



# MEMO

**TO:** Hawk Family

**FROM:** President Anderson

**Date:** September 14, 2020

As we enter the 6<sup>th</sup> week of this COVID-19 fall semester, I have been reflecting on where we are and what that means to our success. This quote from Barack Obama really hits home as we enter midterms -- “change will not come if we wait for some other person, or if we wait for some other time. We are the ones we’ve been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.”

One change that we are seeking is advancing in our national recognition. Today, I am thrilled to report that UMES heads into the 2020-21 academic year rated the nation’s 18<sup>th</sup> best historically Black institution by *U.S. News & World Report*. The publication’s annual rankings show that UMES moved up one spot from a year ago in a complex analysis that relies on data combined with opinions of higher education leaders about the quality and reputation of colleges and universities.

One of the ways we continue to grow is through hiring well-qualified personnel to help us achieve our goals. We had a variety of open positions created by retirements and resignations to fill as well as some interim posts that needed permanent staff. Like many campuses, we were at the interview stages for some of these vacancies when COVID-19 suspended our normal operations. Those searches, I am pleased to say, are now completed. So, I extend my deepest gratitude to all of the committee chairs, campus community members and alumni who served on these search committees over the past few months.

It is my pleasure to introduce you to these individuals and their new positions. I encourage you to join me in congratulating them on their UMES appointments.

**Dean of Graduate Studies and Research. Dr. LaKeisha L. Harris**, Ph.D., CRC, WIP, began her career at UMES in 2006 as an associate professor in the Department of Rehabilitation at The University of Maryland Eastern Shore. Dr. Harris earned a M.R.C. in Rehabilitation Counseling from Bowling Green State University and a Ph.D. in Rehabilitation Counselor Education from the University of Iowa. She has over 20 years of experience in rehabilitation counseling and higher education. Her research interests focus on psychosocial adjustment to disability, offenders with disabilities, rehabilitation counselor professional development, and women of color in academia. Dr. Harris is a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor, a Certified Work Incentives Planner, and has professional work experiences in vocational evaluation and psychiatric rehabilitation. She

most recently served as the Interim Dean for the School of Graduate Studies and the Interim Associate Vice President for Research and Extended Education.

**Title III Director. LaTashia Swain-Gilliard** comes from Florida Memorial University where she served as the Director of Sponsored Programs and Grants/Assistant Title III Director. Prior to that, Mrs. Swain-Gilliard worked at Savannah State University in the Title III Office. She brings over 12 years of Title III knowledge and experience. Mrs. Swain-Gilliard holds a Bachelor of Science in Biology from Savannah State University and a Master of Science in Sports and Exercise Psychology from Argosy University.



**Director of Alumni Relations and Special Events. Mr. Kadeem Turnbull** earned both his undergraduate and Master's degree from UMES in the field of Criminal Justice. He is also working to complete a doctorate in Educational Leadership at UMES. Mr. Turnbull has been an active member of the University community since coming to UMES seven years ago. Most recently, he has served as an Area Director and Graduate Assistant in the Office of Residence Life. He is an active member of The Gents social fraternity and a volunteer for Metropolitan United Methodist Church. We look forward to Mr. Turnbull's leadership in connecting with the UMES National Alumni Association, regional alumni chapters, and individual members of the alumni community.

**Bursar. Ms. Michelle H. Malone** has been selected to serve as our new Bursar. Ms. Malone moved onto the Eastern Shore of Maryland to the town of Hebron in 1992 from Towanda, PA. Ms. Malone has a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration, specializing in Management from Bloomsburg University, Bloomsburg PA. She has held a variety of management positions starting in the fast food industry while attending college. She has served as an Office Manager at Delmarva Bariatric Center in Salisbury, MD and most recently, she has been at Salisbury University as the Cashiers Office and Parking Services Supervisor for 9 years. Ms. Malone says that she is enjoying learning this new position and she is looking forward to being able to meet everyone in person.

**Coordinator of Alumni Engagement and Annual Giving. Ms. Armajeanne Harmon** has been selected to serve in this role. Ms. Harmon, holds an MBA with a focus on Marketing Communication from Wilmington University and a B.A. in Communication from Old Dominion University. In this position, Ms. Harmon will engage alumni of specific academic degree areas as well as those associated with campus affinity groups such as sororities, fraternities, and various campus clubs. Her focus will be on leadership-level annual contributions in support of the University's mission. Ms. Harmon, is experienced in university advancement. She has more than ten years in the field, derived from prior positions at Howard University, Carroll Community College, and an early appointment here at UMES. She has also recently served as an Adjunct Lecturer in the Department of English and Modern Languages.



In addition to announcing these new positions, we are also restructuring some of our offices to more accurately reflect their scope of work. I am excited to announce that we are changing the name of our Office of Institutional Advancement to the **Office of University Relations**. This new name will more appropriately reflect the key role that our advancement personnel play in building relationships with our donors that engage them with our campus, our students, our alumni, and our contributions to the community. Given our Carnegie classification, our next restructuring will be around our research efforts as we enhance the research infrastructure to support our faculty and staff. More on that to come.

In my Friday message I noted we had an 8% decline in enrollment and while we never like to see that, we do have good news and some gains in our year-to-year retention and graduation rates. Our Fall 2019 cohort second year retention rate is at 73% which marks the second time in 20 years we have achieved that high a retention percentile. This is a notably higher retention rate from the 2018 cohort of 62%. Our six-year graduation rate, which when first achieved last year was the highest in 20 years, has stayed the same at 41%. As of now, our Fall 2020 headcount is 2645. Given the nationally anticipated declines in both enrollment and persistence rates, we are encouraged that our campus is remaining strong and growing in year-over-year persistence.

As former President Obama said, “we are the ones we are waiting for.” As we boldly continue into our Fall term and embrace whatever comes next, we remain grateful that our students are continuing to believe in their futures and in our role of helping them achieve the successes that will transform and guide our world.

Still wearing our masks, with Hawk Pride,