Greetings!

I hope each and every one of you is staying safe and healthy as we continue to navigate our new normal! This year has been challenging to all of us in unique ways, but I am deeply proud of the work we have accomplished in spite of unprecedented adversity.

For the past thirty years, the Women’s Forum has galvanized women from across the University of Maryland System by celebrating their achievements and impact in their workplaces. It has been a wonderful honor to serve among so many women dedicated to advocating for a more equitable society. However, my time serving as Chair for the Women’s Forum is coming to a close.

As Chair, I have had the distinct privilege of seeing so many new and exciting developments take place. We have all been tested by a world of great uncertainty, and faced a great number of challenges in our personal lives, our sense of collaboration, and our cohesiveness as an essential organization.

Despite these uphill challenges, we have persevered and the work we have accomplished together speaks volume of this group as a storied institution. We reestablished a working relationship with USM Chancellor Jay Perman with the full support from his staff, including the creation of a liaison position with Kelsey Beckett. We invited campus presidents to take advantage of our programming and resources and, as a result of our direct action, we received a total of $8,000 from several USM institutions.

As in any good working relationship, we reciprocated this support. This past year, we awarded $1,000 in scholarships to eight undergraduate and graduate students from various campuses across the University System of Maryland. Six staff members received professional development awards, ranging from $250 to $1,000, and our forum awarded $1,000 in research funds to two of our faculty members.

Despite our remote work situation, the Women’s Forum nonetheless stood united in our events. Last October, we held our first ever virtual annual conference, “Ever Evolving,” and sold out with 300 attendees. With our keynote speaker Ms. Kimberly Churches, CEO of the American Association of University Women; the Honorable Adrienne A. Jones, Maryland House of Delegates Speaker; and breakout sessions by Amber Chaney, owner of Chaney Communications and social media strategist, we stood resilient in the face of COVID-19.

That resilience also led to our very own support panel – Surviving COVID-19. We hosted numerous webinars and discussions on topics like gender equity in the workforce, how to achieve your goals and how to be confident in all that you do. We saluted many of our fellow women who made an impact in the lives of others, and ultimately spotlighted over 25 women since March.

As the pandemic continued shifting our daily lives and workplaces, we wrote to Chancellor Perman to ensure our voices would be heard and secure flexible, family-friendly policies be adopted as we planned our return to campuses. As platinum sponsor for the Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women, we met with Sen. Nancy King and spoke directly about issues and upcoming legislation supporting our state’s talented women.

We also ensured our voices would be heard across social media, with an increased presence on Instagram and increased followers and content for our Facebook page, thanks to a partnership with Chaney Communications.

The accomplishments of all our members are seemingly endless, and I am filled with pride at seeing so many step up to the plate at a time when our voices are needed most. The Women’s Forum is in good hands moving forward into the next year, and I cannot wait to see what the future brings us and the many powerful women that enrich our lives every day!

Again – thank you! And here’s to another year of great accomplishments!

Tanya P. Jones, MEM Chair

“THE ONLY WAY YOU REALLY SEE CHANGE, IS BY HELPING CREATE IT.”
– Lena Waithe

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Again – thank you! And here’s to another year of great accomplishments!

Tanya P. Jones, MEM Chair
Scholarships & Awards

We are pleased to see a huge increase in the number of scholarships and awards granted to students and faculty alike.

our achievements

- Updated scholarship language to be more inclusive.
- Expanded faculty awards to include any female-conducted research.
- Worked with Chancellor’s office to review and upgrade rubric language.
- Gave more weight to women-oriented topics in rubric.
- Promoted awards earlier this year (February) on multiple platforms.
- Compiled Scholarship Recipient List and posted on website
- Created 1st ever video announcing 2020 winners.

statistics

- From 2005 - 2020 we distributed 62 student scholarships.
- In 2011 we added staff professional development award and faculty research award.
- From 2011 - 2020 we distributed 24 staff awards and 11 faculty awards.
- In 2019 we awarded 10 scholarships (60 apps) and 3 faculty & 3 staff awards.
- 2020:
  - Applications increased from 60 to 220.
  - Awarded $8K Student Awards from 4 different institutions.
  - Awarded $2K Faculty Research Awards from 2 different institutions.
  - Awarded $6K Staff Awards.
**annual conference**

**october 2020**

🌟 1st Virtual annual conference: “Ever Evolving” hosted by Towson University.

- Sold out conference (300 attendees).
- Recruited USM Dr. Perman, TU Pres. Schatzel & BSU Pres. Breaux to participate.
- Engaged great speakers:
  - Honorable Adrienne Jones, Maryland House Speaker.
  - Kimberly Churches, CEO American Association of University Women (AAUW).
- Kept costs economical: $35 early birds, $40 regular, & $20 students.
- Gathered 7 virtual sponsors including AJ Stationers (Rusty) who sent attendees gifts.
- Hosted “Loss During Covid” panel; TU’s Mary Curran moderated with Erica Deramo, Natasha Rodriguez, & Rhea Nedd.
- Gave away 25+ prizes.
- Shipped gift masks directly to attendees.

🌟 Distributed shirts for Conference related to theme.

🌟 Concluded conference with virtual Happy Hour.

🌟 Started preparations earlier with maintained timeline under Jennifer’s leadership.

🌟 Conference Committee members: Jennifer Artis (co-chair), Christine Tennies (co-chair), Tanya Jones, Luella Hackett, Natasha Rodriguez -assistance from Eileen, Renee & Cherlyn.

🌟 Established online forms to be vendor, speaker, or spotlight nominee; drafted by Jennifer.

🌟 Started work on 2021 Conference “Embrace Our Destiny” in January.

- Jennifer leading conference & events committee formed from Committee Meet Up.
- USG agreed to host again.
**USM & CUSS/CUSF/Student Council Interactions**

- Met with Ellen Herbst, Vice Chancellor to strengthen relationship and garner support.
- Made specific asks:
  - Liaison to Chancellor – Deputy Chief of Staff Kelsey Beckett now involved.
  - Physical Space to serve as a repository at System Office.
  - Set up meeting with USM Facilities Manager to discuss physical space.
  - New platform (move from Box) & tech assist in Zoom, Teams, List serves & 6 emails with USMD designation.
  - Follow-up meeting with USM IT team to discuss technical consolidation.
  - Help to get Frostburg to appoint a rep: now we have Heather Killeen.
  - Aspirational goal to discuss daycare with Chancellor.
  - Formed Childcare Taskforce with huge support from Salisbury, UB, Coppin.
- Chancellor asked for letter and recommendations.
- Create Chancellor Scholarship and/or for him to match.
- Set up meeting with USM Foundation to discuss Chancellor scholarship & endowment.
- Set up meeting with USM Advancement Office to discuss scholarship language.
- Raise our visibility.
- Presented to Chancellor and CUSP in March.

- Met Chancellor in January with Annie to reintroduce USMWF and forge relationship including serving as an advisory board, Patrick Hogan Vice Chancellor of Government Relations and Len Raley, President & CEO of USM Foundation.
- Set up meeting with USM Communications team to discuss visibility.
- Met with Tim McDonough, Vice Chancellor for Communications and Marketing; Interim Asst. Vice Chancellor/CIO Michael Eismeier for Technology, Greg Yeldell Facilities Manager.
- Requested 2 meeting with Chancellor per year.
- Drafted and submitted to Chancellor advisory letters prepared by workgroups re flexible work schedules within the System, childcare accessibility within USM and pay gender gaps.
- Attend (Annie & Tanya) attended CUSS that Renee set up.
- Invited CUSF rep Aerian Tatum from Coppin to our meeting (Vaple liaison).
- Invited USM Student Council President Annie Rappaport to our meeting.
- Attended USM Student Council Meeting; Luella represented us.
- Promoted reps to schedule regular meetings/updates with their Presidents/ED.
- Arranged visit by USG’s Executive Director Dr. Khademian to introduce herself, share career & highlights, emphasize opportunities and ways to partner with us.
- Encouraged to apply for 2021 General Assembly boards/commissions by Speaker Jones.
- Hosted “Committee Meet-Up” to garner interest for committees from System Community.
Social Justice & Advocacy

Supporting the women of USM takes a village.

The USM Women’s Forum encourages greater involvement with the organization through committee work, the Executive Council, and donating to our mission. Learn about each of these opportunities below.

- Drafted Social Justice Statements on Website & Social Media/ Vertical Response.
- Condemned the January 6th riots/attacks on the US Capitol Riot and the acts of terror trying to thwart the democratic principles of the United States.
- Solidarity Statement for the Asian & Asian American Community condemning race and gender-based acts of violence.
- Participated in Podcast with Dr. Khademian re USMWF work and empowering women.
- Partnered with Vice Chancellor Patrick Hogan, CUSS, CUSF, USM Student Council on Advocacy Day; met with legislators (Senator Nancy King) to advocate for shared priorities.
- Supported/promoted women-related events/ women group’s campus activities or personal.
- Established in March the USMWF “Spotlight” highlighted 16 & a Military Spotlight with 8 including our own veteran Christine.
- Renewed our MLAW Membership.
- Attended MLAW’s Fall Agenda as Platinum Sponsors (had conference ad, noted on their website & Facebook as well as spotlighted during their session by Delegate Krimm.)
- Communicated multiple “Calls to Actions” in partnership with MLAW and sent out by Annie.
- Invited USM Student Council President Annie Rappaport to our meeting.
- Attended USM Student Council Meeting; Luella represented us.
- Promoted reps to schedule regular meetings/ updates with their Presidents/ED.
- Arranged visit by USG’s Executive Director Dr. Khademian to introduce herself, share career & highlights, emphasize opportunities and ways to partner with us.
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Webinars

- Conducted 10+ webinars.
- Quinn Conyers – Back by Popular Demand.
- Me Too.
- We Can Do Better Women in STEM.
- A Discussion on Empowering Women in the Workplace with VP Olabisi Boyle.
- Embracing Diversity: An Opportunity to Evolve moderated by Patricia A. Jameson from Germany.
- A Discussion of Carol Anderson’s Book, White Rage moderated by Dr. Kathryn Barrett-Gaines.
- I am Remarkable by Michelle Peralta from UMB
- Wellness Hub shared science-based practices for happy, meaningful life (explored mindfulness, self-compassion & gratitude).
- And many more.
Contributions from Systems

- Sent Presidents’ Letters for USMWF support.
- June: $2k from UB in summer 2020 - $2k from UMGC and August -$1k from UMCES/SU, BSU, UB - $2k and UMGC – $1k.

Miscellaneous

- Hired Social Media Strategist to increase presence on Instagram & Facebook.
- Started recording meetings.
- Moved committee meetings before USMWF meetings so better prepared to work on goals.
- Audited USM Institutions to find women-focused & women-centered orgs. for our website.
- Post quarterly newsletters with help from Shelby.
- Saw membership increase as we welcomed Heather (Frostburg) and Gloria A. (UMCP).
- Instituted new process for completing nominations via form/online.
- Began process for researching website refresh because USMD is not available.
- Kept domain for USMWF.
- Virtual retreat with guest presenter on Mental Health Resilience.
- Celebrated Xmas with ugly sweaters & favorite drink recipe despite no Chancellor’s Party.
- Established USMWF Travel Destination to Africa this year.
and finally...

There are the too many to mention personal accomplishments of our members.

Only some of which include earning promotions, joining boards, participating in leadership teams, becoming advisors, submitting successful proposals, leading webinars, traveling the world, speaking, presenting, authoring books, getting vaccinations, celebrating talented children, receiving awards and accolades.