2020 Learning and Development

Annual Report

A Year of Accomplishments
2020 Learning and Development

ANNUAL REPORT

2020 started as a “normal” year for Learning and Development (L&D) at the University of Baltimore. We launched our updated New Employee Orientation in February; the Employee Development Academy held two instructor-led classes in early March; and we completed two follow-up sessions for Title VII training. Then in mid-March our world swiftly changed! COVID-19 pushed us into a global pandemic and our in-person work experience quickly shifted to virtual interactions for academic and business operations.

With the fast-moving force of the pandemic, L&D pivoted its operation, leveraged agility, and engaged creative engineering to:

- Create virtual platforms for employee connection and assistance;
- Convert talent development sessions into live ZOOM events;
- Engage collaborative partnerships to address wellness and racial and social justice concerns;
- Upgrade technology to broaden employees’ learning experience; and
- Initiate departmental programming for inclusive excellence.

The pandemic may have propelled us into a “New Normal”, however L&D is dedicated to cultivating a workplace culture of learning where all employees had the opportunity to obtain the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to strengthen their job performance, achieve their career goals, and develop their professional acumen. Peruse the following pages to learn how 2020 was, indeed, a year of accomplishments for L&D!

Zandra D. Rawlinson
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Associate Director, Learning & Development
VIRTUAL CONNECTIONS

As the pandemic quickly unfolded, leaders and staff were forced to redefine how they would connect, assist, and learn doing everything remotely. In response to the new challenge, telework best practices were curated and two learning communities were established.

Telework Best Practices identified performance behaviors for supervisors and employees to continue productivity and effective teamwork while working remotely. Practices were categorized into three areas and posted on the HR website. These areas and topics included:

- **Supervisors Supporting Teleworking** – Be flexible and available; Stay Connected; Manage by Results; Set Expectations; and Be Positive

- **Employees Teleworking** - Define Your Workspace; Maintain a Work Schedule and Routine; Plan Your Day; Eliminate Distractions; and Prioritize Privacy.

- **Etiquette for Virtual Meetings and Conference Calls** – Mute Microphones; Provide Clear and Specific Feedback; Dress Appropriately; and Plan Ahead for Document Sharing.

Learning Communities were divided into two communities for leaders and staff. The groups met bi-monthly for one hour during March, April, May, July, and August. On average 25 leaders and 21 staff members participated. The focus for each group included:

**Managers' Virtual Platform (MVP)** gave managers and supervisors the opportunity to connect, share any challenges they may have experienced, and obtain strategies to assist their leadership efforts in a virtual environment.

**Topics discussed** - Leading in a virtual space; Leadership Agility; Exemplary leadership practices; Engaging diversity dialogues; and Engaging teams with a growth mindset

**Talent Community Connection (TCC)** offered staff the space to connect and discuss any challenges they were experiencing with remote work as well as and obtain tips and strategies to broaden their career performance within a virtual environment.

**Topics discussed** - Tips for working virtually; Becoming more resilient and adaptive; emotional intelligence in the workplace; Diversity Dialogues; and leaning into a growth mindset.
Employee Development Academy (EDA) is a platform designed to leverage learning where the individual contributor and frontline leader can develop and transform their knowledge, skills, and abilities. The EDA is dedicated to bolstering a culture of learning where all employees have the opportunity to strengthen their professional, intellectual, and cultural acumen. Over the Spring and Fall sessions, 17 classes were offered and 262 employees participated (represents duplicative participants).

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<th>Spring: March 1 – June 23</th>
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<td>Mindfulness Leadership</td>
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EDA Instructors:

**Internal Instructors:** Lakeisha Mathews, M.S., Director, Career Services Career and Internship Center; Pavan Purswani, Associate Director, Office of Student Support and the Dean of Students; Sally Reed, Assistant Vice President, Human Resources; Erin Gleeson, Compensation Analyst; and Zandra Rawlinson, Ed.D., Associate Director, Learning and Development.

**External Instructors:** Nicole Palmore, MSW, University of Maryland Baltimore; Elisa Medina, MSW, University of Maryland; Mark Emmel, University of Maryland; DaNika Robinson, Ed.D., Virginia Institute of Marine Science, William & Mary; John Coughlin, Ph.D., Howard Community College; Stacy Marks, Certified Personal Trainer; and Natasha Rodriguez, M.Ed. University of Maryland Global Campus
Wellness became a recurring theme throughout the talent year. With such immediate disruptions many staff members became overwhelmed; shared anxiety about uncertainty for the future; and others served as substitute teachers for school age students. Thus, we held a wellness seminar, conducted reoccurring mindful meditation sessions, and participated in the National Health Education week.

Wellness for All During Uncertain Times hosted two speakers and two different topics:
- **Nikki Rieland** – Teacher, Montgomery County Public Schools
  *Topic: Strategies to Support Children’s Learning in a Remote Environment*

- **Vicki Lopez** – LCSW-C, Child and Family Therapist
  *Topic: Mental Health Well-being for Children and Adults During a Pandemic*

Mindful Mondays were held as 30 minute sessions. Erin Gleeson, Compensation Analyst in Human Resources served as the facilitator. All levels of meditation experience were welcomed.

National Health Education Week (October 19 - 23) employees were able to participate in a variety of health and wellness classes to increase awareness of major public health issues and learn ways to prevent chronic illness, increase mental and physical strength and resilience, and enhance the overall quality of life in our communities.

New Employee Check-in served as an alternative to our regular scheduled New Employee Orientation. During this one hour meeting, new staff (who joined UB between February and November) had the opportunity to meet other UB colleagues, chat with representatives from HR, Staff Senate, and OTS, and have a casual conversation around the following questions - *How you are doing with the transition into the UB community? What challenges have you had or are currently experiencing? What resources, activities, or information do you need to support your transition?*
COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

As UB quickly pivoted to accommodate virtual academics and business operations, L&D engaged collaborative partnerships university-wide and with external stakeholders. We established connection related to social justice, health, and inclusive excellence.

**JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Series)** a collaborative partnership between UB’s RLB Library, Special Collections, and L&D. JEDI is an engagement platform where all employees had the opportunity to dialogue, learn, and reflect on current issues related to social justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. Two events were held with guest speakers - a community organizer and representatives from Baltimore neighborhood Indicators Alliance (BNIA), Jacob France Institute.

**USM Initiative-National Health Education Week** was a joint effort with the USM Talent Professionals group (Human Resource and Talent Development representatives from the 12 USM institutions). We planned and coordinated the *National Health Education Week*. The health and wellness week promoted awareness of public health issues, preventative strategies for mental and physical well-being, and shared other approaches for overall quality of life. Two USM Institutions (University of Baltimore and University of Maryland Baltimore) and Guidance Resources hosted the workshops.

**Inclusive Excellence Initiative** evolved out of a discussion with the Assistant Vice President (AVP) and executive assistant of Student Success and Support Services. As racial and social justice concerns erupted domestically and globally, the AVP wanted to design a program to cultivate and integrate diversity, equity, and inclusive workplace practices for the division. To ensure the initiative reflected the voices of all staff, a creative brainstorming activity was conducted, specific feedback was collected from directors, and four team members where identified to serve as the Inclusive Excellence Advisory Work Team for 2021.
Since technology was the primary source for learning, approximately 10-20 hours were spent on upgrading the online learning experience platform, identifying courses for learning tracks and curating content from a secondary source.

**Percipio** is an upgraded Skillsoft online learning experience platform. Percipio is a Latin word meaning “acquire knowledge”. The platform offers more than 700 curated learning channels and 2,000 plus topic areas. Content areas are delivered in a variety of formats (i.e. video, books summaries, and audiobooks).

**EDA-Online Learning Tracks** utilized the online learning platform to provide staff with a series of courses they could complete from designated learning tracks. There were three learning tracks available - Employee Empowerment, Supervisor Enrichment, and Leadership Essentials. Staff only needed to complete two classes from any learning track.

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<th>Employee Empowerment</th>
<th>Supervisor Enrichment</th>
<th>Leadership Essentials</th>
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<td>• Becoming Your Own Boss</td>
<td>• Establishing Team Goals and Responsibilities</td>
<td>• Developing Your Business Ethics</td>
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<td>• Facing and Resolving Conflict in the Workplace</td>
<td>• Directing and Delegating as a Manager</td>
<td>• How Organizational Learning Drives Positive Change</td>
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<td>• Perseverance and Resilience</td>
<td>• Thinking Strategically as a Manager</td>
<td>• Strategic Thinking to Consider the Big Picture</td>
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**LinkedIn Learning** provided 20 free online class, due to the pandemic. Faculty and staff could take classes from two areas – Setting Yourself and Your Team Up for Success (14 classes) and Leading Practices for Teaching Online (6 classes). All classes were posted and accessed from the Human Resources website.

2020 was an unprecedented year across the globe, yet Learning & Development surmounted the challenges. We utilized agility to connect and assist employees with established virtual learning communities. We maximized the ZOOM platform to continue robust talent development. We initiated collaborative partnerships in response to wellness and racial and social justice. And we leveraged technology to maximize online learning. Overall, the “New Normal” afforded us a year of many accomplishments!
Learning and Development

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