



SPOOKY EDITION!!!

OCTOBER 2020.



Fun Fact: The first umbrella factory in the United States was established in Baltimore in 1828. Happy rain FALL!

Announcements!

Election Night Extravaganza

RSVP to Election Night Extravaganza on November 3rd, 2020 [here](#). Come join the UMBC Community at this long-standing tradition as we watch the election results unfold.

After the Election: A Community Gathering

Gather with our community on the days after the election to process and reflect on the journey to, as well as the results, of the 2020 election.

OCA Mocha Halloween Discount!

Come to OCA Mocha dressed up in your Halloween costume on October 31st to receive a 15% discount!



OCA Mocha's First Anniversary!

Come celebrate OCA Mocha's first year anniversary this November 4th, 2020!

Want to be featured in this newsletter?

Please visit our website at www.sga.umbc.edu/newsletter for more information!

Follow @umbcsga on all Social Media platforms for more updates!



IN THIS NEWSLETTER:

SGA Branch News:

Student Spotlight: Zaynub Siddiqui

Staff Spotlight: Dr. Orianne Smith

Retriever Reflections: Best Virtual Video Call Moments

Alumni Feature: Poulomi Banerjee

Mental Health & Wellness: BOOS & BOO-NOTS of Halloween

AroundCampus: Edible

Arrangements

Executive Branch

Top Four

This month, the Top Four worked to push forward initiatives and programs that SGA departments were working on. We have updates on the UMBC community and the progress on projects we are involved with, which are below.

- The Arbutus Sustainability Project launched on October 4th, 2020. Learn more about it by clicking [here](#)!
- SGA students will soon be joining Spring COVID-19 Planning Committees to bring the student voice in shaping a safe, connected Spring experience.
- Top Four communicated with administrative bodies about student concerns for the Spring 2021 semester.
- The Stipend Review Committee met and discussed the progress of and corresponding stipends for SGA Officers.
- We held our first Student Organization Support Team open house, and are hosting the event *Presidents of Excellence: Facing the Future Together* on November 21, 2020 from 4-6pm. The interest form is available [here](#).

Department of Communications

This month, the Department of Communications worked on a voting initiative and informed students about voting resources as well as deadlines to register, while promoting the Civic Life Center's debate watching events. We also shared posts from other UMBC bodies that pertained to things such as student physical health, mental health, and academics. We decided to focus on creating and curating content that was relatable and relevant without being overwhelming for students -- meaning that we are valuing the quality of our posts over the quantity of them.

Department of Executive Initiatives

This October, as the Department of Executive Initiatives, we were hard at work to provide the student body with fulfilling virtual events leading up to Election Night Extravaganza. We held three successful community debate-watching events, and encouraged students to vote by spreading resources about deadlines to vote in Maryland. We also partnered with UMBC Civic Life to host a UMBC "Cast Your Whole Vote" giveaway. Students who participated will be receiving voting-themed packages in the mail. Besides items pertaining to the election, we have made progress on an initiative to create an LLC program for students involved in Greek Life, a scholarship for students who are passionate about social justice and equity and partnered with other SGA departments to work on a community engagement mentorship program.

Department of Extended Connections

Throughout October, the Department of Extended Connections worked extensively with various UMBC communities to begin building relationships with them as the Student Government Association. We partnered with the Arbutus Sustainability Project, as well as started a list of Catonsville and Arbutus businesses that want to build partnerships with us. We are also in the process of building a UMBC mentorship system. Two such programs in this system are 1) a long-term student-alumni mentorship program, which focuses on career development and achieving goals, and 2) a long-term student-student community engagement program which focuses on building deep bonds between students through the exploration of UMBC community and neighboring town events. We are also working with the Counseling Center to implement mental health initiatives for students during the pandemic.

SGA Senate

In October, the SGA Senate began the process of implementing our initiatives. Amongst these include a free menstrual product drive, a multicultural fair, addressing student dining concerns, collaborations with UHS on mental health services, and the Arbutus Sustainability Project. We worked on implementing a new policy regarding confidentiality when it comes to positive student COVID-19 test results, whilst still being required to report them. Our Classroom Committee also discussed future adaptations of UMBC's current hybrid and virtual class system. We explored the idea of having more hybrid courses this spring, as well as the implementation of a more robust combination of hybrid, in-person, and online classes when the pandemic is over.

SGA Finance Board

Since the beginning of October, the SGA Finance Board has developed more clear policies for budget allocation and funding. These are listed below:

- ECS will not be giving budget recommendations for the Spring 2021 semester.
- Student organizations cannot file funding requests for merchandise, as there is no process in place for in-person package deliveries or pickups.
- Website domains are considered equipment, so SGA cannot fund requests for them
- Refund requests must have a RESGAF completed before SABSC is approached
- Spring 2021 will continue to operate on a SAHAS system, rather than the semesterly budget system

Check out OCA Mocha's newsletter for updates on new releases and events!

<https://ocamocha.com/contact-us>



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Zaynub Siddiqui



by Milan Sulibhavi

You never really realize how much someone can do till you meet Zaynub Siddiqui. At first, I was interested in interviewing her because of the mural she made for Arbutus' community-building coffee shop, OCA Mocha. However, in a 20 minute conversation, I learned about all of the inspiring work Zaynub does. Zaynub is currently a senior at UMBC studying to earn a degree in Psychology. She has a concentration in bio-psych and child development along with a minor in Sociology. Zaynub's intentions with the mural -- featuring the words, "Welcome to Arbutus" -- were to create a garden of zen with the essence of Maryland tied together. To incorporate the state, she added our native flower and butterfly

to the piece. The steam from the coffee cup then goes to form the name of the community which z

As she eloquently put it, Zaynub wanted to “add an interactive element and increase customer engagement on social media. The mural was designed so that an individual would be able to physically engage with the mural in an aesthetically appealing manner.” If you are in the Arbutus area, this mural is a great place to visit while enjoying some coffee at OCA Mocha!

While I was learning about Zaynub’s mural, she also mentioned the other philanthropic work she does. She is a part of many organizations; some of which are Traversing Tradition, Justice for All, Stanford MMHL, Rashidun DC, and Sanctuaries DC. She uses her artistic talent to incorporate traditional Islamic art and social justice “with a Gen-Z flair.” Zaynub’s kind tone spoke volumes about the good work she does in her life. She spoke to me with such poise and kindness I absolutely loved getting to know her.

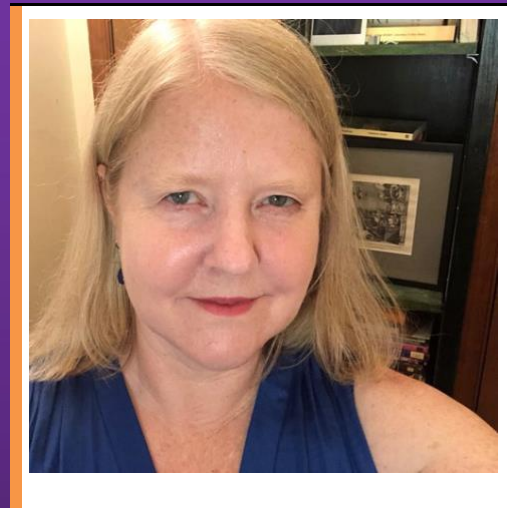
Zaynub knit a scarf, years ago -- back when she lived in California. Her family decided to move to Maryland, and they were donating many items they weren’t going to bring on the move: including the scarf she knit. Years later, while she was volunteering by helping homeless people in DC, her mom quickly yelled to her,

“Zaynub, look! Isn’t this the scarf you made?” Zaynub said her heart filled with warmth to see someone wearing the scarf she donated. I found this story very inspiring as it goes to show how small of a world it is. To this day, she has no idea how the scarf she donated in California ended up with someone she was helping in DC but this memory will always be with her. Zaynub concluded our interview with how she wants to use her degree in Psychology to help individuals through art therapy. She is an avid believer in the idea that art can express things one maybe cannot say. Zaynub is truly an inspiration to all and I feel honored to have spoken with her.



FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

Dr. Orianne Smith



by Wangui Nganga

Question: What are some of your favorite aspects of fall? Do you have any favorite traditions?

For this month’s newsletter, I thought it would be appropriate to make it a bit more fall festive. I chatted with Dr. Orianne Smith, from the English Department, where we discussed topics from fall traditions to poetry. Enjoy!

Fun Fact: Professor Smith has nine pets: two cats, two dogs and five chickens.

Professor Orianne Smith hails from the great state of California. As most of us know, it is not as seasonal as the east coast, which can be a hit or miss depending on your preference. For Professor Smith, it was a bit more of a miss, as she loves Maryland for the seasons. Especially the fall. Before she came to Maryland, she didn’t know what “deciduous” meant, which, if I can be honest,

I still do not really know either. She doted on how beautiful Maryland is when the trees turn their dark and rich shades of orange, red, and yellow. She enjoys apple picking and biking with her family. Living in a forested area with about six acres of land, she has a beautiful view from her home of trees spilling downhill, for which she feels thankful for. When I asked her about fall traditions, she explained that she did really have any out of the ordinary, but did proceed to give me a very endearing Christmas tradition -- her family loves Christmas and every year they chop down a tree and munch on chips and dip as they decorate.

Professor Smith explained how her love of fall also brought her more into poetry; which she believed is due to her beautiful and more pensive environment. She is able to be more reflective and stop and enjoy the small things. She also talked a bit about her college days. When she was in her 20s, she aspired to be a creative writer. Her parents were hippies and they really encouraged her to do anything she desired. She ended up going to The Bennington College -- an arts school -- where she had an amazing experience. In this time where there is so much going on, she uses her creativity to change the way she sees the world. She is able to slow down and find some peace. We are all students in life's journey, and even she was surprised at how reflective and outdoorsy she has become.

My time with Professor Smith really reminded me the importance of slowing down and taking the time to really see and appreciate my environment. It can feel like there's so many places to go and things to do, but one of the most important things is to care for ourselves. Professor Smith said, "this moment is about trying to find quiet," and that whether "quiet" is simply sitting in your car with music softly pulsing from the stereo, or going on a hike amidst the stillness of the world, it is important to find it. I encourage you all to take advantage of the fall. It is a beautiful time filled with so much transformation. I also encourage you to read some poetry or a good novel. Maybe it'll open up another side of you; one that you did not expect.

"Fall, leaves, fall; die, flowers, away;

Lengthen night and shorten day;

Every leaf speaks bliss to me

Fluttering from the autumn tree.

I shall smile when wreaths of snow

Blossom where the rose should grow;

I shall sing when night's decay

Ushers in a drearier day."

-- Emily Brontë

RETRIEVER REFLECTIONS

What has been your funniest video call moment?

In this age of the COVID-19 pandemic, virtual moments are all we have. However, just because we are communicating through screens doesn't mean that we haven't had moments of genuine laughter. This month, we asked you: the student body, to tell us about your funniest video call moments! These were some of your responses:

I was with my sister and my dad walked in and didn't notice we were on a video call so he started talking about me to her

During a video call for my FYS class, my dad walked into the room and yelled "YOU ROCK!" at my sister. Needless to say, I was very unhappy but couldn't help laughing.



"Someone belched in response to a professor question."

"When I realized I was presenting and my mic was off for a solid 15 minutes :)"

"This speaker came to our class and said some interesting things and while that wasn't necessarily funny the class group chat was"

"Hearing someone snore during a virtual meeting and all of us trying our best to wake them up!"

"My friend rear-ended a car (very light) on FaceTime once"

"My uncle's chihuahua jumped on to my laptop during class while my camera was on and managed to kick me out of the zoom call by stepping on the keyboard"

"Online zoom call with friends where we did presentations. I ended up doing one on the cultural impact of the Twilight movie series and everyone was crying by the end of it."

"My uncle had a zoom wedding"

"Playing among us and one person outing themselves as the imposter because it was their first time playing"

Bonus: What is your favorite Halloween costume that you have worn and why?

"I was dressed as a character from an Anime I watched with my friend. She was too, and we spent the two months before making our costumes from scratch."

"I was a Greek goddess in 8th grade! It was my favorite costume because I won the Halloween contest and a \$15 Target gift card."

"I love my copy cat costume because it featured a goofy pun."

"my favorite Halloween costume is when me and my friends went as the emotions from inside out"

"I've been a cat for the last 4 years, it's easy and I like cats so"

"One time I went as a robber for Halloween and it's still my favorite costume of all time because I got more candy from it."

"I was a clown last year, I feel that it really embodied who I am as a person"

"When I was 5 I dressed up as Sharpay from High School Musical and that was my favorite costume because my mom would never let me dye my hair blonde so I really enjoyed wearing a blonde wig"



ALUMNI FEATURE

Poulomi Banerjee



Interview by Milan Sulibhavi

Article by Maheera Chaudhry

Juggling academics, several clubs, and relationships may seem like a complicated ordeal for a college student — but Poulomi Banerjee, Class of 2016 did it all. As a UMBC and SGA alumni, Poulomi comes back to reflect on her achievements, learning experiences, and provides insight on how her experiences have shaped her. Regardless of how indecisive she may have been, Poulomi was able to find the perfect path and excel in everything she put her heart to. Poulomi is a strong advocate for UMBC now, but this wasn't always the case.

“As a senior in high school,” Poulomi says, “UMBC was a back-up school and there was no part of me that wanted to go.” However, this all changed after she participated in the Strive Leadership Retreat, which helped her make meaningful connections and ultimately decide to give UMBC a chance. When asked what she would tell her freshman self, Poulomi responded passionately “give everything a chance and be patient.”

In no time at all, Poulomi found herself as a leader and active participant in SGA, the Student Events Board, Greek life, Panhellenic Association, and Bengali Student Association. However, what stood out the most was her very own Radio Show on WNBC called “Tuesday Ten,” where Poulomi would share her top ten favorite songs for the week. Poulomi recalls, “I would leave the studio and had 15 listeners that day and people would be so surprised because they only got 3.”

Poulomi studied Health Administration and Public Policy while at UMBC and got a minor in Sociology. Although Poulomi changed her major a couple times, one thing remained true – Poulomi says, “I wanted to change the world in some way, shape, or form.” For Poulomi, the goal was always helping people, and college simply helped her decide how she would approach that goal. Poulomi’s passion and drive were evident through her excitement about the world, lightening up the room. Poulomi’s involvement in the service and volunteering committee early in her undergraduate years reflects just that.

Now, Poulomi serves as the Acting Assistant Director of Annual Giving and Public Policy at the Office of Institutional Advancement, where she helps oversee the Phonathon, handles any emails, and helps student organizations raise money. Poulomi finds herself applying for her PhD and is a Masters student at UMBC interested in public policy. She emphasized how she still wants to work for a non-profit and do community-engagement. As Poulomi progresses through her education, UMBC can definitely appreciate her representation and contribution.

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS

Boos & Boo Nots!


COVID-19 and Halloween Safety

Professor Samantha Smith, Assistant Director for Health Promotion, outlines safety guidelines we as students should be taking during this COVID-19 pandemic -- now that Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas are coming up and people feel the need to gather with family and friends. She highlights that we should always be washing our hands 24/7 with soap and water, also keeping hand sanitizers on us because we'll need them. She emphasizes the need to wear a proper face covering and masks, which would even be beneficial during the cold weather. College students should be mindful during these times, and to not only place their safety first but also that of their family and friends. We should remember to keep our masks on and social distance, remember to drink responsibly and only when of age, and also avoid large and indoor gatherings. Professor Smith also talks about the fact that we should normalize leaving a place you don't feel comfortable in, such as a restaurant where people are too close to you or not wearing their masks.

by Sekinat Dosunmo

Boos

- Handwashing 24/7
- Properly using hand sanitizers
- Continue to wear your mask (above the nose, underneath the chin)
- Continue to socially distance
- Students should take advantage of being outside now before the colder weather but should always wear a mask and social distance.
- When going out to eat look up the restaurant to see what they are doing to protect themselves and their customers. Take advantage of outdoor dining

- Be careful when engaging with alcohol (should only drink when of age) and limit the amount of alcohol that you consume. Alcohol often leads to hospitalization put you at greater risk for exposure to COVID-19
- Mask should be put back on after eating or drinking
- When drunk, have a designated driver or use a ride share service to get home safely 

Boo Nots

- Do not rely on a costume mask as most of them have some type of opening, continue to use a proper face covering. One can incorporate their masks into their costumes. This is an opportunity to be creative.
- No indoor or Large Gatherings (they are the new Hotspots). Indoor gatherings with people you know and live with are fine
- Do not use illicit drugs (they are illegal on campus). In the case of an emergency situation, you are putting yourself at higher risk for exposure to COVID-19
- Do not take drinks from strangers or leave your drink unattended.
- You should not host or attend large Gatherings for thanksgiving, Halloween or Christmas
- Don't have a big house party, you are not sure where everyone else has been or if they are following the COVID-19 protocol.



AROUND CAMPUS

Edible Arrangements



by Ekta Daryani

If you have ever set foot into a gift shop, you'll know that they are one of the magical mysteries of our world; the paradox of the mundane and the idiosyncratic. No two gift stores are ever the same; amongst their expected selections of items like flowers, collectibles, cards, and chocolates lie the things in between: Flowers that can only be found in the next town over. Objects that no one once thought to notice, until they resurface, years later, to greet a customer looking for something just like it. Store brand cards whose messages were born after a moving phone call with a client. A unique flavour of chocolate that is only there because a regular customer said she loved them, once.

Combining the concept of things that are "edible" with floral arrangements comes Catonsville's location of "Edible Arrangements." A gift shop comprised of anything and everything you could gift someone that they could eat, it certainly lives up to its name. With categories such as "Edible Bakeshop," housing decorative baked goods,

"Fruitflowers," their trademark product of colorful floral arrangements combined with adorned fruit, and "Edibles," their more inexpensive line of to-go desserts geared towards college students, Edible Arrangements offers gifts in the form of artistically arranged fruits, chocolates, smoothies, popcorn, flowers, and more.

Having a gift shop in Catonsville is more than simply having a place in our town that sells desserts and flowers -- it's about the community that gift-giving begins to create. Cathy Schneider, the owner of the franchise, says, "Everybody's my customer. It's the business owner, the student, it's the homeowner, it's corporate, sending gifts from one client to another."

And she's right. In this way, everyone in the area is connected through knowing what Edible Arrangements is. It's the catalyst for conversation -- the "why" of each gift, and the vulnerability that comes from sharing. No matter who comes into the shop to order something, there is a story behind the gift; and in sharing these stories, Edible Arrangements begins to build a community amongst the common experiences of Catonsville.

It's the "Happy birthday," the "I wish you were here," the "I am so sorry," the "Thank you for being you," and the "I love you." The idea that we can still celebrate with one another, although far apart physically, through sending each other gifts; the knowledge that there are people behind the world around us; and the concept that in the end, there is something simple about the things that bring us together.

1
EAT WHILE YOU DRINK
eat foods that are high in fat to slow alcohol absorption

2
SLOW YOUR INTAKE
... to one standard drink per hour. consider alternating between non-alcoholic and alcoholic drinks

3
STAY WITH YOUR GROUP
stay in small groups or pairs of people within your household to help avoid dangerous situations