

LEAPS GRANTS and AWARDS

The following UMB faculty and staff members were recognized with seed grants or awards by UMB Leaders in Education: Academy of Presidential Scholars (LEAPS) at the 2026 LEAPS Symposium in March. The symposium's theme was "Taking the LEAP: AI in Professional and Graduate Educational Research."

SEED GRANTS



GUILHERME AROSSI

Guilherme Arossi, DDS, PhD, MSc, clinical assistant professor, School of Dentistry, \$7,500 for "From Animal Tissue to Repeatable Mastery: A Modular 3D-Printed Implant Placement and Restoration Curriculum for AEGD Residents."



MARISA ASTIZ-MARTINEZ

Marisa Astiz-Martinez, MSN, RN, CNE, clinical instructor, School of Nursing, \$5,000 for "Scholars in Scrubs: Improving Academic Outcomes by Promoting Belonging and Professional Identity in Undergraduate Nursing Students."



IRIS CARDENAS

Iris Cardenas, PhD, MSW, assistant professor, School of Social Work, \$7,500 for "Developing a Transnational Co-Instruction Framework for

Social Work Practice with Latine Immigrant Communities."



MARY HODOROWICZ

Mary Hodorowicz, PhD, MSW, LCSW-C, clinical assistant professor, School of Social Work, \$7,500 for "Using AI to Teach AI in Health Science and Human Services."



MICHAEL SOH

Michael Soh, PhD, MA, associate professor, School of Graduate Studies, \$7,500 for "Learning to Think with AI: Moving Beyond Prompts and Policies."



KRISTA TOOKHAN

Krista Tookhan, MD, assistant professor, School of Medicine, \$5,000 for "Transforming the Pediatric Clerkship Using Novel Gamified Learning Techniques and Flipped Classroom Model."

POSTER AWARDS

Dr. Carol O'Neil Memorial Poster Award*: "Teaching in an AI-Immersed World: A Collective Autoethnography of Faculty in the AI Studio at UMB."



ERIC BELT

Lead presenter: Eric Belt, EdD, adjunct assistant professor, School of Graduate Studies.

RUNNER-UP: "Continuing Education on Dentists' Pediatric Obstructive Sleep Apnea Knowledge, Attitudes, and Clinical Practices."



STEPHANIE DENNISON

Lead presenter: Stephanie Dennison, DDS, FAGD, clinical assistant professor, School of Dentistry.

RUNNER-UP: "Bridging Faculty Development and Student Success Through Improved Feedback Delivery."



CHRISTINA PLATIA

Lead presenter: Christina Platia, DDS, clinical assistant professor, School of Dentistry.

*The Carol O'Neil Memorial Poster Award recognizes excellence in the creation and presentation of an educational poster at a LEAPS event.

OUTSTANDING SCHOLARSHIP/ PUBLICATION AWARD



VIOLET KULO

Violet Kulo, EdD, PhD, associate professor, School of Graduate Studies, for the book chapter "Assessing Learners in Online and Hybrid Learning Environments."

UNIVERSITYWIDE



TRUDY HENSON



THOMAS LEONE



ISABELLE
WATRISS

UMB's Interprofessional Program for Academic Community Engagement (IPACE) and the Office of Community and Civic Engagement honored the following for

community engagement at the IPACE Symposium on March 24: Outstanding Faculty: **Trudy Henson, JD, MA**, public health program director, Center for Cyber, Health, and Hazard Strategies. Outstanding Staff: **Thomas Leone, MSL**, assistant vice president for public safety and chief of police. Outstanding Student: **Isabelle Watriss**, Master of Science in Nursing Entry-Into-Nursing Program, School of Nursing.



VANESSA
HARRINGTON

Vanessa Harrington, DBA, MS, SHRM-CP, executive director of security and compliance, Department of Police and Public Safety, was named UMB's March Employee of the Month to recognize

her work and accomplishments, including supervising 100-plus civilian employees and founding the University's Security Officer Appreciation Week.



BRUCE E.
JARRELL

Bruce E. Jarrell, MD, FACS, president, was among the 13 people selected for induction into *The Baltimore Sun* Business and Civic Hall of Fame for 2026. Honorees are chosen for their achievements in

leadership and community endeavors.



DENNIS NANGLE

Dennis Nangle, MLS, assistant dean for resource development and access, Health Sciences and Human Services Library, was a panelist for "The Fund(er) Gap: Making Sense of Federal Layoffs and the Impact on University Libraries" session at the 2026 NISO Plus Annual Conference on Feb. 18 in Baltimore.

SCHOOL OF DENTISTRY

Lisa D'Affronte, DDS, clinical assistant professor and director, Division of General Dentistry, Department of Comprehensive Dentistry, co-authored "Restoring an Endodontically Treated Tooth with Limited Interocclusal Space," which was published in *Inside Dentistry* in March.



MARY ANNE
MELO

Mary Anne Melo, DDS, MSc, PhD, clinical professor and chair, Department of Comprehensive Dentistry, received the American Dental Education Association Leadership Institute's Achievers Program

Scholarship, a national award that honors academic leaders who have strong potential to advance dental education.



VIVEK
THUMBIGERE-
MATH

Vivek Thumbigere-Math, BDS, PhD, assistant professor, Division of Periodontics, received the 2026 William Clark Fellowship from the American Association for Dental, Oral, and Craniofacial Research. The fellowship honors excellence in clinical research within the field of periodontology and emerging leaders whose work advances patient care and scientific discovery.

CAREY SCHOOL OF LAW



ANDREW
BLAIR-STANEK

Andrew Blair-Stanek, JD, professor, was quoted in "Comptroller Flags 5,000 'Suspicious' Tax Returns, \$15M in Tax Fraud," which was published by *The Baltimore Sun* on April 1.

Leigh Goodmark, JD, professor and associate dean for research and faculty development, was quoted in "Police Domestic Violence: Underreporting and Victim Barriers in Law Enforcement Cases," which was published by *MyStateline* on March 20.



MARK GRABER

Mark Graber, JD, PhD, MA, Distinguished University Professor, was quoted in "Jewish Groups Slam Cluster of Bills Before Legislature as 'Anti-Israel,'" which was published by *The Baltimore Sun* on March 13.



DIANE
HOFFMANN

Diane Hoffmann, JD, MS, Distinguished University Professor, was among the co-authors of "AI in Residency Application Reviews: Emerging Legal Risks," which was published by *The Journal of the American Medical Association* on March 19.



LESLIE MELTZER
HENRY

Leslie Meltzer Henry, JD, PhD, professor, was among the co-authors of "Impact of Legal Perceptions and Disclosure on Willingness to Undergo HIV Antiretroviral Resistance Testing Among Men Who Have Sex with Men: A Brief Report," which was published by *AIDS and Behavior* on March 24.



BLAIR INNISS

Blair Inniss, JD, deputy director, Legal Resource Center for Public Health Policy, was quoted in “Maryland Lawmakers Weigh Online Casino Gaming, But Ask ‘How Much Is Too Much?’”

which was published by *The Baltimore Sun* on March 9.

Guha Krishnamurthi, JD, professor, was quoted in “Md. Judges May Get \$23K Raise by 2030,” which was published by *The Baltimore Sun* on April 1.



ERIKA LEWIS



RIANNA MUKHERJEE

Erika Lewis and **Rianna Mukherjee**, both JD Class of 2026 students in the Racial Justice and the Law Clinic, wrote “The Maryland Voting Rights for All Act Ensures Democracy Doesn’t Stop at Prison Gates,” which was published by the *Baltimore Beat* in March.

Sarah Lorr, JD, associate professor, presented “Preventing Family Separation at Birth: Training Doulas to Support Parents with Disabilities” at the Association for Successful Parenting’s Chance to Parent Conference on March 12 in Phoenix, Ariz.



AADHITHI PADMANABHAN

Aadhithi Padmanabhan, JD, associate professor, wrote “Surprise Deportations,” which was published in the *Boston College Law Review* in March.

Robert Percival, JD, MA, Distinguished University Professor and director, Environmental Law Program, presented “Environmental Supreme Court Review” at Tulane Law School’s Environmental Law & Policy Summit on March 6.



GREGORY SCHWAB

Gregory Schwab, JD, visiting professor and Donald Gaines Murray Fellow, was quoted in “Baltimore County Council Unsure, But Legal Experts Say Secret \$100K Settlement Can Be

Unsealed,” which was published by *The Baltimore Sun* on March 30.

Matiangai Sirleaf, JD, MA, professor, presented “The Master Narrative in Human Rights” at the Georgia State University School of Law and the University of British Columbia’s Peter A. Allard School of Law.



JEFF SOVERN

Jeff Sovern, JD, professor, was quoted in “Maryland Lawsuits May Be Shaped by Meta, YouTube Jury Verdicts in Addiction Cases,” which was published by *The Baltimore Sun* on March 30.

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Bonghwan Chon, PhD, research scientist; **Mukesh Pratap Yadav, PhD**, research specialist; and **Vikas Kundra, MD, PhD**, professor, all in the Department of Diagnostic Radiology and Nuclear Medicine, were among the co-authors of “Fluorescence Imaging of DMDG-ICG Across NIR-I and NIR-II Windows Using a Single-Camera System,” which was published by the *International Journal of Molecular Sciences*.



ERIKA DAVIES



MARK MISHRA

Erika Davies, PhD, assistant professor, and **Mark Mishra, MD**,

professor, both in the Department of Radiation Oncology, were among the co-authors of “Platinum-Based Therapeutics as Emerging Multi-Modal Radiosensitizers in Glioblastoma Treatment,” which was published by *Advanced Drug Delivery Reviews*.



YANNICK POIRIER



SINA MOSSAHEBI

Gulakhshan Hamad, PhD, postdoctoral student; **Yannick Poirier, PhD**, associate professor; **Sina Mossahebi, PhD**, associate professor; and **Amit Sawant, PhD**, professor, all in the Department of Radiation Oncology, were among the co-authors of “Combining Proton FLASH and Spatially Fractionated Radiotherapy: Experimental and Simulation-Based Dosimetric Characterization,” which was published online ahead of print Feb. 19 by *Physics in Medicine and Biology*.

Stephanie Jo, MD, PhD, assistant professor, Department of Diagnostic Radiology and Nuclear Medicine, was the first author of “Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning for Osteoarthritis and Cartilage Assessment,” which was published by *Radiologic Clinics of North America* in March.



WEI LI

Wei Li, PhD, associate professor, Department of Pharmacology and Physiology and University of Maryland Institute for Health Computing, was the last author of “An Integrated Multi-Omics and Network Analysis of Neutrophil Differentiation from Initial- to Late-Stage,” which was published by *Genome Biology*.



BRIAN MATHUR

Brian Mathur, PhD, professor, Department of Pharmacology and Physiology, was the senior author of “Perineuronal Net and Inhibitory Synapse Remodeling on Striatal Fast-Spiking Interneurons by Chronic Alcohol Exposure,” which was published by *Biological Psychiatry*.



ESTHER NDUNGO

Esther Ndungo, PhD, research associate, Department of Pediatrics, received a 2026 Early Career Investigator Pilot Award from the Infectious Diseases Clinical Research Consortium

for “Contribution of the Breast Milk Microbiome to Shigella Incidence in Young Children.”

Robabeh Rahimi, PhD, associate professor, Department of Radiation Oncology, was among the co-authors of “Enhancing Proton Therapy for Superficial Lesions Using Patient-Specific Bolus and Multi-Leaf Collimator,” which was published online ahead of print Feb. 18 by *Radiological Physics and Technology*.



RYDHWANA HOSSAIN



CHARLES RESNIK

Elana Smith, MD, associate professor; **Rydhwana Hossain, MD**, associate professor; and **Charles Resnik, MD**, professor, all in the Department of Diagnostic Radiology and Nuclear Medicine, were among the co-authors of “Program Directors’ Perspectives on the Transition to the Oral Boards: Results from a National Survey,” which was published online ahead of print in February by *Academic Radiology*.

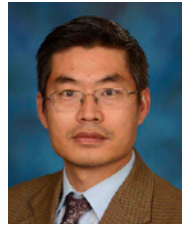


BRUCE WASSERMAN

Bruce Wasserman, MD, professor, Department of Diagnostic Radiology and Nuclear Medicine, received a three-year, \$300,000 grant from the AD Strategic Fund and the Alzheimer’s Association to study “Intracranial Atherosclerosis, Blood Brain Barrier Status, and Dementia Risk.”



BYONG-YONG YI



SHIFENG CHEN

Byong-Yong Yi, PhD, professor; **Shifeng Chen, PhD**, professor; and **Baoshe Zhang, PhD**, associate professor, all in the Department of Radiation Oncology, were among the co-authors of “Checklist and Quality Assurance Tools for Integration of Two Radiation Oncology Information Systems (ROIS),” which was published by the *Journal of Applied Clinical Medical Physics* in February.



RICHARD Y. ZHAO

Richard Y. Zhao, PhD, FAAM, FAAAS, professor and director, Division of Molecular Pathology, Department of Pathology, was elected as a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Zhao was honored for his pioneering virologic research using fission yeast models to study human viruses, advancing public education on HIV/AIDS and COVID-19, and integrating molecular biology into clinical diagnostics.



FUWEN ZHOU



ADAM PUCHE

Fuwen Zhou, BM, MM, Dr.rer.nat., assistant professor, and **Adam Puche, PhD**, professor and vice chair, both in the Department of Neurobiology, received a five-year, Multiple Principal Investigator R01 grant from the National Institute on Aging for “HCN Channels Mediate Olfactory Dysfunction in Aging and Neurological Disease.”

SCHOOL OF NURSING



BRITTANY BURCH

Brittany Burch, PhD, RN, assistant professor, received the John Gladstone Award for Media Excellence from the Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine at its annual conference in March in Anaheim, Calif. She also was quoted in “Howard Teens Develop Wearable Tech to Aid Dementia Patients,” which was published by *The Baltimore Sun* on April 1; Burch provided guidance on the high school students’ project.

Theresa Di Seta, DNP ’25, RN, NEABC, NPDBC, assistant director of student placements for partnership development and community health, was a guest on “The Resilient Nurse” podcast, where she spoke about the practical ways nurses can engage in policy and community efforts.



ELIZABETH GALIK

Elizabeth Galik, PhD ’07, CRNP, FAAN, FAANP, professor and chair, Department of Organizational Systems and Adult Health, was named the 2026 Clinician of the Year by the

Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medical Association at its annual conference in March in Anaheim, Calif.

Lori Harris, director, registrar and student placements, received the Society of Clinical Placement Professionals' (SCPP) Collaborative Leadership Award, part of SCPP's inaugural annual awards that recognize leaders whose work advances innovation, advocacy, collaboration, and sustained excellence in practice education nationwide.



BARBARA RESNICK

Barbara Resnick, PhD '96, RN, CRNP, FAAN, FAANP, Distinguished University Professor and associate dean for research, was inducted into the inaugural Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care

Medicine (PALMed) fellows class in recognition of her dedication and sustained contributions to PALMed and long-term care medicine.



REBECCA N. WESTON



PATRICIA SCHAEFER

Rebecca N. Weston, EdD, MSN, RN, CNE, assistant professor; **Merve Gurlu, MS**, statistician; and **Patricia Schaefer, DNP, RN, CNE-cl, CHSE, CNE**, assistant professor and director, Simulation Lab at the Universities at Shady Grove, were among the co-authors of "Exploring Disability in Healthcare: Maryland Nursing Students Report Improvements in Comfort, Skill, and Clinical Approach," which was published in *Maryland Nurse* in March.

SCHOOL OF PHARMACY



AMERICAN PHARMACISTS ASSOCIATION-ACADEMY OF STUDENT PHARMACISTS

UMSOP's chapter of the **American Pharmacists Association-Academy of Student Pharmacists (APhA-ASP)** received the Chapter of the Year Award at the APhA Annual Meeting in March in Los Angeles. In Patient Care Awards, the chapter was first runner-up for Operation Substance Use Disorder and second runner-up for Over-the-Counter Medication Safety.



ANDREW COOP

Andrew Coop, PhD, professor, Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, and associate dean for students, was named chair of the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy's Research and Graduate Affairs Committee.



BETHANY DIPAULA

Association of Psychiatric Pharmacists' Board of Directors.

Bethany DiPaula, PharmD, professor, Department of Practice, Sciences, and Health Outcomes Research, and co-director, Mental Health Program, was named treasurer of the American



LISA FINN

Lisa Finn, MPH, assistant director of assessment and accommodations, Office of Faculty and Academic Affairs, was named

UMB's 2026 Cecil S. Kelly Memorial Employee of the Year.

Madeline Goldstein, Sierra Larson, Madison Wong, and Ruby Zhang, all students, won the 2026 Academy of Managed Care Pharmacy's Local Pharmacy & Therapeutics Competition.

Paramjit Kaur, second-year student, received the Academy of Managed Care Pharmacy's (AMCP) Mid-Atlantic Student Scholarship to attend AMCP's annual meeting in Nashville, Tenn.



CHEROKEE LAYSON-WOLF



CHARMAINE ROCHESTER-EYEQUOKAN

Cherokee Layson-Wolf, PharmD, and **Charmaine Rochester-Eyequokan, PharmD**, both professors in the Department of Practice, Sciences, and Health Outcomes Research, were named Distinguished Fellows of the Pharmacy Academy of the National Academies of Practice.

Vincent Lowe, student, PhD in Pharmaceutical Sciences Program, received the Best Poster Presentation Award at the 2026 International Hydrogen Deuterium Exchange's Mass Spectrometry Conference in March in Strasbourg, France.



MAGALY RODRIGUEZ DE BITTNER

Magaly Rodriguez de Bittner, PharmD, MS, professor, Department of Practice, Sciences, and Health Outcomes Research, and associate dean for clinical services and practice

transformation, was installed as president of the American Pharmacists Association at its annual meeting in March in Los Angeles.



LINDA WASTILA

Linda Wastila, BSPHarm, MSPH, PhD, professor, Department of Practice, Sciences, and Health Outcomes Research, was named Professor Emerita upon her retirement from UMSOP.

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Richard P. Barth, PhD, MSW, Distinguished University Professor, was elected to the board of the American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare, recognizing his longstanding leadership in advancing social work research, education, and policy at the national level.



CHRISTABEL CHEUNG

Christabel Cheung, PhD, MSW, assistant professor, received a Community Adolescent and Young Adult Project Grant from Teen Cancer America to co-lead “Right Care, Right Time,” a national

project to improve psychosocial referrals for teens and young adults with cancer.



LAUREN COLEMAN

Lauren Coleman, MSW, training and technical assistance manager, Evidence-Based Practices Team, Institute for Innovation and Implementation,

co-presented “From Evidence to Impact: Implementing the Sobriety Treatment and Recovery Teams (START) Model in Maryland” at Maryland’s Office of Overdose Response 2026 Best Practices Conference on March 31.



MALAYSIA HARRELL

Malaysia Harrell, LICSW, LCSW-C, BCD, adjunct professor, presented “The Forgotten Mind: How Collective Memory Shapes Mental Health” as a featured speaker at a TEDx Talk in Groningen, Netherlands.



JIHYEONG JEONG

Jihyeong Jeong, MA, and Tural Mammadli, MSW, both PhD candidates, received inaugural MPower Early Scholars Awards, which will support Jeong’s research on aging

well in place and Mammadli’s Project Transcendence, which promotes HIV prevention strategies among Black transgender women.



NANCY KUSMAUL

Nancy Kusmaul, PhD, MSW, associate professor, received the *National Association of Social Workers* Foundation’s 2026 Knee/Wittman Outstanding Achievement Award, a national honor recognizing her leadership,

scholarship, and impact on health and mental health policy and practice.



NAEEMAH STAGGS

Naeemah Staggs, MHS, senior training specialist, Institute for Innovation and Implementation, represented the Child Welfare Academy at CASA of Maryland’s Day of Training, facilitating

three workshops: “The Trevor Project’s CARE Suicide Prevention Training,” “Ethics in Action for CASA Volunteers,” and “Engaging Emerging Adults.”



JAY UNICK

Jay Unick, PhD, MSW, assistant professor, received a University System of Maryland Board of Regents Faculty Award, the highest distinction the board confers for exemplary faculty achievement.



DARREN L. WHITFIELD

Darren L. Whitfield, PhD, MSW, associate professor, was selected for the National Association of Deans and Directors of Schools of Social Work’s 2026 Next Level Leaders Program, which

supports participants in exploring and moving into administrative leadership roles in social work programs.

LAURELS ARE SUBMITTED BY THE COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENTS OF THE SCHOOLS AS WELL AS BY REPRESENTATIVES IN UNIVERSITYWIDE OFFICES. THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR ERRORS IN THESE SELF-SUBMITTED LAURELS.