

PRESIDENT'S Q&A

OCTOBER 2017

LOOKING AHEAD IN EDUCATION

UMB President Jay A. Perman, MD, kicked off his quarterly Q&A session Sept. 19 at the School of Dentistry by describing it as an open forum, telling the crowd of about 100 faculty, staff, and students, “I want to know what you want to know.” Here are excerpts from the hourlong session:

QUESTION:

Would you address the skepticism that seems to be assaulting the realm of higher education, a national skepticism that asks, “Is higher education worth it?”

DR. PERMAN:

None of us should assume that the entirety of the population, and certainly the public who has to support public education, thinks higher education is terribly important. That’s why institutions need to show their value, and not because they grant an education, and, in our case, an education to a lot of professional people who go on and make a good living. No, it’s because we need to show them that these institutions, which so many see as elitist, give a damn about communities that they’re not a part of. That’s the challenge for so many in higher education, that we take down our walls, get rid of the ivory tower, and make a difference to people who on the face of it don’t see a value to higher education but can certainly see that a higher education institution makes a difference to people who are less privileged. So, if I were asked by a group of presidents, “How does an institution show that it’s value-added?” I’d say, “Get into the neighborhood.”

QUESTION:

What kind of teaching innovations would you like to see across campus in the next five to 10 years?

DR. PERMAN:

I would like to see more in the way of experiential learning. And I would like to see more emphasis given on getting out, beyond the campus, and seeing the world, and I mean the world broadly stated, and learning from it. When I was dean at the University of Kentucky College of Medicine, legislators used to ask me, “Why do you send our Kentucky medical students, supported by the public coffers, to Africa, to Central America? Haven’t we got enough problems in Kentucky? Why do they need to save the world?” Well, those students came back with insights that they never would have gotten otherwise and solutions to issues that are common in a Third World nation and in a highly developed nation, and they applied them. So, when you get out beyond the traditional spaces like the dental clinic and the hospital unit, you bring back insights that make you a better professional.

QUESTION:

In terms of innovative instructional methods in the future, how does interprofessional education fit into your vision?

DR. PERMAN:

You know how I feel about the importance of educating our learners to work as a team. What evidence we have demonstrates that taking a team of professionals of various disciplines, and having them address a problem, results in a better outcome than the traditional method of care. Evidence suggests that for people with chronic diseases, the outcomes are generally better when you can apply a team of professionals that includes more than the traditional caregiver, and outcomes are especially better when that population is nested in a community that is challenged socially. There’s also evidence that shows that the team members, the very professionals that we are or are training, enjoy practicing in a team, delivering care or advice in a team, as opposed to one-offs. There also is increasing evidence that team-based care is better care, with better outcomes. Ergo, we have to redouble our efforts in a place like this. And even if I were stubborn and didn’t think it was important, the accrediting bodies that accredit various disciplines say, “You will do this.” So, we have to do it, and what better place than UMB, where we have critical mass, where we have the range of professionals.



DR. PERMAN ADDRESSES THE GROUP AT THE SCHOOL OF DENTISTRY.

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QUESTION:

I'm part of the dental hygiene program as a degree completion student. Working with a geriatric population, I am limited in what I can do at the nursing home. I was wondering if a dentist or hygienist could be there with me so I could provide more than just preventive education. I believe this is the beginning of one of the interprofessional platforms you were just discussing.

DR. PERMAN:

I can't answer your specific question and will leave that to dental faculty. As for the geriatric population, it's a great population for team-based approaches, so I'm glad you're pointing that out. As with so many other issues, the students are always ahead of the curve. The students are always way ahead of us. There's one group of people on this campus who get it about team-based care. It's the students. Thank you for illustrating that.

QUESTION:

As America's population ages and the ethnic and racial diversity in the nation increases, what is UMB's role in addressing societal concerns as a result of these demographic shifts?

DR. PERMAN:

I am proud of the fact that we have an increasingly diverse student body. It's never as good as it should be. We talk about it all the time, and we strategize about it, and we're deliberate. Maybe some of you could tell us how we need to be more deliberate about making sure that we have a diverse and inclusive environment for our students to come to. It is a matter of fairness and social justice that we ultimately make sure that the kinds of professions that we're creating the workforce for look like America.

If we're charged to create an appropriate workforce for Maryland, the literature shows that given a choice, the recipient of our care would prefer to be cared for by people who come from their life experience, who are part of the culture they know — bluntly speaking, who look like them, and that is an appropriate criteria. So, if we at UMB purport to create a proper workforce, we have to be committed to that, and that requires us to be very proactive, very deliberate about doing even better with regard to a diverse student body.

QUESTION:

Under your presidency, organizational and employee development has really evolved. What are the gaps we still need to address in terms of employee development? And how can we, through shared governance or supervisor training, continue to grow our staff and keep them at UMB as they move forward in their careers?



DENTAL HYGIENE STUDENT SHANIECE BROWN ASKS ABOUT ADDING A DENTIST OR HYGIENIST TO HER NURSING HOME ASSIGNMENT.

PERMAN:

We are taking steps in Human Resources to try to deal with this. It's very important to me that at all levels our staff see an opportunity to move forward on an individual basis, to grow, to take that next step. Plenty of people on this campus come in at an entry-level position, and they don't have computer skills, they don't qualify for most of the jobs that we have. So, one of two things are going to happen: They're going to stay where they are forever or they might leave, if there's no opportunity to move up. People are ambitious — that's the kind of people we want — and want to be able to see a path forward. We've done a lot with staff development, but we need to be more intentional about it. And I know Human Resources has started some classes, some pathways, so that people can move up.

QUESTION:

This event is very important in being able to voice questions, but how can you reach out to those staff who may not feel comfortable being in this public setting or may not be able to come to the Q&A because of their work schedule?

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MONICA MARTINEZ FROM THE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE ASKS A QUESTION ABOUT RECYCLING.

DR. PERMAN:

I'm going to ask our vice president for communications and my special assistant, Jennifer Litchman, to answer that, because there are ways that you can get to me.

JENNIFER LITCHMAN:

For all of you who get *The President's Message* in your inbox, and that should be every single one of you, we do a recap of these Q&As. But we would encourage more people to come to this event and participate so they can more effectively share their views. President Perman also has an **email address** that is open to everyone. If he can't answer something, he forwards it to somebody who can, and that really is the most effective way, as well as *The Elm Weekly*, which you also get in your inbox Monday mornings. That is all self-submitted information, and we'd love for more people to participate with putting information in *The Elm Weekly*, so that more of us feel like we know what's going on in all the schools and areas.

QUESTION:

Is there a way for people to anonymously ask questions?

JENNIFER LITCHMAN:

To the extent that there are confidential matters, we have a hotline on the **website**, and we have the **ombudsperson**, as well as HR staff who are available to answer or deal with issues that are confidential.

COLETTE BEAULIEU, PAST PRESIDENT, STAFF SENATE

Talking about anonymous email, the Staff Senate has on our **website** the ability for anyone to submit questions or comments anonymously if they choose to. The Executive Committee then takes the comments and questions we receive and shares them with Dr. Perman at our bimonthly meetings or forwards them to the appropriate departments for a response.

QUESTION:

I'm in Human Resources, and I wanted to thank you for your past *President's Message* newsletter highlighting the wonderful things we're doing in work, life, and wellness, because we do care for our employees. We partner with the School of Medicine's Center for Integrated Medicine in providing massages, yoga, and reiki. We have tons of financial wellness seminars, healthy foods, all kinds of offerings. We even have coloring book sessions, if you just want to de-stress for a little bit. It's great stuff, and if more people know about it, it will help to build a more positive culture here.

DR. PERMAN:

I think you know that we got recognition this year that we haven't gotten before at UMB. We were recognized by the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, which is the principal communication device in higher education, as being a "Best Place to Work." We were recognized for our commitment to shared governance, and in the areas of compensation and benefits, and confidence in senior leadership. However, we didn't snag an award in the work/life balance category, which shows we need to do more of the things you were mentioning.

QUESTION:

When is Health Sciences Facility III going to be finished and open?

DR. PERMAN:

HSF III will open in January, but it won't be fully open. There are 12 investigator groups that have been recruited that are in our areas of emphasis and will move in. There will also be several of our entities that now reside in the BioPark. Eventually the building will fill up. We also included several floors of shell space, because construction in 2017, we presume, is going to be less expensive than construction some years hence.

QUESTION:

Can you comment about recycling on campus? I became aware recently that paper recycling was put on hiatus. When is that coming back? And what can UMB do more in the way of commitment to recycling?

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TERRY MORSE, INTERIM ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT FOR FACILITIES AND OPERATIONS:

We did have to put recycling on hiatus because we lost our facility because of construction that's happening all around it. But I'm happy to say that it's being restored this week or next week. But having said that, next spring or summer, we're going to be demolishing the recycling building to make room for a new facility.

DR. PERMAN:

It's a huge project. The state has committed the initial part of \$80 million to help us do this. That's the construction Terry's talking about.

TERRY MORSE:

That's a several-year project. But part of that project involves constructing a new switching station at the north end of campus, so we're actually feeding power to the campus, redundantly, from another service, so that if we do lose the south switching station, we can switch over to the north, or vice versa. So, it greatly increases our redundancy. But when we go into construction, they have to demolish that recycling building. We're building a new building that will house our recycling operations, but during the period of construction, we're going to have to put some of our recycling efforts on hold again. It's a temporary interruption.

QUESTION:

Could you give an update on the *MPower* initiative?

DR. PERMAN:

In the first quarter of 2012, as a result of a legislature-initiated discussion and a study about the wisdom, or lack thereof, of merging the University of Maryland, College Park and the University of Maryland, Baltimore, we instead created a strategic partnership, *MPower*. And under the aegis of *MPower*, we had a major expansion, which continues, in the number of joint faculty and many other things. We garnered as much as \$100 million in new grants because of faculty working with each other on both campuses to make the applications more competitive. As we've gone forward, we've done a lot of things we can be very proud of.

Some of you saw the press last month with regard to Cole Field House. Why should UMB get mixed up with a football facility on our sister campus? Because it's not just a football facility.



DR. PERMAN ADDRESSES A QUESTION FROM THE AUDIENCE.

What got crafted initially, from the idea of creating something better for student-athletes for their practices became: How do we really get into sports medicine for everybody, healthy living, fitness, and some of the results of mishaps in sports, particularly brain injury. The Center for Sports Medicine Health and Human Performance is a huge project on the College Park campus, which is a partnership endeavor that involves many of our faculty physicians.

There have been many programs that faculty and schools from each university have come together around that are funded by the dollars we have for the *MPower* strategic partnership initiative. It is going very well.