

NESS Meeting Minutes December 10, 2025

Attendance: Helena Dahlen, President; Barbara Ann Smith, VP; Crocetta Argento; Makeba Ellis; Cathy Fu; Justine Gonzales; Gina Hoagland; Erin Minnigh; Sharon Paul; Kyle Pokorny; Teresa Reese; John Roemer; Lisa Thomas; Amanda Turner with Anthony Oughton from HRSTM.

Guest: *Melody Wright*, Learning and Development Manager, HRSTM to discuss professional development at UMBC, specifically targeting non-exempt staff employees.


Current professional development opportunities:

- Skillsoft Percipio: Many components, new analytics now available.
- Thriving Thursdays each month, launched in part because respondents of the needs assessment survey wanted more in-person staff development opportunities.
- Academies for non-exempt staff
 - Building Bridges Across Maryland– great program, connecting USM and other college staff across the state
 - Aspire Leadership Academy– very popular
- New! Melody is offering 1-on-1 career coaching starting in January.
- HRSTM Week in April
- USM Learning and Talent Development Academy
- DISC, Meyers Briggs, and other assessments: Cool things! There is a fee for the materials, but not for the HRSTM personnel.

Challenges and questions:

- Budget concerns may preclude staff from traveling to conferences
- Any financial assistance for big-ticket classes/conferences? If it relates to your position, you may be able to use tuition reimbursement to pay for it. Or the same training may be available via a free tool like Skillsoft Percipio.
- How well known is the Building Bridges Across Maryland program? Melody would like more staff to be aware of it. She would like to broaden PR about this program beyond telling senior leadership about it. (NESS could help publicize.)
- Is there AI training in Skillsoft Percipio? Yes, they have a robust library on AI. There are also training opportunities through DoIT and UMBC Training Centers but, for the latter, there's a cost that is not fully covered by tuition reimbursement. Please see DoIT links [here](#) and [here](#).

Guest: *Orienne Smith*, Co-Chair, [Middle States Self-Study](#), Chair, [Faculty and Staff Care & Belonging Committee](#). Professor, English Faculty and Staff Care and Belonging Committee

 Faculty and Staff Caregiving Committee.pptx

- This committee started during Covid as a way to support caregivers, and is now expanding its mission.
- The committee is currently spearheading a UMBC-wide Intergenerational Initiative

- Work with Charlestown Senior Living
- Work with on-campus YMCA childcare center to start a lab school
- Committee members are overwhelmingly faculty; Staff are invited to join.

Report from previous Committee meetings

- Strategic Planning Steering Committee, Crocetta Argento. They started meeting again in November.
 - The President's cabinet is no longer a part of the Steering Committee.
 - Members are organized into subgroups. Crocetta is in the Organizational Vitality and Innovation subgroup. Each subgroup needs 5-8 people to lead as they begin stakeholder engagement assessment in early 2026.
- IT steering Committee, Helena Dahlen. We have a request from Jack Sues, CIO and VP for a NESS representative on the ***Administrative and Operational AI subcommittee***.

Open Committee Positions within NESS. [Senators and Committee Assignments](#)

- Alternative CUSS rep. (Cathy Fu is primary)
- Climate Action Steering committee
- Inclusion Council Committee
- Faculty and Staff Care and Belonging Committee

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 14, 2026 from 11:30 to 12:30 pm.

--- Cathy Fu, NESS Secretary