

University Establishes Outreach Council

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Outreach to the community is as much a part of the University's heritage as Davidge Hall. University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) students, faculty, and staff provide more than 2 million hours of uncompensated service annually to residents throughout Maryland.

Now the University is taking that mission one step further by establishing the UMB Outreach Council. The council is made up, in part, of 34 faculty, staff, and students, and will initially partner with three schools in West Baltimore—Vivien T. Thomas Medical Arts Academy, Diggs-Johnson Middle School, and George Washington Elementary School—to help meet the needs of children and their families. Officials from those schools are also council members.

"We were very pleased," Brian Sturdivant, MSW, UMB's community affairs coordinator, said after the first of the council's bimonthly meetings on Jan. 10. "President Ramsay came and spoke about the importance of the council's work, and the faculty were very supportive and very eager. I have spoken to all three school principals and they are very excited and very much onboard."

Each of the three schools conducted a needs assessment based on a survey, a focus group, and interviews with staff, teachers, parents, and students. Then an action plan was created to address the needs. "As we review those action plans, we can see where we can fit in the best," says Sturdivant, who was instrumental in promoting a paid summer internship program for Vivien Thomas students run by the School of Medicine, and mental health interventions at George Washington through the School of Social Work.

Other projects under consideration include a job shadow day, a career exploration day, a youth science enrichment program, a "Give Kids a Smile Day" through the Dental School, a financial planning workshop for parents, a conflict resolution course through the School of Law, a Mini-Med School through the School of Medicine, and information from the Health Sciences and Human Services Library staff on how to pursue a career as a medical librarian.

Not all the programs are new. Sturdivant has been working with schools near the University for years. "But this effort is more focused," he says. The Office of External Affairs will publish a newsletter to inform the West Baltimore community of UMB events and services open to the public. For more information on the University's local outreach programs, visit www.oea.umaryland.edu/gov/community.