - a. Value and support flexibility
    - i. *“One recommendation I have is about class times and online versus in-person—allowing faculty caregivers to teach at times that are convenient for them. Our department teaches a lot of evening classes which are notoriously inconvenient for parents...”*
    - ii. *“...some [K-12] schools may still be online and after school care may not be an option or a safe option... We should consider gradually stepping out of the online, maintaining some aspects of it versus expecting everything in the fall to be like it was before. I think having these conversations would alleviate a lot of stress for parents.”*
  - b. Establish a culture of (acceptance of) asynchronous work
  - c. Schedule meetings in advance that take place during work hours and under two hours
    - i. *“Our department schedules ‘surprise’ meetings, because they think we are ‘just home.’”*

**“The work is endless and there’s no break. We’re doing the best we can, but many may be at their breaking point. I think all university leaders should be thinking about what is essential right now and trimming the fat on the things that aren’t. Faculty and staff should also not be penalized for creating boundaries and saying no to things now and even for some time once things get back to ‘normal.’ It will take caregivers time to catch up. We also are tasked with getting everyone else back to normal before we can do what we need for ourselves personally and professionally.”**

**-- Online Survey Respondent**

## Findings: Online Survey

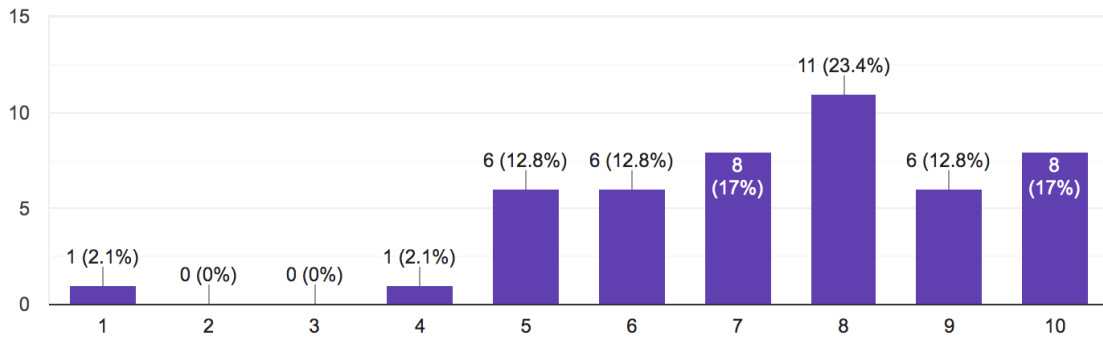
### 1. **Research: Issues/Challenges**

The findings of the online survey echoed many of the concerns and issues raised by the participants in the listening sessions.

Not surprisingly, most faculty members were hard hit in the area of research, and most of the 47 respondents to the survey registered their frustration and anxiety in this area of their responsibilities as faculty. The difference between the ability to conduct research before and after the pandemic is evident in the stark contrast between the two graphs below:

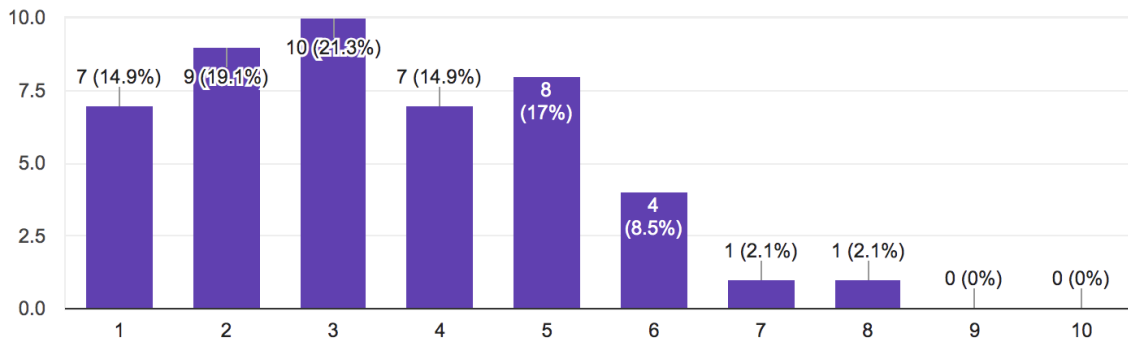
### Rate your ability to conduct research before the pandemic.

47 responses



### Rate your ability to conduct research after the pandemic.

47 responses



As these graphs illustrate, 81% of faculty caregivers at UMBC rated their ability to conduct research before the pandemic as 5 and above, with 25% assessing their ability to conduct research prior to Covid-19 at 9/10. **During the pandemic, 70% of respondents rated their ability to conduct research at 4 and below, with 34% assessing their research output at 1/2.**

Of the 25 respondents who provided additional information about the impact of the pandemic on their research, 21 reported that they were negatively impacted. Here is a sampling of their statements:

“... incorporating field work, projection, and collaborative ventures I saw the wholesale collapse of opportunities to exhibit, screen, concertize, travel for residencies, fieldwork and meetings, etc.”

“As a primary caregiver of an infant, my most productive times now revolve around my child’s sleep schedule. Being pitted with the choice of seeking childcare or reduced risk of Covid-19 exposure, my family’s ability to stay safe in the last year was dependent on me providing childcare in addition to my work responsibilities. It was the right choice for us, but my productivity suffered as a result.”

“My research is performed in Europe, so the pandemic ended my ability to conduct research. I also became my child’s primary caregiver/companion/tutor... so even writing up research already undertaken was impossible.”

It is worth noting that two out of the 25 respondents who included additional comments on this question felt that their research productivity had not suffered during the pandemic. One respondent noted that *“having fewer meetings and things competing for my time...has helped my productivity. I’m afraid that a return to face to face will chip away at that.”* Another respondent pointed to the *“cut in commute time”* as a plus that helped to make up *“for the time it’s taken me to absorb my kids’ increased at-home demand (but they are of an age it’s not as hard as with younger kids).”*

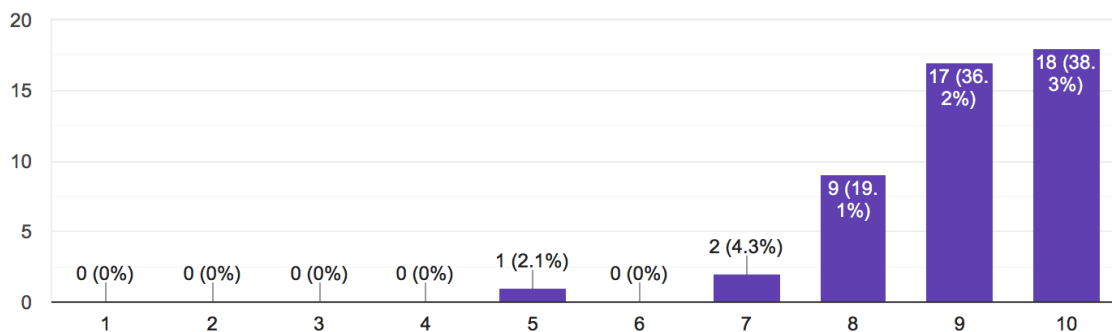
## 2. Teaching: Issues and Challenges

Most of the responses to the question asking respondents to rate their experience with teaching before and after the pandemic suggest that their ability to teach was diminished but not drastically impacted during the time faculty were compelled to teach remotely. Whereas all 47 faculty members rated their ability to teach prior to the pandemic between 5-10 at 100% (with 93.6% rating their experiences from 8-10), **this rating dipped down to 80.9% of faculty rating their experience during the pandemic between 5-10 (with 38.3% rating their experiences teaching remotely from 8-10).**

Rate your ability to perform your teaching duties before the pandemic.



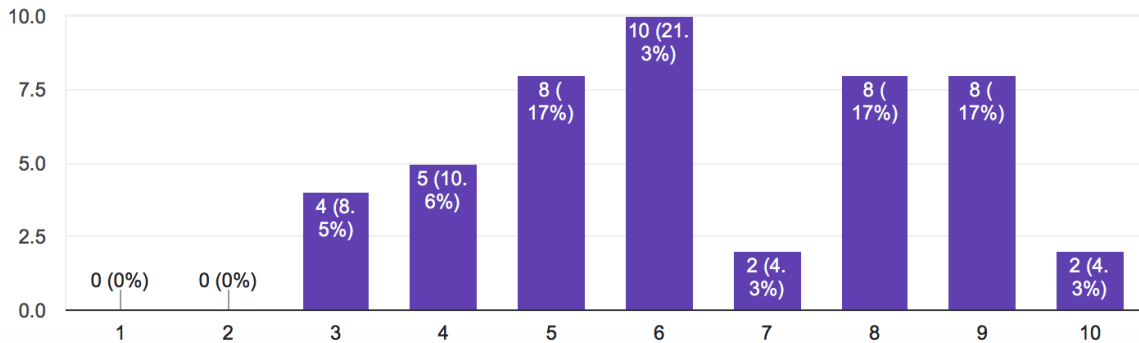
47 responses



Rate your ability to perform your teaching duties during the pandemic.



47 responses



The relatively modest dip in the ability to teach was not accidental. As the comments on teaching in the online survey indicate, faculty worked hard to maintain teaching excellence by attending the PIVOT workshops in the summer and by doing a lot of additional preparation. In addition, some faculty mentioned that they made teaching a priority. Concerns were raised, however, as the sampling of quotes below indicate.

**“As a new faculty member, I had finally gotten to the point where I had taught the same class enough times to reuse material from past courses. However, given the move to online, I had to once again develop material specific for these classes because much of my precious material didn’t translate. I taught in active learning classrooms on campus and had to completely revise lessons and activities for online. I didn’t have the time to dedicate to that shift as well as I would have liked, so my courses were more lackluster as a result.”**

**“It is very difficult to carve out time and space to grade, prepare, and meet with students outside of virtual class time while caring for and becoming the back-up teacher for my two elementary school age children.”**

**“My department has made no accommodations for tools, resources for faculty. We are told to be lenient, and flexible with students and were on our own for translating our curriculum. The room needs of the staff have superseded that of faculty who need large rooms to teach with no discussion. In fact the dept hasn’t had a COVID related discussion regarding teaching to date at all. This includes discussing challenges and problems, or solutions or anything at all. When I request resources, rooms, etc. or equipment to share with colleagues that will assist myself and everyone teaching, all was flat out rejected.”**

**“Working with students remotely is so exhausting because of the tech challenges and not being able to see and interact with students - one of the main reasons I got into this career.”**

### 3. Service: Issues and Challenges

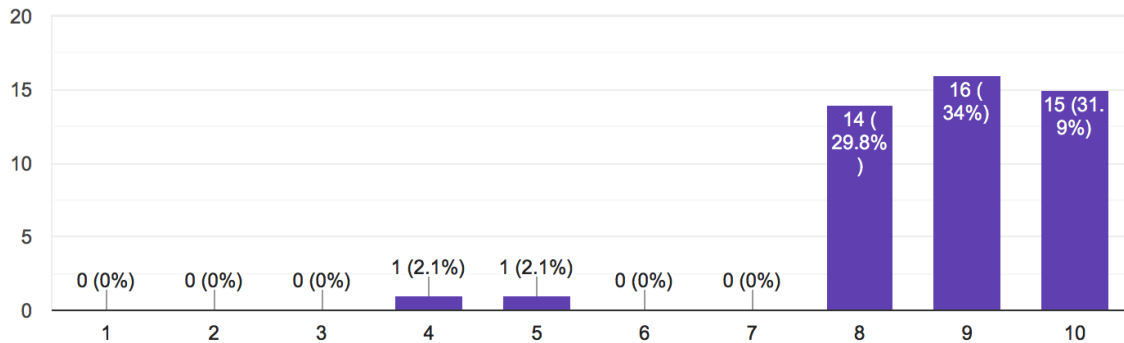
In general, many faculty members who responded to the survey felt able to do their service during the pandemic although some mentioned that their service responsibilities increased and two respondents thought there were less opportunities to do service. In addition, several faculty noted their frustration about being compelled to take on more responsibilities and feeling tired, underappreciated and underpaid.

As the pair of graphs below demonstrate, prior to the pandemic, 95.7% of the faculty respondents rated their ability to fulfill their service obligations at 8-10. **Only 36.1% of the faculty continued to rate their ability to do their service at 8-10 during the pandemic** although 78.6% rated their ability to do service at 5 and above.

Rate your ability to perform your service duties before the pandemic.



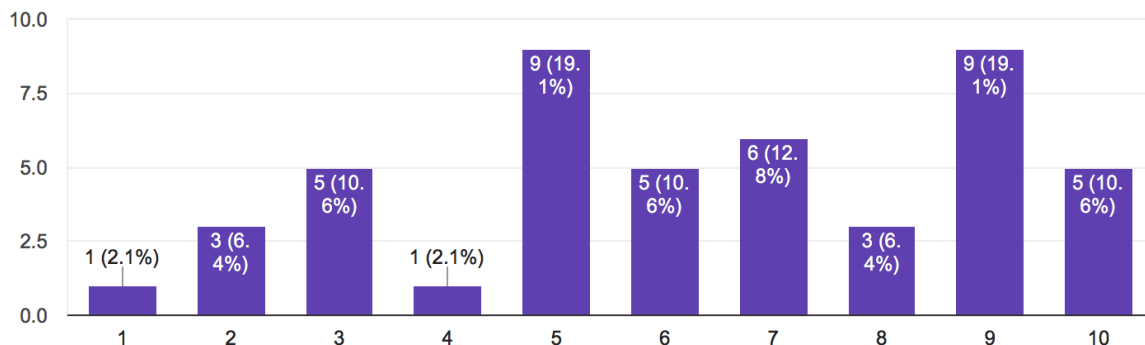
47 responses



Rate your ability to perform your service duties during the pandemic.



47 responses



**While some faculty pointed out that some service obligations decreased as a result of the pandemic, others stated that they were doing more during the pandemic and receiving less in terms of recognition or compensation.**

**“I perform a high level of service; however, during the pandemic it increased more. After a year, ‘more work and less pay’ has become normal.”**

**“Most of my service duties shifted to Webex, and multiplied.”**

**“Part of my service duties include supervising 10-15 adjunct/grad instructors per semester. I also participate in multiple other committees and service requirements. The burden of consistent support for adjuncts in the transition to online learning, while important and something I am dedicated to, has been completely overwhelming. In order to maintain a high level of service engagement, my general health and other non-UMBC related activities have suffered greatly.”**

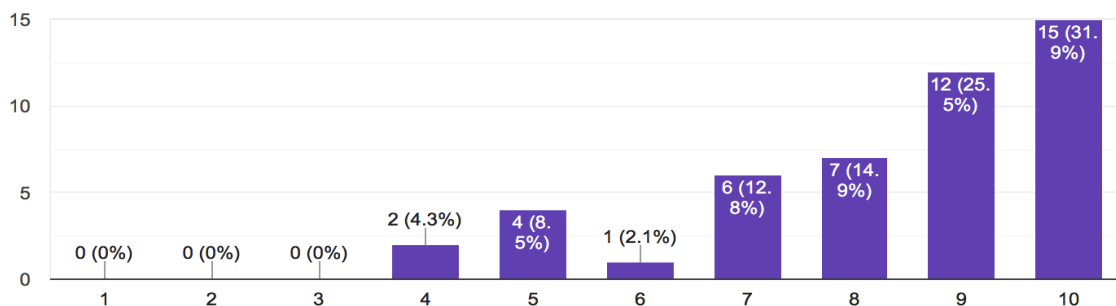
**“I am with a department that has been sort of ‘passed over’ for resources in the College repeatedly before the pandemic, so the glaring issues of having too much work for too few people are exacerbated by the limited childcare time I have now.”**

#### 4. Work Environment: Issues and Challenges

For many faculty members the difference between working at the university and working from home during the pandemic meant exchanging a quiet office at the university, an excellent internet connection, helpful co-workers and the resources necessary to do one’s job with the often chaotic conditions of working from home. **These conditions were exacerbated for caregivers who had to juggle their work responsibilities with managing young children, playing back-up teacher for their elementary-aged children and, in some cases, tending to the needs of aged parents as well.** Some faculty who responded to this survey noted the issue of spotty internet connectivity, which was often the result of multiple family members logging on at the same time. Others said that they didn’t have a home office prior to the pandemic and had to teach in spaces where other family members were congregating. The issues with working from home are mirrored in the rating that faculty caregivers gave their working environments before and during the pandemic:

Rate your working environment before the pandemic.

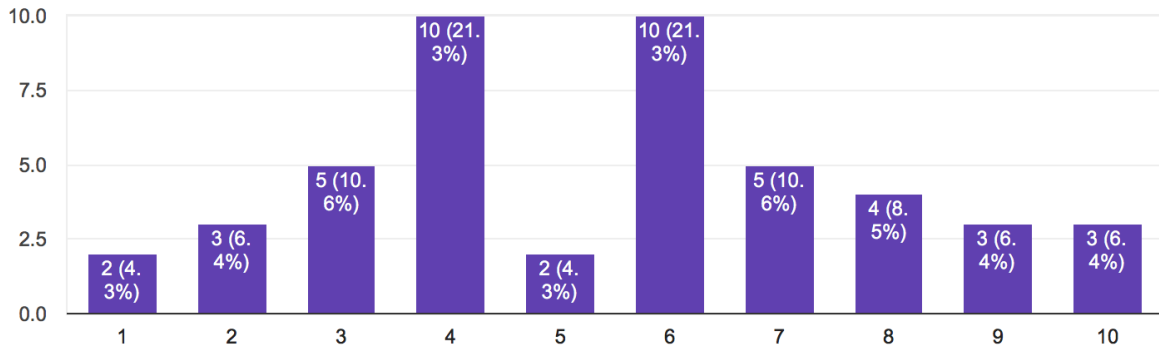
47 responses



Rate your working environment during the pandemic.



47 responses



As the graphs above indicate, 57.4% of faculty caregivers rated their work environment before the pandemic from 9-10, and 95.7% rated it at 5 and above before Covid. During the pandemic only 12.8% of faculty caregivers rated their work environment from 9-10, and 42.6% rated it at 4 and below. The comments below attest to the difficulties of working remotely:

**“I do not have a ‘home office’ and so I have set up make-do art and sound studios in my living room. Many of us have paid out of pocket for ergonomic chairs, desks, ring lights, etc. I’m saving for college for two kids, and so can’t divert resources. [A] long day in chairs not meant for hours of WebEx leave me in joint pain.”**

**“I used to have a nice quiet office to work in where I could concentrate and was free from distraction. Now I have a small house full of children and family obligations that are always in my face when I am trying to work.”**

**“I went from a shared office space to a shared home/living/school/work space with my spouse and children in our small Baltimore row home.”**

**“The blurring of home and work has been very, very hard.”**

### **5. Caregiving Responsibilities in Relation to Work Responsibilities: Issues and Concerns**

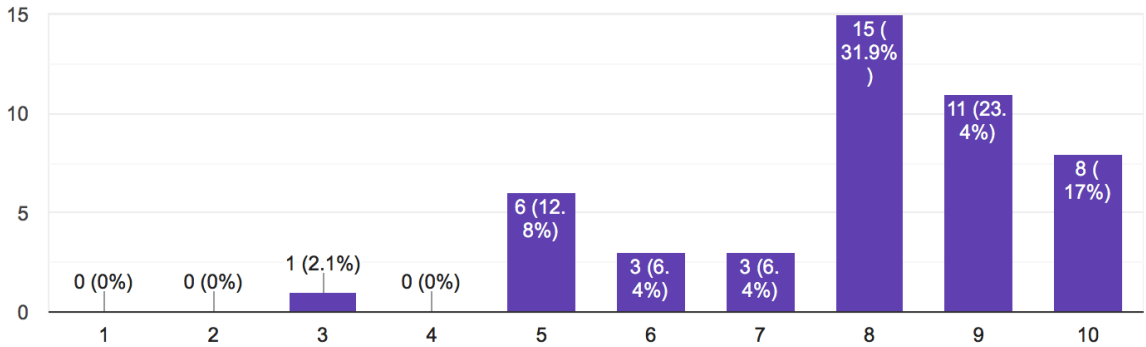
The strain of juggling caregiving duties with the responsibilities of work is clear in the responses of faculty when they were asked to rate their ability to balance caregiving and work before and during the pandemic. Before the pandemic, faculty caregivers felt capable of managing their family and work lives, with 72.3% rating their experience from 8-10 and only one of the 47 respondents rating their experience below 5. **This changed**

**dramatically during the pandemic with over half (51%) the respondents rating their ability to manage caregiving and work at 4 and below:**

Rate your ability to manage your caregiving responsibilities in relation to your work responsibilities before the pandemic.



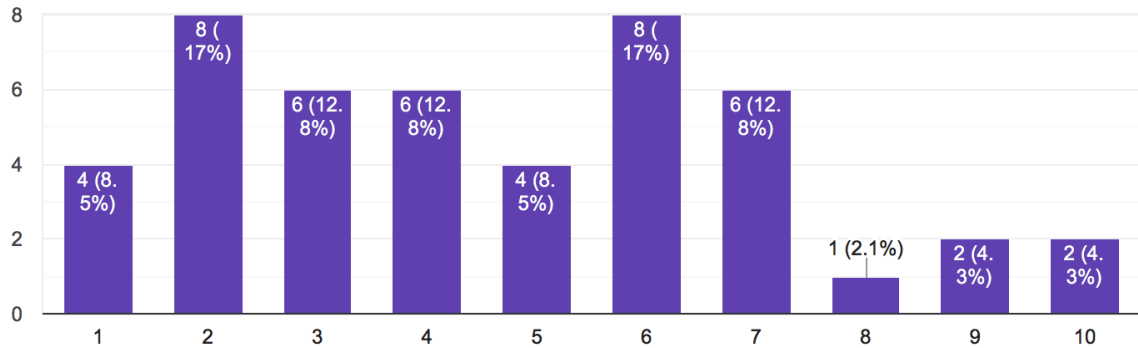
47 responses



Rate your ability to manage your caregiving responsibilities in relation to your work responsibilities during the pandemic.



47 responses



**As the comments below attest, the collision of work and life during the pandemic for many faculty caregivers ranged from “exhausting” to “almost untenable”:**



“Each kid's school deluges me with Google classroom alerts, late notices, test scores, etc. My son is on a hunt for a college, and with that there has been the management of testing, applications, fees and necessary follow up. This adds to my now ramped up online management of Blackboard, delivering all content virtually, etc...This year has been extraordinarily pressured as a result.”

“It was hard to take care of kids and a wife with multiple medical conditions before the pandemic. Now it is harder because I have less people to help me and kids at home that would normally be in school. It is difficult to take care of everybody all at once without the help I once had.”

“My caregiving is for a spouse so it's a bit different than children. His needs are often life-threatening.”

“There's no backup. My kid is in daycare, so we're covered, but we can't send her to a friend's house, or hire a babysitter, or have the grandparents visit. On any given day, it's manageable. But it's every day since the end of August (and before that she was home all day) and the grind is wearing. I'm just tired, and I think it's going to take years to be rested again.”

“It would have been challenging to have a new baby and a new job in ordinary times. In the pandemic it's been almost untenable.”

“I am deeply exhausted and really need a break.”

## **6. Level of Support from UMBC Related to Caregiving Roles: Issues and Concerns**

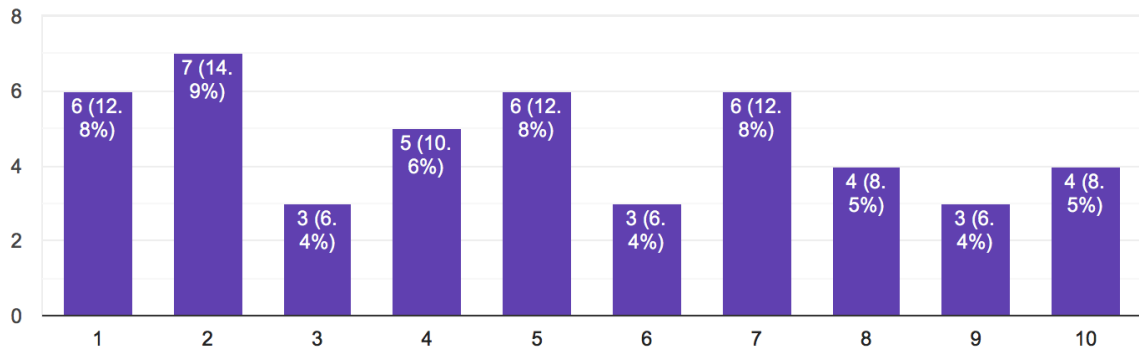
The question of the level of support from UMBC for caregivers elicited a range of responses that suggest that although the pandemic heightened the challenges for faculty caregivers, the university can do more to help support caregivers in general. **10.6% of faculty caregivers rated UMBC's support of caregivers as 1 or "poor" prior to the pandemic and 19.1% (or slightly less than one-fifth of the respondents) rated the level of support before covid as 4 and below.** In addition, slightly over one-fifth of the respondents rated the level support as 5.

During the pandemic the ratings for support for caregivers was even more varied. More than half (57.5%) of respondents rated UMBC's support at 5 and below. On the other hand, nearly one quarter (23.4%) of the respondents rated UMBC's level of support for caregivers during the pandemic as 8-10.

Rate the level of support from UMBC related to your caregiving roles during the pandemic.



47 responses



**As the comments below indicate, faculty perception of the level of support from UMBC is determined largely by departmental culture.** Faculty with chairs who are attuned to the needs of caregivers give high marks to the university for its support of caregivers while faculty in departments that do not embrace a family-friendly culture feel isolated and/or afraid to voice their need for support. As one faculty respondent noted, there is also a potential equity issue when the duties of caregivers are shifted over to others who are not caregivers.

### High level of support

- *“I told my chair and others this summer that I was pretty overwhelmed and prior to any official statements from higher up my chair was 100% supportive and agreed to have me step down off of chairing a committee. Other UMBC people enabled me to cut back on some wider university commitments as well. I feel everyone was very supportive; my chair really went out of their way right away to brainstorm and discuss ways to make everything more manageable.”*
- *“My department head is supportive, understanding, and tremendously collegial. I couldn’t ask for more.”*
- *“My department was excellent in allowing my teaching schedule to accommodate the responsibilities of dropping off and picking up my children from school.”*

### Some support

- *“I think that the administration is aware of these pressures, but we have not addressed them within the culture of the campus nor seen significant policy shifts or supports. The work of triaging students and access has taken up most of the effort.”*
- *“UMBC’s heart is in the right place, and the culture has really improved over the past decade. But here is the challenge: when one faculty gets time off for family leave or arranges flexible work with the chair, the work has to go somewhere -- usually it falls back to the chair, or has to get picked up by staff or other faculty, often someone without family. I think some faculty (who don’t have children or dependents) start to feel they need an equivalent ability to ask for flexibility. Frankly, there simply needs to be less work to pass around. The administration*

*needs to stop adding new processes and expectations onto faculty and chairs. Spreading it around flexibly is helpful, but does not solve the problem.”*

- *“Departments vary widely in supportiveness. If your department isn't supportive you have no good options.”*

### **No support**

- *“There is little formal institutional support. There are also career consequences for taking advantage of what support there is. Telling departments to ‘work something out’ depends on too many factors to consistently be helpful.”*
- *“There is no support and I am managing three households including my own with K-12 children.”*

### **Silence/fear of being “mommy-tracked”**

- *“Since my children were born, I've worked only to hide my parenting responsibilities for fear of backlash, and actual experiences of not being offered positions, funding and respect that I can do my job with potential parenting distractions.”*
- *“I don't disclose my caregiving role. Maybe one or two colleagues know about my situation but not the depth of my caregiving.”*
- *“Everyone is really understanding. But no one has actually done anything to help. I feel like I'm allowed to do less at work, but at the expense of being mommy-tracked and seen as not dedicated to my job... When we say we need help because we're caregivers, it's not a caregiving problem, it's a mommy problem. So we don't say it.”*

## **7. What do you wish the University knew about being a caregiver right now?**

**a. This affected women faculty more severely.** The fear of being “mommy-tracked” registered by the faculty respondent above points to the gendered aspect of caregiving. Several faculty members flagged this as something that the university needs to remember:

- *“Caregiving disproportionately affects women. ‘We'll just make allowances for anyone who needs it’ is the ‘all lives matter’ of caregiving in this pandemic. Of course men should be supported, but \*on average\* that is a less affected group.”*
- *“Part of the issue is the time required to conduct extra caretaking responsibilities during the pandemic. The other component is the stress and emotional/psychological toll of managing new and complicated circumstances for our families in light of unknown futures, serious illness and death. Balancing this with the expectations of maintaining teaching excellence and providing support for others in our departments is extremely difficult and disproportionately falls on the shoulders of women.”*

**b. Juggling caregiving responsibilities and work responsibilities this past year has severely impacted the mental health of faculty caregivers.** Variations on the word “exhaustion” come up repeatedly in this survey, and specifically as something that

faculty caregivers would like university administrators to know about their experiences as caregivers this past year. This exhaustion is physical, mental and emotional. In addition to taking care of their families and, in many cases, extending this role of caregiver to their students as well, many faculty caregivers are extremely worried about their own mental health and their ability to continue to go above and beyond in performing their duties both at home and at work.

**“Loss of commute helps but there is more work to support students and manage teaching and it is more difficult during the pandemic semesters. Care giving involves physical support but also many moments of loss and sorrow for all in the home, so the time to emotionally support an elder (or children) is significant, and time is needed to regain my own emotional equanimity to teach and support students, many of whom are themselves caregivers and facing horrible losses in their families and communities. It's a lot! And we need to maintain our own health to do it all. Struggling with feeling that nothing is done well is constant, but we persist.”**

**“Multitasking has been very hard. It has affected my health and emotional stability including relationships in my family. Many ups and downs dealing with anxiety, very long days.. and thank God we did not get sick or lose our job. We also had to take care of many students with mental and emotional issues (not just our families).”**

**“It is very isolating. Access to help from family, friends, and other resources is severely limited and you feel like everybody depends on you but there is no one to help you or even just spend some time with you to make the present sufferings more bearable.”**

**c. Ongoing concerns about job performance evaluations in general and promotion and tenure in particular.** Although faculty caregivers are aware that the university has established new protocols and processes to support faculty, including faculty caregivers, who are being evaluated for their job performance during the pandemic, they want to remind the administration that implicit biases can still undermine the evaluative process and that we should consider a more holistic approach to evaluating job performance and promotion and tenure.

- *“Caregivers need to feel empowered and absolutely supported to draw hard lines in the sand and thick boundaries around what they can and cannot do. Caregivers need to be reassured that biases in our evaluative systems (especially regarding opportunities for leaves, pay increases, etc.) will not set them back even further.”*
- *“This year is incomparable for so many reasons and I hope the tenure and promotion process reflects that. I’d also like to add that while the pandemic increased these pressures, folks that have caregiving responsibilities take these hits all the time. What can the university do to shift to a more holistic view of*

*productivity for all faculty? That may increase equity in the tenure and promotion process across demographics.”*

## **8. Potential solutions indicated by faculty respondents to the online survey**

One of the final questions of the online survey was “What might the University do to help you manage your work and caregiving responsibilities?”

The most frequent response was **release time from teaching and a reduction of service duties** in the short-term for caregivers to catch up on their research. As one faculty member noted, *“Since service and teaching have immediate deadlines (usually), research is the thing that suffers. It is also much harder to practice remotely. Allow those with caregiving responsibilities to be relieved of teaching or service requirements. This can even happen as the pandemic wanes--give us time to catch back up on research and have some protected time for that.”*

Several of the solutions posited by respondents centered on **clear communications from upper administration to department chairs regarding ways to support their faculty**, particularly women faculty, who often take on more service responsibilities than their male colleagues. One respondent stated that *“the University did a great job reinforcing guidelines for care and compassion for our students during the transition to online teaching. This level of care, regarding flexibility with deadlines, and considerations around lessening service requirements etc. for faculty and staff should be communicated to Dept.Chairs as a cultural norm as well. The University should also ask departments to assess gender equity in their service assignments.”* Another respondent agreed: *“Yes, service is distributed unequally by gender. Historically, at UMBC, women have always done more than their fair share of the service. Stop sending supportive emails and do something about this.”*

Other potential solutions submitted by faculty caregivers include:

- The continued suspension of non-essential work like assessment
- Allowing for alternate teaching schedules that are family-friendly
- An overhaul of university processes to make them more efficient and streamlined
- Revisiting salary compression/inversion from a gendered perspective
- Help pay for childcare
- Free daycare for faculty and staff or credit for daycare and/or childcare
- Training in how to care for students during this transitional period

## **Recommendations**

Assured of anonymity by the peer facilitators, the faculty caregivers who participated in the listening sessions and the survey shared their experiences in the hopes that their stories will be listened to by UMBC’s administration and will help shape policies and

procedures to support caregivers as our university transitions out of this phase of the pandemic into the uncertainties of the academic profession post-pandemic. The recommendations by the Faculty Caregiving Advisory Committee outlined below are based on the suggestions from the participants and committee members in addition to best practices that are currently implemented by other universities to support caregivers now and in the future. Moreover, recommendations were discussed with college deans and were finessed based on additional information and insights they shared. **Since the pandemic has been experienced unequally by faculty of different groups, well-intended, but identity-neutral responses, may inadvertently exacerbate inequality. We therefore offer that recommendations are considered through a lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion in order to center URM caregivers experiences while also supporting all faculty caregivers.** Additionally, we recognize that many of these recommendations will not only benefit faculty caregivers, but also contribute to a more holistic approach to wellness and work-life balance that has the potential to benefit all faculty members.

Recommendations are provided by what level of the University has the opportunity to implement along with suggested timelines for execution. It is important to note that we do not consider these recommendations to serve as a check-list, but rather evidence-based goals intended to support faculty caregivers and influence culture change at UMBC.

## University-level Recommendations

### *Policies and Procedures (Summer 2021)*

- **The limit of two tenure-clock extensions should be reviewed.** Faculty who were granted extensions as part of their family support plans should also be eligible for extensions to their tenure clocks as a result of the impact of the pandemic on their research trajectories. Appropriate considerations should be made based on each caregiver's individual needs and circumstances while also balancing how multiple extensions may negatively impact timely tenure and career trajectory
- **Junior faculty should be provided with information regarding the possibility of extending the number of years that they can use their start-up funds if they were impacted by the pandemic.** They should be encouraged to work with their Department Chairs and mentors to develop a plan for spending these funds down.
- **Childcare support funds should be allowable in internal grants, fellowships, start-up packages and/or as an add-on application for completing research projects.**  
A compelling precedent for this can be found [here](#) and [here](#).
- **The Vice President of Research should investigate the accommodations that have been made by the federal government agencies and draft a**

**boilerplate statement that can be included in grant applications.** These agencies would include but not be limited to NIH, NSF, USDA, NASA, and NEA.

*Promotion and Tenure (Changes to Faculty Handbook, initiated in Fall 2021)*

- **Faculty who have added additional year(s) to their tenure clock who are undergoing contract renewal, promotion and/or tenure should be able to choose the semesters they would like to be considered for review.**

Contract Renewal for Assistant Professors If a junior faculty member has elected to add an additional year or more to their tenure clocks, she or he may select four or more semesters to include in their dossier for review during Contract Renewal.

Promotion and Tenure Review If a junior faculty member has elected to add an additional year or more to their tenure clocks, she or he may select eight or more semesters to include in their dossier for review during the tenure process.

Promotion to Full Professor. An Associate Professor who submits their dossier for review for consideration for promotion to Professor may elect to omit one or more semesters from their review with a written explanation of their rationale for doing so.

- **Allow tenure-track faculty and Lecturers to choose the semesters for which they will submit SEEQ results in promotion and tenure dossiers.** To give maximum flexibility, P&T dossiers should require two fewer semesters' worth of SEEQ sets than the number of semesters under review to allow for the range of outcomes from the move to online learning. This change will enable faculty who are proud of their accomplishments in moving their courses online to submit SEEQ results from the 20-21 academic year without penalizing those who had lower SEEQ scores after pivoting to an online format. This flexibility may also take into account potentially lower student response rates during the pandemic.

*Education/Communication (Academic Year 21-22)*

- **Create and disburse a caregiver supportive toolkit to chairs/administrators on a yearly basis.**

UMBC's ability to not only attract, but to retain the best faculty depends on building an infrastructure that is caregiver-friendly. Supervisors must understand the importance of creating a departmental culture supportive of caregivers and value caregivers as an integral part of our diverse community. Throughout the listening sessions and feedback survey, faculty caregivers identified an inconsistency across departments and supervisors that impacted the ways in which they felt supported as caregivers. This toolkit specific to UMBC's policies, practices, and current and aspirational campus culture would build a consistent starting point and a list of expectations in how to support and affirm caregivers who are already members of our campus community while serving as a

recruitment tool for potential faculty members. A promising example of a Caregiver Supportive Toolkit can be found [here](#).

- **Create and implement a caregiving-supportive/culture change workshop.** In addition to the Caregiving Toolkit, it is recommended that **a workshop intended to complement the toolkit** be created and made available to new Chairs and interested departments on a yearly basis. An excellent model for a Caregiving Workshop can be found [here](#).
- **Create a Caregiving Fellows cohort to educate peers on necessary caregiver support.** Modeled on the STRIDE Fellows, the Caregiving Fellows would be charged with providing peer education on how to support caregivers within a department and during the review process. They would run the caregiving-supportive/culture change workshop and provide consultation to departments as necessary.
- **Enhance and streamline visibility of caregiving policies and resources by creating a “Faculty Caregiving” tab on the Provost’s website.** Faculty reported that it was often hard to find information related to caregiving policies and benefits. Others commented that creating a more visible and robust platform can support faculty recruitment. Promising models from UMBC’s peer institutions include [University of California Riverside](#) and [New Jersey Institute of Technology](#). Other helpful examples include [Princeton University](#).

#### *Meetings and Accountability (Academic Year 21-22)*

- **Institute Provost-mandated reduced meeting times and mandate “protected” times for caregivers.** A significant theme throughout our data collection was the increase of meetings. The facilitators and participants noted that our colleagues who work in units that prioritize limited meetings that are under one hour and occur during traditional business feel less stress. The need for “protected” times for caregivers was also flagged at the University Retreat in the Community/Well-being session and recommended in the report that was generated as the result of this session. The Caregivers Advisory Committee encourages the Provost to explicitly state when meetings can and cannot happen and to encourage the use of asynchronous methods to plan and communicate activities. For example, some groups on campus are limiting meetings to 50 minutes and only holding meetings between 9 am and 2 pm to ensure time to work on longer projects or take care of other obligations. Implementing this recommendation not only benefits caregivers, but can contribute to a more holistic commitment to wellness for all faculty members and supporting staff members.
- **Leverage the APR process to hold departments accountable to supporting caregivers and work-life balance.**



As the participants in our listening sessions and surveys noted, there is inconsistency across departments and supervisors that impacts the ways in which faculty feel supported as caregivers. Requiring departments to reflect and document the ways in which they took efforts to support caregivers encourages a level of accountability that may help reduce or begin to address perceived inconsistencies.

- **Set up a pathway for individual faculty members to report resistance within departments and colleges to accommodating caregivers.** Some faculty do not feel comfortable asking for accommodations, or feel that their departmental culture is such that they will be penalized for requesting assistance. These faculty need an alternative and anonymous/confidential means of getting support. Women faculty and URM are often particularly hesitant to “rock the boat” for fear of retribution. Furthermore, the University needs to know which departments need further training to effect a culture change towards welcoming and accommodating caregivers; such a stopgap measure would also reveal toxic work environments that may otherwise remain hidden. It may be possible to make use of resources already available, such as WISE or ADVANCE, or the Office of Equity and Inclusion. Furthermore, faculty may benefit from a more detailed understanding of OEI.
- **Leverage UMBC’s current Strategic Plan and future strategic plans to advocate for and highlight the recruitment, retention, and experiences of faculty caregivers.** There are at least two areas in UMBC’s current strategic plan in which enhancement of support and benefits for faculty caregivers could be expanded upon in order to reach University goals. These areas include: Collective Impact in Research, Scholarship, And Creative Achievement with a specific focus on Goal 2 to “Increase UMBC’s research prominence through sustained investment in faculty and staff hiring, retention, and development” and Innovative Curriculum and Pedagogy with a focus on goal 1.2 to “Increase the size and diversity of full-time faculty and their engagement in first- and second-year student learning experiences.” Exploring ways in which caregivers and their caregiving experiences impact UMBC’s overall goals should be intentionally named and explored in future strategic plans.
- **Ensure the Faculty Caregiving Advisory Committee receives an updated charge on a yearly basis** to provide ongoing oversight and commitment to cultivating a caregiver-supportive culture. This group should work in partnership with other caregiving supportive efforts led by PSS and students.

## College and Department-level Recommendations

### *Promotion and Tenure (Academic Year 21-22)*

- **Document and account for invisible labor.** Many faculty members spoke to the significant ways in which the pandemic increased the amount of emotional labor and care they were providing to students. This type of care is also well-documented for faculty of color who often provide care, support, and advising/mentorship to students of color in greater numbers than their white colleagues. This was compounded throughout the past year in the aftermath of George Floyd's murder, the surge of protests against structural racism and police brutality, and the increase of anti-Asian rhetoric and violence. Instituting methods to evaluate and appreciate the emotional labor provided to students (and the campus community as whole) during these ongoing crises by faculty are recommended.
- **Provide college-level guidance on how to document teaching during and after covid in dossiers for promotion and tenure as well as comprehensive reviews.** This guidance can include the suggestion of a reflection on teaching during this period: what the faculty member did to prepare for teaching remotely (i.e. PIVOT training), what they did to revise their courses for an online platform, and the amount of time they spent in training and course preparation. Evidence of the difference between teaching specific courses in-person versus remote could be shared by providing "before" and "after" syllabi.

### *Workload and Time Management (Fall 2021)*

- **Allow for flexibility to work at home as a faculty caregiver.** Working and learning remotely over the past year has made it apparent that in-person classes are not the only effective way for students to learn and professors to teach. Faculty members who are caregivers may benefit from teaching remotely from home and we recommend that an allowance for asynchronous teaching modes or work-from-home policies needed as a result of caregiving responsibilities of any sort be considered. This could include a broad policy that would allow these choices to be made without fear of repercussion in terms of promotion and tenure or the opportunity to work with GAs.
- **Provide course releases.** Junior faculty members with significant caregiving demands during the pandemic should be given the option for course release and/or a reduction in course design in a future semester prior to tenure review. These releases can be staggered to reduce pressure on departments to staff courses.

## Looking to the Future

There is an urgency to address the immediate needs of caregivers as a result of the pandemic and remote work. Yet, **we cannot miss the opportunity to use this moment to consider the long-term efforts UMBC can take to enhance and expand a caregiver supportive culture.** We recommend that efforts be combined with the Professional Staff Senate (PSS) caregiving committee while working with Human Resources, student parents, and other partners allied with caregivers to advance aspirational recommendations and goals to cultivate a caregiver supportive culture. We urge that future efforts center the identities and experiences of underrepresented and historically marginalized faculty, staff, and students. Some aspirational goals to consider include:

- **Explore with more intentionality the impact of the intersections connected to caregiving during both a global health pandemic and a racial trauma pandemic.** This first attempt to collect data on the experiences of UMBC faculty caregivers did not include efforts to solicit social identity demographics and therefore cannot provide more nuanced details and assessment to the degree in which racial inequities need to be addressed. Inclusive efforts must specifically address the needs of faculty of color caregivers.
- **Increase access to on-campus childcare** beyond what is currently available through the Y Pre-School.
- **Continue to provide back-up care membership/subsidies** for UMBC employees and students. We are heartened by the May 13, 2021, announcement that this fall eligible employees at UMBC will have access to a Premium Membership with Care@Work, a platform that provides families with the tools to help them make more informed hiring decisions whenever care needs arise. We recommend that this benefit be maintained beyond the transition back to campus and stays a permanent part of employee and grad student benefits.
- **Develop an on-campus Early Childhood Center**, perhaps from a collaboration between the Sherman Center for Early Learning in Urban Communities and the Education Department, to provide child care services to the UMBC community implementing a cutting edge educational model through which to train our early childhood teacher candidates and offer a research site for faculty conducting studies in related fields.
- **Develop concentrated fundraising efforts directed at funding initiatives for academic caregivers** and cultivate donors interested in investing in funds to support back-up childcare, new or larger childcare facilities, and/or childcare subsidies for UMBC students, faculty, and staff.
- **Enhance accessible parking to accommodate pregnant people** by making it easier to park near one's own building during pregnancy.

## Conclusion

The Covid-19 pandemic has introduced unprecedented stressors for faculty caregivers that coincide with historic inequities experienced by caregivers. Implementation of this

report's recommendations is a critical step in supporting faculty caregivers whose professional and personal lives have been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. These recommendations are not exhaustive or time-limited, but are intended to provide an initial overview of challenges and potential solutions identified by UMBC faculty caregivers. **Importantly, as the lasting and future impacts of this global pandemic are better understood, these recommendations will need to be revisited and revisioned to meet the changing needs of faculty members.** While the pandemic has highlighted and deepened these disparities related to caregiving, it did not create them. **As an institution committed to inclusive excellence, equity, and social justice, it will be critical for UMBC to reflect on long-standing institutional practices related to the intersections of caregiving in order to adequately address issues of equity for faculty caregivers.** Decisive action is needed to ensure that faculty caregivers are well-positioned to recover and thrive as members of our UMBC community as it emerges from this pandemic throughout the next several years.