

THE KETTLE



Evan Doyle: Solving Health Care Challenges Through Policy and Action

The Power of
Poetry to Heal

UMR Innovation:
Replacing Advisor with
Student Success Coach

& More

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ket·tle /ke-təl/ noun

A term derived following field observations of hawks, “kettle” means a group of soaring raptors.

FEATURED STORIES

5 The Power of Poetry to Heal

8 BSHP Alumni Profile:
Maria Cisneros Pito

11 Utilizing New Technology
to Change Medicine

15 Solving Health Care Challenges
Through Policy & Action

18 Faculty Profile:
Abraham Ayebo, Ph.D.

23 Reflections from Chancellor
Emeritus Lehmkuhle

26 UMR Innovation:
Replacing Advisor with
Student Success Coach

VIEW FROM USQUARE: DEAR RAPTOR ALUMNI,

We miss you! This fall, the UMR campus community welcomed new students, faculty and staff back to an expanded campus at our annual Raptor Reconnect celebration.

The campus expansion includes a new UMR Student Life Center, a redesigned and repurposed space you may have known as the DoubleTree Hotel. First and second year students are living in those refurbished rooms, and in this new space, for the first time in UMR’s short history, students have a dining plan along with recreation, an Admissions Welcome Center and other amenities. These new facilities emerged from our partnership with Titan Development and the input many of you provided while you were students. Thank you! I invite you to come back to campus for a visit, to see this and other new spaces. For now, you can read more about the new facilities in this issue of The Kettle.

This past summer, we hosted the 10-year reunion of UMR’s first graduating class. During their June reunion weekend, we launched UMR’s first philanthropic campaign — Onward. Speeches from former Governor Tim Pawlenty, former University of Minnesota (UMN) President Robert Bruininks, Chancellor Emeritus Stephen Lehmkuhle and current Interim UMN President Jeff Ettinger reminded the crowd in Peace Plaza of the great history that brought your campus to Rochester. And then Evan Doyle ’13 took the stage, inspiring us all by describing his UMR education and his work to enhance global health. You can read more about his life journey as you turn the pages of this fall’s Kettle.

During UMR’s Onward campaign, I encourage you to consider becoming a philanthropic partner by contributing to the scholarship fund as your circumstances allow. Perhaps each class could crowd-source smaller gifts into a larger scholarship donation on the occasion of your 10-year reunion—class of 2014, you’re up next!

Other alumni featured in this issue of The Kettle include Amarachi Orakwue ’19 (The Power of Poetry to Heal), Maria Cisneros Pito ’21 (a BSHP Alumni Profile) and Quincy Gu ’23 (Utilizing Technology to Change Medicine). We also profile faculty member Abraham Ayebo and sit down for a Q&A session with Chancellor Emeritus Stephen Lehmkuhle.

On behalf of the UMR community, I must repeat again that we miss you! I encourage you to update your contact information and share your news so that we stay connected as you continue to make us #UMRProud.

Onward, learning as we grow...

Chancellor Carrell

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ON THE COVER:

Evan Doyle ’13 celebrated his 10-year reunion of the first graduating class at UMR as the keynote alumni speaker at the Onward philanthropic campaign launch event this past June.

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THE POWER OF POETRY TO HEAL

Written by FELICIA SCHNEIDERHAN



Poems were a way for me to understand what was going on and my emotions. It was a way to befriend my thoughts. I loved how paper was blank, an open space for me to fill up with whatever was in my mind. I loved the privacy of paper. I could be very vulnerable."

UMR alumna Amarachi Orakwue '19 discovered her love of poetry in an eighth-grade creative writing class. "Our teacher gave us an assignment to write a poem. I remember writing mine. It was very easy to write. I brought it to class and my teacher read it. She was the first person to call me a poet."

The experience changed the course of Amarachi's life, inspiring her to pursue a life as both an artist and a health care provider dedicated to helping others heal.

At the time of her eighth-grade epiphany, Amarachi had just immigrated to Minnesota from Nigeria with her parents, younger sister and brother. "It was pretty chaotic being in a new country, not understanding the culture, feeling isolated and different. Poems were a way for me to understand what was going on and my emotions. It was a way to befriend my thoughts. I loved how paper was blank, an open space for me to fill up with whatever was in my mind. I loved the privacy of paper. I could be very vulnerable."

She created a book of poetry, which she kept private and close to her heart for many years.

Amarachi's family moved often in those early years before landing in Rochester. She completed her senior year at Century High School, where she discovered her love of the sciences, particularly chemistry. She initially wanted a career in pharmacy, and UMR was the perfect fit for key reasons. "It has small class sizes and more time to meet with teachers. It's geared to students going into medical professions and close to Mayo Clinic."

She enrolled at UMR in 2016 as a member of the inaugural Health CORE (Community of Respect and Empowerment) living learning community, an initiative brought to life by Chancellor Lori Carrell. The first group of 30 students came from communities underrepresented in higher education — first generation college students, Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC), low income — to create a diverse group committed to living and learning together, celebrating and supporting one another.

“It was a spectacular group of young people,” Chancellor Carrell recalls. “They came from many backgrounds, languages and religions, but they had a golden thread that wove them together: They wanted to make a difference in the world through a career in health.”

The incoming class had the chance to showcase the catalysts for their passion — and demonstrate their civic commitment — with a three-minute presentation at a rigorous scholarship competition. At the event, a supportive audience of scholarship benefactors were present, including Joe and Peggy Marchesani. The Marchesanis had established a scholarship in memory of Joe’s mother, Katherine Guarino Marchesani. The scholarship had much of the usual criteria, plus the novel requirement that the recipient be a poet. “My mother loved poetry, and well past her 100th birthday could recite poems she had learned in grade school,” says Joe. “We believe that an appreciation for the arts, such as poetry and music, makes someone trained in the medical sciences a more rounded, sensitive and empathetic person.”

The scholarship had not been awarded for a number of years, until

Amarachi performed her poetry at the competition and her secret gift as a poet was revealed.

“...an appreciation for the arts, such as poetry and music, makes someone trained in the medical sciences a more rounded, sensitive and empathetic person.”

Chancellor Carrell — whose first discipline is communication and the study of the spoken word — reached out to Amarachi.

“We first bonded over our love of words,” Amarachi says of the Chancellor. “In her office, she has a jar of words for people to pick a paper with the word of the day. She had seen me perform the poem and reached out to me about it.”

The Chancellor told Amarachi about the scholarship, and that Joe and Peggy would like to meet her for lunch. She brought along the poetry book she had created in middle school. “I showed it to Joe and Peggy. I had all these poems I had been writing for so long. We talked about poetry, ourselves. We bonded over that lunch.”

That day, Amarachi received more than the scholarship — she received lifelong friends, mentors and supporters of her passion for both poetry and health care.

“Peggy and Joe have always encouraged me to publish my poetry. Without them I wouldn’t ever consider it. It can be easy for us to not take notice of our own talents. They showed me it can be a powerful gift, and to try to share it with the world.”

She also credits the Marchesanis and Chancellor Carrell for helping her see poetry as a way to bring awareness of societal issues to the world at large. While at UMR, she and some classmates began an annual poetry event for Black History Month at a Rochester coffee shop, open to all community members to come and share. During the pandemic, the event

continued virtually, and people from all over the country attended. “Poetry allows the opportunity for us to learn each other’s stories,” she says. “We find, when we’re done, an atmosphere of love, support, peace and harmony.”

After George Floyd’s death in 2020, Amarachi worked with Barbara Jordan, a member of the Rochester NAACP, to hold a vigil in the Rochester community. At the vigil, she read her poetry and saw in a new light the power of poetry to uplift community voices.

Chancellor Carrell observed how the spoken word became a powerful part of Amarachi’s anti-racism leadership. “She spoke in new ways, in new venues, with new strength. She was truly an inspiration for many.”

While a member of the Health CORE community, Amarachi was surrounded by students from many different health care fields, and they helped her find her calling to medicine. “I had friends I trusted. They would talk about why they loved medicine. And I would say why I loved pharmacy. I wanted to manage the whole care plan for a patient. And they’d say, that sounds more like a physician.”

A health professions summer education program in Florida sealed the deal for her, and she switched to pre-med. She is currently a third-year medical student at the University of Minnesota Medical School, interested in obstetrics and gynecology.

“Now I’m thinking of how to bring poetry into medicine,” she says. “I want to go into visual poetry and short films and allow other people to share in these poems. I’m interested in talking to women who have felt unheard — Black women — and how that has led to them losing their child or having complicated pregnancies.”

Poetry will continue to serve Amarachi in her role as a health care provider, says Chancellor Carrell. She cites research on creativity contributing to the resilience and well-being of health care professionals. “The role of creativity and humanities is central. If a studious person who is very committed to others, like our students, only focuses on studies to the exclusion of what it means to be human, they are less likely to be well. Building resilience by having a means of expression is critical to the health of our health professionals. The well-being of our health professionals

matters to all of us.”

Amarachi shares how poetry makes her more empathetic with her patients. “Poetry channels the emotional part of us. When we come into the hospital and talk to patients, they can see our humanity — that is empathy. Because we are able to process our own feelings of sadness and joy, when we see it in someone else, we can allow them to express it. At that moment, we can connect with them.”

Further, she says, this deep connection leads to improved patient care and outcomes. She recalls a significant turning point between herself and a patient. “A patient came in and they were not taking their medication. In that moment, I could connect as a human being and ask why? They shared their feelings, and they were feelings I had had — hopelessness, fear, frustration. I told them, I can’t understand what it is to be in your shoes, but I can empathize with you. They got emotional. They told me more, something not in their chart history. Connecting in that moment actually helped solve the problem. Connecting on the level of humanity is healing.” ■

FAILURE IS JUST AS IT IS—A FAILURE.

Written by Amarachi Orakwue

A great thud was heard only by me.
Only within me and outside of me,
was this great thud.

Does my failure sound like a thud?
Or should it sound like crackling
dried up leaves?
Or does it crinkle and
burn into peeling wood?

Is my failure a rotting smell?
Eggy? Much too diarrhea? Or is it pus?
Oozing, steadfast, slow nasal drainage?

Does it stink like a newborn’s diaper?
Is it as terrifying as a spider’s legs?
Or the centipede that pops
in your dreams?!

Is my failure the boogy monster at night?
Yes, that one! That scary thing that swats
at your legs dangling over your bed!

Ohhh, I bet my failure is just one fat blob.
I laugh! That tickles me if it’s a fat blob!

My failure is the thing that tips
my sleep over to alertness.
It’s the unstoppable alarm
I can’t seem to shut off!
It’s my schizophrenia no

anti-psychotics can put to sleep.
How I want it 6 ft under!

As I struggle to contain my failure
as a mother hen contains her chicks,
I’ve come to accept my woe.

Woe is me for attempting an
identity on my failure.
For it’s just that—a fail and nothing more.

It’s the black thread amidst
my rainbow colored suit.
Adding its edginess,
Bringing forth a dimension to my life.

It’s nothing more, but a drop in my life’s

bubbling brook.
A bountiful life flowing before me.

It was planned by God Himself and
set in motion before my birth.
It’s as beautiful as my blessings and
as wondrous as my strengths.

It only keeps me burning
brighter and brighter.
Yes, I do laugh in it all!

I dare myself to rejoice!
To claim joy as my own amidst my trial.

It is failure and nothing more.
It just is.



Pictured left to right: Joe Marchesani, Amarachi Orakwue, Chancellor Lori Carrell and Peggy Marchesani gathered at the 2021 Scholarship Banquet at the University of Minnesota Rochester.

BSHP ALUMNI PROFILE: MARIA CISNEROS PITO

Written by FELICIA SCHNEIDERHAN

At the intersection of technology and health care, there stands a professional who is a crucial bridge for patients and their care.

In radiology, that's the radiology technologist.

Serving as that key advocate for patients was one of the biggest draws of radiography for 2021 UMR alumna Maria Cisneros Pito.

"Radiography is more about compassion and care than people realize. You definitely have to be empathetic. We're also the safety commissioners of our machines. We're the watcher making sure the machine is doing what's correct. We're the ones making sure the scan is going well."

Maria emigrated from Mexico with her family when she was three years old. She is among the first generation in her family to attend college, following in the footsteps of her two older brothers; one is now a nurse at Mayo Clinic, while the other is majoring in art history. Maria chose UMR because she was interested in the health sciences and wanted a structured college education close to home. The scholarships she received helped seal the deal.

UMR helped her discover career paths that she didn't know existed. "I went in thinking I would maybe go into nursing. I wasn't too happy with that path. I had shadowed a unit at Mayo Clinic and I couldn't see myself in nursing for the rest of my life. Radiography clicked as soon as I started learning about the program."

A career day at Mayo Clinic showed her a day in the life of a radiographer. "It appealed to me because it was a faster pace. You have more than one patient at one time and colleagues around you at all times, which I liked as well."

After earning her bachelor's degree in Health Sciences in 2021, Maria passed the board exams to become a certified radiology technologist. She is employed by Mayo Clinic and specializes in computed tomography (CT). "CT is growing bigger and bigger — it's one of those exams that are vital in health care. It's basically a big X-ray machine that formats into 3D images,



Radiography is more about compassion and care than people realize. You definitely have to be empathetic. We're also the safety commissioners of our machines. We're the watcher making sure the machine is doing what's correct. We're the ones making sure the scan is going well."





which radiologists can scroll through to see more detailed pictures of the body, soft tissue and internal organs.”

Maria works at both St. Marys Hospital and the inpatient/outpatient clinic at Mayo Clinic’s Charlton Building. At St. Marys, she sees inpatients or people coming from the emergency department. Is there a typical day? Not really — which is part of the appeal for Maria. At St. Marys, she is stationed at her scanner and sees a variety of patients. A coordinator handles the roster of patients, and she is able to focus solely on each exam. “If it’s super busy, I’m running all day, trying to get exams as precisely and efficiently as I can. On a slower day, I’m waiting for exams to pop up.” At the Charlton Building, she’s in charge of scheduling and coordinating the mix of inpatients and outpatients. “It makes the day go faster — I’m never sitting down, but it can get stressful if I’m busy or running behind. I definitely never get bored.”

Which is a great thing for this self-proclaimed extrovert. “I talk to a lot of

patients and get conversations going. This is more of an interpersonal job. There’s always something going on.”

She thrives on bringing technology to directly serve people in some of their most vulnerable and frightening times. “A lot of our patients come in, and they’re easy-going, laughing. You’d be surprised because of what conditions they have. They’re just trying to get through the day. When we interact with them kindly, they appreciate it so much.”

She also enjoys working closely with colleagues. “There are usually two technologists for each scanner. It’s nice — if we have questions, we ask each other. There are usually at least four scanners in my area, and each of those has two technologists. So if our partner doesn’t know, we can ask others. We’re never alone. There are always people to call.”

She also values the opportunity to work alongside radiologists during procedures like biopsies, in which a radiographer such as herself is required

to run the diagnostic imaging for the radiologist — a physician — who performs the procedure. “It’s really interesting to do because we see it in real time,” she says.

Maria credits the in-depth curriculum of UMR anatomy and physiology classes for giving her a strong foundation. “At the time it was extremely hard, but now I’m grateful. They definitely helped me. I can connect and understand a lot of things I now read in exams.”

And while Maria finds the new technologies of this evolving field exciting, like the brand new photon counting machine she uses to take more advanced, precise images, at the end of the day, it’s all about the people she serves. “I try to make it the best experience for them as possible. I get them a warm blanket and do little things they can look back and appreciate once the exam is over. So much relies on the person doing the exam. If we’re very positive and smiling, that can make or break a bad day.” ■



My motivation for studying medicine stems from my desire to alleviate the suffering of the patients.”

UTILIZING NEW TECHNOLOGY TO CHANGE MEDICINE

Written by KIMBERLY FRIEDLINE

For Quincy Gu, Ph.D. in Bioinformatics and Computational Biology (BICB), studying medicine was always the plan. Growing up in a household surrounded by physicians prepared him to follow in their footsteps. But a lifelong battle with a chronic condition for which there are limited treatments made pursuing a career in medicine even more personal for Gu. “My motivation for studying medicine stems from my desire to alleviate the suffering of the patients.”

Gu and his family knew of Mayo Clinic and its reputation in medicine. While searching for undergraduate opportunities, proximity to Mayo Clinic led Gu to the University of Minnesota Twin Cities, with the goal of applying to medical school. However, being an international student presented a problem. “Most medical schools don’t take international graduates, so I had to make an alternative plan.” Gu instead decided to get his Ph.D. first, then apply to medical schools. Following his love of mathematics out of undergrad, he applied to a related Ph.D. program. “I originally was accepted in 2018 into Biostatistics, but found that program wasn’t a

good fit, as it was theoretical, not the applied science that I was really interested in.” In 2019, BICB faculty member Dr. Yuk Sham suggested that Gu take a look at the University of Minnesota Rochester. It didn’t take long for him to realize that Rochester was the place for him. “UMR’s BICB program places significant emphasis on forging connections and fostering collaborations.” For Gu, this was the feature that set UMR apart. “One of the program’s distinguishing features is in its collaborations with institutions such as Mayo Clinic, The Hormel Institute, IBM, National Marrow Donor Program, the Brain Sciences Center and other industry leaders. These institutional-level partnerships profoundly benefit students engaged in interdisciplinary research fields.”

Once in the BICB program at UMR, things really began to fall into place for Gu and his career trajectory. “The Artificial Intelligence (AI) work being done at Mayo Clinic, partnership with Google, abundance of resources and Mayo Clinic’s extensive medical datasets has helped me form strong connections with medical science in the computational

domains,” he explains. “Mayo Clinic’s Digital Pathology (DP) research is unparalleled—I could not point to any other institutions where I would rather conduct my doctoral training in DP.”

These research connections with AI, DP and teams led by Dr. Steven Hart, Dr. Thomas Flotte and Dr. Chady Meroueh from Mayo Clinic, and Dr. Ryan Gillard from Google, are leading to great strides in the field of melanoma and other cancers. “Using high resolution hematoxylin and eosin (H&E)-stained whole slide images (WSIs), the developed progressive context encoders anomaly detection model, P-CEAD, has achieved a remarkable pixel-level accuracy of 89% for segmenting melanoma regions within the WSIs. What does that mean? This novel approach has the potential to streamline the practice of tissue slide review in clinical settings, consequently enhancing the diagnostic accuracy of clinical cancer assessments through an AI-driven automated pipeline.” After their success in applying this process to melanoma, the teams are looking to apply this technology to other types of cancers as well. “We have already transferred this process to segment malignant colorectal cancer tumors, achieving a pixel-level accuracy of 90%, and are looking into lung cancers next.”

Gu’s time in the lab doing research inspired him to be part of the committee organizing this year’s Scientific Innovation Through Diverse Perspectives Conference. This student-led biomedical research conference gives Mayo Clinic’s graduate students, Ph.D. students and medical students the opportunity to organize a research conference, which is no small task.

Additional opportunities have helped Gu feel more prepared for his future career. “I’m learning how to write a good grant and find funding. I’m part of a group of reviewers for abstract submissions for Medical Image

Computing and Computer Assisted Intervention 2023, as well as the UK-based international conference on Medical Image Understanding and Analysis.

While the amazing connections he has forged and research work that Gu has done have led to success in the lab, his advisor at Mayo Clinic, Dr. Steven Hart, has been instrumental in making sure that Gu will leave this program well-rounded and set up for success in his career. “Dr. Hart helped me learn to sell my research, how to tell a story about the research. He pushed me to practice introducing my work to the non-science public. If you can’t introduce your work to kids, you don’t really understand your work 100%.” And, Gu says, Dr. Hart’s influence has gone beyond academics. “He’s taught me the significance of celebrating each accomplishment and embracing failures as learning opportunities,” a mindset helpful in all facets of life, not just science.

Gu’s practice in talking about his research work in an approachable way to those not in the sciences paid off when he presented his work virtually at the 2021 Pathology Visions conference. “Audience really matters, and this helped me when I was talking to people in industry.” At this conference, Gu spent time presenting his work to representatives from medical industries, leaning on the advice from Dr. Hart. “Industry professionals seek out the unique aspects and advantages of your research, along with indications of its commercial potential.” Gu’s clear presentation caught the attention of pharmaceutical giant Roche. “Roche scientists loved my work, invited me to work with them as an intern, then eventually as a part-time employee and now I’m working with them as a full-time imaging scientist.”

The internship with Roche was not only supported by UMR, but encouraged. “An internship is part of the [BICB]

program requirements,” Gu says. “Not many programs have this feature.” Requiring an internship is just one of the benefits of UMR that Gu hopes prospective students considering UMR for a Ph.D. program appreciate.

As Gu looks to the future, he is most interested in applying his work to the medical field in a meaningful way. After successfully defending his doctoral thesis, he is now working with Roche Sequencing Solutions, expanding the vision of what a Ph.D. is and does. “I do not have a strong interest in being a professor. I want to see my work become a real product that can be applied. I’m more interested in new things happening in the field. How can we apply the new tech to meet medical demands? How can we integrate AI advancements into medical contexts? And I think Roche is going to give me the options to do that.”

Is medical school out of the question? Not yet. “Medical school is still part of the plans. I haven’t decided if I’m going to be a practitioner or a researcher. I love talking to patients, and find that fulfilling. It would deepen my knowledge of the medical field and allow me to see challenges and problems, and would give me more ideas of what I can do to push the tech sector services to make a better health care plan.”

Dr. Gu and his beloved Corgi named Leena are now gearing up to relocate to California, where he will start his full time work with Roche. “Leena loves the snow. I don’t. But I have really enjoyed my time in Rochester. The ethos of ‘The needs of the patient come first’ will eternally reside in my heart. I believe this sentiment harmonizes seamlessly with Roche’s mission of ‘Doing now what patients need next.’” Wherever Dr. Quincy Gu’s path takes him next, snowy or not, he will continue to make an impact in scientific discoveries and the field of computational pathology. ■

FLYAWAYS FROM RAPTOR LIFE



DAWOOD AL DAWOOD
2023 UMR Graduate

What is your current position?
BICB master’s student.

How has your definition of success changed since you began your career at UMR? I used to believe that my grades were the proof of my success, however I came to realize that grades are not the proof of my potential, rather they are the harvest of my diligence. There is a beautiful Arabic proverb that I keep visible in order to take my diligence to the next level; “Whoever fears climbing the mountains, will live forever between trenches.”



GAOLUNHA NICOLE VANG
2013 UMR Graduate

What is your current position?
Senior Safety Specialist for Inari Medical. I also opened up a bakery, Better Baked, and it’s been a really exciting journey so far.

Was there a turning point during your time at UMR or in your career that you are now appreciative of? When I interned for the White House, it opened my eyes up to the endless possibilities to help people. I didn’t just have to be in health care to help people, there are endless possibilities.



LAUREN SMITH
2013 UMR Graduate

What is your current position?
Sponsorships Marketing Manager for PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC).

How has your definition of success changed since you began your career at UMR? My perspective on success has evolved. I’ve come to see that it’s not just about achieving milestones, but also about the journey of growth, even when it involves mistakes or obstacles. Additionally, I’ve learned that true success includes maintaining my health and well-being, as they are integral to sustaining my goals. Success is now a more holistic and balanced pursuit for me.

DARIAN MONTPLAISIR
2018 UMR Graduate

What is your current position?
STEM Learning Specialist at Riverland Community College.

Was there a turning point during your time at UMR or in your career that you are now appreciative of? Being an Undergraduate Academic Assistant for Biology courses made me realize that I wanted to work with students.

If you could tell your UMR self something, what would it be?
Be open to new experiences and to get out of my shell!



SOLVING HEALTH CARE CHALLENGES THROUGH POLICY & ACTION

Written by KIMBERLY FRIEDLINE

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the University of Minnesota Rochester's first graduating class. Evan Doyle, M.S. in public health is one of the inaugural class graduates of UMR's Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences (BSHS) class of 2013. While the current enrollment has blossomed into nearly 1,000 students in both undergraduate and graduate programs, it all started with one class and one program that paved the way for those to come.

Doyle's path to UMR started with an unscheduled drop-in. He had applied to the University of Minnesota and, at the time, they had a program where applicants could choose to have their application shared with all U of M campuses. As he and his dad were on their way to visit University of Minnesota Duluth, their route took them through Rochester. On a whim, Doyle called UMR and asked if they could stop in for an impromptu campus tour. "They were ecstatic," he recalls. "It was still a construction zone. I had to really use my imagination." During the tour, he learned more about the unique structure planned for UMR. "I loved the innovative, team-focused learning model and approach to a cross-disciplinary, integrated curriculum. As I was primarily there to learn, I was not necessarily looking for the stereotypical college experience. I was really focused and motivated and took education seriously. The fact that UMR was new was not a deterrent, rather I saw a ton of opportunity in being part of the group that got to define and shape the university's future." This spur-of-the-moment visit to Rochester sparked interest. "We still went to visit Duluth and other campuses, but every tour after that I found myself comparing against Rochester in my mind." Knowing that he was interested in medicine, learning about UMR's planned collaboration with Mayo Clinic and focus on health sciences solidified Doyle's decision.

BUILDING A UNIVERSITY

For Doyle, the challenges that came with being in the first class became opportunities to grow. With leadership experience in his past as student body president of his high school, he naturally gravitated to the leadership roles in this new system. "Being the first class, there was nothing there. UMR needed a constitution, student body president and other leadership roles to be created and then filled" — in other words, UMR needed to set up the structures that established universities have. Where some might have been paralyzed by the ambiguity of it all, Doyle leaned in, stepping into leadership roles throughout his time at UMR, becoming Student Body President, Student Senator, Student Activities Committee Chair and more. While not part of the BSHS curriculum, these leadership experiences became foundations for the career Doyle would build and cemented friendships with his classmates. "Alumni from those first years have become lifelong friends."

The robust relationships and collaborations that UMR has today with institutions, faculty, researchers and medical professionals didn't happen overnight. "In some ways, it was really fueled by the first few cohorts. Institutional connections weren't formal at first, but had to be built from the ground

up, not from the top down,” Doyle explains. Those first UMR classes put in the work “knocking on doors, finding researchers, forming those relationships and creating the appetite for collaboration.” Researchers and departments at Mayo Clinic were impressed with the dedicated students coming from UMR and were thrilled to keep working with them year after year.

“The professor isn’t standing in front of the class lecturing. They are engaging with and amongst students. Debating, questioning, encouraging critical thinking and solving problems. You couldn’t get by learning on a surface level. You had to engage.

A NEW EDUCATIONAL MODEL

While it could be said that for any educational institution a student will get out of it what they put into it, UMR’s innovative learning model is designed to make learning dynamic, not passive. In contrast to a more traditional lecture format, UMR classes are structured with a report-back model. “The professor isn’t standing in front of the class lecturing. They are engaging with and amongst students. Debating, questioning, encouraging critical thinking and solving problems. You couldn’t get by learning on a surface level. You had to engage. Even

the classroom layout encourages interaction between students and faculty.” Doyle had the opportunity to see the real difference when taking classes later in his educational journey at other institutions. “I took some classes in a standard lecture hall — it was jarring. The professor’s expectation was straight rote memorization from old powerpoints and didactic lectures. It was so different from my experience at UMR.”

Another innovative component of the UMR program was the required Capstone experience, which turned into a career-solidifying milestone for Doyle. “I had done volunteer work in Kenya, and that experience made me really want to travel and learn about health systems around the world. I was interested in complex systems and wanted other reference points from other countries. When I designed my Capstone, I chose to include a qualitative study on barriers in access to health care in Ecuador. I received funding through the University, and just blindly reached out to organizations on the ground, and found one to work with me.”

He then returned to the United States to pursue internships focused on public health. “Internships allowed me to explore different levels of the health sector.” He spent three months in New York City working with the Latino Commission on AIDS, a nonprofit that provides community-based HIV prevention and treatment services. “That experience gave me more of a flavor of how data and insights drive local health programming.” He also worked as an Intern in Global Health at the Council on Foreign Relations, a think tank in New York City. There, he was present for very high level roundtable discussions about a wide variety of global health topics: “H1N1 influenza, antimicrobial resistance, biosecurity threats and vaccine resistance. I was a very small cog that got to listen in on these big meetings.

This solidified my interest in global health broadly.”

As Doyle considered his future after graduation, UMR’s student success coaches offered guidance and leveraged connections to help him pursue his burgeoning interest in global health. “I decided I didn’t want to go to medical school, but I knew I wanted to go to grad school after first working for a couple of years. The student success coaches knew the CEO for a small consulting company in St. Paul, and connected us. I worked there for two years after graduation building hard skills in public health research.”

WORKING TO SOLVE THE GRAND HEALTH CHALLENGES OF THE 21ST CENTURY

Doyle would go on to attend the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine where he completed his Master of Science in public health. From there, he began working for the Clinton Health Access Initiative. This role took him to the rural, agricultural country of Eswatini in Southern Africa, where he worked to implement the country’s universal health coverage policy by scaling access to basic health care services. After a year and a half, Doyle was promoted to Regional Manager of the Global HIV Prevention program. He spent two years working in South Africa and neighboring countries, increasing access to oral HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) medications. The successes they saw in these countries provided the framework to implement similar programs in many countries in Africa and Asia with high rates of HIV transmission. Working collaboratively — a skill that was emphasized early on at UMR — with governments, health care providers, funders and other key players has been essential to the success of the projects Doyle has led. “When we started, there were only a few hundred people receiving PrEP. At the end of two years we were up to hundreds of thousands,



A big part of my job is listening and translating people’s needs into something that can be funded and put into action. I can push harder because I’m pushing for other’s needs, not my own.”

and we were on track to scale access in nearly every clinic in the country.” Lives changed and lives saved.

From there, Doyle began his current role as Policy Advisor and Strategist for the Global Fund in Geneva, Switzerland — the largest multilateral funding institution in global health — which focuses on fighting HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria in over 120 countries around the world. Reflecting on his role in all of these large-scale programs, Doyle says, “A big part of my job is listening and translating people’s needs into something that can be funded and put into action. I can push harder because I’m pushing for other’s needs, not my own.” Looking to the future, Doyle’s work with the Global Fund will focus on designing strategies for how to mitigate, adapt and respond to climate change’s impact on global health — a challenge on a scale unlike any we have seen.

As a member of the inaugural class, Doyle believes UMR’s vision of transformation in higher education through innovations that empower our graduates to solve the grand health challenges of the 21st century certainly had an impact on his education and career path. He has focused his life and career on solving those grand health challenges globally. Doyle readily asserts that his experiences at UMR helped prepare him for the future. In Rochester for the inaugural class’s 10 year reunion in June, Doyle and fellow alumni had the opportunity to tour campus. “I love to see the developments that UMR has undergone. This tour showed me that it hasn’t lost its core values, which is really special.” UMR looks forward to the growth that will happen in the next 10 years, and remains steadfastly dedicated to its core values. ■

FACULTY PROFILE: ABRAHAM AYEBO, Ph.D.

Written by FELICIA SCHNEIDERHAN

This fact may surprise students of math professor Dr. Abraham Ayebo: When he was a boy growing up in Ghana, math was his least favorite subject.

“I remember my fifth grade teacher once told me, ‘Abraham, you are a very bright kid, but you need to work on your math skills,’ and I thought to myself, ‘forget this math stuff, there is no way I am going to get it.’”

He was certain that he would never be good at math.

That all changed in high school when a new teacher who had just graduated from college was posted to teach mathematics. “The energy he brought to the classroom, his clear explanation of math concepts and his sense of humor had a great impact on me. Suddenly, I found myself liking mathematics more than all the other subjects. In fact, I liked it so much that I would do math homework as a hobby when I got bored with other subjects.”

But not only did Abraham realize he liked math, he soon learned he excelled at teaching it. “Throughout high school and college, my classmates always told me that they understood math concepts better whenever I explained them. I realized I had the gift of teaching. Inspired by my high school teacher, I determined that I would one day become a math teacher too, to help put smiles on the faces of my students, just like my high school teacher did for me.”

He graduated with a B.S. in mathematics from the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Ghana and taught mathematics at a high school in Ghana. He realized that in order to be an effective teacher of mathematics, he needed to pursue an advanced degree in the subject. He came to the United States to earn graduate degrees in mathematics at the University of Nevada Reno, receiving his master’s degree in 2002 and his Ph.D. in 2010.

Today, his students and the entire UMR community can thank that high school teacher for inspiring a young Abraham Ayebo and setting him on his path to becoming an associate professor in the Center for Learning Innovation.



Students might think they are not good at math, when in fact it is their attitude towards the subject that is causing them not to perform well. It is therefore very important for mathematics instructors to not quickly write students off, but to carefully understand the students’ backgrounds and differentiate the curriculum to cater to the needs of the students.”





Dr. Ayebo brings much to the University, especially his passion for engaging students in his favorite subject, and challenging and inspiring their growth. For him, every student brings unique qualities just waiting to be shared once they are given the support they need; every student, he believes, is capable of performing well in class. “I want my students to leave my classroom with collaboration skills, a sense of curiosity, open-mindedness and a thirst for knowledge.”

He joined the UMR faculty in fall 2018, attracted by the multidisciplinary department and its opportunities for collaborative research. “The research focus on the scholarship of teaching and learning also sounded appealing to me. Since my doctoral degree was in mathematics education, the scholarship of teaching and learning is a natural fit.” Dr. Ayebo’s research focuses on how affective factors — such as attitudes and beliefs — influence the way students learn mathematics and statistics. In the last four decades, there has been increased interest in the role of affective causes in the learning of mathematics and statistics. “It is generally assumed that positive beliefs, attitudes and feelings in mathematics and statistics

will lead to improved achievement, and vice versa. I am currently interested in investigating the affective factors that impact the teaching and learning of mathematics and statistics.”

“Students might think they are not good at math, when in fact it is their attitude towards the subject that is causing them not to perform well. It is therefore very important for mathematics instructors to not quickly write students off, but to carefully understand the students’ backgrounds and differentiate the curriculum to cater to the needs of the students.”

It’s perhaps not surprising that what Dr. Ayebo enjoys seeing most at work is students understanding mathematics concepts for the first time. “The smiles on their faces always bring me so much joy and satisfaction.”

Beyond the university, Rochester has been a strong community for Dr. Ayebo and his family. His wife, Salomey, works as a nurse at Mayo Clinic. They have three children: Oswald, a sophomore at UMR, and Benita and Victor who currently attend Rochester-area public schools. He values time with his family, and teaches Sunday school classes at

his local church, Rochester Assembly of God. He’s also an avid soccer fan, rooting for the Chelsea Football Club in the English Premier League. And, motivated by a continued desire to learn and a curiosity about the world, he’s a voracious reader of biographies, psychology, theology and stories behind the historical development of mathematics and the sciences.

In the classroom, his students’ focus and motivation to learn delights him. “Having students who are self-motivated makes the work of the instructor very easy,” he says.

The field of mathematics continues to evolve and excite him. “The most commonly used technology when I was in high school and college was the calculator. Now, there are so many technologies that have changed the way we teach and learn mathematics. The integration of technology into the teaching and learning of mathematics is very exciting. Being able to use the new technologies to perform complex mathematical tasks is changing the landscape of mathematics learning. The emergence of AI such as ChatGPT will make it even more interesting.” ■

CLASS NOTES

RACHEL SEISLER '14
Graduated with a Master of Business Administration from University of Minnesota Duluth and is the current Assistant Director of Admissions at University of Minnesota Rochester.

STACEY LEBER '15
Graduated from Des Moines University. Completed family medicine residency at University of Missouri - Kansas City and graduated in 2022. Currently working in full spectrum academic family medicine in South Dakota.

KATIE NELSON '15
Started a new position as an Assistant Nurse Scientist in the Center for Indigenous Health at the John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

ERIC MEHLHAFF '16
Graduated internal medicine residency and started a Hematology-Oncology fellowship at University of Wisconsin - Madison.

MICHAEL BERGMAN '17
Graduated from Northeastern University with a Ph.D. in Chemistry and Chemical Biology. Welcomed a second child in fall 2023 with wife Jenna Kremer '18.

HANNAH QUARNSTROM '19
Engaged, finished a master’s degree in Student Affairs and is working at University of Minnesota Twin Cities.

TUCKER REINTS '19
Graduated from Des Moines University’s Physician Assistant program and passed the Physician Assistant National Certification exam.

THOMAS EKSTROM '20
Currently a Ph.D. student at Mayo Clinic in the MPET program. Relocated to Stuttgart, Germany.

BREANNA ENGER '20
Attending the University of Minnesota Duluth Medical School.

ALIYA HAJYUSUF '20
Attending the University of Minnesota Twin Cities Medical School.

BAILEY ONKEN '20
Attending the University of Minnesota Duluth Medical School.

CHLOE LIEW '21
Accepted to the Allopathic Medicine program at Rosalind Franklin University.

CIERRA MACHADO '21
Started a Master of Public Health at SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University.

SHARE YOUR NEWS WITH UMR!
UMR graduates achieve great things every day, from breakthrough research and career success to weddings and the arrival of baby Raptors. Send your updates to z.umn.edu/UMRShareYourNews and stay social @UMRochester. Visit update.umn.edu to update your address and contact information.

ANAB MOHAMED '21
Attending the Mayo Clinic Alix School of Medicine.

WARDA MOHAMED '21
Attending the University of Minnesota Twin Cities Medical School.

DANNY TURIN '21
Attending the University of Minnesota Twin Cities Medical School.

CIERA JOHNSON '22
Attending the University of Minnesota Twin Cities Medical School.

MELISSA JUAREZ '22
Enrolled in the Doctor of Podiatric Medicine program at Rosalind Franklin University.

CHELSEA MOUA '22
Attending the University of Minnesota Pharmacy School.

KYLIE VAN DYKE '23
Pursuing a master’s degree in Bioinformatics and Computational Biology (BICB) through the University of Minnesota Rochester.



TUNE IN TO BEYOND THE NEST,
UMR’s alumni podcast, available via Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Google and Podbean.

  
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REFLECTIONS FROM CHANCELLOR EMERITUS LEHMKUHLE

Chancellor Emeritus Stephen Lehmkuhle was the inaugural Chancellor of the University of Minnesota Rochester, serving from 2007 until his retirement in 2017. During his time at UMR, the inaugural Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences class began their careers, the Bachelor of Science in Health Professions program launched, UMR's mascot, Rockie the Raptor, was created and the first class of UMR graduated with many more to follow. Chancellor Emeritus Lehmkuhle reflects upon his time at UMR in both his book, "Campus With Purpose," and in conversation with our editors, who asked him to elaborate on those early years and share insights on that first class, what makes him #UMRProud and where life has taken him after UMR.

What brought you to UMR?

The key driver behind my decision to accept the position at UMR was the unique opportunity to create change and not manage change.

I began to realize that Rochester was a place where I could tap into my intuition about higher education that I developed over the last decade. It was a place where I could possibly create the future university today – one that has a sustainable cost structure, shaped by a new approach to learning that prepares all students for the future, and values partnerships with the university system offices, other higher education institutions, and the community. (Chapter 1, page 9)

How would you describe UMR's first class?

I began to refer to them as 'trailblazers'. They were an adventurous group, never shy to put themselves out there to do things in the community. (Chapter 7, page 97)

[The students] were an inspiration to us. When times were tough and when challenges emerged, the administration, faculty and staff would look at each other and say, if the students can do it, so can we. UMR's first class was open to new ideas and willing to tolerate ambiguity. They learned to survive that. I see those traits in all students at UMR.

Our graduates frequently demonstrated during their time as students that their passion made them resilient and enabled them to persevere in a rigorous program. (Chapter 6, page 91)

How did the first class impact what UMR was doing?

The trailblazers not only taught us about student life, they also provided an assessment of their learning

experiences created by the evolving curricular model. In fact, the trailblazers referred to themselves as the 'guinea pigs', because they knew the faculty and staff were 'flying and building the plane at the same time.' (Chapter 7, page 98)

We learned as the students worked through pressure points they experienced. For example, the second year became a really tough year for students and there was a lot of stress imposed on them, so we began to ask ourselves, should we think differently about curriculum and the stress that was present? Other stressors students faced included changes in career pathways or aspirations. We noticed that students were stressed beyond what our comfort level was and through collaboration with student success coaches and faculty we worked to ease that transition and better support them through curriculum adjustments and stress management skills. Curriculum became more of a becoming experience for the students. The students that enter UMR today are benefiting greatly from all the experiences of the students that preceded them.

How did you keep the purpose and values at the forefront while 'flying the plane and building it at the same time'?

In the early years, faculty and staff developed things that perpetuated purpose through everything they did. My role was to remind everybody, if this doesn't work it's not the end of the world, we will find something else. The glue that held us all together during that time was the students. We were so excited about what the students were doing. They were reinforcing and inspiring us to continue to do the work. I saw these students grow academically and in life over each of their four years. That kept us focused and reminded us of the purpose of UMR.

How does your personal academic focus align with the mission of UMR and how does it differ?

Throughout my academic career, I always wanted to be in a position to have an impact, and hopefully a positive impact, whether it be in the classroom, the lab, as a faculty leader, an academic leader or a chancellor.

“Campus with Purpose” dedication: Over forty years ago, I became a faculty member because I wanted to make the world a better place... Making the world a better place is a journey without a destination. What I learned is that the real solution to addressing global challenges is to perpetuate the journey through our students.

What makes you #UMRProud?

I am extremely proud that UMR has remained committed to its purpose and is thriving as an institution as a result. I am also very proud of our alumni — how they continue to learn,

grow and adapt so they can live their passion to care for others.

Where has life brought you now?

In retirement, I can now focus on my roles as a husband (married to Cindy for 51 years), a son (my mother is 97 and awesome), a father (with two very successful children who are people that I would want to be around even if they were not my children), a grandfather (to three grandchildren: 12 years, 8 years, and 6 months), a family member and a friend.

I can also now live the role as Chancellor Emeritus, enjoying immensely UMR’s growth, its adaptive culture and ongoing innovations, and its pivotal and national role transforming the landscape of higher education.

Chancellor Emeritus Lehmkuhle shares more details about his time at UMR and the stories behind the origins of the innovative campus in his book, “Campus with Purpose.”



DEAR FRIENDS AND RAPTOR ALUMNI,

I am so grateful to have the opportunity to talk about this year and my presidency!

There were several reasons I ran for Rochester Student Association (RSA) president. I was specifically encouraged by a previous RSA leader. This made me realize that I also wanted to be a leader who would encourage the student body to be involved on campus and create a space where the students can rely on RSA.

I was very honored to be elected as RSA president. Although at times, I experienced imposter syndrome like many college students, but with the support of the student body I was able to overcome that. I am forever grateful for their choice in choosing me as their president for the 2023-24 year.

There are a lot of things that I want to do this year. For the fall semester, we are bringing back the talent show! Another big event currently in the works is a Raptor Night Market, which will include involvement from a number of UMR clubs. The purpose for these events is to build community between students, strengthening familiarity and relationships with one another after the disconnect during COVID.

The current class is thriving and doing amazing. On behalf of the student body, I wanted to say thank you for building a pathway for UMR students who came after you. Because of you, UMR continues to thrive on tradition and plan for the future as we also prepare to fill necessary roles and solve grand health challenges.

Sincerely,

Heidi Nguyen

Rochester Student Association President
Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences '26

THE NEW CLASS: 2023 RAPTORS

The fall semester began with new opportunities and a new group of students calling UMR home. First-year students were welcomed to campus in the new Student Life Center, each student belonging to a Living and Learning Community centered on both academic and social success. UMR continues to make its mark in downtown Rochester through physical expansion and serving nearly 1,000 students that bring vibrancy to Med City.



SAVE THE DATE: UPCOMING EVENTS

State of the Campus

November 8, 2023
11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Historic Chateau Theatre

Partners make it possible.

Give to the Max Day

November 16, 2023
z.umn.edu/UMRGive

In remembrance of UMR student Sahra Gesaade, UMR is highlighting the Sahra Gesaade UMR Student Emergency Fund to support students with unexpected financial needs that could impact their ability to continue their college education.

BICB Research Symposium

January 11, 2024
University of Minnesota Rochester

University of Minnesota Rochester Commencement 2024

May 11, 2024
11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Mayo Civic Center

UMR INNOVATION: REPLACING ADVISOR WITH STUDENT SUCCESS COACH

Written by KIMBERLY FRIEDLINE

Parry Telander, M.S., had spent a year after graduate school in a temporary position as a counselor at a community college. While searching for his next position, he came across a posting for a student success coach at the new University of Minnesota Rochester. As he learned more about the role, his interest was sparked. “I had never seen that title before, ‘student success coach.’ It hadn’t been used elsewhere in Minnesota or in the greater midwest. It’s a very unique position. The idea of a coach is a much different role than a [traditional] ‘advisor.’”

Telander applied and began the lengthy interview process, meeting with everyone including UMR’s vice chancellor, dean of students, registrar, faculty, director of student activities and admissions representatives. Throughout this process, his enthusiasm for the role continued to grow. “The excitement from everyone about this position was unmistakable; how the coach was going to work with both students and faculty. Instead of being siloed as academic affairs or student affairs, the coach bridges the gap, tying those groups together.” Telander would become the student success coach for UMR’s first class. “What is different at other campuses is they have different offices for all of these things. The student has to tell their story four different times to four different advisors who may or may not talk to others or connect with faculty,” he says. “Here at UMR, the coaches serve as the point person for everything.”

Meanwhile, Jenn Hooke, M.S. had been hired as an admissions representative for UMR’s first class, working to recruit students to the Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences degree. With her background in education, Hooke was excited to be part of this new campus. While she enjoyed her work, she eventually began to look for something more. “After working in the admissions office for a few years, I really loved working with the motivated, bright students that UMR attracts. I got to watch the development of the student success coach role on our very small campus and saw the opportunity that the position had to continue to develop relationships with students over time and said, ‘that’s what I want to do!’” To prepare for the role, Hooke completed her master’s degree in education

while working in the admissions office, and was chosen to join the student success coaches in 2012. Many years in, she knows that this was the right move for her. “I continue to be drawn to the role for many reasons. The relationship building is the best — I get to work with students for their entire student career at UMR. The position has both depth and breadth; coaches have to know a lot of things about a lot of different areas, including academic advising, career skills, pre-health and more.”

TOOLS FOR SUCCESS

UMR uses an innovative, homegrown system called APLUS, which serves as a foundational support for faculty, coaches and students. APLUS is an interface that provides access to all of the necessary information from records systems to academics and grades, and is used as a general advising tool. “Gradebook is integrated into the system so coaches can see how students are performing. We get alerts if they’re dropping below a certain line. Faculty have been using it to communicate any academic or care concerns with coaches. It’s been a bridge between coaches and faculty to keep that communication strong,” Telander says. “Faculty send encouraging notes as well, often communicated to students directly with coaches copied on it. Coaches are always a foundational cheerleader.”

As cheerleaders, coaches make an effort to be present for all of the ups and downs of college life. As Hooke explains, “We use a proactive advising model where we are not waiting to reach out to students until they are failing a course — we are inviting them to connect with us, sending messages of care and celebration and generally being present in campus spaces where we can be with students.”

BUILDING TRUST AND RELATIONSHIPS

Hooke and Telander agree: Coaching is rooted in relationships. “First-year students meet their coach on day one of orientation and have an individual meet-and-greet appointment in the first few weeks of the semester where the sole goal of the appointment is to get to know



the student,” explains Hooke. While only required to meet with their coach once per semester, most students meet with theirs two to three times per term. While sometimes these meetings are in the office, coaches work to reach out to students and meet them where they’re at. As Telander notes, “Coaches have been able to connect with students in more flexible ways — in-person and on Zoom. Office hours don’t always mean in-office time. Coaches spend time out in the common areas, meeting students in their space.”

The success coaches’ goals in holistic coaching means that they strive to be a resource for students facing the complexity that life sometimes presents. “Our job as coaches is to both provide excellent and reliable information while also asking powerful questions,” Hooke reflects. “We often have to have hard conversations with students about their progress towards a particular career field, or as a student grieves a career dream, for example. Those hard conversations can be done with a high level of care and support because of the established relationship that we’ve had since day one.”

SUPPORTING DIVERSE POPULATIONS

As UMR’s first student success coach, Telander has seen how the student population has grown and changed over the years. “Currently, UMR has a 75–85% female to male ratio. The health care field has changed with a growing number of women seeking careers in health care. Our campus has changed incredibly demographically. We have seen large increases in the number of students who are first-generation college students, come from different socioeconomic backgrounds, diverse backgrounds and economically disadvantaged backgrounds.” He explains that UMR has responded to the changes in the student population by seeking to make the coaching team more representative

of the student population. “We also do a lot of professional development, focusing on staff education, addressing biases and misunderstandings. We work with academic affairs to seek to understand our students and build those connections.”

Supporting students and understanding their unique life situations is a core part of coaching. “Life outside of school directly impacts students — housing disparities, food disparities, family dynamics and situations they have to attend to. First-generation college students often have multiple roles,” Telander explains. “The intersection of student and family roles, which are sometimes in conflict, is not always easy to balance. Students sometimes are still expected to help at home and work to help support the family while going to school.” For some, changes in relationships that result after going to college can create difficulties. Facilitating hard conversations and helping students navigate challenges as they arise is a critical part of UMR’s life coaching.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

For students at all levels, student success coaches offer valuable guidance. “Most days involve meeting with students. It could be helping a first-year student who is struggling with time management to build new academic skills or coaching a second-year student who is experiencing career indecision and looking for ways to gain meaningful experiences in Rochester. It could be helping a third-year student design the customized portion of their degree plan — their Capstone experience — for their final year, and your last appointment could be helping a fourth-year student, who is applying to medical school, work on their personal statement, do a mock interview or help a student navigate the job search.”

According to Telander, the coaching process includes, but is so much

more than, helping with resumes and personal statements. Coaches are pivotal in the career development of the student. “They ask critical questions. Students come into our programs with life events that have impacted them and determined what they think they may want to do. Coaches take the event or experience and help them evaluate the best way to achieve those goals. They encourage students to be introspective and take into account their values, interests, skills and knowledge of the desired position and together work to find the best fit for them.”

Hooke reflects on this impactful role. “I have now coached over 200 alumni of the University of Minnesota Rochester and am still connected to so many of those folks. It is such a privilege to get to influence the lives of people in college who are shaping their identities and making critical life decisions. UMR students are amazing people. They awe me every day with their bright minds, empathetic souls and joy for life. The alumni I have coached are now impacting the world in really meaningful ways. To get to be a part of their journey while they are here is an honor.”

IMPORTANCE OF INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

The remarkable success of UMR’s innovative approach to advising has not gone unnoticed. “Coaches utilize student development therapies and counseling techniques to provide coaching on academics, career, life and health. It’s very holistic,” says Telander. “To this day, even within the university system, it’s a very unique model. After four or five years of UMR implementing the student success coaching program, I was getting calls from other institutions around the country asking, ‘How did you do this? How do you build this? We’re looking to do this.’”

One of the major keys to the success of this program lies in continued

institutional support. As Telander explains, “Our current coach to student ratio is 1:85. It’s very common for advisors to have a 1:150 or 1:200 ratio at larger campuses. We can’t do all these things if our ratio is larger. Our administration has been very supportive of keeping this model together and keeping the ratio low.”

Another key is the connection and collaboration between coaches and faculty. “Faculty support and partnership has been critical to our coaching success,” Hooke believes. “First, they allowed space in the BSHS curriculum for two credits of required career development coursework, which frankly doesn’t happen at a lot of places. Second, faculty see coaches as partners in helping students find success. They are the first ones to refer students back to their coach when

things aren’t going well. They send early academic alerts through our system, send emails or approach us in the hall. Their belief in us helps create student buy-in for coaches as well.” The commitment of administration and faculty to this unique model has supported its continued growth. What started out as one student success coach has expanded to a team of eight, with a focus on hiring coaches from diverse backgrounds and experiences to better reflect the student population.

Hooke, now the interim director of student success coaching, looks to the future with hope, while acknowledging the challenges that they will encounter. “I get to lead this team through the next growth phase as UMR continues to expand. We will need to support a growing number of students while maintaining the integrity of a

relationship-based model. I also hope to see high coach retention at UMR, which is critical for the model to work. We also need to keep working on collecting data to support this model.” Value assessments used by UMR to survey students at the end of their four years have invariably supported the importance of the student success coaches, says Telander. “We know our students are very appreciative of this service, and it has consistently ranked at the top of these assessments since inception. Parent feedback has also been very good. They tell us ‘I know I can send my student to this one person who will help.’”

Student success coaches have become an integral partner to both students and the institution as they seek to prepare students for a bright future. ■



The alumni I have coached are now impacting the world in really meaningful ways. To get to be a part of their journey while they are [at UMR] is an honor.”

UMR: HISTORY IN THE MAKING



1950 UMR begins as a concept.

1998 UMR is recognized by the legislature as a branch campus.

1999 Provost Heltsley named to lead University Center Rochester (UCR), comprised of three separate institutions: Rochester Community and Technical College, University of Minnesota Rochester Center and Winona State University Rochester Center.

2000 Provost Carl designated to lead UMR.



2005 Governor Pawlenty shares the need for public higher education options in Rochester, Minnesota in his State of the State Address, held in Rochester. Rochester Higher Education Development Committee (RHEDC) is formed.

2006 RHEDC reports the solution to address the public higher education need in Rochester is to establish a new campus. Governor Pawlenty accepts the report and supports a U of M Rochester campus. **UMR is designated as a official coordinate campus of the U of M system.**



2007 UMR moves into University Square in downtown Rochester.

2008 UMR's first Chancellor Dr. Stephen Lehmkuhle is inaugurated.

2009 The inaugural Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences class begin their UMR careers.



2010 UMR opens student housing at 318 Commons.

2011 Bachelor of Science in Health Professions program launches.

2013 UMR reveals mascot Rocky the Raptor and graduates its first class.



2018 UMR's second Chancellor Dr. Lori J. Carrell is appointed.

2019 UMR begins occupying classroom, lab and student lounge space at One Discovery Square.

2021 UMR rennovates space at 318 Commons for faculty collaboration and a student lounge, The Nest. UMR announces its accelerated NXT GEN MED program.



2023 10-year reunion of the first Health Sciences class is held. UMR announces its first philanthropic campaign, Onward. UMR occupies space at Two Discovery Square and officially opens the Student Life Center.

SPACE UPDATES



ADMISSIONS WELCOME CENTER

A space that welcomes #FutureRaptors to campus! UMR's Office of Admissions is now located on the first floor of the new Student Life Center (SLC). The Welcome Center consists of office spaces, a conference room and a large gathering space for prospective students and their families to meet and learn more about UMR.



INTERCULTURAL STUDENT CENTER

Located in the SLC, the Intercultural Student Center is for Indigenous students, students of color and their affiliated student organizations to gather. This is a space to hold diversity, equity and inclusion related events and programming, as well as UMR club and organization meetings. All are welcome into the space with the understanding that the Intercultural Student Center came as a recommendation from the UMR community, the Diversity and Inclusion Committee as a result of the murder of George Floyd, the COVID-19 pandemic and persistent and systematic racism.

STUDENT LIFE CENTER FRONT DESK

Managed by the Assistant Community Life Director and staffed by Resident Assistants and Desk Assistants, the SLC Front Desk serves as an information and security hub for the residence hall. Students can pick up packages, ask questions and connect with Residential Life staff.



FITNESS FACILITIES

All UMR students have access to various fitness spaces in the SLC, including a workout room with weights and cardio equipment, and a group exercise space for students to participate in a variety of fitness classes.



DINING FACILITY

UMR's dining facility, The Perch, and dining services department, Raptor Eats, have opened in UMR's SLC. All first and second year students living in the SLC are enrolled in a 19 meals per week meal plan. The Perch provides a range of delicious and healthy options while providing a space for connection.



RESIDENTIAL ROOMS

The SLC has nine residential floors with approximately 400 beds. Each floor includes a student lounge. 90% of the rooms are a standard double room furnished with a bed, bedside table, desk and chair, closet/wardrobe and bathroom shared by the residents. A few triple rooms are also available.

OFFICE OF ALUMNI RELATIONS

300 University Square
111 South Broadway
Rochester, MN 55904

ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED

IT'S TIME TO GIVE TO THE MAX!

In remembrance of the beautiful life of UMR student Sahra Gesaade, the University of Minnesota Rochester is highlighting **the Sahra Gesaade UMR Student Emergency Fund**. This fund supports UMR students who experience unexpected financial needs that could impact their ability to continue their college education.

Give to the Max Day is a 24-hour period of time to honor the work and worth of Minnesota's non-profits and schools.



#UMNGIVE

WHAT CAN WE ACCOMPLISH IN 24 HOURS? Support this fund at z.umn.edu/UMRGive or donate on Give to the Max Day, November 16.